

Active Local Europe



Local authorities' post-COVID19 plans on sport and movement

Annotations in bullet points

Online meeting - Monday 1 February 2021 from 11:00 till 12:00 (group 1)

Have you organized an activity during the pandemic you consider organizing after the pandemic ?

Trails for running and walking will be organized more than ever before.

The annual closing of roads for cars to allow hiking and biking will be extended.

Traditional events which took place on one day at a specific lieu, are now organized in more than a week time and can be exercised at several lieu. Some people like this freedom. It answers a rising desire of some people to be more flexible in their sport activity. These activities are supported by apps. The apps trigger people from a community (friends, work place, neighbors, etc.). The involvement of well-known IT tools hereby are helpful (Intermundo, Strava, etc.).

New health trails are being developed in the public space (parks, woods, streets, etc.). They will be available after the pandemic as well.

New outdoor gyms are installed in the parks and other public areas, also to remain.

Motivation programs to be active involving well-known Olympians.

The urban planning is redesigned offering opportunities for physical activity in the public space. The existing public space is better exploited for physical activity. Unutilized spaces are turned into spaces for PA. Neighborhoods are redesigned considering opportunities for PA. Mobility opportunities are

created for walking / running / cycling to school / workplace / for shopping / etc. (such as the 'Slow Streets' program in Malta.)

Car parking spaces are abolished for the benefit of children's play areas, cycling lanes, walking tracks, etc.

Have you experienced connections with other departments / stakeholders you will maintain ?

The most important connection laid with other parties to motivate citizens to be active, is with IT departments, IT associations, IT companies. The digital promotion of and organisation of sport and movement by the local authorities has been boosted.

There has been more consultation between the sports department and other city / municipality departments. Such as youth, well-being, public domain, infrastructures, etc.

Do you see policy strategies being developed / model shifts based on this pandemic experience ?

Measures taken to be exploited during the pandemic, offering PA opportunities while indoor sport is prohibited and sport in group is not allowed, are being considered to be extended to be permanently at use.

Studies are undertaken to see what pandemic initiatives for sport and movement have been success factors, for triggering people to be active, to consider implementation post COVID19.

Strategic cooperation between different local authority departments (cross-sector approach) and NGO's is deployed to have more opportunities to launch PA in the neighborhood. These are collaborations with e.g. the local authority departments such as city planning, the department for road infrastructures, etc. As for the NGO's, these are associations such as for the cyclists, neighborhood committees, associations for seniors, etc. These strategic cooperation with other departments and stakeholders is found to be mandatory to succeed in having more opportunities for sport and PA in daily life and in the neighborhood. Without these cooperation, success stories can not be realized.

The pandemic has led to the necessity of homework, or so-called telework. This has sometimes led to other ways of professional collaboration. Online meetings are applied way more than before the pandemic. But also the channels of sharing of information is now sometimes in other formats. Hardly nobody e.g. nowadays still uses paper documents. Digital signatures are substantially more accepted. Control mechanisms on digital abuse are strengthened. Digital communities, committees, commissions, ... have been created; versus the traditional live meetings. Digital congresses are organized and many of the organizers state that the format of their congresses will be hybrid in the future. We will not a 100% go back to 'business as usual' in our professional lives. That could mean less traffic to and from work. It can also mean more deliveries and less going to the shop ourselves. And other lifestyle changes impacting our mobility. It can also lead to people being less 'on the road'

and wishing a more enjoyable neighborhood. And it leads to opportunities of being active during the day. Local authorities have to foresee more and more dispersed desires of physical activity in the city in answer to the changed reality. It would not be surprising to see organized physical activity coaches popping up around midday in the urban parks. An enhanced use of the open space and a different use of the public space is a requirement in this circumstances. All this is a challenge and an opportunity for cities and municipalities. They need to foresee answers to catch up with future changed realities an citizens' desires.

Digital and virtual sport promotion and events will be further developed. It aligns with the overall societal digitalization. It also is an answer on the tendence of more flexibility in time and place to exercise or do sport.

Through the digitalization, the focus of the sports department can be broadened. I.e. that non-organized sport can win on importance, and especially that societal associations offering physical activity can be sustained (neighborhood committees, schools, associations for 60+ people, etc.).

Not having to bring people physically together, enhances opportunities to have more cross-sectorial collaboration on providing opportunities on sport and movement. An NGO working on cycling can e.g. be called in a digital community to formulate where and what changes to cycling lanes would work out well. It is much more fruitful to invite them to bring their input digitally, than having to invite them to a physical meeting or commission.

There is some pressure to have sport and physical activity be less a separate policy domain of the local authorities, but rather a transversal theme going across several domains of the policy making of local authorities: city planning, city infrastructures department, mobility, well-being, etc.

References send in by participants

- NAVIcup: <https://navicup.com/>
- Slow streets: https://issuu.com/lcamalta/docs/slow_20streets_20online

Online meeting - Wednesday 3 February 2021 from 10:00 till 11:00 (group 2)

Have you organized an activity during the pandemic you consider organizing after the pandemic ?

This pandemic can be dangerous in loosing a generation on doing sport and physical activity. Therefore it is important to promote - as cities and municipalities - different opportunities on sport and movement than group sport. Online and more individualized based promotions are challenges and opportunities in this respect.

In Latvia, a conference was organized with the support of the national government and the Olympic Committee, on what / how / when / where organizing individually practicable forms of sport and movement. How do you start it, what activities can be successful, how to promote it, etc. The conference was very inspiring for all who participated and beyond. Knowledge and experience were shared. Activities such as e.g. Nordic Walking boosted as a consequence. In one activity, 300 persons registered online 43.000 km of walking. One initiative attracted over 11.000 people.

In some places, the police needed to intervene in parks and public spaces, because there was too many people over there. That must stimulate cities and municipalities to search for open space, not yet used for sport and movement, to be built as spaces for physical activity. Since the citizen's desire is clearly there that they want to move in the open space. Also other forms of physical activity, outside the traditional parks, should be worked out and promoted by cities and municipalities. E.g. closing streets, temporarily or not, for the benefit of walking or cycling or for children to play. Or the 'car as king' should be challenged with safe roads to cycle. Important hereby is the support of the national government. And one must realize this can involve investment costs. Plus, it must be part of a global policy, be thought through.

In the activities undertaken, it is important to stress that the activities are predominantly to enhance health: physical health, mental health and social health.

Have you experienced connections with other departments / stakeholders you will maintain ?

Municipalities own in each single EU member state at least 80% of the sports infrastructures. Whereas the government can decide to pay the clubs for activities that can not take place due to COVID1, the government can also decide to shift money not used for sport to infrastructural development, both in the typical sport infrastructures, but also in deploying sport and movement opportunities in the public space. In many countries, governments have been a support of the cities and municipalities in these decisions.

Digitalization, which create opportunities for sport practice on demand and not offer based, are being worked out by cities and municipalities, with the help of the government and a variety of stakeholders (such as civil associations).

The government can launch surveys on citizens going into parks, woods and other open space. In Lithuania e.g. it was found that the number of people doing this raised with 20% during the pandemic. Probably also thanks to the promotion to do this from the authorities. The consequence is that attention must be foreseen for both creating opportunities for activity in the open space and that it must be promoted.

Free of cost and open access of citizens to safe areas close to where they live is important. Cities and municipalities must therefore develop plans and foresee budgets. E.g. on artificial surfaces on playgrounds and in other public spaces. Coaches can also be paid to assist those who want to do sport in these areas. But all this can not just be developed by local authorities.

Do you see policy strategies being developed / model shifts based on this pandemic experience ?

