

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Recommendation Rec(2000)17
of the Committee of Ministers to member states
on the Code of sustainability in sport:
a partnership between sport and the environment

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers
on 13 September 2000
at the 720th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Bearing in mind Resolution No 5/2000 on the draft Code for sustainability in sport: a partnership between sport and the environment, adopted at the 9th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport, in Bratislava in May 2000,

Bearing in mind Article 10 (Sport and Sustainable Development) of the European Sports Charter (Recommendation N° R (92) 13 of the Committee of Ministers),

Considering the contribution which the Code can make towards the implementation of the aims of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (Council of Europe and UNEP),

Acknowledging the importance to the Code of the work of the Committee for the activities of the Council of Europe in the field of biological and landscape diversity (CO-DBP), in particular the Group of specialists on "Tourism and the environment",

Conscious of the links, which exist between the following Recommendations and sustainable sports tourism:

Recommendation No. R (94) 7 on a general policy for sustainable and environment- friendly tourism development;

Recommendation No. R (95) 10 on sustainable tourism development policy in protected areas;

Recommendation No. R (97) 9 on a policy for the development of sustainable environment- friendly tourism in coastal areas,

Convinced of the need for a partnership between sport and the environment which takes into account the existing international and national programmes directed towards sustainability in sport, together with those examples of good practice described in the Clearing House publication "Environment and Sport: Awareness raising, education, training",

Aware that a clean and healthy environment is essential for those taking part in recreational or competitive sport,

Realising that many sports organisations and participants contribute actively to environmental protection but that certain sporting activities, particularly those practised in the most sensitive environments, may cause serious damage to nature and landscapes,

Aware that the responsibility for sustainable development lies with all those active in sport and that the sports policy sector, the sports practice sector and the scientific sector, together with individual sportsmen and sportswomen, must be involved if progress is to be made in this field,

Recommends the governments of member states to base their appropriate national policies on the “Code for Sustainability in Sport: a partnership between sport and the environment” as set out in the Appendix to this Recommendation.

Appendix to Recommendation Rec(2000)17

Aims and definition

This Code aims to set out guidelines for a working partnership between sport and the environment. It is important to ensure that sports can be enjoyed, both today and in the future, by as many people as possible in the most favourable conditions, by which is meant sport in a clean and healthy environment.

Sport in all its forms, practised at all levels, whether recreational or competitive sport, shares with the whole of human society the duty of nurturing and safeguarding the natural environment for both present and future generations. The adoption of the definition of sustainable development `as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs` is a starting point for action now.

The concept of sustainability in sport has already been incorporated into Article 10 of the European Sports Charter of 1992. This Article emphasises the responsibility of everyone involved in sport to protect the environment and promotes the introduction of a model of environmentally friendly sport. However, measures are needed to address those trends and practices in sport that are currently endangering the environment. The Code indicates realistic ways to ensure environmental protection. In practical terms this entails national policies that ensure respect for sustainability in sport in urban, open country and water areas.

The International Olympic Committee has organised conferences on sport and the environment, emphasised the need to respect environmental concerns when planning the Olympic Games and adopted Agenda 21, which reflects concern for the relationship between sport, the natural environment and sustainable development.

Responsibility for sustainable sport

This code focuses on the three sectors that bear the major responsibility for action which are:

- the policy sector, which is composed of groups and people concerned with the strategic choices, legislation, values and the underlying issues behind these questions. This includes governments and international organisations;

- the sports practice sector which is made up of sports organisations and federations, those engaged in the planning and construction of sports facilities, the educational sector, those concerned with sports tourism and the sporting goods industry. This group covers the whole spectrum from the large international and national sporting federations to the sports clubs at the grassroots level to the individual sportsman and woman;

-the scientific sector which embraces institutions, groups and individuals carrying out research, collecting and evaluating data and disseminating information.

Co-ordination between these sectors should be assured. Moreover the similarity of aims and concerns provides an opportunity to create close partnerships between those working for sustainable development in sport and those working for environmental conservation and protection. Environmental organisations can provide useful expertise.

