



CITIES OF SPORT



2000

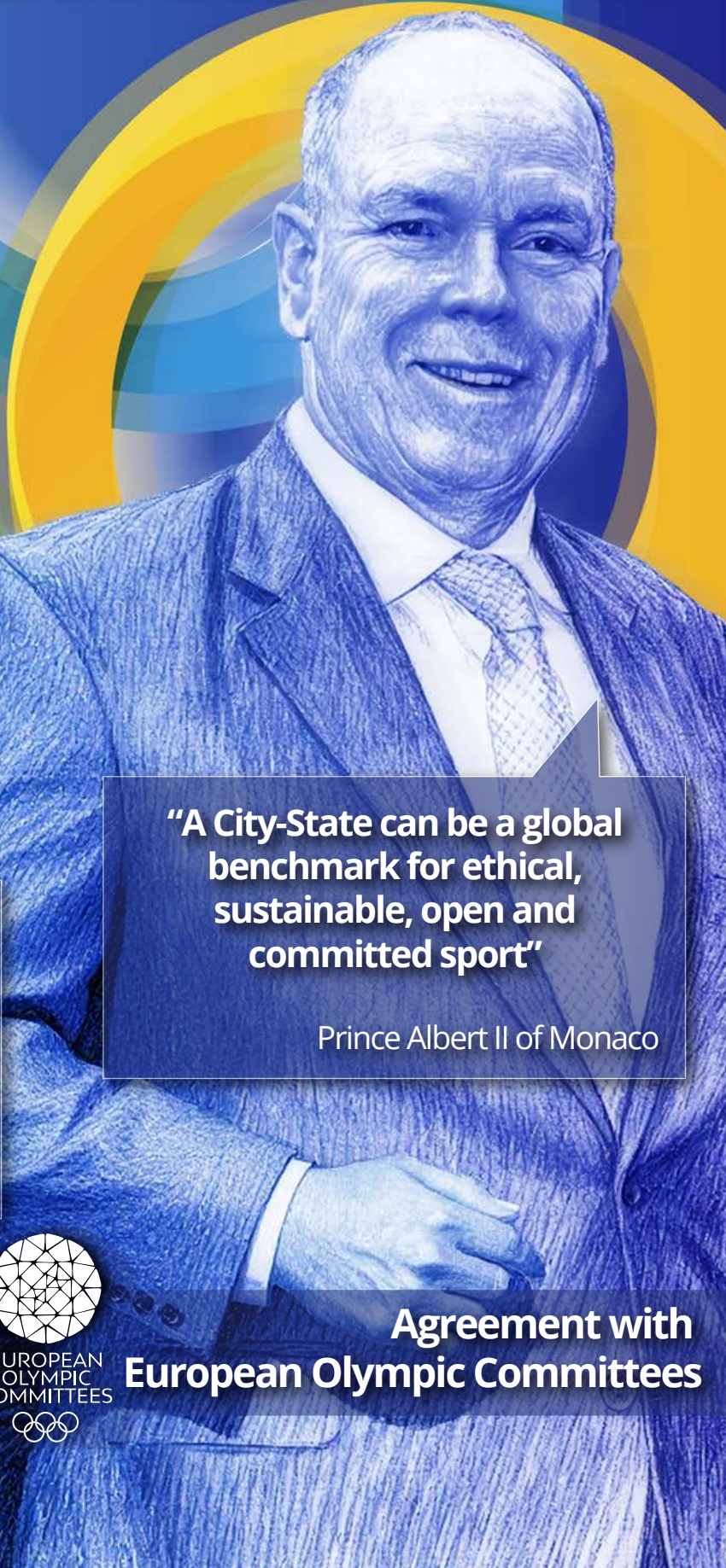
ACES OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

2026



"I am a strong believer that action is needed to increase activity levels of European youth"

Glenn Micallef
European Commissioner for Intergenerational
Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport



"A City-State can be a global benchmark for ethical, sustainable, open and committed sport"

Prince Albert II of Monaco



**Agreement with
European Olympic Committees**

OUR GREENEST AWARD

THE MOST SUSTAINABLE CITY OF SPORT

WHERE SPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY GROW TOGETHER.



Editorial

25 years of service to sport

A testament to vision and impact



The year 2025 has undoubtedly been a historic milestone for ACES. Celebrating our 25th anniversary has allowed us to look back with pride while projecting ourselves even more strongly into the future. It has been a year full of activity, in which we have once again broken the record number of candidacies. This steady growth confirms that our awards are increasingly attractive and enjoy consolidated prestige on the international stage.

We have also signed a new agreement with the European Olympic Committees, an achievement that will further strengthen

the credibility and quality of our project, bringing us even closer to the leading stakeholders of world sport.

Another highlight of the year has been the American Week of Sport, which in its third edition has once again surpassed all expectations of participation. With the active involvement of UNESCO and the OAS, and with Zapopan (Mexico) as the starting and launching point, we have consolidated the project initiated in 2023, establishing it as a continental benchmark.

To conclude this very special 2025, I would like to extend my best wishes to our three great capitals for next year: Baku, as World Capital of Sport; Naples, as European Capital; and Guayaquil, as American Capital. Three cities that symbolize the strength of our movement and that will accompany us in what promises to be an extraordinary 2026.

Let us continue to grow together, year after year, in quality and substance, as we have proudly demonstrated in this 25th anniversary. ★

Gian Francesco Lupattelli
PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER ACES





Contents



06

BAKU: THE WORLD CAPITAL OF SPORT 2026

The city on the shores of the Caspian Sea, renowned for its rich cultural heritage, remarkable architecture and rapid development, is now the World Capital of Sport 2026! The choice reflects the positive impact of Azerbaijan's sports policy on the capital, the successful construction of world-class infrastructure and mass sports initiatives.



12

NAPLES: THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SPORTS 2026

Naples is preparing to shine as European Capital of Sport 2026, and the city's vision goes far beyond hosting a year of events, tells Emanuela Ferrante, Naples' Councillor for Sport. She outlines a comprehensive plan that sees sport as a driver of urban regeneration, social inclusion and economic growth.



18

GUAYAQUIL: AMERICAN CAPITAL OF SPORT 2026

The Ecuadorian city of Guayaquil strengthens its social transformation through sports. We look behind the plans of the administration of mayor Aquiles Alvarez, who has established sports as a true public policy and a strategy for social transformation that involves thousands of citizens.



24

INTERVIEW: EU-COMMISSIONER GLENN MICALLEF

Glenn Micallef, EU-Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport, shares his views on the sport policies of the European Union, the enormous budget increase for Erasmus+ 2028-2034 and the fight against the lack of exercise. "I am a strong believer that action is needed to increase activity levels of European youth", he says.



28

MONACO: THE WORLD CAPITAL OF SPORT 2025

We take a look back at a year rich in emotion and commitment for the Principality of Monaco as World Capital of Sport 2025. In addition, HSH Prince Albert II shares his views on the role of sports in Monaco: "Sports in the Principality skillfully asserts its international influence, because a city-state can be a global benchmark for ethical, sustainable, open, and committed sport."



32

EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN WEEK OF SPORT

They're one of the big highlights in the ACES Cities worldwide: the European Week of Sport and the American Week of Sport. And their success keeps on growing, with record numbers of participants and millions all over the globe experiencing the power and pleasure of sport for all, from people with disability and those dedicated to children, the elderly and the economically weakest groups.

AND FURTHER



Editorial Gian F. Lupattelli, President and Founder ACES



W by ACES Women leading change through sport



ACES and the European Olympic Committees sign important agreement to promote sport and healthy lifestyles across Europe



Global Observatory for Gender Equality & Sport Research and expertise to support development and monitoring of progress towards gender equality in sport



New sustainability recognition The Greenest City of Sport of the Year



Chihuahua The succes of the American Capital of Sport 2025



SESE Sharing the Sporting Excellence of Europe's Regions



Schoolyards4Sport Strengthening sports in schools



EUAPPTIVE Erasmus+ Promoting active and healthy ageing through digital innovation



All the winners of the **ACES International Video Awards 2025** at this year's ceremony in Macerata



ACES Destination Mountain Trentino mountains host European summit on sports and sustainability



ACES Best Practices The first ACES Best Practices Handbook showcasing the experiences of Sports Territories



Looking ahead at **ACES' global vision** and **African expansion**



Societal resilience through sport: how sport and physical activity strengthen individuals, communities and systems Purpose-driven



ACES Events: transform territories through sport



ACES Territories in motion: sport as a key driver for a **new tourism vision**

Staff

Cities of Sport is published by Golazo Media, Vereniging Sport en Gemeenten, and ACES.

Publisher
Michel van Troost
E-mail: michel.vantroost@golazo.com

Editor
Frans Oosterwijk
E-mail: f.oosterwijk@chello.nl

Contributors
Hugo Alonso, Ministry of Youth and Sport Republic of Azerbaijan, Berislav Čizmek, Kreena Govender, Carlos Morán Jalón, André de Jeu, Gian F. Lupattelli, Alessio Di Maio, Angela Melo, Government Communication Department, Principality of Monaco, Lombe

Mwambwa, Adriana Parés, Luca Parmigiani, Sinnple, Yolanda Sosa

Design
www.pageturner.design

Print
Damen Drukkers, Werkendam

Marketing & Sales
Wendy Coppers
Phone: +31 6 155 242 26
E-mail: wendy.coppers@golazo.com

Golazo Media
Opport 21 A, 3011 HT Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 85 820 07 85
E-mail: info@sportsmedia.nl

WORLD CAPITAL OF SPORT '26

BAKU: WORLD CAPITAL OF SPORT 2026

The address of sporting excellence, unity and sustainable development

On the shores of the Caspian Sea, Baku has for centuries been renowned for its rich cultural heritage, remarkable architecture, and rapid development. A city that unites diverse cultures and hosts prestigious events, Baku has now earned a new title – World Capital of Sport 2026! This achievement is no coincidence. The choice reflects the positive impact of Azerbaijan's sports policy on the capital, the successful construction of world-class infrastructure, and the advancement of mass sports initiatives.

MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORT REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Today, our capital is recognized within the global sports community as a reliable host and exemplary organizer. Baku has repeatedly demonstrated its organizational capacity and experience – from the inaugural European Games, the 42nd Chess Olympiad, the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games, and the European Youth Olympic Festival, to UFC Fight Night Baku, Baku EURO 2020, the UEFA Europa League Final, and the annually held Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix, along with numerous World and European Championships

across various disciplines. The successful hosting of international congresses and seminars has further strengthened this reputation.

WORLD-CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE

The prestigious events Baku has hosted, have left behind not only professional experience but also world-class infrastructure. The Baku Olympic Stadium with a capacity of 70,000 spectators, the Baku Aquatics Centre that meets all the international standards, the unique National Gymnastics

Arena, the Baku Shooting Centre, the Sport Palace, the iconic Baku Crystal Hall, volleyball and handball arenas — all stand as striking examples of the country's sporting infrastructure. Moreover, the Ice Rink at the Heydar Aliyev Sports and Concert Complex has repeatedly hosted World Cups, while various sports clubs, stadiums and centers are open to young people and sports enthusiasts alike. From the moment the roar of Formula 1 engines echoes along the Caspian coast each year, Baku's streets become a



Minister of Youth and Sports Farid Gayibov (right) is also an athlete himself.

global showcase of Azerbaijan's sports and tourism identity. The organization of large-scale events is carried out with the special attention and support of the country's leadership, creating the foundation for Baku to fully embody the title of 'World Capital of Sport'.

Minister of Youth and Sports Farid Gayibov evaluates this success as follows: "Undoubtedly, state support for sport is a decisive factor. President of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev, both as Head of State and as a leader of the Olympic Movement, has consistently given

care and attention to sport, turning it into a cornerstone for the country's development and the expansion of mass participation. Today, Baku is known worldwide not only as a cultural and diplomatic hub but also as the 'Capital of Sport'. The title World Capital of Sport 2026 is international recognition of the work done in the field of sport, the unwavering state support, and the priority given to a healthy lifestyle."

SPORT FOR ALL

Baku has become a true sporting hub – a city where citizens enjoy wide opportu-

"Undoubtedly, state support for sport is a decisive factor. President of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev, both as Head of State and as a leader of the Olympic Movement, has consistently given care and attention to sport"

Farid Gayibov (Minister of Youth and Sports)

WORLD CAPITAL OF SPORT '26



Baku Olympic Stadium (left and centre) and the Baku Aquatic Palace (right).

“We want the spirit of sport in 2026 to be felt everywhere – from schools to neighborhoods, from parks to the seaside”

Farid Gayibov (Minister of Youth and Sports)

nities for sports engagement while also hosting Olympic-level international competitions. Here, sport is not confined to stadiums; it has become an inseparable part of everyday life.

The development of sport in Azerbaijan, the promotion of mass participation, and the encouragement of a healthy lifestyle remain central priorities of the state. Within the framework of the World Capital of Sport 2026 project, Baku is preparing a large-scale program under the motto ‘Sport for All’, designed to involve people of all ages and social groups. The city also continues to successfully host international sports conferences and forums. In 2026, as the World Capital of Sport, Baku will welcome the SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit, the



The Baku Olympic Stadium hosted the 2018/2019 Europa League Final (above), and the European Games 2015 (below and right).



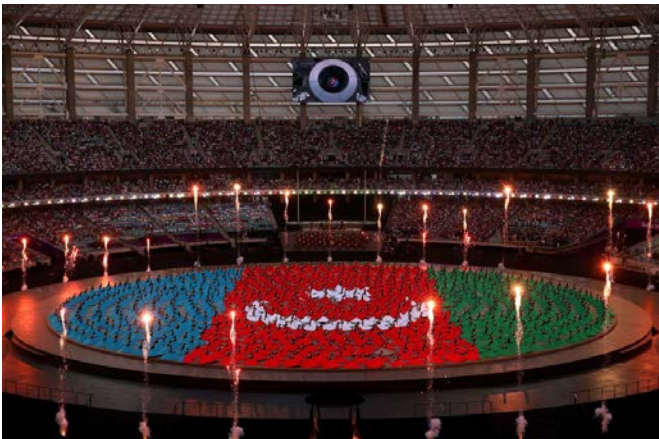
© Trend News Agency



President Aliyev opening the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games.



The Formula 1-spectacle against a historic background.



“Our city, located on the shores of the Caspian Sea, will attract not only sports enthusiasts but also thousands of tourists interested in culture, history, and hospitality”

Farid Gayibov (Minister of Youth and Sports)

WORLD CAPITAL OF SPORT '26



Minister of Youth and Sports Farid Gayibov (left) shakes hands with UFC President and CEO Dana White.

Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix, the World Judo and World Sumo Championships, the U-23 Canoe Sprint and Kayak World Championships, the European Women's Volleyball Championship, and many other prestigious events, alongside diverse mass sports activities.

"We have a long list of priorities – international forums and conferences, mass sports initiatives, and above all, top-level competitions", Minister

Farid Gayibov notes. "Our main goal is to make sport a natural part of the daily life of every resident of Baku. We want the spirit of sport in 2026 to be felt everywhere – from schools to neighborhoods, from parks to the seaside."

TOURISM IMAGE

It is worth noting also that Baku is preparing not only with competition venues, but also with a value-based concept. Particular emphasis is being

placed on the development of grassroots sports in Azerbaijan. Sports facilities established in neighborhoods are increasing accessibility, helping sport become part of daily life. Alongside promoting mass participation, ensuring inclusivity and equal access stands as a fundamental principle. Moreover, supporting women's roles in sports and the growth of women's leagues and competitions is a key priority.

"Baku 2026 will once again prove that sport is a bridge that unites nations, and an endless source of inspiration for young people"

Farid Gayibov (Minister of Youth and Sports)

“Sport has become a key pillar of tourism development”, Farid Gayibov adds. “The title of World Capital of Sport will also contribute to Baku’s international tourism image. Our city, located on the shores of the Caspian Sea, will attract not only sports enthusiasts but also thousands of tourists interested in culture, history, and hospitality. It will further enhance Baku’s appeal among professional athletes and fans

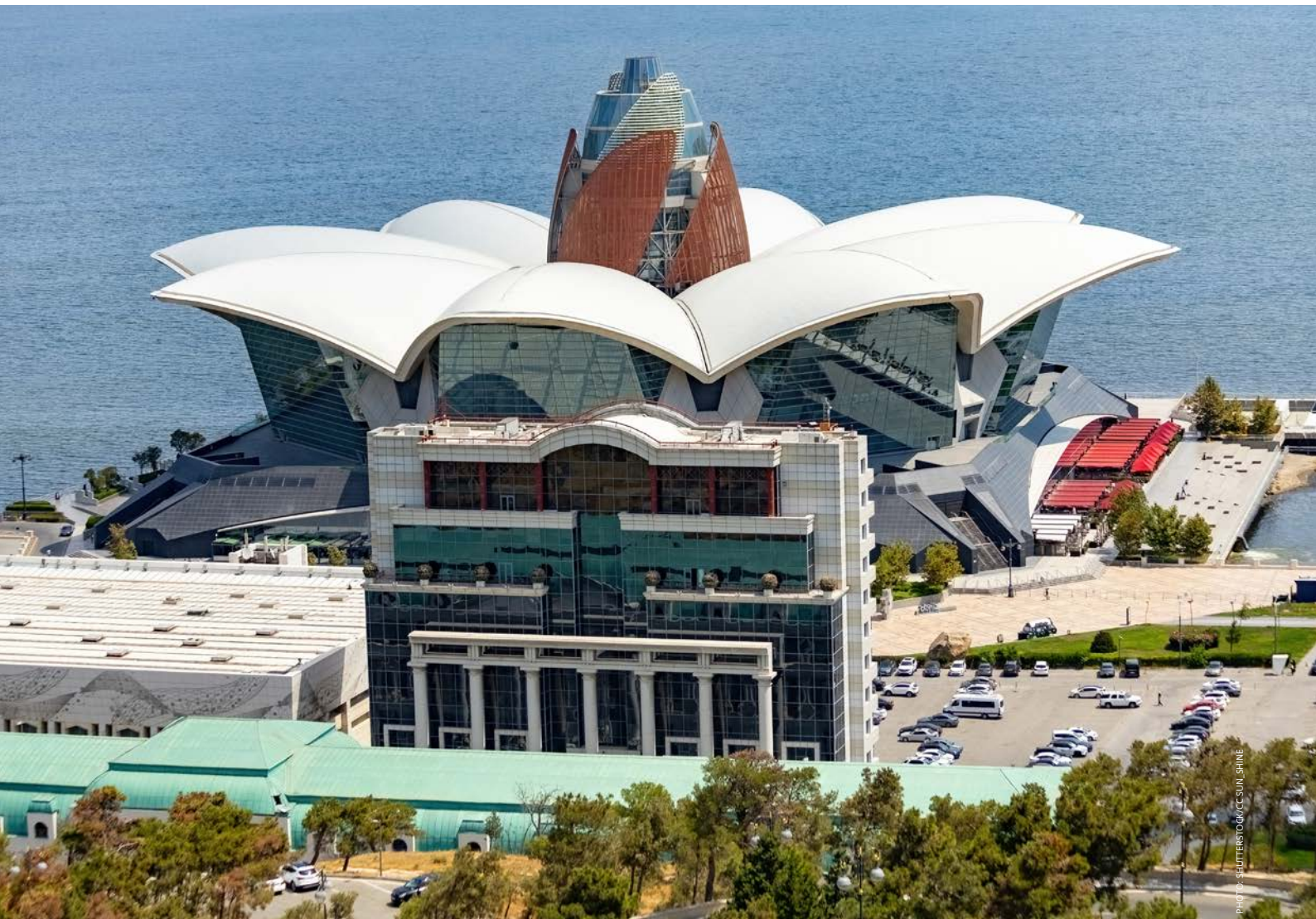
alike. Sport is a source of health and development for future generations, which is why it is crucial to design and implement programs for all age categories. In addition, long-term commitments to environmental responsibility and climate policy will be incorporated into sports events. Infrastructure and competitions will comply with ecological standards, while renowned Azerbaijani athletes will engage in social projects as

responsible citizens. In 2026, as World Capital of Sport, we will unite once again for a greener planet.”

