Specific Elements of Good Governance in Sport, as Important Factors in Ensuring the Management

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Abstract: Good governance in sport is an essential condition for the Olympic and sports movement in order to sustain its autonomy. Several sports organizations have established special regulations and codes of conduct, which aim to improve the self-government of sports activities. Self-regulation and good practice are essential for maintaining and developing good sports governance. However, recent surveys seem to indicate that the principles of good governance in sport introduced by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have not yet been adequately taken into account if we refer to the standards of accountability, transparency and democracy that need to be promoted with priority. At the same time, the sports movement and the governing bodies of international sport face new challenges caused by the evolution of sport, in particular the significant growth of the commercial sector and the growing financial stake, which can create fertile ground for corrupt practices. In this context, the knowledge and correct application of the principles of good governance in sport are important factors in ensuring the efficient management of sports entities.

Keywords: *sports; managerial - legislative-sports skills; good governance.*

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Introduction. Sport is watched by billions of people around the world, which gives it a significant role: from improving public health through physical activity to fulfilling social, educational and cultural functions. Through sports, important values are promoted, such as team spirit, solidarity, tolerance, respect for others and fair play. Strengthening these values and maintaining citizens' trust in sport is mandatory, although through an efficient, accountable and transparent business management.

According to the literature, good governance in a sports context can be understood as “the framework and culture in which a sports body sets its policy, strategic objectives, collaborates with stakeholders, monitors performance, assesses and manages risks, reports activities and progress obtained in a transparent way, based on efficient, sustainable sports principles” (Ponkin & Redkina, 2018).

The European Council Resolution on the implementation of the Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017) stated that “sport can develop positive social attitudes and values, as well as people’s skills and competences, including transversal competences, such as the ability to think critically, take initiatives, solve problems and work collaboratively” (EUR Lex, 2015).

A report by the non-governmental organization *Transparency International* (2011) argued that inefficient governance can compromise the positive influence of sport, especially on young people, in the proper dissemination of these values. Experts also warned that since the growing commercialization of sport has amplified the socio-economic impact of the rules issued by sports bodies, poor governance could have negative, substantial repercussions on society at large (Transparency International, 2011).

Sports organizations enjoy considerable organizational autonomy in terms of the regulation of sport. This autonomy means freedom in establishing the rules and principles of sport, while having the opportunity to protect its inherent values from external influence. In fact, in recent times, this autonomy has been increasingly challenged in national and European courts, as well as through alternative arbitration requests made and submitted by various interested third parties. Therefore, the autonomy of sport has been progressively conditioned, not only by respect for the rule of law, but also on respect for the principles of good governance, in particular democracy, transparency, accountability in decision-making and representative inclusion (Budevici-Puiu, Manolachi, 2016; Budevici-Puiu, 2016)

The purpose of the research is to present specific elements of good governance in sport, as important factors in ensuring the efficient

management of profile activities, the implementation of development policy and the achievement of strategic and sustainable objectives.

In order to know and concretize them, we conducted a research on the problem of good governance in sports, among managers within central and local public authorities (Sports Directorates), national sports federations on various sports events (football, wrestling, judo, tennis, sports orientation, university and veteran sports, boxing, etc.), as well as from the Olympic training centers and sports schools in Chisinau (Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2006; 2012).

The research methodology used materialized in the elaboration and application of a sociological questionnaire on a group of 38 top and middle managers within the national sports departments and directorates and 57 specialists employed in the reference field; the observation and the graphic method of the data accumulated through the answers formulated by the interviewees.

Thus, we formulated the general hypothesis, according to which we assumed that the share of factors specific to good governance in sport, reflected through a scientific training support will also contribute the direct influence on cognitive conditions, understanding and application of principles in field management activities of physical culture and sports.

Interpretation of data and their graphical reflection

In the research, the knowledge of the opinion of managers and specialists employed in the system, regarding certain factors that can influence good governance in sports, as well as the identification and adoption of good international practice models or solutions / measures formulated and applied in this respect (personally at the level of the sports entity they represent) has been actually monitored.

Through the communication approached with the respondents, we established the degree of knowledge and understanding of the issue, applied at institutional and individual level by reflecting the particularities of those who direct or perform activities specific to the field of physical culture and sports (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The degree of knowledge and understanding of the issue

Source: author's own contribution

The frequency distribution of knowledge and understanding of good governance in sport is shown in Figure 1. Thus, it was established that most managers know and understand to a large extent the specific elements of good governance in sport (21.3%) and to a very large extent, respectively in the amount of 32.9%. To an appropriate extent, only 13.3% expressed their opinions. According to specialists, we can notice that in most lines, they register a degree of knowledge and understanding between the values of 7.9% (to an appropriate extent) and 12.6 (to a large extent and to a very large extent). In this context, we can mention that the need for ordinary information regarding this issue, leading to knowledge, understanding, explanation and assimilation of ideas, principles, elements of reference, is part of the characteristics of thinking and particularities of individual experience of managers and specialists in field. Regarding the presentation of the specific elements of good governance in sports, we can see from Figure 2 and Figure 3, that most managers know them (57%), and can offer some concrete features of them, compared to specialists who recorded a percentage of affirmative lower answers (23%). Thus, we can mention that the training of managerial, legislative and sports skills to future specialists in the field of physical culture and sports is necessary and a priority to ensure good governance in sport.

Figure 2. Answers on the concrete presentation of the elements specific to good governance in sport.