The changes in local authority sport and movement policy, compared as to the pre-Corona time, will at least partly be continued. Because of the lessons learned. But also because the EU Recovery and Resilience Fund foresees large budgets for both digitalisation and infrastructural works. It is a duty for the local, regional and national authorities to also apply these funds for health related physical activity, such as sport and movement is.

A lesson learned from the pandemic is, that we now must make plans as local authorities, to invest over the coming 5 years in people being active, rather than in sport infrastructures. However, that is not easy, since the traditional sports give a lot of counter gas on this mission.

The pandemic will impact the local authority sport policy strategy. We have realized during the pandemic that it is possible to promote sport in a less expensive way, easier to organize, open for all, free for the participants. It is a lesson learned that we must continue after the pandemic. We will have to, due to the economic situation local authorities will be in, i.e. much less favourable than before the pandemic. This approach will also allow to focus on specific target groups: safe running for women, PA for seniors, etc.

The activity grade in most EU member states still declines year after year. This creates huge problems. The way we impacted this activity from the local authority perspective hence was apparently not overall successful? We will need to do things differently. Two focusses hereby are important: every kid must as from a very early age have access to sport and the training of our coaches should have a respectively larger focus on education (as compared to skills and competition).

Online meeting - Thursday 4 February 2021 from 09:00 till 10:00 (group 3)

Have you organized an activity during the pandemic you consider organizing after the pandemic ?

There are many activities and events which - pre-COVID19 - were organized without restriction on the number of participants at a specific time at a specific lieu, which - during COVID19 - were online promoted to be exercised on individual bases or in smaller groups in often multiple lieu and in a wider timeframe. Many of those have been a success. Hence the intention to organize these events in future in a hybrid way.

Also new campaigns were set-up. Sometimes at the national level, with the support of the national TV and other promotion channels. To get people active.

Meeting places were set up for sports clubs to still be able to practice together, if practicing there sport club was not possible in their traditional habitat.

e-supported activities / challenges were set-up to be practiced in small groups. Sometimes at home or in the local environment. These included cycling, walking and running initiatives.

Researches were held in many countries to evaluate the success of the COVID19 related sport promotions and initiatives. Lessons can be learned from this.

Online educational programs were set up 'to teach the teachers'. I.e. to teach teachers of school how to online organize PA lessons. I.e. to teach coaches of sports clubs and other associations how to organize online sport and movement activities.

Online videos were developed to mobilize specific target groups to be active: children from the elementary school, seniors, etc.

Campaigns were set up for cities and municipalities to come up with best practices and good examples on how a local authority can stimulate its citizen to be active. The winning initiative received money to realize its project idea. E.g. an amount of € 10.000,-. One example, of the very many examples, is the development of non-used open space into a place where people can be active. The money for the price winner can come from the local authority or from a private company.

Have you experienced connections with other departments / stakeholders you will maintain ?

The connection with the national government has been important for esp. providing financial support to the sports clubs and associations. The clubs and associations often saw a variety of income disappear: membership fees, income from events, fundraising revenue, corporate support, etc. The local authorities could directly intervene in financial support to the clubs and associations, but a nationally organized support created a level playing field among all cities and municipalities, rich or poor, urban or in the countryside.

Discussions between the national authorities and the local authorities on the restriction on sport and PA were sometimes not possible, but have sometimes contrarily led to a better common understanding of the national authorities on the importance of the local authorities cc sport and movement for the citizens.

The good of the pandemic is that, not always, but in many cases, it has brought three partners together among sport and movement: the national authorities, the local authorities and the sports federations. Common understanding has hereby been positively developed. It has for all of these three partners also put in perspective the role of sport on not just sport for the sport, but also the economic impact of sport, the physical health impact, the mental health impact, sport as a catalysator for social cohesion.

The pandemic has brought together the world of sport with the world of new technologies and media. Hereby creating opportunities for other formats for promoting and organizing sport and movement.

Do you see policy strategies being developed / model shifts based on this pandemic experience ?

After the pandemic, the local authorities will be the first in line to have to provide support to the sports clubs and associations. Only after the pandemic will be clear how deep they are in trouble. Local authorities will need to be inventive to spend the money in a way which resorts the best effect of people being active. Lessons learned during the pandemic can be at use then. Such as also having attention on introducing PA in the daily life activities (mobility), less expensive formats of sports events, etc.

Many local authority representatives think that after the pandemic, the pre-COVID19 way of organizing sport and movement will not dramatically change. However, no one things that it will be back to business as usual. Main changes will be in applying digital tools in promoting and organizing sport and PA. The attention on cycling lanes as a basic opportunity for day to day free of cost way of movement, will become more important. Investments in parks, forests, water (beaches and pools), to serve as lieu for sport and PA, will be more important than in the past.

The battle between cars and bicycles will be enhanced after Corona, some consider, especially in currently still car orientated cities and municipalities.

If walking remains as important as during the pandemic, almost everywhere walking really boosted, this will create pressure on the public space and on nature. Sch as for instance mountain biking and trail running also might do.

The discussion on movement as a before all tool for health (both physical and mental health) and social cohesion will, versus the traditional attention of local authorities on the typical sports club, will probably be enhanced. Especially at the level of the local policy making.

The impact of the 'e' will be important. A wide spread of small groups or communities finding each other to do sport when and where they want, will put the necessity of sport club membership under pressure.

The discussion on opening school yards for physical activity in the evening hours by the neighborhood will probably in some place come to the forefront.

Online meeting - Monday 8 February 2021 from 09:00 till 10:00 (group 4)

Have you organized an activity during the pandemic you consider organizing after the pandemic ?

Research was held in a few EU member states, on how people were active during the pandemic. It will be important to analyze the initial findings of these research. Research in Denmark and Finland e.g. demonstrates that, during the pandemic, the number of citizens being active stayed app. the same. With though a remarkable raise of people being active during the pandemic, which were not active before the pandemic, of up to 20%. Whereas up to 20% less activity during the pandemic compared to before, among people who were active before the pandemic. A question, not an answer, could be that esp. youngsters are member of sport clubs, and that they could not practice their sport indoor combined with the relative difficulty for them to go out and do sport on their own compared to adults. Another question, not answer, is what the potential role has been from the media and others with motivation campaigns to be active, and maybe the consequent initiatives undertaken to allow this (roads closed for traffic, etc.).

In some countries / regions / cities or municipalities, no specific new events have been organized, consequent to the pandemic. In other countries new typologies of activities were organized.

But in most countries, existing sport and movement activities have been organized in a different way than before the pandemic. Examples include:

- A traditional run around the lake, pre-pandemic held on one specific day starting at one specific hour, was now organized with starting time delays of 5 seconds per participant.
- A year end corrida, which was not organized such as pre-pandemic as an event as such, but for which a campaign was launched to go running and register it on social media.
- A city triggered its citizens to post the distances they ran, challenging them to run altogether from the earth to the moon and back (i.e. in number of kilometers).
- An annual 2-days live congress of over 40 sessions for over 1.000 persons (from local authorities and on the thematic of sport and movement) was now held entirely online.
- The international exchange among representatives of cities and municipalities on sport and PA has increased significantly, thanks to the widened knowledge and use of the new media (including this Active Local Europe Teams exchange meetings, which would otherwise not have taken place).
- Marathons and other city runs are promoted online, people who run the marathon can post their participation online.
- Online classes are being organized. E.g. gym sessions and work outs that citizens can follow at home. Or televised sessions for the elder, so that they do not need to go online, since they are less familiar with it.
- Traditional national events (such as be active in the playground) are now steered mainly regionally whereas before they were mainly steered nationally.
- Geocaching has won very much on popularity.
- All kinds of 'search' walks are organized digitally. E.g. for children. Also for adults, often culture related discovery walks (architecture, history of the neighborhood, ...).
- Cycling lanes get a boost.
- Fitness instruments are placed in parks.
- A very large Nordic skiing event in Sweden, has during the pandemic been organized over a time lapse of one month, instead of on one day.

