

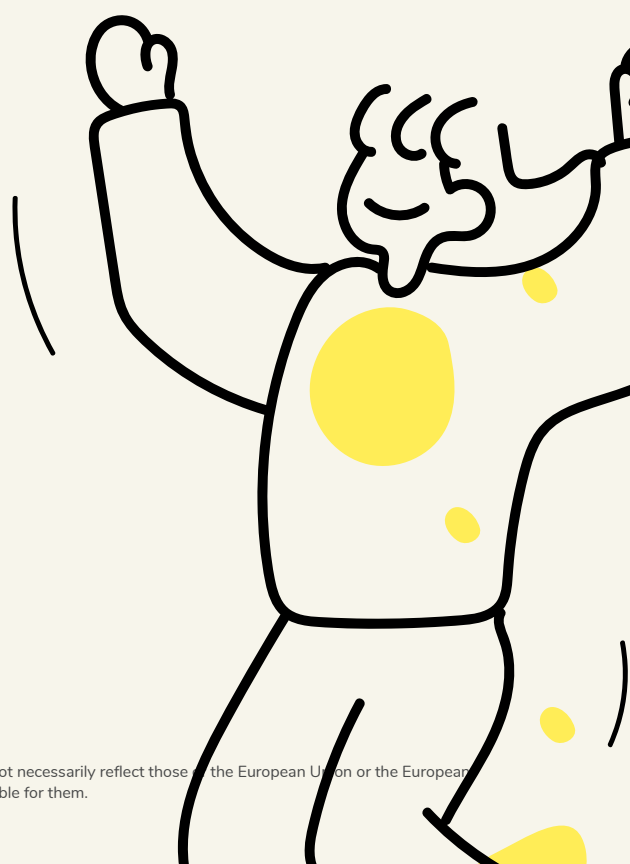


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# ***EUROPEAN YOUTH & SPORT PLATFORM 2025***

## **Conclusions**

June 2025



## 1. Giving Youth a Real Say in Sport

ENGSO Youth's mission is to give Youth a real say in Sport and provide spaces where young people can gather and find joint solutions to our challenges. That is the aim of ENGSO Youth's European Youth & Sport Platform (#EYSP2025).

The European Youth & Sport Platform 2025 took place in Munich, Germany, from the 5th to the 7th of June, 2025. The event was organised by ENGSO Youth in cooperation with ENGSO and German Sports Youth (dsj). The platform gathered around 200 young leaders engaged in the youth and sport sectors from across Europe, to discuss the ethical dilemmas sports innovation might bring to values-based grassroots sports and how we can make sure the technological advancements within the sector work towards an accessible and inclusive environment for everyone, grounded on the respect for EU and sport values.

The EYSP 2025 engaged young people from youth and sport organisations in workshops and discussion groups to give participants the chance to actively contribute to the recommendations put forward in this document. It allowed them to voice their opinions and exchange ideas about the current issues and challenges faced in light of the increasing technological advancements seen in the sport sector.

The present document puts forward the voices and ideas of EYSP participants in a set of recommendations to be addressed to decision-makers and youth and sport stakeholders at all levels. In doing so, it aims to further inform and prompt decision-makers to meaningful and effective action when it comes to planning, shaping and executing EU and National Youth and Sport policies.

We strongly encourage the EU, its Member States, and the Youth and Sport Stakeholders to join efforts in addressing the recommendations hereby issued by the young representatives.

## 2. Youth and Sport in a Trending World – Innovation, Ethics and Inclusion in Grassroots Sport

A trending world often refers to the fast-paced, constantly evolving global environment shaped by emerging trends such as in sport innovation and technology, media and culture. In a trending world, what is popular, relevant, or influential is in a constant state of change, often driven by digital innovation like Artificial Intelligence (AI), social media, and wearable tech, or influencer and viral trends where individuals, actions and movements gain instant massive attention. In essence, a trending world is dynamic, digital, and driven by rapid change, where people, especially young people, must continually adapt and react/respond to what's new. But how do we cope with it in light of our common values? How do we align it with grassroots sport values?