Source: author's own contribution

Figure 3. Specific elements of good governance in sport

Source: author's own contribution

One of the active “providers” of uncertainties, risks and defects (including errors) in the management of the physical culture and sport field can be considered, the lack of understanding or ignorance of the specific characteristics of good governance in sport, as an object of the central / local public administration and of the entities in this activity sphere.

It is also reasonable to distinguish the following key features of the field (Budevici-Puiu, Manolachi, 2016; Manolachi, 2016)

- *autonomy of sport*, although we are witnessing a state intervention in this field, but still lower in the governing process; the autonomy of sport is not absolute, but is limited, and its observance is mandatory for all parties - both for public authorities and for other subjects in the field of sports relations;

- *specificity of the sports field*, determined by the attractive competitive value for sports. Thus, competitiveness in sport is a form of public relations implemented in this field (including methods and mechanisms), associated with achieving the objective of establishing a more relevant set of requirements for sports activities / competitions (a participant in a sports competition) by regulation and in comparison with the result obtained by another participant (other participants) or with certain established parameters, with evaluations of an active third party participant (referee - athlete, referee - their group), as well as by concretizing the effectiveness of the competing party actions, with the subsequent exclusion from the list of parties with lower results and / or non-compliance with the established requirements.

- *variety of subjects (parts) in the field of sports* - central and local public administration (Sports Directorates), subjects of different institutional levels in national and international sport, including outside the field, grouping them in a plan system (distributed on heterogeneous horizontal), whose interaction of segments (for example, related to different sports) is reduced to each other or virtually non-existent. A wide range of sports entities include both decentralized communities, distributed horizontally (including network) by organizations and individuals, and numerous complexes built by professional sports organizations, which in turn can also include a wide range of commercial institutions (investors, business partners, etc.) and educational ones, spectators and fans of sporting events. Thus, the sports management structure constitutes a decentralized, self-referential and self-reproductive system, which includes a large number of varied and connected sports organizations through complex and differentiated relations by the governing and / or coordination organizations at unique and superior level (differentiated by the sporting event, the objectives and forms of activity, the

structure and characteristics of decision-making, the degree of centralization / decentralization, etc.).

- the existence of *a trend in the development of public relations* in the field of sport, which leads to a significant increase in the role of public administration (including state regulation) in this area, namely the specific competencies of state bodies in the direction of self-government, including self-regulation, as a complexity and interaction of the two regulatory systems. Sport management bodies interact in a complex way with public authorities (central and local) in the field of sport in the context of an autonomous (extra-legal) regulation order specific to sport.

- the organization of sports according to certain factors, in particular according to their geographical distribution, institutionalization and legal order;

- *the interaction of different segments of the sports sector* - here we refer mainly to the interaction of professional and amateur sports, performance and mass sports.

Another important aspect mentioned by the participants in the sociological research was that in order to take into account the meaning, content and legal characteristics of good governance in sport, it is necessary to define a terminological "coordinate system":

- "public administration" involving to understand the executive body system of the state administration (central and local) through which the state exercises its functions and the level of local autonomy;

- the concepts of "sport", "professional sport", "amateur sport", "performance sport" and "mass sport"; establishing a legal, concrete definition of these concepts" is needed to more clearly define the main directions of public administration and government in this field;

- the concept and structure of the "sports product" - public relations in the sports industry includes three main elements: the consumers of sports products, the sports product and the providers (including producers and intermediaries) of a sports product. Sports products are varied from the *intangible* ones (sports product and entertainment; sports and informational product, media; sports order; sports process; sports product and created image; sports product and ethics - fair pay, etc.) to the *corporal* ones (sports equipment and accessories; foodstuffs with their specificity in the reference field, rehabilitation, diagnostics and other means and equipment of sports medicine; technical sports facilities; a financial product in the field of sport, including a sponsorship product), supplementing with the *mixed* ones (the athlete, the sports club and the sports team as a specific product; a sports product on the sports services market; a product of

technological engineering creations - technological progress - aimed at improving technical equipment, equipment and other supports for athletes and sports teams).

The professional competencies of the specialist in the field are derived from the objectives and content of the study disciplines, and good governance in sports can be the subject of study at the specialized faculties or scientific research. Also, an important aspect in the training of managerial skills to the specialists in the field is the role they perform by directing their work, gaining the necessary experience for the reference field. In Figure 4 we present the degree of specialists and managers satisfaction in the field regarding the formation of managerial - legislative - sports competences by studying the content elements of good governance in sports.

Figure 4. The degree of specialists' satisfaction regarding the formation of managerial-legislative-sports competences

Source: author's own contribution

Competences are determined as a combination of knowledge, behavioural and attitudinal skills, related to certain situations. The professional competences in the field are those that include the needs, for the development and improvement of personal capacities, up to the necessary level, continuing with their improvement and modernization through other continuous training programs. Competence includes awareness of the individual learning process, the realization of possibilities, the ability to overcome obstacles in the study process, to finally obtain knowledge and effective learning.

In conclusion, we must mention that the governing activity of the Republic of Moldova should contribute to the formation and use of specific elements of good governance in sport to identify the most important problems in the functioning of the sports industry, to establish concrete solutions in this regard, to implement effective mechanisms in reforming the national economy, taking into account possible ways of implementing the most important levers for achieving them. Also, the organization of specialized seminars, the elaboration and publication of scientific supports in the field will be important sources for the training of the professional competences of the specialists in the field. The particularities of the scientific training support, having as object good governance in sports, tasks, statements, didactic topics approached, practical contents must be well known, understood, mastered and applied in concrete situations by specialists in the field of physical culture and sports.

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