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International Sport Programmes in Hungary Effects of European Youth Olympic Festival 2017 and Possibilities for Győr

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Special attention dedicated to this topic, because in Hungary 109 sport programs were organized after London Olympic Games, 2012 till Rio Olympic Games, 2016.

Hungary host first time in summer of 2017 such sport programs (European Youth Sport Festival) with several sports, which belongs to Olympic programs. Then, in the same year Water World Championships will be organized in Budapest.

In the summer of 2017, an international sports program representing several Olympic sports will be held in Győr, Hungary for the first time. This study addresses the question: How can the City of Győr increase its economic activity through sport through the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF). The influence of sports economics via programmes appears to occur through international programs. An important international sport program from a sports economics point of view has impacts over all sport markets. These international sport programmes have specific impacts not only on their own markets, but also on the host country / city's economy. EYOF is an incentive factor in urban development, opening up new opportunities for the City of Győr as a catalyst of investment. World-class sports facilities will be built including the construction of an Olympic Centre neighborhood rehabilitation. The purpose is long sustainability, and 100% utilization of facilities to optimize operations.

Special attention is being dedicated to the topic given that Hungary is competing to organize the 2024 Olympics Games. The Olympic bid application is based on the country's outstanding sport successes and the experience developed hosting several international sport programs in recent years. The state argues that Hungary is world-class in the organization of international sports program and this study aims to show how international sport programs helps develop the image and economy of the host country/cities.

International Sports Programs

Our starting point is sports competitions, which essentially offer participants an opportunity to match their performance levels – in the case of team sports, for example, the match itself. Sports theory defines the term “sports competition” in the professional literature as follows. A game or contest restricted and controlled by rules with the crucial motive of the determination to win, to triumph over others, naturally in the form of striving after betterment, within the framework of socially accepted and highly valued activities, with an assumption of risk – seeing that the outcome of competitions remains always uncertain, because contention always contains a possibility of failure and setback; lastly, performance or one of the components thereof has to be compacted into a short interval – sometimes only seconds (Rétsági Erzsébet et al., 2011). Regarding the general interpretation of the next two levels, that is the definition of event and programme, professional literature is remarkably diverse, and concerning their hierarchical relations, literature is divided.

The English term “event” is translated into Hungarian both as “esemény” (event) and as “rendezvény” (programme). In everyday language, “esemény” (event) is used more for happenings that do not include organizational work. Such is for example the birth of a child – it is a great event but not a programme. Or any economical happening, like an outbreak of global crisis, constitutes as event but not as programme. The examples allow the conclusion that the definition quoted above is right in some cases. In our publication, these “happenings” are defined in terms of arrangement and organization, from the point of view of the extent of human organizational work involved, and the gradually widening circle of those affected. Based on the factors in focus while regarding sports, sports event is followed by sports programme. In case of publications in English, I use the terms “sports event” and “sports programme”, which show the difference between the two terms well.

Two definitions of programme are presented: thus “programme is an occasion of organized social gathering with a specific goal, a defined space and time” (Fazekas & Harsányi, 2011). Main features of programmes can be listed as follows (based on Dancsesz, Haase & Macken, 2004):

- A programme is something special that provides participants with an out of the ordinary, unusual experience, atmosphere, or surprise.
- A programme is short-lived and transitory; it often will not be repeated at all, or only after some specific period of time.
- A programme is planned and created; in most cases, it is associated with an artistic or historical creative concept.
- A programme constitutes as tourist attraction with the primary goal to draw visitors. Besides the organizers, also hotels, restaurants, and service providers may benefit from it, as a result of increased publicity even the hosting location may benefit.

Returning to the starting point: If a sports competition is open to the public, i.e. an audience, the fans (consumers) can watch it, it is called a "sports event". If the media are present and sponsors also play a role and, as a result, the consumers of the product (sports programme) get access to additional services in the form of catering, entertainment programmes during half-time breaks, lottery draws, etc. (in addition to the opportunity to watch the competition), it is called a "sports programme". The highest level of such sports programmes are international sports programmes.

The determining factors of evolving from sports competition into sports programme are shown on Chart 1. We reinforce our notion with two references to the professional literature, according to which sports programmes can be described as a planned and unique ensemble of sports competitions with high emotional value, which can be utilized to vitalise spectators and participants and to communicate advertising messages (Schmid, 2006). Another definition refers to sports competitions in itself as a part of sports programmes, and other areas of the programme (the related services) get more emphasis than before (Brehm, 2005).

