

# A huge success for the European School Sport Day 2016



## School children from 20 countries exercised during ESSD 2016

As reports come in from the second edition of the European Week of Sport, early results point to the European School Sport Day 2016 as the EU initiative's biggest event, moving approximately 1.5 million school children in 20 countries across Europe on 30<sup>th</sup> 2016. In 2015, the event was organised in three countries (Hungary, Bulgaria and Bulgaria) as an international pilot programme supporting the first European Week of Sport, and this year it expanded to Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech



Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Scotland, Spain and Turkey. EUPEA was one of the main partners in the implementation of the initiative together with the Hungarian School Sport Federation (HSSF) and the International Sports and Culture Association (ISCA).

The Hungarian School Sport Federation has run the school sport day at a national level for ten years. It up-scaled the event internationally last year with support from the European Union's Erasmus+ Sport programme and partners from the education and grassroots sport sectors, including the European Physical Education Association (EUPEA), Youth Sport Trust (UK), International Sport and Culture Association, V4Sport Foundation (Poland) and BG BE Active Association (Bulgaria).

In Hungary, 1000 local schools participated in the European School Sport Day, which means more than 250 thousand Hungarian pupils were active on the day.

Schools in the 19 additional countries organised their own school sport day on the same day under the European School Sport Day banner, offering the same 2016-metre running event and other activities designed to deliver the day's target of 120 minutes of collective physical activity and sport. The schools used the European School Sport Day toolkit, developed by elaborated by the Hungarian School Sport Federation and its Erasmus+ partners, as a guide to plan their activities.



“The number of participants exceeded all of our expectations,” **Hungarian School Sport Federation President Gábor Balogh** said.

“The European School Sport Day has become one of the largest and most significant events of the European Week of Sport, and it started as a Hungarian initiative. It is now even more important to be present at European level to engage more students each year.”

At the Budapest flagship event, held at the Honvéd athletic sports ground, 550 children started their 2016-metre run when Hungarian epee fencer Géza Imre shot the starting signal.

“I find it incredibly important to have the school children get up from their books and move! European School Sport Day is a great initiative, bringing the students’ attention to sports and not being alone. Today they may find inspiration, not only to play sports but also to engage in their local communities,” Géza Imre said.

The prestige of the event was further enhanced by the attendance of representatives from the Hungarian Ministry for Human Capacities’ representatives. In her opening speech, Dr Tünde Szabó, the state secretary spoke about sports being not a privilege but an opportunity for life-long activity that must be available to everyone. Learning skills, stamina and concentration are all developed by physical activity, having a positive effect in the classrooms as well. She also emphasised the international success of the event and its power to connect Europe through school sport.

The Hungarian School Sport Federation rewarded the most active schools with sports equipment kits, encouraging students to continue exercising and adopting healthy lifestyle habits.

- The images of the flagship events in Hungary are available on the [Hungarian School Sport Federation’s Flickr page](#).
- A video of the Budapest flagship event is available [here](#).
- [Visit the European School Sport Day® website](#)
- [Original story and photo by the Hungarian School Sport Federation](#)