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

For Baku, the status of World Capital of Sport is not limited to a single year of events. It marks an important stage in the long-term roadmap of Azerbaijan’s sports policy. The aim is not only to set new records and win more medals, but also

to promote healthy lifestyles through innovative approaches and to contribute to the all-round development of youth. “We hope to see sport not only in competition arenas but also in every moment of daily life, sharing that great excitement on international stages”, Farid Gayibov concludes. “Baku 2026 will once again prove that sport is a bridge that unites nations, and an endless source of inspiration for young people.



The spectacular Crystal Hall, the indoor arena located on the coast of Baku near National Flag Square.

NAPLES: EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SPORT 2026

Sport as permanent tool for education, health, and civic engagement

Naples is preparing to shine on the international stage as European Capital of Sport 2026, and the city's vision goes far beyond hosting a year of events. In this interview, Emanuela Ferrante, Naples' Councillor for Sport, outlines a comprehensive plan that sees sport as a driver of urban regeneration, social inclusion, and economic growth.

ACES ITALIA

From the creation of neighborhood sports hubs in historically underserved districts, to the renovation of key facilities and the launch of accessible programs for youth and vulnerable groups, the Municipality aims to leave a lasting legacy that transforms Naples into a model city for community-oriented sports. The strategy is designed not only to celebrate a prestigious European title but to make sport a permanent tool for education, health, and civic engagement — ensuring that the benefits of 2026 will be felt well beyond the event itself.

What are the priority projects that the Municipality plans to implement in preparation for the title of European Capital of Sport 2026, and how will the city's peripheral districts be involved?
Emanuela Ferrante: "In preparation for the prestigious title of European Capital of Sport 2026, the Municipality of Naples has defined a comprehensive strategy aimed at making sport a true driver of urban development, social inclusion, and territorial cohesion. The Administration's main goal is not only to celebrate a major international event, but to leave a tangible and lasting legacy for the city and its

communities, starting with the historically most marginalized neighborhoods. At the heart of this initiative is the implementation of a coordinated set of priority projects that address the real needs of citizens. Of particular importance is the creation of a network of neighborhood sports hubs strategically distributed across peripheral areas such as Scampia, Barra, Ponticelli, San Giovanni a Teduccio, Pianura, and Secondigliano. These spaces will be designed as multifunctional, accessible, inclusive, and sustainable hubs, capable of hosting sports, educational,



“The Administration’s main goal is not only to celebrate a major international event, but to leave a tangible and lasting legacy for the city and its communities, starting with the historically most marginalized neighborhoods”

Emanuela Ferrante (Naples’ Councillor for Sport)

and recreational activities, thus responding to the needs of a diverse population often lacking adequate services.”

“At the same time, the Administration has launched a major program for the renovation and safety upgrades of existing facilities, through an investment plan that combines municipal

resources, PNRR funds, and European contributions. “Special attention has also been paid to the school system. In collaboration with the Regional School Office and CONI (Italian National Olympic Committee), physical education programs are being strengthened starting from primary school, with the goal of countering youth sed-

entary lifestyles and promoting healthy living from an early age. Training and professional development programs are also underway for coaches, trainers, and sports operators to build a qualified professional network serving local communities.”

“The Municipal Districts are actively involved in

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SPORT



“Naples does not simply aim to be the European Capital of Sport, but the European Capital of Social and Community Sport”

Emanuela Ferrante (Naples' Councillor for Sport)



Thousands of 'Napolitanos' enjoy a running event in the city's seafront.

the decision-making and organizational process through permanent working groups that will listen to the needs of the area, coordinate interventions, and monitor results. Each neighborhood will thus become an integral part of the official 2026 events calendar.

“Naples does not simply aim to be the European Capital of Sport, but the European Capital of Social and Community Sport. In this vision, sport is understood as a right, an educational tool, a guarantee of legality, and an opportunity for personal and collective empowerment. Through these projects, Naples intends to

turn the 2026 opportunity into a structural lever for the city's equitable development, where sport becomes a right, a tool for active citizenship, and a means of social redemption, especially in historically marginalized districts.”

What specific initiatives is the Municipality planning to encourage sports participation among citizens, particularly young people and the most vulnerable social groups?

“Our goal is to position Naples internationally as a virtuous model of sports promotion as a driver of human and social growth. I would like to recall

that Naples was awarded the title of European Capital of Sport precisely because of the value that this Administration places on sport as a central pillar of social policy.”

“We have implemented programs promoting sports inclusion and accessibility, aimed at involving people with disabilities, young people from economically and socially challenging backgrounds, and migrants. In particular, the Administration has signed a co-management agreement with FIN (Italian Swimming Federation), pursuant to Article 15 of Law no. 241/1990, for

the implementation of the 'Nuota Napoli' project, which involves eight municipal swimming pools. Its objective is to ensure broader and more effective access to swimming for the population. Through this agreement, a National Center of Excellence has been established at the Scandone swimming pool, capable of hosting major national and international events. Special attention is given to citizens in difficult circumstances, who are guaranteed at least 10% of available spots. For students with proven financial hardship, course enrollment will be free, and access for persons with disabilities will also be free of charge. For those belonging to socially vulnerable groups, a minimum 20% reduction on monthly fees will be applied."

"Last year, with Municipal Council Resolution no. 438 of October 17, 2024, we launched new 'sports welfare' policies, promoting free or low-cost activities in collaboration with local sports associations. Special attention is devoted to young people, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, through sports scholarships, dedicated courses, and events introducing them to different sports disciplines. Our goal is to make sport a tool for personal growth and inclusion, with targeted initiatives supporting families as well. "Moreover, our sports programming now includes the annual initiative 'October Sports Festival': an entire

week dedicated to promoting wellness, sports practice, and healthy lifestyles. The initiative offered free sessions of volleyball, padel, zumba, step aerobics, Caribbean dance, pickleball, mini-basketball, and inclusive activities for people with disabilities. Initiatives like this demonstrate the Administration's commitment to ensuring that every citizen, regardless of age, gender, background, or social condition, can access sport as both a right and an opportunity. "Finally, in accordance with our Regulation on the Use of Sports Facilities, every tender for the concession of municipal sports facilities includes social clauses."

Are there investments planned for the renovation and modernization of existing facilities ahead of 2026?

"The Administration is using every available means and resource to align the city's sports infrastructure with European standards. Our commitment is to offer modern, functional facilities that can host European-level events while remaining available to citizens all year round. These interventions represent an investment in

the future of the city and its sporting community."

"The biggest challenge has been finding the funds, which have been lacking for too many years, maintaining the facilities, and carrying out the work without interrupting sports activities while guaranteeing community access. We are particularly proud of having secured the maximum amount of available PNRR funds by presenting two ambitious projects to the Ministry, which involve investments in the

"Enhancing the city's sports infrastructure is one of this Administration's top priorities"

Emanuela Ferrante (Naples' Councillor for Sport)



EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SPORT



most disadvantaged suburban areas, where institutions must reach out through sport to recover struggling families and youth. Thanks to €11,000,000 in funding, we are building a new multifunctional sports facility in Municipality 8 (Piscinola) and renovating one of the city's most important pools, located in Viale Ulisse Prota Giurleo (Ponticelli), closed since the COVID period. Both facilities, along with the Galante pool in Scampia (also closed for many years), will be completed and reopened by 2026."

"Enhancing the city's sports infrastructure is one of this Administration's top priorities: it is our duty to ensure citizens have access not only to efficient, but also safe and healthy sports spaces, with particular attention to removing architectural barriers. "One of the most significant and challenging projects planned to celebrate the title year is the recovery of municipal sports facilities, with an investment of €1,000,000 to be evenly distributed among the 10 Municipalities, aimed at

refurbishing sports fields and school gyms. Through participation in the 'Sport e Periferie' program by the Ministry for Sport and Youth, the Municipality obtained €4,000,000 in funding for the renovation of the Corso Secondigliano pool and the 'Paladennerlein' pool on Via delle Repubbliche Marinare in Barra. "Specifically, the Corso Secondigliano pool project includes structural, functional, and systems safety upgrades for a total of €4,250,000. For the 'Paladennerlein' pool,

"The legacy we hope to leave consists of fully renovated and upgraded sports facilities and a new culture built on passion for sport and awareness of its social and educational benefits"

Emanuela Ferrante (Naples' Councillor for Sport)



€1,421,000 has been allocated for renovations. Both pools will be co-managed with the Italian Swimming Federation, and thanks to their activities, the National Swimming and Water Polo Center established about a year ago at the Scandone pool will expand its excellence into these satellite pools in the city's outer districts. Through the Development and Cohesion Fund, work will also be financed for the renovation of the Bulgarelli pool and the Palastadera, both located in the Poggioreale area and closed for decades. All things considered, we can proudly say that by the end of our mandate, we will have started and/or completed renovations of all the city's facilities!"

"Another ambitious project taking shape is the dream of giving the city a new sports arena: 'AreNapoli', a facility equipped with modern systems powered by renewable energy sources.

The multipurpose venue will be built in the former wholesale fruit market area, near Naples' Business District (Centro Direzionale). The arena, financed entirely by private capital, is expected to be inaugurated by the end of 2026, coinciding with the year Naples will be European Capital of Sport, hosting national and international sports and entertainment events, with a capacity of over 10,000 spectators.

"Finally, work is underway on the Bagnoli Sports Park, which will become a vast open-air sports area, with five-a-side and seven-a-side football fields, volleyball and basketball courts, tennis courts, and athletics tracks."

What economic, tourism, and sports development opportunities will the America's Cup bring to Naples, and how is the city preparing to host such a major event?

"The America's Cup is an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen Naples' reputation as a capital of sport and nautical and water tourism at the international level. This is an international sporting event of the highest prestige – the oldest sailing trophy in the world – capable of attracting the attention of millions of spectators and enthusiasts from all over the globe."

"The city is preparing through a coordinated plan involving institutions, the business community, and local sports organizations, improving infrastructure and services, and promoting excellent hospitality. Our aim is to show the world the vitality and beauty of Naples, turning the America's Cup into a driver of fully sustainable economic, tourism, and sports development."

"The America's Cup will also be an integral part of the path leading to Naples as European Capital of Sport 2026, serving as a catalyst for a broader urban and territorial revitalization strategy, where sport is at the core of public policies for regeneration, inclusion, and sustainable development."

How does the Municipality intend to ensure that the title of European Capital of Sport 2026 leaves a lasting legacy for the sports community and citizens beyond the event itself?

"The greatest challenge will be to turn the event into a long-term opportunity. For this reason, we are defining a legacy

project that includes not only infrastructure interventions but also the creation of stable networks between schools, sports associations, local authorities, and private stakeholders, with the goal of consolidating a widespread and inclusive sports culture.

"To this end, we have adopted the first Regulation for the Use of Municipal and Provincial School Gyms, to guarantee their maximum and efficient use: gyms open also in the afternoon for school sports projects or activities managed by external associations.

"Similarly, we are working on a new Regulation for the Use of Sports Facilities, which will include exemptions from fees and discounts for socially and economically disadvantaged groups, while ensuring competitive rates for those engaged in competitive sports activities.

"The legacy we hope to leave consists of fully renovated and upgraded sports facilities and a new culture built on passion for sport and awareness of its social and educational benefits.

AMERICAN CAPITAL OF SPORT 2026

Guayaquil strengthens its social transformation through sports

The administration of the mayor of the Ecuadorian city of Guayaquil, Aquiles Alvarez, has established sports as a true public policy and a strategy for social transformation that involves thousands of citizens regardless of age, gender, or social status. Today, more than 83,000 citizens of Guayaquil have already benefited from municipal programs that promote training, inclusion, recreation, and the positive use of public spaces and free time, reaffirming Guayaquil as a city that believes in the power of sports to strengthen the social fabric.

CARLOS MORÁN JALÓN (DIRECTOR GENERAL DE DEPORTES GUAYAQUIL)

The sports programs promoted by the City Government have the main objective of creating spaces that allow young people to dream big, while also ensuring that older adults, people with disabilities, and vulnerable communities find in physical activity an opportunity for development and well-being. From neighborhood sports facilities to the organization of international tournaments, Guayaquil presents sports as a driver of social cohesion and civic pride.

TOURNAMENTS THAT MAKE GUAYAQUIL A BREEDING GROUND FOR SPORTS TALENT

The city hosts large-scale events, such as LigaPro Kids,

a tournament that brings together more than 15,000 children and teenagers, becoming a showcase for emerging talent and sparking the interest of trainers from the country's top clubs. Added to this is the traditional Interbarrial de Fútbol, recognized by FIFA as the largest youth tournament in the world, which every year transforms the fields of the Carlos Pérez Perasso sports complex into stages of passion, talent, and dreams come true.

At the same time, Diario El Universo's multidisciplinary interbarrial tournaments have been consolidated as an inclusive sports festival. Its next edition will include 14 disciplines: boxing, athletics,

tennis, chess, basketball, volleyball, and new sports such as baseball and karate, expanding participation opportunities for young people from different sectors of the city.

With the vision of strengthening the social fabric, these initiatives not only train athletes but also promote values of discipline, teamwork, and civic coexistence.

TRAINING SCHOOLS AND COMPREHENSIVE ATHLETE SUPPORT

In alliance with the Junta de Beneficencia de Guayaquil and Club Atlético de Madrid, the Municipality implemented 15 comprehensive soccer schools where children not only train but



Guayaquil offers a variety of sport to its citizens, from chess to cycling.



From neighborhood sports facilities to the organization of international tournaments, Guayaquil presents sports as a driver of social cohesion and civic pride

also receive medical and dental care and uniforms. Added to this is the implementation of Guayaca Sport, an innovative card that guarantees free rides on the Metrovía, local public transportation system, for each athlete and one companion, facilitating their transportation to municipal training sessions and tournaments. With this pioneering policy in the region, Guayaquil removes economic barriers and fully commits to the sports training of its future generations.

SAMANES, EPICENTER OF SPORTS AND INCLUSION

Parque Samanes, with its 89 sports fields, has become the epicenter of sports in Guayaquil. Every weekend it

welcomes more than 16,000 people, serving as a hub for family and community gatherings. There, The Social Project Foundation takes place, a program that provides people with disabilities, reduced mobility, and older adults with adapted activities that enhance their talents. In addition, the park has hosted major events such as the Grand Prix of Motor Racing and mass-impact competitions.

The Abel Jiménez Parra Coliseum, located in the same complex, hosted the first National Ecuavoley League, a tournament that toured 14 cantons of the country and had its grand final in Guayaquil on September 13,

2025, consolidating the city as a reference in traditional and Ecuadorian identity sports.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS THAT PUT GUAYAQUIL ON THE WORLD MAP

Guayaquil, the Pearl of the Pacific, not only promotes local programs but has also hosted prestigious international tournaments. For more than 20 years, the city has hosted the Guayaquil Tennis Challenger, a tournament that grants ATP points and positions the city as a key destination on the world professional tennis calendar.

In baseball, Guayaquil continues to be the heart of this sport in Ecuador. The municipal field run by the Miraflores Baseball

League has hosted major tournaments, such as the Pony League U12 International, as well as local games that keep the passion for this sport alive in the city.

Chess has also had its historic moment: on August 15, 2025, International Master Viktor Bologan transformed the Hemiciclo de la Rotonda into a giant chessboard, playing simultaneous matches against the country's best young talents, merging culture, tourism, and sports in a single setting.

SPORTS, SECURITY, AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

The Municipality has implemented innovative programs that link sports with



From yoga to football, there's hardly a sport you can't practise (or watch) in Guayaquil.

social prevention. Such is the case of martial arts for women, an initiative that teaches self-defense techniques to help prevent physical and sexual assaults. This proposal seeks to empower women, providing them with confidence and tools to face risky situations.

Likewise, Guayaquil has taken a step forward in sustainability with the recycling campaign carried out by Circular EP in the stadiums where first-category matches are played. This action turns every sports event into an opportunity to raise awareness among fans about caring for the environment and proper waste management.

OUTDOOR SPORTS AND ACTIVE TOURISM

The city has also diversified its sports agenda toward active

tourism and extreme sports. Cerro Santa Ana and its 434 steps, one of Guayaquil's tourist icons, has become a venue for Yoga in the Heights at its summit and downhill events, attracting both local athletes and visitors seeking unique experiences in contact with nature and urban heritage.

These activities not only promote a healthy lifestyle but also position Guayaquil as a vibrant city that combines culture, sports, and tourism.

A CITY THAT MAKES SPORTS A PUBLIC POLICY

Each of these programs and events is part of a comprehensive strategy that understands sports as public policy and a tool for social transformation. Under the leadership of Mayor Aquiles Alvarez, Guayaquil has

succeeded in democratizing access to sports, invested in infrastructure, and coordinated efforts with educational, private, and community institutions to build a healthier, safer, and more inclusive city.

This sustained work consolidates the city as a regional

reference and paves the way for historic recognition: the title of American Capital of Sports 2026. With pride, Guayaquil presents itself to the world as a city that sees sports not only as competition but also as a right, a tool for integration, and an opportunity for all its citizens.