Sport remains a critical platform for youth development, inclusion, and community-building in an increasingly digital and fast-changing world. Technology is playing an increasingly bigger role in the lives of fans, practitioners and athletes, opening the door for sport organisations to recreate themselves with new, innovative customer and performance experiences, as well as fan and athlete engagement.

Grassroots sport serves as an important foundation for inclusive participation, youth engagement, and community cohesion, promoting not just physical activity but also active lifestyles, mental health and wellbeing, and lifelong skills and values such as fairness, respect, teamwork, and solidarity. As technological innovations enter the sports landscape with the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, high-performance equipment and tracking tools, virtual reality and esports, there is a growing concern that these advancements may create divides between those with access and those with difficult access to sport, potentially undermining the inclusive purpose of grassroots sport.

Commercial and data-driven sports technologies may conflict with the ethical framework that underpins EU grassroots sports. As such, it remains vital to ensure that innovation serves to enhance – not compromise – the values on which community sport is built.

As innovation accelerates in the sports sector through technology, data analytics, virtual experiences, and commercialisation, it raises important ethical questions, particularly for values-based grassroots sport. The EYSP25 explored the challenges and opportunities that

might come with sports innovation in light of the core values of inclusion, accessibility, integrity, and respect, as espoused by the European Union and the broader sport movement.

For that matter, participants explored and proposed recommendations for the different ethical dilemmas sport innovation and technological advancements might bring to grassroots sport through three main topics:

1. Data-driven Sport Marketing - A solution for sport adjustment to the trending world?
2. Does Sport Look Like a TV Series? Let's talk. Mental health in modern (sport) societies
3. Does Sport Technology Strive for Sustainability or Results?

## Data-Driven Sport Marketing

In today's competitive sports environment, data analytics and emerging technologies have become an integral part in enhancing athlete performance, injury prevention, fan engagement, and overall sports management. The fusion of sports, data, technology and digital influencing is revolutionising the industry by offering data-driven insights that enable teams, coaches, and stakeholders to make informed decisions and step up their game with incredible results, but also informing and setting trends across digital platforms with real-life impacts.

The overall topic of "Data-Driven Sport Marketing" was further discussed in two parallel sessions, each one of them exploring different aspects of this matter, namely:

1. **Sportfluencers or why do we collect followers in Sport?**
2. **Fan-based database - a chance for sport mainstreaming to everyday life?**

The participants discussed and explored the above-mentioned topics having put forward the following **recommendations**:

**For Sport Clubs:**

- Promote (social) media literacy by organising workshops for young people in sports, athletes, parents and volunteers on how to engage critically with influencer culture, online sport content and sport documentaries;
- Realistic portraits of athletes' lives, sharing both successes and struggles, should be encouraged by sport clubs and federations, therefore ensuring more transparent real content;
- Identify and support volunteers or club members interested in building positive online sport communities.

### **For Sport Federations:**

- Develop and adopt ethical guidelines for sport influencers to ensure transparency, safety, and fairness in marketing and social media representation of sports;
- Most online content depicts an image of sport that is associated with success, often failing to portray the struggles and failures that are normal to the human condition and form part of the journey to success. As such, sport federations should encourage national campaigns to normalise failure as part of the journey to human development towards success and encourage healthy use of social media among youth athletes;
- Invest in media literacy education and training, which should be accessible to sport clubs;
- Offer training in content creation (editing, storytelling, ethical guidelines) to those interested in sports media roles and provide sport clubs with such capacities, including providing resources and best practices to clubs and athletes on managing online harassment and handling digital burnout;
- Ensure data equity by including rural, underrepresented, and disadvantaged communities in data-driven decision-making;
- Develop open-source platforms that can be used by sport clubs with limited resources to access data tools for their development, but also coaches and even institutional partners;
- Use digital tools to track physical activity, deliver motivational content, and build physical literacy. Likewise, these tools should be accessible to sport clubs to ensure they remain updated to trends and need of the population they serve;
- In the spirit of solidarity, make sure sport innovation remains available to lower-income/smaller clubs, therefore allowing them to support and develop their grassroots sport community for the benefit of the whole society.

