

TECHNICAL REPORT

Rationale and background

Development and competitiveness are closely linked to the collection, systematisation, availability, and use of essential, reliable, accurate, and timely information, including data. The economic and human development of each country depends on the analytical capabilities of its civil service, as well as its reliability and expertise in developing and implementing policies and programs.

Ministries responsible for sport often face challenges in supporting sport in ways that maximize societal benefits, distribute subsidies fairly, and ensure efficient use of resources. Evidence-based decision-making contributes to more transparent and reliable policy decisions, which are based on actual data and analysis. At the same time, data collection and processing are often time- and resource-intensive. Digitalisation can support evidence-based policymaking.

The Peer Learning Activity (PLA) on “**State Sport Information Systems and Evidence-Based Policy-Making**” was organised to share Estonia's experience — where a substantial part of sports policy decisions is based on data, analysis, and information technology through the national sports database, the **Estonian Sports Register**—and to bring together interested EU Member States to exchange good practices and discuss challenges.

The **Estonian Sports Register**, established in 2009 and part of the state information system since 2011, collects and processes data to improve the organisation, management, and support of sport, as well as the practice of sport. Established by the Ministry of Culture and the Estonian Olympic Committee and managed by the Estonian Foundation of Sports Education and Information, the Register operates daily, collecting and analysing data and making it available for decision-making.

Achievement of objectives

The general aim of the PLA was to support EU Member States in implementing digitalisation and evidence-based sports policymaking. The PLA set several concrete objectives, all of which were successfully achieved through well-planned topics, presentations and discussions, and active participation of EU Member States.

Detailed description

(all the different activities carried out, overall assessment of the results of the action (number of participants, targeted audience, people who benefit directly and indirectly of the action...) and proof of their dissemination (communication and information plan), published material (CD, DVD publication, photographs, press releases...)

1. Sharing Estonia's Best Practice

Objective: To share Estonia's best practices in digitalisation in sport, demonstrating how data is collected and used in sports policy-making via the Estonian Sports Register.

Achievement:

Estonia's approach was presented in five dimensions through a moderated high-level conversation and keynote presentations:

1. Estonia as a Digital Country – importance of data-based policymaking and benefits for sport (moderated conversation with *Kersti Kaljulaid, President of the Estonian Olympic Committee and President of the Republic of Estonia 2016-2021*).
2. Estonian Sports Register – Overview of the state sport database and information system (*Kairis Ulp, Head of the Estonian Sports Register*).
3. Practical Use of the Estonian Sports Register for Evidence-based Policy-making:
 - Outputs for the state (*Margus Klaan, Estonian Ministry of Culture*)
 - Outputs for sport organisations (*Raido Mitt, Estonian Ministry of Culture*)
 - Outputs for coaches (*Liisa Roos, Estonian Foundation of Sports Education and Information*)

2. Exchange of Knowledge and Good Practices

Objective: To exchange knowledge, experience, and examples of good practices on state sport information systems and evidence-based sport policy-making.

Achievement:

- The PLA was attended by 56 representatives from 20 countries, including 19 EU Member States – more than expected.
- Four EU Member States and the European Commission Sport Unit presented

their good practices as keynote speakers:

- **Portugal: State of play of sport data and statistics** (*Fábio Silva, Portugese Institute of Sport and Youth*)
- **Croatia: National Information System in Sport** (*Branko Radičević, Ministry of Tourism and Sport*)
- **European Commission: Latest developments in sport statistics** (*Stefano Pintus*)
- **Spain: Digitalisation as a development tool** (*Nicolás Battaglia, Spanish Sports Association*)
- **Finland: Solution to scattered sports data** (*Carita Riutta, Finnish Olympic Committee*)
- **Ten EU Member States provided brief presentations or interventions outlining the current state of their national sports information systems, digitalisation initiatives and/or using data for sports-policy making:**
 - **Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain, the Netherlands**

3. Discussing Challenges and Future Plans

Objective: Discuss challenges and future plans related to state sport information systems and evidence-based policy-making.

