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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the contribution of the European sport-related Programmes in developing Europeanisation. The research argues that the European Programmes represent a supranational policy mechanism that brings change at European and national level. In particular, this work concentrates on the importance of the social function of sport and the domestic impact of the European Community Programmes as a supranational funding opportunity for sport in the case of Greece. In this paper, the concept of Europeanisation is adapted as a framework for studying the contribution of EC Programmes to the creation of convergence mechanisms through sport in Greece, such as networking, in order to strengthen European values and European Identity. The first part explains the EU interest in sport as a social function and presents the progress towards the EU interventions in sport. The next section attempts to identify EU pressures, mechanisms and the degree of domestic change as a result of engaging sport in European Community Programmes implemented in Greece.

Key Words: Supranational policy, sport policy, networking, European identity.
Introduction

The paper draws on notions of Europeanisation to frame a research on the impact of EU funding initiatives on the promotion of the social dimension of sport. In adopting this approach, this paper examines the extent, nature and significance of sport involvement in European Community Programmes delivery to Greece.

The significance of this work lies in the fact that limited attention has been given to the European dimension of sport and more specifically to the utilization of EU funding opportunities for the development of the social value of sport at national level, although EU has placed a great emphasis on involving sport in Community Programmes policy.

The recent advancement of the integration process in the European Union has generated new opportunities for sport. Specifically, until recently the European Union had no legal competence in the field of sport while it addressed sport-related aspects in competences (rules, policies, programmes) of other policy areas such as health, education and youth, competition, Internal Market, employment, social affairs and others. Nevertheless, the vast majority of sport-related competences and actions remain in the hands of the Member States and sports organisations. The case of EC Programmes related to sport is discussed as an instrument of supranational policy that brings change to the European arena. Additionally, national governments are now exploring the possibilities of mutual co-operation to mainstream sport and enhance its social value for European citizens.

Regarding the methodology of this case study research, the qualitative analysis of soft-law EU instruments, EU and domestic sport-related records and in-depth interviews with national sport policy-makers provided valuable information in order to investigate the impact of the European sport-related Programmes on the domestic sport policy in Greece. The lacks of relevant Greek literature as well as the restricted access to primary data at domestic level (partially due to the unstable political environment in Greece after the first signs of the economic crisis in 2009) were the main limitations for this study. Additionally, the binding time limit on filing this research does not allow the researchers to investigate the overall impact of the Programmes over time as in most of the cases the Programmes are not closed until 2013. In this given framework, the research focuses on the first half of the implementation phase of these programmes that is the period 2007-2010.

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1. The Commission does not intervene in issues such as the organisation of sporting competitions or the setting of sporting rules, respecting the autonomy of sporting organisations and the role of Member States in conducting sporting affairs (European Commission, 2007).
The next section will attempt to identify EU pressures, mechanisms and the degree of domestic change as a result of engaging sport in European Community Programmes implemented in the case of Greece.

**Europeanisation and European Funding Policy mechanisms**

The European Union is characterized as a European supranational organization devoted to increasing EU policy integration and fostering cooperation among its Member States. A great deal of attention has been given to the process of common policy formulation and the outcomes of these policies at the European and national levels. The Commission enhances EU integration by encouraging Member States to participate in the EU policy-making processes and by directly funding relevant policy initiatives. As Širok and Košmlj (2011) comment European Community funding [...] present supranational policy instruments bringing change to various levels of social reality at the national level”. Therefore, this paper focuses on one particular instrument of the implementation of EU policies, namely European Community Programmes that are related to sport.

As this article aims to explain the EU involvement in sport and discuss the EU influence at national level, this study will be based on one of the instruments of the formation of the EU supranational policy and will argue on the theoretical concept of Europeanisation. The term Europeanisation refers to the changing nature of relations between regional, national and supranational tiers of governance (Matthews, 1999; 18). Among the various mechanisms for exercising Europeanization, this study examines the contribution of European Community Programmes to the creation of convergence mechanisms through sport in Greece, such as the development of networking and strengthening of European Identity. In other words, the analysis intends to show that the European Programmes represent a supranational policy instrument, which can bring important change at national level.

Reviewing the literature, Europeanisation offers the theoretical framework for the conditions, the mechanisms, the process and the impact of the interrelation between EU and Member-States. According to Olsen (2002; 921), “Europeanisation is a fashionable but contested concept” that has been applied “in a number of ways to describe a variety of phenomena and processes of change”. As Ioakimidis (1996) and Spanou (1998) mention, Europeanisation is an uneven process affecting the structure of member states in a non-homogeneous way, it is possible to observe different types of Europeanisation (Knill and Lenschow, 2000) since Member States implement EU directives in different ways. According to Featherstone (1998) the influences that the EU can have on the domestic political agenda are more related to the content rather than the form of implementation, which
is left to the national governments. That is because the EU does not have the resources to be directly engaged in how policy might be implemented at the national level.

The most complete definition of Europeanisation is given by Radaelli (2004; 4):

"Europeanisation consists of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies".

