

International Symposium on *Sport for all!*



SPORT FOR ALL IN THE ARMED FORCES

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I do not intend to be thorough with short paper. I am considering just several aspects of the main problem, hoping that discussions will be of more meaningful use than the presented papers themselves.

It is well known fact that many countries are worried about the health state and the physical activity of their population. The accessible means of the physical education and sport activities as a factor for health promotion and prophylactics of diseases are not got into people's routine.

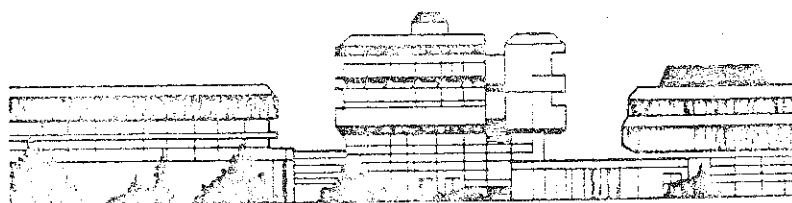
The importance of this problem was considered and was included in the main documents of the 8 conference of the ministers of sport from the countries of the European council held on 17, 18 May 1995 in ; workshops of the European sport conference held in Vienna and Budapest on 25-29 September the same year.

The trouble about the state of the sport as a whole comes in response to the revolutionary changes in the political, economic and social conditions that put sport's organisations in difficult situation. In many countries that used to have achievements and well built system for sport practising, currently suffer troublesome decrease in comparison with the situation several years ago. It is a negative fact for Europe, because in order to keep its important role it is necessary to preserve its unity and its high degree of organisation in each level.

Only those who are fit and healthy are able to keep to the so called European level of knowledge in the background of the accelerating rhythm of life during the next century. In the above mentioned resolutions, concerning young people, it is pleaded for changes in the motionless mode of life throughout Europe and the lack of motivation to go in for some kind of sport.

I have begun with this introduction so as to underline the global aspect and the seriousness of the problem. We are professionally involved in this matter not only not national level, but also on the base of collaboration with different social authorities, local sport organisations and CISM.

Undoubtedly, the role and the abilities of CISM and the armed forces in favour of simulating and developing of the sport activities amongst people in different ages and their role for confirming the sport as a leading factor of social development are considerable. This undoubtedly



**Warendorf - Germany
22 - 28 September 1996**

role of the armed forces derives from their high graded organisation and from the fact that in many countries the military service is obligatory and each citizen who is of the age goes through it. In this sense in order to inform and exchange experience, which is one of the tasks of the present conference, I am going to review some questions concerning the Sport for All in the Armed Forces.

Naturally I will refer to the problems in Bulgaria, but as to the structure and the system almost everything could be applied for the countries former members of SKDA.

Introducing the sport into people's routine is long-standing process that begins from the early child age, goes through school, military service and university. Here in Bulgaria the was built efficient national system for sport, which was supported by the government and powerful social organisations. The most efficient part of this system was the system built in the armed forces. The system for sport development in the armed forces completes the tasks once taken up in the school until joining the armed forces; creates proper conditions for educating and training of high-qualified athletes during the period of their military service.

The sport and respectively sport for all in the armed forces was carried out confining to two major directions:

1. COMPULSORY PHYSICAL EXERCISES AND SPORT ACTIVITIES

These are training hours regulated in the educational programmes of the Armed Forces and divided for the different kinds of Armed Forces and different age categories. These hours aim mainly in strengthening the health and increasing the physical endurance, in order all the tasks concerning the peace time and war time activities to be concluded more efficiently. The hours are organised in two ways:

- a. Physical exercises early in the morning including walking, running, free exercises without apparatuses, gymnastic exercises on apparatus, swimming (where available). The time for this kind of physical activity is 30 minutes in the morning.
- b. Regular hours on physical preparation. These hours are organised 2 - 3 times weekly. Besides the above mentioned exercises these hours include some elements from the track and field, quick passing through a cross-country, hurdle running, specialised hand fight, athletic and ski activities, parachuting and others. These activities are organised in the form of educational hours and have competitive elements. At certain intervals exams are held on all the regulated in the educational programme disciplines. These exams are necessary to measure the individual physical state and the endurance of everyone who is on military service, as well as to measure these quantities for a whole unit.

2. SPORT FOR ALL IN THE FREE TIME.

These activities are organised 2 - 3 times weekly in the free time and last up to 90 minutes. They include training and competitions on the classic sports: shooting, volleyball, basketball, handball, football, track and fields, swimming, wrestling, judo and many others. These activities are very important for establishing long-lasting sport habits, love towards the sport and will for victory. The organisation and implementation of these activities in the Armed Forces not only help with solving health problems, but also form habits for physical exercise and sport in almost all young people.

3. SPORT FOR ALL IN THE ARMY SPORT CLUBS.

These clubs are founded, in order to develop the elite sport, mainly in the Olympic sports. They are open clubs which members are not only people on active military service and civilians in the Armed Forces, but also young civil people (mainly fans). These clubs provide conditions for continuing the preparation of young elite athletes while being on active military service. In these clubs there are conditions for forming elite athletes who later are the basis of the national teams of the country. So if an army sport club develops 20-30 king of sports, 600 - 900 elite athletes are required to fill the teams. In order this to become a reality, it is necessary 8000 - 10000 children, young people and young men who will soon go for military service, to be available as a reserve for this clubs. That is why there is built a sub-system of children and juvenile sport schools that helps these army sport clubs. The best of these schools go for military service in the army sport clubs. Therefore the built up system and its sub-system is one extreme importance for the development of sport for all amongst the young people, future soldiers and citizens. The effectiveness of this activity for the development of sport for all is extreme, because the factor 'elite sport' is an example and attracts lots of young people.

Here I want to draw your attention on the spread in the society two different opinions. Which is more important: sport for all or the elite sport. Undoubted is the opinion of the professionals that both are equally important and are mutually connected. The elite sport and its selection, the good competition could not exist without the sport for all. The practise shows that the more are the people dealing with sport for all the best is the selection for filling the teams form the elite sport. On the contrary the elite sport being an example, attract the people to the sport for all.

I am acquainted with the sport systems of many countries, because of my close relation with the national sport unions and many federations, and I can define the sport systems in Bulgaria as one of the best. The model of this system were the Armed Forces. Naturally there are weak spots and missies in the organisation, in the quantity of the events held and so on, but I think that they were in the acceptable limits.

The national sport system, as a whole, efficiently solved the problem of social and educational aspects. The influence of "the street" almost had not effect on the young people.

At the end I would like to explain why sometimes I used past tense. Due to objective and subjective reasons, unfortunately, today we could state the great achievements of the past. One of the reasons is the heavy crisis in which is the national sport system and the bad co-operation between the sport for all and the schools, universities, and the Armed Forces.