International sports programmes – as discussed in this publication – are sports events where competitors from different countries match their performance in one or more branches of sport, applying international rules. Such sports events get a high level of interest both on site and through the media. Such sports events are media targets (András, 2003); many people are able to get access to the events by means of broadcasting. These sports events offer the highest level of entertainment (they are part of the entertainment industry); additional services are provided at sports events, making them programmes, and they are typically organised for spectator sports and for global branches of sport (András, 2003).

Chart 1. Features of international sports programmes
Features of international sports programmes

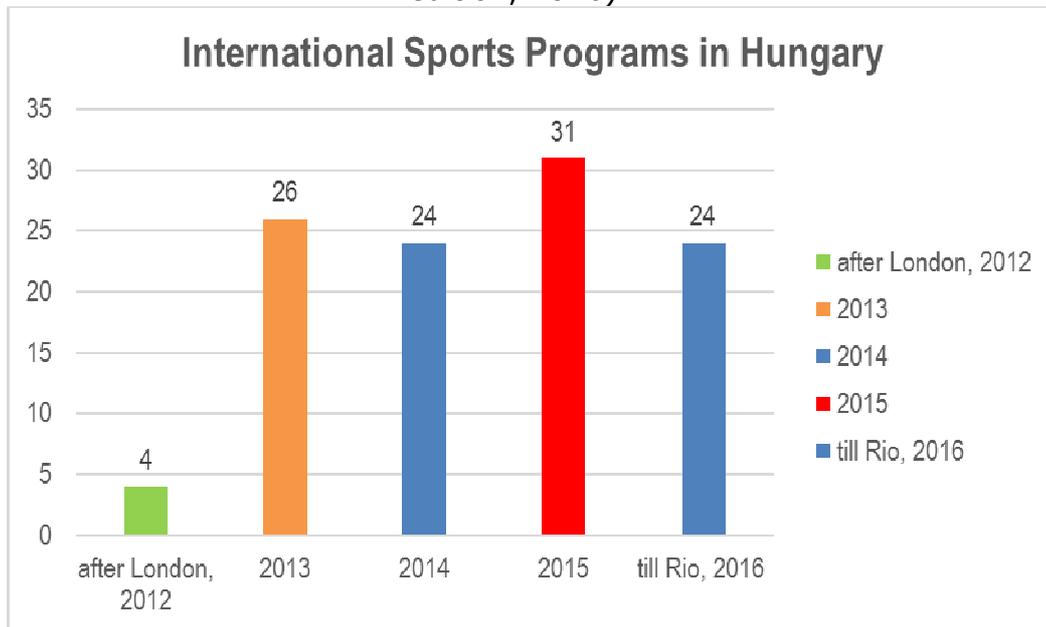


(Source: own edition, 2016)

International Sports Programs in Hungary

The sports programmes organised in the past four years (after London – till Rió) are a clear sign that Hungary has hit the road to becoming an organiser of major sports programmes, and that its aim is to gain as much experience in organisation as possible. The questions arise: what is the reason for the keen competition for the organisation of world contests, and what makes Hungary successful? Is it mere coincidence, a government strategy or are there advantages that drive this trend? The answer is complex. The state handles sports as a focal sector – all branches of sport included, from free-time sport through the introduction of daily PE lessons at schools to professional sport. During the 2008-2012 Olympic cycle, Hungary hosted only a handful of world programmes – the change began in 2012. According to the data collected by me, a total of 50 world competitions were organised in 2013 and 2014. We carried out a survey about the experience about and the impacts of these programmes in the associations of the different branches of sport. As a continuation of our study, we made a summary of the sports programmes organised in 2015 and 2016. In 2015, a total of 31, while in 2016 (till Rió) – according to the information currently available to us – another total of 24 international sports programme were/are organised in Hungary.

Chart 2. Number of international sports programs in Hungary (Source: own edition, 2016)



The lists of these programmes clearly show the branches of sport and the programme types that Hungary is strong at when it comes to organising. The lists make it conspicuous that 4 international sports programmes were organised in Hungary in 2015 and 5 more in 2016 in technical sports (WTTC, Red Bull Air Race, Moto GP, European Truck Championship race and DTM). This figure means that 25% of the

programmes hosted by Hungary are organised on Hungarian or in association with it.