Do you see policy strategies being developed / model shifts based on this pandemic experience ?

All participants in this online session consider that everybody is longing for the lockdowns to end, so that the pre-pandemic activities can be picked up again. As well as that these activities will predominantly be the same after as before the pandemic.

But all participants also think that some different approaches, from cities and municipalities on sport and movement, will probably pop up after the pandemic. These can be such as follow. A raised attention on outdoor sport. More physical activity in daily mobility (less car and more cycle traffic). Attention for free of cost physical activity, so that those with little financial means and those who do not want to 'be part of the club' have more opportunities to be active. Decentralization of sport and PA opportunities, i.e. closer to where the people live. Structurally organized advice by local authorities to the sports clubs on how to create virtual sport and movement activities. Fitness instruments in the parks.

The local finances may play a role over the coming years at least: why invest in expensive sports infrastructures if you can get people active much cheaper, especially the less active and also with a higher spread of the typology of the participants (rich and poor / old and young / etc.) is higher.

If it is true in many countries, that the inactive people have been more active during the pandemic, than before, it is desirable that 'matters do not go back to normal'. Since that would imply that the beforehand inactive people would get back to their inactive lifestyle.

A question mark is to what extend the traditional sports clubs will loose or win members after the pandemic. Will there be a race to club membership to catch up with structural social contacts ? Or will youngsters have found other formats of being active, which they consider more attractive.

Other ways of being active won on importance during the pandemic. Cycling e.g. And non-club sports. It will be interesting to see if and how cities and municipalities will (be able) to resist the pressure from the automobile lobby and the sports federations / Olympic movement lobby.

It will be predominantly important, after the pandemic, for cities and municipalities to focus on sport and movement as a mean for social encounter and health enhancement. Especially the need for social encounter will be important for the mental wellbeing and the reliance of the social cohesion.

Very important will it be for cities and municipalities to support PA in the educational environment. All children have PA at school ... but not during the pandemic. Local authorities will need to follow up the PA at schools. Because for very many kids it is the only place where they are regularly active.

Online meeting - Thursday 11 February 2021 from 10:00 till 11:00 (group 5)

Have you organized an activity during the pandemic you consider organizing after the pandemic ?

Unique city running events, traditionally organized on one day at one place, were during the lockdown organized over a couple of days and could be run in different lieu. These thus needed to be run either individually or in small groups, maximum as many as allowed by the pandemic restrictions. These city runs were promoted, organized and reported digitally. These digital city runs often had up to half of the number of participants compared to the traditional runs. Many sorts of triggers were sometimes combined with these digitally organized city runs. Such as a prize for the winner. An attempt to altogether reach a certain distance. Sponsored runs where the benefit went to social initiatives. Etc.

TV broadcasted combined with online presented gym session for seniors (and others) were organized. Sometimes set up, co-organized or supported by the local authorities. These were e.g. 30 sessions in total of 30' and broadcasted on well pre-determined hours. The success rate of these activities was the highest when these were broadcasted on the local and the national TV. These videos remain online, for free, and can be used at any moment. So that these can be at use continuously in care houses for example.

Online videos were made available for school teachers and club coaches, i.e. train the trainer videos, demonstrating how teachers and coaches can organize online trainings for their pupils or players.

In especially rural area, where there is much open space, citizens rather spontaneously went out for hiking, running, skiing, etc. Not much online PA promotion activities were required by local authorities in rural areas.

New cycling lanes were opened, temporarily or maybe to be maintained after the pandemic. The idea being to stimulate / allow the citizens to be active going to the workplace, school, the shop. A very important issue being hereby the safety of cyclers on these lanes. Another issue being the debate between the car-user seeing all of a sudden disappear traffic lanes for the benefit of the cyclists.

Many activities on sport and movement organized by the cities and the municipalities started from the necessity to combat loneliness and isolation. Of the seniors, but also of the youth.

Much more urban citizens went to the parks in or around the city. This sometimes led to overcrowded parking spaces. Or even overcrowded parks. Which can be considered as too little open space in the urban area in relation to its number of inhabitants.

Many cities crossed by a river, closed one of the to car lanes along the river, so as to allow the citizens to be active on this actually huge public space (for walking, cycling, running, stepping, etc.).

Fitness instruments were placed in parks.

Have you experienced connections with other departments / stakeholders you will maintain ?

In many countries, the local authorities organize or play an important role in the local schools. Local authorities hereby had to be inventive to organize the sport and PA activities of the kids and the students.

Local authorities very much needed to review the financing of the organized sport, i.e. the sport clubs. E.g. by providing them financial support or by letting them not pay rental charges.

Local authorities sometimes provide support to the digitalization initiatives of the sports clubs and the associations providing PA activities. Since there is for sure one main change the pandemic has triggered: it is a fierce raise in the use of digital means in the sport and PA sector.

The pandemic impact on sport and movement was rather different in rural versus urban areas. In rural areas, sport is organized more outdoors. Or there is more space for the traditionally indoor organized sport to be exercised outdoor. Which is different to urban environments. The same is valid between different cultures. Cultures where there are already very many cycling lanes and where the urban design has foreseen open space, are in a very different situation than cultures where these are not available.

An important factor also is the message given by the national authorities. In some countries it was emphasized 'stay home to stay safe'. In other countries the message was given 'keep on moving, individually or with 1 or 2 others'. Depending on this difference, the relation between the local authorities and the local sport associations and the local associations providing sport, is of course very different.

In some countries, some local authorities engaged the schools to open up their playgrounds for activities for the neighborhood.

Do you see policy strategies being developed / model shifts based on this pandemic experience ?

A lesson learned, during the pandemic, is the impact of the school on the PA of kids and students. For many children and youngsters, the only certain place they are physically active is the school. This has completely dropped in some places, schools without or with very little outdoor facilities, simply canceled the PA lessons and / or forbid the kids and youngsters to be active in the school playground.

Research was done in some countries on the impact of the pandemic (more precisely the lock-down restrictive measures) on the physical activity of the citizens. It is remarkable to see that some results demonstrate an important average drop of PA activities, whereas other studies demonstrate an equal PA activity before and during the pandemic. In all studies can be seen that the negative impact of the pandemic has been larger for some categories of the population as compared to others. Such as the more wealthy people have been relatively the same or more active. It is easier to buy a home

bike and place it in the garage, if one is wealthy, compared to just not having the money to buy a home bike and living in a small apartment with no place to install it. It will be a challenge for the local authorities to get the citizens who dropped out of being active start being active again.

In order to launch the economy, after the economic recession caused by the pandemic, money must be invested in sport and movement. Whether it is in straight forward sport infrastructures or lieu for physical activity (cycling lanes, fitness instruments in the park, bark underground lanes for running tracks in parks, etc.).

An initiative to be considered is to organize massive sport events in the open space after the pandemic. If people can go to music festivals again ... why not to sport exhibitions in open air.

Online meeting - Monday 15 February 2021 from 09:00 till 10:00 (group 6)

Have you organized an activity during the pandemic you consider organizing after the pandemic ?

In almost all EU member states, the sport competition at high level was allowed to a smaller or larger extent, but the sport competition at the recreational level was abandoned. Sport and movement training could take place, only outdoor, for the youth (till 12 years of age in some countries up to till 17 years in other countries). Outdoor activities were in some cases allowed up till a restricted number of people from one 'bubble'.

