GOOD GOVERNANCE IN SPORT

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ABSTRACT

Analysis of a pilot study aiming to analyze the web pages of European and National sport organizations by the principles of good governance. Governance has become an increasingly important topic that European sports federations and organizations are addressing with different priority over the last decade in order to combat the actual challenges of corruption, doping fight, match-fixing policies, violence and discrimination in sport. The present report demonstrates detailed analysis of the most important areas related to good governance in sport – internal management and online presence of sport entities: the board and committee; human resource management; stakeholder management and financial responsibility. The main objectives in this pilot study are to analysis of public face of 28 European and 28 national sport organizations, based on strict criteria and with transparent methodology, applicable to all of them with the same approach and to prepare analysis and report of current conditions of accountability and transparency in sport structures across Europe. The study focused also on development, identification, analyzing, promotion and sharing of good practices in good governance as well as providing recommendations for improvement of sport sector. Sport organizations need to be constantly encouraged to apply the principles of good governance in their work and activities, and to transmit them to their partners and members, so the same principles can be applied at wider scale on national, regional and local level. Definitely, European, national and local sport organizations and federations at all levels need to implement necessary reforms and follow the processes that are applied in all public sectors in order to empower sport to remain strong social phenomenon and driving force that inspires millions of people around the World.

Methodology: Data was collected through pilot survey to collect data based on criteria based online research and data was analyzed through statistically one-dimensional frequency analysis. Results: Based on this pilot have been created practical recommendation for good governance in sport.

Key words: Integrity, Accountability, Transparency, Participation, Management

INTRODUCTION

Until the present moment, efforts are being made across Europe to raise governance standards in the sports sector, specifically around the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability in decision-making, and inclusiveness in the representation of interested stakeholders (Todd, 2018). While taking into account the great diversity of sport structures in different European countries, the EU aims to strengthen the organization of sport in Europe. The proper approach should be to provide added value to work at national level by collecting and sharing good practices and providing practical recommendations that will help to increase standards of good governance in sport. (Corruption in sport, 2018)

European, national and local sport organizations and federations and sport governance at all levels need to implement necessary reforms, as already started from many European sport organizations with the signing of the declaration on good gover-

nance (presented in Brussels in September 2016). As the sport bodies have been invited to commit to promote or implement basic principles of good governance in sport: integrity, transparency, accountability, democracy and inclusivity and as it is only a beginning of a process we need to walk in the present reality in order to make sport compatible in the dynamic world. (Power of Social Media, 2018)

The aim of the study is to estimate the web pages of European and National sport organizations by principles of good governance.

The objectives of the study are to research the web pages of these sport organizations, to create principle-based survey and data analyzes.

METHODS

Data was collected through pilot survey to collect data based on criteria based online research and data was analyzed through statistically one-dimensional frequency analysis (f - absolute frequencies,

$W = f / n * 100$ - relative frequency in percent). The concrete information that interested sport stakeholders has been able to provide regarding good governance in sport in their own organizations and an independent research on the web pages of anonymous 28 European sport 28 National sport organizations. The research is based on the following criteria:

- ✓ An English-language website for the European sport organizations and National language/English language website for the National sport organization;
- ✓ Available contact information and social media indication; (Online Learning for Sports Management, 2018)
- ✓ Strategic aim of the organization – vision and strategy, goals, milestones, values;
- ✓ List of members of the organization (sport organizations, sport clubs);
- ✓ Safety and security, inclusion, anti-discrimination policy of the organization available on the web page;
- ✓ Statute or other type of founding document availability;
- ✓ Management decision communication channels, relevancy and update period;
- ✓ A list of management/management board members available online (from here termed “management”);
- ✓ Additional information on management members available online. (Brief biographical information about each member of management, educational and professional background, scope of responsibilities, affiliation to other organizations, photography);
- ✓ Other organizational bodies of the organization – consulting board, control board, supervisory body; (Online Learning for Sports Management, 2018)
- ✓ Procedure of changing management of the organization and mandates; (Corruption in sport, 2018)
- ✓ Financial reports availability and content (if any), law obligation for publicity of financial reports (based on the country of registration).

