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## EUROPEAN COOPERATION AND WORKERS' SPORTS <sup>(1)</sup>

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### Introduction

Created in 1949, the *Council of Europe*, which has its head-quarters in *Strasbourg* (*France*), is the largest political institution

in *Europe*. It numbers 18 member-countries at present, stretching from *Iceland* to *Turkey*, and its activities affect some 300 million Europeans.

The *Council of Europe* is engaged in a vast task of harmonisation involving numerous fields of human activity, but deliberately excluding questions concerning de-

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<sup>(1)</sup> *International Colloquium on the Gym-Sportive Activities of Workers*, *Oporto* 1966 — PORTUGAL.

fense. The global aim of its action is to contribute towards bringing about a more intimate union among its Member States. It also strives to make a constructive contribution to the work of the *United Nations* and, hence, to the establishment of a better world order.

#### Objectives regarding physical and sports education

The *Cultural Cooperation Council (C. C. C.)*, a specialized body of the *Council of Europe*, is charged with a vast programme of activities related to teaching, cultural and scientific questions; physical and sports education has its place in this programme.

Convinced that top-level competition sport involves essentially the competence of respective Federations, the *C. C. C.* is concerned principally with sport conceived as a means of education and a form of leisure, contributing to the individual's happiness. It carries out its task in this field through the intermediary of the *Committee on Extra-School Education*.

In a «*Declaration of Principle*» on its long-term objectives in regard to physical and sports education, adopted in June 1966, the *C. C. C.*, among other things, asserts:

«Sport... is an exceptional means for the education of the individual... It brings a remedy to the evil effects of industrial civilisation; it is the source of health and equilibrium, it shapes the body, hardens the character, develops team spirit and solidarity. It constitutes an indispensable element in modern man's culture. A particularly efficacious factor for international understanding, it brings individuals together across professions and frontiers. It strengthens the sense of belonging to the same community. It matters therefore to promote its democratization as much as possible (1).»

In defining its long-term aims, the *C. C. C.* mentions first of all the need for helping Europeans «whatever their age, sex, profession or personal means, to appreciate

the value of sport and to practise it throughout their lives».

It recalls that Government bodies, when contributing towards creating «the best conditions under which sport might be practised by all», should keep in mind that «cooperation, as intimate as possible, among those responsible in the various sectors of the community, particularly in education and social affairs, is indispensable (2).

#### Workers' sport

At the same time as this «*Declaration of Principle*», the *C. C. C.* has approved proposals by the *Extra-School Education Committee* for long-term action, the general orientation of which may be summed up in the formula «*sports for all*». Sports for workers naturally find their place in it and, because of their social aspects, interest other specialized agencies of the *Council of Europe*.

In the course of the past few years, a whole series of writings has been devoted to this issue. A Working Group concerned with workers' sports having recommended, in June 1933, that the *C. C. C.* consider, among other things, the *role of physical and sports education in apprentice training*, a european course was organized to deal with this topic in *Liège* in March 1964 (3).

Lectures given by outstanding experts — Mme. Robaye-Geelen, Messrs. Per-Olaf Åstrand, Le Boulch, Delmotte, Houte, Günther Lüschen, Maurice Verhaegen and René Lebrun — have permitted reaching precise conclusions and recommendations. One of the latter is aimed at inviting Governments and other competent authorities to adopt laws or regulations introducing physical and sports education in the basic training of apprentices. In what concerns training programmes, it is specified that these should simultaneously aim at general physical education, training in movements specific to each profession (comprising the

(2) Ibid.

(3) See Report, Doc. CCC/EES (64) 34 Revised.

(1) Sec Doc. CCC/EES (66) 33.

related safety aspects) and preparation for leisure sports.

Another part of the conclusions deals with the means of undertaking the setting of staffs, installations, organization in enterprises, information and publicity. Those interested in this issue will find details in the report above mentioned.

As to research, the C. C. C. entrusted a French expert to draft a *synthesis of international works concerning workers' physical training* and a Swedish expert a study on the problems of *sport-work relationship* more particularly conceived in regard to

leisure. The first of these studies is practically finished; the second will be soon. Both will be undoubtedly edited in due course under the auspices of the C. C. C.

### Conclusions

According to what has been said above the essential preoccupation of the C. C. C. regarding workers' sport, is of an educational order; it is a question of allowing a large proportion of the population to attain a balanced life and personal development.

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