### **For Institutional Stakeholders:**

- Regulate social media platforms to safeguard children and young people, therefore ensuring transparency and trustworthy sport content;
- Fund media literacy education for educational institutions and sport stakeholders to help young people critically assess and manage the influence of social media and sport-related content;
- Incentivise partnerships across education, sport, youth and health sectors to foster sport innovation for community access and promote ethical data collection and treatment;
- Bridge the digital divide and development gap by funding accessible sport tech solutions tailored for underrepresented youth;
- Establish EU-wide AI standards/guidelines that prioritise equity, access, and ethical design—especially in youth and community sport;
- Support cross-national AI ethics boards to provide guidance on responsible tech development and implementation;
- Support EU-wide training and capacity building on sport innovation and data collection and treatment according to existing EU legislation. Likewise, whilst participants asserted the need for having updated and inclusive data collection (ensuring fair representation of all groups), it is also important to balance such need for evidence-based policy with the privacy rights of sport users;
- Support innovations that combine sport and educational content to increase youth engagement.

## **Does Sport Look Like a TV Series? Let's talk. Mental health in modern (sport) societies**

Within the digital transition, sports streaming platforms navigate a complex world where the line between reality and virtual entertainment is increasingly blurred. From competition to real-time scrutiny by fans and media, sports are now often scripted into TV series and documentaries, thus upscaling fan engagement to another level. While this visibility brings opportunities, it also presents challenges related to privacy, mental health, and overall personal

safeguarding from both athletes and viewers between fiction and reality. How do we safeguard youth from the blurred dichotomy of what is fiction and what is real?

The overall topic “Does Sport Look Like a TV Series? Safeguarding Youth from Digital Realities” was further discussed in two parallel sessions, each one of them exploring different aspects of this matter:

- 1. Making People Move - Campaigning for sports and mental health**
- 2. Mental Health is a team sport. How Inclusive Tendems Support Mental Wellbeing in Youth Sports?**

The participants discussed and explored the above-mentioned topics having put forward the following **recommendations**:

**For Sport Clubs:**

- Integrate mental health education into training sessions and club events;
- Develop and implement mental health toolkits including psychological support, reporting mechanisms, and safeguarding officers in order to ensure more comprehensive support systems for young people engaged in sports;
- Raise awareness for and train coaches and volunteers in youth mental health, online safety, and digital habits. Coaches and volunteers can often be seen by role models to young people, as such they should also be supported with all necessary tools to provide the necessary support to youth;
- Foster engagement with parents/families by offering information sessions, community activities and resources for parents and relatives to support mental health of young people through sport. Comprehensive mental health support systems involve several actors and services, both on and off the pitch. Being on the first line, parents and families are often on the first line of support, as such, they should be provided with the necessary information and tools to work together with coaches, volunteers and sport staff for an healthier sporting environment;
- Consider appointing a ‘mental health ambassador’ as a trusted and expert individual in the club to discuss any concerns and provide guidance and orientation. Such ambassador could also serve as contact point and facilitator between young people, families, coaches and volunteers;

- Engage families, especially inactive parents, through child-led motivation and community activities;
- Create inclusive environments for disadvantaged youth, including tailored outreach and support. There is an increasing need to adapt the sport environment and outreach strategies to the needs of disadvantaged youth to make sure everyone feels welcomed and no one is left behind in sports.

#### **For Sport Federations:**

- Create safeguarding frameworks that integrate digital safety, mental health education, and youth well-being policies. This could guide smaller clubs in developing better internal frameworks and procedures to support young people;
- Seek partnerships with schools to tackle mental health, promote collaborative workshops, communication campaigns, and mental health ambassadors;
- Develop staff positions for safeguarding officers to handle misconduct, digital harm, and mental health concerns in sport. Promote a multi-level safeguarding approach, including professional input from psychologists and educators;
- Launch campaigns and develop toolkits to support clubs in mental health and digital literacy efforts;
- Create and promote cross-club exchanges and sharing of good practices. Besides having the necessary resources, clubs could benefit from providing spaces to exchange information and good practices.