With pride, Guayaquil presents itself to the world as a city that sees sports not only as competition but also as a right, a tool for integration, and an opportunity for all its citizens

A personal view by Mayor Aquiles Alvarez

"SPORTS TO BE AT THE HEART OF BUILDING A SAFER, HEALTHIER, AND MORE UNITED CITY"

"Guayaquil's designation as the 2026 American Capital of Sport represents international recognition of the city's long-standing efforts to promote sports as a pillar for rebuilding and strengthening the social fabric", says mayor Aquiles Alvarez. "This honor, awarded for the first time to an Ecuadorian city, places Guayaquil on the regional and global sports map, highlighting its commitment to inclusion, health, and the education of future generations through diverse physical activities."

A sports fan himself, mayor Alvarez is a happy man with the title for his beloved Guayaquil. "Being chosen as the American Capital of Sport shows that Guayaquil has the infrastructure, human talent, and organizational capacity to encourage mass participation across multiple disciplines", he says. "It also reaffirms the city's vision of becoming a sports leader, not only through world-class facilities and events but also by fostering citizenship and creating opportunities through sport."

Mayor Aquiles Alvarez together with children during a school sports event.



“Every sports activity we organize should also serve to promote tourism, strengthen the social fabric, and create real opportunities for our youth”

Mayor Aquiles Alvarez



Mayor Aquiles Alvarez is a sports fan himself too.

What makes you most proud when it comes to sports in the city?

“I am proud of the work we are carrying out alongside the Sports Directorate of the Municipality of Guayaquil, and of seeing how sports have become a unifying space for all Guayaquileños. Through every tournament, competition, and recreational activity, we have shown that sports strengthen our sense of community and have become a cornerstone of public policy.

“One clear example is LigaPro Kids, which brings together more than 15,000 children and young people. We also have the traditional neighborhood football tournaments and the multidisciplinary neighborhood games organized by *Diario El Universo*, which encourage mass participation in various disciplines. Added to this are the football schools run by the Junta de Beneficencia de Guayaquil, with 15 locations and over 7,000 participants, as well as the ecuavoley tournament, a discipline that now has its first national league, in which Guayaquil has hosted major matches.”

“Our city has also become a hub for international events. The visit of chess grandmaster Viktor Bologan turned the Hemicycle of the Rotonda into a historic stage for a simul with the country's best young talents. In tennis, Guayaquil has welcomed world-class players such as Juan Martín del Potro and Gustavo ‘Guga’ Kuerten, and for more than 20 years has hosted the Guayaquil

Challenger, a tournament that awards ATP points and secures the city's place on the global professional tennis calendar. “Guayaquil also runs and trains outdoors, with programs like Ruta Centro and Ruta Urdesa that gather thousands of athletes, and it works out in unique spaces with initiatives such as Yoga en las Alturas, held in the tourist-friendly Cerro Santa Ana. Each of these activities promotes outdoor sports, healthy use of public space, and the building of a healthier city.”

What goals does the city hope to achieve with this title?

“Our goal with this recognition is to continue positioning Guayaquil as a city that embraces sports as a driver of social development. We want to strengthen the programs and projects already promoted by the Municipality, expand their reach, and improve our sports infrastructure to meet the standards our citizens deserve. “Along these lines, our administration has delivered projects that mark a turning point for local sports: the new Reynaldo Quiñónez field, modern padel courts in Urdesa, and the comprehensive renovation of municipal courts that are now safe, renewed, and ready to welcome thousands of residents. These spaces represent not just quality facilities, but also opportunities for children, youth, and adults to find in sports a path toward discipline, inclusion, and community. “The objective is for Guayaquil to become a sports benchmark in the region, not only for



hosting major events but also for innovating with programs that encourage inclusive, large-scale participation. One such initiative is the 'Guayaca Sport' card, which provides free rides on the Metrovía public transport system, the first program of its kind in the country and the region. It allows children and young people in our sports projects to travel easily across the city, reinforcing the vision of a more active, healthier, and connected Guayaquil."

Is the goal mainly to promote sports and healthy living among citizens, or also to position Guayaquil internationally as a sports city?

"Both. First, we want to promote sports and healthy living among our residents by opening spaces and organizing sporting activities in different

parts of the city, because we know that physical activity strengthens discipline, health, and community spirit. At the same time, we want Guayaquil to be recognized internationally as a sports city, one that attracts visitors, hosts major events, generates economic activity, and becomes a point of reference in the region. "The title of 2026 American Capital of Sport allows us to work on both fronts: improving the quality of life of Guayaquil's citizens while also presenting to the world a modern, active, and opportunity-filled city."

What is your personal vision for the activities that will be organized?

"My vision is that every sports activity we organize should also serve to promote tourism, strengthen the social fabric, and create real opportunities



"This title allows us to work on improving the quality of life of Guayaquil's citizens while also presenting to the world a modern, active, and opportunity-filled city"

Mayor Aquiles Alvarez

for our youth. Sports are a powerful tool to prevent crime, as they provide positive alternatives, discipline, and teamwork. Moreover, we want our sports programs to improve both physical and

mental well-being, enhancing the health of all *Guayaquileños*. In short, my vision is for sports to be at the heart of building a safer, healthier, and more united city."

Glenn Micallef, EU-Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport

"I AM A STRONG BELIEVER THAT ACTION IS NEEDED TO INCREASE ACTIVITY LEVELS OF EUROPEAN YOUTH"

Glenn Micallef, EU-Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport, speaks about the sport policies of the EU, the enormous budget increase for Erasmus+ 2028-2034 and the fight against the lack of exercise

FRANS OOSTERWIJK

The current EU Work Plan for Sport focuses on 3 main priorities: integrity and values in sport, socio-economic and sustainable dimensions of sport and participation in sport and health-enhancing physical activity. In July the European Commission proposed a 50% budget increase for Erasmus+ (2028-2034), amounting to a huge budget of €40.8 billion. Will this increase lead to a change of sport policies and does it also imply that partner organisations can count on more (financial) support from EU?

Glenn Micallef: "It is important to keep in mind that the EU Work Plan for Sport is a strategic three-and-a-half-year long framework, adopted by the Sport Ministers from the EU Member States. The current Work Plan will finish at the end of 2027, coinciding with the start of the next EU long-term budget, and notably with the new Erasmus+ programme. It is premature to say what the priorities of the new EU Work Plan for Sport beyond 2027 will be. These preparations and negotiations will take place in 2027, led by the Greek Presidency. However, the priorities of the EU Work Plan for Sport should be aligned with the priorities of the Erasmus+



Glenn Micallef, EU-Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport, speaking during the EU Sport Forum 2025 in Kraków, Poland on April 10th, 2025.

“Sport is a real game changer. It plays a key role in people’s everyday life, from improving their physical and mental well-being as well as helping with skills development”

programme in the field of sport to achieve even better impact of our policies on the ground.

“As regards the proposed budget increase and particularly the role of sport in the new Erasmus+ programme, I believe the field has a unique position in advancing social inclusion and cohesion. Sport is a real game changer. It plays a key role in people’s everyday life, from improving their physical and mental well-being as well as helping with skills development.

“It is also an investment in Europe’s competitiveness, innovation capacity and prosperity. The increase in budget will make Erasmus+ more impactful and provide more opportunities to individuals and organisations in the field of education, training, youth and sport.”

Since the motor skills of European youth are deteriorating and participation in sports and physical activity is dropping, isn’t time for an EU-masterplan that promotes health-enhancing physical activity in a more compelling way than only by the yearly



“Sport is also an investment in Europe’s competitiveness, innovation capacity and prosperity”

Week of Sport and the Be Active and Be Inclusive EU Sport Awards? Should it, giving the rising costs of public health everywhere, not be a top priority in all member states?

“I am a strong believer that action is needed to increase activity levels of European youth. Low levels of physical activity are common among young people, particularly girls: across the EU only 17% of boys and 9% of girls do at least one hour of moderate activity per day¹ – as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). This is a call to action.

“Therefore, health-enhancing physical activity is one of my top priorities. It is also the key pillar of the EU Work Plan for Sport. Already in 2013, the EU recommended Member States to develop and assess policy measures to increase physical activity in connection with other policy fields, such as education or health.² The implementation of this Recommendation is carried out with the support of the WHO and a network of national focal points. As Commissioner for Sport, I will propose an update of this Recommendation. I plan to table it in 2027. It will be carried out in close cooperation with Member States, and I believe it will be a new push to put physical activity on top of the European sport agenda. The topic will also be covered in the upcoming European Commission Communication ‘A strategic vision for sport in Europe: reinforcing the European Sport Model’ that will be published in 2026.

“I also believe that the European Week of Sport and the renewed #BeActive EU Sport Awards are encouraging people to move. The European Week of Sport takes place from 23-30 September every year; this year celebrating 10

- 1 Source: OECD, 2023 – Report ‘Step Up! Tackling the Burden of Insufficient Physical Activity in Europe’ p.31. Link: https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/02/step-up-tackling-the-burden-of-insufficient-physical-activity-in-europe_20fba4c9/500a9601-en.pdf
- 2 Council Recommendation of 26 November 2013 on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013H1204%2801%29>

years of bringing together Europeans from all walks of life and all abilities to get moving.

“There are thousands of events being organised in Europe during this week and millions of people participating which I think is an excellent push to promote healthy lifestyles and benefits of physical activity. The new #BeActive EU Sport Awards build on the efforts of previous #BeActive and #BeInclusive EU Sport Awards and celebrate the achievements of individuals, sport organisations and stakeholders in their promotion of sport and physical activity across Europe. The novelties of the new Awards are the category for volunteering and increased prize money for winners and finalists. The 15 finalists of our most recent call will be announced next March. With these campaigns, we raise awareness of the importance of physical activity. We give millions of Europeans the opportunity to take part in events, try something new and experience the joy of being part of a sporting community.

“Lastly, I would like to mention that one of the sport specific priorities of the Erasmus+ programme is encouraging healthy lifestyles for all. I am happy to see many good quality projects tackling this important topic.”

EU is a strong promotor and defender of the European Sport Model and the essential principles and values of sport, like sports for all, open competitions, gender equality etc. Nowadays we experience severe discussions on the participation of transgenders. Isn't here a position needed by the EU or does the Commissioner prefer to leave these discussions up to the individual sports federations?

“Based on the core principle of autonomy of sport, it is for each sport and its governing body to decide on the participation of transgender athletes in sport competitions. I note the International Olympic Committee’s Framework on Fairness, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations that offers a 10-principle approach to help sport organisations to develop criteria applicable to their sport.

“More generally, the European Commission promotes equality, diversity and inclusion for all. These values serve as the basis of the European Sport Model and will be upheld in the upcoming European Commission Communication ‘A strategic vision for sport in Europe: reinforcing the European Sport Model’. Also, our Union of Equality strategies aim to create the conditions for everyone to live,

thrive and lead regardless of differences based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.”

Regarding integrity and values in sport: in the last decade we saw an outburst of cases of intimidation and (sexual) inappropriate behaviour in the elite-sport and grassroots in almost every EU-member state, mostly by trainers and manly colleague-sport-ers. Does the EU monitor these problems on a European level and is it looking for effective answers or even campaigns to establish better manners and more correct behaviour?

“Inappropriate behaviour and harassment, in sport or in any other context, is totally unacceptable. I am convinced that a multifaceted approach to prevention is needed, targeting all sport stakeholders. Educational and prevention programmes must be implemented at all levels, especially at grassroots level, as well as a commitment from sport leaders and organisations. Safeguarding mechanisms should also be put in place by sport federations. Integrity is the foundation of sport. It is what builds trust, and trust is what unites players, fans, clubs, and federations across Europe. When integrity is compromised, the credibility of sport itself is at risk. The European Commission, as mentioned, is developing a Strategic Vision for European Sport aiming at promoting the European Sport Model. Integrity will stand at its very heart – alongside inclusion, solidarity, and sustainability. This vision builds on the European Sport Model, where sport remains open, fair, and based on sporting merit, while serving as a force for education, health, and social cohesion.

“It’s important to mention that the EU Work Plan for Sport highlights safe sport as one of its guiding objectives. One of the measures of the Work Plan is a working group to address hate speech in sport, where actions to avoid such outbursts of violence are being discussed. Also, the Commission works together with the Council of Europe on joint projects to ensure safe sport. For example, the joint project ‘Combating Hate Speech in Sport’ (<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/combating-hate-speech-in-sport/home>), in cooperation with the Council of Europe, has collected best practices and developed educational material. Moreover, Erasmus+ supports projects that promote integrity and values in sport. These projects propose such measures as educating athletes and coaches, safeguarding, combating violence or fighting corruption.”

MONACO: WORLD CAPITAL OF SPORT 2025

A year rich in emotion and commitment

In December 2024, ACES Europe officially designated the Principality of Monaco as World Capital of Sport 2025. A few weeks later, on February 18 2025, HSH Prince Albert II sealed this recognition during an official ceremony, emphasizing the ambition of a sport that is "ethical, sustainable, open, and engaged". This title, a true hallmark, does not come by chance: it recognizes several decades of constant investment in infrastructure, clubs, federations, and, above all, in a vision of sport as a factor of cohesion, health, and international influence.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO



The Stade Louis II celebrated its 40th anniversary this year.

A long list of events demonstrated the Principality's well-known sporting vitality.

HIGHLIGHTS MARKING THE YEAR

In February, the Monaco Run celebrated its 15th edition with a record participation: 3,800 runners at the start, confirming the appeal of an event that brings together amateurs, families, and high-level athletes. A few days later, the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Stade Louis II launched an exhibition entitled 'There Was a First Time', recalling the glory days of a venue that hosts flagship events every year (including football, athletics, and swimming), but is above all the sporting heart where thousands of people participate every day.

The month of April highlighted two emblematic events: the Princess Charlene Rally, which brought together nearly 400 middle school students around the values of peace, equality and fair play, and the prestigious Rolex Monte Carlo Masters, an ATP tournament which attracts the biggest names in tennis every year.

In May, Monaco hosted a double round of Formula E, a showcase for electric mobility and sustainable innovation, while July was marked by the Herculis EBS Meeting, a key stage of the Diamond League. In addition to these events, there are, of course, other must-see events: the Formula 1 Grand Prix in May,



Carlos Alcaraz (Spain) celebrates his win during the prestigious Rolex Monte Carlo ATP Masters Series Tournament at the Monte Carlo Country Club in April.

the International Swimming Meetings, and the International Show Jumping in June.

Even the city's urban landscape was adorned with sporting colors: starting in July, floral arrangements representing iconic disciplines (tennis, rugby, etc.) enlivened the city's spaces, serving as a daily reminder of the importance of this exceptional sporting year.

PROJECTS THAT INSPIRE PRIDE

While major events strengthen Monaco's international image, the authorities are equally pleased with the enthusiasm they generate among residents.

Record citizen participation: the success of the Monaco Run and the No Finish Line 2024, with nearly 14,000 participants and more than 319,000 km covered for the benefit of children, demonstrate how committed the population is when it comes to combining sport and solidarity.

Passing on to younger generations: the Princess Charlene Rally (400 middle school students) perfectly illustrates this desire to educate through sport, combining water rescue workshops, anti-doping prevention, fair play awareness, and artistic creativity. Promoting sporting heritage: the anniversary of the Stade Louis II and its dedicated

exhibition highlight the extent to which sport is part of the Principality's cultural and social identity.

An international showcase: Formula E, ATP tennis, Diamond League and of course F1 confirm Monaco as a true global crossroads for high-level sport.

INCLUSION, SUSTAINABILITY, AND EQUALITY ARE KEY PRIORITIES

Beyond podium finishes and records, the year 2025 illustrates a clear political will: to make sport a vehicle for universal values.

Sport for all: Through the Pass'Sport Culture, available



Grace Stark (USA), Devynne Charlton (Bahrain) and Alia Armstrong (USA) compete at the 100m hurdles during the 2025 Herculis EBS Meeting/Diamond League in Monaco in July.



Lando Norris of Great Britain and the McLaren F1 Team during the Monaco Formula 1 Grand Prix in May, with the perfect view from the yachts.

for only €60 for young people aged 11 to 25, the Principality is broadly opening access to a range of sporting and cultural activities.

Registration for the National Union of School Sports (UNSS) activities offered to secondary school students on Wednesday afternoons is free.

Inclusion and gender equality: Supported by the Women's Rights Committee, the role of girls and women in sport is the subject of dedicated initiatives and awareness campaigns.

Sustainability: Formula E illustrates Monaco's environmental commitment, aligned with its greenhouse

gas emission reduction targets. Landscape enhancement and awareness-raising initiatives complement this approach.

Sports participation and culture: exhibitions, competitions, sports villages, and outdoor events help to anchor physical activity in the daily lives of Monegasques.

Health and fitness, including awareness-raising and information for schoolchildren, athletes, and club leaders on the fight against doping.

In addition, the 'Monaco Mental Health Plan' aims to improve the management of psychological well-being and psychiatric disorders in the Principality.

A RICH SPORTS LANDSCAPE

Monaco boasts a solid foundation: more than 50 sports, some sixty active clubs, and quality infrastructure. The Stade Louis-II (16,360 seats) hosts football and athletics, the Salle Gaston-Médecin (5,000 seats) primarily hosts basketball, while the Yacht Club de Monaco trains more than 2,000 young people each year in sailing and water sports.

This dynamic environment is also reflected in strong participation in high-level competitions. AS Monaco Basketball, the Roca Team, recently reached the Euroleague Final Four, and Monegasque athletes regularly compete in the Olympic Games and World Championships. The 20th edition of the Games of the Small States of Europe in Andorra, from 26 to 31 May 2025, demonstrated the vitality of Monegasque sport with 16 gold medals, 13 silver medals and 15 bronze medals. Monaco has a total of 44 medals, 11 more than in 2023 in Malta. In terms of first places, this is the best record in its history away from home, surpassing the 15 titles obtained in 2019 in Montenegro.

HSH PRINCE ALBERT II OF MONACO: "A CITY-STATE CAN BE A GLOBAL BENCHMARK FOR ETHICAL, SUSTAINABLE, OPEN, AND COMMITTED SPORT"

Speech by HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco at the signing ceremony of the World Capitals of Sport commemorative plaque.



HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco during his speech at the signing ceremony of the World Capitals of Sport commemorative plaque.

"I am particularly delighted and honored to welcome you today for this signing ceremony of the World Capitals of Sport commemorative plaque and the handover of the symbolic flag, representing Monaco's awarding of the 'World Capital of Sport' label in 2025.

"The Principality of Monaco, my Government, and I are particularly proud of this distinction, which recognizes our long-standing commitment to promoting the values of sport. Sport plays a major educational role within society in fostering exchange, respect for others, and personal development, and beyond that, contributes to fostering peace between populations.

