

(SP) PORTS IN EUROPEAN METROPOLREGIONS – A NEW CHALLENGE FOR SPORT MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

The European Union decided to be a Europe of Regions. The political levels extend from local over regional to national and European level. It is not the case that states or nations have no more relevance, but the importance of living spaces below these is recognized by that understanding. Sport Organisations (European-wide, and in Germany, too) have answered these developments on different ways.

Methods

Our study started in 2000 with questionnaires in one region only. We tried to analyse the importance of sports offers within the Rhine-Neckar-Region in Germany (Trosien & Fronk, 2003). One of the most difficult things was that the region is a historical combination of different parts of three Federal States today. So, we had to follow the vertical sports structures (see Fig. 1). But a more important decision was that we analysed the economical relevance of sports activities inside that region, and we compared our results with studies from other regions in Germany. That comparison could show that the meaning of the term “region” differs. Some think of the borders of bigger cities, some add bigger cities with their suburbs, some use the term equal to states or districts. New developments show the political decision for MetropolRegions (see www.eurometrex.org). So, we decided to discuss sports within MetropolRegions only, but with a European comparison and perspective. Our further study is going the way to ask selected MetropolRegions for their material (statistical and in the sports fields).

Results

The first and decisive question is about the regional character of the MetropolRegions. We could find three different types (see below). The second finding is that a lot of the analysed MetropolRegions have no committees or cooperation for sports! In Germany the Rhine-Ruhr-Region (with Dortmund), Rhine-Main-Region (with Frankfurt), Rhine-Neckar-Region (with Heidelberg), and Stuttgart-Region also have common instruments, but in different distinctions. The other eight MetropolRegions in Germany have more or less no institutional sports cooperation (see Trosien, 2005b). In Great Britain, for example, the answer leads to the coincidence of the regional understanding with the sports regional bodies: Except for London! There, we found ASDiL – Association for Sports Development in London!

Discussion

Our analysis shows the different use of sports within the selected MetropolRegions. So, the SportsMetropolRegion Rhine-Neckar in Germany combines all partners with sports offers within one organisation/association (see Fig. 1); the SportsMetropolRegion Rhine-Main in Germany built a company with (one) sports association and some sports companies, only

that means: without the municipalities and their sports support. So, SportsMetropol Region Rhine-Neckar could be interested in Sports Business in Mass Sports and Top-Level-Sports by joining all Sports Actors and SportsMetropolRegion Rhine-Main could be interested in getting “Light Houses”, first. The view in the work of these two MetropolRegions will show special strategies and decisions with, behind these, consequences for sport management. There are some important findings and tendencies, which lead to more regional cooperation for the aims:

1. To compete for global sport events for a world-wide image of a successful region.
2. For this reason a lot of sports change in constitution (from association to

corporation), in location (going from villages to cities or MetropolRegions), and in management (from voluntary work to business) (see Trosien 2005a).

3. These changes have wide range for the MetropolRegions: They need new types of arenas and stadia, which are followed by important sport events (we will show for the selected European MetropolRegions, that most have Football Top League-Clubs, most compete even for Olympic Games ...).

4. These changes make it necessary to have new forms of cooperation (see the discussion and the decisions of some of the MetropolRegions above).

The discrepancies between vertical (traditional) sports structures and (modern) horizontal work are not principal, but gradual from this point of view. Regional Sports Bodies do not substitute, but are additional.

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	Sports Associations in Germany 222.897 (2003)	
Sports Support of Federal Government of Germany	German Olympic Sports Confederation + National Sports Federations	Sports Federations for profit orientated Sports Corporations
Sports Support of the 16 States in Germany	16 States Sports Councils + Sports Districts	Federations or Corporations for profit orientated Sports Corporations
Sports Association of the Metropolregion Rhine Neckar		
Sports Support of each municipality or city in the Region	2.900 Sports Associations in the Region	Sports Firms, Enterprises, Companies, Corporations, Agencies, Studios in the Region
Fig. 1: Sports in Germany with its vertical structures and the example of one horizontal working regional sports body		