

## PRESS RELEASE

### MEP and stakeholders call for recognition of the role of funding from lotteries

*European Parliament hearing on “The way forward for grassroots sport in Europe” highlights the Recommendations by the High Level Group on Grassroots Sport as the European Lotteries Association announces its new Sport Award*

**Brussels, 6 September 2016** –MEP Hannu Takkula, (ALDE, Finland), the European Parliament’s rapporteur the report on the *Integrated approach to Sport Policy* today convened stakeholders and policymakers at a public hearing on “*The way forward for grassroots sport in Europe*”.The event was organised by the European Non-Governmental Sport Organisation (ENGSO) and supported by the European Lotteries Association (EL).

In their opening addresses, ENGSO President, Carlos Cardoso, underlined the importance of the Recommendations of the High Level Group Grassroots Sport, also making a strong reference to the role of Lotteries in terms of sports funding and **Jens Nymand Christensen, Deputy Director General of DG EAC of the European Commission** highlighted the significant role of grassroots sport also in terms of social integration of refugees.

Following up with the publication of the Recommendations published last June by the **High Level group “Grassroots Sport”**, from the lottery sector, the **Chairman of EL Sport Committee, Torbjørn Almlid** provided numerous concrete examples of how Lotteries are using their capillary network to support all EU initiatives related to sport such as the upcoming *European Week of Sport* in all Member States; of how they have been sustainably supporting the creation of accessible sport facilities around Europe and promote various other projects aiming to use sport as a tool for youth and gender empowerment, integration and skills development.

Torbjørn Almlid announced the new EL Sport Award, promising that “it will be open to any social sport project, fully in line with the EL core values” and urged for the submission of projects.

Addressing the High Level Group Recommendations to the EU, **EL President Hansjörg Höltkemeier** expressed his appreciation for the overall work and the reference to the Lotteries and also welcomed MEP Takkula’s work on his new report on sport policy, noting: “*It represents a renewed commitment to keep sport high on the agenda of the European Parliament*”. He finally recalled that “*illegal betting, not only represents a risk to public order but also jeopardises the sustainable financing of grassroots sport*”.

MEP Takkula concluded the event with reiterating the positive societal impacts of grassroots sport, noting that many of the points discussed shall form part of his upcoming report and thanked ENGSO and EL for the organisation of the event.

Projects can be submitted to be considered for the EL Sport Award as of December 31. The winner will be made public in June 2017 at the European Lotteries' bi-annual Congress in Krakow, Poland.

**Links:**

- The full report of the High Level Group on Grassroots Sport can be accessed [here](#).
- More information about the European Week of Sport and its promotion by EL and its Members can be found [here](#).
- More information about the EL Sport Award can be found [here](#)

**ENDS**

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*European Lotteries (EL) is the European umbrella organisation of national lotteries operating games of chance for the public benefit. EL has members from 45 European countries including all 28 EU Member States. The association's EU members contribute more than 20 billion € p.a. to the state budgets and the funding of sport, culture, social projects, research and other causes of general interest. Unlike many commercial online gambling operators, EL members only offer gambling and betting services in the jurisdictions in which they are licensed by the respective national government.*