"We are committed to perpetuating a vision based on a proactive policy of building modern facilities for school and club sports. Our network of associations includes 51 national federations, 24 clubs, and more than 4,300 members.



HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco with ACES president Gian Francesco Lupattelli.

"At the same time, Monaco hosts and organizes international events that have made the Principality famous in the world of sport. These include the Herculis athletics meeting, the Tennis Masters, the International Swimming Meeting, and the Formula 1 Grand Prix.

Sports in the Principality skillfully asserts its international influence, because a city-state can be a global benchmark for ethical, sustainable, open, and committed sport.

"I deeply believe in the positive and lasting impact of sporting values, which I strive to convey through the various roles I hold within the Sports Movement and the International Olympic Committee.

"I would like to renew my sincere thanks to the Association of European Capitals of Sport, its members and you, its leaders, for having awarded Monaco this prestigious label of 'World Capital of Sport'."

The most attended European Week of Sport in the ACES Cities ever!

MOBILIZING 55 CITIES AROUND THE CONTINENT

The 11th edition has been a great celebration of 10 years of EWoS (being the first edition held in 2015), the most important continental event dedicated by the European Commission to Sport. ACES is proudly partner and founder of the initiative since its inception: our 2025 results are the best ever, mobilizing 55 ACES Cities from Andorra to Romania, from France to Georgia, with an increase of 10% compared to 2024. There were 667 events recorded, this meaning 47,5% more than the previous year. With extraordinary participation, capable of involving 1,365,000 people (5% up compared to 2024) in 17 countries, or 21,5% more than the previous year.

ALESSIO DI MAIO (COORDINATOR OF THE EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT IN THE ACES AWARDED CITIES)

Numbers that perfectly capture the success of the initiative, framed in the slogan #BeActive – a basic concept which has the

mission of reminding citizens of the importance of always being active, through any physical and sporting activity – and

masterfully implemented by many ACES Cities. In all these cities there have been events of various kinds, of all sports and with particular attention to physical activation, sport for all, sporting activities for people with disability and those dedicated to children, the elderly and the economically weakest groups. Thus, according to this year's EU priorities for the European Week of Sport 2025: to celebrate its 10th anniversary, promote healthier digital habits under the theme 'Move More, Scroll Less' and encourage participation across



Spanish Alcobendas obtained the 'ACES Yellow Flag' as the Best City 2025.

PARTICIPATION EWOS 2025

European Week of Sport

Countries and Cities 2025

#BEACTIVE

EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT

10
YEARS

23-30 September



Italy

Country with the
highest participation

ACES EUROPE'S ENGAGED
COUNTRIES IN EWOS 2025

17

COUNTRIES

+21,5%

COMPARED TO 2024

REGISTERED EVENTS

667

EVENTS

+47.5%

COMPARED TO 2024

ACES ENGAGED CITIES
COMMUNITIES | REGIONS

55

CITIES

+10%

COMPARED TO 2024

+5% COMPARED TO 2024



PARTICIPANTS FROM
ACROSS EUROPE

1.365M



The European Week of Sport in Viana Castelo (left), Erice (right) and Trebinje (below).

all generations and sectors to improve overall well-being. The campaign also focuses on inclusion, mental health, sustainability, and connecting with local communities through physical activity.

UNITING TWO CONTINENTS

This 11th edition – as usual, scheduled from 23rd to 30th September (with events recorded in the 45 days

from 1st September to 15th October) – also took place at the same time as the American Week of Sport, as an ideal ‘bridge’ that unites the two continents where ACES’ efforts are mostly concentrated. A unity of purpose that crosses the Atlantic Ocean and which will find its ideal embrace in Brussels on 11 December in the Annual ACES GALA Award, where the European and Ameri-

can awarded Administrations for the Year 2026 will have the opportunity to meet and discuss.

Special recognition goes to the Hungarian Region of Veszprém-Balaton (European Region of Sport 2026), which proposed the largest number of events (122), to the Italian Region Liguria (this year European Region of Sport,

61 events) to Porto, Portugal (World Capital of Sport 2028, 47 events) and to the Spanish Alcobendas (40) with many quality events which also allowed the City to obtain the ‘ACES Yellow Flag’ as the Best City 2025 among all the ACES Cities of this year. As well as for Liguria, Best European Region of Sport 2025.

The country that proposed the greatest number of events was Italy, with 226 events in 26 Cities/Communities/Regions.

Looking forward to the 12th Edition of the European Week of Sport in 2026 which will bring even greater successes in terms of quality and participation!



‘Move More,
Scroll Less’

Millions of participants for the 3rd American Week of Sport!

A STUNNING SUCCESES

The American Week of Sport promoted by ACES in the American continent, in its third edition, was a stunning success, in terms of organised events and participation. The extraordinary opening in Zapopan, Mexico, was the crowning achievement of the most attended AWOs ever!

ALESSIO DI MAIO (ACES ITALIA)



The extraordinary opening of the American Week of Sport in Zapopan (Mexico).

The event, characterised by the slogan #ActivateAmerica – a basic concept which has the mission of reminding citizens of the importance of always being active, through any physical and

sporting activity – has mobilised an entire continent, activating more than 10 million people in 14 countries from the United States to Chile.

The third edition, held simultaneously with the European Week of Sport from 23 to 30 September (with events recorded in the 45 days from September 1 to October 15,

PARTICIPACIÓN SEMANA AMERICANA DEL DEPORTE PAISES Y CIUDADES 2025

 [instagram/acesamerica](https://www.instagram.com/acesamerica)

[facebook.com/acesamerica/](https://www.facebook.com/acesamerica/)



PAISES

14

+1

DE AUMENTO CON RESPECTO AL 2024

EVENTOS

4.546

+133%

DE AUMENTO CON RESPECTO AL 2024

PARTICIPACIÓN

8.170.825

+69%

DE AUMENTO CON RESPECTO AL 2024

+4.115.528

CICLOVIAS RECREATIVAS BOGOTÁ

91
CIUDADES

+49% DE AUMENTO CON
RESPECTO AL 2024

Argentina (745): Buenos Aires (9), Puerto Madryn (114), Rosario (1), Vicente López (614) - **Brasil (7):** Indaial (3), Manaus (4) - **Chile (103):** La Serena (5), Santiago (98) - **Colombia (2391):** Alcalá (29), Andalucía (51), Ansermanuevo (13), Argelia (5), Bogotá (17), Bolívar (19), Buenaventura (11), Buga (97), Bugalagrande (66), Caicedonia (9), Cali (1082), Calima (3), Candelaria (31), Cartago (24), Cota (6), Dagua (2), Dosquebradas (1), El Aguila (2), El Cairo (11), El Cerrito (70), El Dovio (41), Envigado (3), Facatativá (2), Florida (49), Ginebra (8), Guacarí (20), Jamundí (38), La Celia (1), La Cumbre (2), La Unión (25), La Victoria (3), Marsella (1), Medellín (1), Montería (7), Obando (9), Palmira (17), Pereira (54), Pradera (12), Quinchía (1), Restrepo (11), Riofrio (26), Roldanillo (71), San Pedro (38), Santuario (1), Sevilla (38), Toro (55), Trujillo (48), Tuluá (124), Ulloa (7), Versalles (30), Vijes (21), Yotoco (1), Yumbo (23), Zarzal (54) - **Costa Rica (164):** Belén (164) - **Ecuador (210):** Guayaquil (19), Manta (123), Portoviejo (8), Quito (60) - **Honduras (7):** Santa Ana (2), Santa Rosa de Copán (1), Tegucigalpa (4) - **México (777):** Chihuahua (46), Ciudad de México (3), Cuautitlán Izcalli (1), Guadalajara (31), León (407), Miguel Hidalgo (17), Morelia (2), Puebla (21), Querétaro (2), San Luis Potosí (2), San Pedro Garza García (1), Santiago de Querétaro (5), Victoria (1), Zapopan (238) - **Perú (1):** Chorrillos (1) - **Puerto Rico (1):** San Juan (1) - **Rep. Dominicana (1):** Bayaguana (1) - **United States (1):** Bakersfield (1) - **Uruguay (2):** Montevideo (2) - **Venezuela (7):** Caracas (7)



Más derechos
para más gente



unesco

Red de ciudades
Deporte y Desarrollo
en América Latina



Consejo
Iberoamericano
del Deporte

CADE



INSTITUTO
PERUANO
DEL DEPORTE

Ciclovías
Recreativas
de las Américas
CRA

ICODER

exactly like the European initiative), showed astonishing progress: the numbers speak of 133% more events (4.546) compared to 2024, with the addition of many cities (+49%, for a total of 91) and an extraordinary participation among athletes, professionals, and spectators, testifying to the importance and effectiveness of initiatives like these.

INCLUSION

In a continent that loves sport and experiences it as a shared celebration, in the face of many difficulties to overcome, the American Week of Sport (AWoS) managed to show extraordinary excellence in including a large portion of the population that receives priority assistance – from children, to the elderly, people with disabilities, and the groups with the weakest economic resources. The AWoS paid much attention to social issues, combined with shared activities of all groups, often in the open air and under the expert guidance of qualified instructors from local administrations.

The American Week of Sport saw the participation of the major Latin American cities, including the World Capital of Sport 2027 Buenos Aires. From Mexico City to Cali, from Guadalajara to Montevideo, from Manaus to Caracas, from Chihuahua (American Capital of



Adriana Sánchez Pares (right), Institutional Director of the American Week of Sport.

Sport 2025) to Tegucigalpa, from Quito to Puebla, from León to Santiago de Chile, from San Juan de Puerto Rico to Guayaquil (next American Capital of Sport 2026), and many others. For the first year, also, a city from Republica Dominicana joined the initiative.

THE AWOS ACTIVA ACES APP

ACES's new technological initiative, the AWOS Activa Aces App, was also a remarkable success. It allowed the many participating cities to better and more easily access the initiative. Above all, it served as a point

of reference for many citizens, who, thanks to this innovative app, can enjoy a multitude of information and support services for physical activity, with a wealth of useful statistics and ongoing incentives for continued practice.

PARTNERS

A fundamental impulse for the success of the initiative came from the other ACES partners, namely the Organization of American States (OEA), UNESCO (with which ACES has an official partnership), the American Sports Council (CADE), the

DESCARGA LA APP OFICIAL
AWOS ACTIVA



Ibero-American Sports Council (CID), in close cooperation with various federations of national municipalities, such as Fedemunicipios in Colombia, a continental Biking Association (Ciclovías Recreativas de las Américas) and the D+D Network of Latin American Cities for Sports and Development (Réd Deportes y Desarrollo), led by UNESCO. With the D+D Network ACES successfully supported the Physical Activation Month initiative too, in April, to celebrate the UNESCO and WHO days for Sport, Health and Peace (6-7 April).

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Special recognition goes to Valle del Cauca and Cali, Colombia, which through the organisation of its municipalities promoted a record number of events, with extraordinary participation; and to Zapopan, Mexico, which hosted the Inaugural Act of the Week on September 20 with a festive event (including the 1st International Forum on Physical Activity and Health By ACES) sealed by a great participation.

The American Week of Sport saw the participation of the major Latin American cities

<< The concept #ActivateAmerica and the AWoS are entering the social fabric of the American continent, promoting the style of healthy life and the importance of continuous physical activity.

W by ACES

WOMEN LEADING CHANGE THROUGH SPORT

When women step into spaces of leadership, they don't just change the game — they redefine the field itself. That conviction lies at the heart of W by ACES, a global platform born within the ACES network to empower women and girls through sport, leadership, and mental health. What began as a visionary dialogue among female leaders has become an international movement for equity, inclusion, and wellbeing across the 6,000 ACES-recognized cities worldwide.

YOLANDA SOSA, ADRIANA PARÉS, KREENA GOVENDER



W by ACES was launched under the leadership of the President and Founder Mr. Lupattelli, ACES America's team and Isaac Piña Founder of RED D+D, together with a core group of women who envisioned sport not only as a tool for competition, but as a mechanism for social transformation.

The Co-Founders, Yolanda Sosa and Adriana Parés in partnership with Kreena Govender (see their bios) describe W by ACES as “a living bridge between continents, values, and generations of women ready to lead with purpose.”

At its essence, the initiative integrates four pillars, known as the 4 W's:

- Warrior – the inner strength to face adversity and persist;
- Wild – the creativity to break molds and innovate;
- Wisdom – the knowledge to lead ethically and inclusively;
- Wonder – the ability to inspire curiosity and hope in others.

These pillars guide every workshop, forum, and alliance under the W by ACES umbrella.

FROM LOCAL ACTIONS TO GLOBAL ALLIANCES

Since its inception in 2024, W by ACES has expanded rapidly, partnering with municipal sports institutes, Olympic committees, universities, and grassroots organizations across Europe, Latin America, North America and most recently Africa. Each alliance shares a commitment to advance the United Nations Agenda 2030, particularly Goal 5 (Gender

I FORO INTERNACIONAL DE ACTIVIDAD FÍSICA Y SALUD BY aces



Adriana Sánchez Pares
Abogada especializada en
derecho deportivo.



Yolanda Sosa Ortiz
Presidenta de la Fundación Sin
Fronteras Pro Mujer y Deporte.



Alexis Calderon Unda
Coordinadora general de
Infraestructura de Comercio y
Servicios Comunitarios de Zapopan

Mujeres líderes en el ámbito deportivo

Historias y estrategias de mujeres líderes que han transformado el deporte,
impulsando igualdad de género e inclusión social.

Martes 23 de septiembre
16:00 horas | Foro Cometa
Parque de las Niñas y los Niños












Equality) and Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), through sport and education.

Among the flagship collaborations:

- INDE Nuevo León, Mexico – implementation of the Safe and Healthy Sport Protocol, a pioneering model for the prevention of gender-based violence and the promotion of mental, physical, and emotional health in athletes.
- Fundación Sin Fronteras Pro Mujer y Deporte – joint training programs for coaches and federations on psychological safety and inclusive leadership.
- ACES Cities Network – annual 'Women & Allies Summits' that showcase good practices in gender-inclusive policy and community sport.
- UNESCO Fit for Life Campaign – shared advocacy for mental health and the participation of women in para-sports across the Americas.

Each of these collaborations translates policy into practice, ensuring that equality is not just an agenda item but an everyday reality.

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

W by ACES invests in developing the next generation of women leaders through circles of mentorship, community laboratories, and skill-building workshops. Participants – ranging from young athletes to sports directors – engage in reflective dialogues on mental health, communication, and decision-making with a gender perspective.



A recent example took place during the Semana Americana del Deporte 2024 in Zapopan, Mexico, where W by ACES facilitated a forum on 'Leadership and Collective Well-being in Sport'. The event brought together more than 200 participants and set a precedent for similar summits planned in Colombia, Spain, and Argentina in 2025.

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ON WOMEN IN SPORT

In the past few years, women's sport has reached new heights of visibility:

- The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup drew over 2 billion viewers worldwide, breaking all previous records.
- The 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup, hosted in England, just concluded with a sold-out crowd of about 82,000 at Twickenham – a record for a women's match.
- And in Paris 2024, the world witnessed – for the first time in Olympic history – 50/50 gender parity among participating athletes.

These achievements are both symbolic and systemic: they show what happens when investment, opportunity and recognition align. Yet, progress in visibility does not automatically translate into equality of experience, particularly for those women and girls who practice sport and physical activity away from the glaring lights of elite stadiums.



"W by ACES is redefining leadership as care, courage, and connection building bridges between women, allies, and institutions committed to a safer, healthier, and more equal world through sport"

Adriana Sánchez Parés (Co-Founder W by ACES & President of ACES America)

“Empowering women in sport is not just about opportunity; it’s about visibility, voice, and creating the systems where girls can imagine themselves leading from the start”

Kreena Govender (Global Partnerships & Strategy, W by ACES)

Across the sporting world, women continue to face a persistent pay gap, gender-based violence and online abuse, and ongoing safeguarding failures. Women remain under-represented in senior leadership and governance roles. Gaps in research — from sports science to injury prevention and sexual and reproductive health — still leave female athletes underserved.

STORYTELLING

Beyond leadership training, W by ACES is transforming the story we tell about women in sport.

Through strategic media collaborations and the *‘Mujeres que Transforman’* storytelling series, the platform amplifies stories of resilience, motherhood, coaching, and community impact – narratives that rarely appear in mainstream coverage but are foundational to sustainable sport ecosystems.

By shifting focus from medals to meaning, W by ACES highlights how emotional intelligence, empathy, and social responsibility are as crucial to performance as physical strength.

HEALTH, INCLUSION, AND SAFETY: A NON-NEGOTIABLE AGENDA

One of W by ACES’s most distinctive features is its intersectional approach which reaffirms the explicit link between gender equality and mental health. In partnership with psychologists, educators, and sports scientists, the network promotes practices of emotional regulation, trauma-informed coaching, and early detection of harassment or burnout.



Fact Box

Founded: 2024

Scope: Europe & the Americas, 6,000 ACES Cities

Focus Areas: Gender Equity • Mental Health • Safe Sport • Leadership Training

Signature Programs: Women & Allies Summit • Safe & Healthy Sport Protocol • W Leadership Circles

Contact: wbyaces@aces-europe.org | @WbyACES

#WbyACES #WomenLeadSport



From a local dojo to the European Parliament, the message is the same: when women rise, communities thrive



Workshops such as *'Masculinidades Conscientes'* and *'Construyendo Comunidades Seguras'* invite both men and women to co-create safe spaces in sport, emphasizing that equality requires collective engagement. As Yolanda Sosa explains: "Inclusion it's a foundation for excellence. When athletes feel safe, they perform better – and when organizations care for mental health, they sustain long-term success."

IMPACT AND OUTLOOK

In just its first year, W by ACES initiatives have reached more than 2,000 participants across 12 countries by disseminating and launching the movement.

Looking ahead to 2026, the program aims to:

- Launch a Digital Leadership Hub with open-access resources in English and Spanish;
- Expand W by ACES Ambassador Programs for young women leaders in each ACES city;
- Establish a Global Observatory on Mental Health and Sport Equity in collaboration with academic and governmental partners.

A MOVEMENT ROOTED IN SOLIDARITY

W by ACES is not a one-time initiative; it is an ongoing movement redefining leadership as care, courage, and connection – a marathon not a sprint. From a local dojo to the European Parliament, the message is the same: when women rise, communities thrive.

As ACES América's Coordinator Gonzalo Cuesta puts it: "This is not only about women leading in sport – it's about re-imagining sport as a mirror of the society we want to build: fair, inclusive, and full of human potential."