Of team sports, handball, water polo, basketball and ice hockey cover 9 programmes, including recurring ones like the Women's Champions' League Final Four or the Men's Water Polo Champions' League Final Six. In both cases, the organising associations managed to obtain the organisation rights for Hungary for several years. Another remarkable programme is the István Gyulai Memorial Hungarian Grand Prix, a Hungary-owned annual international sports programme in athletics. The Triathlon World Cup is also a recurring programme, organised every year in Tiszaújváros, a city in Hungary.

There is strategic thinking behind these programmes – both on the part of the associations and the state. The associations are the bidders, the government assumes a state guarantee, provides financial support and, if required, also arranges facility development. For sports programmes organised by Hungary, an important priority is Hungary's success: fans are primarily interested in their national sportspeople, tickets can be fully sold if this expectation is fulfilled. A world competition organised in Hungary is always an emotionally imbued thing (András, 2013), on both sides. To competitors, it is a unique feeling to compete in their home country – it gives them additional motivation. And fans can experience the catharsis – or disappointment – live, on the site. Taking a long-term and complex approach, organising a sports programme at home sets an example to children – both in the love and cultivation of sport. In Hungary, the objective is to improve active involvement in sports, and these programmes have a strong power of attraction. Bringing world competitions closer to the consumer thus becomes an objective. As a consequence, an increasing number of countries host such programmes and large international programmes – biannual world championships and annual European championships – are organised in an increasing number of sports. Associations have recognised that, by increasing the frequency of the programmes that play a central role in their business model, i.e. offering products that represent higher values in the eyes of consumers and clients, the revenues from the market can also be increased (András & Kozma, 2014). Hungarian associations bid to organise not only adult but also world competitions for trainee players, for example the U19 European Football Championship or the U19 Men's Handball World Championship, where young people played 100 international handball matches, all before a full house, or the U16 Chess Olympiad in Győr. These programmes convey a different message: fans do not see already well-known sports stars – the aims are to introduce and popularise the stars of the future and to experience the programme atmosphere on site. These programmes are also good opportunities to master organisation skills, which will make the organisers more likely and eligible to successfully submitted bids for the organisation of adult world competitions later. Besides, they also prove a good solution to the problem of not having the infrastructure required to qualify for adult competitions. In Hungary, the government's sports concept contains a national facility development programme, part

of which is the renewal of Olympic centres and the construction of courses and arenas. 5 show sports and 16 subsidised sports receive a combined support of HUF 13 billion (e.g. the Wrestling World Championship received HUF 290 million in the form of state support for programme organisation). Sports programmes are also opportunities to address and involve the business sector, new sponsoring opportunities become available. The so-called "soft", or invisible, impacts of international sports programmes include the programmes' internal PR value and the improvement of the country image. Complex, long-term, strategic thinking plays a crucial role when sports programs are organised by Hungary (András, 2013). Complex – because free-time sport and professional sport are not completely discreet concepts, because the role of facilities is not only to provide a place for world competitions but can also be the foundation to broaden the sportsman base. Long-term thinking is important as it may be required for the bidding process or the implementation of the processes described. And a strategic approach is necessary as the given programme must fit into the country's sport and sport development concept (András, 2013). International sports programmes are not simple programmes but programmes and services with a complex impact and, besides, the invested amount must multiply in the return. Besides the sports markets, international sports programmes organised in Hungary have positive impacts also on economic and not directly economic areas if both the opportunities and the burdens are correctly assessed during the bidding and planning phases. A successful sports programme begins with preparation and requires complex, strategic, long-term thinking. Indispensable success factors of world competitions organised in Hungary are the success of the national team and the successfulness of the efforts made to activate fans and to arouse interest: it is through these channels that social impacts flow further down the pipe. The intensity of economic impacts is influenced by the place of the given branch of sport on the imaginary list of sports by popularity, the number of competitors participating in the programme and the type of the programme, too. Single-sport international sports competitions have impacts different from those of multi-sport ones.