RESULTS

Different data has been revealed in the following parts of the current research such as:

- Almost 80% of the analyzed sport organizations can be considered “social media friendly” and have indicated clear link between their websites

and the social media channels that they use for communication of their messages and updates.

- 44.6% of the analyzed sport structures have published their strategic documents such as vision, strategy, goals and milestones on their web pages.
- 62.5% of the analyzed sport organizations have not published the values of their organization on their web page. On national level only 25% of the organizations ensured that such data is available online.
- 76.8% of the analyzed websites include list of members of the organization for public review.
- Only 48.2% of the analyzed organization had traces of safety and security, inclusion and anti-discrimination policies and initiatives on their web pages and more than half of the analyzed websites do not contain any information about such policies.
- 71.4% of all analyzed organizations has published in their webpages their Statute or other basic document that regulates how the organization works as an indicator of transparency and open government.
- Separate news section for publishing decisions and news about the management of the organization is available in 50% of the analyzed organizations and is missing from the webpages of another 50% of the sport structures that has been analyzed.
- 57.1% of the organizations have not published any board decisions on their public portals in any way and this information is hardly reachable from both study researchers and wide public that might be interested to see how the concrete organization operates. 42.9% of all analyzed organizations have published relevant information and it is available with possibility to be traced over the time.
- The information is updated at least every six months only by 37.5% of all analyzed organizations, while 62.5% of analyzed sport structures update their websites less regularly or do not even update the website at all.
- Almost 70% of the analyzed sport organizations have not published any documents from their management meetings – minutes or conclusions.
- 83.9% of the overall analyzed sport organizations had published list of their management/

management boards.

- Data for the biographical background of board members is available in 33.9% of analyzed web-sites and is missing on 66.1% of the portals.
- Educational and professional path of board members until their present position in the analyzed sport organization is available at only 13 of them that are forming 23.2% and it is missing in 43 organizations, 76.8% of all analyzed sport federations.
- Only 9 organizations (16.1%) have considered publishing the scope of responsibilities of their management and 83.9% don't include such division on their webpages.
- Only 8 organizations had published information about the participation/functions, held by each board member in other institutions, forming 14.3% of all analyzed organizations and in 48 of the analyzed structures such information is unavailable that forms 85.7% of sport organizations that result with missing data on this indicator.
- Almost 70% of the analyzed sport organizations have developed supporting/controlling bodies and information about those structures and their activities are available on the public portals.
- 64.3% of analyzed organizations have not published information regarding the board management change process and mandate.
- Publication of financial reports has been found in the public portals of 12 of the analyzed organizations, forming 21.4%. Almost 80% of the organizations (78.6%) have not published such data.
- 75% of analyzed public platforms of national and European sport organizations do not include their annual report. The annual report for each year of the existence of the organization is available for only 4 sport organizations, representing 7.1% of all 56 analyzed federations.
- 21.4% of all analyzed organizations ensured the availability of information regarding the different funding sources that form their budget, while 78.6% of the organizations have not published documents that ensure tracing this data.

It has analyzed different aspects of public visibility in sport sector, with accent on available information at public portals of sport organizations (web-sites) and researched 56 platforms, while 47 sport

entities answered themselves on the same/similar questions. Based to the research itself and the answers of sport decision makers, the following conclusions can be highlighted:

- Almost 60% of both groups of respondents' posses with a public portal available in English language;
- More than 85% of sport organizations from both groups (stakeholders and researched by study team) have easy reachable e-mail contacts on their web pages, more than 83% have available phone contacts and more than 91% of sport entities are easy reachable by clearly indicated online physical address;
- Almost 80% of the federations that has been analyzed or took part in the survey are "social media friendly" and ensured short cut to their social media channels;
- Vision and mission of sport structures, part of this research has been declared available by 68% of stakeholders that responded to the survey, while researchers found traces of those documents only at 44% of analyzed federations;
- List of members is available in more than 72% of all requested and analyzed sport bodies;
- More than 70% of sport organizations included their main document such as Statute for public review;

DISCUSSION

Based to the research itself and the answers of sport decision makers, the following conclusions can be highlighted:

- ✓ The organizations that has been analyzed are "social media friendly";
- ✓ The organizations that has been analyzed are easy reachable by clearly indicated online physical address;
- ✓ The organizations that has been analyzed have a list of members;
- ✓ The organizations that has been analyzed included their main statute;
- ✓ The organizations that has been analyzed haven't published information regarding the board management change process and mandate;
- ✓ The organizations that has been analyzed don't include scope of responsibilities of their management;

Good governance in sport sector has been a topic that is becoming more and more needed in the

sport field, as we are seeing the number of challenges as follows:

- Low numbers of people are actively involved in sport and physical activity. Sport in the present reality is one of the available possibilities that European citizens have and sometimes, in some ways, not the most attractive one;
- Interest of the society members to be involved in sport is decreasing more and more due to the endless scandals, corruption, match fixing, doping, lack of transparency, activities, not focused on sport for all activities and public funding invested mainly in professional sport;
- Public attention is becoming higher on the public finances' expenditure (recent resigning of candidate – cities to host Olympic Games) and reflecting the governance problems in sport, people are losing their trust in sport organizations potential and the belief of returning the investments made in major sport events.

Sport organizations both on national and European level are providers of the social service “sport” at different levels and to different society groups. This responsibility, combined with the fact that most of the funds, dedicated to sport are provided by taxpayers or sponsors (private companies) should ensure transparency and accessibility for each citizen that is interested in the activities, delivered by sport structures. Based on the analysis of the websites of different in their range organizations, we have highlighted some basic elements that might be considered by sport management bodies and included in their future platform's updates.

Best practice in the European Union (EU) and internationally suggests that the ideal website contains the following information:

- Useful and rich information about the activities of the organization;
- Full contact details, including social media networks;
- Information about organization's members and their information/contact;
- Information about management processes in the organization;
- Information about management - board members details, mandates and election rules, description of the educational and professional background of each person, scope of responsibilities of each person, brief description of

functions held by each person in other companies/institutions, photographs.

- Information about financial management of the organization;
- Basic documents of the organization – statute, decisions and minutes;
- Values, vision, mission of the organization.

European, national and local sport organizations and federations and sport governance at all levels need to implement necessary reforms, as stated already from many European sport organizations with the signing of the declaration on good governance (presented in Brussels in September 2016). As the sport bodies have been invited to commit to promote or implement basic principles of good governance in sport: integrity, transparency, accountability, democracy and inclusivity and as it is only a beginning of a process we need to walk in the present reality in order to make sport compatible in the dynamic world.

Until the moment, across Europe efforts are being made to try and raise governance standards in the sports sector, specifically around the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability in decision-making, and inclusiveness in the representation of interested stakeholders. While taking into account the great diversity of sport structures in different European countries, the EU aims to strengthen the organization of sport in Europe. The proper approach should be to provide added value to work at national level by collecting and sharing good practices and providing practical recommendations that will help increase standards of good governance in sport (Taylor, 2018).

A high standard of good governance is one of the most important factors in preparing an organization to be adapted and prepared for the future. Based on the presented findings, application of good governance principles is also a factor in creating a successful and sustainable sport and recreation sector. We have to encourage sport organizations to apply the principles to their own work, their partners and members, so the same principles of good governance in sport and recreation can be applied at national, regional and local level. We have to avoid a “box-ticking” culture, so organizations can focus on implementing practical governance improvements, which make a practical difference and positive impact.

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