Yolanda Sosa Ortiz

Co-Founder, W by ACES

Founder of Fundación Sin Fronteras Pro Mujer y Deporte, Yolanda is an international analyst in mental health and gender-based violence prevention. A pioneer of women's taekwondo Olympics, she has advised Olympic athletes, sports federations, and governments on creating safe, equitable, and inclusive sport systems.

Adriana Sánchez Parés

Co-Founder, W by ACES

President of ACES America and Former Secretary of Recreation and Sports of Puerto Rico, Adriana is a lawyer and policy leader specializing in sports management and equality. She advocates for stronger institutional frameworks to promote gender equity, leadership, and transparency in global sport governance.

Kreena Govender

Co-Founder and Lead, The BOLD Global Alliance for Women, Girls & Sport (BOLD), W by ACES

Kreena bridges the worlds of sport, public health, human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, sustainability, and social impact. With over 25 years of experience in international health and development, at the policy and programmatic levels, within the UN system (WHO and UNAIDS), she focuses on fostering cross-sector alliances to advance diversity, equity and inclusion, innovation, and women's leadership across the ACES network.

"When athletes feel safe, they perform better – and when organizations care for mental health, they sustain long-term success"

Yolanda Sosa Ortiz (Co-Founder W by ACES & ACES Evaluator)

ACES AND EUROPEAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEES SIGN MAJOR AGREEMENT

New era of collaboration to promote sport and healthy lifestyles across Europe

The Federation of Capitals and Cities of Sport (ACES) has signed a major Protocol Agreement with the European Olympic Committees (EOC), marking a new era of collaboration between the two institutions in their shared mission to promote sport, health, and Olympic values across the continent.

HUGO ALONSO (ACES)

The agreement, signed by Gian Francesco Lupattelli, President of ACES Europe, and Spyros Capralos, President of the European Olympic Committees, establishes a strategic framework for cooperation to encourage the spread of sporting culture, participation in physical activity, and to inspire European citizens – especially young people – to lead healthy and active lives.

“This agreement represents a significant step forward for ACES and for all European cities that believe in the transformative power of sport,” said President Gian Francesco Lupattelli. “Working together with the EOC means aligning directly with the Olympic Movement, strengthening our mission to build healthier, more inclusive, and more active communities.”

EOC President Spyros Capralos stated: “The EOC is delighted to partner with ACES, an organisation that shares our commitment to using sport as a powerful bridge to connect communities through social cohesion, youth engagement,

“This agreement represents a significant step forward for all European cities that believe in the transformative power of sport”

Gian Francesco Lupattelli (President ACES)



Spyros Capralos, President of the European Olympic Committees.

and healthy lifestyles. Together, we will work to inspire the next generation of active citizens across Europe.”

Through this partnership, ACES and the EOC will collaborate on initiatives, conferences, and sports events – particularly within the European Capitals of Sport – to promote the social, educational, and cultural values of sport. The agreement also reaffirms both organisations’ commitment to good governance, equality, and the protection of athletes, in full alignment with the principles of the Olympic Charter and the European Commission’s White Paper on Sport.

This collaboration follows a series of institutional partnerships established by ACES with leading global organisations such as UNESCO, UN Tourism, and the

“The EOC is delighted to partner with ACES. Together, we will work to inspire the next generation of active citizens across Europe”

Spyros Capralos (President EOC)

Organization of American States (OAS) – consolidating ACES’ role as an international reference point in the promotion of sports policies, health, and social cohesion through local governments.

Global Observatory for Gender Equality & Sport

CONNECTING FOR CHANGE

The City of Lausanne, on the shores of Lac Léman in Switzerland, hosts the Global Observatory for Gender Equality & Sport. The Global Observatory is an international convenor of research and expertise to support the development and monitoring of progress towards gender equality in sport.

LOMBE MWAMBWA (CEO, GLOBAL OBSERVATORY FOR GENDER EQUALITY & SPORT)

The Global Observatory was established in 2021 with the support of UNESCO and the Swiss Confederation. Founded by the Canton of Vaud, the City of Lausanne, and the University of Lausanne, the Global Observatory offers unique value to the global sport+ ecosystem.

PLATFORM FOR COLLABORATION

As a new entity, the Global Observatory joins various stakeholders working to make the sporting world more equitable and inclusive. With its unique value of connecting government, research, and sports actors, the Global Observatory offers a platform for collaboration and resources to enhance impact. The Global Observatory recognises and prioritises connection as a major driver of effective change. This is visible through its focus on connection of people, ideas and organisations. The Global Observatory's work is therefore organised around three strategic pillars:

- *Establish a global knowledge hub*, aggregating key data, statistics, research, and best practices and stimulating innovative research to close evidence gaps.
- *Connect, coordinate, and convene* individuals and organisations engaged in gender equality and sport.
- *Ensure strong and consistent advocacy and communication*, disseminate information, amplify messages, and mobilise support for impactful action.

Based in the olympic city of Lausanne, the Global Observatory has an extensive and growing international network of individuals and organisations. The Global Observatory ensures strong and consistent communication and advocacy is maintained in order to keep the topic of gender equality on the agenda of policymakers, researchers, practitioners and all of those who are working across the sports world in civil society as well as the private sector.

ANNUAL EVENT

Comprised of governmental entities, non-governmental organisations, academic, and sports organisations, the GO's Advisory Council, that serves as a consultative platform for stakeholder cooperation and strategic contribution to the aims of the Global Observatory, held its first in person meeting on 1 October, in Lausanne. Stakeholders from around the world convened to explore and exchange on their efforts and strategies and to develop cooperation on priority areas of action to address inequalities facing women and girls in sport, physical education, and physical activity.

The conference was hosted with the theme 'Connecting for Change' and brought together about 150 delegates. The conference was opened by the President of the State Council of Vaud, Christelle Luiesier Brodard, President of the Global Observatory, Felicite Rwemarikwa, and Dr Lombe Mwambwa, CEO of the Global Observatory.



Felicite Rwemarikwa, President of the Global Observatory.

KNOWLEDGE HUB

At the conference, the Global Observatory announced the launch of its new Knowledge Hub, an online tool that is interactive, open, and collaboratively developed resource. With this platform, the Global Observatory aims to share the aggregation of data and research and facilitate a space for convening the expertise that is all around the world on the topic of gender equality and sport.

The Knowledge Hub serves as a resource to connect sports actors to research, good practice, and resources to enable their actions. It includes expertise such as directories of



Christelle Luiesier Brodard, President of the State Council, State of Vaud.

research specialists on gender equality and organisations focused on gender-based violence in the context of sport, mapping of policy and actions, and tools for action.

GLOBAL OBSERVATORY INDICATOR PROJECT

The first integral element of the Knowledge Hub is the development of key indicators that assist the sector to know what should be tracked and how it should be tracked. The selection of indicators is drawn from various existing measurement frameworks and builds on collaborative effort across the sector, including the UNESCO Kazan Action Plan and Fit for Life, the Council of Europe All in Plus project,

“True equality entails dismantling the systemic barriers that have kept women out of sport and creating empowering sport environments. The Global Observatory is established to contribute to this effort through mobilisation of data and research, connecting experts, and sharing good practice”

Felicite Rwemarikwa (President, Global Observatory for Gender Equality & Sport)

“Connection remains a major pillar of how the Knowledge Hub is developed, why we host the annual Gender Equality and Sport+ conference, and are building Expert Networks. Connection is invaluable to the coordination and movement building required to effectively deliver the mission of the Global Observatory and of gender equality in sport broadly”

Lombe Mwambwa (CEO, Global Observatory for Gender Equality & Sport)



Dr Lombe Mwambwa, CEO of the Global Observatory.

the Commonwealth Secretariat's work on sport and SDG indicators, the work being done by the Ibero America Sports Council on SDG indicators in the context of their region, the ASEAN actions for Gender Equality in Sport, and the African Union Sports Council among others.

Developed through a consultative process, the Global Observatory Indicator Project began with a collaborative process involving experts and stakeholders who identified an initial list of 260 potential indicators that measure gender equality across four areas: 1) National Context 2) Physical

Activity 3) Physical Education 4) Sport. The list was refined to 77 key indicators, selected for their relevance and feasibility. Following a thorough review, the first phase of indicator testing was launched. This phase marks the starting point of an ongoing process, with future rounds of data collection and stakeholder feedback planned to further strengthen and develop the indicators.

INTERNATIONAL MAPPINGS

The second element the Knowledge Hub is a set of international mappings, through which the Global Observatory offers an exploration of the global landscape to understand what is happening regarding gender equality and sport. A mapping of national policies and legislation is presented, with findings from 15 countries around the world available in the initial phase, with more scheduled to be added every quarter.

TOOLBOX OF RESOURCES

The third element of the Knowledge Hub is a toolbox of resources. These resources are collated from the Global Observatory network and focus on the wide spectrum of topics within gender equality and sport. Resources include handbooks, directories, newsletters, courses, and policy guides. This toolbox further serves as a method to share good practice from what others already did and that others could benefit from.

COLLECTING DATA

Multiple exercises to collate data or to generate insights and knowledge have been initiated by the Global Observatory. These include a mapping of national level policies and legislation by governments that address gender equality.

UNESCO Fit for Life highlights that 49% of adolescent girls drop out of sport – to address this persistent challenge robust policies are indispensable. The Global Observatory is undertaking an analysis of state reports as a way to monitor reporting practices related to addressing discrimination against women in the context of physical education, physical activity and sport.

Further, the reality that “21% of female athletes experiencing sexual abuse at least once in sport as a child”, as is reported by UNESCO, signals the urgency of addressing gender-based violence in sport. The Global Observatory is therefore tracking government action through an analysis of how countries articulate gender-based violence in their national policies and legislation and mapping how that connects to sport. A tracker will be published in 2026 to facilitate data sharing to inform advocacy, research, and policy actions.

The Global Observatory also is mapping the women and sports organisations around the world to identify the focus of interventions, facilitate connections, and sharing of good practice while amplifying approaches that support

women and girls to be engaged in sport and to address the challenges they face.

UNDERREPRESENTED IN LEADERSHIP

Women remain underrepresented in leadership of sport organisations around the world. The All in Plus project by Council of Europe found that across 21 European countries, only 12-14% of sports federations have female Presidents and only 22% of coaches working with national teams or elite-level athletes are women. Similarly, the African Union Sports Council reports that less than 20% of leaders of sport organisations are female. The Global Observatory is undertaking a study to collect data on the proportion of women in leadership of sport for development organisations. Sport for development organisations play a significant role in facilitating access to sport and in providing the resources and initiatives to challenge inequalities. They are a major contributor to continued participation and offer a pathway for wider community reach and connection to high performance sport in some contexts.

Contact: info@genderequalitysport.org
www.genderequalitysport.org



New sustainability recognition is coming

THE GREENEST CITY OF SPORT OF THE YEAR

Sports play a vital role in community development and public well-being, and thus their environmental footprint is increasingly under scrutiny. At the municipal and regional levels, the relationship between sports and environmental management has become a strategic priority, intertwining sustainable development goals with public policy and urban planning.

ACES/SINNPLE

Sports facilities, events, and infrastructure often require significant energy, water, and land use, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and resource depletion. However, these same platforms also offer powerful opportunities for environmental leadership and community engagement.

Municipalities and regions are uniquely positioned to embed sustainability into sports policies, leveraging their planning authority, regulatory frameworks, and partnerships with local clubs and stakeholders. By promoting green building standards for sports venues, encouraging active and low-carbon transport to events, managing waste responsibly, and protecting biodiversity in public recreation areas, local governments can minimize environmental impact while enhancing community resilience.



“Cities, regions, and municipalities are the closest level of government to the people, with the ability to engage citizens directly”

Moreover, the popularity of sports can be harnessed to foster environmental awareness and inspire collective action through eco-certifications, education campaigns, and sustainable event guidelines. As environmental challenges grow, integrating sustainability into the DNA of municipal and regional sports planning is not just a policy option – it is a necessity for ensuring long-term ecological and social health.

With this vision in mind, ACES will launch this year – during the end-of-year ceremony – its first sustainability recognition: The Sustainable City of Sport of the Year, together with our partner Sinnple, a consultancy specialized in sustainability and social impact with deep expertise in the sports sector.

WHY A NEW AWARD?

ACES brings together more than 6,000 municipalities, regions, and communities across the globe under a common mission: to strengthen social inclusion, health, and well-being through sport. In recent years, many of our awardees have also been performing remarkably at the environmental level.

They promote green building standards in their new sports venues, prioritize renewable energy, encourage cycling and public transport to events, integrate waste reduction policies, and preserve biodiversity in parks and natural recreation areas. These actions prove that sustainability and sport can reinforce each other, creating communities that are both healthier and more resilient.

By launching this recognition, ACES hopes to support regions and municipalities by highlighting the best examples and giving them visibility through a specific recognition. This will benefit the whole network of public entities, since healthy competition encourages performance, and outstanding cases allow all cities to learn and improve.

The specific procedure will be presented at the Awards Gala in December. We invited all local entities to showcase their sustainable good practices in the reports they send us. We are convinced that there are many inspiring stories waiting

“By recognizing the Sustainable City of Sport of the Year, ACES hopes to create a ripple effect: the best ideas spreading quickly from one city to another, inspiring thousands of communities to accelerate their sustainability transition”

to be shared – and together we can demonstrate that decarbonization and protection of nature is a ‘coopetitive’ game we all need to play.

HOW WILL THE EVALUATION WORK?

The Sustainable City of Sport of the Year award will build on the information that candidates already submit to ACES during the selection process for our traditional recognitions.

Each participant sends a dossier to support its candidacy before the announcement of award recipients. These dossiers include data on financial investments made in sports



facilities, as well as information related to environmental sustainability – for example, the percentage of sustainable investment or actions to promote sustainable mobility.

Sinnple will extract and analyze this information, applying a clear and transparent scoring formula. After the award year, municipalities also send a final dossier showcasing their sports activities, and again, any sustainability data will be assessed.

The evaluation process will include:

1. Design of the evaluation criteria and scoring system.
2. Analysis of the information reported by awardees.
3. Proposal of recognition to ACES, based on evaluations.
4. Participation in the awards ceremony to present the Green Flag.
5. Support in communication, to maximize visibility for the recognized cities.

In line with ACES values, impartiality and objectivity will be guaranteed. All data will need to be supported with measurable proof, and ACES reserves the right to request official confirmation of any activity presented. The final evaluation report will be produced by Sinnple's experts and aligned with European Union recommendations on sustainability.

IS THIS SOMETHING NEW IN SPORTS?

The relationship between sport and sustainability is not new – but what is new is the growing urgency and the shift from global to local action.

Back in 1994, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) began to formally discuss the importance of the environment in sports. In 1996, environment was officially included in the Olympic Charter as the 'third pillar of the Olympic Movement', together with sport and culture.

In 1999, the Olympic Movement's Agenda 21 was approved, serving as a reference guide for the entire sports community in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development. Since then, all cities aspiring to host the Olympic Games have been required to present a detailed sustainability plan as part of their bid.

This momentum, primarily driven by the Olympic Movement, gradually permeated the broader sports world. Many international federations and events adopted environmental guidelines, introducing eco-certifications,



renewable energy, or waste reduction schemes. Eight years ago, in 2017, the IOC went one step further by launching its comprehensive Sustainability Strategy, based on three spheres of responsibility: as an organization, as owner of the Olympic Games, and as leader of the Olympic Movement. The strategy focuses on five areas of influence:

- Infrastructure and natural sites
- Sourcing and resource management
- Mobility
- Workforce
- Climate

This framework provided a roadmap for countless organizations worldwide. At the same time, the United Nations also started to highlight the role of sport in climate action. Through the Sports for Climate Action framework under the UNFCCC, they encouraged clubs, leagues, and event organizers to both reduce their own climate impact and use sport as a vehicle to engage communities and stakeholders.



“Sport has the power – and the responsibility – to help protect our planet”

Today, the conversation has expanded far beyond mega-events like the Olympics. National federations, regional competitions, and local clubs are increasingly expected to take sustainability into account. Fans, sponsors, and citizens demand it. This is why ACES sees the launch of the Greenest City of Sport Award as a natural evolution of its mission: to guide municipalities not only toward better health and inclusion through sport, but also toward a more sustainable future.

WHY MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS MATTER MOST

While international federations and global events often get the headlines, it is cities, regions, and municipalities that carry the heaviest responsibility. They build and maintain

the facilities, manage the transport, decide on waste systems, and own the green spaces. They are also the closest level of government to the people, with the ability to engage citizens directly.

By recognizing the Sustainable City of Sport of the Year, ACES wants to:

- Empower municipalities to lead by example;
- Highlight the policies and projects that work;
- Share knowledge across borders;
- Encourage a culture of healthy competition ('coopetition') in sustainability.

In doing so, we hope to create a ripple effect: the best ideas spreading quickly from one city to another, inspiring thousands of communities to accelerate their sustainability transition.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Sustainable City of Sport of the Year will be presented for the first time in 2025, during the annual ACES ceremony at the European Parliament. The recognition will take the form of a Green Flag, symbolizing commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility in sport.

The truth is clear: sustainability is no longer an optional extra. For municipalities, for sports organizations, and for citizens, it is the foundation of future health and resilience. Sport has always had the power to inspire, unite, and transform societies. Now, it also has the power – and the responsibility – to help protect our planet.

With the launch of the Sustainable City of Sport of the Year, ACES is proud to take a pioneering step in embedding sustainability into the very heart of sport at the municipal and regional level. Together with our partner Sinnple, and with the active participation of thousands of member cities, we are confident that this recognition will not only reward excellence but also inspire action across our entire network.

The journey towards decarbonization and environmental protection will be long and challenging. But, as in any sporting challenge, teamwork and fair competition make us stronger. By celebrating and sharing the best practices, ACES is inviting all cities to join in this common effort – because sustainability is the game we must all play, and sport is one of our best chances to win it.

III Latin American Cities Summit for Sport and Development

SUCCESSFUL FINISH IN CHIHUAHUA

Chihuahua, the Mexican city that was designated as the American Capital of Sport 2025, hosted the Third Latin American Cities Summit for Sport and Development (D+D), bringing together representatives from 28 cities and 10 international organizations with the shared goal of strengthening public policies that promote physical activity and sport for the benefit of Latin American citizens.

ACES AMERICA



As part of the Summit, the III General Assembly of the Sport and Development Cities Network was held, where the city of León (Mexico) was ratified as President of the Network for the 2025-2027 term.

Following the assembly vote, the vice presidencies were assigned to Santiago (Chile) and Belén (Costa Rica), which, alongside León, will lead the Network's efforts over the next two years.

The presidency presented a report on the progress of the Network, which began with 16 local governments from 8 countries and now includes 40 local governments from 11 Latin American countries, consolidating itself as one of the most dynamic cooperation platforms in the Latin American sports field.

