

COMPETITIVENESS INDICATORS OF SPORTS CITIES IN CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE

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Abstract

Cities faces continuous challenges due to globalization, and the economic competitiveness of cities can no longer be controlled only by the industrial environment, but also by social capital, novelties, and the utilization of local resources. In this competition, using the tool of sport, sport can be a tool for the rehabilitation of the city, an influencing factor of the local's health behavior, which can be used to increase productivity, as well as a determinant of tourism, the image of the city, local identity, which also increases social and economic capital. The determinants of the sports cities are based on marketing and tourism, in which sports events and their effects appear.

The study presents the aspects that appear in the sports strategy of Central and Eastern European cities, as well as the indicators of the ranking of sports cities. The method of the research is statistical, sports strategic analysis examining the cities of 6 countries, in which the main areas of sports development are presented. With regard to the results, the sports development criteria system of the countries and their cities, as well as the ranking of the sports cities and their selection criteria, are presented. Based on the results, sports developments often extend to sports facilities, which are the basis for the effective operation of sports, but they are not enough in themselves. It is also necessary to ensure the appropriate professional background, the human capital that can achieve results in a wide range of sports functions.

Keywords: competitiveness; sports cities; indicators; development of cities; sports economy

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovative strategic directions are advantageous in the competitiveness of cities. The capital elements of the cities are different, but the social capital elements appear more and more strongly. Ensuring the well-being of society makes the environment attractive to local residents. It is essential that strategies that increase both economic and social competitiveness come to the fore at the management levels. One way to do this is to utilize the functions of health and sports in the local space. Building the city brand plays a significant role in the competitiveness of cities (Lucarelli, Berg, 2011, Ranchhod et al., 2004). The condition for building a city brand is the identification of internal and external capital elements and their appropriate utilization. Urban branding is a complex place, it means something different to residents (building a local identity), it means something different to visitors (developing tourism, creating attractions), it means something different to city management (e.g., sister city relations, Kézai, Páthy, 2023). Each factor is an important consideration in branding. (Braun, Zenker, 2010) Due to the functions of health and sports, they are suitable for building the city image, which requires an assessment of their factors. In the theory of the study, the trends of health management and the sports economy are presented, which are the basis of the competitiveness of cities.

The results of the study show which indicators are used to determine the competitiveness of sports cities. In what criteria is the ranking of the cities shown, in this system, which cities came to the top of the ranking list.

2. DATA AND METHODS

The study presents the ranking and indicators of sports cities, which is a guideline for city management in innovative strategic planning.

The methodology of the study is the analysis of the sports strategy of countries and cities, the examination of the criteria system of the sports cities, the analysis of statistical data (EUROSTAT) to examine the effectiveness of the functions of sports in order to assess the criteria system of the sports city. Central and Eastern European cities were presented in the study. The regional level is NUTS2.

The countries included in the analysis: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Austria and their cities.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND - COMPETITIVENESS OF THE CITIES

The driving force behind economic development is innovation, the place where it appears is the city, which, with its concentration, hides more and more challenges in territorial competition. The economic development of cities creates a competitive situation between them. (Currid, 2006) The study applies to the concept of competitiveness the concept of the OECD and the European Commission, according to which competitiveness is the ability of companies, industries, regions, nations or supranational regions to generate relatively high levels of income and employment on a sustainable basis, while they are exposed to foreign economic (global) competition (OECD 1997; EC 1999). In territorial competition, the management of resources means competitiveness, in which the level of the standard of living is decisive, in which the health and quality of life of the companies, the workforce, and the residents are decisive. (Rechnitzer, 2000) Indicators of urban competitiveness are economic well-being, quality of life, urban policy, governance, infrastructure, public services, and human resources. (Kézai, Rámháp, 2022) Urban life, the quality of life and the standard of living of the urban population largely determine the development of cities, so cities strive to provide their residents with a livable environment, such as family-friendly cities (Pátkai, 2023), sports cities, cultural cities.

The defining characteristic of cities is the labor market. One of the attractions of city life. Changes in the labor market are also available in sports. The increasingly typical atypical employment (Gósi, Bukta, 2019) has been present in sports for a long time, while it has only developed in the last decades in the human resource management and strategy of companies.

The population of the capital cities determines the sports base, the level of infrastructure, and the level of investments in the sports economy. The figure below shows the size of the population of European countries (2017). (Figure 1, 2)

