

NATIONAL REPORT



COUNTRY:
Denmark

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1. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL SPORT SYSTEM/ARCHITECTURE

Sport participation in Denmark is composed of a sector of civil society organisations, private companies, self-organised sport and schools.

Denmark has a history of sports associations which date back to the middle of the 1800s and today there are around 10,000 local sports associations. Sports associations/clubs cover a variety, from multisport clubs to clubs with a single activity. Around 40% of the Danes are members of one or more sport clubs and participation is especially high among children.

Legislation defines support for voluntary based associations (including sport) and in practice, this means that municipalities support civil society organisations by providing access to public facilities and to some extent support for the activities. The average amount of municipal public support is €120 per capita. Average individual spending is at a level of €720 per capita +16 years.

Most sports clubs are members of one of more national sports organisations: either a sport federation (and thereby the Danish Sport Confederation/Olympic Committee), the sport for all organisation DGI (having a regional structure) or the Danish Federation for Company Sports. The national organisations are financially supported by national level resources from lottery income.

The private commercial sector operates in the fitness sector where two major companies are dominant. Furthermore, a number of smaller companies exist. They are various services and programmes such as yoga, outdoor activities, personal training, etc.

2. TO WHAT EXTENT IS THERE A SPORT DIPLOMACY STRATEGY?

There is no national public strategy on sport diplomacy. The relationship between the government and civil society organisations operates on an “arm’s length basis”, which means that the government provides funding with only general expectations and the government as such does not commit on behalf of sports organisations.

However, both the Danish Sport Confederation/Olympic Committee and the Danish sport for all association DGI have international strategies which include sport diplomacy objectives and actions. There are also elements in the events support strategy of Sport Event Denmark which are clearly for sport diplomacy purposes.

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs does occasionally use sporting events and sports actors (both professional and grassroots athletes) in public diplomacy actions. These include references to events and activities in external communication or closer collaboration around official/state visits or at diplomatic actions by Danish Embassies.

Sport is handled by civil society organisations with support from, but without much involvement of, the government. And locally or nationally organised events with international participation/dimensions are capable of presenting the culture and the country through their own initiatives. This is true of both grassroots and elite sporting events. Some events have various levels of collaboration between civil society, municipality, state or state-driven entities.

3. WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT OF SPORT DIPLOMACY GOVERNANCE AND WHO ARE THE MAIN ACTORS?

Ministries may have support systems which target diplomacy actions. An example is the peace and stability interventions after the Yugoslavian war, where public and civil society coordinated activities where supported. Another example is the 'Open Fun Football Schools' by the NGO Cross Cultures Project Association. Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports the independent platform CISU - Civil Society in Development. CISU includes 270+ Danish Civil Society Organisations, actively engaged in development work in Asia, Africa, Latin America or Eastern Europe. CISU also supports sport development programmes.

Official diplomats engage in sport diplomacy on an *ad hoc* basis.

City authorities and local institutions play a minor role. Towns/cities may have Twin Towns where sports exchanges are part of the programme. Some cities brand themselves via supporting events and conferences or being a sport/physical activity-friendly city.

The national sports organisations have their strategy and their engagement consists of promoting their sport perspective and views: bidding for and hosting events, representation in international sports organisations or bilateral partnerships.

Media in Denmark do not have an important role within sport diplomacy. However, one of the most direct and prominent examples is the establishment and support of the institution Play the Game. Play the Game is an initiative run by the Danish Institute for Sports Studies, aimed at raising the ethical standards of sport and promoting democracy, transparency and freedom of expression in world sport. Play the Game has existed for 25 years.

The private sector occasionally acts as sponsor for international initiatives taken by sports organisations. This engagement is primarily as sponsor and does not have a direct 'political agenda' behind the engagement.

Athletes – be it at elite or grassroots levels – are free to act on their own behalf. This also means that athletes with opinions supporting the strategy of organisations and the opposite do occur from time to time.

As the sport structure is based on freedom of association and the 'arm's length' principle between public authorities and civil society, collaboration and competition between various organisations in the field of sport diplomacy is the reality.

4. TOOLS OF SPORT DIPLOMACY

There is no dedicated budget for sport diplomacy activities, but various support programmes may be available for sport diplomacy-related activities.

The approach is one of individual projects where typically NGO initiatives in support of entities, organisations or communities in less developed countries are publicly and privately supported. There is an 'arm's length principle' between implementing organisations and the funder/public authority.

To summarise, it is difficult to identify the most important sport diplomacy activity. But as civil society and individual athletes are free to act on their own behalf, this feature which illustrates

an important pillar of democracy in Denmark could be described as the 'most important' sport diplomacy activity

5. SPORT DIPLOMACY'S FUTURE

The major weakness of sport diplomacy is the limited financial and human resources within the relevant ministries, which is a barrier to 'time consuming' participation in international relations and cooperation (for example in the Council of Europe/EPAS, UNESCO, etc.).

For Denmark, it is important to keep in mind three major difficulties that EU sport diplomacy could face:

- The complexity could make it difficult for many smaller entities to participate.
- It would likely be very difficult to reach a consensus on a precisely defined common policy.
- It would mean that a consensus would only be reached within a reasonable time in special situations.

For the Danish point of view, it is important to keep in mind three advantages of a structured EU sport diplomacy policy:

- Such a policy could provide guidance or principles for individual countries with less human resources at political/ministerial level in their sport engagement with countries outside Europe and with different political governance structures.
- Such a policy could also frame governance considerations and principles for major sporting activities and events managed by independent organisations.
- Such a policy could also strengthen the sport priority of the European Parliament focusing on grassroots sport – as was the case with the EU programme called EURATHLON where the aims were: *to promote meetings, exchanges and other activities linked to sports policy, in a European framework, which would contribute to better understanding between young citizens of the Union and would increase awareness of their belonging to a multicultural entity.*

6. INTERVIEWS

- Jens Sejer Andersen, director of Play the Game, journalist.

Furthermore a chapter on Sport diplomacy in the book "Dansk Diplomacy" (Danish Diplomacy) by professor Dr Phil Hans Bonde, has served a background information.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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