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# SPACHE

SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
IN CULTURAL HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTS

# HANDBOOK



Project leader



**TEMPO LIVRE**  
GUIMARÃES

Written by

**Sport and  
Citizenship**  
Sport serving society



**Sport et  
Citoyenneté**  
Le Sport au service de la société



Sport  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



## AUTHORS



**Eva JACOMET**

Project manager  
Think Tank Sport and Citizenship



**Alexandre CHARRIER**

Project manager  
Think Tank Sport and Citizenship

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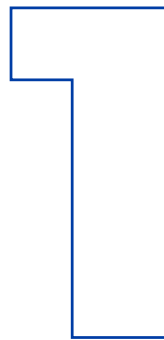
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# 1. Introduction



## 1.1 Presentation of the SPACHE project

### ? What is SPACHE ?

SPACHE (Sport and Physical Activity in Cultural Heritage Environments) is a project supported by the European Commission within the framework of the EU's Erasmus+ Sport programme. The SPACHE project focuses on reducing physical/sport inactivity by making physical/sport activities more attractive, through the integration between sport/physical activity and cultural heritage. It also intends to participate in the development and sharing of knowledge on these subjects.

The project was promoted by a partnership of 9 actors. It set off with the exploration of the use of cultural heritage as a leverage for enhancing sport/physical activity in theory. Through participatory processes, the project partners designed and implemented 4 pilot programs in 4 different countries: Portugal, Italy, Slovenia and The

Netherlands. The pilot programs foresaw actions focusing on cultural heritage as a leverage for enhancing non-competitive and regular sport/physical activity including, but not limited to, guided hikes to cultural sites, gymnastics in cultural sites, etc.

The project also assessed the social impacts of the pilot programmes. Moreover, based on insights and knowledge acquired throughout the project, partners created educational modules (workshops, webinars) and operational tools (capacity building toolkit, handbook etc) that will be widely disseminated, in order to raise awareness and provide guidance for stakeholders and policy makers on cultural heritage as a leverage for non-competitive and regular sport/physical activity for all.





## Objectives:

SPACHE aimed to encourage participation in sport and physical activity, especially by supporting the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Health Enhancing Physical Activity and being in line with the EU Physical Activity Guidelines and the Tartu Call for Healthy Lifestyle. For the duration of the project implementation, the partners have then declined this general objective into more specific work streams, [the SPACHE project was developed to](#):

- **Explore** linkages between sport and cultural heritage (theory and practice).
- **Test** specific pilot non-competitive sport/physical activity programmes using cultural heritage as a lever.
- **Produce** knowledge and learning on cultural heritage as leverage for non-competitive sport/physical activity for all.
- **Communicate** and disseminate shared knowledge on cultural heritage and non-competitive sport/physical activity.

It aimed to achieve the following effects:

- **Raising** awareness and building capacities of policymakers and stakeholders on heritage-based non-competitive and regular sport/physical activity strategies.
- **Increasing** the adoption of heritage-based non-competitive and regular physical/sport strategies.
- **Enhancing** physical active lifestyles and cultural participation and satisfaction in pilot programmes contexts.
- **Strengthening** the sense of local and European identity in pilot programmes contexts.
- **Strengthening** the attractiveness of pilot programs cities.

**9 partners involved:****Tempo Livre**

Tempo Livre has been involved in the design and implementation of sports and cultural events in Portugal for ten years and coordinated the entire SPACHE project. In particular, it participated in the design and implementation of the pilot programme “A. Linho” pilot programme with the municipality of Guimaraes.

**Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale**

Based in Italy, the IRS developed an expertise in producing social impact studies in the domain of culture. The institute was missioned to assess the social impact of the four pilot programmes.

**CÂMARA  
MUNICIPAL DE  
GUIMARÃES****Municipality of Guimarães**

European Capital of Culture in 2012 and European City of Sports in 2013, the municipality of Guimarães deployed one of the four pilot programmes of the SPACHE project on his territory.

**Municipality of Gargnano and Alto Garda Volley**

The municipality of Gargnano and the Alto Garda Volleyball Club have organised six pilot activities on the shores of Lake Garda, an area with an important cultural heritage.

**Sport  
Fryslân****Sport Fryslân**

Sport Fryslân is the sport resource center of the province of Friesland. As a partner of the SPACHE project, it has developed the pilot program “Expedition Friesland”.



### Slovenian Olympic Committee

Traditionally committed to educational and cultural activities related to sport and Olympism, the Slovenian Olympic Committee has developed a pilot programme in the municipality of Piran.

### TAFISA



TAFISA is the international association for sport for all. It has developed a strong expertise in the production of educational resources around sport and education. During the SPACHE project, it designed several educational modules and conducted workshops aimed at building the capacity of actors to develop activities combining sport and culture.

### Sport and Citizenship



Our Think Tank dedicated to the societal impact of sport was involved in the drafting of this handbook and the publication of a scientific journal dedicated to the links between Sport and Culture. It also contributed to the dissemination of the project's results and to advocacy actions.

#### Key dates



**January 2021:** Selection of the SPACHE project (Erasmus+ Sport call for projects)

**March 2021:** Launch of the SPACHE project

**September 2021:** Partners meeting in Gargnano (Italy).

**February 2022:** Launch of the pilot programmes activities in Gargnano (Italy), Guimarães (Portugal), Heerenveen (Netherlands) and Piran (Slovenia).

**September 2022:** Partners meeting in Heerenveen (The Netherlands).

**March 2023:** Partners meeting in Guimarães (Portugal). Presentation of the Social Impact Plan and the educational modules.

**Spring 2023:** Organisation of the multiplier events in the pilot cities to disseminate the project.

**June 2023:** Publication of the SPACHE Journal and Handbook. Workshop and final conference in Brussels (Belgium)

## Project outputs and key figures



## 1.2 Defining the terms

The last Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity published in 2022 underlined the increasing issue of sedentary lifestyle throughout Europe. Since 2013, the levels of participation to sport and physical activity have not changed substantially. However, the proportion of those who never exercise or play sport has increased from 42% to 46%, and this is a continuation of a gradual trend since 2009. Furthermore, in a given week, more than half of Europeans do not do any vigorous physical activity, and around half do not engage in moderate physical activity.

The consequences are known and manifestly dramatic for people's health, particularly in terms of the development of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and other non-communicable diseases. This reality also has high costs for the countries' economies, due to absenteeism from work and the overload of health systems.

The SPACHE project was therefore born in this context where promoting physical activity and sport seems decisive, but where it is also essential to think of new and innovative strategies to encourage physical activity and sport. It is from this observation that the idea of using cultural heritage as a lever for the practice of physical activity was born.

Due to the aim of the project to reach people that are not at all or are not sufficiently and continuously engaged in sport and physical activities, inactive and sedentary people, the SPACHE project deliberately focuses on non-competitive sports, interpreted as sports that do not refer to professional sport activities and to competitions.

Therefore, the SPACHE project adopted the sport and physical activity definition provided by the Designed to move. A Physical Activity Agenda (2018):

### **Sport/physical activity in SPACHE**

"Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being. In other words, it is the effort of being physically active that is being emphasized rather than what is being played, the skill level or the points won or lost. (...) "sport" (or "sports"), "physical activity" and "physical play" refer deliberately to anything that gets people to move in complex, skill-building ways that enhance endurance, strength, balance, coordination, etc. That could be tennis or football, Zumba or break dancing. For kids, it might be a game of tag or playing on the monkey bars. For older people, it could be jogging, swimming or ballroom dancing." (pp.10)

In 2018, the European Commission underlined that the power of cultural heritage to favor happiness, the satisfaction with leisure activities and health and well-being is particularly relevant for enhancing physical activity.

Indeed, cultural heritage provides numerous benefits that contribute to individual, societal, and even economic well-being. Cultural heritage plays a vital role in shaping individual and collective identities. It provides a sense of belonging and connection to one's roots, history, and traditions. Cultural heritage helps people understand their cultural heritage and strengthens their cultural and social identities, fostering a sense of pride and belonging.

Furthermore, engaging with cultural heritage can have positive impacts on well-being and quality of life. It provides opportunities for leisure, entertainment, and personal growth. Participating in cultural activities, such as visiting museums, attending cultural events, or practicing traditional arts, can enhance mental health, social connections, and overall life satisfaction. These benefits highlight the importance of recognizing, preserving, and promoting cultural heritage as a valuable and essential aspect of our societies.

In a same way as for sport and physical activities, the project chooses to adopt a wide definition of the cultural heritage including both tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as natural heritage:

### Cultural heritage in SPACHE project

Cultural heritage refers to the resources inherited from the past, be them tangible (e.g. museums, collections, libraries and archives, including multimedia ones, industrial heritage, including design, monuments/individual protected buildings, architectural ensembles, cities, towns, religious buildings and artefacts, artistic works inherited from the past, archaeology, archaeological sites) intangible (historical events, traditional sport games, rituals, festivities, traditional crafts and arts), natural (landscape, underwater, etc.), which people identify as a manifestation of their continuously developing values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions and that result also from the interaction between people and the environment.





## 1.3 Linking physical activity and cultural heritage

In this Handbook, physical activity and cultural heritage must be associated as interactive domains. In fact, if their interaction is not obvious, it exists. What favors cultural heritage can prove to be relevant while looking at enhancing physical activity. Linking physical activity and cultural heritage can create a powerful synergy that promotes a holistic approach to health, well-being, and the preservation of cultural traditions.



Making a link between sport and cultural heritage connects the physical activities and games of sport with the broader cultural context, traditions, and values of a particular community or society. This connection acknowledges the cultural significance and heritage associated with various sports, highlighting their historical, social, and symbolic importance. It also recognizes that sports can be more than just physical activities; they can serve as vehicles for cultural expression, preservation, and identity.