#### **For Institutional Stakeholders:**

- Support mental health as a right in youth sport policy, ensuring it is integrated into EU Youth and Sport strategies;
- Fund cross-sector partnerships between schools, healthcare services, civil society organisations and sport organisations to provide accessible and comprehensive mental health services, especially in underserved areas;
- Encourage policy innovation by sharing best practices and providing financial support for experimental pilot projects tackling online harm and mental health in sport;
- Support research on the mental health impact of sports and digital exposure;
- Regulate and collaborate with social media platforms to:
  - Enforce age verification and restrict underage access to risky content;
  - Ensure strict content moderation and background checks for influencers working with youth.



## Does Sport Technology Strive for Sustainability or Results?

While many innovations focus on maximising performance, the possibility to perform different sports around the world, enhancing training efficiency, and delivering competitive advantages, there is a growing push to align these advancements with sustainable practices such as eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient equipment and infrastructures, and digital tools that reduce environmental footprints. How do we balance an approach based on excellence and responsibility, one that prioritises long-term environmental and social impact alongside performance outcomes?

The overall topic “Does Sport Technology Strive for Sustainability or Results?” was further discussed in two parallel sessions, each one of them exploring different aspects of this matter:

### **1. Uniting communities through sport**

### **2. Beyond Europe: Sustainable sport actions with the Global South**

The participants discussed and explored the above-mentioned topics having put forward the following **recommendations**:

#### **For Sport Clubs:**

- Whenever possible, strive to use sustainable equipment and adopt environmentally friendly practices (reusable bottles, reusable/shared training equipment and local transport);
- Donate unused equipment to local communities, with particular emphasis on communities from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds;
- Promote inclusive, low-barrier events such as community runs, night sports, or gamified physical activity formats to broaden engagement. Organise family-inclusive and intergenerational activities (e.g., community games, parent-child events);
- Consider integrating gamification strategies (e.g., activity cards, movement challenges) into training whilst prioritising physical movement;
- Encourage athlete ambassadorship around sustainability and responsible sport participation. Role models are often a driving force for responsible and sustainable actions among young people;

- Promote community service initiatives like clean-ups or charity events connected to sport.

#### **For Sport Federations:**

- Raise awareness for sustainable responsibility in sport events and facilities.
- Incentivise social sustainability (e.g. equipment-sharing programs, community outreach actions and community events) within national club development programmes;
- Develop clear sustainability policies across all sport levels (e.g., carbon footprint, ethical sourcing);
- Provide resources and training for clubs to build inclusive programmes (this can include financial support, training programmes and/or human resources/logistical support);
- Further develop collection of data on underrepresented groups to shape targeted interventions and in due respect for a balanced approach between the need for evidence-based policy and privacy rights;
- Continuously monitor and evaluate youth engagement levels, adjusting programming needs based on feedback and research;
- Partner with schools and civil society organisations working with youth and sustainability to deliver joint awareness campaigns during major sport events.

#### **For Institutional Stakeholders:**

- Consider establishing environmental criteria in public funding for sport infrastructure and events;
- Support cross-border initiatives connecting sustainability, youth sport, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Recognise sport as a human right in EU frameworks, promoting it as a tool for well-being and inclusion;
- Support policy frameworks that redefine sport beyond performance, emphasising community, joy, and cultural relevance;
- Co-create initiatives with partners from the Global South, ensuring local ownership and avoiding top-down approaches;
- Prioritise funding for grassroots programmes over elite infrastructure in international development;
- Create commitments and accountability mechanisms for countries integrating sport into SDG strategies;

- Promote cross-sector cooperation by embedding sport into health, education, and cultural policy domains;
- Seize international sport events as platforms to advocate for inclusive, sustainable sport practices globally, as they provide a significant space with the capacity to bring together actors from all corners of the World to cooperate on and develop the different aspects of sustainability within sports (social, environmental and economic sustainability).

### 3. Good Governance: Youth in Action!

If we are to address good governance in sport, youth participation in sport governance must be an indivisible and undisputable part of it. This claim was issued in the paper of the first EYSP back in 2023 and remains equally relevant today.