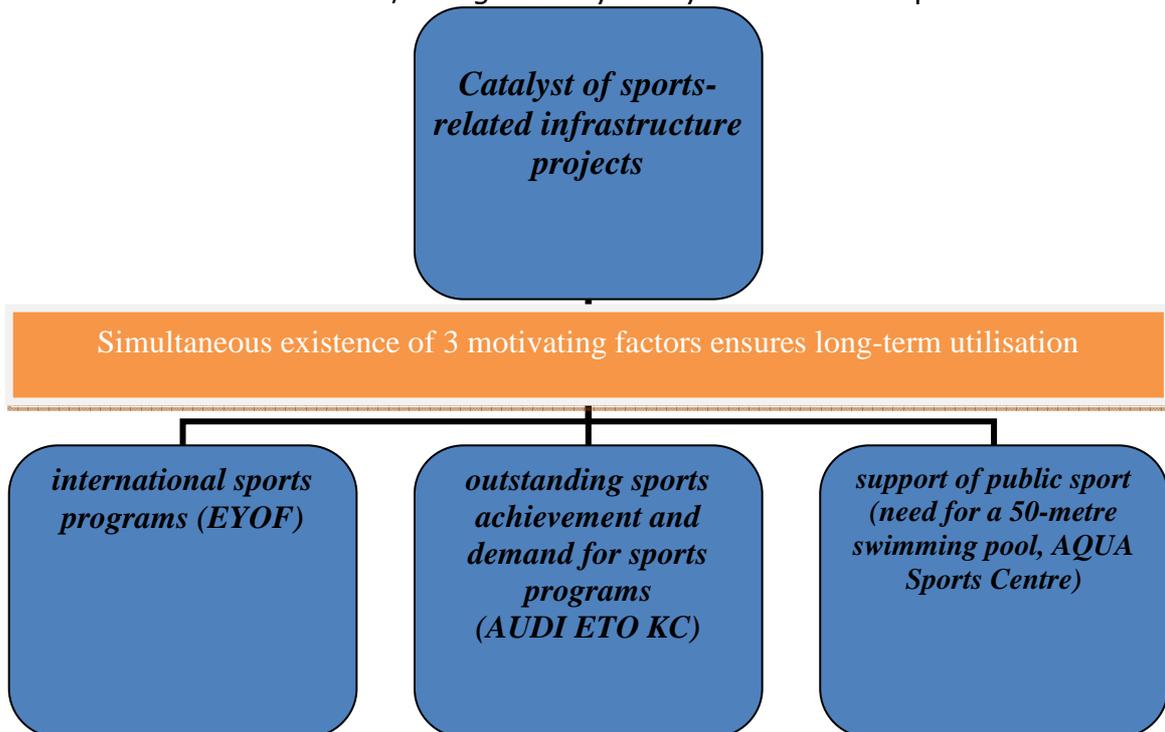
International Sports Programs and New Sports Facilities in Győr

The city of Győr is the HQ of several teams successful in significant national team sports, as well as the hometown of sportspeople successful in individual sports. For this reason, the city is a major player in Hungary's national sports economy. As a catalyst of several development projects and the building of new facilities in Győr, the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) opened new opportunities for the city. Sports facilities complying with international standards (swimming pool, arena, tennis hall, athletic centre) are being built: the construction of the Olympic Centre

brings about the renewal of an entire city district. This international sports program will receive state support, including financing, thus enabling the implementation of projects that would be required even without the sports program, as additional aims, getting the necessary financial help. From the point of view of the development of the host city, the construction of sports facilities and infrastructure development are among the key benefits brought about by international sports programs. They are key because the required investment needs an outstanding volume of resources and the issue of their future utilisation is a key aspect in the assessment of the complex impacts. In our days, the assessment of any construction project related to international sports programs depends on the successfulness of the project's future utilisation. To the latter, there are positive and negative examples alike. In all cases, the goals are sustainability, the full utilisation of the facility and the optimisation of its operation.

Actual demand for the development of sports-related infrastructure can result from different inputs and initiatives. In the case of the city of Győr, we can differentiate three cases. The first, which is the topic of this dissertation, is infrastructure development implemented in the framework and under the umbrella of international sports programmes: in this case, the country/city does not yet have the facilities and the infrastructure required for the program, so development projects are implemented in connection to and for the purpose of it (Győr, EYOF 2017). In the second case, existing, outstanding sports achievements and demand for sports programmes generate the need for a project (Audi Arena Győr, Győri ETO, Champions' League results). In the third case, the lack of a new facility and the need for its construction are identified in the course of the rollout of the given country's/city's general sports development strategy, free-time sport organisation and trainee player education (in a complex sense: support of public sport) (AQUA Sports Centre, Győr). In the strategic plans of Győr, these three simultaneously occurring factors/needs ensure that future utilisation will be stable, cover a wide variety of sports and exist in the long term.

