

*The Sport for All Committee Report, 2009*

# The Sport for All Committee – Conclusions and Proposals

Summary

Summarized by the Danish Ministry of Culture

## Contents

<b>Background</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Recreational sports and life phases</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Children ('the dependents'): Focus on good sports environments .....	8
Children ('the dependents'): Better connections between the involved actors .....	8
Children ('the dependents'): More structural initiatives aimed at increasing physical activity .....	8
Teenagers ('the independents'): Maintaining their interest in sports .....	9
Teenagers ('the independents'): More social, fun and flexible sports opportunities .....	9
Adults (the 'free I-phase'): Greater focus on flexible sports opportunities .....	9
Adults (parents): More sports opportunities for the entire family .....	10
Middle-aged (the 'free II-phase'): Opportunities tailored for those unaccustomed to sports .....	10
Seniors: More visible opportunities .....	11
Gender differences in participation in sports.....	11
New patterns in sports participation challenge sports clubs .....	13
Increased cooperation between sports clubs, private actors and the state and municipalities .....	13
<b>Sports and exercise in the workplace</b> .....	<b>13</b>
The new role of the municipalities regarding health promotion and prevention .....	14
Strong municipal administrations that balance interests .....	14
Health problems increase the focus on sports in day-care institutions and schools .....	14
The need for the coordination of the state sports policy .....	14
Modernization of sports halls.....	15
The dynamic operation of public sports facilities .....	16
The competition between clubs and commercial sports enterprises.....	16
Up-to-date gymnasiums .....	16
Upgrading schoolyards and other outdoor areas.....	17
The interplay between the needs of elite and recreational sports.....	17
Sports facilities in residential areas must be included in urban planning.....	17
The geographical distribution of sports facilities .....	17
Risk of social barriers.....	17
The focus of sports policy on commercial facilities.....	17

Improved access to – and presentation of – the nature and green areas .....	18
Consideration to organized sports in the nature and the city .....	18
The planning system must promote sports and physical activity .....	18
Meeting the needs of self-organized sports.....	18
<b><i>Health and recreational sports</i></b> .....	<b>18</b>
Social disparities in health and the exercise of physical activity .....	19
The increased health awareness has an impact on sports clubs .....	19
The need for multi-pronged measures towards physically inactive adults .....	19
Children and youth quit and become inactive .....	19
Development of health-related partnerships and cooperation .....	20
Healthy food and recreational sports.....	20
Quality control of targeted health-related opportunities .....	20
Understanding and respect for the special limitations and potential of sports clubs .....	20
The need for sports in secondary education programmes .....	21
<b><i>The social capaciousness of recreational sport</i></b> .....	<b>21</b>
General disparities in participation in sports in Denmark.....	22
Need for capacious, universal opportunities to engage in sport .....	22
Need for specifically tailored opportunities to participate in sports .....	22
Need for anchoring projects and an increased focus on funding for operations .....	23
<b><i>42 proposals</i></b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b><i>Sports for children and youth</i></b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b><i>Facilities – development and use</i></b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b><i>Sports in planning</i></b> .....	<b>32</b>

## *Background*

There is a solid basis for recreational sports in Denmark, which can be defined as the sum total of the sports and exercise activities of the general population. Denmark practically has the world record in sports facilities per capita. Sports organizations and clubs enjoy a high level of public support. There is a well-developed club culture, including a great number of voluntary leaders and a long list of opportunities to engage in sports and exercise offered by commercial enterprises (e.g. fitness centres) and recreational areas. The level of participation in the general population in sports and exercise is high.

Sport is changing rapidly and becoming ever broader. New actors are constantly emerging. The promotion of health and preventive measures plays a more prominent role in the reasons indicated for engaging in sports and promoting recreational sports; a tendency also seen internationally, where the EU and WHO have been among the voices calling for sports and exercise to be placed at the top of the agenda as part of health policy. And the patterns of participation in sports are changing in the general population.

That was the background for the government decision to establish the Sport for All Committee on July 3, 2007. The committee received a mandate to analyze the significance of these current features of development in recreational sports and to provide proposals for promoting participation in sports among the general population on the background of this analysis.

The Danish sports model has traditionally depended on support from the state to sports organizations via national lottery moneys and municipal support for local club activities and facilities via the General Education Act (*folkeoplysningsloven*). The development involving a greater number of actors and better access to recreational areas provides new exercise opportunities.

The general tendencies in the general development in society and the participation of the population in sports raise new and greater challenges for the actors.

The most significant developments since the publication of *Recreational Sports in Denmark*, the report written by the previous Sport for All Committee in 1987, have been:

- fundamental changes in the exercise and sports-related habits of the general population. Sports used to be something children and youth did in their spare time. Now, sports attract all age groups. At the same time, there are changes in the sport and exercise patterns among youth and adults and the activities they choose, just as self-organized exercise activities in the urban space, green areas and the nature – together with commercial recreational sport enterprises – play an increasing role as the providers of sports activities.
- increased focus on the health potential in sports for the individual and on the political agenda as a result of lower levels of physical activity in working life and the everyday activities of the general population. At the same time, there is tangible documentation of the health risks and socio-economic consequences of physical inactivity.
- growth in the market share and significance of commercial sports enterprises for recreational sport and the subsequent challenges in relation to the traditional role of club life, the

formation of the state and municipal sports policy as well as the condition of the public sports facilities.

On the basis of the mandate for the committee's work, the Sport for All Committee has dealt with these general features of the development in Danish sports and drafted proposals and recommendations designed to promote participation in sport in the general population. The committee's work has been structured by a number of general themes. Together, these themes reflect the general features of the developments in recreational sports. Structuring the report in five thematic chapters reflects this.

*The Sport for All Committee wants to respect the great significance of the contributions made by volunteers to club life, the value of club life to society and its special character, as well as to promote participation in sport in general by also including actors and initiatives outside of club life which can contribute to reaching this goal .*

As regards health, the everyday activities of club sports are just one of the elements regarding the potential for sport to promote physical activity. The commercial enterprises, school sports, the workplace, evening schools, social clubs and patient associations, together with general structural initiatives in traffic, urban and landscape planning, also play a significant role in the political strategies for increasing the level of physical activity in the general population.

The Sport for All Committee has identified and prioritized three general challenges for recreational sports: firstly, maintaining and increasing the high level of participation in the Danish population in sports and exercise; second, to specifically motivate children and youth, teenagers in particular, to do more sports and exercise. And third, to get the socially vulnerable and groups that are weak at sports to engage in more sports and exercise.

### **The positive side-effects of sports**

Recreational sports build on three fundamental pillars:

- a cultural/democratic dimension,
- a social dimension and
- a health dimension.

The three dimensions are weighted differently, depending on how and when the individual engages in sports and exercise.

When children and youth participate in club sports, all three dimensions are weighted considerably; as opposed to an adult going for a jog in the woods, which first and foremost has consequences for health.

It is important that recreational sports include opportunities covering all three dimensions, even though they do not always occur with the same weight and at the same time.

The positive side-effects of sports become apparent in relation to all three dimensions. The Committee has chosen to emphasize a number of positive side-effects:

- Sports can provide excitement, playfulness and pleasure in connection with movement

- Sports can promote health and have preventive effects
- Sports can help with the inclusion and integration of vulnerable groups
- Sports can help ensure access to experiences in the nature and landscape values
- Sports can help in relation to learning and the development of social skills
- Sports can help with the development of non-formal and informal learning through the development of skills of volunteer leaders, coaches etc, which can be transferred to e.g. the labour market
- Sports can contribute to the ‘cohesion’ of society through the development of trust between people, and club sports can promote democratic practice
- Sports have potential in relation to the so-called experience economy and commercial development

The positive side-effects are all significant in relation to society and the needs and expectations of the individual in relation to recreational sports, although they can be difficult to measure. The most easily measured potential effect of physical activity is in relation to health.

### **Recreational sport as interaction between culture policy and other policy areas**

The Sport for All Committee is therefore of the opinion that recreational sports play a significant role both in relation to culture policy and as a bridge-builder to other policy areas; e.g. sports and exercise have considerable potential in relation to health policy, social policy, integration policy, environmental policy etc.

In the future, Danish sports policy should therefore include all of these aspects.