Virtually steered sport and movement events have been organized. Such as a 10 miles to start the capital of sport 2021 awarded city. Over 7.000 citizens participated. They came from all over the world. The participants ran individually, but the promotion and registration was online. The event also collected money for a charity organisation. The closing event of this European capital of sport city is being planned in a hybrid format: both physical participation and the opportunity to register online the kilometers run individually or in smaller groups.

In some EU member states more than in other EU member states, it has not been easy for the sports and movement sector to organize events due to the one-way regulations of the national authorities. The national authorities sometimes took too overall decisions, disregarding the local opportunities for citizens to be active. As well as sometimes the national authorities changed what was allowed on sport and movement by every turn of the wind. Nevertheless, even in such difficult circumstances, it were precisely the local authorities who organized sport and movement events, within the allowed restrictive criteria outlined by the national authorities. The regional and national authorities often picked up these locally enhanced initiatives, to then promote these at the regional or national level. The conclusion is, that it is important that there is a synergy between the local and the regional / national level, when restrictive measures on sport and movement are taken.

New ways of being active have popped up during the pandemic. Such as the opening of outdoor swimming pools in winter time. Which traditionally never happens. The success is rather unexpectedly high, so that it is considered to open the swimming pools next winter as well.

In many countries, local authorities supported the set up of smaller outdoor sports events. Such as for mountain biking, triathlon, running, mountain running, etc. The start time for the participants was then widely extended in the time. Such as e.g. a kids run, where the kids started with an hour difference per age group. The same was often applied for city running events. All this in time of a mild lockdown, not in a severe lockdown.

Have you experienced connections with other departments / stakeholders you will maintain ?

During the Spring lockdown, there has been a massive participation in walking and cycling. This has led to sometimes local authorities creating cycling lanes and walking tracks in a hurried way. This creation of more cycling and walking opportunities was often an alternative offer for citizens not to have to take the public transport. Many cities and municipalities are now looking on creating a more thought through city plan on mobility.

What the pandemic has caused is anyhow the acknowledgement by other city departments that sport and movement is important. Too important to only be organized by a municipality sports department, but to be integrated in several departments and the overall policy of the city or municipality.

Very important, on physical activity opportunities creation, is the connection of the local authorities with the local schools. For many children, the sole opportunity to be physically active is in the school environment. During the pandemic, especially in schools with no outdoor facilities, the physical education lessons were simply abandoned. Even playing on the school playground was often forbidden. Whereas online lectures on mathematics, languages, history, etc., was provided, not a similar attention was given to the necessity of allowing children to be active in the school / educational context. Many local authorities and schools have worked on finding ways for kids to still be active in the school context.

Sport can be a mean of bringing people together. In some EU member states, at especially the local level, sport club volunteers were stimulated to help other sectors. They were e.g. integrated in the food teams (providing food to vulnerable people), in initiatives to fight loneliness caused by the lockdowns, etc.

In almost all EU member states, the national authorities as well the local authorities have foreseen financial support in many sorts and kinds to the sport and movement sector: no rent to be paid, cash financial support, etc. In very many cases, the budgets provided to the sport are not only concentrated on supporting the competitive sport, but are meant to engage the clubs to also

consider the social / community goals they stand for, or to stimulate the organized sport to attempt to have the preliminary non-active citizens to become active.

Some countries more than others, will invest after the pandemic in a 'greener' sport. Financial support to the sports and movement sector will be given by providing upgrades of sport facilities. Whereby the sustainability and the climate friendly aspects will be the focus. Such as e.g. the renovation of swimming pools with energy consumption reduction. This will be accelerated through the EU Recovery and Resilience Fund, which has a main focus on greener infrastructures and digitalization.

In most EU member states, the pandemic creates - in the local authorities - a shift from the traditional municipal sport service to a more integrated approach on sport and movement. I.e. not sport as such being a policy domain, but sport being at least a part or even a motor for creating a vital city, a healthy city, a city where everyone can be active. Opportunities which are free of cost or very low in cost for the citizens. Without the city or municipality having to pay a lot of money to create this opportunities. What we knew from before the pandemic, is that the economically less wealthy people also are less active, and studies have demonstrated that they even were much less active during the pandemic, cursing them (and the society) high amounts of money on health costs. Attempting to bring these people to a sports club, has demonstrated to rather exceptionally be an effective measure. An approach where and sport associations and active mobility and opportunities to be active, without any cost and / or close to where one lives, this apparently is what very many cities and municipalities will strive for after the pandemic. Not launched by the sports department, but by the city / municipality as a whole.

An example of this approach is e.g. the policy change on sports fields, which traditionally open after 17:00 for the sport club activities, to be open for diverse forms of active playing between the end of the school and the start of the sports club trainings.

Another example in this context is the intention to have 2 times 1 hour of PE in schools. 1 hour is a 100% PE. The 2nd hour is on history, languages, etc., which will be PA included. Such like some schools e.g. already provide some courses in other languages: geography in the English language e.g.

The above is obviously only possible with a translateral approach. The domains of sport, education, infrastructures, etc. all need to be involved. Demonstrating that the authorities acknowledge the importance of physical activity for the benefit of their citizens, an importance going beyond the creation of sport infrastructures and support to sport clubs.

Do you see policy strategies being developed / model shifts based on this pandemic experience ?

One way of support, by the local authorities to sport and societal associations providing movement activities, is that the local authorities financed those associations which launched themselves in online courses. These are online courses for the end-users, organized by people from the organized sport. Or online 'train the trainer' courses, i.e. to teach the trainers how to online organize and

promote sport and movement activities. This approach may be continued after the pandemic. Especially because this can attract people who do not have the money to be part of a sports club.

Local authorities, such as national authorities and others, have heavily invested during the pandemic in the promotion of outdoor activities such as walking, cycling, running, fitness in the park, etc. It will be interesting to see in how far local authorities will continue to promote these ways of their citizens to be active. Both by creating the required facilities (cycling lanes, running tracks in the parks, etc.) and by marketeering those opportunities. Especially in the context of reduced budgets the local authorities will have, less budget coursed by the pandemic. As expressed by a participant in the meeting: sport is like an iceberg. The top of the iceberg everyone looks at is 1 %, the iceberg above the sea under the top is the 99% grass roots sport, but the massive number of people which is active or can be activated in a very varied number of settings is beyond the sea level. The only concentration on the iceberg above the sea level can be disastrous.

During the first lockdown, citizens massively went out walking, running and cycling. The question is whether this was especially done 'to be out' or 'to be active'. And what role can local authorities play in this field after the pandemic ?

There is in very many sports clubs a fear that citizens might only come back to the sports club in smaller numbers. That their thus will be a drain in sport club participation. In some cases there is a clear fear and competition between sport disciplines to attract citizens to their specific sport, if not kind of 'steal' members of other sports disciplines to become adepts of a their sport. E.g. outdoor sport might be in the elevator, indoor sport might be declining, after the pandemic. However, other local authority leaders think that it might be possible that sport club membership will raise after the pandemic, citizens being eager to again socialize, being fed up with being active individually. Local authorities will need to pay attention to possible changes on how citizens will be active after the pandemic, so that they support what might be different desires of the local citizens.

It is expected that the majority of the local authorities will have a larger focus on the traditionally inactive people. As paraphrased by a participant in the meeting: 'the pandemic was already busy before COVID19, under the form of obesity and other silent killers coursed by inactivity'. Especially the socio-economic disadvantaged citizens suffer from this. Leading to local authorities having to spend more and more funds on curing the health of the 'no money, no job, 14th floor small apartment' citizens'. This creates not only individual harm and costs, but large societal costs as well. And it also goes along with societal disintegration. For them, the step to a sport or fitness club is not feasible. Most local authorities will, after the pandemic, have attention for the 'health' as such of its population: physical health, mental health, social health.

