

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT IN THE VISION OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: *The article briefly presents the initiatives for the development of physical education and sports in the world and in Europe. It also presents the main documents that manage this field of activity in the Romanian Armed Forces. The beneficial effects, resulting from the multidisciplinary values of physical education and sports, have been known and recognized since antiquity. However, only towards the end of the twentieth century the activities in the field of physical education and sports, which target the human being as well as society as a whole, came more strongly into the attention of international institutions. Gradually, this area has been recognized for its important role in the development of human resources and interpersonal relations, in increasing the quality of life and mutual respect, in developing a sustainable economy, and in reducing corruption, crime and crime-related phenomena of international terrorism.*

Keywords: *physical education; sport; sustainable development; European and international institutions.*

Introduction

The field of physical education and sports is recognized for its noble and pacifying character, as an effective tool for preventing and resolving conflicts, for promoting peace, reducing tensions and removing obstacles (related to the privileged position of social classes, ethnic and religious differences, misunderstandings regarding geographical boundaries, etc.), the competition taking place in the ring, at the table, in the gym or on the sports field, not on the battlefield. Physical activity also plays a significant role as a promoter of social integration and economic development in various political, cultural and geographical contexts. The specific activities in this field have a significant contribution to strengthening social ties and promoting the ideals of solidarity, fraternity, peace, non-violence, tolerance and justice, constantly succeeding in uniting people and bringing them together to solve objectives of historical value.

Initiatives to develop physical activity worldwide

As early as 1946, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined the concept of health as "*a fully favorable condition both physically, mentally and socially, including the absence of disease or infirmity*"¹. Two years later (1948), the UN, in its *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, clearly stated the right of every individual on the planet to education for the full development of his personality. In the same context, in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1960), the UN states that physical education and sport are activities that ensure the right to education.

Subsequently, the WHO supplemented this definition, adding the ability to lead a productive life economically and socially. Since 1998, through the "*Active Life*" program, WHO has been promoting the beneficial effects of continuous and systematic exercise to improve human health. Thus, physical activities considerably reduce the risks of the installation of physical and/or mental disorders characteristic of the current lifestyle, and implicitly, having an important contribution to maintaining and increasing the physical and mental health of the individual and the optimal development of his personality. Thus, the WHO recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day for adults and 60 minutes for children.

¹ <https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sănătate>, accessed on 07.06.2019.

In recent years, the UN and UNESCO have worked to highlight and emphasize the role of pacifier and important vector of the economic and social development of the world that physical education and sport have, initiating and supporting numerous initiatives, such as: "International Charter for Education Physical Education and Sport", "Sport for Peace and Development", "Quality Physical Education", "Women and Sport", "The Values of Education through Sport", "Anti-Doping" etc. The International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, at Article 1 expressly and unequivocally states that "*the practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all*" (UNESCO, 1978).

The United Nations Agency for Physical Education and Sport (PES) operates within UNESCO. This agency has as its object assistance and guidance services for the governments of the countries, NGOs and specialists for dealing with the specific problems that appear in the evolution of the physical education and sports system. The organization guides and assists Member States wishing to create or update their own physical education training system. In addition, it provides expertise in the design and implementation of development programs in the field of physical education and sports. The Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPE) is also the secretariat of UNESCO. This committee is made up of 18 Member States, elected by vote. The main role of this body is to promote international cooperation in the field of physical activity in order to strengthen peace, friendship, understanding and mutual respect between peoples.

In January 2003, at the UNESCO General Assembly in Paris, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a staunch supporter of physical activity, proposed the adoption of a resolution aimed at raising awareness of the educational and social values of physical education and sport. In support of this initiative, the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Physical Education and Sport, Adolf Ogi, in his report "*Sport for Development and Peace, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*" said that "*Sport can prevent difficulties, can overcome conflicts, being the best school of life*"². In this document he highlights the importance of physical education and sport in the complex process of developing society and promoting peace, showing that physical activities are identified with the health of the population, the quality of education, the evolution of science, economic growth and implicitly number of jobs.

Following these steps, in November 2003, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 58/5, declaring 2005 the year – "*International Year of Sport and Physical Education*". This resolution played a key role in recognizing the special importance of physical activity in society and in relations between the states of the world at all levels. Through the provisions contained in this capital document, all national and international bodies have been constrained to respect the fundamental right of all people to physical education and sport, and, through these activities, to progress and peace. This legislative approach highlights the fact that the rules of physical education and sports are life lessons not only for the individual but also for society, where tolerance, cooperation, integration are necessary for collective success, physical education and sport overcoming all obstacles of origin, social class, color, language, standard of living or religious beliefs, the specific values of these activities being universal and common to all nations of the world.

