



Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

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European Commission
Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth
Mrs A. Vassiliou
B - 1049 Bruxelles / Brussel

Date **23 MAART 2010**

Dear Mrs Vassiliou,

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you with your appointment as Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth. I wish you a lot of success in carrying out your responsibilities in the area of sport. I look forward to constructive cooperation with you and your staff.

You have entered the European sport arena at a significant moment in time. With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the position of sport in Europe has changed profoundly. Article 165 provides the European Commission and the European Parliament with a greater competence in the field of sport and as a consequence, the visibility of sport in the EU will increase enormously. Furthermore, the EU can provide opportunities *and* safeguards for sport. It is important that the responsible Commissioner is fully aware of the importance of sport for society and of the specificity of sport. I am convinced that in this respect you are the right woman in the right place!

The societal role of sport is the foundation of Dutch policies in this area. Sport has a positive influence on a lot of other social areas like health, education and community-building. But sport as such is important as well. Within its own structures, sport provides participants and spectators a lot of joy and satisfaction and a feeling of belonging. These values of sport shouldn't be made submissive to the economic dimension of Europe. The specificity of sport needs to be recognized and safeguarded. It's not always sufficiently clear to sports organisations whether sports rules are consistent with Community law. Professional sport in particular needs a stable and predictable legal framework. For instance in the field of sustainable financing, intellectual property rights, the mobility of sports people and questions regarding team compositions. We have to make use of dialogue to encourage stakeholders in sport to shoulder their responsibilities in order to take full advantage of the societal value of sport and to ensure good governance in the sector.

It will be interesting to see in which way these issues can be implemented in a communication about sport and the forthcoming action plan in the field of sport.

Yours sincerely,

Ab Klink
Minister of Health,
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Our reference

DMO/SSO-2988897

Enclosure(s)

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Your reference

All correspondence addressed to the postal address quoting date and reference of this letter.