Achievement:

- **The PLA included two group discussions:**
 - 1. Good practices and challenges related to digitalisation and sports policymaking**
 - 2. Key takeaways from the PLA**

Main Outcomes:

- **Approximately half of participating EU Member States have already created or are in the process of creating digital sports databases.**
- **Reliable data enables more precise interventions, targeted support, and mapping of sector developments. The trend is shifting from reactive data collection toward proactive analysis.**
- **Challenges identified include legal constraints, unclear concepts, and limited resources.**
- **Main challenges outlined: documentation and legal basis; government decisions**

and support; IT resources availability; development costs; complexity of implementation; management and coordination difficulties; future risks.

- **Main areas of common interest and challenges for further cooperation:**
 1. **Collection and processing of personal data for analysing sport and physical activity habits**
 2. **Ensuring data quality**
 3. **Clarifying the legal basis**

Detailed description

PLA Announcements and Invitations:

- **Announced through Working Party on Sport meetings (including preliminary questionnaire, invitation and registration information, post-event results).**
- **Written invitations were sent on 22 January 2025, including the preliminary programme and objectives. Member States were invited to register by 22 February 2025.**

Preliminary Questionnaire (October 2024):

- **18 countries responded:**
 - **15 expressed interest in participating**
 - **13 offered to present good practices**
 - **11 reported having a national sport information system**
 - **5 expressed interest in presenting as keynote speakers**

Online Meetings with Keynote Speakers:

- **Three online briefings were held to ensure relevance and quality of presentations (7, 9, and 16 May 2025).**

PLA Meeting (20–21 May 2025, Tallinn):

- **Attended by 56 representatives from 20 countries and the European Commission.**
- **Programme included: one moderated interview, nine long and three short keynote presentations, 10 MS interventions, and two group discussions.**

Dissemination of the results:

- **Conclusions published on Ministry of Culture website and social media (6 June 2026)**
- **Presentations shared with participants by email (27 May 2025)**
- **WhatsApp group created for continued communication**

PLA PROGRAMME

State sport information systems & data based policy making

Tallinn, 19th-21st May, 2025

19th May

DAY OF ARRIVAL

19:00-21:00 Buffet dinner at the hotel Park Inn by Radisson Meriton Tallinn

(Toompuiestee 27, 10149 Tallinn, Estonia)

20th May

SESSION I (9:00-13:00)

08:30 Registration

09:00 Official welcome by Ministry of Culture, Mr. Margus Klaan, Head of Sports Department

09:15 Estonia as a digital country, why we need data-based policymaking and how sport

can benefit from it. Moderated conversation with Mrs. Kersti Kaljulaid, President of the

Estonian Olympic Committee and President of the Republic of Estonia 2016-2021

10:00 Family Photo

10:10 Presentation on the latest developments in sport statistics. Mr. Stefano Pintus, Policy Officer, European Commission Sport Unit

10:45 Coffee break

11:00 Estonian Sports Register, the state sport database and information system for Estonian Sport. Mrs. Kairis Ulp, Head of the Estonian Sports Register, Estonian Foundation of Sports Education and Information (Estonia).

12:00 State of Play of Sport Data and Statistics in Portugal. Mr. Fábio Silva, Senior Policy Officer, Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth (Portugal).

12:45 Lunch

SESSION II (14:00 -17:00)

14:00 Functionality of Croatian National Information System in Sport. Mr. Branko Radičević, Head of Service, Ministry of Tourism and Sport (Croatia).

14:30 MS state sports databases and using digitalisation and data for the development of sport and for sport policy making. Short presentations by participating countries.

16:00 Group discussions: MS good practices and challenges related to digitalisation and sport policy making.

19:00 Dinner at Telliskivi Creative Hub (Telliskivi tn 60a, 10412 Tallinn)

21st May

7:00 Joint morning run in the Toompark. Gathering point in the lobby of the hotel.

SESSION III (9:00-13:00)

9:00 Estonian sport information system in practice - using state sport information system for making sport policy decisions. Outputs of state sport information system: for the state – Mr. Margus Klaan, Head of Sports Department, Estonian Ministry of Culture; for sports organisations – Mr. Raido Mitt, Undersecretary for Sports, Estonian Ministry of Culture;

for coaches – Mrs. Liisa Roos, Manager of Coaches Qualifications, Estonian

Foundation of Sports Education and Information.