There is a need to support the voluntary, non-profit tradition that has traditionally characterized recreational sports in Denmark.

Without club sports, both the intensity and extent of participation in sports would fall considerably. At the same time, the Sport for All Committee finds that in many contexts, it can be advantageous – as one element among many, e.g. in order to solve challenges relating to health and social policy – to establish concrete, binding collaboration between the society and the respective actors in the area of sports. However, it is important to consider the conditions the individual actors are operating under. For example, it is important to consider that club sports depend on volunteers who do not necessarily have the capacity and abilities necessary to meet challenges of a social nature. For example, it is also important in relation to cooperation with commercial enterprises to consider the fact that they are operating under commercial conditions.

On this basis, the report will examine the most significant challenges for promoting recreational sports in five thematic chapters:

- Sports and life phases
- The actors in the world of sport

- Recreational sports facilities
- Sports and health
- The social capaciousness of sport

## ***Recreational sports and life phases***

The Danes are among the most athletically active peoples in Europe; nevertheless, there are considerable challenges related to the motivation and opportunities available to the various groupings in society to engage in sports and exercise. The contents and organization of the preferred activities as well as the time spent on sports varies considerably in the different phases of life. On the basis of a national study entitled *Danish Exercise and Sports Habits – 2007* ('*Danskernes motions- og sportsvaner 2007*'), it is possible to trace the participation in sports and the challenges in the way of strengthening the participation in sports for the individual in the various phases of life.

*A number of general tendencies in the participation in sports can be outlined:*

### **Continued high club participation, but other actors have increasing significance**

Sports clubs and their activities continue to have considerable importance for participation in sports. At the same time, other actors are playing an increasing role, e.g. children have a very high participation rate in clubs, but schools, childcare institutions and self-organized sports also play an important role. Among adults, self-organized activities play the greatest role together with club sports, while commercial recreational sports play an ever-increasing role. Other important actors include evening schools and workplaces.

### **Children and seniors participate the most in sports**

Children are the most sports- active. Almost 90 per cent of all children between 7 and 12 years of age regularly participate in some kind of sport and exercise. Participation in sports and time spent doing sports falls steadily thereafter. However, there is a more recent tendency for participation in sports to again increase among the older segment of the population. As such, the least sports-active phase in the lives of the Danes is currently the mid-life years, from 30-49 years of age.

### **Individual activities on the march**

Traditional sports such as gymnastics, team sports and badminton continue to play a major role, but the greatest growth in recent years is in individual, exercise-oriented activities such as hiking, jogging and fun runs, weight training, swimming, so-called 'Nordic walking' (i.e. pole walking) etc.

### **Life situation means more than age**

There are very significant differences in exercise and sports patterns in the respective phases in life. As age no longer necessarily reflects lifestyle in the general population, it is now possible to instead talk of six different life phases, as the respective life situations would appear to mean more than the date on the birth certificate for the choices people make in relation to sports. The respective life phases are marked by major differences in the level of activity, time consumption, choice of activity and organization forms.

*A number of the central challenges blocking participation in sports in the respective life phases:*

### **Children ('the dependents'): Focus on good sports environments**

Children aged 7 to 12 are typically in a life phase where their opportunities to participate in sports largely depend on their everyday surroundings, including the influence and practical help from their parents together with the opportunities to engage in sports in the schools, childcare institutions and recreational opportunities in which they spend most of their everyday life. 88 per cent of all children between 7 and 12 years of age regularly engage in sports or exercise, and the organized club life continues to play a decisive role, particularly for the participation of young children. 93 per cent of all children in the same age group have participated in at least one activity in a club within the last year. Moreover, children's choices regarding sports reflect very stable patterns concentrated around the traditional sports activities. Athletic challenges in the form of tournaments, games and competitions play an important role for children, but the primary motivation for children's choices about sports are that they should be fun and together with their friends.

### **Children ('the dependents'): Better connections between the involved actors**

In addition to clubs, the sports opportunities available in after-school programmes and self-organized sports play a significant role for participation in sports among children. However, experience indicates that it is a challenge to create a connection and transition between the organizational framework for children's sports, not least in relation to the group of inactive, underprivileged children.

Compulsory physical education and other initiatives in school aimed at getting children to become physically active are therefore really the only place where one can be assured of being able to reach the small group of children who are not participating in sports. Failure to participate in sports often produces other challenges, including obesity, motor coordination problems and social problems. Extraordinary measures are therefore necessary in order to create secure and motivating conditions for these children. Particularly among the older children – especially among the girls – there are tendencies toward increased withdrawal from sports.

### **Children ('the dependents'): More structural initiatives aimed at increasing physical activity**

While sports play a major role in children's everyday lives, they are now generally less physically active than in the past. Many do not live up to the recommended minimum of one hour of physical activity per day. At the same time, the number of obese school children is increasing. In other words, recreational sports alone cannot compensate for the lack of physical activity in children's everyday lives. Developing general structural initiatives as a supplement to the opportunities to engage in sports in children's leisure time therefore poses a challenge.

A final significant challenge in relation to participation in sports among children in the dependent life phase is their very dependence upon their parents and surroundings in relation to their transportation needs. The youngest children depend on sports facilities close to their homes, short and safe paths and roads to the sports facilities, or that the sports can possibly take place in direct extension of and/or in connection with school and their after-school programmes.



## **Teenagers ('the independents'): Maintaining their interest in sports**

The independent phase reflects a life phase in which children become teenagers and become more independent in relation to transportation and their choice of activities. At the same time, however, this is also a phase in which many free themselves from the framework of their childhood. This liberating process has a major influence on their participation in organized sports activities. Many experience increasing demands from school, a prioritization of their friends and acquaintances, after-school jobs and their social life as well as breaks in their lives in connection with e.g. the year or two at a boarding school in lower secondary school which is common in Denmark.

The single greatest challenge among young people relates to maintaining their interest. From ages 13-15 until 16-19, there is a 24 per cent point drop in the number of youth involved in activities as a member of a club within the last year. Teenage girls in particular increasingly drop sports. In most cases, the youth stop the activity without beginning a new activity, therefore marking the beginning of a less physically active life.

Conversely, other young people choose to prioritize sport in their early youth. Many get a taste for competition, increase their training and focus on a particular sport. In other words, polarization takes place, where some youth spend more time on sport while others fall away and prioritize other aspects of life.

## **Teenagers ('the independents'): More social, fun and flexible sports opportunities**

There is much evidence that sports clubs – with their general focus on the development of talent and the increasing intensity in the sport – have difficulty including many of the youth who are more interested in ‘just having fun’, spending time together with their friends and getting exercise rather than pursuing a career in sports. Many sports clubs struggle to live up to these requirements. Many teenagers therefore increasingly prioritize the ‘solo’ or more flexible activities offered by commercial enterprises.

All told, it is a major challenge to get the broad mass of teenagers to prioritize sports and exercise. Sports clubs are particularly challenged to maintain their hold on youth by creating social, fun and flexible opportunities. This challenge is also felt in the compulsory physical education in Danish schools, where the older pupils in particular – especially girls – often lose interest in taking part in physical education.

## **Adults (the 'free I-phase'): Greater focus on flexible sports opportunities**

The free I-phase consists of those over 20 years of age who have yet to settle down and form a family with children. This is a period with an even greater break-up than the teenage years, which often has a direct connection with a stop or pause from participating in sport. Physically inactive adults generally indicate ‘spending time with the family’ as the most important factor. For adults in the ‘free I-phase’, however, their work and other interests represent the greatest barriers.

The greatest challenges in this phase of life are to create an array of financially feasible, flexible opportunities, which at the same time can be pursued together with others. In other words, a combination of freedom – particularly in relation to time – and comfort and security in relation to taking part in a social, motivating network around the individual activity.

For students, the longer and less ‘practical’ their education programme, the more they participate in sports. As the unemployed, unskilled and skilled labourers in this age group are the least active in sports, there is a particular challenge in relation to these specific target groups. In relation to the unemployed, the challenge is to get physically inactive persons to be able to cope with becoming engaged in sports or exercise in a period of their life where their everyday life is not structured by steady employment.

Unskilled and skilled wage-earners are often physically active as part of their work. Here, it would be advantageous for those providing sports opportunities to focus on preventive and health-oriented sports opportunities, which cushion, for example, monotonous, heavy lifting work.

