

THE POWER OF SPORT

Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

THE POWER OF SPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Sport features prominently in the 2007-2011 Policy Programme *Working together, living together*.¹ The Cabinet believes that sport is very important to society, and, more especially, has intrinsic value. The Cabinet supports sport primarily because it promotes social values. Because of its social function, sport is a highly desirable and effective way of achieving key government objectives, in the fields of prevention and health, youth policy, education, values and standards, integration, communities, safety and international policy. As announced in the policy programme, an additional EUR 10 million will be invested in sports policy in 2008, and an additional EUR 20 million from 2009.

This policy letter lays out, in concrete terms, the future of the policy programme for sport. I will, of course, also elaborate upon the pillars of current sports policy, namely 'Exercise', 'Participate' and 'Perform', as recently set out in the *Time for Sport*² policy document (2005) and the *Together for Sport*³ implementation programme (2006). The programmes announced in those documents will not be affected. However, I will establish and shift a number of emphases in sports policy, and set some new priorities. Now I would like to share with you my vision (part 1) and priorities (part 2) for the next few years.

The State Secretary of Health,
Welfare and Sport,

Jet. Bussemaker



1 Lower House, 2006-2007 session, 31 070 no. 1
2 Lower House, 2004-2005 session, 30 234 nos. 1, 2
3 Lower House, 2005-2006 session, 30 234 no. 6









STRENGTHENING SPORT

The power of sport

Over the last few months, I have deepened my knowledge of sports policy and the sports sector. The world of sport is quite unique. Millions of people get pleasure from and are involved in sport, not just as competitors or supporters, but also as volunteers or professionals. With involvement in and enthusiasm for sport as strong as ever, sport is the single most important binding force in today's society. Despite the increasingly individualistic nature of society, sport is still able to mobilize thousands of people every weekend to take part and compete.

There is probably no other arena that brings together so many people. Tight-knit social networks and clubs form around sport, which rely on the commitment of the volunteers involved and sometimes evolve into social or even professional organisations. In my view, sport derives its great power from this finely-meshed network of volunteer organisations – a textbook example of how 'civil society' can function.

Sport in figures

According to data from the Social and Cultural Planning Office, almost 60% of the population takes part in sport at least once a month.⁴ For young people up to the age of 19, that figure is more than 80%. On average, we spend 2.6 hours a week on sport and physical activity. 36% of the population are a members of one of the 27.000 or so sports clubs in the Netherlands. As many as 60-65% of young people are member of a sports club. Half the population follows sport each week on the radio or television. More than a million volunteers are actively involved in sport, devoting 2 million hours per week to their involvement. This equates to 50.000 full-time jobs. In addition, some 13.000 professionals are employed by 16% of sports clubs, most on a part-time basis, the total labour volume of which equates to 3.500 FTEs.

I believe that social cohesion is one of the greatest benefits provided by sport. But more than that, sport appeals particularly to young people. With a high rate of participation and its potential as a learning environment, sport is one of the spheres in which children grow up, are educated and are able to develop their talents. The provision of enough sport and physical activity in the school curriculum improves academic achievement and reduces absence from school. Sport encourages people to lead active, healthy lives. Moreover, sports clubs are a way for young people to learn about active participation and voluntary work from an early age. All of this provides reason enough to lay the foundations for lifelong involvement in sport and exercise at an early age.

Top-class sport is also a unique phenomenon which should not be underestimated. The solidarity created by high-level success, and the pride and inspiration that people derive from it, is almost unparalleled. Top-level sport also provides a forum for international encounters, unity and inspiration. In this respect, the social values of top-class and recreational sport offer good comparisons: just as the sports club acts as the present-day 'village green' for local communities, for a fortnight once every four years the Olympic village becomes the centre of the world.

Strengthening recreational sport

The government wants to exploit the power of sport and optimize the social function of the sports sector. In the policy programme, the Cabinet announces a number of objectives it wishes to achieve in and with the aid of sport, namely: involving sports clubs in education, after-school clubs and the community; increasing the impact of sport and physical activity on the health of the population; the participation and integration of, and establishing equal rights for, disadvantaged or vulnerable groups in sport, both in our own country and in developing countries; and developing talent and achieving top-class performance. Above all, sport must offer everyone a sportsmanlike, healthy and safe environment to counteract negative phenomena which detract from the power of sport.

However, the sports sector needs to be given the right tools to achieve this. Many clubs already find it difficult to simply provide enough sport on a regular basis, which would not seem to leave any room for even more tasks, social or otherwise. With this in mind, over the next few years I want to invest in strengthening and, to a certain degree, professionalizing sports clubs. More professional sports clubs will complement the work done by volunteers. Once they are stronger, some of these sports clubs will be genuinely able to undertake social tasks.

Sports clubs also need an effective and efficient national infrastructure in which to operate. The sports sector itself is responsible for maintenance and functioning of this infrastructure, for which purpose it receives substantial funds from the Lotto (Lottery). Under the proposed amendment to the Gambling Act, the restrictions on the appropriation of revenue from gambling licences will be lifted. Instead, a distribution system will be introduced for gambling revenues which gives the licence holders – such as the Lotto – greater freedom when distributing these funds to good causes, including sport. The licence holders will have to make a concerted effort to ensure that sport receives adequate funds commensurate with the social value of sport and the importance of maintaining the national sports infrastructure at all times. The exact percentages of this distribution will be stipulated in a ministerial regulation. If necessary, instructions can be given to licence holders on how to implement the joint and other policy plans. I am currently discussing this with the Minister for Justice and will draw on the findings of the research report on the costs of the sports infrastructure, which was recently produced by Berenschot on behalf of NOC*NSF⁵

The village meeting place

In the small village of Marknesse (population 3.800) in the Northeast Polder, Sportvereniging Marknesse (S.V.M.) has been the only sports club for as long as anyone can remember. There are 700 members involved in four branches of sport: football, korfbal, gymnastics and volleyball. When S.V.M. was provided with new premises, the club wanted to open seven days a week so that as many people as possible could make use of it. So, S.V.M. went on the search for other users. S.V.M. now offers space for a childcare facility – which the village previously lacked – and sport for senior citizens. A panna pitch has also been laid for primary school children from the village, and counts as another great success.⁶

A substantial budget will soon be available to give sports clubs extra support, but I do want to ask sport for something in return. I want to call the sports sector to account for its own social responsibility, especially in terms of offering a healthy, sportsmanlike and safe environment to everyone who wants to take part in sport. The Cabinet is asking the entire sports sector for an unconditional commitment to creating smoke-free canteens, combating alcohol abuse, promoting sportsmanlike values and respect and helping to make society safer by combating aggression, sexual and other forms of harassment, and discrimination.

5 A. Geurtsen RC, and F. Doornbos: Research of costs Sports infrastrucure, Final report. Utrecht: Berenschot, 11 September 2007

6 Edition Sport, Administration and Management 2007, issue 4

I am calling on sport to develop a tenacious and consistent approach which will make extreme behaviour – such as parents attacking youth coaches or young people attacking referees – a thing of the past. These negative side-effects ultimately pose a serious threat to the values of sportsmanship, and to sport itself.

I am also amazed to observe how under-used the huge potential of sport still is. Social diversity is reflected neither in the world of sport nor in its managerial ranks, and this is a missed opportunity. For every eight male managers in sport, there is only one female manager. The Cabinet will be asking the sports sector to make a contribution to women's rights, gay rights and the participation and integration of socially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. I believe that we must step up efforts to providing sports for the disabled, as the disabled appear to be the most severely disadvantaged group in terms of participation in sport. I intend to review sports policy for disabled people, to improve levels of participation in sport and integration among this group.