However, linking physical and sporting activities and cultural heritage represents a major challenge, as it involves complex cross-sector collaboration between various sectors (sport and culture but also education, tourism, economy, health etc.) that do not necessarily pursue the same goals and priorities. While sports may focus on physical activity, competition, and health, cultural heritage emphasizes preservation, storytelling, and historical significance. Harmonizing these diverse objectives can be complex. It can for instance lead to some misunderstanding and potential conflicts that can appear due to the unusual use of cultural resources for sport activities.

To overcome these limits, it's essential to engage experts from both the sports and cultural heritage fields, conduct thorough prior research, involve local communities and the different stakeholders, and be open to feedback. Collaborative planning and a deep understanding of the potential benefits and challenges are crucial for creating successful and meaningful projects that blend sports and cultural heritage.

As a consequence, developing efficient activities mixing sport and cultural heritage relies on the mutual commitment of these key stakeholders. The SPACHE project showed how important it was to associate them from the beginning of the project. This handbook will underline this necessary cooperation and will address several recommendations to better strengthen an early cooperation between these stakeholders at several scales.

## Sport and Culture in Europe: desk analysis of the subject

### Linking sport and culture in Europe: a little history

Sport and culture are part of the European heritage and have been linked in the official texts of the institutions since the 1980s:

- **1985**  
The so-called Adonnino Committee for a People's Europe affirmed the socio-cultural dimension of sport in its report to the Milan European Council.
- **1997**  
The treaty of Amsterdam emphasised "the social importance of sport and in particular its role in forging identity and bringing people together".
- **1998**  
The European Commission published an official document on the "European model of sport", putting forward, for the first time, a European structure of sport organisation and its characteristics. This document also explicitly recognises the role that sport can play as a vehicle for identity.
- **2000**  
The subsequent declaration adopted at the Nice European Summit (2000) defends the idea that these specific functions and characteristics of sport should be taken into account in the development of European policies.
- **2007**  
Publication of the White paper of sport that recognised the specificity of the role sport plays in European society, based on volunteer-driven structures, in terms of health, education, social integration, and culture.
- **2009**  
Entry on force of the Treaty of Lisbon. The EU acquired a specific competence in the field of sport. The Article 165(1) sets out the details of a sports policy, stating 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 educational function".
- **2012**  
The European Parliament Resolution of 2 February 2012 on the European Dimension in Sport recognized UNESCO's statements on Traditional Sports and Games (TSG) as intangible cultural heritage and called the European Commission to support TSG.
- **2015**  
The European Parliament resolution of 29 October 2015 on new challenges and concepts for the promotion of tourism in Europe acknowledges the importance of sport for tourism, recalling the important role of sporting activities in making Europe's regions attractive to tourists.
- **2016**  
publication of the report "Mapping of Traditionnal Sports and Games in Europe" ordered by the European Commission.

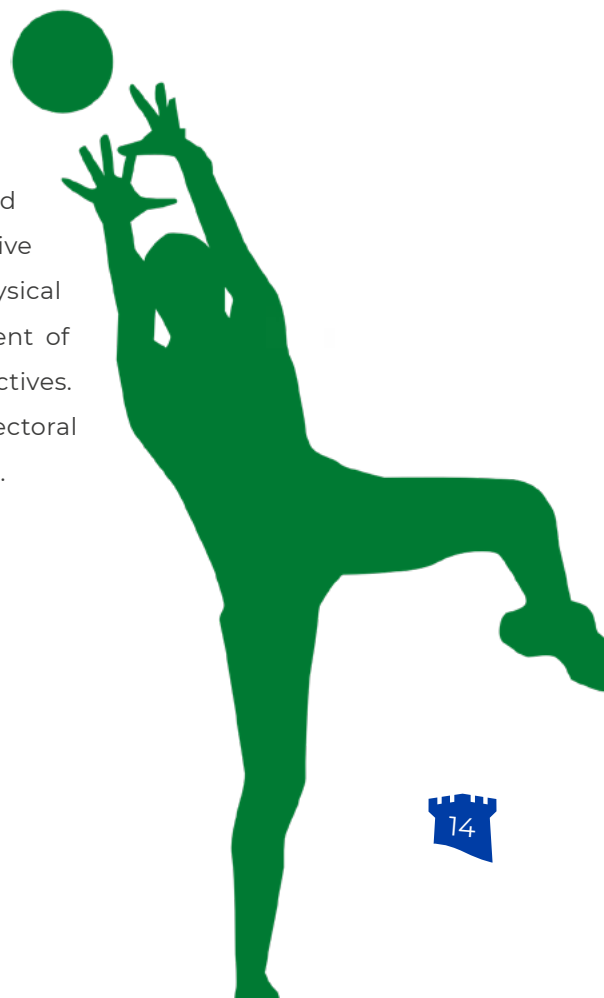
At the European level, both culture and sport are recognised for their contribution to society in terms of well-being and health, as well as their economic impact in the society. The role they can play in strengthening a European identity, for greater social and territorial cohesion is also recognised within the European institutions, as evidenced by different European texts :

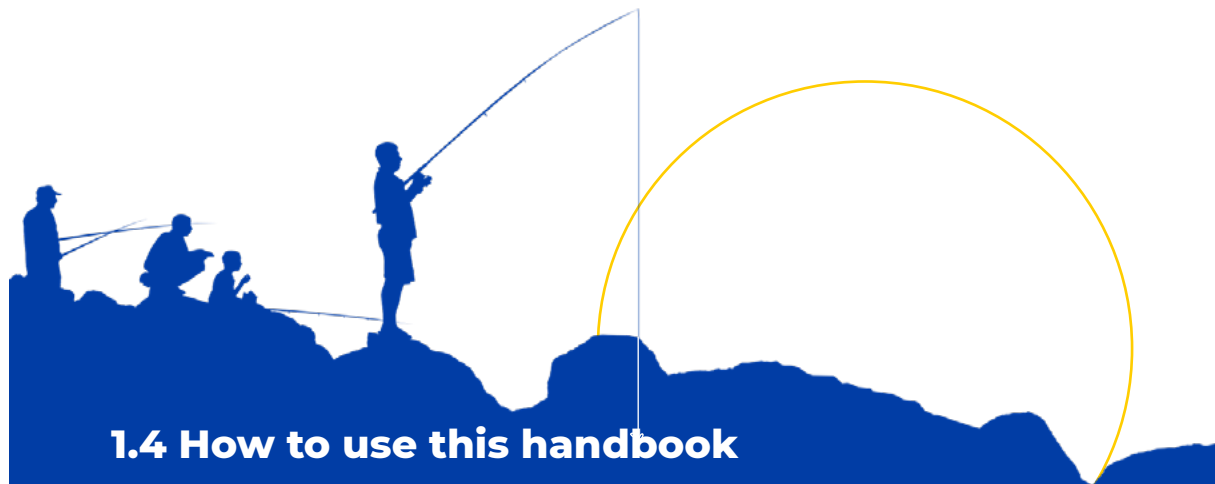
- the current European Union Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026;
- the EU Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024;
- the New Agenda of Culture published in 2018.

The EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 notably underlines the necessity of strengthening the access to cultural heritage and the role of culture in our society. It identifies as a priority the need to guarantee an access for all to the cultural resources with a special attention to ensure children's and young people's as well as vulnerable and disadvantaged groups participation in cultural life. In 2018, the New Agenda of Culture published by the European Commission underlined the need for fostering the cultural capability of all Europeans by making available a wide range of cultural activities and providing opportunities to participate actively of Culture.

According to the Work Plan, cross-sectoral synergies between schools, cultural organisations, civil society and other actors must be established as well as a cross-sectoral cooperation among decision-makers. This need for enhanced cooperation was already highlighted by the European Commission in 2018, through the New Agenda of Culture.

On the other side, the EU Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024 identifies the rising of sedentary lifestyle among the European citizens as a main concern. It mentions as a guiding objective the increase of participation in sport and health-enhancing physical activity in order to promote an active lifestyle. The creation of adequate opportunities for sport and physical activity for all generations as well as the strategic development of sport and physical activity at local level appear as important objectives. To do so, the Council and its members encourage a cross-sectoral cooperation, a shared priority with the EU Work Plan for Culture.





## 1.4 How to use this handbook

This handbook aims to expose the advantages and benefits of the implementation of activities combining sports and physical activity with cultural and natural heritage resources. It recalls on the learnings and the successes of the SPACHE project and sought to extend them to other contexts of implementation. The SPACHE handbook must be understood as a tool to build new projects and initiatives.

The expected outreach of this document are the policymakers from European to local levels, as well as stakeholders from the sports, physical activity, and cultural sectors. Its purpose consists of raising awareness among those actors to make them realise what support they might provide to further enable the development of such combined activities.