### **Adults (parents): More sports opportunities for the entire family**

When people have children, the major breaks in life are often minimized. The family becomes established as the primary, stable pivotal point in everyday life.

Despite the stable family framework, many parents have so much stress in their everyday lives that they are prevented from maintaining their participation in recreational sports. Conversely, future parents – particularly pregnant women – are often very motivated to begin or maintain healthy exercise habits; typically for the sake of their child. It is therefore appropriate to focus on the sports activities for the entire family already before the first child is born.

Parents participate in sports or exercise to a significantly less degree than their childless peers – 49 vs. 59 per cent. It is interesting that it is primarily the parents to children under age 12 who take a break from sports and exercise, as their children are the most active group in the population at this time. In many ways, it is paradoxical that in the course of their everyday lives, parents can be forced to choose between whether they or their children are to participate in sports actively.

The greatest challenge in relation to the participation of parents in sports is to provide opportunities capable of minimizing the period with a total break from sports or exercise. New parents will generally spend less time on sports, but it would be significant progress if more pregnant women or new parents felt to some degree that they had a chance to regularly take part in some amount of sport or exercise. Even though the vast majority of parents who are regularly active are jogging/running or going for walks on their own, the participation in club activities remains significant. As children are simultaneously in the most club-active phase in life, there could be good reason to focus on an optimization of the parents’ opportunities to be active together with their children; or at least do sports at the same time and place.

### **Middle-aged (the 'free II-phase'): Opportunities tailored for those unaccustomed to sports**

The ‘middle-aged’ persons in the 55-75 age group reflect a phase in life in which the children have grown up and are independent, meaning that the parents again have time to realize their own interests and physical activity while their bodies are still well-functioning.

Middle-aged adults primarily participate in sports or exercise to keep the body going, to maintain their health, and because it is fun or pleasant.

Conversely, getting citizens to maintain their participation in sports when injured or experiencing poor health represents a particular challenge. Many are already very active, but roughly 30 per cent never participate in sports or exercise. For those are unaccustomed to participating in sports, physical barriers have a major impact on the decision not to participate in sports or exercise.

It is therefore a challenge for the providers of sports to offer opportunities that make room for injuries or grant consideration to participants who are in poor physical condition. Further along these lines, another challenge involves providing activities that can help prevent the injuries or health-related problems that often occur in this phase in life.

### **Seniors: More visible opportunities**

The seniors over 70 years of age reflect a phase in life which is currently under great change in relation to more traditional understandings of ageing. Even though many seniors suffer physical ailments and therefore naturally reduce their tempo, many seniors have a considerable focus on living an active recreational life and maintaining their bodies through sports and physical activity, which also becomes apparent in the increasing participation in sports in this age group.

The increased participation of seniors in activities that are either organized in sports clubs, evening schools or other contexts shows how the people in this phase of life – to a greater extent than other persons – depend on the organized opportunities in the local community. Here, it can therefore be advantageous to focus on improved opportunities for all seniors to participate in organized sports.

Providers of sports activities targeting seniors have a challenge in relation to becoming visible in the eyes of their target group. In relation to activating the third that is physically inactive, it is also necessary to work with a fundamental shift in opinions among seniors so that they come to see themselves as a natural target audience for sport and exercise.

Finally, a condition for being able to include seniors in groups organized around activities is that there must be special activities with low intensity that do not necessarily challenge the pulse and circulation, but are more about social activities that provide a positive boost in everyday life and help alleviate loneliness.

### **Gender differences in participation in sports**

In addition to the life phases, gender also has significance for participation in sports. It is important to include the connection between gender and participation in sports, as it provides opportunities to coordinate measures, which 1) can effectively fulfil the objectives which the Sport for All Committee defines for itself and meet the needs of the individual citizen; 2) counteracts the differences experienced by women and men, boys and girls to participate in exercise; and thereby 3) promotes their opportunities to benefit from the positive effects of sport.

For many years, men have been more inclined to participate in sports or exercise regularly than women. However, this difference is changing. In the last 15 years, there has been greater growth in the number of women actively participating regularly in relation to men. Women have had the greatest influence on the increasing number of sports-active persons within the older segment in the population, as female seniors in particular have become more active – more active than men, actually. In the 30-69 age group, women are the most conspicuous participants in sports. It should be noted that for men in their 30s, a 56 per cent majority do not participate in regular sport or exercise. As such, there is a sizeable difference between teenage boys aged 16-19 and adult males over 30 years of age. There is evidence indicating that the transition from youth to adult is a phase

of life that takes a considerable toll on men's relations to sports or exercise, while the greatest 'drop-out' period takes place in the teen years for females. Girls 12 years and under go from being the most active to being less active in their teen years to the point where they are less active than boys in the 16-19 age group. Teenage girls and young adult men are thus two particular groups that statistically constitute a critical target group when it comes to increasing the general participation in sports in the general population.

## *Actors in recreational sports*

The sports policy geography is currently marked by two parallel tendencies with considerable perspectives for those working with sports:

On the one hand, there has been an increase in the number of actors and focus areas with significance for the future of recreational sports. New commercial enterprises providing exercise opportunities have appeared; the public system is becoming more involved in sports; and club sports are expanding their area of operations in terms of activity content, the nature of membership and the operation of sports facilities. All actors must thus relate and adapt to recreational sports which are increasingly becoming a market with quality-conscious customers.

The commercial enterprises operate in a competitive market with strong internal competition for customers and increasing challenges from sports clubs that are prioritized in the Danish sports model via the general education legislation and which increasingly adapts the activities to changes in the interests of the population and the competition from commercial enterprises.

The competition takes place internally, within the individual sectors, i.e. clubs competing among themselves, and the individual commercial enterprises compete with one another. There is also competition between the sectors, i.e. between clubs and commercial enterprises.

At the same time, the interests and objectives of parties which were formerly in opposition to one another are becoming amalgamated, or fused. For example, the competing fitness centres established a joint branch organization, the major sports club organizations are constantly deepening their collaboration, and formal and binding partnerships between the sectors are emerging like never before.

The development creates an increased need for intersectorial coordination, not least in light of the shifts in the patterns in sports participation in the population and the reinforced emergence of health as an important agenda in sports, both in order to meet the sports policy tendencies and agendas as well as out of consideration to their respective interests.

The shifts in the sports picture are so pronounced that questions are being raised as to whether the very basis for the Danish model for recreational sports – the General Education Act – which largely sets the framework for recreational sports in Denmark, remains up-to-date. The legislation for gambling, which has decisive significance for the financing of the sports organizations, is under increasing pressure on account of structural and judicial conditions in the gambling market.

*Furthermore, there are a number of specific challenges for the individual actors in the recreational sports area:*

## **New patterns in sports participation challenge sports clubs**

The major challenge for the actors is to adapt to the significant shifts in the participation patterns in sports in Danish society, including the tendencies towards more market-oriented recreational sports. Adults increasingly demand flexible opportunities to engage in sports in modern facilities at a time of day that fits into their busy, modern everyday life. This challenge is particularly pertinent for club sports.

Sports clubs often depend on outdated public sports facilities, i.e. facilities owned by the municipality, which e.g. are primarily designed to meet men's needs. Moreover, sports clubs generally provide team-based sports activities that are based on volunteer efforts. These activities can be difficult for some people to fit into their everyday lives.

## **Increased cooperation between sports clubs, private actors and the state and municipalities**

The cooperation between sports clubs and the public system has also become closer, and this cooperation increasingly couples an agenda related to social and health policy together with sports policy. New opportunities for cooperation with the state and municipalities exist for the sports clubs and commercial enterprises alike, which raises a number of new challenges for those involved. For example, it challenges the very basis of sports clubs, which are based on voluntary involvement in the core sports activities. The individual leader and coach in the local sports club as well as the leadership in the sports organizations must relate to this question.

With the formation of the Danish Fitness and Health Organization (DFHO), the commercial fitness sector has a branch organization which has rendered them a more established player on the sports market. The commercial fitness sector is also interested in engaging in more formalized collaboration together with the public system. However, the commercial sports sector and municipalities have yet to meet the challenge of demonstrating and documenting the potential of the sector as a partner for the municipalities on the health area. The municipalities must therefore remain open towards new solutions in the municipal context.