RECOGNITION OF CITIES AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

During the Summit, awards were presented to cities participating in the second edition of 'April, Month of Physical Activity and Sport', as well as to the more than 75 cities that took part in the American Week of Sport (SAD) 2025.

On behalf of ACES Europe, Gonzalo Cuesta, General Coordinator for the Americas, presented the results of the SAD 2024 and officially announced the SAD 2025, which will be inaugurated in Zapopan (Jalisco, Mexico) from September 19-21.

In addition, ACES introduced the W by ACES program, a new initiative focused on female leadership and the role of women in sport. The program, presented by Adriana



Sánchez Parés and Yolanda Sosa, sparked strong interest among cities thanks to its flexible and adaptable lines of action.

INSTITUTIONAL PRESENCE AND COMMITMENT TO INNOVATION

The Summit featured the participation of Andrés Morales, UNESCO representative in Mexico; Juan José Abdo Fierro, Director of the Municipal Institute of Physical Culture and Sport of Chihuahua; and Fernando Cáceres, Technical Secretary of the D+D Network.

In his remarks, Gonzalo Cuesta highlighted the institutional support of major multilateral organizations for the American Week of Sport, which has been a key factor in its consolidation since its launch in León in 2023. He also announced the development of a free mobile application that will allow cities to easily register their sports events throughout the year, while also gathering data on citizens' physical activity habits.

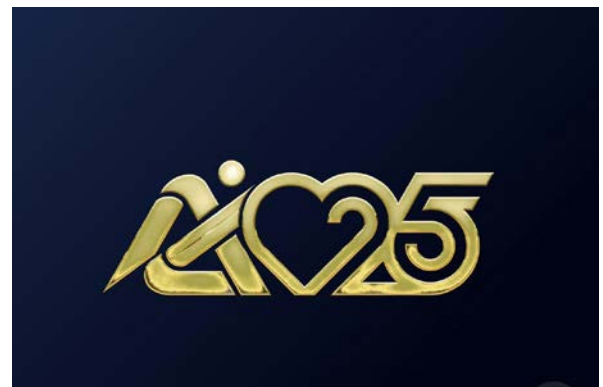
LOOKING AHEAD

ACES reaffirmed its commitment to expand the impact of the American Week of Sport and to recognize cities as key protagonists in policies for recreation, physical activity, and sport across the region.

"We are already looking toward 2026 with the goal of strengthening the media impact of the SAD and giving explicit recognition to the excellent and effective work of cities. Together we will achieve something truly significant that will generate social and health benefits for our citizens", Gonzalo Cuesta concluded.

"Together we will achieve something truly significant that will generate social and health benefits for our citizens"

Gonzalo Cuesta (General Coordinator ACES America)



SESE: SHARING THE SPORTING EXCELLENCE OF EUROPE'S REGIONS

The project's final conference, scheduled for December 12, 2025, in Brussels, coinciding with the ACES Annual Awards GALA was a success. Regional governments and cities from across Europe participated.

ALESSIO DI MAIO (ERASMUS+ PROJECT MANAGER ACES)

The Excellence European SportRegions network is based on the idea that the success and experiences of other regions can help other European administrations improve sports policies, provide more opportunities and ideas, and reinforce the philosophy that sport truly has the power to build more inclusive societies.

A COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP

The SESE project therefore aims to highlight the best sports policies implemented by European regions, so they can inspire other administrations and become a replicable example. SportRegions is a collaborative partnership. Regions with ambition and proven results work together to further raise their standards and set an example for other regions, thus contributing to:

- Increase participation in sport and physical activity;
- Support new approaches to address violence, racism, discrimination, and intolerance in sport;
- Improve good governance in sport;
- Encourage social inclusion & equal opportunities in sport;
- Promote gender equality;
- Promote the digital transformation and decarbonization of the sports sector;
- Promote new, innovative business models to drive the transformation of the sports sector;
- Promote volunteering in sport.

BUILDING THE SPORTREGIONS MODEL OF EXCELLENCE

The model of excellence is, first and foremost, centered on sport and physical activity. We expect to provide a management framework that allows regions to access their own context and receive effective, targeted advice on how to improve their sports activities.

The model combines management/organizational topics and specific intervention pillars in the sport domain, and will include various tools for different levels of governance. The primary objective of our Consortium is to create the first pan-European network of regions based on an interregional value chain in the field of sport. The goal is to raise and stabilize the standards of sports policies by focusing on three main outcomes:

- social inclusion
- digitalization
- business creation

In general terms, we believe that the primary objective of the best sports policies should focus on the possibility for every citizen (regardless of their economic and social status, origin or gender) to be active throughout their lives. Adapting solutions to circumstances that impede the achievement of the objective. For this reason, we must work together to demonstrate that sport is a cross-cutting public



policy, capable of positively impacting the development of European society because:

1. Sport and its practice are rights that serve people's health.
2. Sport is a force capable of facilitating education and personal development, conveying positive values.
3. Sport is a vehicle for development and social cohesion.
4. Sport generates a positive image for the Regions. Sport must gain political prominence in this decade and become one of the drivers of development: improving the quality of life of the European population, its health, its education, and its social cohesion through sport.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

The SESE – Sharing European Sports Excellence European Project Consortium has already held four meetings:

- February 2023, Province of Drenthe, Netherlands – TransNational Project Meeting & Study Visit organized by the project lead organization, SportsDrenthe;
- March 2024, Rovaniemi, Finland – TransNational Project Meeting organized by the Lapland Universities of Applied Science;
- September 2024, Međimurje County, Croatia – TransNational Project Meeting & Study Visit organized by REDEA, Public Institution for the Development of the Međimurje County, Croatia;



- June 2025, Province of Drenthe, Netherlands – Trans-National Project Meeting organized by the project lead organization, SportsDrenthe.

Furthermore, as a useful dissemination opportunity offered by ACES, Project Leader Hans Derks (of the project lead organization, SportsDrenthe, Netherlands) presented the project at the European conference in the Sala De Gasperi at the European Parliament in Brussels, on 12 December 2024 on the occasion of the ACES Annual Awards GALA.

THE FINAL CONFERENCE

On December 12, 2025, at the conclusion of the Project, coinciding with the ACES Annual Awards GALA in Brussels the day before, ACES hosted the Project's Final Conference (in synergy with its partner EPSI), with the participation of regional and city administrations from across Europe.

The program included:

9:00 am | 10:00 am – SESE EXCELLENCE MODEL PRESENTATION: EXPLANATION AND SPEECHES
 10:00 am | 12:00 pm – SESE MODEL/EBOOK WORKSHOPS (SPORT EXCELLENCE MARKET – BEST PRACTICES EXAMPLES)
 12:00 pm | 12:30 pm – Q&A SESSION AND OPEN DISCUSSION WITH PARTICIPANTS

Finally, ACES was chosen – as the largest global network of cities | communities | regions | Islands of Sport – as the digital home of the online Platform, a precious legacy of this European Project. Thus, allowing new entities and administrations from every European region to approach the Project and aspire to excellence in their policies for sport and citizens.

Schoolyards4Sport

STRENGTHENING SPORTS IN SCHOOLS AND REDEVELOPING SCHOOLYARDS FOR SPORTS

The European project 'Revitalize the Schoolyards for Sport', co-funded by the Erasmus Plus Sport Program, has successfully been concluded. The project, coordinated by L'ORMA of Milan (ormasite.it), involved Deporte para la Educación y la Salud (Spain), the University of Thessaly (Greece), ACES Europe (Belgium), Social Innovation Sports Hub (Portugal) and NGO Nest Berlin (Germany).

ALESSIO DI MAIO (ERASMUS+ PROJECT MANAGER ACES)



The Final Transnational Project Meeting was hosted in Valencia – European Capital of Sport 2011.

The project focused on developing a strategic administrative mechanism to foster local collaborations between sports organizations and schools. This support for municipalities and sports organizations aimed to:

- Transform underused outdoor school spaces into valuable community resources;
- Renovate or create multipurpose school sports areas;
- Establish virtuous public-private partnerships;
- Create a model that can be replicated and exported to other countries;
- Improve the quality and quantity of physical education programs and basic sports offerings;
- Engage the local community in maintaining school spaces through a Community of Practice;
- Facilitate investments by sports organizations to improve the accessibility and quality of school sports facilities;

INADEQUATE SCHOOL SPORTS FACILITIES

Inactivity costs the EU €80.4 billion annually, or 6.2% of all healthcare spending (according to the report 'The economic cost of physical inactivity in Europe' by ISCA & Cebr). This is particularly concerning among younger populations. According to the World Health Organization Update on the

Status of Physical Education in Schools Worldwide, although there are legal requirements for physical education in schools across Europe, actual implementation typically falls short of these obligations. For example, in Italy, students participate in only 66 hours of physical education per year; 35% of them are overweight and 10-12% are obese (1st CONI Sport & Society Report).

The main problem this project aimed to address is the inadequacy of sports facilities, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

PARTNERSHIPS

Municipalities face financial challenges, and there are administrative limitations in promoting public-private partnerships. The recommendations of the European Commission's expert group on health-enhancing physical activity are highly relevant to this project: "Schools and local sports organizations need adequate sports facilities to develop their activities in safe and healthy environments. Partnerships with shared facilities would be beneficial for regular physical education classes, but would also provide new or expanded opportunities for after-school physical activity programs." In this regard, "local authorities should develop efficient models for planning, managing, and financing safe, high-quality physical activities and sports infrastructure, making them accessible to schools."

ACES EUROPE DISSEMINATION CAMPAIGN

As a project partner, ACES Europe worked on a broad dissemination campaign in the last quarter of 2024 and throughout 2025, involving the 'Schoolyards4Sport' project in several ACES Europe events, including the following:

- The Annual ACES Gala Awards in Brussels at the European Parliament, December 12, 2024, the flagship ACES event, alongside the Project's Intensive Ambassador Training, as well as the Transnational Project Meeting attended by representatives of the 'Schoolyards4Sport' Consortium.

For ACES, the chosen Ambassadors were:

- Hans Derks, Sports Project Manager of the Province of Drenthe, Netherlands, European City of Sport 2019
- Klevis Kaso, Deputy Mayor of the City of Vlora, Albania, European City of Sport 2024
- Adem Sever, Sports Manager of the City of Istanbul, Turkey and ACES Asia Delegate 2024-2029

In the context of this meeting, hosted at the ACES International Headquarters in Brussels, with the participa-

tion of numerous administrations from various European countries, including several ACES-certified ones:

- Esch sur Alzette, Luxembourg, European City of Sport 2025
 - Strasbourg, France, European City of Sport 2025
 - The Final TPM (Transnational Project Meeting) in Valencia in May 2025, hosted by the Municipal Sports Foundation of Valencia, which successfully managed the activities of Valencia – European Capital of Sport 2011, was a successful case study with the ideal realization of as per the Protocol, the Administrative Mechanism aims to foster a virtuous synergy between the Municipal Administration, Schools, and Local Sports Associations.
- The following ACES-awarded Administrations participated in this event in Valencia with their valuable projects aligned with the Project's objectives:
- Alcobendas, Spain, European City of Sport 2025 (winner this year of the Golden Flag as Best European City of Sport 2025 and of the Green Flag as the Greenest European City of Sport 2025)
 - Velky Saris, Slovakia, European Town of Sport 2021 (winner of the Golden Flag as Best European Town of Sport 2021)
 - Basauri, Spain, European City of Sport 2024

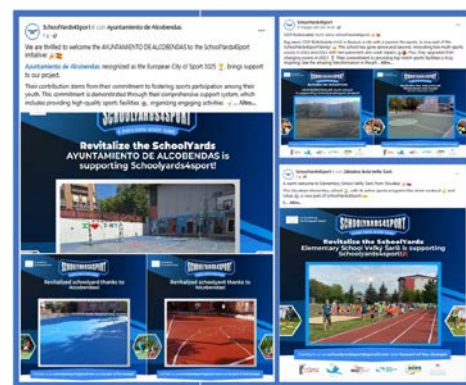
In addition to the in-person events, the official *ACES Italia Magazine* (Italian Delegation of ACES Europe) also featured an article on the Project in July 2025.

THE NUMBERS

The Project has achieved excellent results, with at least 20 cities actively involved in specific promotional events and/or training initiatives, and with municipalities signing Memoranda of Understanding for ongoing initiatives.

Finally, a very high number of European municipalities have been contacted to participate in the Project, which has left behind a detailed and accurate eLearning book (schoolyards4sport.com/courses) for in-depth study of all topics.

For more information, visit schoolyards4sport.com.



EUAPPTIVE ERASMUS+ PROJECT



Co-funded by
the European Union

Promoting active and healthy ageing through digital innovation

As Europe faces the realities of an ageing population, the EUAPPTIVE Erasmus+ project is setting new standards for how digital innovation can empower European seniors to live healthier, more active and socially connected lives. At the core of this initiative is the BeActive app, a tailor-made digital tool designed to encourage their physical activity, improve digital literacy and strengthen integration of seniors in the community.

BERISLAV ČIŽMEK/CBBS

The EUAPPTIVE project has been supported by a diverse consortium of partners, each contributing its unique expertise:

Sport Innovation Hub (Spain): manages project coordination and coordinated the launch of the strategic planning of the EUAPPTIVE challenge;

European Network for Innovation and Knowledge (The Netherlands): contributes to research, app design and dissemination;

University of Southern Denmark (Denmark): leads research and ensures activities are scientifically grounded;

Municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares (Portugal): assists with the recruitment and dissemination, particularly during the pilot phase;

Cuicui Studios (Spain): responsible for the app design and development;

ACES Europe (Belgium): supports recruitment and dissemination across its network.

WHY THE APP MATTERS

The app goes beyond a traditional fitness tracker. By combining gamification, competition, and social features, it turns physical activity into a shared community experience. Seniors have been invited to log their walking, cycling, or other everyday activities, earning recognition for their efforts and contributing to collective city-wide results. The design of the app was intuitive and accessible, making it

“EUAPPTIVE represents
a major step forward in
promoting active ageing”

Dr. Marcos López Flores (CEO Sport Innovation Hub)



easier for older adults to engage with technology while also improving their confidence in digital tools.

The BeActive app is more than a tool for recording steps. It's a platform that:

Promotes Health-Enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA): motivating seniors to move more in ways that fit their lifestyle;
Builds Community: encouraging teamwork, friendly competition, and shared goals across generations;
Improves Digital Literacy: helping older adults gain confidence in using apps and digital platforms;
Supports Sustainability: by rewarding eco-friendly activities like walking and cycling, it highlights the link between healthy ageing and greener living.

Hugo Alonso, General Secretary of ACES Europe commented: "As a key partner in the EUAPPTIVE project, ACES Europe was proud to lead the Dissemination and Communication Work Package. By the dissemination among our network of cities, regions and municipalities across Europe, we were supporting EUAPPTIVE project and giving broad visibility and stronger participation in the #BeActive Challenge 2025."

SPOTLIGHT ON THE #BEACTIVE CHALLENGE 2025

The highlight of EUAPPTIVE's activities this year is the #BeActive Challenge 2025, running from July to September 2025. Open to municipalities across Europe, this three-month initiative transforms daily movement into a collective effort for health, sustainability, and European solidarity.

Here's how it works: citizens download the BeActive app and record their daily physical activity – whether walking to the shop or cycling to work. Every step and every kilometre counts toward their city's total performance. The Challenge has been structured in three one-month stages, with progress tracked and celebrated at both the community and at European level.

Cities like Town of Lepoglava, Vila Nova de Poiares, Kocasinan or Gijón competed, showcasing their commitment to healthier lifestyles and eco-friendly practices. The Challenge also aligned with the European Week of Sport 2025 (September 23-30), giving municipalities the chance to strengthen their profile as forward-looking, community-oriented places to live.

Dr. Marcos López Flores, CEO of Sport Innovation Hub (SIH) and the lead partner in the project, emphasizes its significance: "As the lead partner in the EUAPPTIVE project, we are excited to be at the forefront of an initiative that represents a major step forward in promoting health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) among the elderly population, combining the power of digital technology with the principles of social inclusion and environmental consciousness. EUAPPTIVE represents a major step forward in promoting active ageing, combining digital innovation with social inclusion and environmental awareness. The #BeActive Challenge has shown how technology can bring communities together, making healthier living both engaging and sustainable."

By combining research-based strategies with user-friendly technology, EUAPPTIVE is redefining how seniors can stay active and connected. The app and the #BeActive Challenge demonstrated the power of digital tools to promote health, community and sustainability, all while making everyday activity more rewarding.

As the Challenge kicked off in July 2025, EUAPPTIVE partners invited municipalities and citizens across Europe to get moving, compete and celebrate healthier living across Europe. Every step counts – for individuals, for communities and for a more active Europe.

CONCLUSION

EUAPPTIVE is a forward-thinking initiative addressing the challenges of aging in Europe. Through the collaboration of its partners and the integration of innovative approaches, EUAPPTIVE has implemented a new standard for active ageing in Europe, improving health outcomes and building stronger, more connected communities for years to come.

Dr. López Flores concludes: "EUAPPTIVE project is a testament to commitment of all the partners in consortium to innovation and well-being. Through the collaboration of its partners and the integration of innovative approach, EUAPPTIVE is setting a new standard for active ageing in Europe, improving health outcomes and building stronger, more connected communities. We are positive that EUAPPTIVE will make a lasting contribution to promoting active ageing, enhancing social inclusion and fostering healthier, more connected communities across Europe."

AIVA 2025 IN MACERATA

Best video award for Hungarian Community of Veszprem-Balaton

The ACES International Video Awards (AIVA) ceremony was held with great success as part of the 15th Edition of the Overtime Festival, featuring the participation of administrations, institutions, and representatives from four continents.

LUCA PARMIGIANI



After the press conference held in Venice during the Venice International Film Festival, the two-day event in Macerata featured two main moments:

October 10: A Round Table on audiovisual media dedicated to the themes of Culture, Sport, and Tourism in the digital age, attended by Italian and European administrations and institutions;

October 11: The awards ceremony at the Teatro Lauro Rossi, attended by students from Macerata's schools, who brought enthusiasm and curiosity to the event.

Milestone

This year's edition marked a historic milestone: for the first time, the main prize for Best Overall Video

was awarded to a foreign administration – Veszprem-Balaton (Hungary) – whose video was judged by the jury as the best overall in terms of artistic quality, communicative value, and emotional impact.

The Audience Award for Best Video went to the Municipality of Mariánské Lázně (Czech Republic), which won over the more than 300 students present in the theater.

