

VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT – PORTUGAL

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1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

1.1 Tradition and contextual background

Sport is mentioned in the Portuguese constitution. It grants citizens both a social and a cultural right to sporting activity and a specific legal entitlement to partake in sport. Since 1990, the sport policy goals and role distribution between the government and sport organisations have also been regulated by a Law on Sport. Honorary functions and private initiative are acknowledged as the hallmarks of sport. As such, clubs and federations constitute the basis for organising sport. Nonetheless, the basic responsibility for accomplishing objectives in sport falls on the state.

According to Marivoet, S. (2001), around 2.1 million Portuguese citizens are members of at least one sport club. This seems a fair number even for the present time, particularly due to the recent increase in the number of members of major professional football clubs. This puts Portugal in equal terms with most Member States when considering the number of club members as a proportion of total population (more or less 20%).

1.2 Definitions

The Law n.º 71/98, of November 3, establishes the legal framework for all volunteering activities in Portugal. This Law, in its Article 2nd, defines volunteering as:

«Volunteering is a set of measures of social and community benefit selflessly undertaken by individuals on projects, programs and other forms of assistance to citizens, families and the community developed with non profit intent by public or private institutions.»

Within the specific scope of Sport, there was once a specific definition of Sport Volunteering. The Law 30/2004, of July 21st, designated “Lei de Bases do Desporto”¹, defined, in its article 45, volunteering in sport as the ***set of actions of social and community interest undertaken with non profit intent and for the good of sport as a vehicle of social solidarity.***

This law was revoked by Law 5/2007, of January 16th, which ignores this previous definition.

¹ “Sports Basis Law” or “Sports Act”.

1.3 **Number and profile of volunteers in sport**

There is no reliable data available on the number of volunteers in sport. Estimates provided by existing studies show important variations.

Research from the European Council puts the number of volunteers in sport clubs around **200,000** in total. Melo de Carvalho (1997) estimated that 120,000 sport volunteers were administrators.

Total number of volunteers in Portuguese sport clubs would be, according to Marivoet, S. (2001) around 828,000. The same study presents an interesting ratio combining the number of sport club members with volunteers in those organisations. In that respect, Portugal and Finland are countries where this ratio is above 35% (around 35% for Portugal and 38% for Finland). The next country is Holland but with a result of only 21%.

1.4 **Number and types of sport organisations engaging volunteers**

According to Instituto do Desporto ([IDP](#)), there are 64 national sport federations with the “sport public utility” status.

Around half a million people are organised privately in around **10,000 clubs**, most of which are multi-sports clubs. The clubs constitute the regional sport federations and the 64 national sport federations. A national umbrella organisation has only been in place since the Portuguese Sport Federation was set up in 1993, although not all federations belong to it. The federations, including those representing non-Olympic sports disciplines are, however, also organised within the General Assembly of Federations (AGF - Assembleia Geral das Federações) that is linked to the National Olympic Committee (COP).

Currently there are 64 sport federations linked to the COP as ordinary members, of which 30 comprise Olympic sports (such as athletics, basketball, fencing, judo, skiing, swimming or wrestling) and 34 supervise non-Olympic sports (such as autosport, chess, golf, roller skating or surfing).

Share of volunteers and paid staff in the sport sector

Volunteers would account for around 90% of total staff in the sport sector.²

1.5 **Main voluntary activities**

Level of volunteering in different sport segments

The level of volunteering is higher in the non-professional sport segment.

Level of volunteering in different sport disciplines

Football is the most popular and practised sport in Portugal. Other than football, many other professional or semi-professional well organized sport competitions take place every season in Portugal, including basketball, swimming, athletics, tennis, gymnastics, futsal, rink hockey, team handball, volleyball, and rugby union championships among the hundreds of sports played in this country.

Type of activities carried out by volunteers

Volunteering activities can be organised in two major categories: Administration/Management and Coaching.

² Interview with IDP

Sport segments, disciplines and type of activity are not the main variables responsible for the variation in the number of volunteers in sport. Age intervals and competition level appear to be much more relevant: For example, in the same Club and for the same sport discipline, if you consider juvenile or junior teams, it is highly probable that coaches are volunteers, but in the senior level of competition, it is much more likely that the coach will be a paid professional.