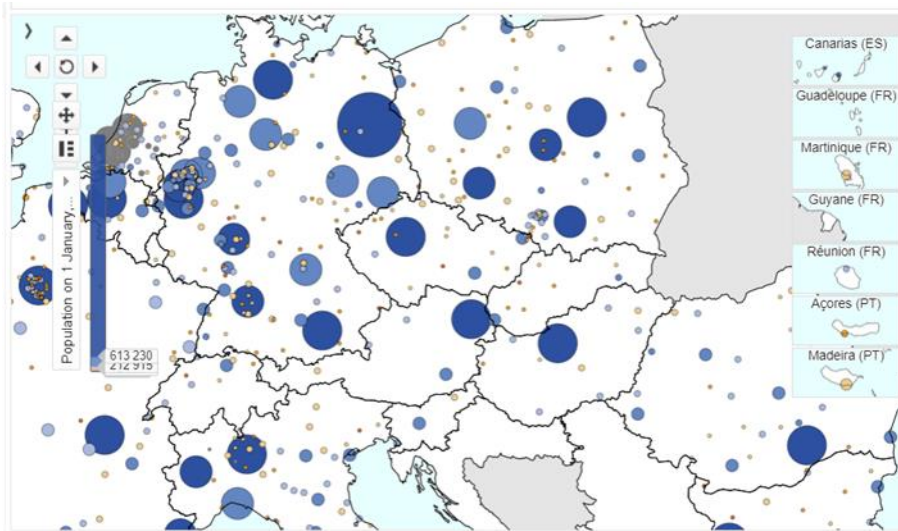


FIGURE 1 - POPULATION RATIO IN EUROPEAN CAPITALS
Source: Eurostat, 2017

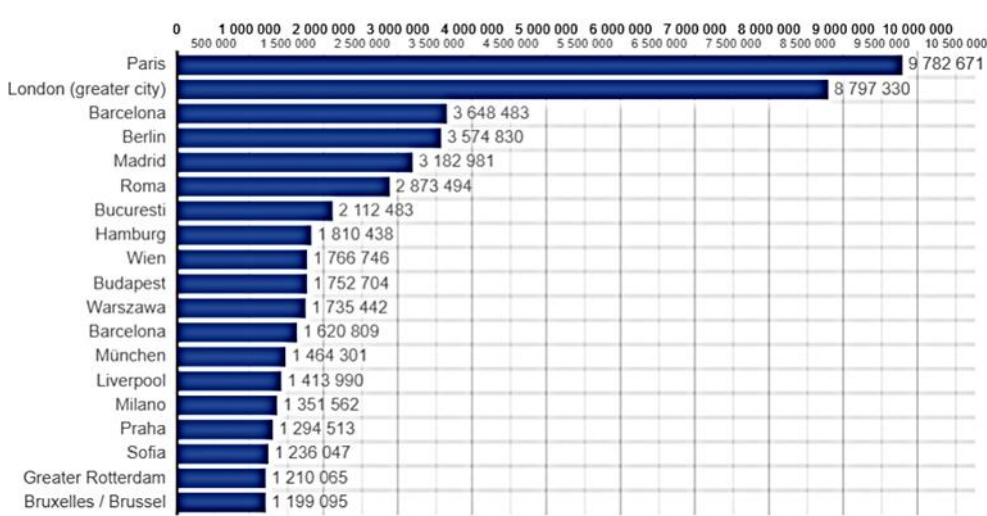


FIGURE 2 - POPULATION RATIO IN EUROPEAN CAPITALS (CAPITA)
Source: Eurostat, 2017

The aspects of the analysis of cities were defined by Kiss, 1998, and Horeccki and Egedy, 2021, in which the functions of the city and the beneficiaries of urban policy were determined through theoretical foundations. Based on this, the comparison cannot be completely objective, it was necessary to create an uniform system based on objective indicators. Based on this, the comparison is not completely objective, which is why an unified system based on objective indicators was created. In 2011, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published an uniform, transparent system of criteria that can be used to categorize European Union and Middle Eastern European cities. The ranking indicators defined by Carrera Portugal (2019) are the following: economy, globality, business

activity, cost of living, quality of life, population, development, GDP, and smart cities, society, socio-culture, transport, environment, technology, digitization, sustainability, innovation.

Another determinant of competitiveness is digitization, which resulted in the strong development of the Smart Cities. On the other hand, they respond less dynamically to technological developments in the cities of Central and Eastern Europe. (Szalavezt, 2020, Kézai, Kurucz, 2023) According to the definition of Komninos (2011), smart cities are areas where the city's creative population, digital infrastructure and knowledge management ensure a high rate of knowledge and innovation. The measurability of its performance and indicators attracted the interest of several researchers, such as Cohen, 2014, Lados, 2011, Giffinger, Pichler-Milanovic, 2007. Giffinger, Pichler-Milanovic's indicators used a total of 74 indicators for the smart economy, people, governance, mobility, environment, quality of life, in the examination of the competitiveness of the smart city. Scientific articles are constantly being published to measure the competitiveness of smart cities, which, on the one hand, combine existing ones or supplement them. (Szendi et al., 2019)

The other innovative line is startups, which generate economic activity, and their place of appearance is cities. Startups represent a new business direction in the changed economic environment. The global environment requires rapid change, the digital environment in which startups bring about a corresponding dynamic change. (Faragó et al., 2022) The expected characteristics of a startup are young business, innovation, technological development, high risk (Csákné et al. 2020, Giffinger, Kramar, 2021). Startups represent the innovative direction of the economic growth of cities, which stimulates young entrepreneurial motivation and creativity, and promotes a sustainable economy.

3.1. Healthy cities

The competitiveness of cities is determined not only by the strengthening of the economy, but also by the health and quality of life of society, which increases productivity. A dynamically developing city pays attention to the quality of life of its residents, which is based on a healthy lifestyle. Recognizing this, the World Health Organization announced the healthy city program for cities in Europe. (WHO, 1988) Health is increasingly important in national economic processes. The health image and health behaviors of nations influence the development of the quality of life. The health behavior can be managed on an individual level and requires individual actions. The term health promotion was first coined by the Canadian Minister of Health, Marc Lalonde, in his report, the Lalonde Report (1974). His report resulted in a change of attitude, which pointed out that health and its prevention were viewed from the perspective of disease and not interpreted in terms of lifestyle. The new approach resulted in a new strategic direction, in which a multisectoral approach affecting health was considered as a basis. The Lalonde report was based on the Ottawa Charter (1986), the basic document for health promotion in the European Union. According to the document, health promotion is a process in which people are able to control, manage, and thereby improve the factors affecting health.

The goal of health promotion is to represent health, to increase people's health potential, and to utilize health promotion. The tool system for this, the development of individual abilities, the strengthening of collective actions, the creation of an environment that supports health, the reorganization of health care, the development of a policy that supports health. We can call the beginning of health education the period when health was manifested not in the absence of disease, but in the concentration on the individual lifestyle. An integral part of this is the development of educational programs that promote the health behavior of individuals. It is necessary to recognize people's own sense of responsibility for their health. (Naidoo, Wills, 1999) The need for health promotion programs is supported by the fact that the health parameters of young people have been decreasing year by year, and its measurement and examination are particularly necessary. Daily physical education is one of the solution strategies, in which young people get the opportunity to play sports and be physically active every day. (Szakály et al., 2016)

On the other hand, proper communication and individual encouragement are necessary for the development of health behavior. Health education informs and encourages, which depends on planning and voluntary commitment to change. Areas of health include environmental health, physical health, intellectual health and mental health. The delivery of health education is the responsibility of specialists who have deep, scientific knowledge in the given field. Specialists participating in health education provide the information necessary for quality health decisions and the opportunity to acquire skills to improve health. (Naidoo, Wills, 1999) The WHO (1988) (Health Promotion Glossary) formulated recommendations for the development of health strategies, which are the establishment of individual and community needs of health education, the design, planning and implementation of health education programs, research on health education, health, health education communication and support. (Farágó et al., 2020)

In the conceptual definition of health promotion and health education, it is important to separate the two areas. Health promotion affects the environment, includes political actions, researches the basis of a healthy lifestyle, creates its directions, tries to restore the balance of social inequalities, treats health and social prosperity on the same level. It strives to create a public life that supports health, as a result of a health policy aimed at health. The goal of health promotion is to increase individual knowledge, and it encourages the development of competences for its application. The focus is on improving health and creating a sense of well-being. (Kovácsné Tóth et al., 2020)

The WHO European Healthy Cities Movement was launched in 1988. From Hungary, the city of Pécs joined the European program as a founder, initiating the creation of a national network. After four years of network cooperation, the Hungarian Association of Healthy Cities was founded in 1992 with 10 member cities, and currently has 19 member cities:

Baja, Békéscsaba, Győr, Gyula, Hódmezővásárhely, Kiskunfélegyháza, Mosonmagyaróvár, Nagykanizsa, Pécs, Sarkad, Sopron, Székesfehérvár, Szentendre, Szigetszentmiklós, Szolnok, Szombathely, Vác, Zalaegerszeg, Zalakaros.

The basic principles formulated in the system of membership conditions of the WHO European Healthy Cities program:

- the commitment of city decision-makers to the issue of health
- multisectorality
- the principle of ensuring equal opportunities
- the participation of communities in the preparation of decisions, the development of individual skills
- ensuring sustainable development.

