

OUR OBJECTIVES

EEYP is an exciting educational activity that allows young people to attain the following personal objectives:

1. Improving independent research skills
2. Developing organizational skills
3. Expanding knowledge of European issues
4. Strengthening ability to negotiate and debate
5. Improving public speaking skills
6. Meeting young people with interesting and varied (*cultural and economic*) backgrounds
7. Expanding knowledge of the complexity of European city life

THE CRISIS OF THE ACTUAL URBAN MODEL

The first metropolis in the history was ancient Rome with more than 1,200,000 inhabitants during the 2nd century BC. As is the case now Rome expanded very rapidly and chaotically. The arrival of immigrants was a big organizational problem. The city was built vertically and the lack of space gave rise to property speculation. Most of the times buildings were built fast and poorly and demolitions were frequent. Traffic jams in Roman streets were also frequent. But because of the big fire during Nero's period the rebuilding of the city followed a master plan designed on straight and wide streets and open parks. That new city plan helped to improve hygiene and health.

After hundreds of years things seem to be the same in most of the cases and metropolises are not able to cope with immigrants yet. Cities are chaotically built and they are harmful to the environment. According to the UN in 2007 for the first time in the history urban population was higher than rural population on Earth. These geographical distribution changes cause big social and environmental problems. Urban surface takes only 2% of the total planet surface but wastes the major part of the natural resources. Inhabitants use the land in a selfish way. For example: London needs a surface 125 times bigger than the actual one in order to create the resources it consumes. According to Richard Register, who used the term "ecocity" for the first time in 1979 and President of EcoCity Builders of Oakland, the big problem is our attitude. We need much more courage to cope with change. It is not only about politics, everybody is involved. We live very comfortably and we want to live even more comfortably. It seems nobody wants to accept that means the end of cheap energy, the end of simple solutions.

European Cities and Regions 2008/2009

According to **FDI (Foreign Direct Investment)** the top 10 European 2008/2009 cities are:

1. London
2. Paris
3. Berlin
4. Copenhagen
5. Amsterdam
6. Edinburgh
7. Cardiff
8. Frankfurt am Main
9. Brussels
10. Manchester

Top 10 European regions:

1. Scotland, United Kingdom
2. Flanders, Belgium
3. Northern Ireland, United Kingdom
4. Kent, United Kingdom
5. Wallonia, Belgium
6. Isle of Man, United Kingdom
7. Southern Poland, Poland
8. North Brabant, The Netherlands
9. East-Netherlands, The Netherlands
10. Western France, France

The cities and regions researched for the 2008 report were assessed on their performance in the following fields:

- human resources;
- economic potential;
- business friendliness;
- quality of life;

- infrastructure;
- foreign direct investment.

TOPICS

The contributions on the following subjects are meant to be an introduction, not a limitation of the discussion.

BIG CITIES: SECURITY AND JUSTICE

Some big cities are dangerous. Delinquency, juvenile delinquency, is a problem in the major part of European cities. Police sometimes even advise people not to go to dangerous areas; does it mean that there is a lack of police control in some places? It seems the Government does not know what to do although they take some measures: *Gang reduction program*, [Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency](#), *Shared youth vision*, [Tribal Youth Program](#)...

Do you think youngsters are still youth when they commit a crime?

Juvenile crime has been growing, especially in large European capitals, and has forced some member states to strengthen juvenile criminal law including an increase in maximum sentences. The areas of juvenile crime that are of main concern to the EU are *organized crime, youth gangs, vandalism in public places, violence in sport, bullying in schools, violence against parents, extremist groups and xenophobic behaviour, linkage between new forms of crime and migration, or drug addiction*. A number of models were used to approach juvenile delinquency among member states, such as the welfare one, but the new situation in this area forced the countries to reconsider these and slowly start to move towards the so-called “responsible model”, in which the legal position of a minor is strengthened and the juvenile justice system comes closer to the adult criminal justice system. When it comes to crime, youth is no longer youth.

Let us look at some of the causes of youth crime. Some of the most visible ones can be a broken home, socio-economic marginalization or poverty, truancy and academic failure, unemployment, influence of the media, drug abuse, personality and behavioural disorders, or parents’ failure to teach and pass on social and community values.