2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

2.1 Main public bodies and other organisations involved in volunteering in sport

The **Instituto do Desporto** (IDP) is the main public body responsible in terms of sport policy. IDP depends directly from the Council of Ministers. The State Secretary for Youth and Sport has delegated powers from the Ministry.

The Portuguese sport system also has a **National Sports Council** (CSD - Conselho Superior do Desporto) as a consultative body.

The **Olympic Committee of Portugal** (Comité Olímpico de Portugal - COP) is a non-profit organisation of public utility, which serves as the National Olympic Committee (NOC) for Portugal. It was founded in 1909, to ensure a timely, methodical and state-sponsored participation at the Games of the V Olympiad, in Stockholm. Thus, it was the 13th nation to join the Olympic Movement.

As a NOC, its responsibilities include the setup and management of a delegation for the Olympic Games, and fundraising to support Olympic-related sports development programmes, by cooperation with public and private entities. 64 national sport federations are assembled under the COP's wing as members with voting power. This close relationship with the federations helps carrying their interests close to the government and official organisations, and ensures their active and decisive intervention in the committee's internal affairs.

According to the statutes approved on the Plenary Assembly of May 7, 1998, the COP's main objectives include:

- Spread, develop and defend the Olympic Movement and sport in general, in compliance with the Olympic Charter;
- Promote values such as a character-building, health, environment protection and social integration;
- Take measures regarding the elimination of any sort of discrimination by sexual, race or religious grounds in the practice of sport and in the managing bodies;
- Represent the national sport federations in negotiations with the government and official organisms, on the matter of their attributions;
- Support the training of sport agents.

2.2 Policies

The Programme of the XVIII Constitutional Government, recently elected, from the Socialist Party (due to stay in office until 2013) mentions volunteering in Youth Policy and Sport Policy. In the first case, the Programme asserts that youth volunteering programmes should continue to be promoted and widened. Concerning specifically volunteering in sport, the

government sets as its goal to «Promote and valorise volunteering in sport, and continue the work developed within the scope of the [National Action Plan for Social Inclusion](#) (NAP).

These statements can be considered a positive sign concerning volunteering in general and in sport in particular. The NAP has now been integrated in the new programmes funded under the European Social Fund. Previously NAP was clearly focused on volunteering for the healthcare sector, particularly to support the elderly.

2.3 Programmes

From 2000 to 2004 the Portugal Sport Institute implemented a National Training Program for Volunteer Sport Administrators with the cooperation of local authorities and clubs/associations.

The costs of this program were split between sport national authorities (70%), local authorities or clubs/associations (20%) and volunteer sport administrators (10%).

Except for this small initiative, specific programmes focused on volunteering in sport have not been implemented, as such, in the country. This is quite understandable, since Portugal has not defined yet a national strategy for volunteering in sport. Once this is done (the need for this strategy is already acknowledged at political level), programmes will be set up to operationalise this strategy.

3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

3.1 General legal framework

Sport is mentioned in the Portuguese constitution. It grants citizens both a social and a cultural right to sporting activity and a specific legal entitlement to partake in sport. Since 1990, the sport policy goals and role distribution between the government and sport organisations have also been regulated by a Law on Sport. As such, clubs and federations constitute the basis for organising sport. Nonetheless, the basic responsibility for accomplishing objectives in sport falls on the state.

Under this explicit sport legislation, financial support is legally regulated.

Law No. 71/98 establishes the overall legal framework for volunteering in the country. To understand the full legal scope of volunteering in the sport sector, one must also consider the general legal framework of sport, namely Law No. 5/2007 which defines the legal framework for Physical activity and Sport.

3.2 Legal framework for individual volunteers in sport

In addition to the legislation regulating volunteering in general, the following applies specifically to volunteering in sport and:

- Decree-Law no. 267/95 – Establishes the regimen of support for volunteer sport administrators.
- Law no. 20/2004 – Establishes the status for the volunteer association administrators.