The main goal of the WHO Healthy Cities project is to include health among the priorities on the agenda of city decision-makers, to promote the development of comprehensive local strategies to ensure health and sustainable development, taking into account WHO principles and objectives.

The European Healthy Cities Movement operates in five-year cycles, the fifth five-year cycle of Healthy Cities started in 2009.

The goal of the healthy cities project is to create an opportunity for residents that increases their quality of life. Healthcare is not only the responsibility of healthcare professionals, but of health policy decision-makers, city planners and residents alike. Small group health projects are not effective in developing health programs. It is important that the environment also influences the residents to achieve a healthy lifestyle, which can be used to change the health behavior of the masses. Spatial planning and the healthy environmental design of urban development contribute to the development of a healthy city. Figure 3 shows the health map of the settlement, which shows the connection between the urban environment and health. (Barton, Grant, 2011)

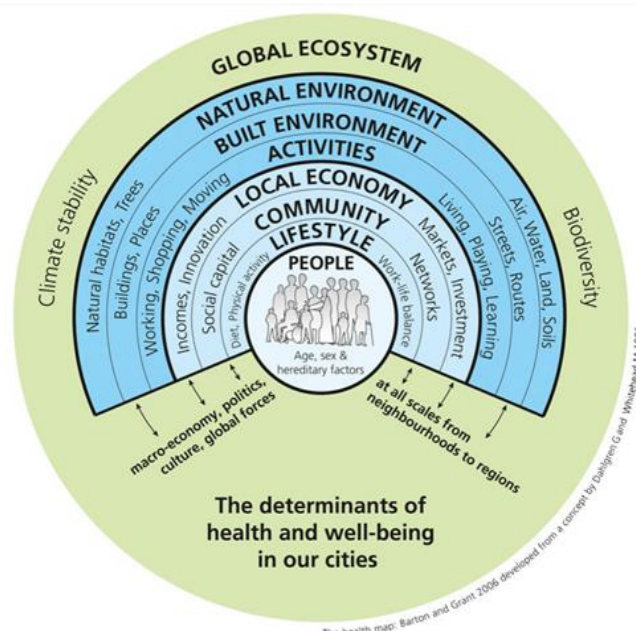


FIGURE 3 - THE DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN OUR CITIES. A SETTLEMENT HEALTH MAP SHOWING THE BROAD NATURE OF MULTIPLE IMPACTS OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT FORM ON HEALTH
Source: Barton, Grant, 2006

The health integration levels of urban planning were described by Barton (2009), in which he distinguishes 3 levels. The first level, similar to Maslow's pyramid of needs (1943), lists the basic needs for health. At the second level, environmental factors played a role, while the third level shows health factors in a holistic approach. (Figure 4)

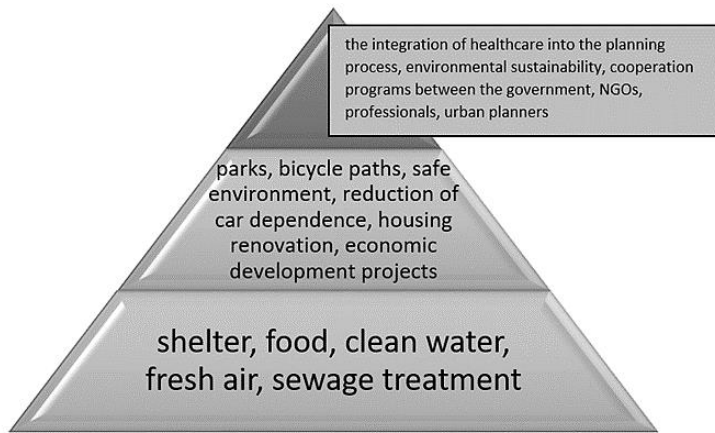


FIGURE 4 - URBAN PLANNING HEALTH INTEGRATION PYRAMID
Source: based on Barton 2009, own editing

The innovative health development of cities includes smart cities and their health factors, such as Cisco, IBM, IoT (Chambers, 2014), which were created to improve the quality of life of the population. Their goal is to promote the creation of a sustainable environment, to connect healthcare services and care with users, thereby making these opportunities closer to home and available to the population. Many fitness applications also promote a healthy city and a smart city through digitization tools. (Kamel Boulos, Yang, 2013, Kamel Boulos, Al-Shorbaji, 2014)

3.2. Sporting cities

Sports activity is global, its operation, which has economic and social needs, prevails effectively in an urban environment. The reason for this is that it requires consumer concentration, sports-specific facilities, economic and social environment, workforce, which demand sports professionals, a large number of athletes, and sports leaders. The condition of the sports economic environment is the concentration listed above, an effective driver of which is sports events. (Máté, 2018) Due to the global market, sport is a competitive factor in the life and economic environment of the city. (András, 2003, András, Kozma, 2014) In the relationship between sport and the competitiveness of cities, tourism is the next connection point. Tourism also changes dynamically and is sensitive to economic influences. In the context of sports and tourism, appear the athlete, the sports event and the person who participating in the sports event. Based on this, we can talk about active (who participates in the sports event as an athlete) and passive (who participates in the sports event as a spectator) sports tourism. (Bánhidi, 2007, András, Máté, 2016) The local effects of sports events can be applied in environmental, social and economic, as well as direct and

indirect groupings. (Puczkó, Rácz, 2002) Effects occurring before and during sports events can be interpreted as direct effects (e.g. economic impact, ticket revenues, purchase of sports products, merchandising products), indirect effects e.g. the tax revenues from tourism, the recognition of the city, the perception of its image, and as a social effect the increase in the number of children playing sports. The environmental impact refers to the infrastructure and the location of the facility, the social impact extends to the increase in the number of athletes, the promotion and follow-up of a healthy lifestyle, and the economic income generated by the sports event. Sports events receive a lot of media support, in which the image of the city also plays a role.

One of the determinants of sports cities is the city image. The popularity, recognition and competitiveness of a city can be linked to some social, natural or economic resource. The functions of sport support the competitiveness of the city in many ways, be it the identity linked to sports, sports successes, sports events, sports tourism, or the rehabilitation of the city through sports. Brand building can be effective in several areas, if sport is used as branding. (Ranchhod et al., 2004) Branding represents a network, an impression coupled with an intangible feeling, a cityscape associated with sports. (Braun, Zenker, 2010, Moilanen, Rainisto, 2009) The city brand is a complex concept, with different interest groups (local residents, tourists, businesses, city leaders), in branding a common point must be found. (Klijn et al., 2012) In the brand image of the nation and the city, mega-events are considered the most applicable. (Knott et al., 2015, Wang et al., 2012) Major sporting events have social and economic benefits for cities, and cities compete to host major sporting events due to their multiplier effects. (Qinqin, 2011, Hernstein, Berger, 2013) Athletes in sporting cities are also factors of urban identity, as they increase the city's reputation with their sports results. If the talent retention force appears in the city's politics with the appropriate employment opportunities (Béki, Faragó, 2020), with the development of a dual career, in this case the athlete will stay in the city later and increase the capital elements of the city as a human resource.

