



1. State of play: an alarming and unacceptable level of physical inactivity across the EU

The detriments caused by **the lack of physical activity** in Europe are well recorded, as are the significant economic costs associated with the effects of **sedentary lifestyles** and their related health problems, especially in view of the fact that most European societies show increasing numbers of people being overweight and obese:

- **51.6%** of the EU's population (18 and over) are **overweight** (Eurostat, 2014);
- **1 in 3 children** are currently overweight or obese.

Despite many millions of Euros spent to encourage higher levels of participation in sport and physical activity, there has been little impact on turning the tide of inactivity. **Physical inactivity remains the 4th leading risk factor** of global mortality increasing the risks of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure.

According to the 2014 Special Eurobarometer on Sport and Physical Activity⁽¹⁾:

- 54 % of all respondents did not do any vigorous

activity on a weekly basis and 44% did not do any moderate physical activity. The **WHO recommends**, for an adult, at least 150 minutes per week of moderate –intensity aerobic physical activity or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity (2).

- **60% of Europeans do not reach the minimum levels of physical activity recommended by WHO**, and many of these are people come from low socio-economic backgrounds, minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities.

The treatment of preventable (non-communicative) diseases has both direct and indirect costs. The direct costs are related to the expenditure for health care whereas indirect costs cover the loss of economic output due to illness, disease-related work disabilities or premature death. A recent study by the Centre for Economics & Business Research (3) estimated **the cost of physical inactivity to be EUR 80 billion per year in the EU-28**.



2. The European Week of Sport: initiative to tackle the European inactivity level

To help raise awareness to tackle the issue linked to inactivity, in 2015 the European Commission launched the European Week of Sport with the aim to "promote sport and physical activity across Europe". The Week is for everyone, regardless of age, background or fitness level.

With a focus on grassroots initiatives, the Week wants to inspire Europeans to #BeActive on a regular basis and to create more a better opportunities in peoples' everyday lives to be more physically active.

Some key dates:

- **Treaty of Lisbon** (entry into force in 2009): the EU has the competence to support, coordinate and supplement the actions of Member States in the area of Sport. Member States remain leader in the area of Sport;
- **Letter of intent from the EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, T. Navracsics**, with partner organisations to launch the first European Week of Sport. A letter was signed with EuropeActive.
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(1) http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs_412_en.pdf

(2) http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_recommendations/en/

(3) <https://www.cebr.com/reports/the-costs-of-inactivity-in-europe/>

- **September 2015:** 1st edition of the European Week of Sport with a European Sport Village organised in Brussels; EuropeActive had a stand. 7,000 events were organised throughout Europe.
- **September 2016:** 2nd edition of the European

Week of Sport. 15,000 events were organised, with 10 million people participating. The #BeActive message reached 200 million Europeans.
September 2017: 3rd edition of the European Week of Sport.

3. The role of EuropeActive and the fitness sector in the European Week of Sport

EuropeActive considers that this initiative provides an opportunity to further strengthen the dialogue between policy makers and the sport and fitness sectors as European citizens are not active enough. In line with the Week's purpose and key messages, EuropeActive is strongly committed to promote the social role of sport and the wider benefits of physical activity at all levels:

- **Official partner of the European Week of Sport** together with 34 other European Sport organisation.
- **Member of the Advisory Board since 2015**, with other sport organisations with the aim to support, promote and improve the Week every year (contribution to meetings, evaluation, workshops).
- **EuropeActive had the third most active Twitter** account during the Week 2016.

Putting words into action!

- **Fitness Open Doors** in Brussels during the first edition of the Week
- **Start of the ALCIS 1 and 2 projects** during the education focus day of the Week (non-collaborative partnership) – 27.000 kids reached over the 2 projects.
- Contributed to the **House of Sport conferences** (2016 and 2017)
- **Launch of the National Fitness Days** (September 2017) with the aim to actively encourage fitness clubs and fitness professionals to contribute to the Week and to promote the #BEACTIVE message with events and activities in their clubs (open door, special offers, special fun activities, etc.) to make more people, more active, more often.

4. EuropeActive recommendations for future editions of the Week

1. EuropeActive encourages the initiative of the Week to continue and for the need to strengthen the #BeActive message.

EuropeActive calls for a very strong, powerful and instantly recognised message, to be as known as other pan-European campaign such as the "5 a day" one (to encourage people to eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day). The #BeActive message should be used and promoted throughout the year and is included in EuropeActive communications.

2. For clarity and efficiency reasons, EuropeActive calls for a #BEACTIVE WEEK instead of European Week of Sport.

3. EuropeActive encourages the Erasmus+ programme to continue supporting actions focusing on health-enhancing physical activity, where there is a clear need for action regarding the pandemic of physical inactivity and the consequences related to it.