Most of us, EU citizens, are subject to different ages in order to buy alcohol, tobacco, to have sex, to get married, to drive or to vote. But the main disagreements among member countries concern the definition of youth within the criminal justice system. Whereas most countries agree that the upper limit is around the age of 18, the lower limit varies from the extreme age of 7 to 16. Until 2006, the age of criminal responsibility in Ireland was 7 (!), then it was raised to 12 years of age, same as in Greece and Scotland. It is 10 in England, France and Wales. 12 in Cyprus, the Netherlands; 14 in Austria, Bulgaria,

Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Spain; 15 in Denmark, Finland, Italy, Slovakia and Sweden, and 16 in Belgium, Luxembourg, Poland and Portugal. Interestingly, criminal responsibility age was lowered from 15 to 14 in the Czech Republic in 2005. Psychologists object that imposing harsher punishments on young criminals will not solve much unless social roots of this problem are addressed.

EU Documents

Whereas the Council of Europe has taken numerous initiatives concerning juvenile delinquency, the institutions of the EU are standing back and have hitherto mainly addressed this issue in connection with general crime prevention. Crime prevention is rooted in Title VI of the Treaty of European Union on Provisions on police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters; and Title XI of the Treaty establishing the European Community on Social policy, education, vocational training and youth. Although the EU institutions recognize youth crime to be a common problem for all member countries, not much has been achieved to include this weighty problem among top priorities.

-DO YOU THINK A CRIME COMMITTED BY A TEENAGER HAS TO BE PROSECUTED AS IF IT WERE COMMITTED BY AN ADULT?

-WHICH SOLUTIONS DO YOU KNOW TO MAKE DANGEROUS AREAS IN CITIES SAFER? DO YOU KNOW ANY SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM?

-HOW CAN POLICE SURVEILLANCE IMPROVE IN PLACES (where sometimes they even do not dare to go) WHERE THERE IS NO SURVEILLANCE AT ALL?

-HOW ABOUT PUBLIC BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL CONTROL? IF SOCIAL CONTROL WORKS; DO YOU THINK POLICE WILL BECOME LESS NECESSARY?

-DO CITY COUNCILS NEED SOME KIND OF JUDICIAL POWER TO BE ABLE TO JUDGE SOME "SMALL CRIMES"?

BIG CITIES: ECONOMY AND LABOUR

We live in a period of crisis but even before that unemployment was increasing in cities. In some European (also in Rotterdam) big cities unemployment is passed on from one generation to another, that means there are some families that never have known what having a job is. For that reason there are some limited programs (maybe for only 20 people) to teach them what work is: getting up every day, having a boss, earning money (not getting it). They neither know what it is to make an effort, like being educated or trained to get a job.

The crisis we live in nowadays increases unemployment and the lack of labour is stagnating citizen's participation in city life and the integration for "newcomers" in cities.

- How should the EU and the member states act to further the integration of immigrants (and other newcomers) in the labour force, ensuring equal rights and opportunities?

-Which are the ways a Council can get money from the government and from residents?

-How can a government or a city council help in increasing employment?

-How could the EU reshape its internal market policies in accordance with the increasing number of foreign companies within its borders?

-Small Economics: most of the centers of big cities look the same; the same shops (HM, Zara...), the same fast food restaurants and cafes. It seems very difficult for people outside these big chains to keep their own business. How can a Council help small businesses, small shops which do not belong to any chain neither franchise? And how about plumbers, painters, electricians and other repairmen or engineers? How can they survive in that world working self-employed or freelance? What can a Council do for them?

Do you think a city council can be autonomous, depending less on the central government, in order to attract economic activity to the city? Do you not think a city is more liveable and attractive when there is economic activity?

Here you have some examples of city autonomous decisions:



Barcelona Activa is the city's primary business incubator; it consists of more than 45 workstations with computers for research, rooms with a networking space for presentations and social gatherings, and some staff to help the prospective entrepreneurs develop business plans. *Barcelona Activa's* services are all free. In the first half of 2008, *Barcelona Activa* received 15,771 requests for information from individuals interested in starting a new business, a 15% increase over the same period last year. Since its beginnings in 1986, the agency estimates that it has helped create 7,000 businesses. It is also the case

that because of the problem of unemployment more people seek out entrepreneurial solutions (Spanish government allows the unemployed to receive a sum payment of 60% of their unemployment benefits).