The fact that only administrators are targeted by this legislation is quite significant. It means that management of sport sector organisations rely almost entirely on the voluntary work of

administrators. On the other hand, there is no specific legislation for any other kind of voluntary work which must be, in legal terms, understood under the general law on volunteering.

3.3 Legal framework for sport organisations engaging volunteers

Decree-Law No. 144/93 establishes a very important concept for major sport organisations, namely sport federations: “**sport public utility**”.

This is very significant, since this status of “sport public utility” is mandatory to be eligible to receive public funding. The 64 sport federations mentioned previously have all obtained this legal status.

4 ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

4.1 Public financing of volunteering in sport

With the exception of some major professional sport activities, the sport sector in Portugal depends mostly on the state in financial terms. This is true for all sport activities and, of course, for volunteering.

In many cases, federations, associations and clubs would not be able to survive without state support.

4.2 Other support schemes and benefits

Funding collected from social games is transferred to IDP which then distributes this funding to federations. Associations and clubs collect funding from respective federations.

Special benefits granted to sport organisations are related to their legal status as private non profit associations, which is not specific to the sport sector. Particularly in what concerns sport administrators (as mentioned previously) there is a general discontent towards the current legislation due to the fact that it lacks clear and significant benefits for voluntary work.

4.3 Private financing and support schemes

Private financing assumes two different shapes: sponsorship and patronage (philanthropy).

Sponsorship is a relevant source of funding for many sport organisations at all levels (federations, associations, clubs, etc.). Its legal framework is the same as in any other sector of the economy.

Patronage is regulated under a specific legal framework, although not specific to the sport sector. Law No. 53A/2006 defines “Mecenato”, which is basically a donation from any individual or organisation to support the activity of any public or private entity acting predominantly in social, cultural, environmental, sport or educational areas.

4.4 Specific issues: state aid, public service and general interest

No data available.

4.5 Economic value of volunteering in sport

According to the “[Confederação do Desporto de Portugal](#)” (2001), referring to data from the European Council, volunteers would contribute with a total of 3.1 million working hours dedicated to sport in Portugal.

This organisation also estimated that the economic value of volunteering in sport for Portugal would be, in 2001, around **65 million EUR**. This value was obtained considering 120.000 volunteers, 5 hours of voluntary work per week during 45 weeks in a year, generating a total of **27 million hours of work**. Then, the minimum wage (2.39 € per hour in 2001) was used as a benchmark to obtain the total value of voluntary work. This would be the economic value of volunteering in Sport by administrators.

In an effort to update these figures to the latest available data, the following assumptions have been made:

Number of volunteer sport administrators:	120.000
Number of other volunteers in sport:	80.000
Minimum wage 2009 (EUR)	450
Minimum wage 2009 (EUR per hour)	3.03
Number of hours of voluntary work per week (sport administrators):	4
Number of working weeks in a year:	48
Total hours of voluntary work per year (sport administrators):	23.040.000
Economic value per year (sport administrators) EUR:	69.784.615
Number of hours of voluntary work per week (non administrators):	1
Number of working weeks in a year:	48
Total hours of voluntary work per year (non administrators):	3.840.000
Economic value per year (non sport administrators) EUR:	11.630.769
Total economic value per year EUR:	81.415.384

To better understand the dimension and meaning of this economic value, one can compare it with the overall budget of IDP for 2009 which is 81.6 million EUR.

5 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSION OF VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

5.1 Key benefits of volunteering for sport volunteers, the community and direct beneficiaries

The organisation of the **Euro 2004** in Portugal illustrates the importance of volunteers for major sport events which would not have been possible without an army of volunteers that worked throughout the event to keep everything running smoothly.

From the team bus drivers to teenagers escorting fans to their seats, 4.600 volunteers were involved in the Euro 2004 – including the hospitality teams, anti-doping units, stadium helpers and media assistants. The whole process began two years before when the Euro 2004 organisation in conjunction with the Portuguese Public Institute for Youth requested applications for helpers.