International openness

"This edition represented a moment of growth and international openness for our network", said Vincenzo Lupattelli, President of ACES Italia. "The language of sports audiovisual media proves capable of transcending borders, uniting people and communities



through sporting and cultural values combined with the expressive power of audiovisual storytelling.”
Behind the scenes, a high-level network of collaborations made the success of the event possible: ICSC, Pindaro Eventi, Cineguida, the Veneto Region, and the European Parliament Office in Italy, with the support of CONI, Sport e Salute, CIP, ANCI, USSI, the City of Macerata, EPSI, World Football Summit, La Vuelta, Decathlon, and GSIC.

“The language of sports audiovisual media proves capable of transcending borders and uniting people and communities”

Vincenzo Lupattelli (President ACES Italia)

AIVA 2025 Awards List

Prize 01 – ‘Digital Creativity’

Jesolo | Mariánské Lázně

Prize 02 – ‘Sports Tourism’

Agropoli | Novalja

Prize 03 – ‘Link to the Social, Cultural, and Territorial Context’

Naples | Samborondon – Corriere dello Sport Special Award (Venice, August 30)

Prize 04 – ‘Relevance to the Values of Sport’

Veneto Region | Primorje-Gorski Kotar County

Prize 05 – ‘Promotion of Sporting Values and Activities’

Torrejon de Ardoz | Alpe Cimbra Community | Chihuahua

Prize 06 – ‘Social Inclusion and Promotion of Fair Play’

Liguria Region – Veneto Region Special Award (Venice, August 30)

Prize 07 – ‘Emotional Impact’

Erice | Manta

Prize 08 – ‘Sport & Sustainability’

Trebinje | Sakarya

Prize 09 – ‘Project Idea’ – Decathlon Special Award

Seregno

Prize 10 – ‘Best Overall Video’ – Veszprem-Balaton

Istituto per il Credito Sportivo e Culturale Special Award (Venice August 30)

Prize 11 - Audience Award for Best Video

Mariánské Lázně (Czech Republic)



ACES DESTINATION MOUNTAIN

Trentino mountains host European summit on sports and sustainability

On 26 July 2025, the Trentino mountains became the beating heart of European mountain sports with 'ACES – Destination Mountain', an international event organized by the ACES – World Capitals and Cities of Sport Federation, the Alpe Cimbra Tourist Consortium, and the European Community of Sport 2025, led by the Municipality of Folgaria.

LUCA PARMIGIANI

The gathering brought together European mountain towns and regions recognized by ACES in recent years, with the aim of fostering structured dialogue between local governments, sports organizations, tourism operators, and key stakeholders.

INSIGHTS FROM FOLGARIA

The summit highlighted several pressing themes for the future of mountain regions:

- *Sport and infrastructure of tomorrow*: a call to transform ski resorts into year-round, multifunctional sports hubs;
- *Event legacy*: using major sporting events, such as the upcoming Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics, as catalysts for social and urban development;
- *Climate adaptation*: shifting from seasonal tourism to resilient, multi-seasonal models in response to climate change;



- **Circular economy:** advancing recycling practices and ensuring sustainable management of mountain facilities;
- **Culture and identity:** reinforcing the role of sport in preserving local heritage, combating depopulation, and fostering social and generational inclusion.

BUILDING A EUROPEAN MOUNTAIN SPORTS NETWORK

Delegations from more than ten ACES-recognized destinations attended, including Maribor (Slovenia), Sestriere (Italy), Kayseri (Turkey), Rovaniemi (Finland), Livigno (Italy), Encamp (Andorra), Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (Croatia), Valsesia-Scopello (Italy), and Alpe Cimbra-Folgaria (Italy). Together, these locations represent over 1,000 km of ski slopes, around 350 ski lifts, and an estimated 7-8 million visitors annually. This collective heritage of infrastructure, expertise, and tourism models positions Europe's mountain



EUROPEAN MANIFESTO FOR THE MOUNTAIN

COHESION FOR THE FUTURE - FOLGARIA, JULY 25-27, 2025

We, administrators, technicians, academics, and representatives of sports, economic, and cultural institutions, gathered in Folgaria for the first meeting of ACES - Mountain Destination, share the urgency and the responsibility of building a new paradigm for European mountain communities, with sport as a driver of cohesion, sustainability, and innovation.

In a context marked by profound climate, economic, and social changes, mountain must become space of resilience, opportunity and a shared vision. The challenges that emerged during the discussion – climate change, depopulation, environmental sustainability, tourism pressure, and the legacy of major sporting events – must be addressed with new tools and multilevel approaches.

With this Manifesto, we intend to define shared guidelines for a viable, equitable and regenerative future for high-altitude areas.

- 1. Sports and Infrastructure for the Mountains of the Future**
 - Encourage the development of multifunctional ski areas, offering diversified activities year-round, where is sustainable and consistent with actual accommodation capacity and tourist demand.
 - Promote universal accessibility and support, where appropriate, seasonal adaptation and technological innovation, highlighting local specificities.
 - Encourage the multifunctional and seasonal use of ski slopes, promoting their summer use for activities such as mountain biking and hiking.
 - Promote cable cars and ski lifts as tools for gentle, inclusive, and environmentally friendly mobility, capable of reducing the environmental impact compared to other means of mountain transport.
 - Transform high-altitude resorts from geographical limitations into competitive advantages for competitive and professional sports by welcoming elite athletes and/or teams.
- 2. Legacy of Events and Territorial Development**
 - Use sporting events as catalysts for investment and urban regeneration, respecting the identity of each territory.
 - Promote projects capable of generating tangible impacts (infrastructure, transportation) and intangible legacies (social cohesion, culture, education).
 - Support multilevel governance models that involve public-private partnerships and provide for reinvestment tied to social goals.
- 3. Climate and Adaptation: Resilience Strategies**
 - Address climate change with immediate adaptation policies and long-term visions.
 - Combine safety and environmental protection, promoting technological solutions compatible with mountain ecosystems.
 - Reflect on water use in areas affected by climate stress, integrating efficiency and sustainability criteria.
 - In particular, recognize that the water used for artificial snow, returns to the natural cycle, contributing, once melted, to the replenishment of aquifers and the flow of watercourses in spring, when water availability is often most critical.
- 4. Circular Economy and Sustainable Sport**
 - Promote the circular economy throughout the sports sector, encouraging good practices in production, recycling, and reuse.
 - Encourage the creation of sustainable local ecosystems by engaging businesses, schools and institutions in virtuous cooperation processes.
- 5. Identity, Culture and Community**
 - Promote sport as an element of identity, society, and culture, capable of connecting local traditions to the contemporary world.
 - Combat depopulation and support mountain residences, strengthening the positive trends and virtuous models already in place.
 - Promote social and generational inclusion through sports policies aimed at families, the elderly, young people, and people with disabilities.
- 6. Inclusion**

Inclusion means sport for all, with attention and sensitivity to people with disabilities – because "sport for all" is a choice of education and cultural values, as well as sporting values; it's a training that must be a normal part of our way of thinking and acting. Sustainable sport means sustainable for all and sustainable in nature, since only environments like the mountains or the sea – extreme by their very nature – can offer emotions and motivation that are difficult to replicate in an urban setting.

We are committed to: networking, sharing experiences and developing common tools to address the challenges of contemporary mountain life. This Manifesto is a first step toward a shared European strategy that places sport, cohesion and sustainability at the heart of mountain areas. ACES - Worldwide Capital and Cities of Sport Federation, Alpe Cimbra, the Municipality of Folgaria, and all the signatory organizations are committed to continuing this journey, supporting mountain communities that choose to look to the future with vision, expertise and courage.

Signatory organizations who contributed to the drafting of the Manifesto

Alpe Cimbra - Folgaria (Italy) - European Community of Sport 2025
 Encamp (Andorra) - European Town of Sport 2020
 Kayseri (Turkey) - City of Sport 2024
 Livigno (Italy) - European Town of Sport 2019
 Maribor (Slovenia) - European Town of Sport 2018
 Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (Croatia) - European Region of Sport 2026
 Sestriere (Italy) - European Town of Sport 2020
 Sestriere (Italy) - Candidate European Town of Sport 2020
 Valsesia-Scopello (Italy) - European Community of Sport 2016
 ANEP - Associazione Nazionale Esercenti Funivie
 Comitato Italiano Paralimpico - Trento
 Istituto del Credito Sportivo e Culturale S.p.A.
 Professione Montagna
 Scire Magazine
 TSM - Trentino School of Management
 Università di Trento

regions as laboratories of sustainable development through sport.

PARTNERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The event welcomed high-profile institutional and sporting stakeholders. The Milano-Cortina 2026 Foundation, organizer of the upcoming Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, granted official patronage as part of the Cultural Olympiad 26.

Other contributors included the Italian Paralympic Committee (CIP), ANEP – the National Association of Cableway Operators, Energia Pura, the Trentino School of Management (TSM), the University of Trento, and the Institute for Sports and Cultural Credit S.p.A., who shared valuable insights on funding models and local development strategies.

Media coverage was provided by Scire Mag and Professione Montagna, leading outlets in alpine sports and mountain tourism.

An official report will follow, summarizing key outcomes, pilot projects, and practical guidelines. It will be circulated across the ACES network and shared with international organizations such as UNESCO, the European Commission, and UN Tourism, laying the foundation for a stronger, structured alliance of mountain destinations united by sport and innovation.

ACES BEST PRACTICES

Handbook showcasing the experiences of Sports Territories

In collaboration with the Italian city of Ascoli Piceno the first ACES Best Practices Handbook has been edited, marking a new step forward in the promotion and enhancement of sports policies developed by ACES-awarded territories.

ACES ITALIA

The publication collects the most significant experiences implemented by cities, communities and regions that have received ACES titles over the years, with the goal of providing a concrete reference model for local administrators, sports operators and professionals.

This first edition features 40 administrations from four continents – Europe, America, Asia and Africa – confirming the international dimension and increasingly global character of the ACES network.

Every good practice – large or small – can serve as an example and an inspiration to build more active and united communities





The selected experiences range from major sports capitals to small local communities, demonstrating that commitment to sport and well-being can thrive anywhere, regardless of size or resources.

SIX THEMATIC SECTIONS

The handbook, edited thanks to the collaboration of the Italian city of Ascoli Piceno, European City of Sport 2025, was created to share best practices that promote sport as a driver of well-being, inclusion and sustainable development. Each project was selected in collaboration with ACES member cities based on criteria such as innovation, social impact, accessibility and replicability.

The collection does not focus only on large events or infrastructure projects: it also highlights small local initiatives capable of transforming everyday life through sport. To ensure a structured and comprehensive overview, the handbook is divided into six thematic sections, each representing a key dimension of contemporary sports policy:

- *Inclusivity* – Promoting access to sport for all population groups, combating discrimination, and supporting marginalized communities;
- *Health and Well-being* – Encouraging active lifestyles, mental health, and ethical values in sport;
- *Social Impact* – Highlighting projects that foster community engagement, integration, education, and social cohesion;



- *Innovation* – Emphasizing the use of technology, digitalization, and the creation of new or renewed public spaces for sport;
- *Sustainability* – Focusing on environmental, economic, and social sustainability in sports policies and events;
- *Sports Tourism and Economic Development* – Showcasing initiatives that promote tourism, job creation, and local economic growth through sport.

YEARLY UPDATE

Published also in digital format, the handbook has been translated into English and Spanish to encourage its international dissemination and facilitate the sharing of experiences among territories across continents. It will be updated every year with new contributions from ACES Cities and Communities of Sport worldwide, reflecting the dynamism and continuous evolution of the ACES network, now active in Europe, America, Africa and Asia.

With this first edition, ACES reaffirms its mission: to promote an open, inclusive and sustainable sports culture, where every good practice – large or small – can serve as an example and an inspiration to build more active and united communities.

Looking ahead

ACES' GLOBAL VISION AND AFRICAN EXPANSION

Continuing to look towards the future, in 2027 ACES plans to surpass 6,000 cities in its global network, including numerous African capitals and cities. This expansion is a direct realization of Gian Francesco Lupattelli's strategic vision – first conceived during a quiet morning in Madrid – and reflects ACES' commitment to extending its reach and impact worldwide.

ANGELA MELO (ACES AFRICA REPRESENTATIVE)



The benefits of sport as a catalyst for positive change and as an enabler of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – particularly in areas such as health, gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment, and reducing inequalities – are well established. Well-crafted sport policies, involving the participation of all stakeholders, can transform lives and uplift communities.

ACES is dedicated to supporting activities and initiatives that are fit for purpose. Following the appointment of the ACES Africa representative, the organization has engaged in ongoing dialogues with several African nations to support national sport policies, grassroots initiatives, gender equality, and youth empowerment.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Based on a conceptual note on ACES Africa and draft Memorandum of Understanding prepared, dialogues have been established with Kenya, Botswana, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo,



Angela Melo, the representative for ACES Africa.

Well-crafted sport policies can transform lives and uplift communities

Cameroon, Somalia, Togo, Zambia, Madagascar and Ivory Coast. Memoranda of Understanding have already been signed with some of these countries, outlining future areas of cooperation in alignment with their priorities and ACES and UNESCO 'Fit for Life' programme.

ACES is also exploring potential collaboration with the African Union on Traditional Sports and Games (TSG) and aims to strengthen cooperation with African associations promoting TSG. This would support cultural diversity through sport on a continental level and complement ongoing discussions with the European Association of TSG.

ACES has actively participated in key events such as the Adapted and Inclusive Sport in Africa Conference, organized by the Cameroon Sports Organization, and the Forum on Gender Equality in and through PEPAS (Physical Education,

Physical Activity, and Sport), held in Cape Town. ACES is further demonstrating its support for areas that require increased investment and multi-level cooperation.

COMMUNITY SPORT

Additionally, ACES is engaging with 'Mammies Football' organizations in South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia, Togo, and Kenya. These grassroots teams focus on promoting the health of older women, fostering mental and physical wellbeing, encouraging solidarity, reducing social isolation, and improving quality of life through sport.

This focus on community sport is a core aspect of ACES' mission and influence. The impact of African collaboration with ACES is visibility, through increased prominence across the 6,000-city network, the sharing of good practices, peer learning, and cooperative projects between twin cities – facilitating joint fundraising and development initiatives. ACES members, led by President and founder Lupattelli, are passionate advocates of sport, physical education, and physical activity. Their work is characterized by both seriousness and joy.

Looking ahead, we hope one day to see the establishment of an Africa ACES Gala, celebrating the achievements and fostering further engagement across the continent.

How sport and physical activity strengthen individuals, communities and systems

SOCIETAL RESILIENCE THROUGH SPORT

We live in challenging times, facing multiple and interlinked societal issues. More and more, we talk about resilience – the capacity to anticipate, withstand, recover from, adapt to, and even transform in the face of adversity. Resilience applies to individuals (personal strength and adaptability), to neighbourhoods and cities (social and spatial resilience), and to systems (institutional and policy resilience).

ANDRÉ DE JEU

In an era marked by health inequalities, mental pressure, social polarization, ageing populations, and climate stress, the question becomes urgent: How do we build the types of resilience that truly work – here and now, and for the future?

Sport and physical activity can be a powerful engine for that resilience. This article explores the roles that local governments, regional collaborations, and national and

international partners (such as ACES, UNESCO, Eurocities, OAS and others) can play. It is written for policymakers, administrators, and partners working to strengthen societal resilience through sport and physical activity.

As a guiding framework, we refer to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide clear indicators for broad well-being – a ‘wide approach’ that connects health, inclusion, sustainability, and participation across all sectors.

FROM INDIVIDUAL TO SYSTEM: THREE LAYERS OF RESILIENCE

Individual level

Resilience starts with the individual. Sport and physical activity not only improve physical fitness and motor skills, but also strengthen mental resilience, self-confidence, and social skills. Regular activity reduces stress and anxiety, improves sleep and focus, and helps people cope better with challenges. Those who are active experience greater control over their own lives – a vital foundation for personal resilience.

Resilience starts with the individual. Sport and physical activity not only improve physical fitness and motor skills, but also strengthen mental resilience, self-confidence, and social skills



Community level

At the community level, sport and physical activity build social networks and trust. Sports clubs, local walking or cycling groups and other active mobility initiatives bring people together and strengthen cooperation and mutual support. These informal 'response chains' within neighbourhoods make it easier to react to challenges and crises, increasing safety, reciprocity, and inclusion.

System level

At the systemic level, resilience depends on how our environments and organizations are designed. A movement-friendly environment with accessible facilities – swimming pools, sports parks, schoolyards – is the foundation. Stable institutions such as sports clubs, community hubs, and local coordinators (e.g., neighbourhood sports coaches) provide continuity and adaptability. A city built this way can absorb shocks while staying focused on what truly matters: broad well-being and long-term societal resilience.

Resilience is not a byproduct of sport – it is what sport and physical activity inherently teach: repeated effort under pressure, failure and retrying, teamwork, goal-setting,

and mutual support. These micro-level skills translate into macro-level outcomes in health, learning, work, and social cohesion.

WHY SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ARE UNIQUE INSTRUMENTS OF RESILIENCE

A double dividend

Sport and physical activity offer a 'double dividend': every minute of movement produces both immediate and long-term benefits. In the short term – less stress, more energy, and improved mood. Over time – reduced healthcare demand, greater self-reliance, and better health. Physical activity is both preventive care and a sustainable investment in resilience.

Low threshold, high reach

Activities like walking, cycling, or playing are accessible to almost everyone. They require little organization or resources. When cities and neighbourhoods are designed to invite movement, everyone benefits – even those who might not identify with 'sport'. In this way, inclusion becomes a natural part of daily life.



Builder of social capital

Sport and physical activity build social capital. Team sports, neighbourhood initiatives, and volunteering create bridges across age, background, and income. They foster trust, cooperation, and empathy – the social glue that strengthens communities.

Resilience in times of crisis

Strong sport networks also enhance community safety and crisis response. Trained volunteers, familiar places, and existing connections are invaluable during heatwaves, floods, or power outages. People know where to go – and how to help each other.

Identity and hope

Sport also fuels identity and hope. Top-level sports, local events, and relatable role models create shared stories of pride and belonging. They give people energy, direction, and confidence in the future — all essential ingredients for a resilient society.

A professional neighbourhood sports coach can serve as a linchpin

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Director of local resilience

Municipalities are the directors of local resilience. They influence nearly every policy domain that shapes a community's ability to adapt – space, health, youth, education, work, safety, and culture. This makes municipalities ideally positioned to use sport and physical activity as connecting forces that link these domains and promote broad well-being.

At the community level, sport and physical activity build social networks and trust

Designing a Physical activity Friendly Environment

The first key lies in the built environment. Municipalities can adopt the '15-minute norm': every resident should have access to a safe place for play, sport, or social activity within a 15-minute walk. Embedding active mobility, greenery, and shade in spatial planning ensures that physical activity becomes part of everyday life and urban quality.

