

NATIONAL REPORT



COUNTRY:

GERMANY

AUTHOR OF THE REPORT:

Estelle E. Brun



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL SPORT SYSTEM/ARCHITECTURE

Germany has a long tradition of using sports as a tool of soft power. The bilateral sport diplomacy developed between Germany and Israel from the 1960s onwards is an important example in the history of sport diplomacy. The first football match between the two countries took place in 1969 and formalized bilateral relations, as explained by deputy ambassador of Israel to Germany Emmanuel Nahshon during a 2014 conference. This initiative was indeed part of a broader German strategy to use sport as a tool to normalize the countries (West and East Germany before their unification in 1990) in the European “post-war” period, as argued by historian Heather L. Ditcher. Sport was then clearly included in German public diplomacy programmes (Ditcher, 2016), as seen in East Germany where international sports competitions were used to improve its global reputation with their athletes called “diplomats in tracksuits” (Albert & Grix, 2018).

In contemporary Germany, notably under the Federal Foreign Office, improving Germany’s international image in such competitions continues to be a part of the country’s sport diplomacy. In this vein, the hosting of the men’s football World Cup in 2006 was described as an attempt to improve Germany’s international reputation in a post-WWII context (Grix & Houlihan, 2014). The event was even described as “the best World Cup of all time” by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior (Grix & Houlihan, 2014).

Under the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), sport is used as a tool to promote sustainability, education, inclusion and gender equality in Germany and abroad, notably through partnerships between Germany/German organisations and developing countries

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

According to all experts, Germany does not have a formalized national sport diplomacy strategy. However, several ministries and foundations have been consciously using sports as a tool “within their spheres of jurisdiction”. These include the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The main goals of sport diplomacy in Germany consist of creating business opportunities and driving economic growth as well as promoting peace, inclusiveness and sustainable development, according to all participants. Improving Germany’s global reputation and reinforcing its diplomatic relations were also described as relatively important goals by all participants but one. According to a representative of the development agency polled, Germany has developed partnerships with 40 countries over the past decade in an effort to build a “broad and effective sports portfolio”. In line with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, it has effectively used sport to contribute to the development goals, such as “health, education, employability, gender equality, and integration and migration”.

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

As the model of sport diplomacy governance in Germany is decentralized, with different actors working on different programmes and activities, there is very little coordination in place between actors.

Government-level entities, such as the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Federal Foreign Office are important actors in sport diplomacy governance in Germany with projects organised around grassroots sports structures and focusing on strengthening civil society through sports in developing countries, as well as the BMZ alongside key partners including the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB), the German Football Association (DFB), the German Athletics Federation (DLV), the German Sport University (DSHS), International coaching courses (ITK, University Leipzig), and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). City authorities and local institutions are also involved on an ad hoc basis, notably through Twin City Partnerships with developing countries, or city sports association mobility projects.

Non-government sports bodies also play a key role in Germany's sport diplomacy. Perceived as 'diplomats in tracksuits', German athletes do represent their country when participating in mega-sporting events abroad and are prepared by sport bodies to "promote values such as democratic principles, inclusiveness, fairness, clean sports" and are expected to behave responsibly. The BMZ Sport for Development Ambassadors, the German Olympic Sports Confederation and the German Football Association were cited as examples of sports bodies which are involved in sport diplomacy.

The media is not actively involved in sport diplomacy actions while the private sector only participates in such actions on an ad hoc basis, as it is the case of the Partnership between German Development Cooperation and the German Football League (DFL).

4. TOOLS OF SPORT DIPLOMACY

The public economic resources available for sport diplomacy activities could not be specified but were described as adequate by most of the participants. Thanks to these economic resources, diplomatic and political efforts to attract mega-events and the employment of high-profile sports people in Germany are well implemented. Germany notably has an ambassador function during mega-sporting events. International broadcasting and the organisation of trade missions as sport diplomacy activities were described as somewhat to not implemented by participants.

In order to empower sport diplomacy actors, activities could be better implemented or developed in Germany. Political support for empowering sport diplomacy actors, as well as monitoring and evaluation processes, dedicated resources and coordination tools, and training for diplomats and athletes were all ranked as activities that are not well implemented.

When asked about the most important sport diplomacy activity in the country, one interviewee responded: "The holistic development in and through sports" such as "strengthening sports structures in partner countries and involving different stakeholders in development through sports programmes".

A good practical example of Germany's sport diplomacy is a toolkit¹ developed by the 'Sport for Development' Programmes under the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH designed to help in the implementation of sport diplomacy projects.

Most participants indeed considered that funding for collaborative projects aimed at specific values and sport exchange programmes were well implemented in Germany.

5. SPORT DIPLOMACY'S FUTURE

For its future, sport diplomacy in Germany should try to strengthen relations between different sport diplomacy actors and activities, through a long-term overarching sport diplomacy strategy. Indeed, the lack of coherence between various stakeholders was cited as a weakness by all participant.

When discussing sport diplomacy at the European Union level, all participants but one appeared to believe that the potential benefits outweigh the disadvantages of a sport diplomacy strategy common to the EU. Better relationships and policy coherence between member states were cited as advantages, as well as the potential to implement a broad and clear definition of sport diplomacy which encompasses all its aspects. Globally, it could also position the EU as a stronger actor for external action and international partnerships. However, in seeking to develop such a broad strategy respecting all the different countries' values and individual goals will be a major challenge.

6. INTERVIEWS

Representatives from five organisations answered survey questions designed by the TES-D team and disseminated to all partners and used for all reports, but they wished to remain anonymous. The organisations are:

- one German umbrella organisation focusing on promoting physical activity,
- two German governmental organisations, and
- one German development agency.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albert, E. & Grix, J. (2018). 'The Mixed Record of Sports Diplomacy' in *Council on Foreign Relations - CFR.org*. Accessed May 14, 2022: <https://www.cfr.org/interview/mixed-record-sports-diplomacy>.

Ditcher, H. L. (2016). 'Sporting Relations: Diplomacy, Small States, and Germany's Post-war Return to International Sport' in *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 27(2), pp.340-359. DOI: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09592296.2016.1169798>

Grix, J. & Houlihan, B. (2014). 'Sports Mega-Events as Part of a Nation's Soft Power Strategy: The Cases of Germany (2006) and the UK (2012)' in *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 16(4), pp.572-596.

'Emmanuel Nahshon (Deputy Ambassador of Israel to Germany)' (2014), *Youtube.org*. Accessed May 14, 2022: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jm12JhgpTXM>.

¹<https://www.sport-for-development.com/home>

UCLouvain



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del SACRO CUORE

ISCA
International Sport and
Culture Association



SOAS
University of London



uc3m | Universidad
Carlos III
de Madrid

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore
ALMED
ALTA SCUOLA IN MODA
COMUNICAZIONE E SPETTACOLO



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union