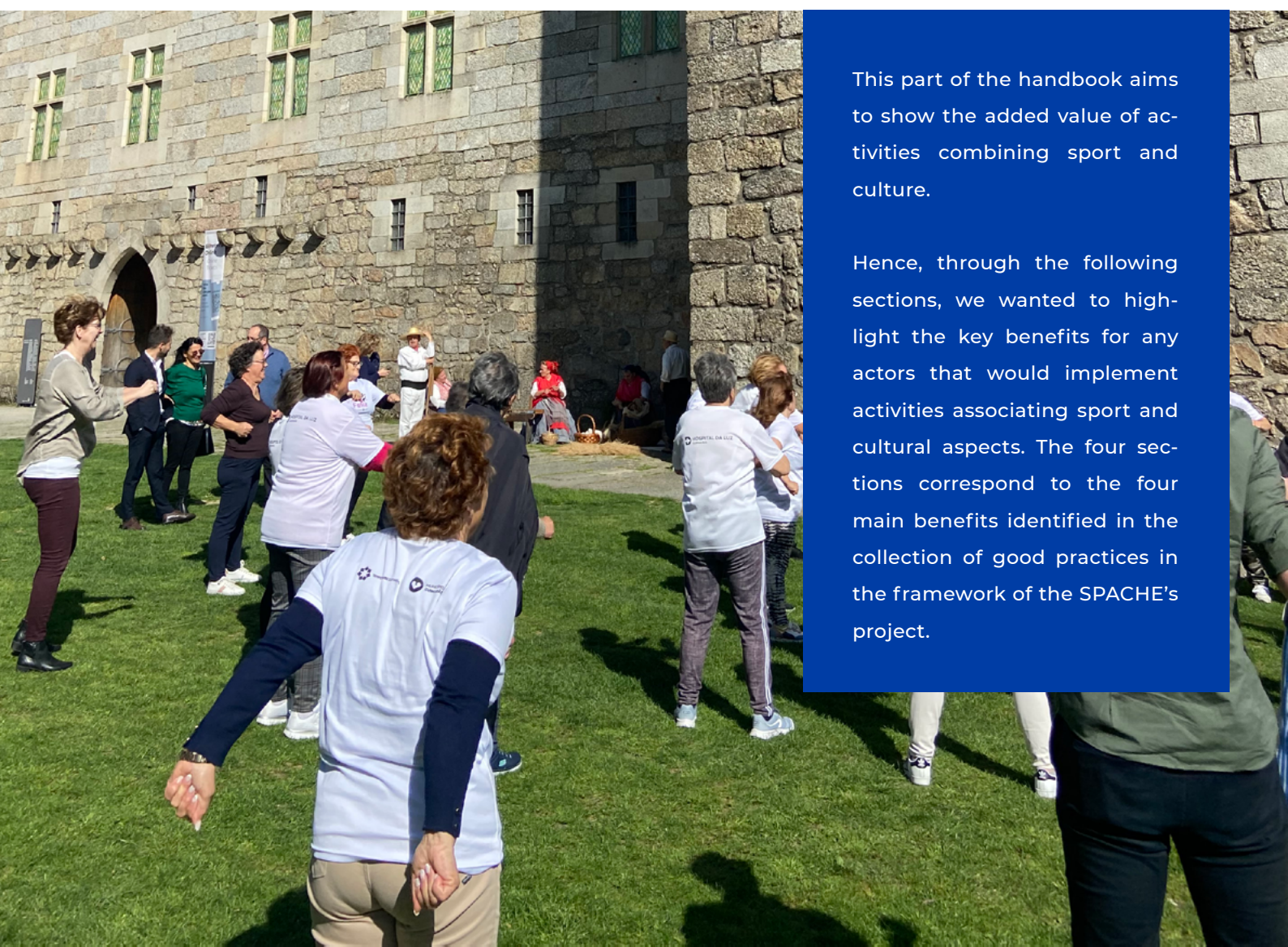
To be fully understandable, the handbook has been divided into three main parts. This division answers to a logical reasoning. Indeed, at first, you will be able to gather knowledge and information about the genesis of the project and of its specific terms, such as cultural heritage. Furthermore, as this reflection and project has been conducted thanks to the European fund Erasmus+ and in collaboration with partners from different countries in Europe, you will find a desk analysis of what has been done within the EU on the topic. It seems important to present in what context this handbook has been produced. Following it, you may learn from the benefits observed from activities associating culture and sport during the SPACHE project. Finally, the handbook provides you with recommendations based on several sources to ensure the dissemination of the project and to foster the rise of other similar initiatives in Europe.



# 2.

# 2

## What benefits would you gather from promoting and developing activities combining sport and culture?



This part of the handbook aims to show the added value of activities combining sport and culture.

Hence, through the following sections, we wanted to highlight the key benefits for any actors that would implement activities associating sport and cultural aspects. The four sections correspond to the four main benefits identified in the collection of good practices in the framework of the SPACHE's project.

## 2.1 The development of new forms of tourism: slow, sustainable and active tourism

Globally, tourism represents a large part of incomes for countries, regions, and individuals. As mentioned by the European Commission (EC), based on a study produced by the World Travel and Tourism Council, in 2019, tourism represented nearly 10% of the EU GDP and accounted for around 23 million jobs in the Union. The development of the tourism sector is due to the cultural wealth of the continent which attracts crowds from all over the world. In 2022, in Europe, were reported 584,9 million international tourists' arrivals according to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). And yet, this number does not consider intra-European flows of tourists. Tourists come on the "Ancient continent" to discover the beauty of gorgeous capital cities such as Paris, Berlin, Budapest, or Madrid, as well as the treasures of the Romanian Empire and the Greek civilisation. Gastronomy also must be considered as a source of attractivity with the delicious meals you might taste in Italy, Spain, Portugal, or France among others. This diversity of cultural opportunities reflects in the numbers as the EC states that "cultural tourism accounts for 40% of all European tourism". Hence, nearly half of tourism activities are related to a cultural activity.

Those figures displayed; we can consider that cultural tourism is already very developed in Europe and benefits to a large variety of actors. Yet, tourists are looking out for new ways of visiting and discovering a territory.



For instance, active tourism according to the non-profit organisation of the same name, consists in "a new travelling philosophy that combines adventure, nature and culture [...] is low-impact, ecological, socially compatible and high quality". Opposed to passive tourism, active tourism offers opportunities for local territories to support their businesses and to promote new approaches to their cultural heritage. In this regard, we argue that sport should be considered as such an approach.

The UNWTO considers that "sport tourism is one the fastest growing sectors in tourism". If the main reason for the growth of sports tourism consists in crowds traveling to a mega

sport event such as the Olympic Games or the Football World Cup, tourists for whom the travel is not related to the latter “are also interested in sport activities”. But as mentioned above, sport tourism is a “growing sector”, meaning it is still developing. As a source of tourism, sports have the potential to benefit to the local economy,

especially when it is associated with other activities and interests such as the discovery of a country’s cultural heritage or the preservation of a territory’s natural heritage.

### **Enhance the local economy through cultural and sports tourism.**

At the local level, tourism represents a source of incomes for numerous actors (restaurants, transport companies, housing, local businesses etc). It creates an ecosystem which stability and reliability depends on the attractiveness of an area. Within this tourism ecosystem, cultural organisations and sports organisations play a key role in the attractiveness of a territory as, according to the Cultural Routes’ report of the Council of Europe (CoE) in the Alpine Region, “they are economic actors and supply chain activators”<sup>1</sup>. Hence, they contribute to the economic development of the local economy thanks to the activities they have to offer. By combining cultural and sport activities with the aim of preserving a territory’s cultural and natural heritage as well as encouraging people to be more active, the economic return for the local actors can be improved. In this regard, the Council of Europe emphasised the importance of producing “an economic impact analysis (EIA) [...] to estimate the effects of the expenses related to certain initiatives on the economic system of a specific territory”<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, indicators are needed to measure the benefits that can occur from combined sports and cultural initiatives.

To give a first example, as a type of cultural tourism, culinary tourism consists of “discovering and exploring the culture and the history of a location through alimentation and activities linked to it by the creation of memorable experiences”<sup>3</sup> according to Maria Salvador-Perrignon. In the IRS study, one of the key observations made by participants was the combination of gastronomy, specifically the inclusion of unique, locally sourced products that created an additional level of attractiveness.

<sup>1</sup> Council of Europe (2020), Transnational cultural policies for the Alpine Region, Routes4U Policies EUSALP.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Salvador-Perrignon, M. (2012). Tourisme culinaire et valorisation des produits artisanaux : vers un tourisme durable, *Management & Avenir*, vol. 56, no. 6, pp. 114-133.



While promoting the traditional meals and recipes of a territory, culinary tourism also shines the light on local businesses and enable to create itineraries of food adventures. For restaurants, food markets and specialised shops, the promotion of a community or territory culinary heritage enables to value the wealth and the beauty of their region. Culinary tourism can easily be combined to sport related events which attracts big crowds. For instance, in France, for the 2023 Rugby World Cup, programmes have been established in the hosting cities to promote the territory, and notably its food specialities.

The interest of associating sport events with the discovery of cultural traditions of a territory is to create an opportunity for the audience to extend its journey. Creating such things as culinary itineraries or thematic cycle itineraries enable the development of sustainable mobility as well as the connection between several sectors, and at the same time it profits the local businesses.

Additionally, according to the report on the SHARE initiative, “sport-based initiatives can contribute to the regeneration of former industrial areas and consequently assist in the transition from an old industrial economy to a greener hospitality and experience economy, while generating social and environmental benefits and developing the touristic potential of the area”<sup>4</sup>.

Cultural and sports activities enable to promote the traditions and specificities of a territory and to make them attractive for locals and tourists. They also have the potential to revitalise an area and therefore to increase its economic overturn. If sports and cultural organisations work together, it allows for the development of new opportunities for tourists and it contributes to the promotion of the natural and cultural heritage of a specific territory. And at the end, this enhanced attractiveness profit to the local economy and to the local ecosystem of actors.

## Extend the length of the journey

As mentioned by the Council of Europe in its needs assessment report about the development of Cultural Routes in the Adriatic Region “the attraction for tourists of many Cultural Routes does not always consist of a system of tourist destinations but rather the collection of tourist attractors often not linked to each other within the framework of a local integrated cultural / tourist system”<sup>5</sup>. Those tourist attractors mean several individuals natural or cultural sites isolated from each other even though they belong to the same heritage. The analysis of the reporters is that one of the main consequences of this missing system for the local communities is that they are unable “to retain visitors within their own territories for at least one night”<sup>6</sup>. The length of a journey is im-

<sup>4</sup> European Commission & KEA European Affairs, (2020), Contribution of sport to regional development through Cohesion policy 2021-2027 <https://sport.ec.europa.eu/document/share-contribution-of-sport-to-regional-development-through-cohesion-policy-2021-2027>

<sup>5</sup> Council of Europe (2020), Transnational heritage and cultural policies in the Adriatic and Ionian Region, Routes4U Policies EUSAIR.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



portant economically but also in building memories and knowledge of the cultural and natural heritage of a territory.