This definition is particularly useful in the analysis of sport policy, as European institutions have limited if any power in the area of sport (certainly in the social dimension of sport), and therefore frequently rely on soft or informal mechanisms in their attempts to affect change. Such an example is the promotion to Member–States of a number of EU initiatives, recommendations and processes of policy making in order to develop a European dimension of sport.

In the literature there is a reference to strong and weak Europeanisation, where strong refers to a shift in policy hegemony from member states to the European Union institutions, and weak refers to some kind of minor change in the member states' institutions, policy or culture which have been caused by the process of European integration. Sport is a policy area that complies with weak Europeanisation as there is no legal framework and sport is still a highly national concern.

While there are various usages of the notion of Europeanisation, many researches have used it as a conceptual starting point for studying the impact of European integration on domestic politics (Borzel and Risse, 2000, Buller and Gamble, 2002). This study will adapt a top-down approach for understanding the impact of EU membership on Greek politics in the field of sport. In this framework, Bache and Jordan. (2006; 30) define Europeanisation as:

2. EU requirements are transmitted to the national level as rules, measures or directives which consists a hard-law approach to Europeanisation or as declarations, recommendations, decisions which consist a soft-law approach to Europeanisation. The latter is the situation in sport, where EU requirements take the form of initiatives. The White Paper on Sport, the “Action Plan Pierre de Coubertin” and the EU Community Programmes are some examples of soft-law instruments.
“the reorientation or reshaping of aspects of politics in the domestic arena in ways that reflect the policies, practices and preferences of European level actors, as advanced through EU initiatives and decisions”.

Such a definition encourages the analysis of how politics in the domestic arena have been affected by EU policy-making in ways that are consistent with the goals and objectives of EU initiatives and decisions. In applying this definition to the Greek case study, this paper examines the establishment of an ‘Europeanisation effect’, focusing on the impact of European funding Programmes related to sport at national level.

The literature indicates some conditions to be regarded as having signs of Europeanisation (Börzel, 2003, Olsen, 2002, Bache, 2003). First, there must be a degree of ‘misfit’ or incompatibility in processes, policies and institutions, between European and national level. This ‘inconvenient’ constitutes adaptational pressure, which is the key component for expecting a change. Second, apart from the “misfit” there must be some ‘facilitating factors’ such as actors or institutions in order to respond to the adaptational pressures. With regards to the outcome of Europeanisation, Börzel (2003) and Radaelli (in Featherstone & Radaelli, 2003) distinguish four degrees of domestic change: inertia, retrenchment, absorption, accommodation and transformation. In absorption, Member States incorporate European requirements into their domestic institutions and policies without substantial modifications of existing structures.

According to Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999), there are three mechanisms of Europeanisation (institutional compliance, changing domestic opportunity structures and framing domestic beliefs and expectations). As Europeanisation is not only confined to legally binding EU provision, this paper argues that in the case of European funding Programmes the mechanism that could better explain Europeanisation is ‘changing opportunity structures’ which leads to a redistribution of resources between domestic actors confined to changing domestic opportunity structures. EU initiatives in sport are soft-law instruments and can only bring an average degree of change regarding the funding opportunities in the national structures of sport policy.

Schmidt (2002) has categorized differently the mechanisms of EU adjustment pressures at the national level such as large degree of coercion, lower degree of coercion, mimesis and regulatory competition. What could apply to this study is the mechanism called ‘mimesis’ where European in-

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3. Due to length limitations of this study, the European funding Programmes are treated as independent variables, although it should be mentioned that EU initiatives and developments can be “uploading” which means that are influenced by member state domestic policies and practices (R. Chapman, 2004).
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Institutions only suggest actions or measures, leaving the Member States free to decide whether to accommodate or not. This mechanism allows national governments to imitate a European ‘outfit’ in a new policy initiative at the time and level they can accommodate.

Goldsmith (1993) mentions that the national governments have a higher interest in EU matters when they can compete or participate in EU funding opportunities, which indicates a positive effect on the process of Europeanisation. In general, Europeanisation becomes a necessity for national governments seeking European funds. In particular the EU Community Programmes represent the incentive for the national authorities to move towards EU sport model. According to Rhodes (1997), one of the main objectives of the EU is to produce convergence (Börzel 1999 and 2000; Knill and Lehnkuhl 1999; Radaelli 2000) which leads inevitably to pressures for change, adapting a more European ‘outfit’.

From another perspective, many scholars identify a socio-cultural aspect of Europeanisation (Hedetoft, 1995, Roche, 2004 and Smith, 2001), which is related to the emergence of a sense of community or European identity among the citizens of the Member States (Venturelli-Christensen, 2000). Spanou (1998) argues that the intense interaction within the EU generates shared values and culture. The cultural significance of sport as a vehicle for the process of EU social integration and for the formation of EU identity (sharing ‘European values’ through sport) has well been identified from the EU institutions (Roche, 2004). In particular, the Declaration on Sport (No. 29) annexed to the Amsterdam Treaty (European Union, 1999) emphasises “the social significance of sport, in particular its role in forging identity and bringing people together”.

