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ORIENTATION ARTICLE

MANIFESTO FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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ARGUMENT

This manifesto elaboration was dictated by the necessity of rendering aware and consolidating, among the people and the decision bodies, the role of physical education and sports¹ in the modern Romanian society, as a health, education and social integration factor.

The formative-educative motor activities are confronted with newly-issued dangers and challenges that have imposed this approach:

- the statistics about the population's health state, particularly among the young people, emphasize alarming increases of the morbidity ratio, sedentariness and obesity being the main factors responsible for the onset of different physical and psychical disorders;
- the perspective of a population with a precarious health and the diminution of people's motor capacity jeopardize the durable economic development and the national security;
- the diminution of people's perception upon the formative role played by physical education and sports, which is reflected by the reduced number of physical education lessons in the core-curriculum, for certain categories of pupils, as well as by the reduced time allotted to sports practicing;
- the alarming reduced number of children and young people who practice sports, under different forms;
- the diminution of the Romanian sports performances at the international level, especially when competing in major contests - Olympic Games, World Championships and European Championships;
- the lack of consistency when applying the legislation in force, in relation with physical education and sports, as well as the disharmonic points of view expressed by the decision factors (ministries, agencies etc.);

¹ - Physical education represents an education component, expressed through a type of motor activity that has its own organization forms and practicing rules, which aims at optimizing the individual's bio-motor and psychic potential, in order to increase his life quality.

- Sport is a competition activity comprising the group of sports branches and its objective is to develop the individual's physical and psychical condition, for the performance obtaining in the competitions of any level.

- the alarming increased number of violence and corruption acts on the sports arenas and outside them, the young athletes' exploitation, doping, racism, facts that are detrimental to the sports phenomenon very essence.

This document aims at stimulating the elaboration of some social policies and developmental strategies at the national and local levels, meant to encourage and support the different forms of physical education and sports practicing.

ART. 1. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS - A HUMAN FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

Physical education and sports are a human fundamental right, acknowledged by the great international organizations. In the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UNO, 1948), it is stipulated that any person has the right to education, in order to fully develop his personality.

In the *International Letter of Physical Education and Sports*, the UNESCO (1978) establishes, at article 1, that these activities represent "a fundamental right of all", and its putting into practice has many effects on the people's health state and on their personality development.

In the *Convention on the Child's Rights* (UNO, 1989), in the *Convention against Discrimination in Education* (UNO, 1960), but also in other treaties and declarations, physical education and sports are considered as activities through which the right to education is guaranteed.

Relying on the experience accumulated during the *European Year of Education through Sports* (2004), the European Commission encourages the support of physical and sports activities by means of different political initiatives in the education and forming fields.

In Romania, the *Education Law no. 84/ 1995* specifies, at article 4, that the education finality is the human personality forming, inclusively through "[...] physical education, hygienic-sanitary education and the sports practicing", aspects reinforced by the *Physical Education and Sports Law no. 69/ 1999*, stipulating that these ones represent activities of national interest, supported by the State.

Consequently, there exists a conceptual and legal framework through which the social role of these activities is acknowledged and their practicing is guaranteed.

ART. 2. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS - COMPONENTS OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Within the education global character, physical education and sports present specific contents and tasks, with systemic influences upon the individual, at the physical, motor, intellectual, esthetical and moral levels. At the same time, physical education and sports can be considered as special forms of education through the physique, they leading not only to biological finalities, but also to important psychological and social aspects.

ART. 3. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS - COMPONENTS OF PERMANENT EDUCATION

Due to their great accessibility, physical education and sports are practiced under the most different forms, they accompanying the human being from his birth to the old age, by *creating thus a balanced and healthy lifestyle*. Physical education and sports have application strategies and adapted methods meant to fulfill the differentiated objectives, for each age.

Physical education and sports are also factors that consolidate the resistance against the modern life inconveniences, they being a common wealth with a deep educative character during the lifespan and representing a tonic for the individual or the group leisure time activities.

ART. 4. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS FOR HEALTH

By promoting the respect for one's own and for the others' body, physical education and sports become forms of the education for health. Man is a biological human being whose structural-functional components are, generally and specifically, influenced through physical education and sports.

A corresponding effort, from the quantitative and qualitative points of view, in physical education and sports training, leads to relevant morphological and functional alterations, which allow the individual's better adaptation to the daily life requirements.

The *World Health Organization* promotes, through the "Active life" program (1998), the importance of systematically practicing physical activities for health, first of all in children and young people. Researches have proved that the physical exercise long-term practicing improves the physical and mental health, it having a positive contribution to the learning process and to the personality development, and also reducing the risk of physical and psychical disorders associated to the modern lifestyle.

In this sense, the adults are recommended to practice a physical activity requiring a moderate effort, for at least 30 minutes a day, while the children are prescribed to practice it for 60 minutes a day.