3.3. Sport startups

Due to the globalization of the sports industry, sport is no longer only about athletes, but has also become a tool for urban development. On the one hand, sport, as a city image, on the other hand, is a factor that increases the quality of life, and on the third hand, the sports economy increases the economic potential of cities through the sports industry. The expansion of technical technologies in sports boosted not only competitive sports, but also the users of leisure sports, the public, which provides a wider segment from the market point of view. The innovative, economic-stimulating nature of startups is strongly enforced in the field of sports and appears most in creative, innovative cities. (Witt, 2004, Kim et al., 2019, Dietrick, Cool, 1989) Sports startups also have a ranking, the indicator of which is their economic characteristics. The activities of the most successful sports startups cover fan activity, participation, training methods, and merchandising products. It is often applied to artificial intelligence for the production of digital content, and to biotechnology. (Faragó et al., 2022)

The current direction of sports is aimed at building relationships with fans, which is also the goal of sports startups today. On the one hand, the media has already joined this process, but the digital space offers more than that. The economic base of sport requires reaching a broad consumer base, which means the fan base in the field of sports.

Based on the Deloitte (2023) survey, he sees the future directions of sport in the development of the trends shown in the following table.

TABLE 1 - DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS OF SPORT IN 2023

increasing functional, digital experiences
expansion of sports betting options
growth of private equity investments
increase in women's professional sports participation
the growing importance of university sports, due to the wide availability of market participants (students, parents, fans, business partners, alumni)
the virtualization of sport, its means of payment (cryptocurrencies, tokens), digitization of collections is increasing
increasing fan engagements

Source: based on Deloitte, 2023 own editing

The strongest direction is digital technology, in which several areas prevail, such as sports betting, payment instruments, fan participation, and the sale of merchandising tools. The ranking of sports startups is based on economics and does not affect the field of sports. It is rests on revenues, and they are ranked based on this, as well as by scope of activity.

4. INDICATORS OF SPORTS CITIES

In the analysis were included six Central and Eastern European cities, Bulgaria, Austria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic.

Bulgaria

Sport is in Bulgaria also considered a tool for public health, not just for achieving sport-specific goals. Sports policy determines the nation's physical activity. If a nation has no sports policy or is based on weak strategic foundations, it affects the health indicators of the nation, the poor presence of physical activity, and the low level of participation. An effective sports policy includes sports opportunities available to everyone, which is shown in the provision of infrastructure and professional background. Bulgarian sports policy places great emphasis on competitive youth sports, which is limited by funding. Special attention must be paid to the sports activities of individual age groups. In Sofia, the surveys showed that communication between the ministry and sports organizations, or between schools and sports organizations and the ministry, is less good. Therefore, the development of communication between the organizations concerned and the development of sectoral collaborations have been set as an essential

development point. In the national strategy, it was set as a goal that civil organizations should be given a greater role in decision-making, since they are closer to the population and are better able to mobilize their resources in this area. Inactivity is very high in Bulgaria (Winkins et al., 2017), which should be changed by the country's sports policy (Stahl et al., 2002). According to the European Union survey, 16% of Bulgarians regularly play sports (European Union 2017), in which political pressure is no longer typical, but the lack of sports policy is even more so. In the Bulgarian sports policy, the most supported sector at the local and national level is youth sports, the less supported sector includes elite sports, sports for the disabled and mass sports and leisure sports. Local organizations played a greater role in increasing physical activity. (Filipov, 2018)

Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the following goals have been set in the field of sports. Improvement of health and quality of life, social integration, development of education, training, city representation. Many cities in the Czech Republic have already received the sports city award, in 2017 Olomouc (15th place, Sports City 2017 project), 2016 Kosice (19th place), 2015 Most (9th place), 2014 Ostrava (18th place), 2012 Liberec (10th place). (ACES Europe, Olomouc City of Sport, 2017) Olomouc city offers favorable conditions for sports, active youth sports and a wide range of leisure sports activities. There are 150 sports associations in the city, with 20,000 registered athletes. In the Czech Republic, Olomouc ranks first in the use of free sports facilities. They are also active in organizing sports events, involving 23 sports. (Schwartzhoffová, 2022)

Poland

In Poland, it is believed that sport is an important part of social policy. Poland is taking significant steps in researching the determinants of sports development. In Poland, researchers have created a new metric to measure the development of sports infrastructure, a NUTS2-level synthetic metric of sports infrastructure in Poland. Sports facilities, professionals and resources are indicators of this. No significant correlation was found between the sports infrastructure and the development of the regional economy. However, in relation to resources and infrastructure, yes. (Müller-Fraçzek, 2020, 2021) (Table 2)

TABLE 2 - INDICATORS OF SPORT DEVELOPMENT

Dimension	Description of individual indicator
Participants	Persons practising sports in sports clubs per 100 inhabitants
	Competitors registered in Polish sports associations per 100 inhabitants
Staff	Sports judges per 1000 inhabitants
	Sports judges with international class per 100 sports judges
	Members of coaching staff in sports clubs per 1000 inhabitants
Women	Females practising sports in sports clubs per 1000 population
	Females practising sports in sports clubs per 10 persons practising sports in sports clubs
	Female competitors registered in Polish sports associations per 10 competitors
Young	Youth aged up to 18 practising sports in sports clubs per 10 persons aged up to 18
	Juniors (no seniors) per 100 inhabitants

Source: Müller-Fraçzek, 2021

In their research, they showed that the sports infrastructure itself does not result in development in sports, it is also necessary to use other resources.

Poland has a Sports Development Program (2020), which contains a medium-term strategy based on sectoral documents, the provisions of which can be interpreted as a means of building human and social capital. Regarding sports, Poland focuses on the sports competitiveness of cities, in which it considers the organization of sports events to be of utmost importance. An essential element in this is to be innovative, have new technology and operate on the basis of a digitized platform. Main elements of the Polish sports events market: globalization, digital supply, development of mobile applications, gamification, health promotion, CSR activity, development of sports equipment, presence of sports stars, increasing range of leisure sports, social campaigns to promote sports, expansion of extreme sports, sports for the elderly, people with disabilities social inclusion. Sports events are used not only for the city's competitiveness in the sports economy, but also as part of the marketing strategy. In this way, the infrastructure, the pooling of social and financial resources, the development of the urban agglomeration, and the image of the city play a role in urban development. (Basińska-Zych, Holderna-Mielcarek, 2015) The use of sports events in sports promotion, focusing on cities, was realized in the following way in Poland. These cities - Poznań, Wrocław, Warsaw - consciously build their competitive advantage based on the sports brand. (Best Place Foundation, 2013) Poznań stands out significantly among Polish cities in promotions. (Figur 5)