A small club with big achievements

The Argus table tennis club from Harkstede and Hoogezand in Groningen proves that a sports club doesn't have to be big in order to take action for special target groups in society. In 2006 for example, with just a hundred members, this club managed to make the table tennis tournament in the Special Olympics a great success. The club was also behind the 'Colourful Ping Pong Festival' aimed at young people from disadvantaged districts and asylumseekers' centres. The volunteers at the club enjoy organising these kinds of events as projects. In addition, as part of a Neighbourhood, Education Sport (BOS) project, Argus offers introductory lessons to schools in the municipality of Hoogezand-Sappemeer and works hard to provide after-school activities.⁷

Supporting top-class sport

I am also keen to support the sports sector at international/professional level. The Cabinet continues to pursue the aim of the Netherlands becoming one of the top ten countries in the international sporting world.

I support efforts in the sporting world to create a sportsmanlike climate of Olympic standard in the Netherlands within the next ten years, which might ultimately lead to the Netherlands being a candidate for the Olympics and Paralympics in 2028. Of course, we can only succeed in this aim with wide, popular support. But in the meantime, more and more influential people and bodies are voicing their Olympic dreams. The policy in support of efforts to attract, plan and organise top sporting events in the Netherlands reflects that Olympic ambition. The Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB), with the support of the Cabinet, is investigating the possibility of staging the 2018 soccer world championships in the Netherlands.

If we are to achieve our top 10 objective, we need to provide the best possible environment for top-level, disabled and able-bodied players and athletes, as well as new talent and coaches. Based on my own observations and discussions with the sports sector, we need a number

of additional facilities to enable more talented players and athletes to develop into top-class sportspeople. I intend to invest in this over the next few years. For top-class disabled sport, which has further to go if it is to achieve top-ten status, I want to consider how I can make policy and the existing programmes more effective.

But I also expect top-class athletes and talented newcomers to give something back to society. Society is prepared to invest in them, and top athletes can repay this by showing a willingness to play a significant role in society. They can do this simply by being mindful of their status as role models, and leading by example in terms of sportsmanship and respect. However, there are many other ways in which others can be inspired by the achievements of top-class players and athletes, and the methods they use to attain them. Thankfully, more and more top athletes are aware of this fact and – despite their busy sports careers – are keen to commit to social tasks and good causes. I intend to ask a number of them to act as ambassadors for sports policy.

Professional footballers ‘scoring’ for health

This year, all 18 professional ‘Eredivisie clubs’ are doing their bit for the ‘Score for Health’ project, made possible with the help of the Ministry for Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS). Pupils from specially selected primary schools sign a contract with a professional footballer stipulating that, for 20 weeks, they will take plenty of exercise and eat healthily. Their parents are also involved. Famous footballers are actively involved in encouraging the children, and the initial results are promising: the children taking part are eating more healthily, they are doing more exercise, and more of them have joined a sports club. The average body fat percentage also fell sharply.

More physical activity for health

As well as supporting recreational and top-class sport, I will be pressing ahead with policy aimed at combating lack of exercise. From a health perspective, combating lack of exercise is an important social task. Regular physical activity not only helps prevent obesity and diabetes, but also depression, cardiovascular disease and dementia. The earlier a person starts an exercise regime, the better.

Judging from the positive trends of recent years, policies designed to encourage people to do more physical activity appear to be bearing fruit. However, I share the concerns of the Minister for Health regarding the rising rate of obesity among adults and young people, and the most vulnerable groups in society who exercise least: the elderly, the disabled, the chronically ill, immigrants, and residents of deprived neighbourhoods. For these people in particular, sport and physical activity have much to offer, both in terms of an active, healthy lifestyle and because of the numerous opportunities for integration which sport and physical activity offer. Much is already being done to reverse this trend, but we can do more. For this reason I intend to increase the pace of implementation of the National Action Plan for Sport and Exercise (NASB). The physical activity policy that forms part of the NASB is a major component of health policy, as outlined in the framework letter *A vision for prevention and health*⁸ which the Minister for Health recently sent to the Lower House.

Investing together, knuckling down together

Needless to say, I cannot achieve my objectives for sports policy single-handedly. Fortunately, sports policy can count on the full and concrete support of the Cabinet. In a number of cases, this will result in joint investments from other government departments, which means that this Cabinet is investing more than ever in sport.

I will dovetail sports policy with policy for other areas whenever I believe that doing so will create new opportunities. It is my hope that this will forge strong links between sport and other sectors. To give some examples, sport and physical activity are integral to the *'Everybody Joining In' Action Programme*⁹, the *Strong Communities Action Plan*¹⁰, the Programme for Youth and Family *'Every Opportunity for Every Child'*¹¹, the Civic Integration Delta Plan *'A Firm Footing in the Netherlands'*¹², the Equal Rights 2008-2011 Policy Document *'More Opportunities for Women'*¹³ and the aforementioned framework letter Vision for Prevention and Health. They will also be integral to the long-range action plan for voluntary work and volunteer aid, the policy document on gay rights, the social placement action plan and the letter on alcohol policy.

You were recently informed about the *Community Schools, Sport and Culture Initiative*, which I will be implementing in collaboration with the Cabinet members for Education, Culture and Science (OCW). You will be sent a separate document on the subject of *Sport and Development Cooperation*, which I am preparing in collaboration with the Minister for Development Cooperation.

To strengthen the sports sector, as well as investing itself, the Cabinet will ask the other government authorities to do likewise. I will be making a big appeal to municipalities to subscribe to the aims of sports policy and consider how the national approach can be reflected at local level. I am happy to report that, in general, the municipalities have shown themselves very willing to take action for sport. Many of them pursue an active sport and physical activity policy, and are investing considerable amounts in local sports infrastructure.

The sports sector has also voiced its approval of the policy for strengthening sport, at both recreational and professional level. The sports sector will work towards achieving the goals set, both locally and nationwide.

The sports sector may be the main provider of sport and exercise facilities, but it is not the only one. There are other players in the field. Partly because of my desire to combat lack of physical activity and obesity in the Netherlands, I am delighted with the growing market for sports schools and fitness centres, and am pleased to observe that health insurers are also recognizing the preventive and, in some cases, curative effect of sport and physical activity. I also applaud initiatives by private organisations, such as the Cruijff foundation and Krajicek foundation, which are creating neighbourhood and community sports and playing fields, and will also be focusing on the 40 Strong Communities selected by the Minister for Housing, Communities and Integration.

9 Lower House, 2007-2008 session, 31 200 XV no. 2

10 Lower House, 2006-2007 session, 30 995 no. 7

11 Lower House, 2006-2007 session, 31 001 no. 5

12 Lower House, 2006-2007 session, 31 143 no. 1

13 Lower House, 2007-2008 session, 30 420 no. 50

On the other hand, I observe that healthcare facilities, including facilities for people with mental or other disabilities, could do a lot more in the field of sport and exercise. Physical education has also suffered in recent years, and swimming is being removed from the curriculum by an increasing number of schools (and municipalities). This is often the consequence of the choices made by organisations. I am calling upon these organisations to look afresh at the importance of sport and exercise, and to make them a permanent part of their strategy.

As regards other authorities, the sports sector and other partners, I want to keep or place all facets of sport and exercise on the agenda over the next few years, and consider how everyone involved can further the aims of sports policy. I am committed to enabling everyone in the Netherlands to enjoy sport and physical activity as much as possible, and in particular sports clubs and the added value they offer. Ultimately, membership of a sports club provides the best opportunity for lifelong participation in sport.