## **Sports and exercise in the workplace**

The workplaces in the public and private sectors are increasingly becoming the focal point for opportunities for sports and physical activity aimed at promoting public health. The challenges here include how to ensure that the opportunities for physical activity spread throughout the labour market, possibly through collective bargaining agreements; that the opportunities to participate in sports and exercise reflect the interests, abilities and opportunities of the various employee groups; and that they do not come to be viewed as being overly paternalistic, but instead that the employees become involved and regard the health-related sport and exercise opportunities as contributing to their well-being in the workplace.

It is noted that the government bill includes objectives about public as well as private employers being able to offer exercise opportunities to their employees free of charge, e.g. in fitness centres and sports clubs, and that this offer would also be tax-free. The government has yet to present a proposal. The Sport for All Committee has not dealt with this question.

## **The new role of the municipalities regarding health promotion and prevention**

The recent Danish Structure Reform has provided the Danish municipalities with new areas of responsibility such as promotion and prevention. Combined with the larger municipalities, this points in the direction of the municipalities developing a more active sports policy. The municipalities have an increased interest in engaging in partnerships with sports clubs and commercial sports enterprises regarding health-related projects. Moreover, many of the new municipalities have declared an interest in strengthening their internal cohesion and external profile via various initiatives related to culture, recreational and elite sports, as well as major events.

## **Strong municipal administrations that balance interests**

The changes indicate that it is necessary to develop up-to-date sports policies and strong, competent municipal administrations capable of using the general education committees and other organs together with the general education legislation to support the changes in the patterns in sport and exercise in Danish society.

Here, the massive group of individuals who are active in self-organized sports – who by definition have no formal sports policy representation – demand particular attention. The challenge here is to find the balance between the various actors on the local sports scene, including the examination of which (potential) strengths the individual actors possess when the municipal objectives are to be attained.

## **Health problems increase the focus on sports in day-care institutions and schools**

For day-care institutions, schools and other education institutions, the risk of lifestyle-related health problems among physically inactive children and youth has provided extra significance to the role of the institutions and schools in sports policy.

Children spend many hours in public institutions. Sports and exercise arranged in this context therefore has great significance for the total activity level among children. Here, the teaching of good exercise habits is a significant challenge that can make a difference for the rest of the children's lives – not merely via increased physical activity in the course of the everyday lives of children and youth, but with the help of a more professional, long-term pedagogical approach to sports and exercise. The efforts to promote sports and exercise in childcare institutions and schools is increasingly taking place in partnerships between schools, day-care institutions, after-school programmes, sports clubs and commercial enterprises. There are professional challenges involved in getting this cooperation to function optimally due to the different bases of the sectors.

## **The need for the coordination of the state sports policy**

In the day-to-day work with sports policy questions and work, the civil service in the state administration is challenged by the fact that sports policy relates to many other ministries. This focuses on the need to create the stronger coordination of the state measures in relation to sports.

## *Recreational sports facilities*

Financially, the most important element in the public sports policy in Denmark is the obligation of the municipalities via the General Education Act to make vacant facilities available free of charge for sports clubs and subsidize the clubs' expenses for private sports facilities for children and youth

under 25 years of age. This policy means that Denmark has good coverage in terms of sports facilities for popular sports such as outdoor and indoor ball sports, gymnastics and swimming.

In 2008, the Danish municipalities budgeted DKK 2.633 billion for subsidies to facilities and the operation of sports facilities. DKK 0.8-1.2 billion is also budgeted to construction expenses together with 'hidden' subsidies in the form of recreational activities in the municipal facilities; these operations are not always included in the accounts under sports facilities (e.g. certain school halls and gymnasiums).

In practice, most Danes think of access to public sports facilities as a 'welfare right'. Many sports halls and public swimming pools were constructed in the period from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. Since this building boom, however, there have been major shifts in the patterns of participation in sports in Danish society.

The number of 'sports-active' adults and seniors has increased dramatically, and many adults demand more flexible access to the facilities and opportunity to supplement or replace traditional sports with more individual, exercise-oriented activities. Children remain the most sports-active segment of the population, and the way children choose between sports activities continues to be strongly marked by club activities in the most popular sports. As such, a schism is occurring whereby children continue to depend on access to the traditional sports facilities and clubs in their immediate community, whereas adults increasingly make use of other actors and self-organized sports. However, sports club membership also continues to be widespread among adults.

The nature, green areas and the urban space have become the most important arenas for self-organized sports and much of the organized sports. The growth in participation in sports among adults has largely taken place in exercise activities such as hiking, jogging, Nordic walking, cycling, aquatic activities etc. In order to promote participation in sports in the general population, access to attractive outdoor areas and facilities are decisive – particularly in residential areas. This development raises demands regarding intersectorial planning in the state and municipalities.

A more recent development in recreational sports is that many of the new facilities are built without public funding, i.e. they are commercial facilities such as fitness centres and golf courses. *These general developments together with the general need for – and interest in – promoting participation in sport in the general population raises a number of other specific challenges regarding sports facilities:*

### **Modernization of sports halls**

There are many municipally owned or supported sports halls, swimming pools and gyms in Denmark which are no longer up-to-date in relation to the demands of large segments of the population with respect to the activities offered and the quality of the buildings.

Fundamentally, the design of a typical sports hall no longer matches the patterns for participation in sports among adults. There is a greater need for more individual training activities in the gym environment, just as women in particular indicate a need for better rooms for gymnastics and softer forms of movement as well as safe and inviting surroundings. The sports halls and gyms also often lack the space necessary to create attractive social settings for teenagers.

## **The dynamic operation of public sports facilities**

The allocation mechanisms in the general education committee or hall management first and foremost meet the needs of the established sports and the need of the respective clubs for access to the facilities. It is often difficult for new sports or more spontaneous groups interested in access to sports facilities to have their needs met in the allocation of time in the facilities.

The municipalities are also obligated by the general education legislation to provide facilities to clubs free of charge and to subsidize the rent for private facilities for club activities for children and youth under 25 years of age. This creates a dilemma between the need to promote children's participation in sports in sports clubs and the increasing need to also promote the opportunities for other age groups or organization forms in the public sports facilities.

Exploiting the vacant time in the facilities in a flexible manner also poses a challenge. There is an increasing need to develop the operation of public sports facilities so that, on the one hand, up-to-date facilities are provided to the clubs and, on the other hand, there is flexible access to facilities that can also be booked by other groups, for not to mention the opportunity to engage in more individual activities. As such, there is often a need to develop opportunities for online-booking, just as there can be a need to develop the role of the manager so that the facilities themselves actively initiate activities or help exploit the available capacity in the local community.

## **The competition between clubs and commercial sports enterprises**

Danish sports clubs receive public funding via the football pools and lotteries as well as the General Education Act. The clubs receive subsidies and access to public facilities via the General Education Act that commercial enterprises are not entitled to. This contributes to the unequal competition for members between commercial enterprises and sports clubs, which becomes particularly apparent when the clubs and private businesses run similar activities.

From the perspective of a private commercial actor, this makes for unfair competition. Conversely, the basis for club sports is undermined if public – or publicly supported – facilities do not correspond to the activities and the standard that athletes demand. Conversely, the sports clubs are of the opinion that the competition is not distorted, as this is about member-based clubs in which the 'profits' remain within the club and are not distributed amongst shareholders or owners.

In the instances where it is possible that the uneven competition has consequences for the private companies, the local general education committee must be particularly aware of the requirements in the general education legislation for the purposes and formation of clubs and associations when assessing the support-eligible enterprise. As specified in the General Education Act, the Danish *Folketing* has thus determined that activities within the context of clubs and associations are entitled to support, while the same activities within a commercial context are not.

## **Up-to-date gymnasiums**

School gymnasiums and changing rooms are important arenas for club sports. In many local settings, the facilities are out of date and uninviting in relation to e.g. the gymnastics and dance activities, which often take place in these facilities in school hours as well as in the afternoon and evening. These gymnasiums are often designed without considering the social activities, storage rooms and activities arranged by clubs and others using the facilities outside of school hours.