Currently, most sport governance decision-making bodies and structures lack effective and meaningful representation of young people, therefore failing to give a voice to the largest segment of their membership base and lagging behind in terms of addressing the challenges faced from the grassroots to the elite level that hinder the development of physically active communities.

During the EYSP25, ENGSO Youth brought together experts from European Institutions and civil society organisations to discuss youth participation in sport governance. Some of the key takeaways are provided below:

#### 1. Create inclusive leadership programmes/activities for youth

- **Action:** Establish or develop inclusive recruitment and mentoring programmes and/or leadership academies targeting underrepresented youth, namely young people from socio-disadvantaged backgrounds and LGBTIQ+ youth.
- **Why:** Many young people, especially from underrepresented groups, feel unsafe or lack confidence in leadership spaces. Young people are skilful, competent and interested, but they need support and mentorship to reach their full potential. As such, proper meaningful inclusion and participation should start early, involve staff and decision-makers and be continuously supported.

## **2. Promote democratic, effective and meaningful youth participation in sport governance**

- **Action:** Implement meaningful youth participation structures in sport governance where young people share real decision-making power with adults, supported by clear democratic processes within organisations.
- **Why:** This shifts youth roles from symbolic to influential, enabling meaningful participation in shaping policies, strategies and overall transparent and representative governance.

## **3. Strengthen networks and knowledge sharing between youth and sport organisations**

- **Action:** Build and support spaces for youth and sport organisations that can facilitate better communication and the sharing of good practices both across countries, sectors and governance levels (European, national, regional, local).
- **Why:** Although strong initiatives, actions and/or programmes exist, they are often siloed due to lack of resources to foster space, human resources and time for more and better cooperation between organisations and sectors.

Now, what has been done regarding youth participation in sport governance since the last EYSP23 and what is up next?

Although the challenge remains - more and better youth participation in sport governance - a couple of steps have been taken to uphold this commitment ENGSO Youth holds since its inception:

- ENGSO Youth membership-based research on youth participation in sports;
- ENGSO Youth Position Paper "[Youth participation in sport organisations: quo vadis?](#)";
- National workshops with member organisations;
- ENGSO Youth International Activity "[Youth in Action](#)";
- ENGSO Youth [EUYOUSPORT Project](#);
- Launch of the [European Youth & Sport Network](#).

### **Upcoming:**

- European-wide study on the state of play of youth participation in sport governance;
- Creation of youth participation mechanisms in Sport Organisations.

## **Acknowledgements**

ENGSO Youth would like to warmly thank all the young representatives who participated in the second edition of the European Youth and Sport Platform as well as all the partners and speakers who contributed to and supported the event.

## Annex

Selection of useful sources and channels on Youth and Sport:

- [United Nations \(UN\) Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)
- [United Nations \(UN\) Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\) Youth Forum](#)
- [United Nations \(UN\) Sport for Climate Action Framework](#)
- [World Health Organisation \(WHO\) / Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\) 2023](#)
- [International Olympic Committee \(IOC\) Young Leaders Programme](#)
- [International Olympic Committee \(IOC\) Strategic Framework on Human Rights](#)
- [European Youth Portal](#)
- [EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027](#)
- [EU Work Plan for Sport 2024-2027](#)
- [European Commission HealthyLifestyle4All Youth Ideas Labs](#)
- [Eurobarometer on Sport and Physical Activity](#)
- [Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy in the European Year of Youth](#)
- [Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy \(2024\)](#)
- [European Sports Charter](#)
- [Council of Europe Resources – Sport](#)
- [Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030](#)
- [Council of Europe Manuals and Handbooks – Youth](#)
- [European Youth Foundation](#)
- [EU – Council of Europe Youth Partnership](#)
- [ENGSO Position Paper on the European Sport Model](#)
- [European Youth Forum – Youth Progress Index](#)
- [ENGSO Youth Manual on Human Rights Education through Sport](#)
- [adidas Foundation Website](#)
- [IGLYO – International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex \(LGBTQI\) Youth & Student Organisation](#)
- [sportanddev – International Platform on Sport and Development](#)
- [Special Olympics](#)
- [ISPO – International Trade Fair for Sports Articles and Sports Fashion](#)



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