Activities common to all three sectors

While each sector and its composite groups have a distinctive role to play in the area of sustainable sport there are areas where co-operation on common activities is essential. These include:

- exchanging information on progress and activities in their sector;

- emphasising the importance of education in environmental issues in relation to sport. Such education can take place in the framework of physical education and sports programmes in schools and universities, in sports clubs at all levels, in the programmes of international and national sports federations and associations and in sports management programmes;

- co-operating closely in the drawing up and implementation of international and national codes;

- alerting the media to the relevance and importance of this area and the need for closer co-operation. All three sectors should make a determined effort to involve the media in giving information on the need for measures and the actions being undertaken to halt the damage to the environment from sports activities;

- consulting on a broad basis to ascertain how widespread sports participation as favoured by `Sport for All` can be made compatible with the environmental concerns for sports facilities, sports related traffic, access to the countryside and the control of the noise, waste and pollution which sport generates.

The policy sector

To guarantee the practice of sport in a way that will contribute to sustainable development, national, regional and local governments should, as appropriate to their respective competence:

a. examine the need for legislation and similar measures on:

- the use of non-renewable natural resources e.g. land, water, fossil fuels and the promotion of eco-friendly materials in the planning, designing, constructing, operating and maintaining sports facilities;
- transport provision in the siting of sports facilities, both indoor and outdoor open air sport, as a way of reducing sports related traffic and keeping sports participants and spectators away from sensitive areas and protecting fauna and flora;
- the control of forms of sport and associated technological practices and changes that carry potential harm for the environment;

b. study the possibility of introducing financial incentives:

- to help modernise sports facilities to reduce consumption of non-renewable resources;
- to subsidise the development of sports facilities and the holding of sports events in proportion to the concern shown for the environment in their planning, as is already often the case for the disabled;

c. review their sports policies from the viewpoint of environmental friendliness;

d. consult at the international level to ensure that national legislation is compatible with that of other countries. This would prevent a situation where practices are forbidden or regulated in one country but can be engaged in freely without restriction elsewhere;

e. support and encourage the introduction of a “green” label that could be awarded to products, facilities, events, organisations etc. which are taking environmental concerns seriously;

f. when hosting major sports events ascertain that environmental concerns are taken into account from the outset throughout the whole operation.

The sports practice sector

All the sports and sports related bodies (sports organisations and federations, those engaged in planning, designing, operating and constructing sports facilities, the educational sector, the sports media, those concerned with sports tourism and the sporting goods industry) should be involved in the drafting and implementation of policies and projects at the national level. They should take steps to remain abreast of the results and research coming from the scientific sector. These measures would indicate the desirability of mainstreaming environmental concerns into all their programmes and short and long term planning.

Possible measures include:

- the appointment of a person, at whatever level is appropriate to an organisation, with responsibility for environmental questions;
- the drawing up of curricula and provision of packs for environmental education at all levels;

- the involvement of well known national sportswomen and sportsmen to support sustainability in sport;
- liaison between the sporting goods industry and the sports organisations and federations to promote the use of products which respect environmental concerns, possibly by the institution of an award or a special label;
- active respect for environmental factors in the management of sports facilities;
- promotion of environmental sensitivity in sports tourism.

The scientific sector

This sector should co-operate closely with both the policy and sports practice sector to:

- undertake surveys and research to ascertain ways to limit damage to the environment through sport;
- investigate ways to measure environmental impact of sports, by for example evaluating a monitoring system of the costs and benefits of sport (for example sports events) in relation to potential damage resulting ;
- recommend new ways of sports involvement which can protect both the concept of “Sport for All” and promote sustainability in sport;
- collect and evaluate information on measures on both the international and national projects designed to encourage environmentally friendly sport;
- ensure the wide dissemination of information, research results and data on sport and sustainability to the sports community;
- provide advice and documentation to the various bodies that make up the policy and sports practice areas;
- analyse the various laws and codes for compatibility within Europe.

A common responsibility

Achieving sustainability in sport is a task for the whole world of sport. Taking active responsibility for the environment is a vital and important step towards the attainment of a clean and healthy sport in the 3rd millennium.

Everyone shares this responsibility and must ensure that their activities do not damage the environment, but rather safeguard and sustain it.