In this regard, several initiatives associating sports with culture in Europe have shown their benefits to increase the length of a journey and to incite people to stay longer than the amount of time needed to visit one isolated cultural site. Indeed, itineraries have been built which aim to contribute to the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of specific region while enhancing physical activity. Collected in the good practices of the SPACHE project, La Loire à Vélo, a bicycling itinerary of approximately 900 kilometres, allow tourists to discover the beauty of the Loire Valley and its numerous castles as well as the culinary traditions of the different places it crosses. Another initiative, developed under the INTERREG VA Italy-Slovenia project and named “Bike route of Friendship and Health” sought to promote green tour-

ism through physical activity. Those bicycle routes contribute to extend the length of the journey and thus benefit to local businesses. Along those itineraries tourists are invited to spend some days in certain locations to taste traditional food and drinks, to visit a castle or simply to appreciate the landscape. Camping, bed & breakfast, and other types of housing have been developed along “La Loire à Vélo” to offer cyclists places to rest and to stay. This kind of initiative is transposable to a lot of activities and has the advantage of promoting sustainable mobility. The creation of Cultural Routes is a major opportunity to associate physical activity and cultural discoveries.

## 2.2 Knowing and preserving the territory and the heritage resources

Beyond the economic and tourist benefits that they can generate, activities that combine sporting activity with the discovery of cultural heritage can strengthen the access to cultural and natural heritage for local audiences and in a same way reinforce a sense of belonging in a community. They can also contribute to raise awareness and protecting the cultural and natural resources. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as natural resources are exposed to many threats in recent years, starting with the consequences of climate change. They can also be strongly impacted by human activities, societal evolutions or threatened by armed conflicts.

For instance, engaging in outdoor physical activities like hiking, biking, or trail running allows individuals to explore and connect with the natural environment. Through these activities, people can discover different landscapes, ecosystems, and geographical features of their territory. This firsthand experience fosters a sense of connection, appreciation, and understanding of the local environment, encouraging its preservation. Sport and physical activities can also be an innovative way of discovering local cultural heritage and strengthen access to cultural resources for people who are far from them and for whom sport can play a facilitating role.

### **Preserve and value the resources of the territory.**

As underlined in the previous section, economically, the use of physical activity and sports as a basis for the development of new forms of tourism is very much valuable for a territory and the local businesses. But it also as a meaning for preserving and promoting the cultural and natural heritage and resources of the territory.

First of all, it contributes to the development of sustainable mobility as it promotes alternatives to motorised vehicles. Indeed, as we mentioned above, numerous cycle itineraries have been created in Europe which allow and encourage to discover the “Old continent” through bicycle. The EuroVelo routes, developed by the European Cyclist Federation (ECF) with the support of EU funds and partners, are great examples of the opportunities to travel in a sustainable and active way.

It has even more sense when those itineraries are directly design around a thematic that promotes European cultural, historical or natural heritage. For instance, the EuroVelo 13, named the Iron Curtain Trail and certified as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe since 2019, explores “a significant historical and cultural meaning for European contemporary history”.

Sport and physical activities seem to be an innovative and under-used tools to value the cultural heritage of a territory to which the public is receptive. The SPACHE project social assessment plan conducted by the IRS underlines the interest of the participant for discovering the cultural heritage/places of cultural interest of the territory. To the question “why did you decide to participate in SPACHE activities, 62% of the participants answer “I thought it was an opportunity to discover the cultural heritage/places of cultural interest of the territory while practicing sport and/or physical activity”. Furthermore, almost 100% of participants in activities organized in the Guimaraes pilot programme said that they learned new things about the city, its history and traditions.

Moreover, the Eurovelo routes as other similar initiatives manifest a new approach to tourism. An approach which is based on the willingness of tourists to be less in a hurry when they decide to visit a country or a specific territory but also on the awareness of the environmental challenges that our societies are facing.



**Raise awareness  
of the protection  
of the natural  
environment**

For more than 40 years, the European Union (EU) has underlined the need for additional action to fight against climate change and to protect and restore the environment, biodiversity, and natural resources.

Sport has a very real impact on the environment. This comes from all the sporting events organised, whether they are big events (Olympic Games, World Cup, European Championships and so on) or at grassroots level, from the construction and management of facilities, from the use of equipment to name a few of the many examples. In any case, sport sector stakeholders are increasingly aware of the issue, and numerous regulations and public policies are moving in the direction of increased protection for the environment.

Sport, however, because it hands down educational and exemplary values, can and must play a role in raising awareness and changing behaviours. This is true regarding the protection of the environment and its various dimensions: fight against climate change, reduce pollution, raise awareness of the environment, protect biodiversity, etc. It could be a channel for changing societal behaviour, provide best practice examples that can serve as models for adoption elsewhere.



Therefore, organizing sport and physical activities in the context of natural resources can help raise awareness of the need to preserve these resources against climate change among local inhabitants and tourists.

### **Keeping traditions alive and ensure the transmission of ancestral know-how.**

Between 2020 and 2022, the Cultural Heritage as a Source of Societal Well-being in European Regions project was conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund. Its final report recognizes the potential of intangible cultural heritage to generate valuable and meaningful cultural experiences for visitors and tourists.

Intangible cultural heritage includes oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. According to UNESCO, intangible cultural heritage includes also contemporary rural and urban practices in which various cultural groups take part.

Linking the transmission of ancestral know-how and intangible cultural heritage with sport or physical activity can help regenerate former traditions. It would benefit for the local economy as well as for the promotion of the heritage of the territory. The project “A. Linho” developed by the City of Guimaraes in the framework of the SPACHE project, around the movements made along the different steps of the Linen cycle emphasised this particular point by enabling the sharing of past knowledge and know-hows. As underlined by the assessment plan conducted by the IRS, “the elderly participants were extremely involved also because the Linen tradition is part of their individual memories and childhood. Many of them remembered the experience of seeing the Linen production process, and the occasion of recalling it generates many positive spillovers. First, they were motivated in doing physical activity in an inclusive context, that has a positive effect on their physical well-being. Second, they could share childhood memories and link the intangible local heritage with their personal history”.



**Increase the sense of belonging to the community and strengthen the social links.**

As underlined by the cooperation project Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe (CHCfE) report (CHCfE Consortium, 2015), cultural heritage fosters feelings of civic pride, belonging and cooperation. In the author's view, cultural heritage acts as a "community hub providing opportunities for bonding and bridging between different age groups, long time and new residents, different ethnic and religious groups"<sup>7</sup> (CHCfE Consortium, 2015, pp. 29). Furthermore, the CHCfE report underlined that "various researchers indicate that engagement with cultural heritage at local and national levels can lead to a greater national awareness, social cohesion, sense of a place and identity"<sup>8</sup>. The researchers quoted a study conducted in 2022 on a representative sample of citizens of Latvia. According to this study, 80% of respondents stated that cultural heritage played an important role in the formulation of the image of Latvia. Therefore, it plays a vital role in reinforcing the cohesion of society.

In addition, the social connectedness power of cultural is particularly relevant for increasing sport practice, as it can provide opportunities for increasing social networks, which in turns may favour people's continuous engagement in sport/physical activity practice. The lack of somebody to exercise with/play sport with is, in fact, identified as a relevant barrier to sport/physical activity practice. Equally important for sport/physical activity practice is the power of cultural heritage to enhance a search for roots (Taylor et al., 2015). As underlined by Lowenthal (1998), the search for family/community roots can be powerful. Furthermore, Byrne (2012) emphasises that the cultural heritage that is connected to our life histories (or perceptions thereof) is the one that is most intense, meaningful and intimate.

These elements have been confirmed by the project, especially by the pilot activities in Portugal and Italy. The social assessment plan highlights that "the participation of elderly people represented an occasion to link the local heritage with their personal memories, generating a positive impact on the individual well-being and social cohesion. Indeed, they felt part of the same community, and this feeling of belonging increased the enthusiasm of taking part in the project". In Gargnano, one of the primary goals of the project was to bring together different communities within the territory, often separated by distance and lack of interaction, by creating a shared space for physical activity. This initiative successfully encouraged people from different areas to forge new relationships, thus fostering a virtuous circle of social interaction. Indeed, the project was open to people of all ages from neighboring villages and communities and was seen as an opportunity to bring people together through shared interests and experiences. Similar effects have been observed in Slovenia where the cross-generational approach contributed to create a sense of social cohesion and community building.

## 2.3 Educate and transmit traditions to young people

For several years now, we have known the benefits of sports on the health and physical development of young people. Indeed, it allows them to fight against the harmful effects of a sedentary lifestyle, to generate significant health benefits and to participate in the personal development of each of them. However, the practice of physical activity and sport can also have a powerful impact on the general education of young people, and as such be a vector of learning.

Sport contributes to a better-quality education: it allows the development and acquisition of sport values such as respect, team spirit or solidarity, which are useful to understand the values that young people will have to carry as citizens. Moreover, sport promotes education by building fundamental skills such as responsibility, effort, teamwork, and decision making.

Therefore, sport may be used to foster individual development and learning. Sports events can act as a magnet, drawing in people who can then be engaged in education sessions before or after an event. In some cases, learning and information sharing are interwoven with sports activities themselves. Sport could contribute to educate and raise awareness on historical events and historical patrimony including ancestral know-how or traditional sports games for instance. Furthermore, sport can play the role of a facilitator to reinforce access to culture for young audiences who are far from it.

### **Make young people discover historical events through a different approach and keep memory alive**

In 1986, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu claimed that cultural heritage stimulates the ability to connect oneself to the past, and to the collective past of others via the recollection of specific memories and histories. Strengthening the access to cultural heritage represents a major challenge for our contemporary societies. For two years the SPACHE project explored the role sport can play in making cultural heritage more accessible for all. The results have shown that sport can be used as a tool for education and raising awareness about historical events especially with young people.

For instance, sports can be used as a mean to commemorate historical events related to war and conflicts. Organizing special sporting events, such as charity runs, marathons, or relay races can raise awareness and remember the sacrifices made by soldiers and civilians during wartime. Some educational sessions or memorial ceremonies alongside the sporting activities can be organized to provide historical context and ensure remembrance.