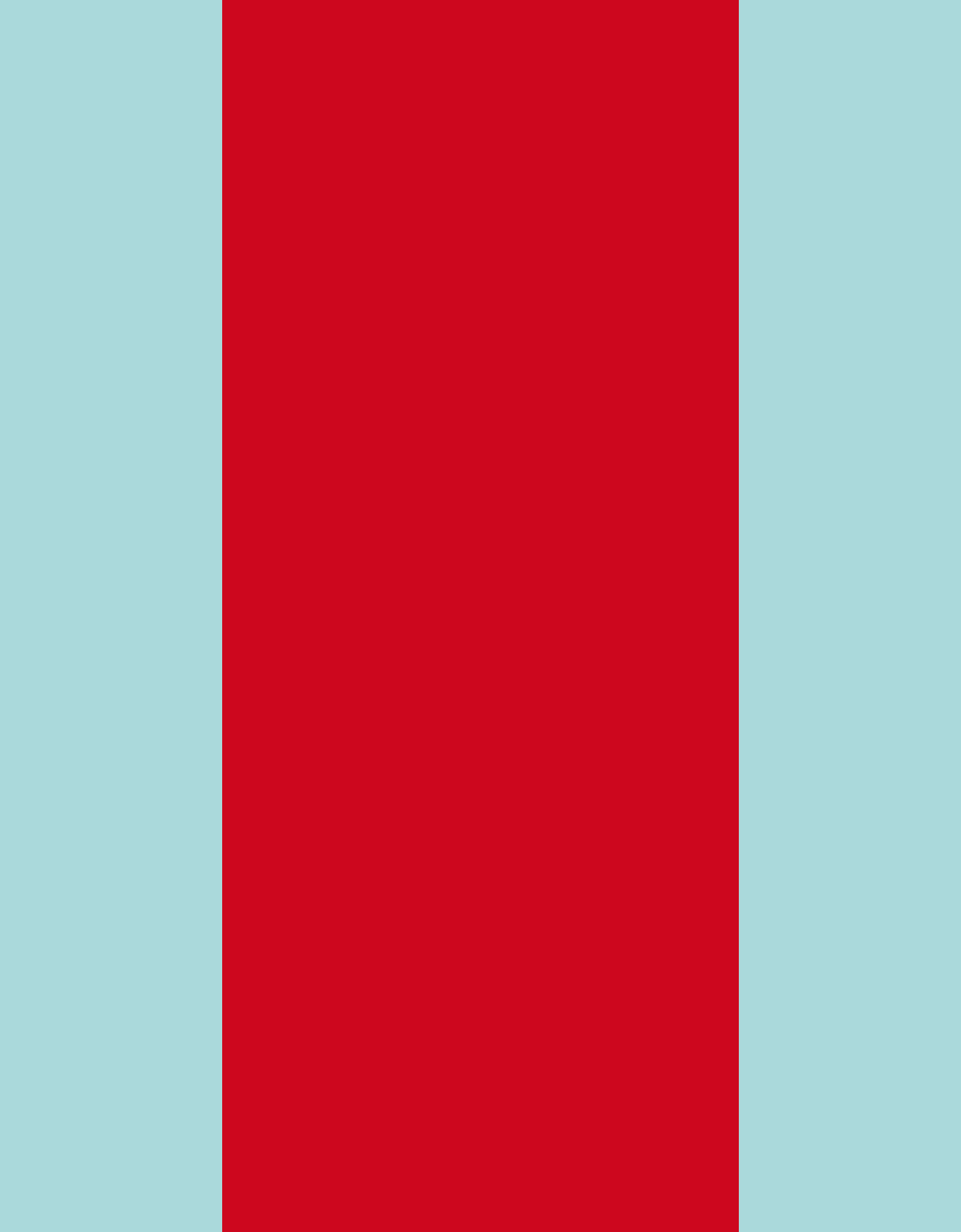
Policy and extra funds

Sports policy for the next few years will, of course, build on the *'Time for Sport: Exercise, Participate and Perform'* policy document and the *Together for Sport* programme. These plans, which run until the end of 2010, will be implemented unchanged. For instance, I have already given the go-ahead for the *Masterplan for refereeing*, the promising 'experimental parks' are underway under the *Renewing Sports Facilities* programme, and nine sports associations, working with the MOGroup, are going to implement 50 'sport/care programmes' as part of the *Participation amongst immigrant youth through sport*. In addition, the Cabinet has made extra funds available for implementing the new plans: € 10 million in 2008 and, thereafter, funds of € 20 million to be continued into the future. From 2009, I will also be reinvesting the funds released from the Neighbourhood, Education and Sport scheme in sport and exercise policy.

I intend to devote a large percentage of the extra funds to supporting sports clubs, so that they are able to fulfil their role in society more effectively, and carry out social tasks. I will also be using the extra funds to give an additional boost to enabling new talent to excel. Over the next few years, I will also be prioritising the promotion of disabled sport, the National Action Plan for Sport and Exercise, sportsmanship and respect as well as international policy, in particular sport and development cooperation. These subjects will be discussed separately below.









2.1 Combined jobs

10% of clubs at full strength

My aim is that, in four years' time, roughly 10% of sports clubs should be so 'strong' that they are not only able to serve their own members, but can also get involved in education, after-school activities, the community and/or the often vulnerable target groups who, relatively speaking, participate less in sport.

I intend to rely particularly on 'combined jobs' to achieve this, by which I mean roles in which professionals work part of the time in sport and part of the time elsewhere, such as in education. These kinds of roles will serve to professionalize sport and support voluntary work, while also creating attractive full-time jobs which are not a viable option for people working only for sports clubs. As an added benefit, the approach will raise the profile of sport and physical activity in other sectors.

Combined jobs: one means, several ends

Working with Cabinet Members of Education, Culture and Science, with municipalities and also the sports, education and culture sector, I am currently preparing a concrete initiative to create a total of at least 2.500 full-time combined jobs. You were informed about the *Community Schools, Sport and Culture Initiative* by Cabinet Members for Education, Culture and Science and myself at the start of August.¹⁴ Combined jobs are a means for the Cabinet to achieve a number of ends:

- Increase the number of community schools offering sport and cultural facilities in both primary and secondary education, starting with the 40 strong communities;
- support sports clubs with a view to their social function and use sport for education, after-school clubs and the community;
- stimulate the provision of opportunities for daily sport and physical activity in and around schools, for all pupils;
- encourage young people under the age of 18 to encounter one or more forms of art and culture.

Physical Education twice a week

The report of the *Temporary Committee for Broad-Based Analysis*¹⁵ on the status of sport in schools found that, on average, physical education is taught two days a week: a total of 1.5 hours per week in primary education and 2 hours per week in secondary education. Only one in ten schools consider that they are currently in a position to provide sport and physical activity five days a week (both during and after school hours). In primary education, a minority of schools elect to use a specialist teacher for physical education lessons. There also appears to be a lack of facilities, which creates problems with travel times, and those available are poorly maintained. Physical education is almost completely absent from the curriculum in senior secondary vocational education. Good practice has shown that the provision of sport and physical activity at regional education centres hinges on the support of sector management and directors.

Schools and sport

As physical education only provides some of the sport and physical activity important for children and young people, and this situation is not an easy one to change. It is important to create other opportunities, such as organising after-school activities in collaboration with sports clubs, and making better use of opportunities for sport and play in and around schools, childcare facilities and the community. Achieving this relies on consistent collaboration between sport, education and other local organisations, as personified by the professionals who will be taking on the combined jobs.

When implementing the initiative, I intend to ask municipalities to also make provisions for disabled pupils to participate in sport. Specialist teachers fulfilling combined jobs in special education and at sports clubs can provide a great boost for disabled sport (see 2.3).

Social placements

A large number of schools are already offering work experience placements with non-profit and voluntary organisations, known as 'social placements'. Many school pupils appear to be choosing placements with sports clubs. Sports clubs offer a wide variety of opportunities: giving training, coaching a youth team, organising events or tournaments, producing a club newsletter or website, and helping with administrative tasks. Social placements are an opportunity for sports clubs to attract young people to their ranks, not just as volunteers, but also as members or supporters. The Cabinet will elaborate upon the opportunities for social placements, including in the sports sector, in an action plan which will be presented to the Lower House this autumn (2007).