Physical activity as a basic right

Municipalities can also define basic physical skills – swimming, cycling and fall prevention for older adults – as local fundamental rights. These are forms of existential security in motion: they keep people literally and figuratively mobile and independent.

Sport facilities as community hubs

Sports venues can become multi-use community hubs: spaces for rehabilitation or social care during the day, youth sport after school, and culture or social gatherings in the evening. Idle hours become value hours.

A NEIGHBOURHOOD SPORTS COACH AS CONNECTOR

A professional neighbourhood sports coach can serve as a linchpin – connecting healthcare, education, welfare, local businesses, and clubs. By lowering barriers of language, cost, shame, or safety, they help more people participate.

Inclusion, affordability, and simplicity

Municipalities can promote inclusion by using low-threshold entry systems, women-only sessions, role models, and warm referrals from doctors, schools, or community teams. Simplifying bureaucracy helps too: one access point, light licensing for small events, and fewer administrative burdens for volunteers.

Measuring what matters

Comprehensive local sport and physical activity policy requires measuring what truly matters: not just usage hours

or square meters, but reach (who doesn't participate?), behaviour (how often do people move?), effects (health, participation, safety), and experience (trust and well-being). These insights allow municipalities to steer effectively toward a resilient and active community.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION: SCALE CREATES STRENGTH

Stronger together

Resilience increases when municipalities collaborate regionally. Many social challenges transcend municipal borders. Regional partnerships enable shared use of resources, knowledge, and infrastructure, creating greater capacity to achieve sustainable, inclusive, and healthy environments.

Health as a continuous chain

Integrated 'movement pathways' are a good example. In hospitals, general practitioners, physiotherapists, and neighbourhood sports coaches work together in one chain – from medical care to guided exercise to independent activity. This holistic approach strengthens both prevention and recovery.

Data and learning

Regions can jointly collect and analyse data to improve policy. Regional dashboards linking sport, physical activity, and broad well-being help identify opportunities and challenges. Shared evaluation accelerates the scaling-up of successful approaches.

Mobility, climate, and environment

Regional cooperation also enhances sustainable mobility and climate adaptation. Connected cycling routes, shaded walking paths, and water or play spaces contribute not only to active lifestyles but also to livability and resilience to heat and flooding.

Financing together

Joint regional approaches open doors to innovative financing – for instance, impact funding for fall-prevention programmes or joint tenders for energy-efficient facilities. Pooling resources lowers costs, improves quality, and speeds up the transition to sustainable sports infrastructure. Through regional collaboration, scale becomes strength – magnifying the impact of sport and physical activity on health, sustainability, and broad well-being.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT: ENABLING CONDITIONS AND THE LONG TERM VIEW

The national role of ministries

While municipalities deliver implementation, the national government ensures continuity, fairness, and scale. A strong national framework prevents regional inequality and provides certainty for local governments and citizens.

Sport and physical activity as basic services

Sport and physical activity should be legally recognized as basic public services, on par with education and healthcare. They contribute to health, learning opportunities, and social cohesion – and must therefore be embedded in law and policy as essential, not optional.

Sport and physical activity should be legally recognized as basic public services, on par with education and healthcare

Stable and structural funding

Neighbourhood sports coaches, swimming facilities, and sustainability programmes need long-term financial certainty. 'Yo-yo funding' – short-term or one-off grants – undermines capacity and trust. Multi-year investment enables municipalities to plan strategically and build lasting partnerships.

Rewarding system gains

The national level can promote collaboration by unifying budgets across health, social care, and spatial planning. Rather than rewarding isolated sector performance, policy should recognize system gains: lower healthcare costs, higher participation, and better population health achieved through integrated approaches.

Data, monitoring, and knowledge

Effective national policy also requires robust data infrastructure and open monitoring. By combining broad well-being indicators with sport and physical activity data, regions and cities can compare progress, learn, and innovate. Open data empowers local actors and strengthens evidence-based policymaking. In this way, the national government provides



both the enabling conditions and the long-term perspective needed to embed sport and physical activity at the heart of a resilient society.

WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

Learning and accelerating across borders

International cooperation offers cities and regions powerful opportunities to learn, share, and innovate. Challenges such as health, inclusion, sustainability, and liveability are global in nature.

Through international networks, cities can access proven solutions, build partnerships, and amplify their own initiatives.

ACES Worldwide

ACES Worldwide promotes systemic improvement programmes using sport and physical activity as drivers of social development. An ACES award year is not an endpoint or celebration – it is a lever for structural change. Communities are activated, volunteering is strengthened, and events are linked to grassroots sport and civic participation. The ACES framework brings international visibility and attracts partners that help sustain long-term impact.

UNESCO

UNESCO provides a global framework through its programmes on inclusion, anti-discrimination, ethics in sport, and the Fit for Life initiative. For municipalities and regions, UNESCO offers a shared language of equality, human rights, and values-based development. It helps position sport and physical activity not just as ends in themselves, but as instruments for human development. ACES is a proud partner of UNESCO.

Eurocities and other urban networks

Within Eurocities and similar networks, European cities work together for sustainable, healthy, and inclusive urban development. Working groups exchange practical solutions – from the 15-minute city and school streets to open parks, community hubs, and impact measurement using Social Return on Investment (SROI) tools. By learning together, cities avoid repeating mistakes and accelerate the adoption of proven innovations.

Beyond Europe

In many regions, public space is literally the population's 'gym'. Their solutions for safety, heat, and water management offer valuable lessons for Europe. Although resilience



André de Jeu is Director of the Dutch Association of Sports and Municipalities (VSG), Board Member of ACES Worldwide and proud partner of UNESCO and Chair of the Eurocities Working Group on Sustainable, Healthy and Inclusive Cities through Sport.

looks different everywhere, the mechanism is universal: get people moving, learn together, and make systems simple and inclusive.

The collaboration between ACES, the OAS and UNESCO, along with the many cities across Latin America, is a great example of working together to build a resilient society – with the ACES America Week of Sport serving as a powerful illustration of that shared commitment.

And in Africa, ACES Africa, UNESCO, and other African partnerships promote the use of sport and physical activity as an important catalyst for developing life skills, particularly among young people, women, and girls.

INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE: FROM 'CAN' TO 'DARE' TO 'DO'

Ultimately, resilience begins close to home – in daily habits and small victories. Individual strength grows step by step: from can, to dare, to do. Sport and physical activity play a key role because they combine physical skill with mental confidence, giving people a sense of agency over their own lives. The same applies on a societal level: A resilient and vital society is not a sector – it is a way of living together.

ACES Events: purpose-driven

TRANSFORM TERRITORIES THROUGH SPORT

In today's landscape of local public policy, sport has evolved from a complementary activity to a central tool for social transformation. Beyond spectacle or elite competition, sport is now recognized as a strategic vehicle for promoting health, social cohesion, sustainability, responsible tourism, and economic development. Aware of this reality, ACES, as a pioneering organization promoting sport for all, has created ACES Events, a workstream focused on sports events that generate direct and measurable impact in communities.

ACES AMERICA

This initiative, which already includes several well-established formats in Europe and the Americas, represents a natural evolution of ACES' mission: moving from the evaluation and recognition of sports cities to the direct creation of sports experiences designed with values, vision, and legacy.

"Our goal is to leave a tangible mark on the ground through sporting activities that combine not only high-quality standards, but also the core values of ACES and all our partners", says Gian Francesco Lupattelli, President and Founder of ACES.

A PHILOSOPHY WITH INSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Far from being a simple event promoter, ACES Events follows an institutional logic, based on collaboration between public administrations, sports organizations, businesses, and citizens. Each format is designed according to principles that reflect the founding values of ACES:

- *Sport as a universal right*, accessible to everyone regardless of age, gender, or background;

- *Social cohesion and integration*, prioritizing the inclusion of vulnerable groups and promoting equal opportunities;
- *Environmental sustainability and responsibility*, applying principles of active mobility, circular economy, and ecological impact reduction;
- International visibility, helping host territories gain exposure and positioning;
- Socio-economic development, enabling the creation of economic activity in cities.

Each event is conceived not just as a one-off activity, but as a public policy tool that helps activate, communicate, and innovate around sport.

STRATEGIC LINES OF ACES EVENTS

Through ACES Events, cities and institutions can access replicable and adaptable formats, designed to generate impact in the short, medium, and long term. Some of the key events already implemented include:

1. American Week of Sport

Inspired by the successful European Week of Sport, this initiative has been adapted to the Americas with support



from national, regional, and local governments. During one week, thousands of citizens across the continent engage in physical activities, open sessions, community classes, and participatory events.

This week aims to showcase political commitment to physical activity, promote healthy habits, and strengthen collaboration networks among countries, cities, and institutions.

2. W by ACES – International Forum on Women and Sport

This forum responds to an urgent need: promoting gender equality in sport, both at the grassroots level and in leadership spaces. W by ACES offers a professional and collaborative environment where experts from various sectors analyze structural barriers, share best practices, and develop transformative proposals.

The forum has already been held in several cities across Europe and Latin America, becoming an institutional reference for administrations aiming to integrate gender perspectives into their sports policies.

3. 5K Night Run for Sustainability

This urban event is designed as a participatory, healthy experience aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Held at dusk, the run passes through emblematic city landmarks and incorporates sustainability principles such as:

Sport is one of the most powerful tools

Reducing carbon footprint

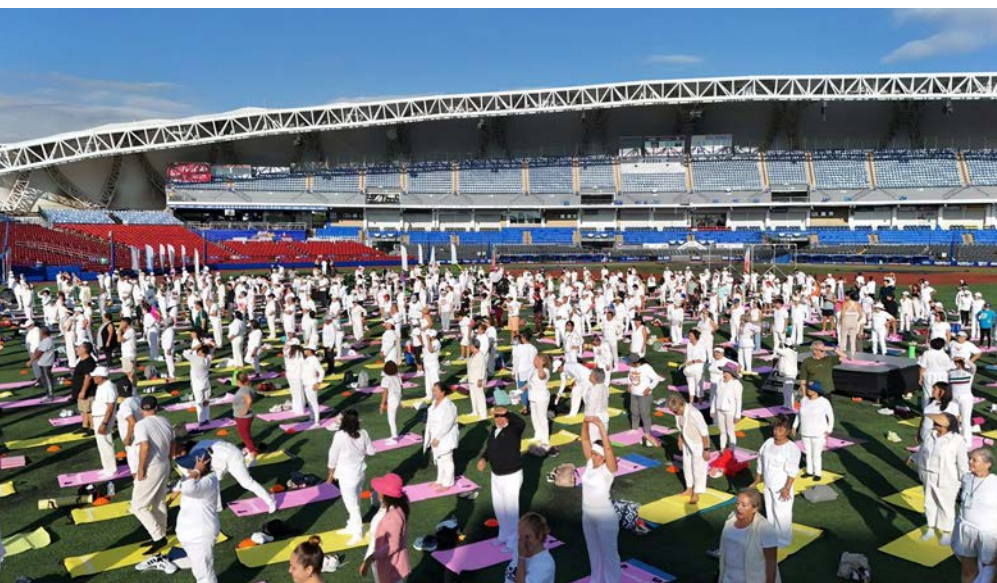
- Using recyclable materials
- Promoting active mobility (public transport, cycling, walking)
- Including categories for seniors, children, and persons with disabilities

Beyond its sporting element, the 5K Night Run serves as a tool for urban regeneration, civic pride, and public space activation.

4. Conferences, Certifications, and tailor-made Events

In addition to the above events, ACES Events organizes and supports:

- Thematic conferences and seminars on sports management, public innovation, or school sports;
- Training and networking sessions for municipal staff and policymakers;
- Quality and sustainability certifications for events and local policies;
- Promotional or commercial activations related to sports tourism or city branding.



Each event can be adapted to the context of the host city, leveraging its strengths and reinforcing its local sports policies.

BENEFITS FOR HOST CITIES

Hosting or participating in an ACES Events initiative offers cities and institutions a strategic opportunity on multiple levels:

- *International visibility*, as events are backed by an entity recognized by the European Parliament and present in over 40 countries;
- *Direct and indirect economic impact*, through sports tourism, citizen engagement, and activation of urban spaces;
- *Institutional reputation*, linking the city brand to positive values such as health, sustainability, inclusion, and innovation;
- *Genuine citizen engagement*, fostering a sense of belonging and strengthening the relationship between governments and residents;
- *Access to an international network* of best practices, technical knowledge, and public-private partnerships.

Additionally, ACES Events provides territories with a proven, flexible methodology that ensures organizational quality, impact evaluation, and legacy creation.

A STEP FURTHER IN ACES' MISSION

With ACES Events, the organization deepens its commitment to supporting cities, regions, and countries that invest in sport as a tool for transformation. Rather than competing with existing actors, this workstream aligns with and complements local sports policies, adding value, visibility, and technical support.

For public institutions, it means having a reliable partner with international experience, capable of translating the principles of sport for all into concrete, visible, and sustainable actions.

CONCLUSION

Now more than ever, cities need tools that promote well-being, strengthen communities, and position themselves on the global stage. When designed with purpose and strategy, sport is one of the most powerful tools available. ACES Events embodies this transformative vision, offering territories events that not only celebrate physical activity, but also create a real, measurable legacy aligned with today's pressing challenges.

ACES Events offer territories events that not only celebrate physical activity, but also create a real, measurable legacy aligned with today's pressing challenges



ACES – TERRITORIES IN MOTION

Sport as a Key Driver for a New Tourism Vision

At this year's TTG Travel Experience in Rimini, one of Europe's most important tourism fairs, the world of sport and tourism met on the same stage to discuss a shared goal: shaping a new, more sustainable way to travel and experience places through sport.

ACES ITALIA

The conference, titled 'ACES – Territories in Motion: Sustainability, Events and Local Promotion through Sport', was organized by ACES in collaboration with Decathlon Italia. It brought together institutions, local authorities, and private companies to explore how sport can regenerate territories, strengthen community identity, and extend the tourist season beyond traditional patterns.

Opening the event, Angela Maceri, B2B Manager at Decathlon Italia, reminded the audience that sport is not only a product to sell but a bridge that connects people and communities. "Our stores are deeply rooted in the territory", she said. "They are part of the community, supporting associations and local initiatives – especially when it comes to organizing events that bring people together through sport."

"Our stores are part of the community, supporting associations and local initiatives, especially when it comes to organizing events that bring people together through sport"

Angela Maceri (B2B Manager Decathlon Italia)



Vincenzo Lupatelli – President of ACES Italia and Angela Maceri – Manager Decathlon Italia B2B.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Debora Miccio, from the Istituto per il Credito Sportivo e Culturale, focused on one of the most concrete aspects of development: access to resources. "Thanks to our zero-interest loans", she explained, "local administrations



“We are investing more and more in sport and tourism as drivers of sustainable growth.”

Rossano Fabbri (San Marino Secretary of State for Sport)

can build or renovate sports facilities, ensuring that sport remains accessible and inclusive for everyone.”

From San Marino, Rossano Fabbri, Secretary of State for Sport, offered a reflection that perfectly captured the spirit of the event: “While our economy has a strong manufacturing base, we are investing more and more in sport and tourism as drivers of sustainable growth.” San Marino, he announced, will become European Community of Sport 2026, confirming its commitment to this vision.

BOOSTING TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY

The international perspective continued with Endrit Hoxha, Deputy Minister for Sport of Albania, who shared the country's ambitious journey within the ACES network: “Tirana 2023, Vlora 2024, and Shkodra 2025 are not coincidences”, he said. “They are part of a clear strategy that uses sport to boost tourism and international visibility. Every year, more visitors come to Albania for sports events – proof that this path works.”

Representing the Liguria Region, soon to be European Region of Sport 2025, Councillor Simona Ferro emphasized how the title is helping to unite the region under one shared goal:



Simona Ferro, Regional Councillor for Sport of Liguria, and Michael Rech, Mayor of Folgaria.



Endrit Hoxha – Deputy Minister of Sport of Albania and Rossano Fabbri – Secretary of State San Marino.



Andrea Fabris – Corporate General Manager Atalanta BC and Elena Carnevali – Mayor of Bergamo.



Councillor for Tourism, Trade and Sport, Emilia Romagna Region Roberta Frisoni.

“Outdoor sports are a key tool to rediscover our territory and to make Liguria a destination for all seasons,” she explained.

ACES – MOUNTAIN DESTINATION MANIFESTO

The conversation then moved to the mountains, with Michael Rech, Mayor of Folgaria, presenting the ‘ACES – Mountain Destination Manifesto’. The document, signed by mountain communities from across Europe, commits to promoting sport as an engine for sustainability, accessibility, and territorial development.

From the city of Bergamo, candidate for European City of Sport 2027, Mayor Elena Carnevali spoke passionately about how sport can transform cities without consuming new land: “We chose to regenerate existing facilities – to give new life to places that already belong to the community.”

“We chose to regenerate existing facilities: to give new life to places that already belong to the community”

Elena Carnevali (Mayor of Bergamo)

Andrea Fabris, General Director of Atalanta B.C., echoed that sentiment: “Our stadium is right in the heart of Bergamo. It’s not just a sports venue, but a living part of the city, a space for social life and well-being.” He also noted that the city’s bike path network now connects directly to Orio al Serio Airport, which welcomes over 17 million passengers every year, making Bergamo a truly accessible sports destination.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Finally, Tiziana Beghin, Councillor for Tourism of Genoa, together with Roberto Lamborghini from SG Plus, shared the impressive results of Genoa 2024 – European Capital of Sport: “More than €47 million in direct economic impact”, they reported, “and an even greater return in terms of energy, participation, and pride. The city will continue along this path, making sport a key pillar of its future tourism strategy.”

Bringing the session to a close, Vincenzo Lupattelli, President of ACES Italia, summed up the spirit of the day with a message that resonated throughout the hall: “Sport is a universal language that unites people and territories. Through sport, we can build a more sustainable, inclusive, and dynamic model of tourism for the future.”

DISCOVER AWOS ACTIVA

AMERICAN WEEK OF SPORT
OFFICIAL APP



3:05 PM



Zapopan
3:05 PM

Daily Activity



26°C

Active calories

435/600

Exercise minutes

23/30

Stand hours

12/12



Recovery

Updated now



Strained



Confidence
80%



See details

ACES OFFICIAL APP



CUSTOM SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR PERFORMANCE NEEDS



SPORT GEAR

REPRESENTATIVE
TEAMS

UNIFORMS


sporelli[®]
TU PERFORMANCE

sporelli.com.mx/contacto