For instance, in Italy, the pilot program of Gargnano proposed some activities to children. The main activity targeting the children was organized in the city center with a focus on the recent history of Gargnano, related to the World War II and to the consequences for the local community. The involvement and active participation of the teachers was crucial because the children perceived the activity as an occasion to have fun, practicing physical activity, but also to acquire new knowledge through some educational sessions.



During the first phase of the project, a number of good practices and examples of existing events were collected that could inspire the development of this activity in Gargnano. One of these events was The hike along the barbed wire (“Pohod ob žici”), organized every year in Ljubljana (Slovenia). The march follows the almost 35 km long path around Ljubljana, where a wire fence of the Italian and later German occupiers stood during World War II and was therefore named the Path by the

Wire. In addition to the memory of the liberation of Ljubljana (May 9, 1945), the event wanted to promote movement and a healthy lifestyle. Every year, the event is traditionally opened by children from Ljubljana kindergartens.

Based on the same idea, the “Trail des Tranchées” is organised in Verdun (France) every year. This trail run commemorates the memory of the Verdun Battlefield during WWI and its soldiers. The different itineraries enable to discover all the major sites of this famous battle (Ossuaire de Douaumont, Froideterre, Fleury-devant-Douaumont village, monuments of Verdun...) and the spirit of commemoration is present through a minute of silence observed during the event. Three runs called the “Mars’up” are dedicated to a young audience, from 7 to 15 years old. Memory names have been given to 3 circuits like for instance “Circuit Doughboy” from a nickname given to the American soldiers of the First World War. It is a way to commemorate an historical and decisive moment in French history.

By using sport as a gateway to history, young people can develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the events that shaped our past. It provides an alternative approach that combines physical activity, competition, and fun with learning, ensuring that the memory of historical events remains alive for generations to come.

## Strengthen both access to culture and sport for young people

In a more general way, sport can play a significant role in strengthening the access of young people to culture by creating avenues for cultural expression, fostering inclusivity, and promoting cultural exchange.

According to the last Eurobarometer on cultural heritage published in 2022, respondents aged 15-24 are the age group that most often mentions lack of interest as a barrier to accessing culture (39%). 40% of them also highlighted the lack of time followed by cost (34%) and a lack of information (28%).

Indeed, sports can be used to strengthen the access of young people to cultural heritage resources, always in a playful way. Sport is a place of learning where physical skills allow to build fundamental learning: it can help young people to develop their interest for cultural expression. By leveraging sport as a platform for cultural heritage, societies can increase awareness, engagement, and appreciation for their traditions and historical legacies. Sport not only becomes a means of physical activity but also a gateway to experiencing and preserving cultural heritage resources for present and future generations.

As an illustration, more than 80% of the children that participated in the SPACHE pilot activities organised in Gargnano said that they learned new things about Gargnano (history and traditions), they are even more (85%) to declare that they enjoyed learning new things by doing gymnastics.

## Maintain the transmission and the practice of traditional sports games

In 2009, the UNESCO through the Collective Consultation of Teheran, developed the following definitional framework for the traditional sport and games: “they are motor activities of leisure and recreation which can have a ritual character. They are part of the universal heritage diversity. They are practiced in an individual or collective manner, deriving from regional or local identity; they are based on rules accepted by a group that organizes competitive or non-competitive activities”<sup>9</sup>. Many cultures have traditional forms of physical activity that are deeply rooted in their heritage. These can include traditional dances, martial arts, indigenous games, or folk sports. By engaging in these activities, individuals not only participate in physical exercise but also connect with their cultural roots and preserve traditional practices.

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO, (2017), *Traditional sports and games, challenge for the future: concept note on traditional sports and games*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000252837.locale=fr>

However, many traditional games and sports, expressions of traditional knowledge and ways of life contributing to the common identity of humanity have already disappeared; and those that survive are threatened by imminent disappearance or extinction due to globalization, demographic changes, and the lack of interest of the younger generations.

Yet traditional games can provide a unique opportunity to enhance youth sports experience. In 2020, a group of Indonesian researchers conducted a study that aimed to examine the influence of traditional programs in school for developing social behavior. They considered, games as “the most effective learning process which is a real means of education and provides knowledge [...] and supports the development of both physical, cognitive, linguistic and social emotional aspects”<sup>10</sup>. According to the research of this study, “Traditional games can enhance the sports experience of indigenous youth in the aspects of cultural pride, interaction with elders, interaction with nature, and developing basic movements. Traditional games also contribute to the participant’s motor, linguistic, cognitive, social-emotional and self-care fields to a certain extent”.<sup>11</sup>

### **Ensure the transmission of ancestral know-how.**

More broadly, sport can be a gateway for the transmission of ancestral know-how. Through integrating ancestral know-how into sports activities and providing platforms for intergenerational learning, storytelling, and cultural exchange, young people can develop a deep connection with their cultural heritage.

In the framework of the SPACHE project, the program “I am Linen at school” dedicated to 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes audience (9-10 years old) was developed in Guimaraes. The students spontaneously performed physical activity and at the same time they got to know the various phases of the Linen Cycle. Within this activity, not only students made movements inspired by these tasks, but they also had access to images and communication products, which allow them to acquire knowledge about the intangible cultural heritage of the Lynen cycle.

Another example quoted in the collection of good practices conducted in the first phase of the project is the Pallio della mura held in Peschiera del Garda in Italy. The Pallio della mura is a race in which the challengers are armed with oars and boats that were used by fishermen of the past. The race was created in 1992 by a Youth Committee. The regatta consists of a regularity test on the unique course of its kind, around the sixteenth-century city walls, to be repeated twice. About 20

<sup>10</sup> Nur, Hana & Ma'mun, Amung, Fitri, Mustika. (2020). *The Influence of Traditional Games on Social Behavior of Young Millennials*. *Advances in Health Sciences Research*, volume 21, 4th International Conference on Sport Science, Health, and Physical Education, pp.251-255

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

traditional boats called Garda gondolas participate, competing with two young rowers each with the Venetian style of rowing, that is standing.

These two examples illustrate how sport can be a vehicle for preserving and transmitting ancestral knowledge, ensuring that traditional practices, skills, and values are passed on to future generations.

## 2.4 Strengthen access to sport for all.

Sport and culture are often opposed, as well as their audiences. It is the opposition of “the body and the mind”. Yet, those two domains share a lot in common. They are leisure activities which contribute to the construction of the individual and to meeting other people. Their social value is highly comparable.

Moreover, they share objectives and challenges. Sport and cultural organisations sought to reaching out to young people. Indeed, culture and sport play a key role in the education of the youth. One of their main challenges, in a time where sedentary lifestyle is the order of the day, consists of finding the right approach to convey their interest. In this regard, the access to culture needs to be democratise as it still suffers from the idea that it is reserved for intellectuals.

Their goal should be to attract new audiences. As mentioned by François Le Jort, organiser of Nantes' Open Squash, with this event he sought “to propose to watch sport as a spectacle for persons that are usually not interested in sport”<sup>12</sup>. Indeed, the idea with combined sport and cultural activities is to attract audiences that are distant either from culture or sport. More than that, it should be activities suitable for everyone.

As they involve the use of the body and the cultural capital, sports and cultural activities can be discriminatory under several aspects. What first comes to mind are the age and social background factors. Necessitating a physical effort, sports can be hardly accessible for the elderly. Cultural activities on the other side, sometimes require a prior knowledge to be able to understand them. Culture is one of the strongest social barriers in society.

In this context, enhancing physical activity through a promotion of cultural and natural heritage enables to think about alternatives in the practice of sport as well as in the consumption of culture. It is a first solution to overcome the discriminatory aspects of sports and culture.

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<sup>12</sup> Think tank Sport and Citizenship, (2023). *Enhancing sport and physical activity by culture*, n°55.



**Facilitate the access to culture and sport for distant audiences:  
not every individual or social group is interested in cultural activities.**

As we mentioned above, associating sport and culture facilitates the access to culture and sport for distant audiences.

Indeed, the social impact assessment study revealed that such combined activities helped distant audiences to engage in physical activity and to practice it more regularly. Participants to SPACHE pilot activities reported that they were willing to discover the local cultural heritage while practicing a physical activity. Even though the study did not assess the social background of the participants, it is not incorrect to mention that the latter showed an interest for combined activities which might not have been the case if they had been proposed to experience only the cultural or the sport part.

Moreover, the project “At a museum with ... Narrated Heritage for Welcoming Museums” developed in Roma (Italy), a good practice collected by SPACHE partners, highlights the strategy of using storytelling “as a tool to improve access for new audiences”.

At the end, associating both domains enabled to get distant audiences to at least experience something that usually they would not have been doing.



## **Promote alternatives forms of physical and sport activities that would enable to attract new audiences.**

The literature on the topic is unequivocal, pleasure and fun are at the heart of the participation of people into physical and sport activities as well as cultural activities. Both sport and cultural activities can be associated with displeasure and a lack of fun, as well as barriers due to physical issues. In this regard, combined cultural and physical activities enable to think about new forms of experiencing culture and sports.

Non-competitive form of physical activities has been a first step in sports environments to come back toward a practice of physical activity that is led by the desire to have fun with friends. Without pleasure and fun, sport can be repulsive. On its side culture is sometimes described as boring. Indeed, cultural activities often suppose observation, silence, and concentration. But culture is also about the discovery of new things and the wonder before artistic creativity.

While sport as the capacity to develop cultural activities in more active ways, culture can feed physical and sport activities with the learning of knowledge in fun environments. Finally, according to the IRS study, “SPACHE activities were the occasion to start new sport routines and healthier lifestyles”. Thus, more than promoting alternative ways of practice it encourages to begin a new engagement in physical activity.

## **Enable a transgenerational path.**

A transgenerational path corresponds to the idea of improving the connection between different generations. The transgenerational path is essential in the perspective of preserving the local heritage of a territory, especially in the case of the immaterial heritage as it is maintained by the memories transmitted through generations. Therefore, to ensure the preservation of those memories it is essential to enable or foster a transgenerational path and it proved to be effective in the case of combined sport and cultural activities.