Strong communities

Strong sports clubs benefit the social infrastructure and quality of life in the community they serve. Sport can help tackle problems in deprived areas. I intend to ask municipalities to pay special attention to communities and neighbourhoods which do not have enough sports clubs or, in some cases, are now completely bereft of sports clubs. I intend to call on them to consider how sports clubs can be reinstated for and, preferably, in the community, for instance

by forming satellite, neighbourhood and school sports clubs. The provision of sustainable sports opportunities, created by the community's residents, will restore the lifeblood of the community, with community schools possibly acting as a point of contact. The Cabinet has set out this vision in the *Strong Communities Action Plan*. It is now up to the municipalities to include sport in their community action plans, with the aid of the *Community Schools, Sport and Culture Initiative*.

The Hague Sports Park

Many deprived communities lack the facilities for sport, i.e. premises or sports clubs. This was the case in the heavily built-up Schilderswijk district in The Hague. However, a solution was found: the creation of the Hague Sports Park, a 2.000 m² sports complex with four multifunctional sports fields on which almost any type of sport can be practiced. The Sports Park is operated by five primary schools working in collaboration. Strong sports clubs from outside the community have been brought in to offer activities. The facilities are used by around 400 young people each week.

Implementing the Community Schools, Sport and Culture Initiative

Municipalities have a vital role to play in rolling out the combined jobs at local level. Municipalities are the link between the different sectors and can assess, at local level, where and how the combined jobs can best be deployed. The initiative will be shared among municipalities wishing to shape policy at local level, who will then have to be willing to commit to the objectives and creating a certain number of combined jobs, as well as match the Cabinet's initiative with their own funds. The initiative will be launched in 2008, initially for the 31 large and medium-sized municipalities; the (rising) budget will then be portioned out to other municipalities starting in 2009. The funds will be distributed to the authorities using a simple instrument (decentralisation or integration payment) and a straightforward scale (in proportion to the number of young inhabitants and/or pupils in the municipality).

Administrative agreements on the deployment of combined jobs will be concluded with interested municipalities and the other parties involved from the spheres of education, sport and culture. The agreements on the deployment of combined jobs for community schools, sport and culture will take due account of the origin of funding. The Cabinet and the umbrella organisations from the sectors involved will sign up to the stated objectives and specify their contribution to the realisation of these objectives in a national covenant, each drawing on their own roles and responsibilities. Based on this, each municipality will then sign a declaration, and draw up its own agreement with local organisations such as schools, sports clubs and cultural institutions. This integral approach is commensurate with the objectives regarding cohesion of themes, bundling of resources and cooperation between organisations. It is also a way of ensuring the attainment of various objectives, such as strengthening sports clubs.

The implementation of the initiative will be the subject of regular, government-level consultation with the policy partners. To support the initiative, the Cabinet is keen to set up a (possibly temporary) taskforce of representatives and experienced experts nominated by the national government, municipalities and the education, sport and culture sectors. The role of this taskforce will be to clear the way for the introduction of combined jobs, by developing accompanying policies.

This will include supplying profiles, ensuring that employers are properly organised, regulating the status of holders of combined jobs, and ensuring that they have consistent authority and training. To support the implementation of the initiative, it will also be important to share knowledge and provide a helpdesk and support team.

Financing

The Community Schools, Sport and Culture Initiative will be financed by the Ministries of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), and Education, Culture and Science (OCW), as well as the participating municipalities.

I am setting aside 75% of the additional sports policy budget for this purpose. As agreed in the Coalition Agreement, these additional funds will be made available in two stages. The first instalment for 2008 has already been added to the 'VWS' budget. The second instalment has been reserved in the national government's supplementary budget and a decision will be made on its assignment in the spring of 2008. Of the second instalment, a sum of € 7.5 million has been earmarked for strengthening sports clubs via the *Community Schools, Sport and Culture Initiative*. Within the budget, I will also devote a large percentage of the funds released from the Neighbourhood, Education and Sport (BOS) scheme to this purpose. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will also be using some of the additional funds for the *Community Schools, Sport and Culture Initiative*. Again, the funds agreed in the Coalition Agreement will be distributed in instalments. The first instalment for 2008 has already been added to the Education, Culture and Science budget. The remaining instalments have been reserved as part of the supplementary budget. Decisions will be made on the remaining instalments in 2008, 2009 and 2010. A further amount, rising to € 9.8 million in 2011, has been reserved in the supplementary Education budget. A further amount, rising to € 1.5 million in 2011, has also been reserved in the supplementary Culture budget. In parallel with decisions made on instalments, agreements will be made with a growing number of municipalities each year between 2008 to 2012.



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The table below illustrates the government contribution to the Community Schools, Sport and Culture Initiative (amounts in millions of euros).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ministry of VWS	7.5	19.6	23.3	23.3	28.3
sources:					
Increased Sport budget 1 st instalment 2008	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5
Increased Sport budget 2 nd instalment 2009 *		7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5
Funds released from BOS		4.6	8.3	8.3	13.3
Ministry of OCW	9.4	8.7	10.9	18.8	18.8
sources:					
Secondary Education	5.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Primary Education 1 st instalment 2008	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Primary Education 2 nd instalment 2009 *		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Primary Education 3 rd instalment 2010 *			1.8	1.8	1.8
Primary Education 4 th instalment 2011 *				7.0	7.0
Culture 1 st instalment 2008	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Culture 2 nd instalment 2009 *		0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Culture 2 nd instalment 2010 *			0.4	0.4	0.4
Culture 2 nd instalment 2011 *				0.9	0.9

* The remaining instalments have been reserved in the supplementary budget. Decisions will be made on the remaining instalments in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

It has been agreed with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) that the participating communities will match the government contribution with their own funds from the second year onwards.

It has also been agreed with the VNG that, in accordance with the 'Knuckling Down Together' Administrative Agreement (Bestuursakkoord 'Samen aan de slag') between the government and the VNG/municipalities¹⁶, the participating municipalities will use some of the additional funds for *the Community Schools, Sport and Culture Initiative*.

Again, the funds from the Coalition Agreement will be made available in stages. This is illustrated in the table below (amounts in millions of euros).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Funds from increase	4.6	11.4	15.4	24.3	24.3
sources:					
1 st instalment 2008	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
2 nd instalment 2009 *		6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8
3 rd instalment 2010 *			4.0	4.0	4.0
4 th instalment 2011 *				8.9	8.9

*The remaining instalments have been reserved in the supplementary budget. Decisions will be made on the remaining instalments in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

2.2 Enabling talent to excel

The final big step

My aim in stepping up and expanding the top-class sport programme is to increase by 20% between 2007 and 2011 the number of talented Dutch sportspeople (disabled and able-bodied) who either have the prospect of becoming or have already become world-class players and athletes.

If a country is to compete and perform at top international level, it is essential that it develops high-quality sports programmes. International comparative research¹⁷ and discussions with researchers and NOC*NSF have revealed that the Netherlands must do more to facilitate the final step, when talented individuals develop into top-class talents athletes. Talented athletes must be able to devote themselves fully to their sport and receive proper support, both from their sport and from society. This is what enables talented athletes to take the final – and often biggest – step towards excelling in the ‘inter’national competitive arena.

A number of measures are needed:

- appointing talent coaches, possibly in greater numbers;
- clustering education, training, accommodation and other facilities into Centres for Top-class Sport and Education;
- making a structural contribution to high-quality training and competition programmes with a view to the Olympics and Paralympics.

17 2006 SPLISS, An international comparative study (VU Brussel, WHJ Mulier Instituut, UK Sport and Sheffield Hallam University)

I will be elaborating upon these objectives in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, as well as with the NOC*NSF, NebasNsg, sports associations, NLcoach, Olympic networks, municipalities and provinces, athletes and the education sector.