## **Upgrading schoolyards and other outdoor areas**

The design of schoolyards, day-care institutions, after-school programmes, playgrounds and outdoor areas has great significance for the physical activity of children and youth. Schoolyards and other outdoor areas that invite sports, play and exercise during and after school hours can help promote physical activity among children and young people as a supplement to the physical education received in school.

## **The interplay between the needs of elite and recreational sports**

In recent years, Danish municipalities have focused on the potential for elite sports and sport in general in the experience economy. This has led to increasing investments in facilities for exhibitions, elite sports and events in many municipalities. It is important to avoid this coming at the expense of the needs of recreational sports in relation to the prioritization of the public resources for the establishment and operation of sports facilities, the access to attractive practice times, as well as the prioritization between large, central facilities and the need for sports facilities in residential areas.

## **Sports facilities in residential areas must be included in urban planning**

Transportation needs and access to sports facilities in residential areas play an important role for participation in sport and the choices people make regarding sport and exercise. It is therefore necessary to consider the decisive significance of access to sports facilities in residential areas when planning housing or the subdivision of new land for housing.

## **The geographical distribution of sports facilities**

The major investments in public sports facilities in the period from the 1960s to 1980s was initiated by the Danish municipalities and private actors in the local communities and without general state regulation. Geographically speaking, the access to public sports facilities is therefore uneven. Copenhagen and the other Danish cities have significantly fewer sports facilities per capita than the other parts of the country; conversely, many of the sports facilities in the thinly populated areas are now in poor condition, as many of them were established in the construction boom in Denmark from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s.

## **Risk of social barriers**

The increasing significance of commercial sports facilities – particularly for adults – has created a new framework for the patterns of exercise and participation in sport in Danish society. However, the commercialization of parts of the sports facilities can create increased social barriers for the access to sports facilities and contributes to the further separation of the arenas for children's and adults' sports if the quality of the public facilities is not maintained.

## **The focus of sports policy on commercial facilities**

In many Danish municipalities, the commercially driven facilities are not included in the overview of the facilities or the sports policy strategies, even though many of these facilities include up-to-date rooms for dance and gymnastics or fitness equipment. There is a need for increased municipal cooperation with the commercial operators in relation to including the vacant capacity in the commercial facilities in clubs, educational institutions or the needs of other user groups.

## **Improved access to – and presentation of – the nature and green areas**

Access to the nature and green areas has great significance for the motivation and opportunity to engage in a number of popular sports activities. There is a need for the better planning and presentation of connected jogging paths, which can make it even more attractive to run, hike or navigate the outdoors by other means.

Private agricultural areas or outdoor areas also possess considerable potential for attractive opportunities to participate in sport in the nature. Numerous Danish municipalities have had success creating connected jogging paths and routes, e.g. where gravel roads or paths along fields and windbreaks are included and create new, interconnected paths of considerable geographical value. One of the challenges for the Danish municipalities is that providing access to private nature areas usually involves payments to the private landowners.

## **Consideration to organized sports in the nature and the city**

Many organized sports encounter barriers in the form of environmental and noise requirements, traffic requirements or private landowners or other conditions rendering it difficult to carry out tournaments or meets or daily activities in both the nature and the urban space. Organized sports must also be allowed to make use of the nature and attractive outdoor areas.

## **The planning system must promote sports and physical activity**

The state, regional and municipal planning and directives for the general use of the area play a decisive role for the opportunity to plan sports facilities and access to sports and physical activity in the public space. Formal requirements in the planning system about granting greater consideration to the needs for recreational sports for facilities and access to the nature, green areas and urban space can further contribute to promoting participation in sports and avoid new residential areas being planned without laying out playing fields, exercise routes etc.

Safe paths for cyclists and pedestrians and other general structural measures aimed at promoting physical activity in everyday life can be more effective in terms of reaching more broadly in the population than exercise campaigns and focused sports projects in relation to meeting the health-related recommendations about the extent of the physical activity in everyday life.

## **Meeting the needs of self-organized sports**

Clubs and other organized users enjoy strong representation in relation to the municipal prioritization of the operations and establishment of sports facilities, but the interest in promoting the participation of the general population in sports and physical activity means that the needs of all of the actors, including those who prefer to exercise on their own, are included to a greater extent in the municipal sports policy and general planning. It is important for the total participation in sports that initiatives aimed at promoting e.g. hiking, jogging, team sports, in-line skating, aquatic sports, cycling, horse-riding etc are prioritized and included in the municipal strategies.

## ***Health and recreational sports***

Health is hardly new to the agenda in recreational sports; however, in line with new knowledge and increasing societal focus on physical activity, recreational sports have attained a more prominent

role as a key to healthy living. Part of the background is the increasing concern about the less physically demanding working life and leisure activities having undesirable consequences in relation to the development of lifestyle illnesses in certain segments of the population. The health benefits on the individual level have also emerged as a central motivating factor for many adult athletes.

*The development can be summarized in a number of political challenges:*

### **Social disparities in health and the exercise of physical activity**

The likelihood of an individual being physically active largely depends on social factors such as education, income and connection to the labour market. These social differences re-appear among children and youth, where e.g. children from families from lower social levels and ethnic minorities will be significantly less inclined to engage in sports and exercise in their leisure time. For recreational sports, these social disparities mean that there is a very general challenge to developing comprehensive sports opportunities capable of reducing the tendencies towards social polarization in the health area.

### **The increased health awareness has an impact on sports clubs**

Roughly 70 per cent of the adult population indicates that they are physically active for health reasons; and this percentage is increasing. The increased health awareness represents a challenge for the suppliers, i.e. the large sports organizations and clubs as one as well as the commercial enterprises, if they are interested in meeting the interests and needs of the population related to sports in the long term. This sets the stage for the relevant actors developing sports opportunities corresponding to the demand for e.g. functional training such as fitness. But the development and more targeted spreading of traditional sports activities which do not – on the face of things – serve health purposes can also inspire new groups to engage in physical activity.

### **The need for multi-pronged measures towards physically inactive adults**

Effective measures targeting the physically inactive groups in the population require an understanding of the very different practical, psychological, cultural and social barriers that are possibly preventing the individual from doing sports.

For recreational sports – not least in clubs – this requires increased focus on the development of more flexible or better-coordinated sports and exercise opportunities, e.g. expanded opening hours, better access, opportunities for the entire family, which correspond to the general shifts that are occurring in the Danish family and work life. Moreover, the maintenance of team activities with emphasis on social fellowship and a number of other targeted opportunities appeals to the inactive, who primarily seek the sense of togetherness enjoyed in connection with the activities.

### **Children and youth quit and become inactive**

Dropping out of sports and becoming physically inactive increases with age and represents a challenge for sport and health alike. Particularly the girls in the cities – especially those with ethnic minority backgrounds – are generally difficult to include or hold in a physically active lifestyle after they reach their teen years.

For those providing sports and exercise opportunities – commercial enterprises and clubs alike – the general challenge is to ensure qualified opportunities that live up to the social and sports-related needs of children and youth through e.g. partnerships around after-school sports, homework cafés

and other socially toned activities as well as opportunities for adapted training. For the rest of society, it is a challenge to ensure that sports and physical activity have a central position in the home, school and after-school day-care programmes, that there are well-developed local sports opportunities, and that the physical surroundings and framework – from the schoolyard to the residential area – encourage exercise.

### **Development of health-related partnerships and cooperation**

There is increasing attention towards the health-promoting partnerships between e.g. municipalities, clubs, sports organizations and the commercial enterprises in relation to health-promoting projects for particular target groups or in special focus areas. The new municipal health centres can attain a central role in this regard in the years to come.

The experience from the area is mixed, however, and it is a challenge to develop models for well-functioning partnerships that manage to include the sports clubs and the commercial actors in a constructive manner; and with an impact on the target groups.

### **Healthy food and recreational sports**

Recreational sports cover children and youth, families and vulnerable groups. Recreational sports and the places where recreational sports are carried out therefore have potential for initiatives regarding healthy eating habits, as information and structural initiatives are able to exert an impact on many different target groups.

### **Quality control of targeted health-related opportunities**

The emergence of new, ambitious partnerships on the health area – where the public sphere actively works to include both the commercial and voluntary sports sectors – also presents new challenges to the aspect of health in initiatives targeting particular patient or residents groups. For example, the requirements regarding quality control and documentation will likely increase in the future, and ensuring proper communication between sports leaders, coaches and health sector employees will be a challenge.