Online meeting - Tuesday 16 February 2021 from 09:00 till 10:00 (group 7)

Have you organized an activity during the pandemic you consider organizing after the pandemic ?

In many countries, it has been almost impossible to organize sport and movement events. Neither new ones adapted to the COVID19 restrictive regulations, nor traditional ones in a COVID19 conform format. An important reason being that the rules and regulations on the COVID19 restrictions changed very rapidly, sometimes every fortnight, and very abruptly. In these environment, planning an event is hardly feasible. A collaboration between the national and local authorities, on developing the COVID19 measures, would probably have favored the opportunities for local authorities to plan sport and movement events and activities.

Nevertheless, in all countries, online sport and movement events have been set up by local authorities, or online sport and movement events organized by other parties have been supported and promoted by the local authorities. Hereby, the aim was to an important extend not only to promote physical wellbeing, but also the mental and social wellbeing were important aims.

In many countries, local authorities (co-)organize or have strong relations with the schools. Research has demonstrated that only a minority of the children are member of a sports club as well as that for many children the PE lessons in schools are their sole organized sport and movement activity. During the pandemic, especially schools with no or not much outdoor playgrounds, totally canceled the PE lessons. Many local authorities have therefore collaborated with the schools to provide online PE lessons, often following the educational curriculum program. These initiatives are mostly launched at the local level, sometimes these are then taken over at the regional or national level.

Local authorities almost all feel the pressure from the sports clubs to maximize the opportunities on activity of the local sports clubs during the pandemic. This is often a difficult exercise for the local authorities, who on the one hand want their citizens to be active, but on the other hand have to ensure the safety and health of its citizens. Some local authorities hereby help local sports clubs in organizing their sport activities in a safe way, outdoor, or stimulate them to keep the members of their sport club active in another way than in their traditional sport.

Have you experienced connections with other departments / stakeholders you will maintain ?

In all countries, the number of people going out for walking, cycling, running ... rose massively. Many citizens try to be out in parks and in nature. Most of these movement activities are organic. Or it can also be that the media played an important role by propagating to be active outdoor.

The rise in outdoor activities sometimes leads to too many people in some parks, leading to the paradox of stimulating people to be active in the public space, but then having to restrict these activities in some areas. Which might lead to the conclusion that some cities and municipalities have not enough open space for their citizens to be active. Or there is enough public space, but is e.g. used for parking cars instead of broad walking paths, cycling lanes, small playgrounds for children, etc. With COVID19, there was much less car traffic. This has helped cities and municipalities to close roads, or parts of the roads for car traffic or car parking. For the benefit of citizens to be active in the city or municipality. The question is to what extent the local authorities will be able to resist the

pressure to re-open this public space for cars again, hereby turning down the day-to-day free of cost activity opportunities of the citizens.

It is unsure yet whether all these people going out walking or on their bikes, do this to be active, or rather to be just out of their home, or even to avoid having to be packed in the possibly contaminated public transport.

There is a great difference on sport and movement opportunities between cities and rural areas. Rural areas offer much opportunities to simply be active or do sport outdoor: mountain biking, hiking, mountain climbing, etc.

Very many local authorities have installed soft fitness infrastructures in the parks and on other public areas. In many cases, research demonstrates that these infrastructures are well used. Some national associations of cities and municipalities therefore promote the installation of these infrastructures to their local authorities. It can also be a cheap mean - the pandemic creates a significant cost for the local authorities - to offer rather cheap sport and movement opportunities to the citizens. In the neighborhood where they live. Free of cost for the citizens and therefore in principle accessible to all citizens.

Sport as a tool for physical, mental and social health has not been enough emphasized during this pandemic. Especially some groups have suffered from this: the seniors, families living in small apartments, etc.

Do you see policy strategies being developed / model shifts based on this pandemic experience ?

It will be very important for local authorities, and also the national authorities and other actors, to intensively promote physical activity after the pandemic. Studies have been held in many countries. Almost all demonstrate a drop in physical activity during the pandemic. The opportunity of getting out of the pandemic should be the combination of socializing and being active. Whether in the sports club setting, or in other semi-organized sport and physical activity settings. Late Spring and early September 2021 will be good moments to campaign for citizens to take up or start doing sport and movement again.

COVID19 definitely did shine a strong light on both outdoor and individual or semi-organized sport and movement practice. As well as on the online opportunities to promote sport and movement.

Local authorities might, after COVID19, be squeezed between the sport sector on the one hand, asking for financial support or investment in infrastructures, and the pressure from the public opinion (based on health barometers) to invest in the creation of more healthy and more vital cities. It can be that the golden years of strong rise in investment in sport specific infrastructures will come to a saturation point, with more attention from the local authorities on promoting other means of sport and movement to enhance the happiness, health and feeling of belonging of the citizens.

Some studies demonstrate that the sport and movement activity dropped less during the pandemic in cultures (countries) where the aspect of a sport 'club' is more important than the aspect of the 'sport' club. This might lead to local authorities promoting society anchored sport associations and sport infrastructures and invest less in uni-sport infrastructure.

Online meeting - Thursday 18 February 2021 from 09:00 till 10:00 (group 9)

Have you organized an activity during the pandemic you consider organizing after the pandemic ?

There have not been many new types of sport events organized during the pandemic. Some existing sport events have been organized differently, but not many.

Plans were made to organize new sport events, or organize these in a different way, but once these were ready to be operated, the restrictive measures could well have been changed meanwhile. With the very fast and sometimes abrupt introduction of new restrictive regulations, it was discouraging to plan new or differently organized sport events.

Nevertheless, there are many good examples of new or differently organized initiatives, on sport and movement, organized by or supported by the local authorities.

In 'the balcony exercise', coaches walked the streets and invited the citizens to do exercises, on their balcony. This was especially, but not only, addressed to the seniors. An important element was that it was accompanied by music.

An app developed by a professor, on how seniors can stay active, was promoted by the local authorities.

Many outdoor recreational movement initiatives, promoted and registered digitally by local authorities, include the 'walk to the moon' event.

Very many cities and municipalities ensured, during the pandemic, a better use of the public space.

Movement activities were much more practiced during than before the pandemic. These are activities such as walking, hiking, cycling, mountain biking, mountain walking, etc. It is not obvious to state whether the principal reason hereby was 'being out of the door' or 'being active'.

Organized walks, such as search walks where QR codes are used, were sometimes canceled due to a lack of interest of a sufficient number of citizens. This type of activities sometimes, but not always were successful. These were more successful if organized by the neighborhood committee or by the local guides, than by the sports department.

A 'Container Cup' was very successful. In the container, 6 to 8 physical activities could be exercised: running, rowing, throwing, strength exercises, etc. These had a fun competition element. Citizens could register their results and friends hence competed with each other. It is possible that this initiative was successful, because the same kind of 'Container Cup' was organized by the national media with sport stars, it was thus upfront well known by the citizens, which might have triggered the citizens to also engage in this. The container was successively placed in different neighborhoods of the city.

Playgrounds were made available after school, where this before the pandemic was not always the case in all countries.

Train the trainer online sessions were little organised by local authorities. Hereby is meant online sessions whereby coaches learn how to organize online steered practices. The reason being that the sports federations are better placed and did organize this for each their specific sport.

Have you experienced connections with other departments / stakeholders you will maintain ?