Chart 3. The 3 potential motivating factors for the development of sport-related infrastructure, using the city of Győr as an example



Source: András, Gyömörei & Máté, 2015)

As regards investments in sports infrastructure, we can make the general statement that the key aspect of decision making about them should be long-term utilisation. Timing and long-term, complex planning are in the focus of such projects. As was described in the introduction, existing needs and interests must be connected with actual opportunities that present themselves. Our survey also contained the investigation of whether the organisation opportunities arising from a high-level international sport performance and from the needs of international sports programmes and public free-time sport are seized in a properly timed manner.

If a city would implement development projects independently of any international sports program but, looking for the ideal situation, identifies an programme in whose framework it can build the project and get state support for it, the program is an unmissable opportunity. Timing in such cases can be implemented in two ways: development projects either have to be implemented earlier than planned or organisers must wait for a sports program to which the project can be tied (András, Gyömörei & Máté, 2015).

AUDI Arena Győr and Aqua Sports Centre formed a meeting point of demand and opportunity. Based on our research we can say that the projects had been procrastinated: the aim of the Municipal Government was to find the right opportunity and timing to apply the most favourable financing model possible under the circumstances.

With the city of Győr having won the right to organise the Youth Olympiad, the Hungarian Handball Association successfully bid for the

right to organise the European Women's Handball Championship at the end of 2014 and the city could also host the group matches of the 2015 European Women's Basketball Championship ("Eurobasket Women 2015"). This favourable timing enabled the city to seize state support opportunities and receive HUF 4.9 billion from the budgetary framework, which sufficed to cover all the construction and implementation costs. The contribution that the city of Győr made to these projects comprised the financing of connected infrastructure development projects, the building of roads and parking areas and landscaping.

The construction of sports facilities is conspicuous but costly: the future level of utilisation and potential ways of use of such edifices must be planned and justified before they are launched. The main reason for the construction of Audi Arena Győr was the existing high-level performance in handball and futsal. In Hungary, a facility like AUDI Arena Győr can provide stop-gap services during international sports programs and offer the expected international standards in several branches of sport. Besides its primary purpose, the Arena is also a potential site to host international sports programmes. In the course of the implementation of the Arena, discussions were held with two international associations, EHF and FIBA, to ensure that the facility would meet the criteria for the organisation of international handball and basketball programs. At its opening at the end of 2014, the Arena hosted the group matches of the European Handball Championship. In the summer of 2015, the semi-final matches of the "Eurobasket Women 2015" continental tournament were held in the Arena. In addition to the 2017 EYOF (see above), bids are being prepared for further international sports programmes in the near future, which can potentially be hosted by Audi Arena Győr. Demand has been continuous for this multifunctional arena, which is a potential site for major international sports programmes: in 2014, the Hungarian Gymnastics Association ("Magyar Torna Szövetség"; MATSZ) and the Municipal Government of Győr submitted their joint bid for the organisation of the 2017 Gymnastics World Championship. They later set the goal to organise the 2018 European Championship in the same facility together.

As soon as the matches of the European Handball Championship had finished in December 2014, the games of the U-16 International Chess Olympiad started in the city of Győr. This youth tournament was a good opportunity for the association and the city to show that they could successfully organise the adults' international tournament as a next step: the goal is nothing less than obtaining the right to organise the 2020 adults' international chess tournament.

The Hungarian and Slovakian volleyball associations jointly hosted the 2016 Women's Junior and will host the 2017 Men's Youth European championships. The Hungarian programme site will be Audi Arena Győr. The group matches of the Women's Junior European Championship held in Győr and Nitra, the finals hosted by the Slovakian city. The group rounds of the Men's Youth European Championship will take place in the cities of Győr and Púho (Puchov), while the semi-finals and the finals will be organised in Győr. Plans for the utilisation of the Arena further include

bidding for the organisation of the 2019 Women's Volleyball European Championship, including the qualifying matches.

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