



# Swedish sport – international policy





## Introduction

This policy document is intended as a support for individuals representing *Swedish sport in international contexts* in different capacities. It is a living document and is designed to act as a tool for understanding issues to which the whole sports movement gives priority in an international perspective.

## Swedish sport and international collaboration

International collaboration in sport shall be guided by the goals and policy of the sports movement:

*“Sport shall act as a medium of international contact and shall respect the equal value of all people.”*

The Swedish sports movement and the sports movements of the other Scandinavian countries have adopted a common system of ideals based on the following key concepts:

- Honesty
- Democracy
- Community
- Voluntariness
- Diversity
- Enjoyment

These values are to be the foundation of both our internal operations and of our attitude to international sport.

The very idea of sport predicated an absence of boundaries. Sporting exchanges between different nations and different ethnic groups at all levels create new opportunities for contact. Within the community of sport, people of different nationalities, ethnic origins, religions, genders or sexual orientation can get to know each other and can learn to understand and respect each other’s ideals. For this reason Swedish sport will maintain exchanges with other countries, regardless of their political systems and of whether they have diplomatic relations with Sweden or not. The only excep-

tions are countries that are subject to binding UN sanctions in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter or legally binding decisions of some other international organization.

The Swedish sports movement upholds its own, unique independence – its right, in democratic forms, to determine its own goals and modes of operation. The movement upholds its own, independent legal system established through democratic decision-making processes based on the rule of law.

Anyone who wishes, regardless of their ethnic origin, nationality, religion, physical or mental abilities, age, gender or sexual orientation, shall have the opportunity to take part in sporting activities in a sports club. Regard for gender equality shall pervade all fields of activity.

The Swedish model for sport shall be a useful example for other countries both in Europe and elsewhere. The Swedish sports movement shall assume a responsibility to support sports organizations that are being developed in other parts of the world.

Swedish sport seeks greater influence in international sports organizations in order to:

- Communicate the democratic ideals of the Swedish sports movement.
- Influence the way in which international competitions are organized to ensure that Swedish athletes compete on the same conditions as representatives of other countries.
- Strive for more international events (including competitions and conferences) to be held in Sweden.
- Contribute to increased international exchanges that stimulate the positive development of Swedish sport.

Leaders in Swedish sport who are active internationally must have access to adequate training, exchanges of experience and a continual flow of relevant information.

During the coming years, our international sports policy will focus on sport for children and young people, credibility issues and the sports movement's relations with the EU.

## Areas in focus

### Voluntariness

The Swedish sports movement relies to a great extent on voluntary commitment. This is the hallmark of Swedish sport and is a force to be safeguarded. Members of sports clubs take part of their own volition, leading and organizing the operations themselves. This participation and shared responsibility adds value to the activities.

Most people in the sports movement, both administrators at different levels and coaches, work on a voluntary basis receiving no monetary compensation or, at most, a symbolic sum. There are currently some half a million leaders in the sports movement, the majority of them volunteers. A study conducted by the Stockholm School of Economics calculated the value of the contribution by voluntary leaders at € 2 billion .

The concept of a social economy, increasingly used internationally, helps to explain the economic role of sport in various areas of society. Many sports organizations assume responsibility for activities other than sport. And in spite of the fact that volunteers are dominant among leaders, the sports movement is a significant employer. Furthermore, major sporting events create temporary work in other social fields such as the tourist industry.

### Sport for children and young people

The sports movement is Sweden's largest youth movement. Two out of every three boys and half of all girls between the ages of seven and fifteen are members of sports clubs. This is also true of youngsters with an immigrant background.

The sports movement's policy document Sport wants, lists the fundamental principles regarding sport for children and young people. Activities shall be available to all and shall be based on the needs and wishes of the youngsters.

For children up to the age of twelve, sporting activities should be characterized by a play element and all-round development. Emphasis on performance and results, for example in the form of major national or international championships, should be avoided.

Sport meets many different needs in youngsters. Mixing with children of the same age and with adults, personal responsibility, an enjoyable experience as well as physical activity are important factors in the physical and mental development of every young person. It is important that the sports movement should develop activities that answer the needs of girls and boys with more modest sporting ambitions.

Youngsters who show talent and have the ambition to become elite athletes should be given the best possible conditions for seeing how far they can go. It is important for youngsters to be able to pursue their sporting ambitions in a socially secure environment, and this will include being able to continue with their education while practising their sport.