In several countries, local authority departments joint forces, to stimulate or create opportunities for their citizens to be active. That could e.g. be the local authority department for education, the department for sport and the department for the public space (including the parks) parks. They jointly organized the help to the local associations to find the correct way of doing sport and movement. It is seen in many cases that smaller associations providing non-Olympic sport have significantly grown during the pandemic. These include sessions in the parks and other public spaces on e.g. yoga, thai chi, etc. The joint forces of several local authority departments also enabled that the public space was available and well shared among the different associations or spontaneous users. Only seldom a typical uni-sport arena was opened up for activities different to this uni-sport. Something which might be open for improvement, since also these spaces are public property.

The use of open space was sometimes regulated by the local authorities, such as e.g. the unique use of parts of the public park by schools during a defined timeslot. This to avoid conflict of interest of users.

Walks and online gym sessions were often organized for seniors. Either organized straight forward by the local authorities, or by local associations or entrepreneurs, supported by the local authorities. The local authority departments hereby many times involved are the health departments (local or regional health departments).

In many cities, there was an intensive collaboration between the sports and the youth departments. Whereby the department of public space also was involved. These led to interesting initiatives combining youth and movement activities.

For young children a city e.g. developed a 'multi-move' path. It is a path in the public space of app. 2 kilometers, where movement activities can be undertaken. These were 12 basic motoric skills exercises: rolling, throwing, etc. It was all worked out in a fun enhancement way. It was addressed

to children aged 3 to 12, whereby parents and grand-parents could accompany their youngsters. The path was open at all times, the citizens were thus free to do the tour whenever and how many times they desired.

For teenagers, an urban zone was created around the skate park. Anything with wheels could be tried out in this area. Also calisthenics instruments were placed in this zone. As well as obstacles for the 'free running' exercises. Free running is a discipline which combines running and acrobatic exercises on obstacles.

An asset for local authorities, to enhance sport and movement, often was that an alder(wo)man was in charge for different domains: youth, health, education, sport, etc.

Do you see policy strategies being developed / model shifts based on this pandemic experience ?

A main concern for many cities and municipalities is to get the sport structure on the rails again. To have the finances of the sports clubs in equilibrium. To see as many volunteering engagement as before in the sports clubs. To see the members coming back to the sports clubs, since there was a severed drop out of sport club membership during the pandemic.

On the other hand, during the pandemic, much more people than before the pandemic were active individually or in small groups in the public space. Local authorities consider they may be under pressure from the public to actively enable, as local authorities, more than before the pandemic this way of being active of their citizens.

Many local authorities even have decided to effectively concentrate, post COVID19, on public space management for physical activity of their citizens. To e.g. avoid too many people in one park and none in another park close by. To e.g. also avoid that young and fast runners could create a feeling of threat with walking seniors, making that the seniors would quit being active in the park. These authorities will also promote the promotion of the non-Olympic sport and movement practice, free of cost for the citizens, and close to where they live. These can be activities such as Zumba, gym, tai chi, etc.

Another success that some local authorities saw rapidly growing during the pandemic, which they intend to exploit after the pandemic, is the offer in schools of not so well-know practices: roller blade, taekwondo, etc. It is often smaller associations which are interested in demonstrating these activities in the schools. These local authorities will stimulate a variety of these activities being demonstrated in the schools. The hope is that this variety 'demonstration offer' may lead to the schoolchildren picking up one of the varied activities, which suits them best. To be exercised then out of the school. These merely are 'for fun' activities and not 'competition' based activities. These local authorities intend to also provide similar varied offers for seniors, hoping also they will pick up a way of being active that triggers them.

For most local authority representatives, activities in the public space plus other types of being active plus active mobility or not new. They were rising already before the pandemic. But the pandemic seems to have accelerated their impact.

Local authorities will be faced with reduced budgets. This will lead them to choose the cheapest way of investment in healthy enhancing physical activities. The use of the public space can be such a choice. Especially if it would prove to be true that hereby also the yet non-active would become active.

Online meeting - Monday 22 February 2021 from 09:00 till 10:00 (group 10)

Have you organized an activity during the pandemic you consider organizing after the pandemic ?

A year end corrida was organised digitally (via Strava) in 2020 to replace the traditional live event. In normal years, app. 7.000 runners participate in the corrida, this year's online corrida had app. 3.700 participants. The distances offered were the same as in previous years.

Some local authorities organised fixed term meetings with the sports sector, e.g. every 6 weeks. The goal was to create interaction between the local authorities and the sports associations on the offer of sport and movement.

Outdoor swimming pools were opened in several cities in an EU member state. Because indoor swimming was not always allowed during the pandemic. In winter, outdoor swimming pools are normally closed. During this pandemic, an amazing number of citizens engaged themselves in outdoor swimming during the winter.

Obstacle trails were created. Both in or outside the city or the municipality.

Many local authorities organised, or supported third parties, in the organisation of youth sport lessons. Outdoor. Also on places which are not the home bases of these sports. E.g. athletics, football, tennis, ... in parks or other open spaces.

Sport passes were set up. These sport passes allowed youngsters to participate in a variety of sport and movement activities. With some liberty of choice in the sport and the timing when they practice. This was especially set-up for youngsters aged 12-16, to allow them to be active and counter their drop-out whilst the sport associations could not organise their usual training and games programs.

Local authorities developed new playgrounds in public spaces, so that the youngsters had more opportunity to be active outdoor in their neighbourhood.

Multi-move paths were elaborated, in a combination of e.g. the local authority departments of youth, of sport and the municipal green service.

What the pandemic has caused is an important raise of local authorities a) looking at outdoor non-organised sport and movement opportunities and b) utilising a wide variety of online / virtual / digital / new media / ... opportunities to organise and promote sport and movement for their citizens.

Have you experienced connections with other departments / stakeholders you will maintain ?

In many local authorities, the connection among several departments has strengthened, related to the offer for citizens to be active. Local authorities were often aware of the importance of sport and movement for the physical, mental and social health; especially during the pandemic restrictions. Whereby the traditional sports could not be organized due to the restrictions. The collaboration of local authority representatives of e.g. the social, youth, sport, city development and more departments, created activity opportunities for citizens to be challenged to be active. Hereby sometimes promoting their city or municipality to be a 'healthy city', a 'moving city', an 'active city', etc. With motto's such as "stay safe and be active".

Many creative ideas came to live. Such as 'city neighborhood sport coaches' organizing 'balcony gym'. These are people from the neighborhood, involved with sport and movement, walking the streets demonstrating gym exercises while music is played in the background. This was especially, but not only, attractive for the elder people.

Do you see policy strategies being developed / model shifts based on this pandemic experience ?

In some countries, the pandemic seems to have accelerated the already existing attention of local authorities on the important liaison between health and active citizenship. Whereby, on top of the offer and support to the traditional sport clubs, active citizenship is more global. By creating safer physical mobility (cycling and electronically supported mobility). By creating more opportunities for activity in the public space (playgrounds, walking paths in the surrounding woods, fitness instruments in parks and open space). By promoting the 'health on subscription' strategy. Etc. I.e. sport and movement is taken to the level of health, illness prevention, ... on top of support to the sport clubs in their inner setting. Many local authorities hereby have, during the pandemic, accelerated their way to being 'vital city'. A vital city where many actors need to interplay to strive for 'health enhancing physical activity': local authorities, schools, the private business sector, the fitness sector, the paramedical sector, the city planners, etc. As paraphrased by a participant 'being regularly physically active is a health issue which is as evident as regularly going to the dentist'. Citizens are supported in regularly going to the dentist, to avoid their teeth degrading, the same is valid for body movement.