The creation of national and transnational networks facilitates the transfer of knowledge and best practices beyond the national borders (Goldsmith, 1993). Adapting the policy network approach (Marks et al. 1996; McAteer and Mitchell, 1996; Chatzigianni, 2007) to the case of European funding Programmes, it is evident that EU has developed new modes of cooperation with national authorities in order to get closer to European citizens. On the other hand, national actors participate in diverse policy networks in order to influence and/or adjust to supranational policy arena and increase their capacity to absorb EU funds. It can be described as a relationship of mutual interests where both EU and Member States interact in the EU funding process. It is expected that EU funding will increase national and transnational networking and co-operation in an attempt to achieve EU strategic objectives (Rhodes, 1997; Goldsmith, 1993). As the main objective of the Community Programmes is to develop through sport European identity and European citizenship, this can be achieved with the participation of Member States in trasnational projects which foster the exchange of ideas, the co-operation and generally bring a greater ‘matching’ in cultures.
Concluding, before examining the impact of EC sport-related Programmes at national level, it is important to understand the values inherent in sport. The next chapter will provide a comprehensive framework for the EU increasing interest in the social dimension of sport and the most important actions taken towards developing a European dimension on sport.

EU intervention in the social dimension of sport

Sport[^4] is not only an economic activity but also a social and cultural phenomenon embracing all European citizens[^5]. Sport offers significant benefits to European societies. Apart from improving the public health, sport plays a vital role in the field of education, active citizenship, social inclusion, volunteering, employment and generally in social cohesion. By bringing European citizens together through sporting competitions, recreational activities, exchanges of ideas and experiences, sport also contributes to the emergence of a truly European identity and European citizenship which is one of the main aims of EU. The increasing intervention of the EU in sport-related matters reflects this multidimensional nature of sport.

At this point it is paramount to understand the complexity of sport in order to explain the development of the EU’s policy on sport[^6]. Although it is important to provide a historical review of the EU intervention in sport, due to length limitations this paper will mainly focus on the recent developments and especially on the social function of sport.

Despite earlier EU interventions, the Bosman Case (in 1995) can be considered as the milestone in developing the European Sports Policy. Only after Bosman the economic function of sport as a commercial activity gave sport a supranational dimension and attracted greater European interest. This resulted in a discussion on the need to develop a common sports policy at national level. The perception that sport is a transversal tool which

[^4]: The European Sports Charter, adopted by the Council of Europe in 1992, defines sport as ‘all form of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels’ (European Sports Charter Art. 2.1).

[^5]: The data from the Eurobarometer on Sport and Physical Activity (2009) revealed that about one third of the EU population is organized in sport clubs and about 65 percent practice sport on a regular basis.

[^6]: It is necessary to differentiate between the “sport for all” and the professional dimensions of sport to understand how and why the EU has become involved in sport related matters over the last decade.
can be used to promote healthy lifestyles, social integration, regional development, etc, generated further discussions at EU level regarding the social value of sport in the Community. Indeed, the Declaration on sport (Decision 29) which was annexed to the Treaty of Amsterdam (European Union, 1999) was the first formal document that emphasized the specific characteristics of sport and its social, educational and cultural significance. Towards that idea was the initiative of the ‘2004 European Year of Education through Sport’ which reinforced the educational dimension of sport and underlined the role of sport in education and training.

It was not until 2007 that there was a comprehensive framework for sport in the EU, presented in the ‘White Paper on Sport’ (European Commission, 2007a) which appointed the social, economic and organisation function of sport. The objective of this initiative was to enhance the visibility of sport in EU policy-making, to ensure that the specificity of sport is taken into consideration in the development and implementation of EU policies and to promote sport-related action at EU level (European Commission, 2007b). European value-added in this area is mainly achieved through the exchange of good practice and other supporting activities at European level. More specifically, the White Paper on Sport and the accompanying Action Plan “Pierre de Coubertin” (European Commission, 2007c) are essential soft-law instruments for the promotion of sport, advising Member States to participate in European programmes, studies, and conferences and build on political cooperation, consultation and dialogue with sport stakeholders and the European sport movement in general (see also Chatzigianni, 2010). The Action Plan “Pierre de Coubertin” suggested a number of actions to be implemented at EU level and a series of European Community Programmes that could support sport through other policies.

The 2009 Lisbon Treaty (TFEU) (European Union, 2007) brought a new era in the promotion of the social aspects of sport at EU level. Article 165 stipulates that: “The Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and education function”. With this provision, EU has a new competence in sport and can undertake actions to support, coordinate or supplement the policies of member states. In other words, a new legal basis is formed for implementing specific policy proposals in the area of sport such as “mainstreaming”

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7. Actually the first EU Programmes related to sport were introduced in the 90’s. The “Helios II Programme” (1993-1996) funded sporting initiatives with the objective to promote equal opportunities and the integration of disabled people (Coopers and Lybrand 1995:115). The “Eurathlon Programme” (1995-1998) was designed to provide a framework for Community subsides for sports (Coopers and Lybrand, 1995).
sport into existing EU policies and programmes as well as introducing a purely ‘EU Sport Programme’.