The social impact assessment conducted by the IRS in the framework of the SPACHE's project emphasised the potential of associating sport and cultural activities to create a transgenerational path. It was allowed by inclusive activities that gathered a diverse audience and created a space for social interactions between different generations. With barriers removed such as the competitive aspect of sport, the activities were more attractive for the elderly and their cultural aspect also represented for them the opportunity to share their childhood memories to younger generations.

# 3.

# 3

## Recommendations for support and implementation of combined sports and cultural activities ~

Now that we presented the several benefits of establishing links between sport and cultural heritage, in each of the following sections, you will be able to find a set of general and specific recommendations. The latter consists in providing ways of actions to achieve or to come in adequation with the general recommendations. They are directed towards policy-makers as well as stakeholders of the sports and cultural sectors on different levels. It will allow one to find the most appropriate recommendations and advice on how to value cultural heritage and enhance physical activity through combined actions.



These recommendations have been built thanks to information provided by the good practices collected by SPACHE partners. Besides, the social impact assessment study produced throughout the implementation of the pilot interventions by the Istituto per la Ricerchia Sociale (IRS) gave us concrete facts and figures on which to establish recommendations. Finally, we mobilised institutional and academic documents to further support our recommendations.



# 1 Working in network:

A key measure to develop ambitious and successful projects to promote physical activity and cultural heritage.

Although there are many similarities between the worlds of sport and culture, in practice there is very little interaction between them. Making it easier for stakeholders at all levels to get to know each other is a prerequisite for working together and developing projects where sport and culture converge.

The social assessment plan of the SPACHE project underlined in the different contexts of the pilot programmes activities, the necessity, and benefits of working in network from the choose of the locations to the implementation of the activities and the reaching of the targeted audiences.

Projects that aim to promote physical activity and cultural heritage require a holistic approach that considers various aspects, including programming, infrastructure, outreach, and community engagement. Working in network allows different organizations to contribute their expertise in specific areas, ensuring a well-rounded and comprehensive approach to project development. This com-

prehensive perspective enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of the initiatives.

Furthermore, collaborative projects have the potential to reach a larger audience and have a more significant impact. By combining resources, the actors involved can im-

plement initiatives on a larger scale, reaching diverse communities and populations. This broader reach increases the visibility and influence of the projects, leading to greater participation and engagement in physical activity and cultural heritage promotion.

In summary, working in a network enables organizations to harness collective resources, expertise, and influence to develop ambitious and successful projects that promote access to both physical activity and cultural heritage. By fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and stakeholder engagement, networks maximize impact, ensure sustainability, and create lasting positive change in communities.





## Create networks of committed actors from the public, sport and cultural sectors

**A network provides a platform for engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including sports organizations, cultural institutions, community groups, local authorities, and educational institutions.**

Involving multiple stakeholders fosters inclusivity, collaboration, and shared ownership of the projects. It ensures that the initiatives are rooted in the needs and aspirations of the community and increases the likelihood of long-term success.

In addition, networks facilitate knowledge sharing and the exchange of best practices among participating organizations. Lessons learned, successful strategies, and innovative ideas can be shared, accelerating learning and enabling organizations to avoid common pitfalls. By tapping into collective experiences, the network members can benefit from the wisdom gained from previous projects and build upon existing knowledge to achieve better outcomes.

Networks have a stronger collective voice when advocating for policy changes and securing support from stakeholders and decision-makers. By working together, organizations can amplify their messages and influence policies that support the integration of physical activity and cultural heritage. This collective advocacy can lead to favorable policy environments and increased funding opportunities for the projects linking sport and cultural heritage.



## Ensure multilevel governance

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**Ensuring multi-level governance is important for developing activities that combine sport and cultural heritage because it allows for coordinated efforts, collaboration, and effective implementation across different levels of governance.**

Local communities play a crucial role in the development and implementation of activities that blend sport and cultural heritage. Multi-level governance ensures that local authorities and communities are actively engaged in decision-making processes. This involvement enables local communities to have a voice, contribute their knowledge and cultural heritage expertise, and take ownership of the activities. It enhances the relevance and sustainability of the initiatives.

Furthermore, cultural heritage and sporting traditions vary across regions and communities. Multi-level governance allows for the adaptation of activities to local contexts, taking into account the unique cultural heritage, local traditions, and community preferences. Local authorities, community organizations, and cultural institutions have a better understanding of the specific cultural and sporting dynamics, and their involvement ensures that activities are tailored to the local context.

Multi-level governance promotes policy coherence and long-term sustainability. It allows for the integration of activities into broader policies and strategies related to sport, culture, education, tourism, and community development. By considering multiple levels of governance, activities can align with overarching objectives, ensuring their continuity and long-term impact. Overall, multi-level governance is important for developing activities that combine sport and cultural heritage as it fosters coordination, inclusivity, resource sharing, local engagement, adaptation to local contexts, monitoring, evaluation, policy coherence, and sustainability. By bringing together different stakeholders and levels of governance, multi-level governance maximizes the potential for successful implementation and meaningful experiences for participants and communities.





## Fostering collaboration with others key actors (private actors, educational actors)

**A key factor in the success of the project is the involvement of a wide range of partners.**

In projects that combine sporting activities with cultural heritage, involving and strengthening links with the private sector is crucial, whether it be the tourism industry, local producers and craft businesses, or bigger companies that are in a position to provide financial support for the project but also their expertise, networks and branding. Private actors play a vital role in advancing the development of activities that combine sports and cultural heritage, contributing to their success and long-term impact.

Strengthening the links with the educational actors also represents a key factor in project's success to develop educational resources that support the activities, adapted to the different age groups and learning styles. These resources could include lesson plans, activity guides, multimedia materials, or digital platforms. It's also a way to further involve young people and students in these activities and use sport as an educational tool.



## Specific recommendations



### European institutions and lawmakers

- Create a European network of actors involved in the development of “sport” and “culture” actions in order to share best practice and launch an advocacy strategy aimed at public decision-makers, sport and cultural sectors.
- Organize panel discussion at the EU Sport Forum on the development of activities mixing sport and cultural activities.
- Organize panel discussions at the European Cultural Heritage Summit about the role sport can play to enhance cultural heritage in Europe.
- Create a price dedicated to trans sectoral initiatives (including sport activities) into the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards
- Create a price dedicated to trans sectoral initiatives (including cultural activities) into the BeActive Awards.
- In the framework of the EU Cultural Routes network, organize consultations and workshops to raise awareness about the interest of mixing sport and cultural heritage and encourage sport tourism.



### Member states and stakeholders from the cultural and sport sectors

- Create a common database to identify volunteers who already volunteered in the culture and sport sectors.
- Strengthening the links between sport and culture at school. Incorporate activities combining sport and cultural heritage into school curricula.
- Developing training courses in sport tourism and the links between sport and culture.
- Based on the model proposed in Slovenia, create a public holiday dedicated to physical, sporting and cultural activities.





### Regional and local decision-makers

- Discuss the identification of heritage resources to be used into the project with local stakeholders to overcome potential opposition and fears created by a non-traditional use of heritage resources.
  - Work with local producers and restaurateurs to develop walking or cycling routes to promote the local area and local products.
  - Ensure that there is sufficient sports infrastructure for the development of such activities (cycle parking, car parks, quality of public transport, etc).
  - Extend the programmes to new neighbouring towns. Set up a network of pilot towns on a national or regional scale.
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### Sports and cultural actors

- Appoint a resource person in sports associations and cultural organisations to develop cross-sector projects.
- Strengthen the links with the schools.
- Organize training sessions and workshops for educators, coaches, and facilitators to enhance their understanding of the integration of sports and cultural heritage.







## Private actors

### Private actors and companies

- Sponsorship: to involve private sector companies in the development and promotion of cultural and sporting activities.
- Link the activities to the company's CSR goals and values. Highlight the social and cultural impact of the initiatives and how they align with the company's commitment to community development, education, or cultural preservation.
- Facilitate access to cultural resources remaining in the private sector, as it has been done in Gargnano in the framework of the SPACHE project.
- Collaborate with national rail companies to make available and develop projects to renovate out of use railways and systematise the development of green routes.

### Providers of service (bike rental companies, restaurants etc)

- Forge collaborations with cultural heritage organizations, sports clubs, tourism boards, educational institutions, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Use these activities to promote local products and crafts.
- Train staff and participants on cultural sensitivity and awareness.



## Pilot programmes context

- Expand and duplicate the pilot programmes activities of the SPACHE project to other cities in each country.
- Create a network of cities / sports organizations involved in projects mixing sport and cultural heritage at a national or regional level.
- For the activities targeting young audience, further collaborate with schools and educational actors.
- Reinforce the partnerships with educational institutions that train professionals in the field of tourism at a local or regional level to raise awareness about the benefits of such activities.
- For regional and local decisions makers, ensure that all activities are accessible through public transports, in case not, support the project leaders for the logical aspects.

## 2. The importance of a tailored communication

In the light of the creation of a new type of activities such as combined sports and cultural events, communication is essential on several points.

On one hand, it enables to build partnerships between different actors on a multi-level dimension. Indeed, communication is crucial to share ideas and promote the values and benefits of them. Organisations from the cultural and sports sectors, public authorities, tourist offices, and private actors must have the opportunity to interact with each other in order to allow those kinds of activities to rise from the ground.

On the other hand, communication is necessary to promote an activity towards audiences. Even more so when something is new and not common, communication becomes essential for the visibility of an activity and to increase its potential of attractiveness.

In this regard, the collection of good practices within SPACHE highlighted visibility as one of the main challenges for the organisers of activities. Once the activity exists it becomes necessary to develop a tailored communication strategy to attract a wide audience. But you also need to be able to target the more effective channels of communication, especially when you are looking to attract “non-audiences” or specific audiences with diametrically opposed use of communication tools. In the IRS Social Impact Assessment of SPACHE’s pilot programmes for instance, word-of-mouth was reported as one of the main communication channels.