In order to develop sport for children and young people in accordance with the agreed policy, the Swedish Sports Confederation, in collaboration with the sports movement's educational body, Swedish Sports Education, is undertaking a major initiative for leadership development.

- *Lift for sport* is the name of a government programme for sport for children and young people at club level and is a continuation of the *Handshake* programme which started in 2004. The main aim of the new programme is to open doors to sport for more children

and youngsters. To reach this goal the sports movement will work at developing associations and clubs, will improve access to sports facilities and sporting environments, recruit and develop leaders and collaborate with the schools. There will be a major focus on keeping youngsters in the sports movement as they move towards adulthood.

- The *Young leaders* project will run from January 2008 until June 2009. This programme is part of the Lift for sport and is aimed in the first instance at leaders with posts of responsibility in youth clubs as well as athletes aged 16 to 25. The aims of the programme are:

To create favourable conditions for young leaders.

To stimulate young people to undertake leadership activities.

To increase influence and opportunities for participation for youngsters in the sports movement.

To stimulate all levels of sport and to oversee forms affecting youngsters.

- *Strategic plan for the sports movement's collaboration with the schools.* In 2005 the General Assembly of the Swedish Sports Confederation requested a strategy for the sports movement's collaboration with the schools. The staff of the Swedish Sports Confederation and of Swedish Sports Education have jointly produced a strategic plan to which will be added an action plan. The aim of the plan is to raise the sports movement's ambitions and to seek to achieve two fundamental goals in the secondary schools. The strategy will also provide guidelines for collaborating with the schools in the Lift for sport programme.
- *ENGSO Youth.* Together with the other Scandinavian countries, the Swedish Sports Confederation has – within

ENGSO for example – raised the issue of young people's influence and the way operations are designed. The Swedish Sports Confederation is involved in the youth organization *ENGSO Youth*, which was formed under the auspices of ENGSO in 2002. Participants/members must not be more than 35 years old and shall be selected by their respective national sports organizations. Strengthening young people's participation and influence is a priority issue for the Swedish Sports Confederation's operations for the years 2008-2009. The Swedish Sports Confederation also has a special youth council on a national level that consists of some ten young people aged 16 to 25. The youth council is a reference group for the Swedish Sports Confederation's sport-for-all unit that deals with matters pertaining to sport for children and young people.

#### Values and ideals in sport

- *International legal agreements*

The *UN Declaration on Human Rights* and the *Declaration on the Rights of the Child* are examples of two important international legal agreements. Responsibility for fulfilling and exercising international law rests with the governments of the signee countries. Swedish sport seeks to ensure that all its activities are in agreement with the international legal agreements that the government signs.

- *Vision and ideals in sport*

There is currently a discussion of the vision and ideals of Swedish sport. These issues will be clarified under the *Sport will* programme and will be presented to the 2009 General Assembly of the Swedish Sports Confederation for a decision.

*Ideals:* Sport is joy, everyone's right to participate, fair play, democracy and participation.

*Sport for all and the elite:* Safeguard the good circle of sport with its beneficial effects, respect for each other's different roles and operational conditions.

*Vision:* We shall be a leading sporting nation – for everyone at every level.

- *Equality in sport*

The 2005 General Assembly of the Swedish Sports Confederation agreed a strategy for gender equality in sport under the heading *The sports movement's policy for gender equality*. The primary goal is that women and men shall have equal opportunities, rights and obligations at all levels in all areas. About 42% of people active in sports are women. The executive committees of the Swedish Sports Confederation and of the District Federations are subject to quotas. 27% of the Special Sport Federations' executive committee members are women, about 10-15% of the chairpersons of the special sport federations, of top administrators and national coaches are women. The Swedish Sports Confederation and Swedish Sports Education have conducted training courses for elected representatives and employees.

- *Integration*

In 2001 a strategy for diversity in sport was agreed under the heading *Action plan for increased diversity in sport*. This forms the basis of the Swedish Sports Confederation's further efforts to use sport as a means of lessening segregation in society. Swedish sport reaches about the same proportion of youngsters with an immigrant background as youngsters in general. A study is currently being conducted of how nominating committees deal with the diversity issue in proposing candidates for club committees and suchlike.

- *Fair play*

Honesty and fair play are a natural part of sport. There is no point in competing if not everyone keeps to the same rules. And so the sports movement is continually working for consistent rules and their observation as well as encouraging good behaviour among athletes both in competition and off the pitch. It is particularly important that sport for children should be run in such a way that they learn to respect each other as colleagues and co-competitors, and that bullying, harassment and discrimination are prevented.