The lack of physical activity leads to overweight, obesity and chronic disorders, such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, which affect the life quality, jeopardize the person's life and create problems to the economy and the budget allotted to health care (*The White Book of Sports, Commission of European Communities, 2007*).

The studies conducted in different countries emphasize that to each dollar invested for physical education and sports corresponds a 3.8 dollar reducing for the medical expenses (*The Declaration of Punta del Este by the Education Ministers, 1999*). Not by chance, there is a conception according to which "sport gives days to life and life to days".

ART. 5. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS - COMPONENTS OF HUMAN CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

The physical education and sports field defines a universe of moral, intellectual and esthetical human creations that find their right place within the general group of cultural values. As a value creation act, therefore as a culture act, physical education and sports render manifest a new significance of the human body, a harmonious combination between the spiritual culture and the action itself.

We can assert that the universal culture development has also been achieved due to the physical culture enrichment, which supposes a set of ideas, convictions, habits, institutions, scientific disciplines, artistic works etc. All these elements create the intrinsic connection between physical education, sports and culture, they uniting, in a common language, different geographical and social areas.

ART. 6. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS - FACTORS PROMOTING THE ECOLOGICAL AND THE LIFE QUALITY PERSPECTIVES

In order to eliminate the tendency to sedentariness and the passive lifestyle, it is imperative to valorize the physical education and sports potential in the daily life. An active life, during the childhood and the youth periods, positively influences the healthy lifestyle at the adult age.

Physical education and sports diminish the effect of the harmful factors in the modern civilization artificial environments, by increasing the human body immunity and its resistance to stress, but also by facilitating its adaptation to the environmental climatic strains and changes.

At the European level, these aspects are part of the ecological public policies. In this sense, it is necessary to encourage the physical exercise practicing in the open, by valorizing the beneficial influence of the natural factors that are, at the same time, an activity support and a motivating factor when making up the groups of practitioners.

But the today's young people must learn to respect the nature and to combine the movement satisfaction with the civic culture elements, where the ecological perspective is prevalently contoured.

ART. 7. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS - FIELDS OF THE SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

The UNESCO (1978) considers that the science contribution is indispensable to the physical education and sports development. Important scientific events, organized at the international level, have promoted the contribution of different sciences to the knowledge progress in this field.

The information collecting, in the physical education and sports area, have led to the constitution and consolidation of a system of sciences that study the human motricity, they contributing to the increase of the activity educational efficiency, expressed through higher sports performances and through a specific capacity of adaptation to physical and psychical efforts.

A retrospective of the performances in different sports branches emphasizes their constant progress, which wouldn't have been possible in the absence of a solid scientific research.

The State authorities must support the scientific research focused on the development of human performances (physical, motor and psychical ones).

ART. 8. SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND THE ENGAGEMENT FOR QUALITY

School physical education provides knowledge, the forming of practical and intellectual skills, as well as the assimilation of ethical values, all of these contributing to the development of the individual's social integration capacity.

The FIEP (*International Federation of Physical Education*) Manifesto (1970) and the *European Association of Physical Education*, in the Declaration of Madrid (1991), argued, relying on the studies conducted on children and young people of different ages, the necessity of systematically practicing physical education and sports for at least 1 hour a day, up to the age of 12, and for at least 3 hours a week, for the children of more than

12 years old and for the teenagers. The EU stipulations also include the necessity of the 3 compulsory physical education lessons a week.

The application regulations of the *Law no. 69/ 1999* mention that it is compulsory to assure, through the school program, a number of 3 physical education lessons a week, for the grades 1 to 12. This number of lessons provides an optimum stimulation, able to induce adaptive, morphological and functional alterations.

At the same time, we emphasize that school physical education and sports don't represent aims in themselves, but they contribute to the fulfillment of the education general finalities, together with the other disciplines in the school curriculum.

We also add that the physical education teachers must continuously be concerned with providing an attractive content for the organized lessons, so that school physical education lays the basis of the permanent physical education, which means a lifestyle, a way of thinking and acting to one's own benefit and to the society interest.

ART. 9. SPORTS - A HUMAN EXCELLENCE LAB

The true image of sport is given by the social life itself that places it within the important concerns, such as education, economy, culture, ideology, science, public defense and order, this completing a conception that recognizes its value.

The sports essence is competition that has developed, under the historical aspect, along with the society evolution, and through which physical performances, intelligence and the creation capacity used to be compared.

Because the sport can be practiced from childhood to the old age, it becomes one of the most accessible education forms and health factors. The syntagm *Sports for all* reflects all the men's right to practice sports for recreation, conditioning, motor rehabilitation or for the top performance.

Performance sports are a human excellence true lab, both for the health and, most of all, for the performance capacity development. This represents a territory where the human being searches for perfection that is really often reached, to his delight and to that of the millions of admirers.

