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## PRESS RELEASE

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Brussels, 19 September 2014

### **FUTURE STRATEGY FOR FITNESS AND OUTDOOR SECTORS DECIDED AT LONDON SUMMIT**

The plenary meeting of the DIAL Project in social dialogue convened at the UK Trades Union head office on 17th September. 60 employers and employers organisations from 20 different EU Member States attended the congress to hear of the latest European initiatives and proposals that will affect the progress in social dialogue, mobility and education, representation of the sector at a European level, some new sector definitions and the establishing of a skills council for fitness and outdoor sectors.

With the appointment of the new EU Commissioners and with a priority placed on skills issues, recognition of qualifications and removing barriers to mobility, there is new significance for actions across the active leisure sector – which is the new European title for fitness and outdoor sectors. The delegates in London gave support and recognition for the work that the European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA) and European Confederation of Outdoor Employers (EC-OE) have been doing in the past year, which has been greatly aided by the EU-funded DIAL Project.

The European Commission and UNI-Europa also gave their views and visions of how good industrial relations can support growth and entrepreneurship of the sector. Fitness alone has over 46,000,000 users across Europe, and is the largest participation “sport” according to the Eurobarometer. The delegates in London were asked to comment on the priorities of a future strategy which concluded that EHFA and EC-OE should continue the work in social dialogue, but with an emphasis to now also help employees to establish better representation, and to focus on some main issues of training, mobility, and to improve levels of good practice in safety. The final point of confirmation was that based on the existing work of EHFA and EC-OE, and with just some minor adjustments in their existing cooperation, they can be easily extended to effectively become a sector skills council for active leisure.

In economic and employment terms the active leisure sector is four times larger than “sport” and with a new agreement on sector definitions, the recognition and representation of active leisure can now be fully realised. Commenting on the proceedings Cliff Collins, EHFA Programmes Director said “the DIAL Project results and especially the London meeting have surpassed our expectations and outcomes. We



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have had a tremendously high-level of buy-in from employers all across Europe who have now helped us to be confident in the way that we can proceed and that is based on a solid mandate.” Herman Smulders, President of EC-OE added “there cannot be any mistake now about which organisations have the real representation of employers in the active leisure sector. EHFA and EC-OE have established a pre-eminence in so many areas of EU policy, and through DIAL have also managed to increase their membership with employers, that means we have excellent EU coverage.”

The DIAL Project outcomes and findings will be reported to the Commission in October, and will include further plans for how social dialogue and a sector skills council for active leisure can be pursued. Further information is available at <http://www.ehfa-programmes.eu/node/12> and on [www.ec-oe.eu](http://www.ec-oe.eu).

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#### Notes to the Editor:

#### Social Dialogue in the Active Leisure Sector (DIAL)

To encourage continued growth and entrepreneurship in the active leisure sector (fitness and outdoors) it is important for there to be sound industrial relations and understanding between employers and workers. It is important to promote consensus building and involvement among the main stakeholders in the world of work through a process which is known as social dialogue.

The European Commission is funding some development work to help establish discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions between employers and employees through a new process of social dialogue for the active leisure sector. The focus of this development during 2014 is to get more employers aware of the importance of social dialogue and to identify some key areas of industrial concerns at both national and European levels.

For more information: <http://www.ehfa-programmes.eu/node/12>.  
<http://www.ec-oe.eu/active-leisure/>



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#### About EHFA/EuropeActive

EuropeActive formerly known as The European Health & Fitness Association (EHFA), with its origins in 1996 as a not-for-profit organisation, remains as the unique voice for the European health & fitness sector to all of the main EU Institutions. Its mission is to turn back the tide of inactivity and ensure that MORE PEOPLE become MORE ACTIVE as a result of a functional synergy between all of the sector’s actors.

EuropeActive has, among its membership, more than 10,000 facilities, 19 national trade associations, industry leading suppliers, education providers and individuals.

For further information visit [www.ehfa.eu](http://www.ehfa.eu)

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## About EC-OE

The European Confederation of Outdoor Employers (EC-OE) was founded in 2008 as a representative umbrella organisation of the national associations of outdoor companies in Europe.

EC-OE's mission statement is:

Assuring Quality and Safety in the Outdoors by:

- Adopting appropriate safety standards
- Promoting a commitment to ongoing staff training
- Promoting a commitment to a sustainable environmental policy
- Sharing pertinent information with members
- Representation at appropriate national & international bodies
- Acting as the voice of the European Outdoors

EC-OE is an international non-for-profit organisation (IVZW) established according to Belgian law. For further information visit [www.ec-oe.eu](http://www.ec-oe.eu)

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