The EU intervention in the area of sport has many applications. The EU impact on national level can be expressed through the national participation in EU sport-related initiatives. In the present research the interest focuses on the European Programmes, proposed by the White Paper on Sport for the period 2007-2013, which are related to other policies but incorporate physical activity in their actions, promoting the social values of sport.

**European funding Programmes**

The term “European Programmes” refers to a set of research and development incentives that are awarded either directly by the European Union or through the national governments to organizations and businesses. These incentives take many different forms such as tax breaks, subsidies, etc. The European Programmes motivate the development of knowledge and skills in selected industries, markets or particular groups of people. This study is focusing on the “European Community Programmes” (period 2007-2013) and especially those that are related to sport and physical activity. They are presented as integrated set of actions adopted by the European Community in order to promote co-operation among its member states in different specific fields related to Community policies, over a period of several years. The Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou pointed that “the implementation of the new EU competence for sport also requires coordinated and mutually supportive approaches with other EU policies and complementarity of financial instruments (EU programmes and funds)”.

The European Commission is ultimately responsible for the smooth function of the programmes as it manages the budget and sets priorities, objectives and criteria, in consultation with the relevant Program Committees. Furthermore, it guides and monitors the general implementation, follow up and evaluation of programs at European level. The European Commission is assisted by the relevant EU Executive Agency which are responsible for the program implementation. Moreover, each Member State has designated a National Authority which has the overall responsibility for supervising

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9. Member States participate in the implementation of the programs, through representatives in the relevant Program Committee.
10. In the case of sport, responsible for the implementation of the EU Community Programmes is the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).
the implementation of the program in the country and a National Coordination Unit (NCU), which undertakes the management of the Action Programme and the budget allocation at national level. EU-funds are implemented according to the principle of additionality (co-financing) where national organizations offer supplementary support to the projects’ budget.

The EU Community Programmes related to sport that are examined in this research are the following:

- Public Health Programme
- Lifelong Learning Programme
- Youth in Action Programme
- Europe for Citizens
- Life+ Programme
- Progress
- Fundamental Rights and Citizenship
- Daphne

Recently, the Commission introduced the ‘Preparatory Action in the field of sport’ (2009-2011) in order to prepare possible future EU actions in this field in view of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. The aim of this financial support was to facilitate cooperation and exchanges of best practice between sports organisations in Europe so that discrepancies in sport among EU countries could be addressed. Specifically, this Programme intends to provide policy support for the identification of future policy actions in the area of sport through studies, surveys, conferences and seminars, test suitable European networks and create the environment for exchange of ideas and good practices in the field of sport.

In parallel with a wide consultation for the implementation of Lisbon Treaty’s sport provisions, the Commission has proposed a new Programme for education, training, youth and sport, called ‘Erasmus for All’ (2014-2020) in order to increase the funds allocated to the development of knowledge and skills. It foresees a budget of € 238 million for transnational projects among Member States and sport organisations implementing guidelines and recommendations in areas such as good governance, dual careers, participation in sport and physical activity (European Commission, 2012).

Concluding, European Community Funding Programmes are promoting changes -agreed on supranational level- at national levels by supporting the development of common policies and activities in the field of sport. In the next section, the research presents the main characteristics of these programmes and their implementation at national level in the case of Greece.
The implementation of European sport-related Programmes in Greece

In the case of sport-related actions, the EU funds transnational projects in order to identify and test suitable networks and good practices in the field of sport. The overall goal of EU is to develop a European dimension in sport by promoting active citizenship, social cohesion and a sense of European identity. According to the White Paper on Sport, EU recommends the Member States to take actions on the following issues of the social dimension of sport (European Commission, 2007e):

a) Public health and physical activity
b) Fight against doping
c) Education and training
d) Volunteering in sport, active citizenship and non-profit sport organisations
e) Social inclusion in and through sport
f) Fight against violence and racism in sport

In relation to these areas of social concern, European Programmes will be examined as an instrument of Europeanisation implemented at national level emphasising on the social significance of sport.

The contribution of sport and physical activity in the protection and improvement of public health is of highly significance. Physical activity as well as nutrition and diet are included in the key priorities in the EU public health policy and are implemented in the actions of the Public Health Programme ‘Together for Health’ (2008-2013). The Programme intends to complement, support and add value to the policies of the Member States and contribute to increasing solidarity and prosperity in the European Union by protecting and promoting human health and safety and improving public health (Decision No 1350/2007/EC). The total budget for the programme is € 321 500 000. The Programme is implemented by the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC). In Greece, the National Agency for the Programme is the Center for Disease Control and Prevention which is under the control of the Ministry of Health and Welfare and its work is to disseminate information and to promote the programme at national level. According to the research, until 2010 the number of the approved funded projects was 198 where Greece was the main partner in 5 of them. Based on the research data, none of these projects dealt with physical activity and nutrition as a factor for promoting health. Therefore, in the case of Greece it is apparent that sport as a form of physical activity is not adequately promoted under the Programme Public Health. However, in the 2009 Preparatory Action in the field of Sport, two Greek institutions were project-partners on actions for health enhancing physical
activity\textsuperscript{11}, while Greece did not participate in any of the 15 anti-doping granted projects of the \textbf{2010 Preparatory Action in the field of Sport}. Consequently, it can be argued that the Greek participation in EU networking for involving sport in health initiatives is limited, indicating low signs of Europeanisation in this field.

