

Brussels, Friday 13 November

150 sports organisations get financial support from the Commission

The Commission is providing financial support to 18 sport-related projects in the European Union, involving 150 sporting organisations. The grants awarded amount to a total of € 4 million, and are part of the 2009 Preparatory Action in the field of sport, which was approved by the European Parliament as a step towards the implementation of the new EU competence for sport enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty.

As Maroš Šefčovič, the European Commissioner responsible for sport, noted, "Expectations of sport stakeholders are high. The enormous interest in this first call for proposals clearly demonstrates the need for support for transnational sport projects in the EU. The selected projects offer sport organisations an opportunity to exchange good practices and expand their networks, illustrating the added value the EU can bring to sport. This first wave of projects will also allow the Commission to gather information and experience which can be used in the implementation of the new EU-level competence for sport under the Lisbon Treaty."

The call for proposals, launched in May 2009, generated wide-spread interest among sport stakeholders. 207 project proposals were submitted by public bodies and civil society organisations from across the 27 Member States. The total amount of the applications exceeded the available budget tenfold, in spite of the strict award criteria included in the call for proposals.

The objective of the call for proposals was to identify and test suitable networks and good practices in the field of sport. Emphasis was put on the transnational character of the projects: depending on the priority area, each project had to include a network from 4 or 9 EU Member States, but many successful applicants presented a far wider partnership.

After a tight selection process, **18 project proposals were selected for funding in four priority areas**, as follows:

- Nine grants were allocated to projects promoting **health-enhancing physical activity**,
- Four grants went to projects promoting **education and training in sport**,
- Two grants went to projects promoting European fundamental values by **encouraging sport for persons with disabilities**, and
- Three grants went to projects promoting **gender equality in sport**.

With their various partner networks, **these projects involve a total of 150 organisations**, covering a wide range of actors from sport federations and sport clubs to European umbrella organisations and public authorities. The projects will be implemented between December 2009 and March 2011.

In view of the forthcoming entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which foresees "incentive measures" in the field of sport, the road toward further EU support for sport-related projects is now open. A second call for proposals is expected to be launched in 2010 and another one in 2011. Subject to future decisions taken by the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament, these Preparatory Actions may pave the way for a first-ever EU Sport Programme in 2012.

Further details regarding the 2009 Preparatory Action can be found on the sport website of the European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/sport/index_en.htm