All actions and events held throughout 2005, as part of the UN initiative to declare it the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, aimed at recognizing and promoting the important role of physical education and sport in achieving the goals of societal development in this millennium at all levels, starting from the individual, through the abilities and valences characteristic of a world in which the aim is to improve the health and social inclusion of the person as premises for increasing the quality of life, development and progress, rising collectively and regionally, state and global through its contribution to maintaining and increasing the state of

² UN launches International Year of Sport and Physical Education in <https://news.un.org/en/story/2004/11/120242>, accessed on 05.07.2019.

collective health. Thus, in different countries, various studies and researches have been carried out, which have undoubtedly proved that the practice of physical exercises has a positive and economic return. Every dollar invested in physical education and sports leads to a \$ 3.7 reduction in medical expenses (Punta del Este Declaration, 1999).

On 25 September 2015, at the UN Special Summit in New York, the *"2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"* was adopted by Resolution A/RES/70/1, which aims to achieve 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), 169 complementary targets, universal in nature, and also the balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development: the social dimension, the economic dimension and the environmental dimension. The document has direct implications on the internal and external policies of the world's states, and all countries and stakeholders are mobilized to carry out this very ambitious project. This resolution, paragraph 37, states that *"physical activity and sport are an important factor in sustainable development. We recognize their growing contribution to the achievement of development and peace, to the promotion of tolerance and respect and the contribution they make to the empowerment of women and young people in communities, and to the achievement of health, education and social inclusion goals"*³. In the UN's vision, physical education and sport are activities with great potential in sustainable development, which can be constructively involved in achieving all 17 objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

Initiatives to develop physical activity at European level

The European Charter of Sport (1992) provides the legal framework for an effective policy on physical education and sport, being respected and implemented by all European states. Through this document, governments are obliged to provide their own citizens with favorable conditions for exercising. Moreover, this document stipulates that physical activities must be accessible to all, to be carried out safely, with respect for the health of all participants, with loyalty, tolerance, satisfaction and respect for the environment.

In 2000, *the Council of Europe*, through *the Nice Declaration*, defined physical education and sport as the field that brings together *"all forms of physical activity which, through more or less organized participation, aim to express or improve the condition physical and mental, the development of social relations or the acquisition of positive results in competitions of all levels"*⁴. Thus, the social values and specific characteristics of physical education and sport have been recognized at European level, the European Council understanding the benefits of using sport in implementing common policies at European level.

In 2007, the Commission of the European Communities, in its White Paper on Sport, warns that lack of physical activity leads to overweight, promotes obesity and chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes, which affect quality of life, endanger people's lives. and creates problems for the economy and the health budget, and the European Parliament, in its *Resolution adopted in Strasbourg*, made it *compulsory to include at least three hours of sport a week in primary and secondary school curricula*.

In 2009, the Council of Europe, through its *Resolution on the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field*, aims to promote mental and sexual health, prevent accidents, nutrition problems and addictions and substance use through physical education and sport, highlighting the role of physical activities in creating some moral-volitional skills regarding teamwork⁵.

In 2016, the European Parliament, through its Resolution on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, recalled that *"physical education*

³ https://www.un.org/sport/sites/www.un.org.sport/files/ckfiles/files/Sport_for_SDGs_finalversion9.pdf, accessed on 10.07.2019.

⁴ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/com/com_com\(2007\)0391_/com_com\(2007\)0391_ro.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/com/com_com(2007)0391_/com_com(2007)0391_ro.pdf), accessed on 10.07.2019.

⁵ *Jurnalul Oficial al Uniunii Europene*, Anexa 1, nr. C 311/5 din 19.12.2009.

and sport are extremely important tools in the context of social inclusion, as they create opportunities for interaction and the acquisition of social skills”⁶ and calls on the European Commission and the Member States to launch specific programs to make sports activities and events more accessible to people with disabilities. In view of the events unfolding and the experience gained in *the European Year of Education through Sport* (2004), the European Commission encourages the support of sports activities through various policy initiatives in the field of education and training.

