

EuropeActive Calls for a Stronger Focus on Physical Activity, HEPA, and Cross-Sector Collaboration in the Revised European Sport Model

A STRATEGIC VISION FOR SPORT IN EUROPE: REINFORCING THE EUROPEAN SPORT MODEL

EuropeActive, the leading member-based non-profit organisation representing the **European fitness and physical activity sector**, welcomes the Commission's intention to revise and actualise the European Sport Model.

Representing over 70 million users, including 64,550 facilities, and generating €36 billion annually, our sector continues to grow - notably thanks to its informal and non-structured offer, which individuals value for its flexibility and convenience. Being physically active is now a normative behaviour rather than an exception, reflecting **a significant societal shift**. The fitness and physical activity sector is also increasingly popular as people exercise not only for their health, but also for the social interactions it provides at the local level.

Provided its ability to cater to an ever-growing market, the societal position it holds as the preferred access to exercise, **the fitness sector is a logical piece of the puzzle** when it comes to safeguarding and expanding **a holistic approach to health**, both physical and mental.

Given Europe's current and future social and health challenges, **our sector is committed to improve our continent's public health** and contribute to **social cohesion** by the means of Health-Enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA). We recall that:

- The latest [*Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity \(2022\)*](#) found that **45% of Europeans** report to **never engage in exercise** or sport,
- The latest OECD Report [*Health at a Glance Europe 2024*](#) found that **only 15% of adults** meet the **WHO-recommended levels** of physical activity,
- Extensive scientific research details the biological mechanisms through which **exercise aids NCD prevention and management**. Regular activity enhances cardiovascular function, improves insulin sensitivity, and reduces chronic inflammation and oxidative stress- physical activity enables individuals of all ages maintain and improve their physical and mental health,

- [*WHO/OECD's 2023 Step up! Tackling the burden of insufficient physical activity in Europe report*](#) outlined that achieving at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise weekly could **prevent 11,5 million of new NCD cases** by 2050, including cardiovascular diseases, depression, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. Meeting the target of 300 minutes of physical activity per week would **prevent a further 16 million cases of NCDs**. It further found that **every €1 invested in physical activity will return € 1,7 in economic benefit**.
- Considering the topic at hand on the influence of EU policies on the European Sport Model, we emphasise that **HEPA must be given the attention and space it deserves** if the EU is serious about reversing inactivity levels and the poor health, and economic outcomes that come with it.

The ESM should consider leaning towards a 'Church model' rather than a strict pyramid one, to provide more room, resources and consideration to the participatory physical activity of the many, in sight of enabling them to access physical activity.

The European Sport Model should consider endorsing a stronger focus on HEPA to support and enable an improvement in health and productivity levels, and to therefore to give more attention to the many, by helping more people, be more active, more often.

The ESM should consider endorsing a greater role to enable Cross-Sector Collaboration. Health behaviours are shaped by structural and systemic factors that exceed individual control and responsibility: societal and structural shifts are required to encourage and support people to remain active. To do so, collaborations across sectors are required such as physical activity, health, sport, education, urban planning. Along similar lines, [*the 2021 Parliamentary Report*](#) recommendations on the future of European sport politics and policies highlighted the importance of including additional policy fields in addition to sport, with particular focus on 'integrity, physical activity, health, and education'.

About EuropeActive:

EuropeActive is the leading non-profit, membership-based organisation representing the European fitness and physical activity sector. Our members include 30 national associations, fitness and health club operators, suppliers, and fit-tech / well-tech companies. Collectively, our sector serves over 71,6 million club users, generates €36 billion in annual revenue, and comprises 64 550 facilities ([*European Health & Fitness Market Report 2025*](#)).

Our mission is to help get "more people, more active, more often." We strive to enable access to physical activity, and to further promote exercise as a preventative and cost-effective public health solution to combat non-communicable diseases, to improve quality of life and overall well-being, and to build sustainable, resilient communities across the continent. For further information, please visit www.europeactive.eu

EUROPEACTIVE'S NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS:

Austria	Austrian Professional Association of Sports and Leisure Enterprises (WKO)
Belgium	Fitness.Be
Bosnia & Herzegovina	BH Active
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Association of Health and Fitness (BAHF)
Czech Republic	Czech Chamber of Fitness (CKF)
Denmark	Danish Fitness and Health Organisation (DFHO)
Finland	Finland Active
France	Active-FNEAPL
Georgia	Georgia Active
Germany	Deutscher Industrieverband Fur Fitness und Gesundheit e.V. (DIFG) & Arbeitgeberverband Deutscher Fitness- und Gesundheits-Anlagen (DSSV)
Greece	Attic Union of Gym Owners (SIGA)
Hungary	hunactive
Ireland	Ireland Active
Italy	Associazione Nazionale Impianti Sport & Fitness (ANIF)
Latvia	Latvijas veselības un fitnesa asociācija (LVFA)
Lithuania	Lietuvos Sveikatingumo Klubu Asociacija (LSKA)
Netherlands	NL Actief
North Macedonia	North Macedonia Active
Norway	Virke Aktiv Helse
Portugal	Portugal Activo
Romania	Romania Active
Serbia	Serbian Association for Recreation and Fitness (SRFS)
Slovenia	Slovenian Association for Fitness, Recreation and Regeneration (SFRR)
Spain	Fundacion Espana Activa
Sweden	Active Sweden
Switzerland	Swiss Active
Turkey	Sport Endustrisi Dernegi
Ukraine	UA Active
United Kingdom	ukactive

Contact: Kiera Wason, EU Affairs Manager (kiera.wason@europeactive.eu)