Talent coaches

In top-class sport, proper coaching for talented players and athletes is what can set you apart from the rest. Therefore, in 2008, ten more talent coaches will be added to the talent coaches pilot already launched. This will further the development of talent coaching as a profession, as well as joint training methods. At the end of 2008, based on the interim evaluation of the pilot, I will be setting up a wider programme for talent coaches, similar to the existing programme for Coaches at the Top.

Centres for Top-class Sport and Education

A number of centres will be created in the Netherlands to offer full-time training and education programmes for the national selections (including youth selections) of a number of branches of sport. Sports associations and partners at local level are concluding the necessary agreements on combining training, education (Secondary Education, Upper-Secondary Vocational Education, Higher Vocational Education, University), housing, sports medicine facilities and social support – all 'within cycling distance' of each other. The training and sport programme guides players and athletes in their daily routine. By clustering facilities, we will enable players and athletes to make the best possible use of their time for training, study and relaxation. This balance will benefit performance.

The sports sector is currently developing the concept of Centres for Top-class Sport and Education. I am aware that neither every sports association nor every sportsperson will be able, or indeed wants to make full use of these bundled facilities. However, in view of the added value of the concept to existing facilities, I am prepared to make a financial contribution to new and established centres that have a good infrastructure and are supported by partners from sport, the local government, housing organisations, education and the business community. My aim is for these centres to be evenly spread throughout the Netherlands. Depending on the needs of each centre, the grant can be used for accommodation, collective training facilities, dovetailing the sport and education programme, and social support. Sports medicine policy provides for a contribution to the necessary medical support for talents. Sports associations will also be able to link their talent coaches to these centres.

Excellence during 'The Games'

The achievements of top-level players and athletes have a beneficial effect on society at large: a high-achieving country is a country of which you can be proud. The Olympics and Paralympics occupy a special place in this respect, not just in the Netherlands but throughout the world. Starting in 2008, the Dutch government will be investing a fixed amount each year in preparing top-level athletes for the winter and summer Olympics and Paralympics. This ongoing contribution will provide impetus for training and competition programmes to rival the best countries, raising top-class sport to new heights.

Financing

The existing budget for talent development as set out in the Time for Sport: *Exercise, Participate and Perform* policy document (€ 4.8 million per annum) will be increased by € 2.5 million, using funds from the increased Sport budget provided for by the Coalition Agreement (25%). As stipulated in the Coalition Agreement, these additional funds will be made available in two stages.

The first instalment for 2008, and the amounts for the next few years thereafter, have already been added to the VWS budget. The second instalment has been set aside on the Government's supplementary budget and a decision will be made on its appropriation in the spring of 2008. Of the second instalment, a sum of € 2.5 million has been earmarked for Talent Development. The budget for the next few years is illustrated in the table below (amounts in millions of euros).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Increased Sport budget 1 st instalment 2008	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Increased Sport budget 2 nd instalment 2009 *		2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Current budget	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
Total	7.3	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8

* The remaining instalments have been set aside in the supplementary budget. Decisions will be made on the remaining instalments in 2008, 2009 and 2010.



2.3 Disabled sport

In total, there are around 1.7 million moderately or severely disabled people (with a motor, visual or auditory handicap) living independently and around 200,000 people living in semi-residential or residential care. By and large, this latter group is more seriously disabled. There are also 110,000 people with a moderate or serious mental handicap, roughly half of whom live in sheltered or residential accommodation. These people often have a combination of disabilities. Almost 2.5% of children and young people aged between 6 and 24 are moderately to severely handicapped in their daily lives. This equates to roughly 90,000 people. Research conducted by the Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research (NIVEL) in 2007 found that, in 2005, 19% of people living with a chronic complaint or handicap were inactive, compared with 8% in the Dutch population. 25% of people with a mental handicap engaged in organised sport.

Concerted action required for disabled sport

The number of disabled people who participate in sport still lags far behind the number of people with no disability, and the situation is proving very hard to rectify. The causes, insofar as they are known, are bound up mainly with the nature of the disabilities and the facilities and preconditions in place to enable physical activity and sport. Yet, sport and physical activity are particularly beneficial to the health, participation and integration of disabled people.

Because of this, I intend to make some changes to current policy in order to:

- ensure that more disabled people become involved in sport;
- raise the level of achievement of top-class disabled talents and athletes at European Championships, World Championships and the Paralympics.

Research into participation in sport

Although we have some data about participation in sport by disabled people (see box), the picture is far from complete. For this reason, I have made a subsidy available to NebasNsg to enable it to carry out a baseline study of the current and potential level of participation in sport by disabled people.

The survey will pay particular attention to young disabled people who are in mainstream education and people with a mental disability. The possibilities for adapted sport for these target groups will be considered.

Based on the findings of the original survey, I intend to set concrete targets and make agreements with NOC*NSF and NebasNsg in 2008 to stimulate participation in sport among disabled people. I intend to concentrate mainly on 'discovery' facilities offering the best opportunities to stimulate participation in sport, as well as on youth and on residential homes for people with a mental disability.

Where possible, I intend to use the 'strong' and other sports associations to provide sports facilities for the disabled. To aid integration, I am in favour of both disabled and able-bodied players and athletes attending the same clubs or, if possible, taking part in the same competitions.

Special education

We will continue with the 'Special Heroes' trial projects in special education, in collaboration with NebasNsg. The aim of this project is to enable more disabled children to use curricular and extra-curricular sports facilities in special education.

Special Heroes in Groot Gelre

Special Heroes seeks to enable as many children and young people as possible in special education to experience the joys of sport. In consultation with schools, a sports encouragement programme is being developed which offers various kinds of sport, dance and other forms of physical activity. The main thrust of the project is curricular sport, followed by extra-curricular sport and, finally, introducing pupils to the sports clubs. The first trial project is a joint initiative of the Regional Expertise Centre (REC) Groot Gelre (a joint venture along federal lines, involving 19 primary and secondary special schools in Gelderland), NebasNsg and LVC3, the national umbrella organisation for primary and secondary special education for pupils living with a physical, mental or multiple disability, or a chronic illness. The project has been partly enabled by health insurer Menzis.

Care facilities for people with a mental handicap

I also want to support NebasNsg in its efforts to mobilise institutions which provide residential or day-care facilities for people with a mental disability. By 2010, all residential and day-care facilities for people with a mental disability should have an active policy to encourage their residents to follow an active and healthy lifestyle. Residents and staff can find out about the various branches of sport and adapted sports activities by visiting the regional Special Olympics events.

Sports clubs

Although sports clubs have made good progress in recent years in terms of embracing disabled sport, there is still some work to be done to ensure that more disabled players and athletes can be admitted to these clubs. I therefore intend to take measures to revitalise and support the sports sector to ensure that this specific group can benefit, and will be consulting NOC*NSF and the sports associations. NebasNsg will be acting as advisor to the sports sector and municipalities, who could consider employing professionals in combined jobs (2.1) to work at sports clubs and in special education. Special, additional training will be offered to people involved in supporting and coaching the disabled in sport and physical activity.

Top-class sport

All top-class players and athletes, be they able-bodied or disabled, share the same desire, which is to attain the highest possible level. All top-class sport programmes are, in principle, open to able-bodied and disabled sportspeople, as is the incentive to enable talents to excel (2.2). However, Dutch disabled sportspeople have achieved limited success at world-ranking events, and are at risk of falling behind as competition from other countries increases. I will be consulting NOC*NSF regarding ways of optimising top-class sports policy for the disabled. I intend, to some extent, to base follow-up actions on a thorough evaluation of the Paralympics in 2008.