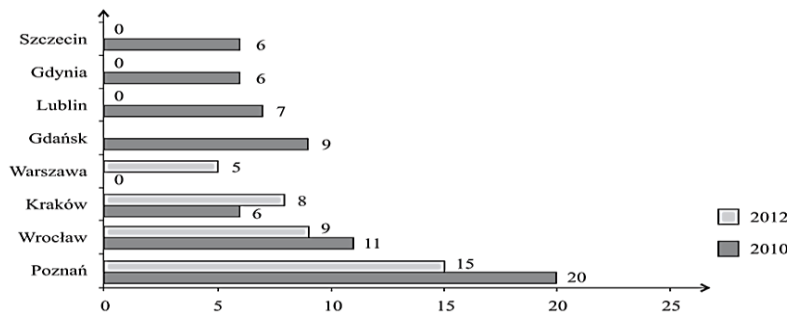


FIGURE 5 - PROMOTION LEADERS AMONG POLISH CITIES MOST OFTEN LISTED IN 1ST, 2ND, 3RD PLACE 2010-2012 (IN %)

Source: Top promotions of Polish cities, countries, and regions. Best Place – European Place Marketing Institute, 2013

In terms of urban communication (social media), there are already two cities of greater importance, which are Poznań and Wrocław, followed by Kraków. In the analysis of the sports image of Poznań, Wrocław, and Warsaw, the inclusion of sports in the city's development strategy were considered criteria the availability of sports programs offered in the city, and the quantity and effectiveness of sports promotion campaigns. Wrocław has set its sights on recreation and health promotion, with the goal of increasing the health of the population through sports. (Wrocław recreation development strategy, 2002). Poznań is considered the know-how place of the city, promoting business centers with leisure entertainment opportunities. Poznań stands out in Poland for its many economic innovations, which make it a significant

location for place marketing. It has an urban development strategy until 2030, which includes the sporty Poznań program. (Poznan City Development Strategy, 2013)

Romania

Based on research, the young people of Timisoara spend their free time mainly in the city, they like to go out with friends. (Nadolu, 2020)

In the Youth Strategy of Timisoara City Hall, processes have been developed that promote sports for young people. Its main points are the promotion of sports and increasing its availability, as well as the development of sports infrastructure in each city district. (Youth Strategy of the Timisoara City Hall 2014-2020) The city allocates 0.5% of its budget to the development of sports. (Table 3)

TABLE 3 - MAIN INVESTMENTS IN SPORT BY MUNICIPALITY BUDGET 2014-2020 IN EUROS AT AN AVERAGE YEARLY EXCHANGE RATE¹ (TIMISOARA CITY HALL)

Main investments in sport	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Polyvalent Hall of the Polytechnic University	2,024,929	2,609,674	1,469,671	328,364	214,892	421,479	627,812
Constantin Jude Sport Hall	157,494			29,990	25,572	63,643	
Skate-park-	112,496			153,236			
Semi-Olympic swimming pool		44,994	111,339				
New stadium with 42,000 seats		67,492	44,535				
Multipurpose hall with 15,000 seats		67,492	44,535		85,957		
Synthetic surface rink				8,975			
Bega Sports Complex				18,607		82,272	
Sports complexes in neighbourhoods				262,691	373,912	463,626	418,541
Aqua park					21,489		

Source: based on Nadolu, 2020, Timisoara Municipality Budget, 2014-2020

Based on the investments, young people in Temesvár are satisfied with the changes in sports facilities and developments, despite this, 47.8% of them do not play sports (this is below the national level). The research (Nadolu, 2020) shows that the motivation to sports activity is at a fairly low level, which is why sports investments alone did not bring the expected result of increasing sports activity. The Romanian government also created a sports strategy to improve the situation in the 2016-2032 period (Strategy for Sport 2016-2032 Ministry of Youth and Sports Romania, 2016). Their goal is to increase sports activity in all age groups of the population, to improve individual health, to significantly increase sports activity among young people, for the sake of high-quality sports activities of Romanian athletes and results in competitions.

Hungary

In Hungary, the number of sports cities has increased in recent years, since the Hungarian government declared sports a strategic sector. Sports events appear as a competitive factor in the sports economy, as well as sports infrastructure developments, which form the basis of sports as well. In the area of the

sports city, the sports strategy of the city of Győr in Hungary was examined. The sports development concept between 2021-2026 (Sport concept 2021-2026 Győr) shows that the city of Győr provides a high level of sports funding. One part of the sports concept of the city of Győr was the primary data collection of residents (1141 people), institutions (32), sports organizations 65, supplemented by qualitative in-depth interviews, the results of which are shown in the development areas of the sports concept. The public's sports opportunities in the city of Győr were ranked second after shopping opportunities, followed by cultural life on the third level. The city of Győr places great emphasis on sports opportunities for the elderly. 60% of the residents of the city of Győr in the age group 31-59 do some sport at least once a week. There are several student sports associations in Győr, in 12 sports. Women's handball has excellent results, which also increases the desire for sports in the city. Győr is at the forefront of sports infrastructure development, between 2015 and 2019, 2,166,790 Euros were spent on sports infrastructure development, 30% of which was paid by the Municipality, the rest was financed from the Government central budget. Between 2015-2019, 30 international sports events were organized, with an average of 25 countries/events per country. The Municipality of the City of Győr provides 20% of the sports events with independent financing, the rest is created with mixed financing. 70% of the sports events of kindergartens, schools, and universities are financed by the municipality alone. Mixed financing involves the combined presence of municipal and state financing. (Table 4)

TABLE 4 FUNDING OF COMMUNITY SPORTS IN GYŐR

Community sport	Self Government financing	Mixed financing
sports of kindergartens, schools, and universities	70%	30%
leisure and residential sports	81,80%	18,20%
supplying sport	7,50%	92,50%

Source: City of Győr Self-Government Sport strategy 2021-2026

3 Sports Parks, 1 ice rink, 1 sports center, 1 sports hall were built between 2015-2020 as part of the priority sports investments of the city of Győr. In these, the level of state support was 80%. In the city of Győr in 2020, 11 sports halls are available for athletes, which are a mix of elite sports and leisure sports venues.