The ability to speak at least one foreign language was required and more than 9,000 people applied. Many wanted to help in an area they want to adopt as a future career. Some were motivated by the chance to watch games and many out of a pride in their country and a desire to help Euro 2004 be a success in the eyes of the world.

For the selected candidates - aged between 15 and 72 - a week's basic training followed at which they were instructed in everything from first aid to their precise role. At the end they received a special watch, a diploma and a commemorative coin.

This major international event and other similar events that have taken place in Portugal over the last few years should not be considered as the “rule” but rather the “exception” when trying to understand the volunteering phenomenon in the country. Indeed, the number of volunteers in sport is thought to be decreasing. Youth are not attracted to daily voluntary work in sport as it lacks social recognition and media coverage.

5.2 Factors that motivate individuals to volunteer in sport

Motivations can be organised around two different kind of voluntary work in the sport sector: major national and international events and daily work in sport organisations.

Media dedicate great attention and coverage to major sport events that take place in Portugal. This is even more so when these events concern the more popular sport disciplines in the country (football, futsal, motorsports, etc.). This makes these events very attractive to youth and relatively easy to implement as, in many cases, supply is greater than demand.

In contrast with these more self-centred motivations, daily work in sport organisations can only be undertaken on a voluntary basis with a totally different set of motivations and values. Solidarity, sense of community, altruism, must be valued by the individual to embrace this kind of activities.

One could assume that sport administration could appeal to youth due to a relative sense of “influence” inherent to this kind of work, but this is hindered by the resistance to change from current administrators and the lack of clear benefits for the volunteers.

6 EU POLICIES AND VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

One EU policy area that has affected the sport sector in Portugal is the European legislation related to gambling and the numerous rulings handed down by national courts that deem national gambling regulations /monopolies to be incompatible with Community law.

The Interstate Treaty on Gambling provides for restrictions in the freedom of the movement of capital which need to be clarified by the EJC in the referral proceedings instituted by Portugal. The previous case law of the ECJ dealt mainly with issues relating to the infringement of the freedom to provide services and the freedom of establishment enshrined in the Treaty Establishing the European Community. The sport betting case that has been presented by a Portuguese court also refers to the issue of the compatibility of the gambling monopoly that exists in Portugal with the freedom of the movement of capital. The petitioners in the underlying initial proceedings are the Portuguese football league and a bookmaker belonging to the listed B-Win Group (case C 42/07). The defendant is the non-profit-making monopoly provider who had attempted to have a lucrative sponsorship agreement nullified that had been concluded between the bookmaker and the football league (worth up to EUR 10 million over the next four years). The two contracting partners objected to this, invoking European law and in particular the so-called “fixed-odds” gambling license issued to the bookmaker by the public authorities in Gibraltar. It was argued, by and large, that expanding the Portuguese monopoly to the Internet and hence the sealing off of the market which this resulted in is incompatible with European law.

It is particularly interesting from the national perspective that the ECJ now has to rule on the freedom of the movement of capital (Article 56 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community) in respect of the cross-border provision of sport betting as numerous Member States are restricting or even trying to fully prohibit flows of payments to bookmakers and gambling providers – in accordance with the ideas behind the introduction of the US Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA) (access to banks and local financial services companies), a relevant provision has already been made particularly in the Interstate Treaty on Gambling in Germany which has meanwhile entered into force (Section 9 subsection 1 (4)) which the EU Commission has already construed as problematic.

7 MAIN OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

7.1 Main challenges

A national strategy for volunteering in sport is needed in the short term. The general focus on volunteering is not adequate to the specifics of the sport sector.

Legislation must be revised in order to define clear and significant benefits for sport administrators. Volunteering must be maintained as the rule in sport administration.

Mentalities must change quickly among sport administrators, allowing new administrators and new management practices to come on board. Youth are not attracted to sport administration activities and, simultaneously, senior administrators are not willing to take younger administrators “on board”.

7.2 **Main opportunities**

Portugal would welcome the launch of an EU Programme to support volunteering in sport, provided it would be shaped in order to guarantee equal chances of access to all Member-States, thus preventing that the countries already more “advanced” in this field would be favoured.

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Interview

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