The increased requirements can lead to a professionalization of the efforts of the participating clubs and commercial actors, where the employment of personnel with a background in healthcare and the development of actual certification schemes, e.g. in relation to coaching seminars, can be a possibility.

### **Understanding and respect for the special limitations and potential of sports clubs**

It is an ongoing challenge to ensure the understanding of the fact that recreational sports primarily contribute to public health via the everyday goings on and that there are limits as to which responsibilities sports clubs and others can and will assume in relation to health.

Most voluntary sports activity focuses on the sporting activity itself and will have limited interest in engaging in health policy initiatives. This perspective on physical activity, with its emphasis on sports and fun, is the greatest asset of the volunteer sports; neither society nor the sports community is interested in narrowing down the broad-spectrum Danish sports culture through increased instrumentalization. Part of the picture is also that the voluntary clubs are often weak in housing areas marked by social problems, where many health-related problems are often concentrated. That said, there are many examples of clubs carrying out activities for special target groups: the

overweight, children with poor motor skills etc. It is about the clubs and associations meeting challenges in their local community and being able to identify opportunities for doing something.

Part of the picture is also that increased collaboration between sports organizations and voluntary social organizations – though this is not particularly common at present – can turn out to be an approach to this area in the future.

### **The need for sports in secondary education programmes**

From the perspective of sports and health, physical education plays a central role in primary school and in the secondary education programs. For primary schools, the challenge is not only to strengthen the level of the actual teaching but also to develop the individual school's outdoor environment and use of play, sports and physical activity in other social and teaching situations.

In the upper secondary education programmes, physical education is based on the physical activity and includes knowledge from the natural and health sciences together with the humanities and social sciences. Through versatility and immersion and by drawing on theory, the subject of physical education creates a sense of understanding for the cultural values in sport. Physical education is not compulsory in the vocational upper secondary programmes (hvx and htx), but one of the obligatory objectives for the first half-year of these education programmes is for the pupils to become aware of the significance of exercise and lifestyle for their health and quality of life.

As far as vocational secondary education programmes are concerned, sport is not usually compulsory or included as an elective subject in the technical schools (vocational education programmes and htx), business colleges (vocational education programmes and hvx), agricultural colleges, basic health care colleges, social and health schools and production schools. As a rule, these schools therefore do not have sports facilities. This represents a particular challenge, as it is the young people who do not have sports in their secondary education programmes who are generally less physically active than their cohorts in the other upper secondary education programmes. It should be noted that the vocational programmes under the vocational education act are normally arranged in the form of so-called sandwich courses or dual training, i.e. many internships are involved. More than half of such programmes often proceeds in the field.

### ***The social capaciousness of recreational sport***

The Sport for All Committee finds it important that the entire population – regardless of contrasting situations – ought to have the same equal access to participate in sports and exercise. Everyone ought to benefit from the experiences and sense of togetherness that an active life with sports provides. The Sport for All Committee has therefore focused particularly on the groups in society which, for one reason or another, encounter particular barriers and challenges when it comes to participating in sports.

The vague distinction between social, health and sports policy renders the actors in the sphere of recreational sports attractive partners in relation to welfare policy.

In addition to a number of *general* socio-economic conditions for participation in sport and exercise, there are people with more *specific* issues and challenges which have significance for their participation in sport. The Sport for All report provides examples of some of these challenges by examining specific citizens with ethnic minority backgrounds and a number of individuals with

disabilities or handicaps. But other special groups in society also find that their participation in sport can be limited by their particular life situation.

## **General disparities in participation in sports in Denmark**

Sports and exercise are among the cultural offerings that Danes make the greatest use of. There is a clear connection between participation in sports and the social and financial standing of the individual. The social disparities found in society in general are reflected in corresponding differences in participation in sport.

Education and income are so-called socio-economic factors with decisive influence on the level of sports activity. These factors have an impact on the participation in sports for all Danes. Among those with less than 10 years total education, 40 per cent regularly engage in sports or exercise; correspondingly, 62 per cent of those with 13 years of education or more are athletically active.

Studies show that more than 50 per cent of those with the lowest income (less than DKK 300,000/year) regularly engage in sports or exercise. Contrastingly, this figure is 69 per cent for persons with an annual income between DKK 800,000 and 900,000. Participation in sport would thus appear to reflect social background.

## **Need for capacious, universal opportunities to engage in sport**

There is a need to create more space in the ordinary opportunities to engage in sport. Sports clubs are particularly able to meet this challenge. As they have become the widespread framework for a sports-filled life for the Danish people, clubs are central when working to facilitate access to sports and exercise for people with particular cultural and social or physical barriers for their participation in sport. Ethnic minority girls, who are less active than others in their cohort, offer an example of one such group.

Distinction ought to be drawn between sports clubs in housing areas marked by social problems as opposed to clubs in general, as there is a considerable difference in the Danish sports clubs in terms of the resources and conditions the volunteers are working under; and therefore which expectations are reasonable in terms of extroversion, partnership initiatives and capaciousness. A sports club in a well-functioning neighbourhood full of human resources is able to pull things off that would be far more difficult in a housing area marked by social problems.

It can be necessary in the vulnerable housing areas to strengthen the sports clubs in terms of human resources as well as an awareness regarding the issues related to particular groups of athletes, including information, tailored opportunities to engage in sports, and education and support to the leaders and coaches so that they can become better at making room for the athletes who are struggling with particular barriers prohibiting their participation in sport. The major sports foundations and organizations could help provide solutions to these problems.

## **Need for specifically tailored opportunities to participate in sports**

There is also a need for specifically tailored opportunities to participate in sports at a high level. Some issues and athletes require greater financial, pedagogical and sports-related resources than the average sports club has to offer. In such cases, it would be useful for the sports and social organizations – working together with the public system – to contribute with professional advice.

## **Need for more strategic planning and intersectorial comprehensive thinking**

Sports projects related to social and health policy for particular target groups are found in the culture and leisure administration in the municipalities, the ministries, in club sports, and in commercial sports enterprises. It is therefore necessary to establish structures capable of horizontal coordination – both internally between the actors in recreational support and between the involved sectors.

One concrete example of the need for a more horizontal effort is the overlap found between several of the state-run pools. There is a lack of transparency and more consolidated and uniform information about the purpose, target groups, funds and deadlines for the pools financed by the state and municipalities.

Similarly, it is decisive for the success of future efforts to draw upon experiences and assessments from earlier planning projects. In this connection, it is a challenge to develop the limited knowledge about the nature of the participation in sport among the ‘difficult’ groups and those with different backgrounds and opportunities. This also holds for structured compilations of experiences with respect to the effects of various initiatives and measures. For example, it is important to learn from the mixed experiences with the construction of partnerships in the continued efforts. In this connection, ensuring the formal sharing of knowledge between the state, municipalities and actors in the sports sector presents a challenge.

### **Need for anchoring projects and an increased focus on funding for operations**

By their very nature, the pools are temporary, i.e. they have a time limit. In this connection, it is important to also be aware of the potential for the subsequent anchoring and operation of the social and health policy initiatives involving sports for special groups. This is particularly relevant for the operation of sports clubs and associations in housing areas with social problems, where sports clubs are often operating under conditions that are radically different from ordinary sports clubs.

Socially conditioned inequalities in participation in sports thus present a major challenge for the actors in the world of sport.

Social and health measures in Denmark are primarily financed via the general municipal resources for operations in the area. As a supplement, the Danish state has long set temporary, pool-financed projects in motion, often with municipal co-financing, targeting specific groups such as ethnic minorities or vulnerable children. Pools and projects are basically conceived of as dynamic and development-oriented measures. By their very nature, such pools are often suitable solutions in the short term, but they often prove to have limitations in the longer term, as the projects are often ad hoc based – and therefore not anchored in the daily operations. In certain instances, local, temporary trial projects financed with resources from special pools have proven to have negative consequences for the ordinary clubs in the local community.

---

## *42 proposals*

The Sport for All Committee has identified a number of primary challenges and presented 42 proposals, which the committee regards as being a significant contribution towards solving these challenges. These proposals are the committee's recommendations for promoting efforts for children, women and men to engage in more sports and exercise.