Serbia

Serbia has sports achievements in many sports, both team sports and individual sports. In terms of Olympic medals that play a role in the competitiveness of sports, the Rio Olympics in 2016 included athletics, wrestling, taekwondo and canoeing. Between 2014 and 2018, the Republic of Serbia issued a sports development strategy, one of the main points of which is the renovation and construction of sports facilities, since the existing ones are no longer up-to-date. (Dugalić, 2016) In Serbia, the development of

sports facilities started thanks to the sports strategy, the figure below shows the number of sports facilities in the cities. (Figure 6)

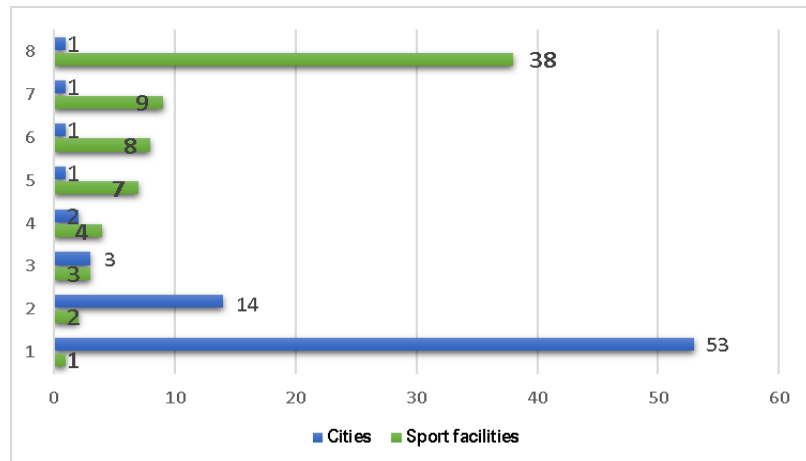
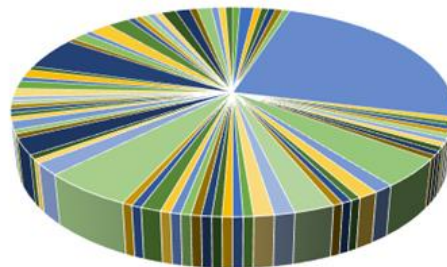


FIGURE 6 - NUMBER OF CITIES AND HIS SPORT FACILITIES IN SERBIA
Source: based on mojgrad.rs own editing

The distribution of sports facilities in the cities shows that Belgrade has 38 sports facilities, 53 cities have 1 sports facility, 14 cities have 2 sports facilities, 3 cities have 3 sports facilities, 2 cities have 4 sports facilities, each city has 7, 8, 9 sports facilities. (Figure 7)



- ADA 1
- ARANDELOVAC 2
- ATENICA 1
- BAČINCI 1
- BAČKA TOPOLA 1
- BANATSKO VELIKO SELO 1
- BEČEJ 1
- BEOGRAD 38
- BREZOVICA 1
- BRZEČE 1
- BUJANOVAC 1
- ČAČAK 1
- ČUPRIJA 1
- DESPOTOVAC 1
- DOBANOVCI 1
- GARAŠI 1
- GORNJI MILANOVAC 1
- INĐIJA 1
- JABLANICA 7
- KAČ 2
- KIKINDA 2
- KNJAŽEVAC 1
- KOPAONIK 1
- KOVAČICA 1
- KRAGUJEVAC 4
- KRALJEVO 2
- KRUŠEVAC 2
- KURŠUMLIJA 1
- LAZAREVAC 1
- LESKOVAC 1
- LJUBOVIJA 1
- MAČVANSKA MTROVICA 1
- MAJDANPEK 1
- MONICA 1
- MLADENOVAC 1
- NAKOVO 1
- NIŠ 2
- NOVI KNEŽEVAC 1
- NOVI PAZAR 1
- NOVI SAD 9

FIGURE 7- NUMBER OF SPORTS FACILITIES PER CITY
Source: based on mojgrad.rs own editing

In order to develop sports, the strategy emphasizes increasing the sports activities of young people, increasing the number of school athletes, promoting sports for the disabled, recreation, popularizing mass

sports, motivating women to play sports, increasing success in sports competitions, increasing the number of international sports competitions, increasing the number of sports camps, creating sports scholarships, supporting athletes. One of the priority goals is the development of sports infrastructure, in which the distribution of state support is shown in the following table. (Figure 8)

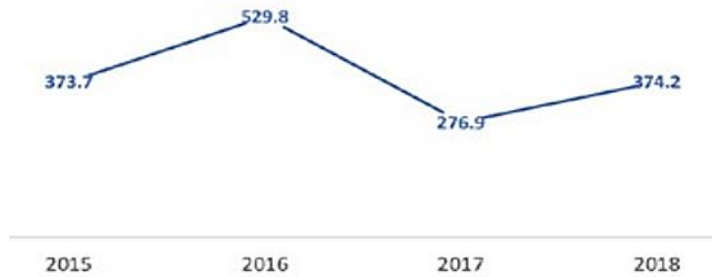


FIGURE 8 - SPORTINFRASTRUKTÚRA FINANSZÍROZÁS SZERBIÁBAN (MILLIÓ DINÁR) SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING IN SERBIA (MILLION DINARS)

Source: Strategy for Development of Sport in the Republic of Serbia 2014-2018

The Republic of Serbia shows a changing picture in the financing of sports, but the results of the sports strategy are constantly monitored and the achievement of the goals is supported. Regarding the results, surveys were conducted to evaluate the achievement of individual goals.

Slovakia

The Slovak government also considers the development of sports to be essential. For this, he set the development of the sports infrastructure as a primary task. However, this alone is not enough to create a background for sports, they also pay attention to professional human resources.

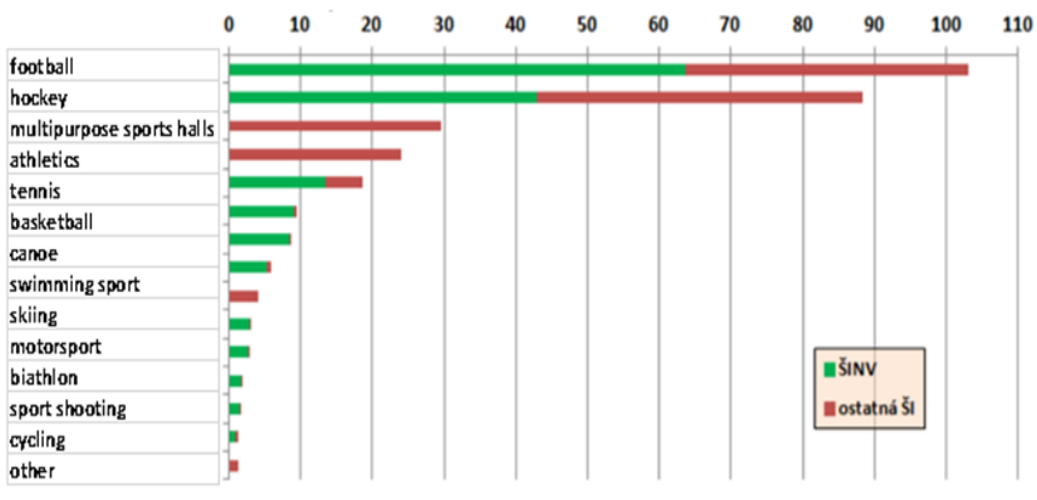


FIGURE 9 - SUPPORTED SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN SLOVAKIA BY SPORT 2010-2022 (MILLION EUROS)

Source: minedu.sk

The infrastructural developments were implemented at the regional level, in which each settlement received support for the development of sports infrastructure (Figure 10)