Some local authorities also found out that the offer of semi-organized sport addresses citizens who have not been active for a long time. And that the pro rata use of neighborhood movement opportunities (skate parks, multi-move paths, fitness instruments, ...) can lead to overall more activity for a relatively low cost. Hereby also offering an answer to a growing number of citizens to be less 'structurally' engaged as in a sports club, i.e. be active in diffuse groups in a more flexible 'when and where they wish' activity.

Local authorities will have to deal with a growing pressure of citizens wanting to use the public space. Just as one of the numerous examples: how to allow youngsters to run at a speed of 20km/hr in the same park where 80+ people want to have a healthy walk.

Some local authorities are looking to hitherto buy extra pieces of land, turn car parking space into cycling lanes, ... Thus creating or changing the public space for more sport and movement opportunities.

But apart from all this, all local authorities are longing to see sports clubs engage their citizens to be active as they did before.

Online meeting - Tuesday 23 February 2021 from 09:00 till 10:00 (group 11)

Have you organized an activity during the pandemic you consider organizing after the pandemic ?

There have not been many new types of sport events organized during the pandemic. Some existing sport events have been organized differently, but not many.

Plans were made to organize new sport events, or organize these in a different way, but once these were ready to be operated, the restrictive measures could well have been changed meanwhile. With the very fast and sometimes abrupt introduction of new restrictive regulations, it was discouraging to plan new or differently organized sport events.

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Multi-move paths were elaborated, in a combination of e.g. the local authority departments of youth, of sport and the municipal green service.

A municipality developed with the tourist office concepts for walks, hikes, treasure hunts, jogging and trail running to be done individually or in small groups. Welcome and arrival were at the tourist office. More than 3000 people participated on a single "treasure hunt" activity for example. It allowed people to go out and do physical activity as a family. What's more, it allowed the municipality to highlight itself.

Trail runs and jogging also were organized. These were individually timed competitions with a possible start during 10 to 15 days. The results were communicated in real time on the site of the organizer (external partners).

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Have you experienced connections with other departments / stakeholders you will maintain ?

In several countries, local authority departments joint forces, to stimulate or create opportunities for their citizens to be active. That could e.g. be the local authority department for education, the department for sport and the department for the public space (including the parks) parks. They jointly organized the help to the local associations to find the correct way of doing sport and movement. It is seen in many cases that smaller associations providing non-Olympic sport have significantly grown during the pandemic. These include sessions in the parks and other public spaces on e.g. yoga, thai chi, etc. The joint forces of several local authority departments also enabled that the public space was available and well shared among the different associations or spontaneous users. Only seldom a typical uni-sport arena was opened up for activities different to this uni-sport. Something which might be open for improvement, since also these spaces are public property.

In many cities, there was an intensive collaboration between the sports and the youth departments. Whereby the department of public space also was involved. These led to interesting initiatives combining youth and movement activities.

For young children a city e.g. developed a 'multi-move' path. It is a path in the public space of app. 2 kilometers, where movement activities can be undertaken. These were 12 basic motoric skills exercises: rolling, throwing, etc. It was all worked out in a fun enhancement way. It was addressed to children aged 3 to 12, whereby parents and grand-parents could accompany their youngsters. The path was open at all times, the citizens were thus free to do the tour whenever and how many times they desired.

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Do you see policy strategies being developed / model shifts based on this pandemic experience ?

A main concern for many cities and municipalities is to get the sport structure on the rails again. To have the finances of the sports clubs in equilibrium. To see as many volunteering engagement as before in the sports clubs. To see the members coming back to the sports clubs, since there was a severed drop out of sport club membership during the pandemic.

On the other hand, during the pandemic, much more people than before the pandemic were active individually or in small groups in the public space. Local authorities consider they may be under pressure from the public to actively enable, as local authorities, more than before the pandemic this way of being active of their citizens.

For most local authority representatives, activities in the public space plus other types of being active plus active mobility or not new. They were rising already before the pandemic. But the pandemic seems to have accelerated their impact.

Local authorities will be faced with reduced budgets. This will lead them to choose the cheapest way of investment in healthy enhancing physical activities. The use of the public space can be such a choice. Especially if it would prove to be true that hereby also the yet non-active would become active.

In some countries, the pandemic seems to have accelerated the already existing attention of local authorities on the important liaison between health and active citizenship. Whereby, on top of the offer and support to the traditional sport clubs, active citizenship is more global. By creating safer physical mobility (cycling and electronically supported mobility). By creating more opportunities for activity in the public space (playgrounds, walking paths in the surrounding woods, fitness instruments in parks and open space). By promoting the 'health on subscription' strategy. Etc. I.e. sport and movement is taken to the level of health, illness prevention, ... on top of support to the sport clubs in their inner setting. Many local authorities hereby have, during the pandemic, accelerated their way to being 'vital city'. A vital city where many actors need to interplay to strive for 'health enhancing physical activity': local authorities, schools, the private business sector, the fitness sector, the paramedical sector, the city planners, etc. As paraphrased by a participant 'being regularly physically active is a health issue which is as evident as regularly going to the dentist'. Citizens are supported in regularly going to the dentist, to avoid their teeth degrading, the same is valid for body movement.

Some local authorities are looking to buy extra pieces of land, turn car parking space into cycling lanes, ... Thus creating or changing the public space for more sport and movement opportunities.

Online meeting - Thursday 25 February 2021 from 09:00 -10:00 (group 12)

How can local authorities support sports associations in their events ?

What have you, as sports sector, appreciated that local authorities did for sport during the pandemic; and what could local authorities have done better ?

How can local authorities help the sports sector to recover post-pandemic ?

Academic research demonstrates that during the lock-downs the car traffic was lower than before and the cycling and walking of citizens raised. Many local authorities created safer cycling tracks and promoted walking. Many citizens have appreciated this policy of the local authorities. The question is if and in how far local authorities will maintain this policy. At least some cities and municipalities

are determined to continue this policy. An important factor of success hereby is the support of this policy by the full college of mayor and aldermen. Also important is that this policy is communicated and supported by an adequate information campaign.

The EU networks on sport consider it important to get feedback from the local authorities on sport and movement. Surveys and the collection of information is very much required. EU Sport networks can then spread the good policies and best practices of what local authorities do on sport and movement. So that other local authorities can learn from this. As well as that the sport networks can learn from this.

EU sport networks feel a lack of bridges between themselves and the local authorities. It would be good for the local authorities to be better internationally organized, on sport and movement, so that they can better inform the EU sport networks and collaboration is possible. As well as that the EU sport networks can learn from what they do, at the local level.

EU sport networks cannot define who the actors in the EU on sport and movement are. They actually are a wide and varied set of actors: entrepreneurs, schools, federations and their clubs, societal organisations offering sport and movement, semi-organized sport providers, local authorities ... Local authorities must profile themselves better in this required consortium of interplay to provide an offer for all.

The use of the outdoor for sport and movement is on the rise. But the sports sector often is confronted with unclear position taking by local authorities on the use of the public and open space for citizens to be active. Local authorities must be clear in the regulations on using the public and open space for sport and movement. And local authorities must also better communicate these regulations.

Local authorities must facilitate much more the access to public and open space for sport and movement.

For the sport sector it is important that, when they want to use the public and open space for an event, they do not have to address the selves to a multitude of local authority departments: sport service, urban department, the police, etc.

Small sport associations and small sport and movement events have too little access to using the open and public space, as compared to the large events; events which then again are sometimes less focused on sport and the local citizen, but on city promotion and tourism fall out.