European Commission has indicated a great interest in the social and educational values of sport thus it has included physical education and sport in the priorities of the \textbf{Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) 2007-2013}. The Programme aims to foster interchange, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the Community so that they become a world quality reference (Decision No. 1720/2006/EC). Among others, it is divided into four sectorial sub programmes which are promoted through the White Paper of Sport as they can exploit the specificities of sport to achieve common goals;

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) Comenius for school,
  \item b) Erasmus for higher education,
  \item c) Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training,
  \item d) Grundtvig for adult education.
\end{itemize}

The actions supported by the Programme are mobility, partnership, multilateral projects, networks and e-twinning. The programme budget is € 6 970 000 000. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Agency Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for the management of the Lifelong Learning Programme under the supervision of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC). For decentralised actions, the national Agency for the implementation of the Programme is the Ministry of Education and the Coordinating Unit is the State Scholarship Foundation.

In line with the concept of Europeanisation, the \textbf{Program Comenius} intends to create convergence in the educational policies, practices, values and preferences of the different educational institutions of Member-States. The ‘Comenius’ refers to preschool and school education and the institutions and organizations providing such education. The objective of this program is to support and promote the value of European culture to young people and teachers and to help young people acquire the basic knowledge necessary for personal development, future employment and be ac-

\textsuperscript{11} The projects and national partners were:

a) You Need Exercise! Introducing every day Culture of Sports for Children in European Cities”, Municipal Nursery of Athens

b) “S\textsuperscript{2}-PORT”, Greek Foundation for Research & Technology which is a partner project presenting a holistic methodology for a healthy lifestyle through physical activity.
tive European citizens. The participation in educational opportunities through sport, which is an objective in the Comenius Programme, is promoted though the School networks. In the case of Greece, out of the 199 approved national projects for the year 2007, 6 included forms of sport and physical activity in their actions. In 2008, the approved projects were reduced to 121 but the projects related to sport increased to 7. In 2009, the total approved projects were 156 with 5 showing an interest in physical activity. Lastly, in 2010 the total number is 158 while sport is included in 10 projects. According to the priorities of the Comenius Programme regarding the school partnerships, the participation in educational opportunities is highly promoted through sport and physical activity, partly satisfying the social and educational goals of the White Paper on Sport. More specifically, the approved Greek projects support health through physical activity, education through sport, inclusion of people with disabilities and the fight against racism through sport, the promotion of multicultural dialogue and solidarity, the spread of Olympic values, the preservation of tradition and culture through folklore dancing. Through these projects, the interaction among Greek and other European participants generates shared values and culture, highlighting the socio-cultural aspect of Europeanisation.

Another opportunity for networking and cooperation is offered by the program Leonardo da Vinci which refers to vocational education and training, excluding higher education. The aim of the project is to offer participants training activities in order to facilitate personal development, employability and participation in the European labor market and to support improvements in quality and innovation. However, the data research for the implementation of the Programme in Greece, reveal that sport is not adequately promoted. In 2007 and 2008 the projects approved were 129 and 149 respectively, however only 2 of them referred to mobility and initial vocational training (IVT) in sport sector and especially in sport journalism and sport management. In 2009, there is a slight increase in the number of approved projects for vocational training in areas that promote sport with 3 out of 69 projects, in which Greece participates in a partnership action that refers to sport instructors’ skills in accordance with the European Qualification Framework (EQF). Yet the same cannot be supported for the year 2010 as there is no reference to sport in any of the 132 approved projects. Generally, sport is not presented in projects for mobility in labour market (PLM), in vocational education training for professionals (VET professionals) and in multilateral projects for transfer of innovation. It can be supported that the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme prepares the participant countries for the formulation of a new EU policy in education and training where sport can be adapted. In this case, although the degree of ‘misfit’ between Greek and EU education policy process appears quite high, Greece does not seem to respond to EU pressures for integration of sport in training opportunities.
On the same concept, the program **Erasmus** refers to formal higher education and vocational education and training. The program aims to support the creation of the European higher education area and strengthen the contribution of higher professional training to promote innovation. According to the published data for Erasmus sub-Programme for the period 2007-2008, 23 university students and 27 Professors have been transferred from the Departments of Sport and Physical Education of the Greek Universities to international educational institutes for studying or teaching purposes while no shift has been done for internship and staff training. Unfortunately no other records are published while the access to this information was not feasible through telephone interviews due to personnel reluctance to cooperate.