As much as informal communication can be successful in local areas with a low density of inhabitants, in urban areas this type of communication will not have the same impact. The specificities of the area must therefore be considered in the communication plan.



Another challenge for the communication about combined sport and cultural activities relies on the fact that sports and cultural organisations do not employ the same communication channels nor tools to publicise their activities. Hence, the creation of activities associating physical activity and sport with culture necessitates another approach to the communication strategy. One that would be more adapted to target a wider audience than the usual audiences of sports and cultural organisations.

Finally, the reports on the Cultural Routes released by the Council of Europe showed that communications skills within cultural organisations need to be reinforced. This remark also applies for sports organisations. Not all of them are indeed able to assess that “the outreach is reaching the right audience in the right way<sup>13</sup>”. Moreover, the reports also emphasised that there are “communication and knowledge gaps<sup>14</sup>” that appears when organisations from different sectors are brought to work together. A challenge that must be considered in the planning of combined sport and cultural activities.

Communication must therefore be increased between actors to create more interactions and thus enable greater opportunities for the development of combined sports and cultural activities that will allow to enhance physical activity and to contribute to the preservation of the cultural heritage.

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<sup>13</sup> Council of Europe (2020), Transnational cultural policies for the Alpine Region, Routes4U Policies EUSALP, p.64.  
<sup>14</sup> Council of Europe, (2020) Transnational cultural policies for the Baltic Sea Region, Routes4U Policies EUSDR, p.22



## Develop communication tools appropriate to the targeted audiences

**The tools through which you communicate about an event or an activity to an audience are likely to determine its outreach and its success. The type of tools used is indeed of high importance and therefore must not be neglected.**

In the framework of activities combining culture and physical activity, the communications tools must be selected according to the groups targeted. In order to do that, it is crucial in a first time for both cultural and sports organisations to assess their expected audiences. It will allow to identify the participants profile and to choose the most appropriate communication tool.



## Creation of communication materials accessible for all (maps, brochures, guides)

**Once the organisations managing the communication around the activity have been able to identify the targeted groups and the appropriate communication tools to use, they need to create communication materials that will be accessible for all.**

Indeed, the materials used to spread and share information about the organisation of an activity face the same challenges as the communications tools: they must be adapted to everyone.

A first step would be to ask the support of a local tourist information centre to identify the type of material that has the greater success with tourists. It will allow to increase the impact of the communication materials and help for the visibility of the event. To reach out to a wider audience, a communication material must be displaying clear and readable information, but most importantly it should be at least available in 2 or 3 languages, notably English.



## Build and mobilise communication networks directed to specific audiences (e.g to attract students, request the help of student's associations)

**However, communication cannot be successful without the use of proper communication networks. Indeed, whether or not the communication around an activity is well done, to be spread it needs relays.**

Thus, to ensure that the organised activity is visible and attractive, and to promote its benefits, it is first necessary to build a network of stakeholders who can act as intermediaries with target audiences. In the case of activities that combine physical activity with cultural discovery, it may be appropriate, for example, to turn to student associations as well as associations that help people with disabilities, in order to attract as many participants as possible.



## Deliver a clear and attractive message including the key benefits

**Building a communication strategy also requires to be able to deliver a clear and attractive message. It must generate the interest of the person who will read about the activity.**

A first step to increase the attractiveness of the message delivered would be to emphasise the benefits of an activity combining sport and culture. For instance, “To do bicycle in the Loire à Vélo bicycle path will allow you and your family to discover wonderful castles from the Renaissance era, excellent traditional meals and tasteful wines”. The message must also rely on its innovative aspect.

Finally, the IRS Social Impact Assessment reported an effect of EU supported activities on their attractiveness. Indeed, the participants in SPACHE pilot programmes mentioned a sense of pride because they had been involved in an “EU activity”. Thus, the visibility of the EU logo or the logo of another public authority should be increased in the communication strategy of such combined sport and cultural activities.

## Specific recommendations



### European institutions and lawmakers

- Create a narrative for European heritage on sport and culture through promotional campaigns;
- Create European labels for culture and sport, or promote existing label such as the Cultural Olympiad label in the framework Paris 2024;
- Develop a communication strategy to raise awareness among national/regional governments and public institutions of the significant potential contribution of those activities to the social and economic development of their territories;
- Build on the success of EU's visibility and communication through funded projects to create dedicated lines to sport and cultural heritage in EU call for projects;



### Member states and stakeholders from the cultural and sport sectors

- Enable greater cooperation between sport and cultural ministries to encourage joint communication strategy;
- Support operationally and financially sports and cultural stakeholders in their communication strategy;
- Take advantage of national sport events to showcase the richness of a territory's cultural heritage;
- Create training sessions for sport and cultural stakeholders to improve their communication skills;





### Regional and local decision-makers

- Organise cross-sectorial meetings between sport and cultural organisations to create communication bridges;
  - Contribute to the creation of partnerships between sport and cultural organisations and tourist offices;
  - Update the inventories of sports activities and places of cultural and natural heritage in the regional or local territory to facilitate their visibility;
- 



### Sports and cultural actors

- Build on EU's logo attractivity to form partnerships with economic and social actors;
  - Nominate ambassadors within your organisation to deliver the key messages of the activities;
  - Increase the outreach of your communication strategies;
  - Fed the activities with fresh interpretations using topical language;
- 



### Private actors

- Partner with sport and cultural events to increase their visibility at local and national level;
- Support the communication strategy by acting as information outlets;



## Pilot programme context

- Diversify the type of communication tools to increase the outreach;
- Establish tailored communication strategies according to the targeted audience;
- Consider informal communication strategies, especially for local and rural areas;



# 3. Diversity and accessibility

Essentials factors to build initiatives associating physical activity and cultural heritage.

Access to sport, physical activity, or cultural heritage is not guaranteed to everyone. Yet, more than seven Europeans out of ten (73%) live nearby a form of cultural heritage according to the 2017 Eurobarometer on Cultural Heritage. Most of them also live close to sport infrastructures even though the opportunities are wider in urban areas than in rural areas. However, there is a difference between accessibility and opportunity. Accessibility depends on various factors, with the age and the social background being among the most determinant when considering sport, physical activity, and cultural heritage. Disability must also be at the centre of the conversation regarding accessibility.

To bring on some examples. As it requires physical effort, a sport or physical activity relies on the ability of those who practice it to be able to produce this effort. Age and physical condition are important factors in this regard, although they must not be excluding factors. On the contrary, sport and physical activity should be adapted to everyone and promote inclusivity to encourage inactive people to commit into any kind of physical activity.



The access to cultural heritage, and more broadly to cultural activities relies a lot on the social background of one group or individual. Indeed, while the “upper classes” of the population have the tendency to dedicate large amount of time to cultural discoveries, the “lower classes” are not involved in the same way. This creates an inequality in their consideration to culture and to the importance of the preservation of cultural heritage.

Therefore, the access to sport / physical activity and cultural heritage is highly linked to different kind of factors. If we

already talked about the age and the social background, as well as physical condition, we must also consider more practical variables such as the language of an activity or the difficulty of a sport event.

Aiming at international audiences, the cultural sites offer a variety of translation in order to widen the accessibility of their cultural activities. At the same time, it allows to attract more people which is important for their success.

Considering those different elements and based on the good practices collected at the beginning of the SPACHE project, we can showcase that combined physical and cultural activities allow to diversify the offer and to propose more accessible to everyone. At first, it promotes alternative ways to practice a physical activity and to discover cultural sites and the significance of preserving the heritage. Also, those innovative approaches to explore the links between sport and culture allow to target and mobilise a wider audience through a more diverse set of activities.







## Adapted activities as an invitation to everybody

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**As mentioned above, a key issue to address in most cultural and sport activities is their accessibility. They must be tailored or at least adapted to a diversity of audiences. Thus, the specificities of each potential public as well as their needs must be assessed and identified to be properly considered in the designing phase of each activity, because one of the main goals behind the association of physical activity and cultural heritage is to attract people disengaged from sport or culture. The idea is to make them aware of the benefits of physical activity as well as the preservation of cultural heritage.**

The difficulty of a sport activity can also be a factor of non-engagement. To be accessible to everyone, an activity should propose different levels of difficulty or alternative ways to practice the sport and physical activity. Above all, it must not be competitive.

Among the most important thing regarding adapted activities for everyone is the non-competitive aspect of it as shown by the SPACHE pilot intervention conducted by Sport Fryslân. Indeed, they designed their pilot “Expedition Friesland” so that each participant could do it at its own rhythm. Moreover, the participants had the choice between doing all activities in one day or divide them up along several weeks.

However, be aware that organising only non-competitive activities could prevent from attracting any person who’s already a confirmed sport practitioner. The activity “I am Linen at Gym” developed by the Municipality of Guimaraes, a SPACHE partner, highlighted that “people that are already enrolled in regular sport activities usually have their own schedule and training routine, and they enjoyed less the proposal of adding a new element such as the movements executed through the Linen cycle in it” according to the Social Impact Assessment report designed by the IRS.

Finally, if there are common things that culture and sport share it sure is the transmission of values. Cultural and sports activities possess a high potential for gathering people that come from various backgrounds. In this regard, their combination has the power to enable intercultural dialogue and to foster peace as well as tolerance within our societies.





## Encourage the involvement of citizens and locals to capitalise on their everyday heritage

**Associating physical activities or sport and cultural heritage benefits for people's health and knowledge. But the benefits are not only individual, they also possess a collective aspect. Indeed, thanks to the analysis of the IRS, it was shown that those combined activities contributed to improve the intergenerational exchange. It enables to reduce a generational gap, a phenomenon that can lead sometimes to the dissolution of a territory's cultural heritage.**

Organising physical activities linked with cultural traditions of a local community is an important factor of attractivity for the elderly that see in it a way for them to share their individual memories. Three main sources of motivation emerged from the IRS's study: doing PA in an inclusive context, sharing their childhood memories, and link local heritage with their personal history, and finally generating social interaction within a community circle. It fosters social cohesion as well as the feeling of belonging to a group or a community.