Local sport associations are the MVP's. Cities and municipalities creating opportunities for people to do sport and physical activity in the open and public space is good. But local authorities must value the role of the sport associations. These create opportunities for encounter, serve as an educational environment, ensure the 'social health' (on top of the physical health and the mental health sport and movement can offer), they are a bases for citizens engagement through volunteering, etc. Local authorities must be stimulators of associational sport and movement.

At the same time, local authorities must go along with the changed culture. Already before the pandemic, but apparently accelerated during the pandemic, citizens connect virtually and are active together in less structurally organized ways. Which also include the social aspect of being active. Such as neighbors or friends going for a run / walk / MTB ride / ... together, hereby triggering other neighbors and friends to join in. The EU barometer demonstrates that 12% of the Europeans are active in a sports club, while 40% is active outdoor and outside a sport club, which does not mean that all of these are individually active. The digitalization allows citizens to connect much easier and faster and created a raise in the non- and semi-organized sport and movement practice.

A research during the pandemic has demonstrated that only 45% of the citizens trust the COVID19 measures taken by the national authorities, whereas 68% of the citizens trust the COVID19 measures taken by the local authorities. The role of the local authorities, on measures with an impact on sport and movement, is therefore very important. Local authorities must speak up towards the national authorities, not just be executers of the top-down nationally taken measures.

Local authorities must pay attention not to overregulate the use of open and public space for sport and movement. I.e. to simply decide that outdoor sport is not allowed in certain places, e.g. to safeguard the nature. There are examples of good management of woods where the nature is safeguarded and at the same time individuals can be active.

Some local authorities tend to design their open space in a 'safe' and 'recreational' way. A park with only grass makes it easier to just sit down and relax, avoids the danger of rape, ensures nobody falls out of a tree. But it also leads to not being to be active. The creation of (parts) of parks for multi-move paths for the youngsters and of obstacle spaces for the teenagers are examples.

When local authorities work out regulations for the use of parks, woods, etc., it is very important that the local citizens and the local associations are being heard. It makes no sense that local authorities just make top-down regulations.

Local authorities must create opportunities for citizens to be active 'without them knowing it'. In daily life.

It is currently quite unknown how people will in general behave after the COVID19 pandemic. Very probably we will not go back to everybody going during five days from the morning till the evening to the office. Citizens currently working from home can more play around with their time spending. They also have more time with being less on the road to and from their work place. The digitalization took a flight, also in the offer of sport and movement. Will schools still demand their children to 'all' be in the school 5 days a week ? Or will the remote lectures remain to a lesser or higher extend ? Local authorities will need to provide support to sport and movement in line with the possible upcoming changes.

Cities and municipalities must strive to become 'active cities'. It is absolutely required to avoid huge health curing costs for the society. It is important also to enhance the mental health of the citizens and to create 'a feeling of belonging to the community' of the citizens. The only way to achieve an

'active city' is the interplay between the local authorities, the schools, the employers, the sports and societal associations, etc., in a global and transversal approach.

Online meeting - Wednesday 17 February 2021 from 09:00 - 10:00 (group 13)

How can local authorities support sports clubs in their events ?

Provide good sport facilities. Very many local authorities are the owner, builder and maintainer of sport infrastructures. It is important that these are well-located, adapted to the needs, well maintained and well managed.

Provide funding. Local authorities and sport clubs have a common interest. It is important for local authorities to enable their citizens to be active. This includes financial funding.

Respect for what is required to enable a good sport event. This is allowing the practical organisation along the specific requirements of the event. It is ensuring there are no unnecessary barriers for a successful event.

Ensure the safety and security of the event. This includes car parking facilities, fluid mobility in the area of the event, support from the police / red cross / etc.

Marketing and promotion. Local authorities have a common interest in city sport events with the sports clubs / federations. Local authorities can use the sports event for city marketing, tourism enhancement, be attractive and be a propeller for the proper citizens. Local authorities can make publicity of the sports event through their media channels, by co-creating a VIP area during the event, etc.

Networking. Many sports clubs in one and the same city / municipality organize sports events. Local authorities can help the different sports clubs to connect with each other, so that they can share their expertise, learn from each other, collaborate possibly in certain domains. Idem dito on connecting with non-sport third party stakeholders.

Volunteer engagement. Local authorities can spread the call for volunteering assistance during the sport event.

Values. Local authorities must help the sports clubs to include a variety of values in the event they organize. Those can be values such as: sustainability, eco-friendly events, level playing field accessibility to the event, quality in infrastructures and goods and services, etc.

Sport club development. Local authorities can best help the sports clubs to organize the sport event as part of the process of the sport / club development.

Development of the sport at the city or municipal level. Local authorities must allow the sport clubs to help building the sport policy at the local level.

What have you, as sports sector, appreciated that local authorities did for sport during the pandemic; and what could local authorities have done better ?

Positive is that many cities and municipalities have invested in the refurbishment of the sports arenas during the pandemic.

To be improved is that local authorities must much more be prepared for a pandemic. Local authorities had no roadbook of action in case of a pandemic. The consequence is that during the COVID19 pandemic there was a cacophony of policies, initiatives, actions ... Cities and municipalities undertook very varied measures, even neighboring local authorities sometimes took opposite measures. Also, the measures changed very quickly overtime. It sometimes looked too much as a trial and error exercise. There were very many ad hoc decisions. Local authorities should in future also, during a pandemic, demand for interaction with the national government, on what is possible on sport and movement. It looked too much like local authorities were just the executors on sport and movement of nationwide governmental mainstream decisions, whilst sport is different in e.g. urban and rural areas. In these chaotic environment, it was / is very difficult for sports clubs to organize themselves.

To be improved is that local authorities must have a pandemic phaseout policy plan, i.e. to plan the start up phases on sport as per the infection rate going down.

To be improved is that local authorities should have a relance policy plan for the recovery of sports clubs when the pandemic is over.

Positive is that many local authorities have canceled the rent sports clubs normally pay to the local authorities for using their facilities.

Positive is that many local authorities foresee in straight forward financial support to the sport clubs.

Positive is that some local authorities foresee further plans to refurbish the sports infrastructures. Hereby often appealing on the budgets made available by the regional / national governments, budgets these governments make available to boost the economy again and try to keep unemployment at a low level.

Positive is that many local authorities have continued their subsidies to the sports clubs, although no sport activities which stand against these subsidies were organized.

To be improved is that the financial support plan of the local authorities for the sports clubs should be much clearer and communicated on time. Too many sports clubs actually do not know what the planning of the local authorities, on the support of the sports clubs, is. Whereby the sports clubs live in the dark as what they can expect and hence can not rely themselves yet.

Positive is that very many local authorities have ensured larger opportunities for sport to be practiced in the public space. And in some cases have opened up the outdoor sports clubs arenas for the local sports club practice, but also other sports practices which normally are not held in these arenas.

How can local authorities help the sports sector to recover post-pandemic ?

It will be very important that local authorities will launch campaigns for people to come back to the sports clubs. And for preliminary non-sportive people to try out sport club membership. Since research has demonstrated that in the vast majority of the EU member states the sport club membership has significantly dropped during the pandemic. These campaigns could go along with stressing the opportunity to socialize in a sports club. Socializing is what we all missed during the pandemic. This could be under e.g. the motto "it is nice to do sport, but it is much nicer to do sport in a sports club". The timing of these campaigns must be well-planned.

Very important will be that the local authorities chase financing instruments which are made available for the pandemic recovery. These are financing instruments often created at the national level, or distributed at the national level coming from the EU, or straight forward EU managed financial instruments. These include: the EU Recovery and Resilience Fund, the EU Cohesion Fund, the EU Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which seems to textually include the possibility to invest in sport infrastructures, the EU Social Fund (ESF) such as for example but not exclusively train the trainer programs.



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