

7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

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National strategy(ies)

National strategy for the promotion and support of sport and movement among young people

The diversified sport provision in East Belgium requires the public authorities to provide differentiated and adapted financial support that relates in equal measure to grass roots, school, competitive, disabled and senior citizens' sport.

Around 250 clubs form the basis of sport East Belgium. The sports played in the clubs are very varied. The clubs are organised at municipality level in the form of sports councils, sports federations or sports communities or can join one of the 16 recognised associations devoted to a specific sport.

Four competitive centres in various sports (tennis, apparatus gymnastics for boys and girls as well as acrobatics, sport for the disabled and chess) introduce children, young people and adults to competitive sport in East Belgium. The reform of the competitive training centres in 2005 and 2006 has enabled some young sport talent trained in the centres of East Belgium to risk the next step and sign up to the sport schools that exist both in Flanders and in the French Community and are geared towards competitive sport.

Sport for people with a disability is particularly promoted in thirteen specially recognised sports clubs. A competitive training centre particularly geared to sportsmen and women with special needs looks after these differently abled but no less ambitious sportsmen and women.

East Belgium has already been taking part in "Be Gold", a cross-community project for the promotion of young sports talent, for some years. "Be Gold" aims to finance specific promotion projects and measures in the area of the development, progression and support of young sports talent in the medium and long term and to do it with respect to a top 8 placement at the Olympic Games.

A cornerstone of sports promotion is the quality assurance of the trainers and training supervisors in the clubs. For this purpose the Ministry of East Belgium draws up an annual training and development programme together with the recognised sports associations and the clubs. Here young people from the age of 15 can participate and be trained as a training supervisor for grass roots sports or a specialist sport trainer.

Campaigns for the promotion of grassroots sport as well as the "Die DG wird FIT, ich mache MIT!" [The DG is getting FIT, me too!"] campaign which has been conducted for some years or by the "Week of Sport" first proclaimed by the European Union in 2015, encourage the active participation of as many citizens as possible in movement activities and round off the initiatives of the DG. The "European Week of Sport" has taken or will take place in East Belgium in 2016 and 2017 too. This is intended to propagate sport and physical activity at all levels. The European Week of Sport 2015 and 2016 was a great success not only for the European Union. In East Belgium too, many clubs and sports organisations joined in and offered taster training modules in the various sports for all age or ability groups.

Sport in East Belgium is governed by the Sports Decree of 19 April 2004. The Sports Decree has been developed with the involvement of the Sports Council of the German-speaking Community. It promotes among other things a range of recognised sport organisations such as local sport councils and sport associations and provides for special grants for the maintenance of the intra-community and international contacts of the sport clubs and sport associations, for the organisation of sports holiday camps, open air classes and competitive training centres. It likewise supports projects in top-level, grass roots and school sport.

The provisions for the sport associations provide for a basic grant and additional funds that are linked to various conditions and specifications. This also includes a grant of EUR 1000 to carry out projects in the area of working with schools.

The Sport Council of the German-speaking Community, the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee, which coordinates the nomination and support of Belgian sportsmen and women for the Olympic Games and the Youth Olympics, receive ongoing funding provided based on the existing legislation or on contracts.

The promotion of a wide range of projects by the clubs and sports associations occupies a large place in the government programme in East Belgium. These include in particular, holiday and sports camps, training camps for preparing for championships and competitions as well as activities as part of international and intra-community relations.

The Programme Decree of 24 February 2014 has set out new regulations from scratch for the promotion of top-level sport in the Sport Decree. Like the other communities of the country, from 2014 East Belgium has introduced a three-level system for supporting top-level sport. It is planned that sportsmen and women will be given the opportunity to be classified into an A, B or C squad status. Children and young people who have already reached a high sporting level in their sport, are performance-focused and have been identified as talents by the respective sports associations fall into the category of the C squad. In the area of the B squad athletes are

young people and adults who have already reached a high national and international level in the sport discipline and can demonstrate a significant prospect of increasing their performance. In the highest category are the A squad athletes. In this category are classified young people and adults who, because of the performance they have already achieved in a sport, have the prospect of participating and a promising placement in European championships, world championships, Olympic Games or Paralympics. While at the C squad athletes level the emphasis is primarily on improving the training conditions (including possibilities of release from school), the athletes classified into the B squad or A squad may also have benefit of individual funding. The classification of the sportsmen and women is carried out on the basis of criteria agreed with the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee and the French community. Over and above that, the German-speaking Community contributes annually to the accommodation and catering costs of squad athletes who are registered at recognised competitive training centres. This contribution is EUR 17 per day and per C squad, B squad or A squad athlete for a maximum of 180 days of an academic year.

In the area of team sports a revision of the applicable legislation has likewise been carried out. Sports clubs that have at least one team in the highest playing class, conduct active youth work and whose sports association does not have a training centre, can benefit from additional funding. Here the funding of the clubs is geared to the number of youth teams and the qualification of the trainers employed in the club's youth teams and teams in the highest playing class over a period of ten months.

Subsidies for participation in or toward the organisation of international championships are distributed over around 50 initiatives annually. Primarily sportsmen and women and teams that have qualified at national level for international tasks are considered.

Annually around 35 training camps are organised domestically and abroad by sports clubs for their members.

In total 22,106 East Belgians (as of 2012) have joined a sports club in their nine municipalities. About 40 % of them are under 18. Of the schoolchildren in the German-speaking Community about 60 % are active in a sports club.

Furthermore, in East Belgium there is also cooperation between club sport and schools. The initiatives within the scope of a time-limited and project-linked "School-Club" cooperation activity are financially supported and get a great response. In the last few years, initiatives in sports such as orienteering, judo, tennis, basketball, gymnastics, cycling, karate and shooting have been carried out.

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

Apart from the National strategy for the promotion and support of sport and movement among young people mentioned before, there are no additional specific top-level policies, programmes, projects or initiatives promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people.

Physical education in schools

Alongside the compulsory 2 hours of sport each week, which has to comply with the specifications of the framework plans, the "Fit School" project, which was newly initiated this year, aims to bring more movement, sport and games into East Belgium's schools. School is the only place where enthusiasm for movement can be aroused in all children. This is where the "Fit School" project starts. The participating schools build a range of movement activities into every school day – before, during, between and after lessons. Plus they design the school playground and surrounding playing areas together with the pupils to make them more movement friendly.

If a school carries out 12 activities in the school year, it receives the "Fit School" award, for 17 activities it is even designated "Top Fit School".

After the successful completion of a pilot phase last year, this school year 12 primary schools have registered to take part.

The project was officially launched as part of the European Week of Sport - i.e. at the start of the school year 2016-2017.

Collaboration and partnerships

There is no specific policy or legal framework for partnerships between formal education providers, youth workers, health professionals and sporting organisations.