In the humanity socio-cultural relationships, the comparison among performances takes an important place. Many nations on all the continents do their best to be represented in the great international competitions, in order to make known their performances. Sport becomes, thus, a true ambassador, a symbol of the individual prestige and of the nation the athlete belongs to.

ART. 10. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS - EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS TO PREVENT AND ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Physical education and sports bring an essential contribution to the economical and social cohesion, as well as to the forming of a better integrated society, they promoting the feeling of belonging to a common socio-cultural space. These roles are even more relevant for the disadvantaged categories of persons, for the insufficiently well represented groups, the persons with special needs, the immigrants etc. The physical exercise practicing must take place without discriminations, by assuring the equal access of men and women, regardless of their race, religion, political opinion, national or social origins. In this sense, the *European Commission* encourages the access to the areas destined to sports practices and to physical activities, as positive social interaction tools. On the other hand, it highlights the sports contribution to the creation of new workplaces and to the economical growth, but also to the revitalization of some disadvantaged zones.

The physical education and sports socializing environment provides behavioral models transferrable to the daily life. Social cohesion, mutual tolerance, ethnical and cultural integration are, to a great extent, effects of the physical exercise practicing, under different forms.

ART. 11. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS - FACTORS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION FOR THE DISABLED PERSONS

Through specific methods and means, physical education and sports provide an accessible educational environment, with strong formative and educative influences upon the disabled persons.

The *European Commission* requires the member States and the sports organizations to adapt their infrastructure, in order to allow these persons' access to the sports facilities and, implicitly, their participation in programs and competitions conceived on this purpose.

Modern adapted physical education and sports programs promote the inclusive education, by integrating into common activities the persons with and without disabilities.

ART. 12. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS - AN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

Physical education and sports create a new framework of cooperation among the peoples, by turning out the culture of the war, violence and discrimination into a non-violent culture, that of the tolerance and solidarity.

Physical activities facilitate, due to their specific organization modality, the establishment of the contacts among people, of the intercultural dialogue and of the international cooperation. Sport, through its specific means, favors the respect of some common rules that surpass the geographical, political, social and economical barriers.

International cooperation is the universal prerequisite for the physical education and sports balanced development in all the countries. The expression of this cooperation is represented by *The White Book of Sports*, which stipulates orientation actions of the European Commission activities, in connection with this field.

ART. 13. SPECIALISTS IN THE FIELD - FACTORS PROMOTING PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

The most important role in promoting physical education and sports comes to the involved human resources, respectively: physical education and sports teachers, coaches, managers, researchers, physicians, pedagogists, sociologists etc. The experience accumulated during the latest years has proved the necessity of a change in the specialists' mentality, which has to aim at new models of analysis, explanation, interpretation and application of the knowledge specific to the field.

In the actual social context, the physical education teacher and the coach are charged with a set of attributions, firstly given by their position of educators and then by their specialization profile. They have the role of guaranteeing the physical education and sports contribution to the fulfillment of the education objectives, both general and specific to the field. It is thus necessary to permanently reconsider their initial and continuous training, so that it fully meets the new social requirements.

ART. 14. ROLE OF THE STATE AUTHORITIES IN THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND IN PROVIDING THEIR PRACTICING CONDITIONS

The main role in the physical education development process comes to the *Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation*, while the main role in sports development comes to the *Ministry of Youth and Sports*. The good cooperation between these two institutions and their collaboration with other State bodies (Parliament, ministries, agencies, public institutions, zonal institutions, local councils etc.) influence the efficient working of the physical education and sports national system. Their functions are oriented towards the following directions:

- the improvement of the legislative framework, for the physical education and sports good functioning at any age and level, as well as the careful permanent watching of the way the laws in force are applied;
- the elaboration, by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, of the general Strategy for the organization and development of the physical education and sports activity in Romania, on the period 2009 to 2012;
- the continuous development of the facilities for physical education and sports, that must be accessible to all the categories of citizens;
- the elaboration of programs representing efficient frameworks for the physical exercise systematical practicing by all the categories of citizens.

The State authorities' actions in the physical education and sports field must aim at making Romania become a country with a healthy, vigorous and well-educated population, a country of the sports excellence, visible anywhere in the world, due to its values.

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SHORT PERSONAL PRESENTATION



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Professor Aura Bota is a member of the Theoretical Chair in ANEFS Bucharest. With a license and PhD in Physical education and sports, she has developed over the years, a comprehensive and original discussion about the human movement field of study. Her main scientific and editorial contributions are expressed in books on Kinesiology, Theory of motor activities, a series on Adapted physical activities, and Leisure-time activities. Also, she has been involved as a coordinator or member in 3 international grants and 8 national CNCSIS research grants.

In 2000, she received together with Professor Adrian Dragnea the “Leon Teodorescu” Prize for scientific book, awarded by the Romanian Olympic Committee – the Romanian Olympic Academy, for the book “Theory of motor activities”.



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