The case of Shell in Rotterdam. For several years Shell was working in the harbor and in the city center. A big part of the firm left Rotterdam, even their offices. Rotterdam's council got Shell back by offering them very good conditions: they offered to Shell the offices almost for free. The result was that people who lost the job before got them back and the important economic activity by Shell continues in that city.

Philips, a Dutch company, left the Netherlands, especially Eindhoven, for cheaper labour.

Which are the main points for a company to decide to stay even when it costs more money than leaving to Asia, for instance:

- good general and concrete conditions
- the concrete firm's history (coming back to the "roots")?
- the respect to some ethic values
- modern infrastructure



Would you like to continue reflecting on it?

-A city survives because of the taxes; how do taxes have to be spent? When there is no economic activity then there are no taxes. If there are no taxes in cities then cultural and leisure activities will be in danger; then they tend to disappear.

-What do you think about Monopolistic tendencies in the media market: How should the member states act to ensure that mass media encourage political diversity and support democracy?

-Which other forms of economic activity can create jobs in a city?

BIG CITIES: EDUCATION AND INTEGRATION


The great aim of education is not knowledge but action.
Herbert Spencer

Cities are the scene where different identities and cultures meet.

1) The challenge of creating a 'European Identity': How can the member states act to define and establish a common European identity within the European Union? How can the member states establish a European identity respecting minority cultures? What should be the criteria for a European identity with an ever-diversifying population?

In which ways should the European Union and the member states reshape the current institutions and treaties to fully defend the rights of minorities?

2) What kind of schools does Europe need? How can EU design schools able to adapt to cultural, political and economic variables, and adopt shapes and structures that are compatible with the environments in which they are developing.

 The example of health promoting school models, a very necessary school concept nowadays, dealing with different miniprojects related to oral-, physical-, mental health, and personal hygiene, etc (all these projects have as their common denominator, the participation of pupils as well as teachers). Health promoting schools are based on the holistic concept of health and the principles of community health promotion.

Only if people are educated then people can be really citizens (to be a citizen means to be part of city life); not outsiders, not dependent on. There are a lot of people "*missing the boat*", so developing methods/ways to avoid it is utterly necessary. We find some examples of that work in:



-Sunday schools (educated people helping uneducated people in their free time)

-Dave Eggers project (as an example in EEUU),

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Eggers

<http://www.mcsweeneys.net/authorpages/eggers/eggers.html>

When we accept that a lot of people are "*missing the boat*" then it means that the actual educational system does not cover everybody's education. There is a gap.

People need to be educated as citizens but education also has to be focused on the demands of society:

-Rotterdam's harbor needs at least 6,000 people in five years (because in five years a lot of people will be retired). The fact is that Rotterdam's harbor is not able to attract this number of workers.

-Every year there are, let's say, hundreds of people getting a degree in Sport and Management. Is that really the demand of our society, of our cities?

3) Bilingualism, bilingual education.

How European educational institutions can implement minority language programmes (bilingual programmes with both an official/dominant language and an immigrant minority language as means of instruction)? Differential treatment of different minority languages in the mainstream educational discourse has to be discussed.

4) Urban schools in poor areas.

Relationships between family demographics and school contact are necessary to be successful in educating children. The creation of **educational communities** (parents, teachers, psychologists, children...) are necessary.

It is also the case that different alternative programs within a school district have to be possible. Such programs have to be helpful dealing with the needs of schools. That means schools need to be somehow autonomous.

5) Do you think Europe needs a new strategy for culture?

What is culture? What is multicultural education? (*What is multicultural education from the perspective of an immigrant student? And from the perspective of a non-immigrant student?*)

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/focus/focus1087_en.htm

6) May students be taught about religion? Or about history of religion?

From an anthropological point of view it seems very interesting to know about the dominant religions in Europe in the past and in the present; they shaped our traditions.