In our country, the organization and functioning of the national system of physical education and sports are regulated by the *Law on physical education and sports no. 69* of April 28, 2000. According to this law, the field of physical education and sports is understood by “*all forms of physical activity intended, through organized or independent participation, to express or improve physical condition and spiritual comfort, to establish civilized social relations and lead to results in competitions of any level*”, which are considered “*activities of national interest supported by the state*”⁷.

The studies carried out by specialists, as well as this interpretation present in the law, strengthen the fact that physical education and sport influence man not only in the physical plane, the systematic development of physical activities having a special influence both in maintaining optimal health and in obtaining mental comfort and also the improvement of interpersonal relationships and in the development of society.

Military physical education is one of the subsystems of physical education, being specific to the Ministry of National Defense. All the activities characteristic of this field are carried out based on the Military Physical Education Regulation no. M149/2012, in which, in Article 1, military physical education is defined as “*a fundamental component of the instruction/education process that systematically capitalizes on all forms of collective or individual activity that take place in order to train, develop and maintain motor capacity, contributing to improve the physical and mental health of the army personnel*”⁸. Also, *Law 69/2000*, specifies in article no. 7, that military physical education is a “*compulsory discipline, provided in the instructional plan. It is carried out systematically and continuously, throughout the week, of the instruction and education process, within the limit of at least 3 hours per week, being led by specialized military or civilian personnel*”⁹.

Another document that manages the specific activities is the Concept of physical education and sports in the Romanian Army, which highlights the fundamental role that military physical education plays in the military system: “*Military physical education is the starting point of the entire training process for combat, the pivot of the other components of training, which determines the performance of the military in carrying out combat missions and the efficiency of activities in peacetime*”.¹⁰

The sports activity organized in the units of the Ministry of National Defense (grassroots sports and performance sports) is carried out according to SMG/PF – 3.8/2003 – Instructions regarding the management of sports activities in the Romanian Armed Forces. This is a complementary part of the training process and contributes to increasing the level of training of troops, the formation of fighters who possess special physical qualities, with a high resistance to long and intense efforts¹¹. Thus, military sport, a related activity in the field of physical education and military sports, has a special importance happily completing the corollary of beneficial valences that this field exerts on the military, both individually and organizationally.

⁶ Jurnalul Oficial al Uniunii Europene C 101/138 16.03.2018.

⁷ ***, *Legea educației fizice și sportului*, nr. 69/2000, cu modificările și completările ulterioare.

⁸ *Regulamentul educației fizice militare*, Centrul Tehnic Editorial al Armatei, București, 2013, p. 2.

⁹ <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gi3dmnru/legea-educației-fizice-si-sportului-nr-69-2000>, accessed on de 25.01.2021.

¹⁰ *Conceptia de educație fizică și sport în Armata României*, Statul Major General, București, 2016, p. 8.

¹¹ *Instrucțiuni privind managementul activității sportive în Armata României SMG/PF – 3.8*, Statul Major General, București, 2003, p. 7.

At national level, although this activity is legally regulated, the experience of recent years proves that the recognition of the importance of this field is only at a declarative level. Thus, the measures taken in the field of education, respectively the reduction of the number of hours of physical education in the curriculum, moreover, the intention to eliminate this subject, the deliberate abandonment of many sports bases with the obvious intention to later change their destination and introduce these lands in the real estate gear claim that this activity is in fact more and more neglected. And the negative effects are already visible. Thus, our country, which a few years ago was excellent in many sports, obtaining extraordinary results at international competitions, is now struggling in mediocrity, in many of the sports for which it "made the law" to not even be able to qualify. Moreover, Romanians are more and more sedentary, we have an increasingly lazy young generation, with tendencies towards obesity and, implicitly, towards disease. All this is mainly due to the gradual disappearance (in the case of the elderly) or the lack (in the case of the young) of physical culture.

In conclusion, the activity of physical education and sport is regulated by the main European and international political structures and bodies, which attach great importance to this field, understand the great potential that physical education and sport manifest in the development of society as a whole and take effective measures. the multi-plane improvement of the individuals of this planet.

Regarding this activity at national level and implicitly in the military system, in our opinion, the only saving solution for the future of the Romanian nation is for the authorities in our country to change the paradigm regarding the field of physical education and sports, to include this field in the chapter vulnerabilities to the Romanian state in the National Security Strategy and to reform it on sound principles, to establish concrete measures, with clear and measurable objectives for physical education and sports.

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