10:15 Presentations of MS good practices:

From the Court to the Code: Digitalization as a Development Tool in Spanish Sports.

Mr. Nicolás Battaglia, Head of digitalization, Spanish Sports Association (Spain).

Finnish solution to scattered sports data. Mrs. Carita Riutta, Manager of sports federations, partnerships and services of Suomisport, Finnish Olympic Committee (Finland).

11:15 Coffee break

11:30 Group discussion: Main takeaways from the PLA.

12:30 Presentation of summaries of group discussions.

13:00 Conclusions of the PLA:

Mr. Stefano Pintus, Policy Officer, European Commission Sport Unit

Mr. Jarko Koort, Member of the Board/CEO, Estonian Foundation of Sports Education and Information

Mr. Margus Klaan, Head of Sports Department, Estonian Ministry of Culture

13:30 Lunch

14:30 Free time or sightseeing in Tallinn Old Town

Departures

Moderated Interview and Keynote Presentations – Summary

Moderated Interview – Kersti Kaljulaid (Estonia)

Kersti Kaljulaid, President of the Estonian Olympic Committee and former President of the Republic of Estonia shared insights into the development of Estonia’s digital society, highlighting the role of digital governance and data-driven decision-making. Kaljulaid emphasised that evidence-based policy-making, including in the field of sport, increases measurability, reliability and long-term sustainability of public policies.

Stefano Pintus (European Commission, DG EAC)

Stefano Pintus, Policy Officer at the (DG EAC) of the European Commission, presented recent and planned EU-level initiatives aimed at harmonising sport statistics. He underlined the economic and social importance of the sport sector and informed

participants about four upcoming reports focusing on harmonised methodologies, participation in sport, and the social and economic value of sport.

Kairis Ulp (Estonia)

Kairis Ulp, Head of the Estonian Sports Register, provided a comprehensive overview of the structure, core principles and development of the Estonian Sports Register. She explained how the register has supported sport governance in Estonia since 2011 by collecting and processing data on sport organisations, sport schools, coaches, sport facilities, competition results, athlete scholarships, contracts and athlete support. The presentation highlighted the register as a key tool for evidence-based sport policy development in Estonia.

Fábio Silva and Teresa Saraiva (Portugal)

Fábio Silva, Senior Policy Officer at the Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth, together with Teresa Saraiva, presented the Portuguese approach to producing sport statistics within the national statistical system. They explained how different organisations and institutional units cooperate to collect, process and disseminate sport-related data on behalf of the national government.

Branko Radičević (Croatia)

Branko Radičević, Head of Service at the Ministry of Tourism and Sport of Croatia, presented the Croatian National Information System in Sport (NISuS). He demonstrated the system's functionality and structure, which is based on three main registers covering categorised athletes, professional staff (coaches and instructors), and independent sport activities. The presentation illustrated the wide scope of NISuS, including data on athletes, sport organisations, sport facilities, competition results, financial monitoring of public sport programmes, education and qualification processes, inspections, licensing, recognition of foreign qualifications, and participation in health-enhancing physical activity.

Margus Klaan (Estonia)

Margus Klaan, Head of the Sports Department at the Estonian Ministry of Culture, presented the outputs of the Estonian Sports Register for state-level decision-making. He explained how the system supports the Estonian Sport Strategy 2030, including maintaining records of state scholarships, sporting results, allocation of support, recognition of key contributors in sport, and planning the use of sport infrastructure.

Raido Mitt (Estonia)

Raido Mitt, Undersecretary for Sports at the Estonian Ministry of Culture, focused on the use of the Estonian Sports Register for sport organisations. His presentation highlighted the automated calculation of state support to sport federations and the fully digital process from application submission and contract signing to

reporting, demonstrating efficiency and transparency in resource allocation.

Liisa Roos (Estonia)

Liisa Roos, Manager of Coaches Qualifications at the Estonian Foundation of Sports Education and Information, presented the outputs of the system for coaches. She outlined the digitisation of applications, self-service, issuance, and record-keeping of certified and non-certified coaches, illustrating the practical use of the sports register for professional development and administration.