The program **Grundtvig** covers all forms of adult education. The Grundtvig program aims at promoting European cooperation in quality, innovation and European dimension in all areas of adult education. Regarding the Grundtvig Programme, a slight increase in projects that promote the development of knowledge and skills through/in sport for adults has been identified only in the last few years. Specifically, in the case of Greece, 3 out of 66 partnerships implemented in 2009 and 2 out of 9 partnerships implemented in 2010 include sports in their actions. In detail, projects could support the integration of the social value of sport into the general education of adults by addressing their individual needs for lifelong learning and their educational needs as parents, the elderly or members of marginalized groups. However, according to the priorities of the Programme, the use of sport to provide learning opportunities for specific categories of the population does not seem to be promoted through the programme actions at national level. Although networking, cooperation, exchange of ideas and practices are the tools to develop Europeanisation, there is a limited participation of Greek organisations in educational networks and workshops related to sport focusing only on the promotion of physical activities in the nature and on sport tourism.

Concluding about the ‘Lifelong Learning’ Programme, it is revealed that sport is used as a means of non-formal learning, social inclusion, promotion of cultural diversity, promotion of health and fight against violence and racism only at school age. Mobility in higher education (e.g. for internship), vocational training in sport and the improvement of knowledge and skills related to sport in adults are areas that have limited effects. It is evident that there is an adequate Greek participation in decentralised projects related to physical activity. Yet, the same cannot be supported for the centralized projects of LLP where the Greek selected projects did not involve any sport-related activity. However, according to the data collection, it is apparent that the Lifelong Learning Programme contributes notably to the promotion of the social and the educational role of sport in the Greek context, reflecting the policies, practices and preferences of European level actors.
In parallel with the socio-cultural aspects of Europeanisation, The Programme ‘Youth in Action’ (2007-2013), seeks to inspire young people’s sense of European citizenship, to encourage their active participation in public life and generally to promote European cooperation in youth (Decision No 1719/2006/EC). The budget is estimated at € 885 million. Responsible for overall management of the Program is the Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA) of the EU. For the decentralized actions, the National Service is designated to the Ministry of Education and the Coordination Unit is the General Secretariat of Youth. Most of the activities related to sport and physical activity are identified in the programme ‘Youth in Action’. Indeed, it is mentioned in the priorities of the programme that “sport is utilized as a tool to promote active citizenship and social participation of young people and as a means to promote healthy lifestyles”.

Based on the results of the research in the case of Greece, the most important activities of the programme that appear to promote exercise and physical activity are: Action 1: ‘Youth for Europe’, particularly the ‘Youth Exchange’ (1.1) and ‘Youth Initiatives’ (1.2) and Action 2: “European Voluntary Service”, relating to volunteerism. Specifically, sport is promoted in several actions contributing to non-formal education and social integration of people with particular disabilities, to health promotion, to combat doping, to encourage multiculturalism, to the protection of the environment etc. In detail, in 2007 from the 85 approved applications for Action 1. ‘Youth for Europe’, 4 applications were associated with sporting activity and in 2008 from the 88 approved applications, the actions that promoted sport in-
creased to 5. In 2009 the total number of approved projects was decreased to 59, 7 of which contained some form of exercise or physical activity. Finally in 2010 the approved applications decreased to 37 with a relative reduction in the promotion of sport in young people with only 2 applications. It should be noted however, that under the restrictions of Action 1.1. ‘Youth Exchange’ does not subsidise projects related to sports events, tournaments or leagues with competitive status, instead it supports actions that promote physical activity and sport as a social and cultural phenomenon.

Furthermore, in Action 2 the voluntary participation through sport or in sport is limited but steady in the life cycle of the program to date. In particular, the total number of actions related to volunteering in 2007 to 2010 range from 60 to 76 per year, while the actions that contained some form of sporting activity was consistently 3 per year. One project that introduced voluntary service in sport referred to volunteering in therapeutic horseback riding for people with disabilities. Significant is the central action of the Greek organization ‘Citizens in Action’ entitled ‘Join the Wonderful Winning World of Special Olympics World Summer Games’ (2010) which was granted €157,500 for the promotion and support of volunteering for the organization of Special Olympics hosted in Athens in summer 2011. This is a voluntary action that engaged 100 volunteers from different European countries to support the event. At this point it should be noted that according to the program guide of the EU, sport is one of the suggested topics for the implementation of a voluntary plan. So it is verified that the social and educational dimension of sport are fairly promoted through voluntary projects for youth. In the case of Greece, the participation in transnational sport-related projects for youth exchanges and volunteering fosters the citizens’ sense of community or European identity.

