DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR A NATIONAL SPORTS ORGANIZATION. METHODOLOGY AND APPLICATIONS

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Abstract: In the field of sports, development strategies (by level) include: the social mission of sport, the vision of accomplishing the mission, the values that must result from activities carried out over long periods of time (more than 12 years).
In Romania, there have been developed strategies at the national level by field of activity, such as the economic, cultural, educational, sporting and financial ones, as well as at the region, county and local levels.
Designing a strategy involves completing an acknowledged methodology specifically applied to a field, depending on its traits and dimensions.
The disharmony existing between the statements of leaders and current realities, the lack of knowledge of the basic concepts and their contents, and consequently the sports-specific categories, the appointment of leaders based on political criteria and the sponsors unprepared specifically represent handicaps which are difficult to overcome when developing strategies in the field
Key words: Development strategies, national sports, organization

1. Introduction

Strategos (Greek), meaning the leader, the commander of an army or a general, is a term that has changed its content in the time of Pericles (450 BC), when it started denoting leadership (in administrative, oratorical, power-related terms). Throughout the years, the term has evolved. Thus, according to Napoleon Bonaparte, strategy is the art of application, and according to Clausewitz, strategy is the art of using military forces to achieve the goals set by policy. Nowadays, strategy is perceived intentionally and is concretized in programs, plans and methods aiming at the future of a country, the social area, institutions, sports federations, sports clubs, firms and the operations involved to reach the objectives. It is also perceived as the sum of objectives set by leaders, which must be reached within a given time.

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In Romania, there have been developed strategies at the national level by field of activity, such as the economic, cultural, educational, sporting and financial ones, as well as at the region, county and local levels.

All these have become necessary and possible in an increasingly globalized external environment integrating the social, economic, cultural and other areas. The internal environment seeks forms of understanding according to the dominant ideology, animated by policies with different scopes.

National sports organizations are concerned, in a broad sense, with their prospective development, optimization of the activity, construction of the own future over a long period of time. Strategy development is laborious, because sport has become a cultural, educational, economic and managerial field with increasingly complex social functions.

The durations of strategies in sport are relatively easy to establish if one takes into account the 4-year periodicity of the Olympics. In sport, there are conventionally used the following periods: the near (4 years), medium (8 years) and large (12 years or more) ones.

2. Material and method

Designing a strategy involves completing an acknowledged methodology specifically applied to a field, depending on its traits and dimensions.

The strategies of organizations, particularly of national sports federations and sports clubs, include the following phases:

- Defining the mission of the organization
- Purpose of the activity or its strategic target/targets delimited and described as clearly as possible
- Explicit vision of the way of action for achieving the mission, based on data resulting from:

- An analysis of the external environment in which the organization performs
- An analysis of the internal environment of the organization
- Strategic targets by subsystem (globally)
- Strategic objectives by subsystem (sport for all, performance sport, adapted sport) or department (technical, economic, financial, human resources)
- Activities for achieving the objectives
- Factors with responsibilities (duties)
- Performance indicators
- Human resources
- Strategy implementation (phases, stages, roles)
- Assessing the performance indicators (objectives, activities) and the achievement of strategic targets

3. Results

3.1. The objectives of a federation are to grow and develop activity in the sport it administers, and they are established according to policies, as shown in Figure 1:

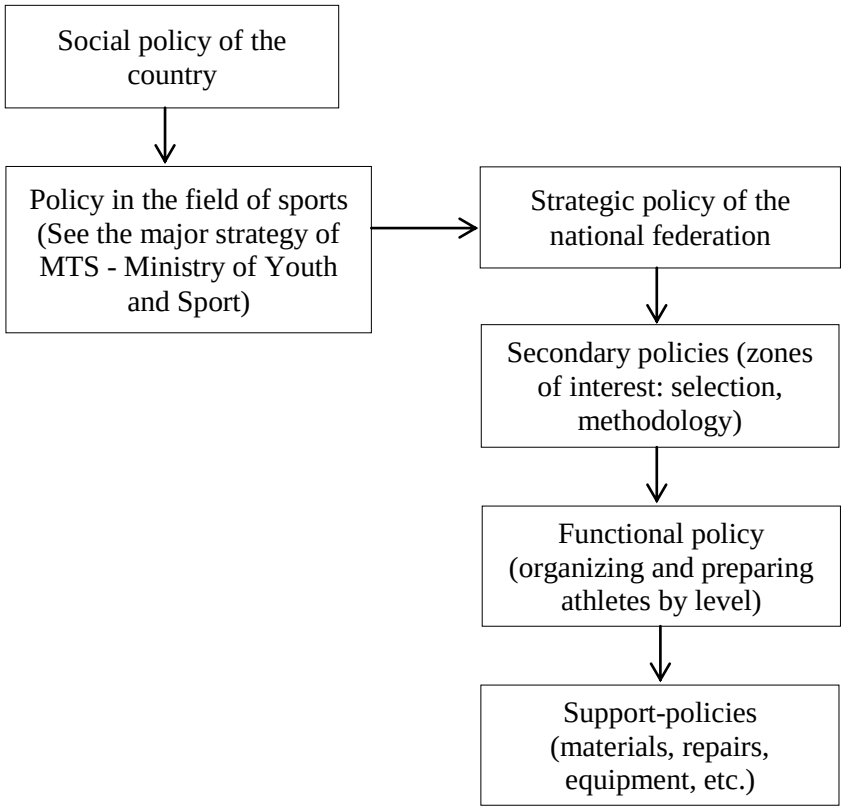

Fig. 1. Relationships between sports development policies

3.2. Explicit vision resulting from:

- An analysis of the external environment:

- Political factor: the strategy of Romanian sport is developed in the European context, in compliance with and by applying the legislation drawn up to increase the social role of sport, as seen in Figure 2.
- Sociocultural factor:
  - Performance sport – Athletes Without Frontiers (AWF)
  - Sport as a cultural and human development factor:
    - Mutations and development directions
    - Emergence of new sports
    - Training reconceptualization and restructuring. Directions of action in performance development
- Economic factor
- Technological factor

- An analysis of the internal environment:

- National policy on sport is concretized in a series of laws and normative acts, among which the most important are:

- Law of Physical Education and Sport no. 69/2000, with subsequent amendments
- Law of National Education no. 1/2011, with subsequent amendments
- Normative acts and government emergency ordinances on the organization of sport, the fight against doping, financing, human resources, the professionalism status, etc.

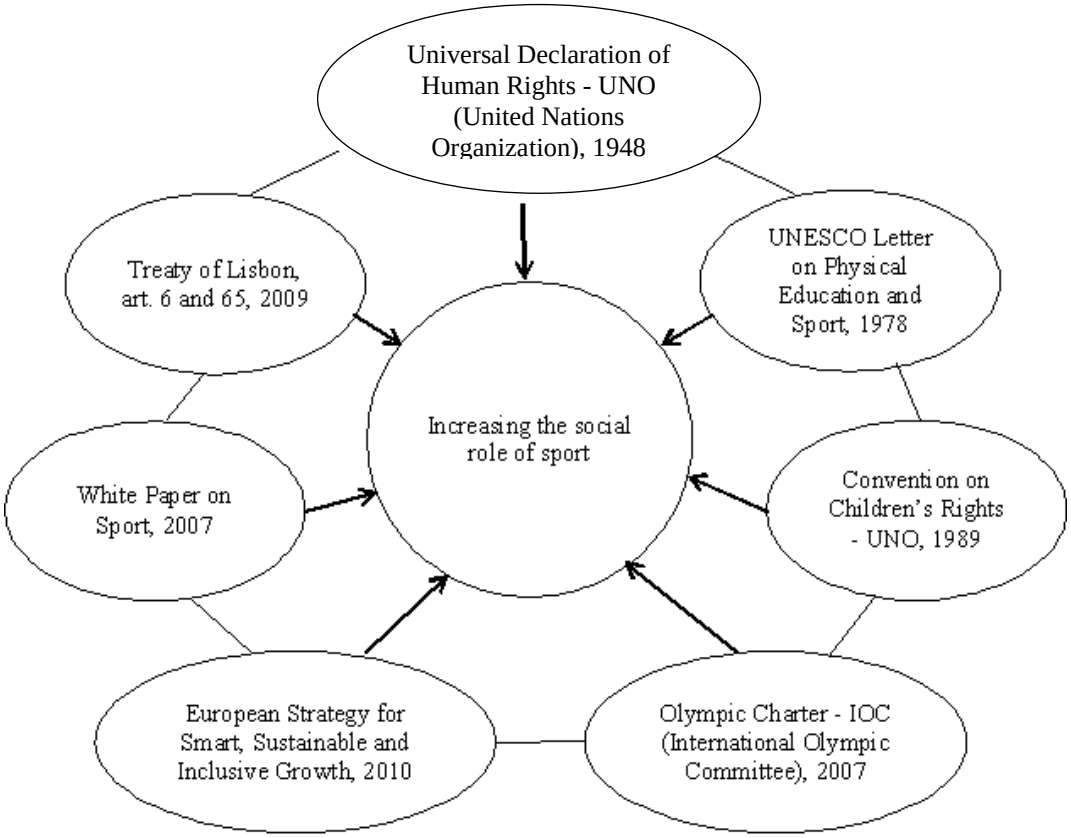

Fig. 2. International political context in which the Romanian sport is developing

The defining notes of Romanian sport and implicitly of subjacent organizations are shown in Figure 3.

