



DECLARATION OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL SPORT COUNTRIES CONFERENCE

Participants from different sport countries, including representatives from sport organisations as well as of governments, attended the First international Sport Countries Conference that took place in the City of Barcelona, in Catalonia. The conference was held under the presidency of Mr. Josep Maldonado, Secretary General of Sport at the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Catalonia. Sport authorities of the Governments of Quebec, Flanders and Basque Country, were also members of the Steering Committee.

The conference participants addressed the theme: “sport countries, their reality and international expression” and adopted the following statement:

“Call for the co-operation of sports organisations and the international expression of the sport countries”.

The participants to the First International Sport Countries Conference note that sport activities are regulated by private entities from the civil society and organised according to social values, culture and history. The conference led to a consensus about an operational definition of the traditional concept of “sport countries”:

“Any geographically or historically delimited territory with cultural and social homogeneity, with its own political institutions, notwithstanding any international political recognition. Such a territory has its own sport system with its sport organisations that promote, manage and rule its sports, and regroup democratically the majority of federations, clubs, associations or participants of its territory”.



The participants reaffirmed that sport is not only an essential component of the welfare of individuals, groups and societies but it also has to be a mean of demonstrating the diversity of people's social, historical and cultural specificities, internally as well as internationally.

Discussions expressed during the conference clearly show the need and the interest of the sport development actors from the sport countries to design and implement policies and targeted measures in favour of the recognition of the "sport countries" concept, the expression of its sport potential and its participation to international events.

Policies and measures allowing sport countries to express themselves on the international scene need the collaboration of all sport system actors as well as the political institutions of the sport country.

These policies deal with the following components:

- Establishment of a close and developing co-operation between sport countries, notwithstanding their political situation.
- Organisation of regular exchange forum between sport countries.
- Organisation of sport events between sport countries according to their specific interests.
- Exchange of expertise on sport events organisation, development of sports programmes and public policies in sport.
- Co-ordination of representation to the international sport authorities to have the "sport country" concept recognised and to promote official and institutional participation of sport countries to international sports events.



The First International Sport Countries Conference held in Barcelona in 2003 allowed to identify and open channels of communication between various sport countries in order to establish new tools to improve sport co-operation at the international level.

All recommendations must at first benefit the sport movement as well as the athletes and lead towards new opportunities for sport exchanges between countries.

Barcelona, 5 April 2003