Part of the existing budget for disabled sport (€ 2 million per annum) will be deployed differently. Furthermore, the total budget will be increased by EUR 0.5 million per annum, by means of a reshuffle of the sport budget.
The table below illustrates the budget for the next few years (amounts in millions of euros).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Current budget	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Budget reshuffle	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5

2.4 National Action Plan for Sport and Exercise

30 minutes' exercise

The National Action Plan for Sport and Exercise (Nationaal Actieplan Sport en Bewegen, or NASB) has just been launched. A number of methodologies developed will be trialled on a small scale in 2007 and 2008. If they prove successful, I intend to scale up implementation. My aim, in stepping up and expanding the NASB, is to steadily increase the number of people doing the recommended amount of exercise and reduce the number of people leading a sedentary life:

- in 2012, at least 70% of adults (18+) do the recommended amount of exercise (2005: 63%);
- in 2012, at least 50% of young people (aged 4-17) do the recommended amount of exercise (2005: 40%);
- in 2012, no more than 5% of adults in the Netherlands are inactive (2005: 6%) .

Recommended exercise levels

Since 2005, the so-called 'combined standard' has been used to define a healthy level of exercise. In order to satisfy this standard, people need to satisfy the Dutch Standard for Healthy Exercise (NNGB) and/or the Fit Standard. The NNGB stipulates at least 30 minutes of moderate intense physical activity at least five days a week. For young people up to the age of 18, the standard is 60 minutes, seven days a week, at a slightly higher intensity. The Fit Standard stipulates at least 20 minutes of intense physical activity (sport or gym) on at least 3 days a week.

The problem of lack of physical activity and the health problems this causes, such as obesity and diabetes, require a solid approach.

Among adults in particular, the trend in levels of physical activity has been positive in recent years.¹⁸ I therefore believe it is time to raise the bar, and further expand the National Action Plan for Sport and Exercise (NASB). This is in line with the framework letter *'A Vision for Health and Prevention'* which was recently published by the Minister for Health, in which stepping up policy on physical activity is cited as one of the key measures to prevent obesity, diabetes and depression.

Research from Groningen has found that a sporty lifestyle improves academic performance and helps prevent dementia.

The NASB encourages people to become active for the sake of their health, by getting involved in sport, play and fitness and incorporating exercise in their 'normal' everyday life. The NASB is developing a package of stimulation measures which are designed to encourage the population and specific risk groups in particular to become more physically active. It places a strong emphasis on the development and implementation of evidence-based methodologies in five 'settings': community, care, work, sport and school. The implementation of these methodologies is supported by the new '30 minutes' exercise' campaign, which refers to the standard for healthy exercise.

I intend to focus particularly on three major areas:

- the 'Exercise on Prescription' methodology (Beweegkuur), implemented by the healthcare sector;
- the 'Locally Active' and 'Active Communities' projects (Lokaal actief and Communities in beweging), which are designed to promote physical activity in communities and neighbourhoods, and
- the target group of young people, which does not show the same positive trend with regard to levels of physical activity.

Exercise on Prescription

In consultation with healthcare professionals (GPs and physiotherapists) and the sports sector, in 2007-2008 exercise programmes will be rolled out in a similar way as the 'Exercise on Prescription' methodology, with first-line care fulfilling a referral role. In the first instance, the projects are targeted at people with, or at high risk of, type 2 diabetes. The NISB (Netherlands Institute for Sport and Physical Activity) has been instructed to develop a methodology which satisfies all the requirements for inclusion in the insurance package from 2009. The projects will be rigorously monitored and evaluated, working closely with the Health Care Insurance Board (CVZ). In this manner, we will obtain information about cost-effectiveness and how the interventions can be rolled out over a wider area.

Projects in the community

Many people who do not get enough exercise, including the elderly as well as young children and their parents, can be reached via their home environment. With that in mind, I intend to focus particularly on the 'community' setting. The NASB will be expanded to accommodate additional community projects, i.e. twenty 'Locally Active' and twenty 'Active Communities' projects. Agreements will be reached with municipalities regarding the implementation of these projects, and the available funds will be paid out to those municipalities (via the integration/decentralisation payment). In addition, the GALM methodology (Groningen Active Living Model), aimed at the elderly, will continue to receive national support.

Large and small-scale interventions

'Locally Active' is a new approach, along the lines of Woerden Active (Actief Woerden), aimed at increasing levels of physical activity among the inhabitants of a municipality (youths, adults and the elderly). The approach hinges on municipalities adopting an integral approach, which includes promoting existing facilities for sport and physical activity, providing information and organising all kinds of events. The method is currently being trialled in Maarssen, Purmerend, Urk and Waddinxveen.

An 'Active Community' is a small-scale group intervention which targets lack of exercise and obesity, particularly among young people, immigrants and people with a low level of education and low income. Ideally, the people affected are approached through the community, such as the neighbourhood, school, mosque, church or a club. These projects seek cross-over with forms of sport and physical activity that are easily accessible, both physically and financially, such as walking, cycling, swimming, aerobics and dance.

Active lifestyle for young people

It is striking that levels of physical activity among young people in particular do not display the positive trend displayed elsewhere. The majority of young people do not meet the recommended amount of exercise.

Working with the Minister for Youth and Family and the Minister for Health, I am investigating ways of overcoming the problem of lack of exercise among children and young people.

B-Fit in Gelderland

One in eight children in the Netherlands is overweight. In Gelderland, there are as many as 46,000 overweight children. The 'B-Fit' action programme, financed by the province of Gelderland, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, Menzis and the Nuts Ohra foundation, has been implemented by the 'Gelderse Sport Federatie' (GSF), to combat obesity in the youth of the province. A B-Fit consultant, who works in a school for 4 hours a week during the school year, helps implement the project which, among other things, consists of five sessions of physical activity each week, a fitness test twice a year, lessons in nutrition and exercise, the involvement of a famous sports person as a role model and access to the B-Fit website. Parents also play an important role in the project, and there are two parents' workshops each year. Parents also have access to the website and can volunteer to take a fitness test.

The Community Schools, Sport and Culture Initiative (2.1) will increase levels of physical activity among school pupils. However, additional measures are also required, so we will be investigating the possibility of making a healthy and active lifestyle a more prominent feature of the various guidelines for youth healthcare. In addition, the Youth and Family Programme states that children must be able to grow up healthily in child-friendly communities. More detailed agreements will be made with the municipalities regarding the implementation of the programme, with due regard for 'Active Communities' for young people and demonstration projects modelled on the 'B-fit' methodologies of the GSF and the 'Itching to Get Fit' ('Beweegkriebels') scheme run by the Netherlands Institute for Sport and Physical Activity (NISB).

We will also be considering how the physical and social environment can be made more conducive to an active and healthy lifestyle, seeking to tie in with the policy of the Ministries of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), Housing, Communities and Integration (WWI), Transport, Public Works and Water Management (V&W) and Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV). The measures could include designing a spatial environment that is conducive to sport and physical activity (such as community sports fields, multifunctional accommodation for school and sport, cycle paths, etc.) and tying in with the LNV's Urban Green Spaces policy.

Combining physical activity with play for very young children

The NISB's *'Itching to Get Fit'* methodology gives parents and professionals ideas, tips and information about exercising with babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers. Children enjoy physical activity and like to be on the go all day long. But watching a lot of TV, and insufficient opportunities to have fun playing outdoors can quickly make children overweight and physically inactive. The Itching to Get Fit approach also involves training professionals currently working with the target group of 0-4 year-olds, teaching them how to develop and implement challenging and fun forms of physical activity tailored to the age of the children. A number of Regional Education Centres have included the methodology in the training syllabus for Social-Pedagogic Workers.

Implementing the NASB

After the development and trial implementation phases – provided the outcome is favourable – we will seek to roll out both these major elements and all the methodologies in the NASB nationwide. I intend to pay particular attention to implementing the methodologies in a sustainable way, to ensure the best chance of success. Because of their social structure, sports clubs provide a good environment for their members to adopt and maintain active lifestyles, as do dance schools and commercial fitness centres. We will also consider the measures that can be taken to make it easier for people to incorporate more physical activity in their daily lives.