7) The "Bologna Process", which now extends far beyond EU borders, more than 40 countries are working toward convergence of their higher educational systems.

Is the Bologna Process helpful in making education meet the demands of neocapitalism?

Does the Bologna Process further "elitism" and privatization of the University? Students cannot work and study at the same time anymore.

Which are the advantages and disadvantages of standardization of European Degrees?

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna_en.html

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/et_2010_en.html

http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/figel/index_en.htm

<http://www.eurotopics.net/en/magazin/gesellschaft-verteilerseite/schule-europa-2007-12/debatte-schule-2007-12/>

BIG CITIES: HOUSING

Housing causes a lot of problems in cities, especially in big cities. There are not enough houses available for young people and lower class people. Is it really possible to build affordable houses in our society? If the answer is “yes”; who can build them? Private companies are not interested in building cheap houses, they want to get some gain/profit. There is also the fact that usually the price of square meters is very high (which factors increase prices?). Under these circumstances it seems impossible to build houses for starters and youngsters.

If we assume that the government or the council are the builders then more questions arise: where does the money come from? Government and councils are retreating from the housemarket because when they do not do it, when they take part in the construction, then the market will become unstable (the value of private construction changes and when the demand and prices decrease then we enter in a period of crisis, as is happening now in the USA and Europe). A total change seems necessary.

What are the solutions taken in big cities in your country? Is the government helping starters with money instead of building?

For whom are houses built? Only for the people living in the city or are they also built to attract youngsters and families from other places? Is it a good idea to build a quarter only for young people?

-Squatters. Speculation

What kind of people become squatters? Middle class youngsters, immigrants...?

First squatting movements were very connected to an “ideology” against speculation and capitalism. The original ideology disappeared and right now squatters parasitize society. Do you know how squatters live in big cities? Do you know how many ways of squatting exist?

On the other hand, some people get a place to live thanks to anti-squatting plans: some councils decide to rent very old and abandoned houses and flats at very cheap prices in order to avoid squatting. That is a solution to consider when we think of the use of abandoned houses. Should the owners of empty houses be punished? It is also the case that sometimes construction companies and state agencies buy a lot and if crisis times are coming then they are helped by the government, they pay less taxes, because investment is considered a good thing for the city. Maybe governments and councils altogether need to be free to rule this kind of matters.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squatters>

-Dead streets.

It is difficult to see street level life in the major part of big European cities. New houses have car park places and shops at street levels. We consider that street level life makes cities cozier and safer; people live directly connected with the street and see what happens there. Of course there are too many cars parked in streets. It is also the case that city

centers are usually shaped by offices instead of dwellings; when a city can decide between offices and dwellings, it chooses offices. It is necessary every city addresses all these problems.

Housing involves a quantity problem (there are not enough houses) but also a quality problem.

BIG CITIES: INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

"In wildness is the preservation of the world."
- Henry David Thoreau

Resisting the commodification of nature and of life: what should the guiding principles adopted by the EU be to better "rebuild" greener cities?

-Ecological footprint

Scientists call footprint to the environment indicator which estimates the amount of biologically productive land and sea area needed to regenerate (if possible) the resources a human population (a big city like London for instance) consumes and to absorb and render harmless the corresponding waste it generates in one year. The right footprint has to be 1'8 hectares of land per person but right now the average consumption per person and year is 2'8. In Spain, the average ecological footprint is 5'5 hectares, in rural China it is 1'6, in Shanghai it is 7 and in EEUU it is 9'7.

It is obvious that the urban model that we all know and live in now is living its last days. The solution cannot be to return to the rural areas (rural areas also have a large ecological footprint). Cities have been built ignoring the natural limits and accompanying automobile development. Roundabouts, petrol stations, big cinemas, low cost airports...show us that mobility is the way to shape the territory.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological_footprint

How we can improve our ecological footprint?