The committee has assessed that individual challenges are best solved by broad, long-term initiatives. The proposals are therefore grouped under five headings:

- Sports for children and youth
- Sports for socially vulnerable and 'sports-weak' groups
- Facilities – development and use
- Sports in planning
- Exercise and sports in the workplace

The committee emphasizes that the individual person, parent and family has a decisive impact on whether children, women and men are active or passive and whether they participate in sports and exercise. As such, participation in sports and exercise is a considerable personal responsibility, including a parental responsibility.

At the same time, the committee emphasizes that the welfare society must contribute to facilitating the opportunities for doing sports and exercise, thus making it easier to assume a personal responsibility. The proposals are therefore particularly focused on what public authorities, organizations, clubs, companies etc can contribute with in relation to solving these challenges.

With respect to financing, the mandate requires that the committee's proposals can be financed within existing frameworks in the area. This means that for all of the proposals presented in the following – unless explicitly stated otherwise – each of the proposals are assumed to be financed within the current financial framework in the area that the individual proposal relates to. This means that the committee's proposals are to be regarded as inspiration for the municipalities; they are not orders that the municipalities must carry out. To the extent that the proposals can be converted to



legislation, the financial consequences of each proposal must be assessed, and the municipalities must be compensated in accordance with the so-called DUT principle.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be noted that the committee has discussed a number of other areas, including the General Education Act and health. In relation to the General Education Act, the committee has submitted an enquiry to the Minister of Education on the background of the fact that the Minister of Education has decided to establish a committee to examine the General Education Act. In relation to health, the committee has submitted an enquiry to the Prevention Commission (*Forebyggelseskommissionen*).

The 42 proposals in the report will be followed up by the forum referred to in proposal 23.

## *Sports for children and youth*

### **Challenge**

Participation in sports helps children learn to enjoy physical movement and develops their social network and personal competences in a broader, nurturing perspective. The Sport for All Committee believes that *all* Danish children should be able to learn to enjoy sports and physical play in a manner enabling them to attain a lifelong appreciation of sports and physical activity. The general objective ought to be for all children and young people to be able to participate in at least **seven hours of sports and physical activities per week**.

There is a particular challenge relating to the teenagers who are not engaging in sports or exercise. Low participation in sports and exercise is particularly found among girls in urban areas.

The committee believes that compulsory physical education in primary schools is a central element in attaining this objective, particularly in relation to vulnerable and ‘sports-weak’ children and youth. This ought to be supplemented with a focus on opportunities to engage in sports and exercise in day-care institutions and after-school programmes, as well as in sports clubs and commercial enterprises. Moreover, there is a need for good, local sports and exercise facilities, including recreational areas.

### **Proposals**

1. That *the government* drafts a national action plan for all children and youth to have the opportunity to engage in **at least seven hours of sports and physical activity per week**.
2. That the *sports organizations* work together to establish a partnership which is to gather and coordinate the contribution of the voluntary sports sector to the government action plan.
3. That the *local educational institutions* which do not have access to sports facilities make an effort to ensure access to municipal, independent or commercial sports facilities during school hours.

---

<sup>1</sup> The DUT principle means that when the Folketing and government change rules of a binding nature for the municipalities, the state block grant is adjusted corresponding to the financial consequences for the municipalities.

4. That the *municipalities*, together with the local educational institutions, make a special effort in relation to:
  - Continuing education measures for teachers and childcare workers.
  - The establishment of positions for coordinators for the reinforcement of the interplay between schools, institutions and the sports actors.
  - Including guest teachers in physical education.
5. That *those providing opportunities to participate in sports* focus more on social events, informal and horizontal opportunities to engage in sports as well as experiences for the girls and boys who are either uninterested or do not have the time or talent to focus on competitive sports in their teenage years.
6. That the *clubs and enterprises* providing the opportunities to become involved in sports, when recruiting girls and boys, focus on groups of friends, i.e. not just the individual youth. The social networks have considerable significance for how girls and boys prioritize their leisure time.
7. That the *sports organizations* offer training to coaches and managers in order to better enable them to work with and understand the young girls and boys - as well as girls and boys with particular social problems who are 'sports-challenged' - and the conditions that youth culture present for practice and training.
8. That the *sports clubs* ought to be extroverted, e.g. by contacting the youth who have quit in order to understand why. For example, the clubs ought to focus on maintaining contact to the youth who spend a year at the Danish '*efterskoler*', i.e. boarding schools for lower secondary students.
9. That the coaches and leaders in the *sports clubs* ought to strive to develop close, personal contacts to the youth. Young people are motivated by adult empathy that reaches beyond the field or the court.

(about childcare:)

10. That the *municipalities* place increased focus on the opportunities for physical activity in childcare for 0-6 year olds.
11. That the *municipalities* support sports-related partnerships between day-care institutions, schools, after-school programmes and commercial enterprises in order to improve children's motivation to engage in sports and physical play in general – and their access to the same.

(about primary school:)

12. That the *Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs, Ministry of Science* and the *Ministry of Culture* work together to develop research and development projects in relation to including technology in the development of games, movement and sports in the schools.

13. That the *municipalities* and schools ought to ensure that all primary school pupils have opportunity for one hour of exercise and movement per day in school and that greater emphasis is placed on the more organized use of recess periods and the opportunity for after-school programmes to facilitate physical activity.
14. That the *municipalities* and schools include physical activity in the teaching in subjects other than sports in primary school.
15. That *municipalities and providers of opportunities to engage in sports* are aware of the opportunities for increased cooperation between primary schools, after-school programmes and actors from the sports sector about sports-related opportunities, e.g. in the form of partnerships. These partnerships could, for example, be based on the experiences gathered in the *School Sports* project.
16. That *sports organizations and Danish School Sports* inspire the schools to establish 'play patrols' whereby older children act as activity leaders for younger children.

(about youth education programmes:)

17. That the *Ministry of Education* seeks to launch a project focusing on sports, exercise and health, which can inspire future sports projects in Danish vocational schools.
18. That *youth education programmes* make it possible to offer sports and exercise.
19. That *those providing opportunities to engage in sport and youth education programmes* seek to engage in partnerships that make it possible to meet the needs of more young people to engage in sports and exercise, and that the organization of the opportunities to engage in sports are tailored to meet the needs and opportunities available to teenage girls and boys.
20. That *those providing opportunities to engage in sports* collect the knowledge necessary to uncover the needs and opportunities of the non-active teenagers to engage in sports and exercise. This can possibly occur in cooperation with local youth education programmes and research centres.

It must be noted that the responsibilities of the parents in this area – as a supplement to the proposals – play a particularly major role.

It should further be noted that as a result of the agreement regarding municipal finances for 2009, the Ministry of Education is responsible for establishing a working group together with Local Government Denmark in order to place increased focus on sports and exercise in the teaching in primary schools. Work is also being carried out aimed at formulating the objectives and contents for after-school programmes, where the childcare institutions are to indicate the extent to which they are working with sports and other activities.

## **Challenge**

Socially vulnerable and 'sports-weak' groups encompass a number of different groups, which for social or other reasons are characterized by their limited use of the opportunities to engage in sports. Similarly, the groups are characterized by a need for special incentives if they are to engage in sports and exercise. At the same time, these are the very groups that would benefit from participating in sports and harvesting the considerable cultural, social and health-related rewards that such participation can provide.

Many actors (public authorities and clubs) contribute actively to solving this challenge. The coordination and sharing of knowledge between these actors can be improved.

In relation to the initiatives involving the voluntary sports in the solution of this challenge, it is necessary that the involved sports clubs are relieved and supported in the appropriate manner. In this connection, it is important that it is the sports organizations that are involved and assume the responsibility – not the individual club.

## **Proposals**

(For improved coordination:)

21. That relevant ministries establish a task force with respect to increasing the participation in sports among the socially vulnerable and sports-weak groups by improving the quality, professionalism and impact of development-related projects. This task force is to follow the proposals in the report in hand. The task force is responsible for formulating an action plan coordinating and thematizing the state measures in the area. In other words, there is talk of a task force responsible for ensuring the interministerial (or public) coordination in the area: sports for socially vulnerable and sports-weak groups.
22. That the *sports organizations* work together to establish a partnership that is to collect and coordinate the contribution of voluntary sports to the objective to involve socially vulnerable and sports-weak groups in sports.
23. That the *Ministry of Culture* carries out meetings annually with the participating ministries in the task force, the sports organizations, commercial sports enterprises and Local Government Denmark in order to ensure development and innovation in relation to the measures for including socially vulnerable and sports-weak groups in the sports opportunities based on the accumulation of experiences and knowledge between sectors about initiating and carrying out projects. Furthermore, this forum is to follow the proposals in the present report, including following up the extent to which the proposals are implemented.