The “Europe for Citizens” (2007-2013), supports activities and organizations that promote active citizenship and contributes to European integration by promoting European citizenship, European identity and intercultural dialogue (Decision No 1904/2006/EC). It responds to the need to improve citizen’s participation in the construction of Europe and encourage cooperation between citizens and their organisations from different countries in order to meet, act together and develop common ideas in a European context. The program budget amounts to €215 million. It is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) under the supervision of the European Commission, which is in close cooperation with the Member States through the Programme Committee where States have designated their representatives. In Greece the Ministry of Interior has been designated as the National Agency for the coordination of the Programme. Such domestic changes in the administrative structures deriving from the delegation of duties to national authorities indicate the vertical process of Europeanisation as a “top-down” approach.
From a variety of actions\textsuperscript{13}, the ones that support physical activity and sport are: Action 1. ‘Active citizens for Europe’, which involves citizens directly, either through activities linked to town-twinning or through other kinds of citizens’ projects, and Action 2: ‘Active civil society in Europe’, which is targeted at Europe-wide civil society organisations, receiving either structural support on the basis of their work or supports trans-national programmes. The results show that Greece does not promote the social dimension of sport in achieving the priorities of the Programme ‘Europe for Citizens’ which is intercultural dialogue, active citizenship and the promotion of basic social values. Specifically, while the Greek participation is average in the Action 1, “Active citizens for Europe” in particular through twinning projects, however sport bodies or agencies are not seen to be involved. Specifically, twinning through the internet, allows exchanges of experiences on issues of common interest such as sport. However, non-profit sport organizations could have joined the initiatives of civil society (Action 2) in order to raise awareness, seek solutions to specific issues of sport interest and promote volunteering in sport as an element of active citizenship. The limited Greek participation in the programme demonstrates that the idea of promoting European identity and European Citizenship through sport is still undeveloped in the beliefs and attitudes of the Greek society, showing a weak ‘Europeanisation effect’.

In accordance with the Social Agenda, the ‘Progress’ (2007-2013) is a European programme for the financial support of the objectives of EU in the sector of employment, social solidarity and gender equality (Decision No. 1672/2006/EC). The priorities of the programme are employment, so-

\textsuperscript{13} – Action 1 “Active citizens for Europe” involves citizens directly, either through activities linked to town-twinning or through other kinds of citizens’ projects.

– Action 2 “Active civil society in Europe” is targeted to Europe-wide civil society organisations, receiving either structural support on the basis of their work programme or support trans-national projects.

– Action 3 “Together for Europe” supports high visibility events, studies and information tools, addressing the widest possible audience across frontiers and making Europe more tangible for its citizens.

– Action 4 “Active European Remembrance” supports the preservation of the main sites and archives associated with the deportations and the commemoration of the victims of nazism and stalinism.

The programme’s priority areas are: promoting participation and democracy at the EU level; the future of the Union and its basic values, intercultural dialogue, employment, social cohesion and sustainable development, and boosting awareness of the societal impact of EU policies.
cial cohesion, favourable working conditions, combating discrimination and gender equality. The recommended actions support research, studies, statistics, awareness and dissemination of best practices, collaborative networks, etc. The cost of the programme is estimated at € 743 250 000 for the seven-year period. The actions of the Programme are centralised and are implemented by the Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (DG EMPL) of the EC. The Ministry of Employment and Social Protection has been appointed as national coordinator of the Programme. Related to sport, ‘Progress’ can support activities that promote social inclusion through sport, combat discrimination in sport, create jobs in the sport market and contribute to economic growth. However, sport-related activities are not included in the national projects for ‘Progress’. According to the records, in 2007-2008, there was no call for proposals, while in 2008-2009 from the 75 awards projects Greece was granted only 3 projects. In 2009-2010, from the 41 projects Greece was the coordinator body in only 2 of them. Examining the domestic change towards EU pressures in the field of sport, it is apparent that the adsorption and integration of European initiatives into domestic sport-related institutions is delayed, showing slow tendency towards Europeanisation.

The Programme «LIFE +» (2007-2013)\(^{14}\) intends to financially support the development and implementation of European policies and rules in the environmental field and has a budget of € 2 143 000 000. This program action is centralized and managed by the Executive Environment Agency while the Greek Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change is responsible for the promotion and coordination of the Programme at national level.

The Action ‘LIFE+ Information & Communication’ co-finances projects that implement communication and awareness raising campaigns on nature protection and preservation of natural wealth. In this action, sport can be included as a form of outdoor activity and sports in nature and can be generated in projects that promote communication and dissemination of information. Until 2010 Greece participated in this action with three projects, yet the potential of the Programme to promote the value sport and physical activity in nature has not be exploited. While the Programme provides a new policy initiative for the integration of sport into environmental matters, national institutions do not seem to ‘imitate’ European initiatives, which is a mechanism of EU adjustment pressures (Schmidt, 2002).

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14. The “Life+” Programme comprises three components:
- LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity
- LIFE+ Environment Policy & Governance
- LIFE+ Information & Communication
The “Daphne” and the ‘Fundamental Rights and Citizenship’ are two Programmes that perform under the General Programme ‘Fundamental Rights and Justice’ managed by the DG of Justice of the European Commission and have a great interest in sport as they combat violence and racism and thus improve the overall level of well being in the EU. On the one hand, Daphne Programme (2007-2013) (Decision No.779/2007/EC) aims to prevent violence against children, youth and women on the societal level and to create cooperation and action at the state level. It has a budget of € 116 580 000. On the other hand, the Programme ‘Fundamental Rights and Citizenship’ (2007-2013) (Decision No. 2007/252/JHA), aims at promoting the development of European society respecting human rights, helping combat racism and xenophobia, fostering interculturality and tolerance and developing collaborative networks between legal, judicial and administrative authorities. It has a budget of € 93 800 000.