But most of all, it creates new memories for the locals and develop their knowledge on a heritage they share. Brought together with sports / physical activities, people build relationships and social interactions. And when those activities are directly associated with cultural aspects, it enables them to discuss their memories.

Locals were among the wider group to participate in SPACHE's pilot programs. It shows their willingness to dedicate a part of their time to learn or to taught about their cultural heritage while gathering with their local peers.





## Attract younger and new audiences.

**Young people are identified in several reports as a distant audience from culture and sport.**

However, this distance relies mostly on issues of accessibility such as lack of transportations, incentives of drop-out due to mockery and teasing, and prices of cultural locations and licenses.

But young people can also be characterised by a willingness to practice sport or to discover culture through other means. For instance, with the rise of gyms and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, a lot of them turned to an individual practice of sport. One of the challenges would be to succeed in mobilising them within the framework of team sports. The consumption of culture by the youth now much relies on the use of new technologies.

Therefore, to face this distant audience, the SPACHE's pilot intervention "I am Linen at school" showed the necessity of being able to come to them. Indeed, the city of Guimaraes organised combined sport and cultural activities in schools to confront this distant audience and to give her the opportunity to be aware about their possibilities to practice such activity in safe and inclusive environments.



## Specific recommendations



### European institutions and policy-makers

- Include more references to accessibility, inclusivity, and diversity in EU sport and cultural policies;
  - Order academic studies on the values of sport and culture to foster social inclusion and overcome social barriers;
  - Make inclusivity a mandatory objective for Erasmus+ Sport and Creative Europe call for projects.
- 



### Member States and stakeholders from the sport and cultural sectors

- Promote and increase transnational and transregional collaborations to value different traditional games or cultural specificities;
  - Organise cross-sectorial events on the topic of inclusivity, accessibility, and diversity to gather national sports and cultural organisations (federations, museums, clubs ...);
  - Enhance the relationship with specialised international organisations (UNESCO) or NGOs.
- 



### Regional and local decision-makers

- Create bridges between sports and cultural organisations and local actors working for social inclusion;
- Establish local subventions for sports and cultural organisations working towards more inclusive activities.
- Improve public transportation and accessibility to sports and cultural infrastructures;



### Sports and cultural actors

- Design activities adapted to every audience;
  - Promote non-competitive sports activities;
  - Establish special prices for low incomes and vulnerable groups;
  - Propose flexible schedules and accessible prices for the activities.
- 



### Private actors

- Support sports and cultural actors to finance adapted infrastructures and equipment.
- 



### Pilot programmes context

- Take into account the gendered aspect of the conciliation of care activities and leisure/sport participation;
- Consider evolutive prices in time for the organised activities (from free of charge to a certain amount);
- Promote the intergenerational value of the activity.

# 4. Expand the scale of action

The need to register projects within the scope of larger events.

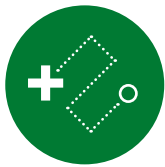
In most of the EU's Member States sports and culture does not belong to the same ministry. Indeed, they are dissociated as two sectors that work apart from each other. This dissociation is reflected in the national policies and affects the capacities of sport and cultural stakeholders to work together. However, it seems that mega sport events such as the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games create window of opportunities to promote the existing and interesting links between sport and culture. The French government as indeed cease the opportunity of Paris 2024 to organise cultural events promoting France's cultural heritage in a programme named the Cultural Olympiad. Yet, the question remains of the sustainability of this action and of the partnerships created to this effect. Because to ensure the sustainability of the relationship between sport and cultural sectors you must create an adapted framework for it.

Nevertheless, another challenge exists. Within European Union's institutions, even though sports and culture belong to the same departments in most cases, sports always appear to be less considered. And while sports and culture topics are discussed in the same committees, no bridges are made between them. For instance, if you consider the EU's Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 or the EU's Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024 no or few references are made in those documents about links and connections between the two sectors. They seem to bet set to grow apart. Yet, as we have demonstrated through SPACHE project and by the arguments established in this handbook, several bridges can be made between sports / physical activities and culture.



If you wonder what would be the benefits for the European Union, as well as for national, regional, and local governments to consider more joint sport and cultural policies, let us provide you some examples. First, through a promotion of sport and physical activity in alternative ways of practice, it would allow to tackle the issue of sedentary lifestyle that affects EU citizen's health. Indeed, as reported by the IRS study, people are appealed by a practice of sport that allow them to discover pieces of the cultural or natural heritage of a territory. Second, as the continent is experiencing the rise of extreme-right political parties and ideas, it is even more important to promote tolerance, solidarity, and respect. Sport and culture share these values and consist in appropriate tools to transmit them. Their combination would allow their promoters to advocate for a more open-minded society and should contribute to the reduction of racism, hate speech etc.





## Create specific policies as a driver for more projects and initiatives

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**European and national policymakers must create specific policies as a driver for more projects and initiatives seeking to enhance physical activity and promote cultural and natural heritage at the same time. The EU and the Member States do have the role to create a framework and an environment in which it becomes possible to launch new opportunities.**

To ensure the sustainability of the actions undertaken, they must be implemented at multiple levels. As culture and sport are less integrated at EU level than other sectors, it seems important that the EU Member States lead the way. In this regard, they should work on national strategic policies associating sport and culture, but also sport and tourism.

Developing a policy framework advocating for the association of sport and cultural heritage to offer more inclusive activities, economical and social benefits for the local community, and attractiveness for the concerned territories will work as an incentive for sports, cultural, and local actors. It must also be followed by financial incentives through call for offers and projects as most sports and cultural organisations report a lack of resources.





## Establish bridges between sport, culture, and tourism

**In order to create a fruitful policy framework for the development of joint sport and cultural heritage policies, it is essential to establish more bridges between the departments of culture, sport, and tourism within the EU institutions, national governments, as well as regional and local governments.**

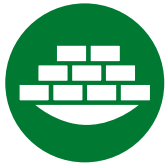
This intersectoral approach has been promoted in Slovenia recently with the establishment of the Ministry of Economy, Tourism, and Sport, in January 2023. As mentioned by Minister Matjaz Han “it will help to further explore the synergies in these fields”.

In this regard, it is therefore important to consider the establishment of greater cooperation between ministries of sport and culture if they do not belong to the same one. This can be implemented through the creation of inter-ministerial working groups or missions.

A crucial point finally remains to ensure the sustainability of those cooperations. Indeed, while on some occasions such as the hosting and organisation of major sport events links are established between sport and culture institutional actors, they often don't survive the end of the event.



<sup>1</sup> Think tank Sport and Citizenship, (2023). Enhancing sport and physical activity by culture, n°55.



## Build on sports events

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**Sports events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games or the Rugby World Cup consist in special opportunities to promote physical activity and cultural heritage.**

Indeed, those events take place in chosen countries, regions, and territories. Most often for two or four weeks, they attract an important audience on their location. In this regard Beatriz Garcia wrote that “the Sydney Olympics served as a vehicle for enhancing the image and attractiveness of Australia in its core trade and tourism markets”<sup>1</sup>. The concept of the Cultural Olympiad should be replicated to other sporting events as it proved its benefits for the hosting countries in terms of cultural promotion notably.

However, it is up to national, regional, and local governments to seize the opportunity of sporting events to include culture in their programmes. In order to do that, strategies of support must be developed to maximise the impact and the outreach of those events both for the promotion of cultural heritage and sport.

Finally, financial support must be unlocked to give regional and local governments the opportunity to host sporting events and to build cultural programmes around it. In the context of Paris 2024, France has organised the Olympic torch relay in such a way that it will pass through 65 French territories and visit some of the most emblematic and historical places of the country. Though, to welcome the torch had a cost which some territories and cities could not afford. Financial support for developing culture around sporting events should be provided to avoid financial issues to be a reason of missed opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> Garcia., Beatriz. (2001). Enhancing Sport Marketing through Cultural and Arts Programs: Lessons from the Sydney 2000 Olympic Arts Festivals, Sport Management Review.



## Specific recommendations



### European institutions and policymakers

- Design joint culture, sport, and youth policies;
  - Use the theme of each Cultural Route and EuroVelo itineraries as a tool to implement wider societal and cultural objectives;
  - Enable the creation of working groups in EU institutions on sport and culture;
  - Create an Observatory to oversee the outcomes of sports/physical activity for the preservation of the European cultural heritage;
  - Draw specific lines of call for projects on the association of sports and cultural heritage;
  - Advocate for the implementation of a legislation promoting the benefits of combining physical activity and cultural heritage to enhance the European identity.
- 



### National policymakers and stakeholders from the sport and cultural sectors

- Draw on guidelines for national strategic policies to improve physical activity while promoting the country's cultural and natural heritage;
- Create inter-ministerial delegations for sports, culture and tourism;
- Organise cross-sectorial summits to gather sports and cultural stakeholders;
- Push for sports events' organisers to work in peers with local and cultural actors;
- Dedicate financial support through grants for the development of cultural programme in the framework of sporting events.



### Regional and local decision-makers

- Enhance interactions with sport and cultural actors at a municipality level;
  - Identify areas highly exposed to tourism.
  - Make more cultural and historical locations open / available for welcoming sport & PA;
- 



### Sports and cultural actors

- Develop supporting strategies to initiate cultural actors to sports related topics;
  - Define specific objectives for these combined activities.
  - Meet with actors from the cultural or sports sector to discuss about opportunities;
- 



### Pilot programs context

- The idea of including intangible heritage might be extended to other products of the traditional manufacturing, and it has potential for the scalability to other territories and contexts.
- Take advantage of local cultural festivals/ events to promote sports benefits and activities.





# SPACHE

SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
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# Further support and resources

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