(Other proposals:)

24. That the *Ministry of Integration, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Cultural Affairs* and the *sports organizations* carry out an empirical study aimed at uncovering the causes and barriers for the lack of participation in sports among the socially vulnerable and sports-weak groups.

25. That the *sports organizations* focus on including other types of associations other than sports clubs. These alternative associations possibly possess other important resources in relation to getting socially vulnerable and sports-weak groups to engage in more sports and exercise.
26. That the *sports organizations* work together with the sports clubs that are in touch with the socially vulnerable and sports-weak groups in order to focus on the potential in the cooperation with other types of voluntary clubs, including voluntary social clubs and clubs for ethnic minorities in order to recruit and maintain the target audience as members.
27. That the *sports organizations* work together with the local *sports clubs* providing opportunities for children and youth in order to increase parental involvement so that the lack of experience that some parents have with club life does not have a negative impact on their children's participation in sports.
28. That the *sports organizations* work together with the local *sports clubs* in order to conceive of the group of volunteers more broadly than those who are active in relation to the specific sports activities. For example, physically handicapped individuals can participate in organizational work.

## *Facilities – development and use*

### **Challenge**

The developments in sports-related habits in the general population, e.g. with an increasing number of self-organized athletes, shift the focus to accessibility, multi-functionality and the capacity in the physical setting for engaging in sport. There is a need for the ongoing modernization, upgrading and development of new types of facilities, urban spaces and other outdoor areas. And there is a need for increased attention regarding the interplay between these conditions. Furthermore, ensuring that the existing sports facilities are fully utilized also represents a challenge, as this is not always the case at present.

### **Proposals**

29. That the *municipalities* establish an overview of the actual utilization of the existing facilities, as well as establishing local arrangements that provide for a better utilization of the existing facilities, both in relation to clubs and self-organized users.
30. That the *government, Local Government Denmark* and the *municipalities*, in connection with the allocation of resources from the *Monetary Fond* to childcare institutions, primary schools, sports facilities and the seniors area places the focus on the modernization and upgrading of sports-related facilities for recreational sports with respect to the development occurring in the patterns in sports participation that have occurred in the respective developments in sport; and that they grant consideration to schools, after-school programmes, clubs and self-organized sports.
31. That the *municipalities*, in connection with the construction, upgrading and modernization of sports facilities:
  - base such projects on a comprehensive plan for the sports facility in question, including many new types of users having access to the facility and the interplay between the facilities and the surrounding areas.
  - Consider the shifting patterns in sports and leisure activity among the older girls and boys. These patterns relate particularly to engaging in sports and exercise spontaneously and the need for drop-in centres in connection with sport.
  - Consider the need for decent changing facilities, safety, opportunity for social intercourse and the development of sports activities that meet the needs of the respective target groups.
  - Make it possible for the entire family to engage in sports at the same time – and to possibly gather for some kind of communal meal or healthy café food after the activity.
32. That the *Halinspektørforeningen* (the association of facility managers) and *sports organizations* work together with the *Danish Foundation for Culture and Sports Facilities* to develop a model for targeted training and education for the leaders of future activities and the continued education of the current managers of the sports facilities. The purpose is to improve the qualifications of the organizational and pedagogical skills and competencies and to create a new investigative activity manager role. This model can be developed in

cooperation with one or more formal educational institutions. The experiences from other European trials on the 'Sports Coordinator' area are to be included.

33. That the *municipalities* strengthen the coordination of sports facilities with priority for elite sports or facilities intended for less widespread activities both in the individual municipalities and across municipal boundaries. The purpose here is e.g. for the sports requiring a lot of equipment or elite sports for older children, youth and adults to be offered more specialized facilities, while the local gyms are correspondingly opened up more for children and self-organized user groups.
34. That the *Danish Foundation for Culture and Sports Facilities* works together with the relevant ministries to carry out a study designed to create clarity regarding the sports and exercise facilities/areas in problem-plagued housing areas as well as to analyze how these conditions affect the participation in sports among the residents in these areas.

## *Sports in planning*

### **Challenge**

Sports, exercise and physical activity must be included in physical planning to a greater degree than at present, e.g. in the implementation of municipal and local planning, urban renewal projects etc. There is a need for more knowledge and cooperation regarding how the physical planning and use of space concretely conceives of sports, exercise and physical activity.

### **Proposals**

35. That the *municipalities* grant greater consideration to physical spaces for sports and exercise in municipal planning, such that e.g. connected exercise path systems are included in the comprehensive plans for outdoor areas. At the same time, the municipalities must do a better job at ensuring that project developers include room for physical movement in their work and that sports, exercise and physical activity are included in the development of the streets, squares etc of the city, as well as access to the outdoors, parks and urban spaces, as well as cooperating with the relevant organizations.
36. That the *Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment, Local Government Denmark, the Danish Foundation for Culture and Sports Facilities, the Outdoor Life Council (Friluftsrådet) and the major sports organizations* supplemented with the participation of ministries in relevant contexts and with inspiration from the previously established 'team of sports thugs' set up a temporary group responsible for mapping the problems with access and planning and to examine the barriers in ownership, environmental rules, municipal planning etc in relation to the use of urban spaces, green spaces and the nature for self-organized as well as club-organized exercise and sports activities.
37. That the *Ministry of the Environment*, together with the relevant ministries and agencies, sports organizations, outdoors organizations and tourist organizations, work together to develop a general plan for branding Denmark as an 'active green exercise country' in general and to market attractive outdoor areas in particular by creating a national plan for a comprehensive and marked network of hiking and exercise paths. Naturally, this is to be coupled to the initiatives that are already in place, just as it can contribute to supporting other objectives, such as tourism. A regional or national network of nature paths can be maintained and spread in partnerships between the local authorities and clubs.
38. That the municipal planning strategies – in as much as it is possible within the existing financial framework and under the conditions for particularly thinly populated areas – prioritizes the access of all citizens to connected and safe systems of nature paths, bicycle paths and forest paths for joggers, hikers and other forms of exercise.
39. That the *municipalities* work together with the actors in the sports sector to open up the most popular urban exercise areas to serve more of the day and more of the year, e.g. by improving lighting, outdoor training pavilions and training equipment, changing and toilet



facilities, lockers etc in parks, the urban green areas and other spaces that are often used for sports and exercise.

40. That the *Ministry of the Environment* and the *municipalities* work together with actors from the world of sport to make agricultural land more accessible for self-organized sports and exercise by working to establish increased public access by creating marked riding and walking paths alongside fields and windbreaks.

It is to be noted that a number of the proposals presented above will be addressed by the working group under the Ministry of Welfare, which will follow up on the Government Bill about how urban planning can support an active lifestyle. The working group is to produce a catalogue with examples of how the municipalities can be supported in their efforts with urban development and an active lifestyle.

## *Exercise and sports in the workplace*

### **Challenge**

The workplace is a significant actor when it comes to providing the greatest possible number of people with the opportunity to live a physically active life combined with healthy working and family lives. This is where many people spend much of their time; and this is where effort ought to be made to get more people physically active; both in order to increase well-being and health as well as to reduce sickness absenteeism.

### **Proposal**

41. That the *social partners, relevant ministries and relevant providers of sports opportunities* work together to determine how initiatives regarding exercise and health can be included in the personnel policy in all public and private enterprises to a much greater extent than is the case at present.
  
42. That the *Ministry of Health and Prevention, in cooperation with the relevant actors* in the area, develop a model for the voluntary health certification of workplaces based on the so-called KRAMS-factors (Diet, Smoking, Alcohol, Exercise, Stress. In Danish: *Kost, Rygning, Alkohol, Motion, Stress*). Certification is a strategic instrument for promoting health objectives in Danish enterprises in order to strengthen the preventive measures – not least in relation to the weaker groups in the labour market.