Financing

In addition to the budgets already available for the NASB, the reshuffle of the Health, Welfare and Sport budget has released extra funds for Exercise on Prescription (from the increased funds for Healthcare), Projects in the Community and Active Lifestyle for Young People (from the funds released from the Neighbourhood, Education and Sport scheme).

The table below illustrates the budget for the next few years (amounts in millions of euros).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Current budget	8.4	11.7	12.7	13.6	13.6
Increased Healthcare budget	3.0	1.0			
Funds released from BOS	1.9	4.0	5.3	5.3	5.3
Total	13.3	16.7	18.0	18.9	18.9

2.5 Sportsmanship and respect

A healthy, sportsmanlike and safe environment

The Cabinet will be urging the sports sector to take responsibility for creating a healthy, sportsmanlike, safe and social environment. This will also provide sport with extra support from within the sector itself. Sport is not immune to the negative phenomena we are witnessing in society – as described in the SCP report A Yellow Card for Sport¹⁹ – but, because of the values with which sport is associated and the social aspect of sport, the sporting world is particularly well-placed to tackle these phenomena, and this should have a beneficial effect on other sections of society.

Tackling sexual harassment

When, in 1996, a number of top-class sportspeople announced that they had been on the receiving end of sexual harassment from their coaches during their careers, this prompted an intensive policy aimed firstly at preventing sexual harassment and other forms of abuse of power, and secondly at helping the victims of the harassment. Working with the sports federations and with the support of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, NOS*NSF developed a number of instruments, including procedures, a code of conduct for sportspeople and sports managers, teaching material for managers' training, and self-defence courses for vulnerable sportspeople. A national hotline has been set up and independent, confidential counsellors and advisors are available. There is now an efficient safety net in place, which can respond appropriately in the event of sexual harassment.

19 Tiessen-Raaphorst, A. and K. Breedveld: A yellow Card for Sport. A quickscan in search of desirable and unwelcome customs in and around recreational Sport. The Hague: SCP, 2007

Follow-up study

It is still difficult, at present, to state concrete goals for sportsmanship and respect. However, this may well be possible in the spring of 2008, when the follow-up study to the SCP report A Yellow Card for Sport is completed. The study seeks to:

- compare physical and verbal aggression in sport with the situation in entertainment centres, at school, etc.;
- gain an insight into the attitudes of the population in general, and in particular that of sports managers (mainly at club level)

The findings of the follow-up survey will be incorporated in policies, and I will be asking the sports sector to take the initiative. Nonetheless, a number of measures can be taken in the here and now, elaborating upon existing policies and new initiatives from the sports sector itself.

Hockey certificate for young people			
The Dutch national hockey association KNHB has had sportsmanship and respect policies in place for years, aimed not only at players but also at parents, spectators, directors and managers. The KNHB is running an interactive campaign to encourage debate about sportsmanship and respect at grassroots level. It runs workshops and theatre sessions for clubs, has developed campaign material and has asked each club to appoint an ambassador for sportsmanship and respect. The campaign also makes young people more aware of their own responsibility. Every youth member is required to obtain a 'hockey certificate', for which they must demonstrate a knowledge of the rules of the game and undertake voluntary work.			

Refereeing Master Plan

The Refereeing Master Plan was officially launched in March 2007. As well as regulating the quantity and quality of referees, the plan is also intended to bring an end to the discourteous treatment of referees. I will be asking the participating sports associations to focus not just on referees and players, but to apply the same products to trainers, coaches, mentors, parents and supporters.

Good governance at sports clubs

I intend to raise awareness among the sports clubs of the 'good governance' recommendations made by the Loorbach committee.²⁰ So far, implementation of these recommendations in the sports sector has been disappointing.

As part of the good governance policy, I will be calling for fresh consideration of the following matters:

- increasing diversity, including the rate of participation of women in sports management positions and governing bodies. I will be holding discussions about this with the Minister for Education, Culture and Science, in relation to the new equal rights policy document announced in the Cabinet's policy programme;
- the introduction of a code of conduct at every club. This will replace the original idea of a quality mark for sport.

As part of Cabinet policy to combat aggression in society, the Ministry of Justice commissioned the Netherlands Centre for Crime Prevention and Community Safety (CCV) to produce 'Code of Conduct Guidelines'. These guidelines can be used by many sectors of society in which there is a need to combat unwanted behaviour. The sports sector could also benefit from the guidelines when developing and introducing codes of conduct.

Professional code for volunteer managers

I intend to discuss with the sports sector the possibility of introducing the professional code for trainers and coaches for volunteer managers at sports clubs. NLcoach has developed such a professional code. I wholeheartedly support the code's ethos, whereby trainers/coaches undertake to treat players and athletes with respect. The picture will become complete if trainers and coaches are also given guidelines for ensuring that players and athletes uphold the principles of sportsmanship and respect.

Social safety

Since not everybody feels comfortable in a sports club, these clubs are not always fulfilling their potential as meeting places. Sadly, discrimination, harassment and aggression can also be found in sports.

I intend to call for particular efforts to combat verbal aggression and discrimination against homosexuals, who are often the target of these forms of unwanted behaviour, severely jeopardizing their sense of security. It is important for sport to be aware that discourteous treatment of homosexual players and athletes still occurs. Acceptance of homosexuality in sport will be placed on the agenda, and the Minister for Education, Culture and Science will be including sport in the policy document on gay equal rights.

20 Commission Good Sports Governance; the 13 recommendations for good sports governance. Arnhem: NOC*NSF, 2005.

Tackling discrimination in football

Combating homophobia is one of the stated aims of UEFA. The Royal Netherlands Football Association KNVB is committed to tackling discrimination in football, not just on the grounds of race, faith and ethnic background, but also sexuality. A report on the results of this approach will be published in the spring of 2009, to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the EGLSF (European Gay & Lesbian Sports Federation).

Smoking and alcohol

From 1 July 2008, sports canteens will join the hotel and catering trade in becoming smoke-free. The Minister for Health informed the Lower House about this in June 2007.²¹ I want to call upon the sports sector to comply with anti-smoking legislation in order to create a healthy environment that befits sport.

It is also important to combat alcohol abuse in sport. The 'third half' (i.e. the drinking that occurs after a game or match) is a familiar phenomenon with which some branches of sport are very strongly associated, but sport must not be an arena in which children learn to drink. The Cabinet will soon be publishing a policy letter on alcohol policy which will deal in particular with preventing and combating alcohol problems among young people.

Financing

A significant portion of the current budget of € 1.8 million per annum has been set aside for the Refereeing Master Plan for the next few years. Extra budget funds will be used over the next few years to support the sports sector with the development and implementation of policy to promote sportsmanship and respect. I have released an additional budget of € 1.0 million per annum, by reshuffling the Sport budget.

The table below illustrates the budget for the next few years (amounts in millions of euros).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Current budget	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
Budget reshuffle	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8



2.6 International policy

Sport and Development Cooperation

Working with the Minister for Development Cooperation, I am giving fresh momentum to Sport and Development Cooperation policy. The Lower House will be given more information about this in a separate policy document.

Joint policy enables the government authorities and organisations in developing countries to use the power of sport and match programmes to optimum, lasting effect, both to combat poverty and for reconstruction and welfare. Under the new policy, Dutch sport and development organisations and embassies are given more scope to develop activities.

The policy for Sport and Development Cooperation is a response to calls from the United Nations to integrate sport in the programmes created to achieve the millennium development goals. Dutch organisations have also pressed for recognition of the importance of sport as an instrument of development and international cooperation. This policy document will draw on the results of a meeting of the Network for Sport and Development Cooperation on 11 July 2007.

The policy will concentrate on sport/development programmes in countries with which the Netherlands has a special relationship. Personally, I will focus mainly on the countries with which I have been cooperating for a number of years in the field of sport, such as Suriname and South Africa.