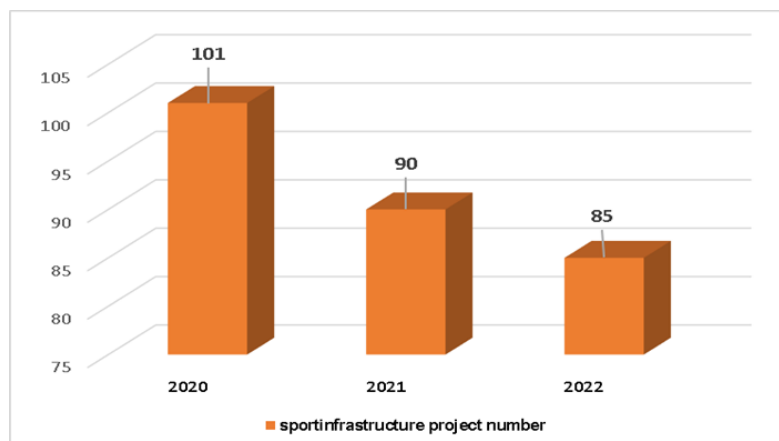


FIGURE 10 - SUBSIDIZED INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN SLOVAKIA AT REGIONAL LEVEL PER SETTLEMENT 2020-2022 (PROJECT)

Source: based on minedu.sk own editing

The Slovak government allocated 0.8 billion euros for sports between 2009-2022. In the distribution according to purpose, 65% for sports organizations, 23% for sports infrastructure, 6% for sports of the disabled, 2% for school and university sports, 1% for leisure sports. Regarding the support of sports, the distribution in the period described above is 49% football, ice hockey, tennis, 51% other sports. In other sports the division: a total of 88 sports were supported by the Slovak government, of which 31% were canoeing, athletics, handball, swimming, volleyball, shooting, cycling, skiing, basketball, and 20% other sports.

Austria

The city of Graz prepared its sports strategy until 2030, in which recreational sports and the encouragement of the widest possible group to play sports came to the fore. Mainly in the topic of people with disabilities and social inclusion, social inclusion through sport, and following the principles of Sustainable Development. The city of Graz already analyzed its sports foundations in 2006, for which it also involved stakeholders. Based on this, the sports program was created. This formed the basis for the city of Graz's sports policy measures, which included significant sports investments. (Figure 11) Sport is a means of sustainable development, which contributes to the achievement of development and peace, tolerance and respectability become part of socialization through sport, ensures equal opportunities among women and young people, strengthens the community, healthcare, education, has an effective educational function in the field of social inclusion. (UN, 2015) The city of Graz joined the Active Cities movement, which aims to increase the health-conscious lifestyle of the population. Between 2004 and 2017, the city of Graz invested significant financial support in the infrastructure.

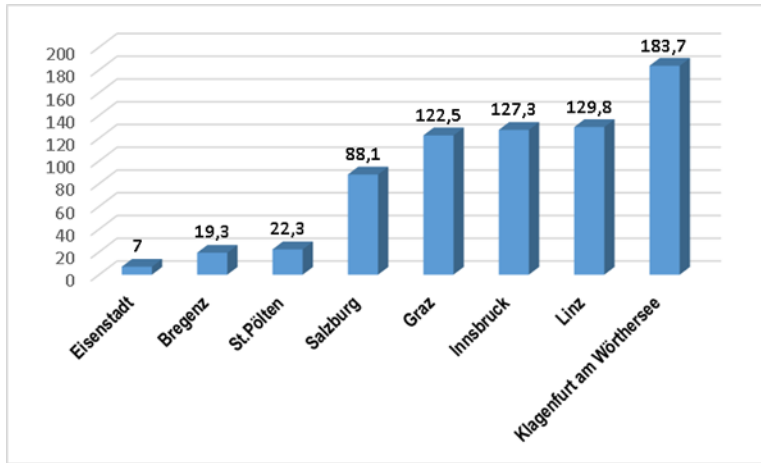


FIGURE 11 - BETWEEN 2004-2017, EXPENDITURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS PER CITY (26 SPORTS, EXTRACURRICULAR PHYSICAL EDUCATION (MILLION EUROS)
Source: based on Sportstrategie Stadt Graz 2030, 2019 own editing

In comparison to the total budget of the cities (2015-2017), such a high rate of development is less visible, since St. Pölten (0.65%), Graz (0.74%), Salzburg (0.79%), Bregenz (1.09 %) lags behind the average, while Linz (1.25%), Eisenstadt (1.51%), Klagenfurt am Wörthersee 1.71%), Innsbruck (2.07%) have higher sports budgets. In the budget for sports support measured by the number of inhabitants, Graz ranks at the back of the Austrian cities with sports funding of 8.74 Euros/inhabitant. In this grouping, Salzburg is in the last place, with a sports subsidy of 6.16 Euro/inhabitant, followed by Graz (8.74 Euro/inhabitant), then St. Pölten (9.7 Euro/inhabitant), Bregenz (10.56 Euro/inhabitant), Klagenfurt am Wörthersee (13.95 Euro/inhabitant), Linz (27.07 Euro/inhabitant) and Innsbruck are in the lead (31.36 Euro/inhabitant). With its sports strategy, the city of Graz plans complex developments in infrastructure, youth sports, leisure sports and special areas such as the disabled, social inclusion through sports, and sports for the elderly. He significantly increases his funding in the field of sports, where he expects effective results. (Sportstrategie 2030 Stadt Graz, 2019)

4.1. Ranking list of sports cities

With the globalization of the sports economy, sports cities have gained an increasing role in urban development, through social effects, by increasing health and quality of life, in their economic potential by the fans' willingness to spend, by offering recreational sports equipment and sports clothing.

Based on the collection of the internet sports portal bleacherreport.com (2015), in which the criteria for comparing sports cities are: historical importance, the success of competitors, teams, and fans. According to them, the following list has been drawn up regarding the sports cities of the world, of which 4 cities are European.

1. Barcelona: One of the biggest sports cities in the world is characterized by its football team and famous football players, FC Barcelona
2. London: Also based on its football club, London came in second place. It hosted the London Olympics three times, organizes major sports events in many sports and many famous athletes are present in the city.
3. Tokyo: Its most famous sport is baseball, which has also been the site of the Olympics three times. Tokyo is a fast-paced city full of life.
4. Melbourne: Melbourne hosts many sporting events that are both world events. It is a major competition center for tennis, or large-scale cricket tournaments are held, for example, and surfing has a long tradition, in which it also hosts many competitions.
5. Beijing: China's economy began to develop rapidly in the last decade, in which sports also played a role. In 2008, it organized the Olympic Games, and its sports economic performance is also outstanding in basketball.
6. Berlin: It was included in the list mainly for his achievements in football, in which his football club and its fans play a big role. Berlin's sports culture is also outstanding, boasting great sports teams in many sports.
7. Rio de Janeiro: It is the host of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, as football is part of Brazilian culture. Its other prominent sport is volleyball, which is also reflected in the number of Olympic medals it has won.
8. Manchester: The stronghold of football has a huge fan base and has been operating as a leading sports club for several decades.
9. Toronto: Toronto's most famous sport is ice hockey, but it also has significant teams in basketball and baseball.
10. Sydney: The home of the 2000 Olympic Games, it is particularly successful in football, rugby, cricket and basketball. The city is characterized by an extensive sports culture. (Ferrari-King, 2015)