- *Alcohol and tobacco*

The 2003 General Assembly of the Swedish Sports Confederation revised and sharpened the policy of the sports movement regarding alcohol and tobacco. The sports movement supports the government's aims of reducing the consumption of alcohol and tobacco and works at raising the age at which youngsters start using alcohol. No alcoholic beverages are allowed among leaders or athletes in conjunction with sporting activities for children and young people. The sports movement also encourages the creation of smoke-free environments indoors and smoke-free zones outside.

- *Supporter behaviour*

In 1997, the executive of the Swedish Sports Confederation decided to take active responsibility for working with supporter behaviour and safety at sporting events. The sports movement wants to promote enjoyable and secure events, to emphasize the positive aspects of supporter behaviour and to counteract the destructive elements. The Swedish Sports Confederation has, for example, worked for better co-ordination, appropriate legislation, research and preventive measures.

## Anti-doping

The Swedish sports movement categorically condemns and opposes the use of forbidden, performance-enhancing substances or doping. Our vision is a sport free from doping. Sport in which the winner can enjoy an honest victory and the loser can be safe in the knowledge of having lost in fair competition and the public can delight in the sporting achievement with the knowledge that it is not due to forbidden preparations or methods.

Internationally, we have well established channels both in sport and in government for working against the spread and use of doping.

- Since 1983 the Swedish Sports Confederation has collaborated closely with the other Scandinavian countries. There is a Scandinavian anti-doping convention, *Nordiska Antidopingkonventionen*, which is the only multilateral anti-doping agreement in the world that allows unlimited mutual doping tests of each country's athletes.
- Since 1989 the Swedish Sports Confederation is included in the Council of Europe's Anti-Doping Convention which focuses on social measures to combat doping in sport. There is a specific monitoring committee with representatives from the Swedish Sports Confederation and the government that constantly checks on how the convention is being applied.
- Together with the government, the Swedish Sports Confederation also takes part in the activities that derive from UNESCO's anti-doping convention which was agreed in 2007 and which clarifies the responsibility of states for applying the World Anti-Doping Code in their countries.
- Since 2003 the Swedish Sports Confederation has been a member of ANADO, a global society of national anti-doping organizations which is primarily inten-

ded to promote exchanges of information and to harmonize operations.

- The Swedish Sports Confederation monitors the government's work on the issue of doping in other international contexts, not least within the EU and it also co-operates with the Swedish Olympic Committee with regard to matters affecting international anti-doping operations.
- There are Swedish representatives in many international sports associations that include anti-doping activities in their agendas.

The fundamental aim of the Swedish sports movement's international policy is to influence and support the development of internationally harmonized, high quality anti-doping programmes, by its example, its international activities and its collaboration.

## Sport and the EU

Sport is gaining a stronger position within the EU. In the new EU Constitution, sport will appear as a concern for the EU for the first time. The Swedish Sports Confederation supports the description afforded to sport in the new constitution and is positive to the fact that sport will now have a legal fundament within the EU. The Swedish Sports Confederation points to the necessity of giving due consideration to the specific character of sport and its independence. We maintain that sport is, first and foremost, a national issue and that it should be treated with due regard to the principle of subsidiarity.

In the autumn of 2007, a *White Paper on Sport* was issued by the EU which the Swedish Sports Confederation supports. The white paper is an important step towards defining the EU's role in relation to sport and sports organizations. Sport has gained greater recognition at the EU level in recent years and it is now universally accepted that sport plays an important role in society, particularly with regard to health and education as well as in social and cultural

contexts. The white paper is an ambitious and comprehensive study and it contains an extensive action plan to be undertaken during the next five years.

The proposals in the white paper will come into force in 2009.

## Summary

- International collaboration in sport shall follow the goals and policy of the sports movement:

*“Sport shall act as a medium of international contact and shall respect the equal value of all people.”*

- Swedish sport shall have exchanges with other countries regardless of their political system and of whether the country has diplomatic relations with Sweden or not.
- The Swedish sports model shall serve as an example to other countries. And so the sports movement shall take responsibility for supporting sports organizations that are in the process of development.
- Swedish sports policy shall be communicated in international sporting bodies. During the coming years, besides the Swedish sports movement’s democratic ideals, priority will be given to the following areas: sport for children and young people, credibility of sport and the sports movement’s relations with the EU.
- By means of sporting exchanges with other nations at all levels, Swedish sport shall monitor developments in other countries and bring home international impulses.







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