Strengthening sport in South Africa and Suriname

Action Plans have been agreed with South Africa and Suriname based on individual cooperation protocols. The priority themes of these protocols are strengthening the sports sector, sports training, promoting sport in schools and sport for the disabled.

Local organisations, supported where necessary by Dutch organisations, have been asked to implement these plans. The implementation is supported by the cooperating ministries, supplemented with funds from partner organisations.

White Paper

Sport is not merely a matter for national governments. Because of the international nature of sport, governments need an international platform. The European Commission provides such a platform for the EU Member States. The Commission's responsibility in the sphere of sport complements that of the other parties. One of the key roles fulfilled by the Commission is that of facilitating dialogue in sport, coordinating activities and addressing sport in EU policy.

On 11 July 2007, the European Commission took its first major initiative in the sphere of sport and adopted a White Paper (COM 391/2007) which deals with a number of issues which, because of their cross-border nature, require an EU-wide approach.

The White Paper builds on 'the Nice Declaration'. In the White Paper, the Commission sheds light on the role that sport plays and should aspire to play in the European Union, and the Paper is an acknowledgement of the social and economic importance of sport in the lives of Europeans. By broaching sport-wide themes, the Commission crosses over into other policy

areas such as public health, education, social integration, voluntary work, external relations and financing. The White Paper also proposes concrete actions in a detailed action plan named after Pierre de Coubertin.

There is no separate budget for sport. Existing, relevant EU programmes and funds may provide a source of additional funding for sport-related projects and events. In the White Paper, the Commission indicates the policy areas which may have some cross-over with sport. The Netherlands is preparing a Cabinet and government response to the White Paper and will disseminate this response at a European level.

Anti-doping policy

Doping poses a grave threat to sport. It goes against the basic principle of fair play, as well as putting the health of players and athletes at risk. I will therefore be continuing the current anti-doping policy, and tightening it up in certain respects. The same division of responsibility will continue to apply. The responsibility for combating doping rests primarily with the world of sport, while the government is mainly responsible for combating trade in doping agents.

The activities undertaken by the sports sector will still be heavily facilitated by the government, firstly by stipulating conditions for sports organisations applying for subsidies and secondly by financing the Netherlands Anti-Doping Authority. In collaboration with NOC*NSF, I am financing the costs of more than 2,000 doping checks carried out each year by the Anti-Doping Authority, and I also bear the cost of almost all the authority's other activities (such as legal advice, information and scientific research).

I will also ensure that the Netherlands continues to remain active in the international arena. Among other things, this means that the government will continue to make a financial and administrative contribution to WADA and that the Netherlands will remain actively involved in implementing the conventions of the Council of Europe and Unesco.

I will be tightening up two aspects of anti-doping policy:

- in the international arena, I will press for better coordination between governments and investigative authorities regarding trade in doping agents. At present, coordination is too fragmented. The aforementioned EC White Paper on Sport provides a good basis for coordination;
- at national level, working with NOC*NSF, I will use doping checks in our country in a different way. There will be a smaller testing pool (roughly 800 top-level players and athletes), within which the number of target checks will be increased based on pre-defined criteria. Target checks are also possible outside the testing pool.

In line with current policy, I will not be using criminal or other legislation to combat the use and possession of doping agents for personal use. This will remain the domain of sport and the affiliated disciplinary bodies. Possession of doping agents for trade and supply can be adequately tackled by current legislation (Medicines Act), which was amended up for that purpose in 2001.

In the international arena in particular, I will continue to call for a limited doping list ('genuine' doping agents and not, for instance, cannabis) and for protection of the legal position of players and athletes. However, efforts to achieve harmonized, global policy will remain of overriding importance.

At my request, the Netherlands Anti-Doping Authority will be continuing with the current policy for non-organised sport, focussing on developing a quality mark for sports schools and gyms and information campaigns for the people who visit them.

Financing

I have increased the budget by € 0.4 million to € 2 million per annum, by reshuffling the Sport budget.

The table below illustrates the budget for the next few years (amounts in millions of euros).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Current budget	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6
Budget reshuffle	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0









SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

To sum up: objectives and plans

The Cabinet wants to invest in the power of sport, both recreational and top-class. The programmes currently in place under the Time for Sport policy document and the *Together for Sport* implementation programme will continue in their present form, but a number of aspects of sports policy will be broadened and given more specific attention. To enable new priorities to be implemented, the additional funds announced in the policy programme will be made available, as will the funds released from the Neighbourhood, Education and Sport (BOS) scheme. There will also be a (possibly limited) reshuffle of the existing Sport budget.

The objectives of sports policy for the next few years are:

- 10% of sports clubs to be strong enough to take on social tasks;
- 20% more talents and athletes – both disabled and able-bodied – to have prospects of top-class success;
- more disabled talents and athletes to be involved in sport and physical activity;
- more people doing the recommended amount of exercise: 70% of adults, 50% of young people.

Sport will be asked to do something in return for these investments, namely to create a sportsmanlike, healthy and safe environment and to use players and athletes (both top-level and recreational) for social purposes.

Concrete objectives for sportsmanship and respect and for disabled sport will follow; these will be based on further studies.

A number of instruments will be used to implement sports policy, including:

- The joint deployment of at least 2,500 combined jobs for community schools, sport and culture;
- the creation of additional facilities for talented individuals;
- the creation of more opportunities for disabled sport through special education, care facilities and sports clubs;
- the evaluation and reassessment of policy on top-class disabled sport;
- the expansion of the National Action Plan for Sport and Exercise, focusing heavily on young people;
- the support of the sports sector with regard to measures aimed at promoting sportsmanship and respect and combating excessive behaviour;
- the Netherlands' active participation in the international arena with regard to Sport and Development Cooperation, anti-doping policy and the EU White Paper.

Where do we go from here?

The policy will be fleshed out further over the next few months. I will be making agreements with partners regarding the implementation of concrete plans and the involvement of other parties. I can count on the involvement of the sports sector and the other government authorities to achieve a 'multiplier' effect for sports policy. To support this, I will develop a simple and effective range of administrative and financial instruments.

Strategic policy development and policy implementation rely on proper, regular consultation with the policy partners in sport and the coordinated efforts of all the parties involved. I intend to continue the interactive policymaking approach of recent years.

Of course there are other issues that will require attention in the near future, and issues that will be placed on the Cabinet's agenda by the sporting world. These include the 2028 Olympic Plan, which the Cabinet wants to support, and national and international developments with regard to gambling policy, which may affect how the Lotto funds are used.

I therefore intend to initiate structured, joint consultation with policy partners in sport, including NOC*NSF and VNG/VSG.

The Sport Programme 2006-2010 is already in full swing; the implementation of the policy priorities under this letter from 2008 will soon follow. I will update you on the implementation of the sport programme and the Power of Sport policy letter at the end of 2008.

Published by

Ministry of Health, Welfare
and Sport.

Postal Address

PO Box 20350
2500 EJ The Hague
The Netherlands

Visitor Address

Parnassusplein 5
2511 VX The Hague
The Netherlands

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January 2008

The government assigned a clear role to sport in its 2007-2011 policy programme entitled 'Working together, living together' ('Samen werken, samen leven'). This letter to the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament entitled 'The power of sport' ('De kracht van sport') explains the details of this role, as well as the sport policy plans of State Secretary Jet Bussemaker of Health, Welfare and Sport for the next few years. The annual budget for sport will be raised in 2008 and 2009 from €100 million to €120 million euros.

The government wants to increase the power of sport and use that power to optimise the role played by sport in society.

In line with the three pillars of the present policy, namely, 'exercise', 'participation' and 'performance', the following priorities have been established for sport policy: combined jobs, fostering talent, sport for the disabled, National Action Plan for Sport and Exercise (Nationaal Actieplan Sport en Bewegen), sportsmanship and respect, and international policy

Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