4.2. European cities of Sport

Among the determinants of a sporty city, one of the essential aspects is the number and quality of sports facilities, which can satisfy the needs of the sports economy, sports media, competitors, and fans. In 2019, the Eurostat survey examined 103 cities in terms of how satisfied residents are with their sports facilities. In the research, Denmark's Aalborg finished in the first place, with 45.2%, where there were more than 3,600 registered sports facilities in 2012 and there are more sports facilities than schools. Zürich came in second place with 42.2%, where FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) is also located. In third place is Glasgow, with 39.8%, where residents can choose many sports to play and support. (Figure 12)

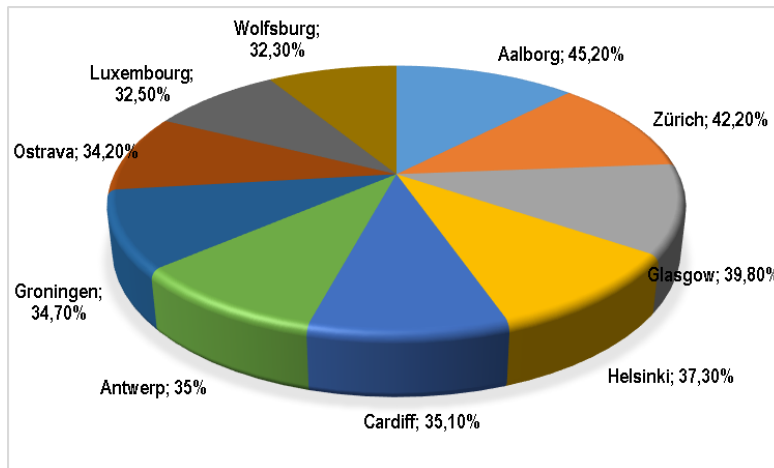


FIGURE 12 - TOP 10 EUROPEAN CITIES WITH THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE SATISFIED WITH SPORTS FACILITIES 2019

Source: based on Eurostat city statistics, 2019, and mayorsofeurope.eu, own editing

ACES Europe cities of sport The Association of European Sports Capitals and Sports Cities calls out a tender every year to win the sports city award, which is based on the guidelines of the European Union. The awardees receive their appointment at the European Parliament in Brussels during a celebration.

ACES created this initiative in 2013. The criteria for awarding the prize are as follows, which are evaluated using a scoring system.

- it should include a practical implementation that increases community activity and enhances solidarity
- Include sports activities carried out in the spirit of fair play
- They serve to improve health
- number of actions performed
- number of participants
- popular sports activities
- local sporting events
- national and international programs
- composition and number of participants (organizations, individuals, volunteers, fans)
- Sports competition level (national, international, local level)
- dissemination (conferences, research, publications)
- investments
- social network communication
- degree of mass communication
- other sports activities
- new sports activities.

ACES Europe between 2020-2024, the following cities won the title of sports city. (Table 5)

TABLE 5 - ACES EUROPE SPORTS CITIES 2020-2024

2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
City	Country	City	Country	City	Country	City	Country	City	Country
Aix-En-Provence	France	Busto Arsizio	Italy	Cartagena	Spain	Aphen Aan Den Rijn	Netherlands	Bijeljina	Bosnia - Herzegovina
Arganda del Rey	Spain	Cantazaro	Italy	Getafe	Spain	Cigli	Turkey	Čakovec	Croatia
Ville d'Arras	France	Eibar	Spain	L'Aquila	Italy	Goma Oryahovista	Bulgaria	Cemusco sul Naviglio	Italy
Basauri	Spain	Fondi	Italy	Leiria	Portugal	Leuven	Belgium	Çorlu	Turkey
Herceg Novi	Montenegro	Martorell	Spain	Macerata	Italy	Nevesehir	Turkey	Cosenza	Italy
Kayseri	Türkiye	Montana	Bulgaria	Panagyurishte	Bulgaria	Potenza	Italy	Dakhla	Morocco
Manresa	Spain	Padova	Italy	Rijeka	Croatia	Rieti	Italy	Grottaglie	Italy
Prishtina	Kosovo	Poprad	Slovakia	Sesto San Giovanni	Italy	Sandanski	Bulgaria	Krivji Rih	Ukraine
Štip	North Macedonia	Rende	Italy	Treviso	Italy	Siena	Italy	Limassol	Cyprus
Subotica	Serbia	Sakarya	Turkey			Temì	Italy	Milton Keynes	UK
Thessaloniki	Greece	Schio	Italy			Terrasa	Spain	Miramas	France
Vlora	Albania	Spinea	Italy			Zadar	Croatia	Ódivelas	Portugal
Viseu	Portugal	Tirana	Albania			Zrenanjin	Serbia	Pazardzhik	Bulgaria
		Tres Cantos	Spain					Prombino	Italy
		Velika Gorika	Croatia					Rovaniemi	Finland
		Mana do Castelo	Portugal					Smallingerland	Netherlands
								Tmava	Slovakia

Source: based on ACES Europe database own editing

Less present in the table are the Eastern Central European cities, but Croatia, Slovakia, and Serbia appear in the lists. A large Italian presence, possibly thanks to the location of the ACES Europe organization in Italy. Spain is also a frequent player among the cities, which country and its cities are also included in the previous list, so the sports city is present with great emphasis.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study examined the competitiveness indicators of sports cities, on the one hand, their literary foundations, which presented a theoretical approach to the competitiveness of sports. In the development of cities, in the constantly changing environment, it is always necessary to take new directions in order to achieve development. The basis of the dynamic development of the cities is mainly the population, whose quality of life also depends on the urban infrastructure and the economic development of the cities. In the theoretical part of the study, these urban development indicators were presented, as well as the new directions of the sports economy, which are the sports startups, which give the economic pulse of the city with their youthful vigor and innovative market appearance. During the analysis, the sports strategies of the cities of six countries were analyzed, in which it became visible that the development of the infrastructure is very important, this is the basis for the development of sports, but it is not enough in itself. It also requires human capital, which provides the professional foundations for sports. In the sports city competition, the Association created by the European Union currently provides the opportunity to apply, which includes indicators created based on the guidelines preferred by the European Union, on the basis of which the sports cities are selected from among the applicants. The cities of Croatia, Serbia, and Slovakia appear in this group, while the cities of the other analyzed countries are not included in this list. This ranking of sports cities was created based on a kind of criterion system, it does not mean that this criterion system is accepted in the world or in Europe. However, the directives of the European Union are

decisive in Europe, so the system of criteria is relevant. Another research task could be the development of a criteria system for a new sports city, its examination, the elevation of sports cities to an economic or social or even both criteria system.

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