

ENGSO Youths Statement on the EU Guidelines for Physical Activity

- Recommended Political Measures to Support Health-Beneficial Physical Exercise

ENGSO Youth welcomes the publication of the EU guidelines for physical activity. The Guidelines provide guidance for the development of national plans to promote physical activity. Due to the often confirmed and consolidated findings about the widespread unhealthy and physically inactive lifestyle amongst Europeans of all age groups, the introduction of national plans within the EU member states is a necessity.

In this regard, particularly the age group of children and adolescents should be paid special attention to, as it is in the young years that the foundations are laid for a healthy lifestyle. Therefore play, sports and exercise should be conveyed and encouraged during youth in order to install a lifelong healthy lifestyle.

As ascertained in the EU Guidelines many successful and great projects already exist in this field and ENGSO Youth would welcome if the exchange of best practice examples would be increasingly promoted. With ENGSO Youth events such as the “ENGSO Youth Forum”, in co-operation with partners the annual “European Youth and Sport Forum (EYSF)” and other conferences, ENGSO Youth already has successful events at hand, which are suitable for this exchange.

ENGSO Youth welcomes the networking of all partners who advocate the facilitation of exercise amongst children and adolescents. Using our existing network as a basis we would like further coordinate a network for organizations in the field of youth sport.

ENGSO Youth believes that the increased promotion of non professional sports and sports-for-all activities, as opposed to specialized sports, is paramount and an important task for the future. Many examples have shown that early specialization in children and youth sports is counterproductive and leads to increased drop-out rates and disappointed digression from sports and a physical inactive lifestyle amongst youngsters.

Numerous investigations have shown that it is far more cost effective and promising to invest in preventive measures by conveying and imprinting a physically active lifestyle, than the treatment of health problems – especially obesity.

As stated in the EU Guidelines for physical activity, various forms of co-operations - promoted by the government for example - between Schools and Sports Clubs have proven to be successful in familiarizing children and adolescents with sports. In this way, all classes of the population, also the lower social classes who are often opposed to sports, can be reached. This kind of co-operation can start even earlier, for example there are several programs collaborating with day-care centers and sports clubs, which successfully offer physical activities for smaller children. We consider this to be very desirable because the training of motor abilities in children should start early.

Essentially, ENGSO Youth welcomes the EU guidelines for physical activity. However the member states are now challenged to convert these guidelines into national standards. Therefore ENGSO Youth calls upon the governments of the EU member states to adopt the EU guidelines and to implement these for a healthy development of our children and youth in Europe.

ENGSO Youth is the youth organization of ENGSO (European Non-Governmental Sports Organization). ENGSO Youth is the youth sport for all organization at European level. ENGSO Youth has 41 members, which are the umbrella organizations for sport from across Europe. ENGSO Youth represents the interests of young people (under 35) involved in sports in Europe. The organization promotes sport and health, participation and volunteering of children and young people in sports and international cooperation. Please find more information on the ENGSO Youth website: www.engso.eu/youth.htm

Adopted by the ENGSO Youth Committee January 17, 2009

ENGSO Youth
Berlin Office of German Sport
Behrenstr. 24
10117 Berlin
Germany

Phone: +49 - (0)170 - 4876868

Email: engso-youth@dsj.de
www.engso.eu/youth.htm