Although ‘Daphne’ Programme can support action for combating violence in sport through dissemination of information, knowledge and best practices, awareness raising actions, educational materials, networks and studies, none of the awarded projects is related to the phenomenon of violence in the area of sport. According to the results, for the period 2007-2008, Greece participated in only 1 of the 41 awarded projects of the ‘Daphne’ Programme. In 2008-2009 the participation increased to 6 out of 43 awarded projects and in 2009-2010 the participation was stable with 6 out of 82 awarded projects. Apart from the low participation of Greece as a partner or coordinator body in the above projects, violence in sport was not a prime issue in any of the Greek projects. The same can be claimed for the ‘Fundamental Rights and Citizenship’ Programme which can support actions to combat racism through sport or in the field of sport. Greek participation is low as well with 0 out of 18 awarded projects for 2007-2008, 2 out of 33 projects for 2008-2009 and 3 out of 49 projects for the period 2009-10. Although the participation is increasing, again the fight against racism in sport is not in the goals of projects where Greece is involved. One may say that although the Programme offers funding opportunities for sport, domestic actors seem reluctant to adapt to ‘changing opportunity structures’ which is a mechanism of Europeanisation (Knill and Lehmkuhl, 1999).

The research findings demonstrate that although Greece participates in almost all the EC funding Programmes, sport-related activities are mainly apparent in national projects under the ‘Youth in Action’ and the ‘Lifelong Learning Programme’. Although the evaluation of the Greek participation in EC Programmes is not in the aims of the study, it is vital to briefly present some of the obstacles and constraints:

- The duration of the Programme is from 2009 to 2013. The fact that the implementation of the Programmes is in progress, means that the research
provides only an estimate of the Greek participation in EU funding opportunities for sport.

- There is a lack of awareness, information and guidance about the application process. Many sport-related projects were not approved as they did not meet the criteria.
- The principle of additionality, restrict national organizations from participating in the Programmes as they could not offer supplementary support to the projects’ budget.
- The contribution of national Governmental Sport Bodies and other sport related authorities in the promotion of the EU Programmes in the sport community seems to be weak.
- Concluding, in order to develop a ‘European dimension of sport’, EC sport-related Programmes are used as mechanisms for the transmission of supranational policies in national contexts. However, according to the findings, Greece does not seem to effectively exploit the EU funding opportunities, neither does it promote adequately the social function of sport in other policy actions, showing a slow tendency towards Europeanisation in the field of sport.

Conclusion

In order to demonstrate the valuable contribution of sport to the implementation of Community policies, various EC sport-related Programmes were addressed. As it is demonstrated in this paper, the European Programmes are the main approach of the European Commission to initiate co-operation and networking and exchange of ideas, preferences and practices among Member States and EU institutions in order to create convergence in the member states’ policies. Additionally, this interaction facilitates diversity in cultures, brings citizens closer, creates a ‘common way of doing things’ and basically strengthens citizens’ European identity.

European funding represents an incentive for the EU countries to move towards EU models. According to Bönzel (2003), Olsen (2002) and Bache (2003) the need to absorb EU funds and resources for sport is a paradigm of adaptational pressure. Besides, one of the main objectives of the EC sport-related Programmes is to produce convergence and reduce the ‘mis-fit’ between European and national sport policy-making, leading inevitably to pressures for change. In this case study, this change may be defined as a sense of European Identity and European Citizenship through the exchange of ideas and networking which are the main aims of the European Union. The process of changing and adapting to a more European outfit is what we have called so far Europeanisation. The level of influence of European Programmes in the case of Greece can be taken as
evidence of Europeanisation, as the implementation requires a certain degree of consistency with the overall goals of the EU. Besides, it is apparent that Europeanisation becomes a prerogative for national authorities seeking European funds.

Following Börzel’s (2003) concept on the degree of change applied to the Greek case study, the change deriving from the EU funding Programmes as the outcome of Europeanisation, seems to have an average degree such as in “absorption”. This is because the sport policy in the European arena is still “indirect” and national governments still maintain sovereignty.

Discussing on the results of this study, it should be mentioned that whilst some Europeanisation is evident, arising from the provision of funding and the setting of broad EU policy aims and objectives, the preferences and actions of domestic actors involved in programme delivery remain highly significant in determining ultimate outcomes (Chapman, 2005). That means that EU programmes can promote institutional and policy designs that favour particular outcomes, however flexibility and innovation in their implementation at national level determine the ‘degree of change’.

In conclusion, focusing on the impact of EU funding as a means of Europeanisation (see also Alakavuk and Helvacioğlu, 2007), the paper argues that the European Programmes related to sports foster the awareness of EU, enhance the European values and may promote the establishment of European identity, as long as national relevant key actors are willing to act accordingly. As Bulmer and Radaelli (2004) emphasise “Europeanisation is not simply about formal policy rules but also about less tangible aspects, such as beliefs and values”.

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