<http://www.belspo.be/belspo/Fedra/proj.asp?l=en&COD=SD/TA11A>

Low Impact Man is a three-part documentary about a profound ecological experiment. Steven Vromman wants to Save the World in 30 steps. Each step he takes reduces his impact on this tormented planet. His goal: an ecological footprint of 1,6 global hectares. To reach this goal he fights old bad habits and the reluctance of his own children. If everyone of us would deal with energy, mobility, nutrition, travel and waste as Steven does, the earth would definitely be healthy again.

-How to plan the future of our cities?

During the 30s Frank Lloyd Wright indicated the way to the modern style of life with his Broadacre City; a net of suburbia connected by motorways. All important transport is done by automobile and the pedestrian can exist safely only within the confines of the one acre (4,000 m²) plots where most of the population dwells.

<http://www.futurecities.org.uk/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadacre_City

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/4682011.stm>

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,881865,00.html>

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/magazin/kultur-verteilerseite-neu/europaeische_stadt_2007_05/debatte_europaeische_stadt_2007_05/

<http://books.google.es/books?id=9DuC35atMu0C&dq=FUTURE+CITIES&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots>

[=FnxaeRbFYS&sig=bd7HnGQdhmEP28XxJ-ympTlcq0A&hl=es&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=8&ct=result#PPP1.M1](#)
http://news.mongabay.com/2008/0530-tina_joachim.html
<http://www.greencityjournal.com/content/view/46363/35/>

-Already 50% of the world's population lives in an urban setting and that could grow to two-thirds by 2050.

-Urbanization is bringing problems of concern to us all. Do you think leaders have the will to implement the Millennium Declaration?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennium_Development_Goals

-Who has to take financial care of the infrastructural development of a city? Private or public money? What happens when all the economic sources are private during a period of crisis? Who has to take the decisions?

-How to solve the problem of the lack of places to park cars? Do parking areas have to be underground? Do they have to be free?

-Which solutions can you think of to solve the pollution problem? Do you think that paying special taxes in order to reach the cities' centre is a good point in the way of looking for solutions? Has London improved since the partial prohibition to enter the center by car was adopted? What do you think about the city bike systems in Paris, Berlin, Barcelona...to make people use bicycles instead of cars (for instance "biking" in Barcelona and [Fahrradstation](#) in Berlin)?

<http://velomondial.blogspot.com/2008/01/greening-of-transport-in-paris.html>

How can we diminish pollution? And how can we improve recycling? Is recycling expensive for cities? Are recycling bins visually impacting the streets? How about recycling services coming to the houses? Do you know how the city's residents recycle, reduce, and re-use waste? How can we improve the climate of our cities?

<http://www.rotterdamclimateinitiative.nl/NL/English/?cid=6>
<http://www.erp-recycling.org/france.html>

-Infrastructural cities' network.

How can cities use the infrastructure of other cities. Rotterdam's harbor is also the harbor of other cities in Netherlands, maybe the harbor of the whole country. This is an example of using other cities' infrastructure. That means that somehow we need an agreement among cities on the use of infrastructures. This use is usually managed by central governments; do cities need more freedom to manage this use? What about a "commonwealth of cities"; maybe cities with important characteristics in common can be governed together. How do you think it is possible to finance it?

⇒ Other important points to be considered:

- Community revival and neighbourhood renewal
- Liveability
- Impact of climate change
- Transport problems and solutions – public and private
- Railway station development
- City planning – role of developers working in partnership with city planners
- Funding, finance and grants for revival
- Attracting domestic investment
- Competition between cities, role of marketing
- Importance of design
- Heritage buildings and historic quarters
- Brownfield revival

BIG CITIES: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Public administration, how a city or a region is governed, differs around Europe; every country has a different one. We consider it important you get an idea of what is the structure in your country and compare it with other members of the committee:

unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN023318.pdf
<http://www.gencat.net/temes/eng/administracio.htm>
unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan023309.pdf

-Decentralization and development of modern local government systems in Eastern Europe.

-Centralization and regionalism, two opposite trends that have taken place in Europe over the past decades. The decentralization history of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Usually countries are classified in groups using two characteristics. First countries are classified according to their institutional structure, which can be federal, unitary decentralization or unitary centralization. Second, countries are classified according to the different forms of regional administrative decentralization, which are devolution, delegation or deconcentration.