Nicolás Battaglia (Spain)

Nicolás Battaglia, Head of Digitalisation at the Spanish Sports Association, presented “Digitalisation as a Development Tool in Spanish Sports.” He shared the experience how sport and physical activity were included among the ten strategic policies of Spain’s Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan, with a focus on digital tools supporting sport development and management across the country.

Carita Riutta (Finland)

Carita Riutta, Manager of Sports Federations, Partnerships, and Services at Suomisport, Finnish Olympic Committee, introduced the Finnish solution to fragmented sports data. She presented Suomisport as a national digital platform and ecosystem for Finnish sports organisations, centralising sport support allocation and integrating Sports ID for athletes, enhancing data-driven decision-making and operational efficiency.

Short Presentations / Interventions by EU Member States – Summary

Austria

Austria presented the current state of play regarding the development of a national sport facilities database, which is not yet in place and is currently subject to a draft agreement. In addition, Austria introduced an ex-ante economic evaluation tool used for assessing the impact of major sport events.

Belgium

Belgium presented the Vlaanderen (Flanders) approach to sport data, including existing databases on sport, sport infrastructure, coaches’ qualifications, and membership data of sport organisations.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria introduced its new national sport strategy and presented six existing sport registers covering sport federations, sport clubs, united sport clubs, tourist associations, sport facilities, and coaching staff. The presentation also addressed key challenges related to the management and development of these registers.

Finland

Finland presented the Suomisport service as a national digital platform, alongside the national Sports Data Strategy and the SporttiData report (data and impact analysis, as

well as the use of analytics and visualisation tools).

Hungary

Hungary introduced the Hungarian National Sports Information System (NSR), outlining its structure and the processes for registering sport organisations and individuals.

Latvia

Latvia presented the VIIS as a state database used keeping record of for sport schools and their data, along with several related datasets, including a sport infrastructure register, funding principles for state-recognised sport federations, and a database on athletes' functional status maintained by the Latvian Olympic Committee.

Lithuania

Lithuania shared experiences, challenges, and lessons learned from the development of the Lithuanian Sports Register (ŠMSM), which covers sport organisations, sport facilities, athletes, coaches, and referees.

Slovenia

Slovenia provided an overview of the current state of existing sport registers, including registers of sport organisations, sport professionals, elite athletes, accredited training programmes, public sport facilities, and open sport areas.

Spain

Spain presented the success story of the comprehensive digitalisation initiative in the sport sector, supported by the national Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan, that was achieved in good cooperation with Spanish Sports Association.

The initiative covers 8 topics: the digitalisation of sport federations, development of a data warehouse for sport data analysis, implementation of Internet of Things solutions in high-performance centres, digital systems for training optimisation, the creation of an electronic office for anti-doping administration, and the rollout of new IT solutions across sports medicine centres and the study on digitalisation needs for the digitalisation of the sports sector.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands presented its national system for monitoring key indicators of sport and physical activity, consisting of 25 indicators and supported by a broad network of data and knowledge institutes. The presentation demonstrated how these indicators are used by policymakers to inform sport and physical activity policies.

European added value / Relevance towards the strategic issues related to the EU Programme

(describe how the project contributed to the development and/or implementation of the European policy)

By bringing together representatives of 19 EU Member States, the PLA “State sport information systems & data based policy making” contributed to the implementation of the **EU Sport Work Plan 2024–2027** on its two key themes 1) “Innovation and digitalisation” and 2) “Policymaking and investments in sport”.

The Peer Learning Activity delivered clear European added value for participating EU Member States and beyond by:

- **Introducing an Innovative Topic:** For the first time, EU Member States jointly explored the topic of state sport information systems and their role in evidence-based sport policy-making. This shared focus enabled the exchange of good practices and the discussion of common challenges, fostering mutual learning across borders.
- **Identifying Common Interests and Challenges:** The PLA highlighted key areas of shared concern, including the collection and processing of personal data, ensuring data quality, and clarifying the legal framework. This provides a common basis for possible coordinated efforts and harmonised approaches among Member States.
- **Establishing a Network for Future Cooperation:** The PLA created an expert network to strengthen cooperation among EU Member States, supporting effective use of sport data and enhancing its social and economic impact at the European level.