Do you think that decentralization of authority to the regional level might have positive effects on economic growth? Do you think that regions in federal states grow faster than regions in unitarily decentralized states? It is said that sometimes the growth rate of autonomous regions is a half percent higher than in other regions. A possible explanation is that the administration of autonomous regions is relatively more efficient and accountable.

Do you think if big cities are divided in quarters with some government autonomy the citizen's participation will be higher? Maybe when everything is closer and familiar to people then they will take part in city life more easily.

Breaking down bureaucracy. Do you think bureaucracy makes a city less alert to anticipate problems and take solutions?

Do you think that government has to be closer to people in order to be more alert and for that reason local government needs to be autonomous to take the measures it considers necessary? Right now this is not possible; state central governments take the decisions.

Is it more efficient to collect taxes at the country level than at a local level?



Think of the negative and positive effects of decentralization.

-Is a transformation of the Government needed? A government for the 21st century; working around the needs of the citizens and businesses and with a strong bid for new technologies to become more accessible, friendly, quality and service-oriented? How successful measures to reduce administrative

burdens, obstacles, barriers and critical success factors can be found? How to ensure an organisation's professionalism, preparedness and customer satisfaction?

BIG CITIES; SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Member States of the European Union make agreements on a wide range of topics within the area of social affairs and employment. Let's say that the European Union wants to find some general formulae in social affairs. Sometimes a general rule does not work in every city; sometimes cities need concrete and different solutions, as a fact that every city is a different one. Is a city free to look for its own solutions?

E.g. Imagine a big factory giving employment to a lot of people in a European city. When the factory is in financial problems can the city council help to avoid unemployment and all the socially derived problems?

-Immigrants' participation in the labour force: How should the EU and the member states act to help the integration of immigrants in the labour force while ensuring equal rights and opportunities?

-Drug Abuse control. The need for a new model of drug abuse control. How to reduce drug abuse and use among the youth and young adults? How to reduce the spread of infectious diseases?

-Crime prevention and control in big cities. How to reduce the crime and violence associated with the drug war?

-Advancement of women. Status of women. Violence against women.

-Old people. Disabled people. Pensions.

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/pensions_en.htm

-Finding work in big cities. Employment contracts. Dismissal. Working hours.

-Should EU rules contain a maximum or minimum length for probation periods in labour agreements?

-Now that Romania and Bulgaria have joined the European Union on January 1st, 2007, will workers from those countries be allowed to work in EU without any restrictions?

-Has "everybody" (or everybody who deserves it) the right to apply for social assistance benefits? How can a city manage itself to be able to cover everybody's needs?

-The need to develop health and long-term care systems in big cities.

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/health_and_lt_care_en.htm

- What precautions need the EU to take to ensure that social policies benefit all citizens equally?



European Social Charter

The main significance of the Council of Europe for the policy area of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment lies in the European Social Charter (ESC), which was ratified by the Netherlands in 1981. The main objectives of the charter are to promote economic and social progress, to raise the standard of living and to improve the welfare of all sections of the population. To that end the ESC provides, for example, the freedom to choose an occupation, the rights to fair employment conditions, safe and healthy working conditions, fair pay and the right to unionise (the freedom of organisation and the freedom of collective bargaining). The charter includes a reporting procedure for the purpose of monitoring compliance and there is a separate Protocol that provides for a collective right of complaint. The Netherlands is considering ratifying the Protocol and the revised version of the ESC from 1996.

Other treaties

The Council of Europe has also drafted a number of treaties that include social standards and cooperation agreements. With regard to social security they include the European Code, the European Convention on Social Security, the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance and the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers.

Intergovernmental cooperation

With regard to intergovernmental cooperation within the Council of Europe, the Steering Group for Equal Treatment of Men and Women (CDEG), the Steering Group for Social Cohesion (CDCS), and in particular the CDCS subcommittees, are of particular interest to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

BIG CITIES: SPORT AND RECREATION

SPORT'S POSITIVE ASPECTS

Sport has a distinctive role to play as a force for social integration, tolerance and understanding. It is open to all, regardless of age, language, religion, culture, or ability. It is the single most popular activity in modern society. Sport provides the opportunity to learn to play by commonly agreed rules, to behave admirably both in victory and in defeat and to develop, not only the physical being, but also social competences and ethical values. Its contribution to education is increasingly acknowledged.

Some people believe that through sports, people learn general ways of thinking, feeling and acting that make them contributing members of society. Sports teach spectators and athletes the importance of rules, hard work, efficient organization, and a well-defined authority structure. If a young person learns to follow the rules of a baseball or basketball game (as examples), they can learn what it means to be a contributing member of society.

Some sport teams also make our cities well known around the world; Barça sometimes is better known than Barcelona.

What do you think about creating a good community recreational program that captures the attention of our youth at age five and that does not take their hands off of them until they have finished college (or are otherwise employed)?

Do you know any way to make people enrol in sport, especially in poor areas?

Do you challenge the city to take a more aggressive stance with respect to recreational and sport activities? With help from community groups, the city should beautify area parks and create more leagues for disadvantaged youth, providing children an alternative to an already pervasive violent lifestyle that exists somewhere between school and home.

SPORT'S NEGATIVE ASPECTS

Violence and drugs – (The European Convention on Spectator Violence and the Anti-Drug Convention Act against the negative aspects of sport)

Violence: The European Convention on Spectator Violence provides governments with practical measures to ensure crowd security and safety, particularly at major football matches. It also outlines procedures for the control of violence, as well as educational measures to prevent its actual outbreak.

Drugs: Historically, drugs are the first of the Council of Europe's concerns in sport. As early as 1967 the Committee of Ministers produced the first

international legal instrument on this matter. Since then, the Organisation has continued to strengthen its commitment to address this issue and to reduce drugs from sport. The Anti-Drug Convention entered into force on 1 March 1990 and shows a solid, concerted commitment on this issue.

Competition is a big part of who we are. Whether we play against each other on the courts or greens or even watching the sport on tv at home or in a bar. We pride ourselves on our home teams. Is it a wasted effort?

Every city has its own football club, often a symbol of our identity/culture; Barcelona/Barça, Rotterdam/Feyenoord, Roma/AC Roma etc. These clubs are "*more than a club*". They respond to the identity of a town, a region... but they also are very important for the passive recreation of thousands of people. We can guess which are the negative aspects of this big phenomenon: the very expensive infrastructures, such as roads, parkings, stadiums and security (only one football match needs the work of hundreds of policemen because of the hooligans), the costs of the athletes, taxes... Too much money is spent on only one passive branch of sport. Football players are in many cases millionaires. *In Roman times there were also very expensive sport buildings (Coliseum) and very expensive sport events (gladiator games and chariot races) but they were not paid by the people but by the rich private Maecenas or the Emperor.*

Where are the limits?

Do you not think it is better to invest in active sport for everybody in order to avoid one of the actual biggest problems in our society: obesity? Active sport is better than passive.

Public places like libraries, youth centers and swimming-pools are sometimes closed because of lack of money of the local government. At the same time we can see the rise of expensive training and fitness centers. Half of the small football clubs in Rotterdam disappeared during the last 10 years. It also happens in other sport clubs around Europe. Do you think we will miss the lower class, which needs sport and recreation more than ever? Do you think that recreative sport, leisure and recreation have to be paid by local government? Half paid? Do you think that money has to be first spent on sport and recreation for everybody than on millionaire football players and big stadiums?

Think about heart diseases, obesity, learning rules and behavior, integration... and try to find your solutions.

Do you think our modern sports culture damages our cultural attitudes? The very idea of gathering by the thousands in one location doing so to endlessly watch a select group of individuals for being physically 'better' than the rest of us. Do you think we have to avoid the *conventional sport culture* also because of the wasted-life behavior of some sport stars and their fans?

Unhealthy food: local sports franchises damage our citizen's diets, health, air-quality, and local businesses. Typical fare at any major sporting event includes deep fried chicken wings, French fries, nachos served with fake cheese, all

white-flour pretzels, very low quality domestic beer, high-fructose corn syrup soft drinks, and high fructose corn syrup “sports” drinks which are, of course, healthy because athletes drink them.