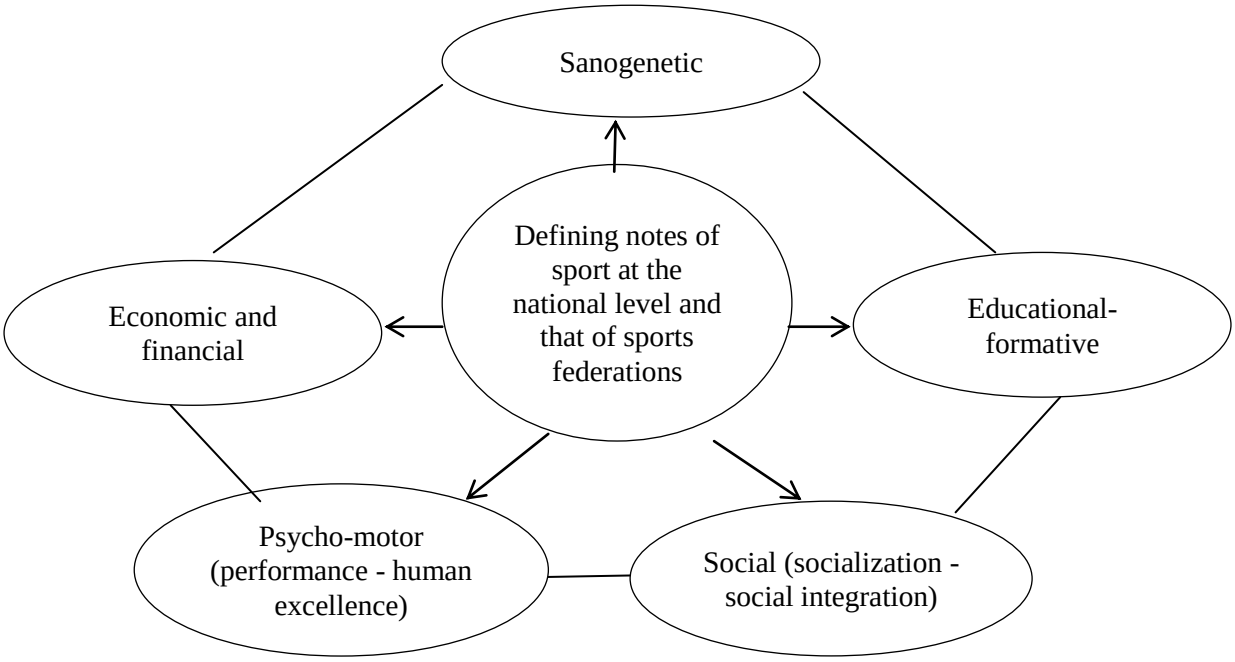

Fig. 3. Dimensions of sport

3.3. SWOT analysis has emphasized several aspects:
3.3.1. As regards sport for all (European Commission, Eurobarometer Sport and Physical Activity, March 2014), it is noted that, among the 28 European countries, the percentage of Romanian population not involved in the practice of sport reaches 60% (Figure 4).

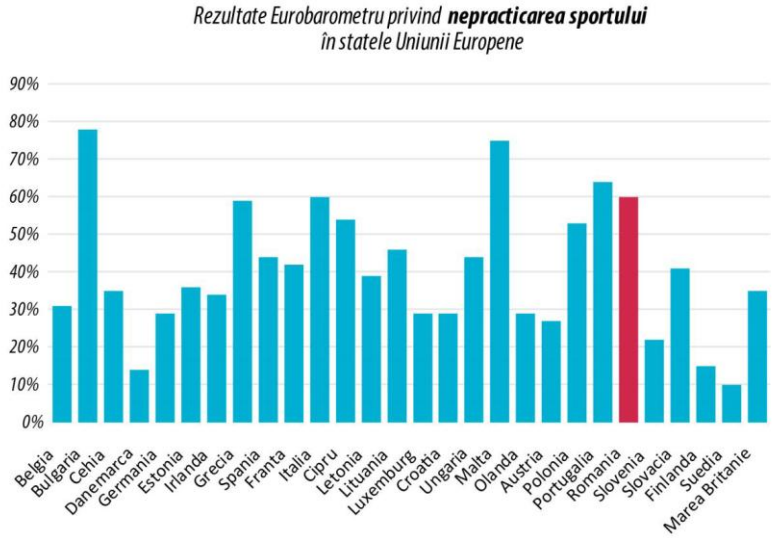

Fig. 4. Eurobarometer results on the non-practice of sport in the European Union countries

3.3.2. Performance sport is characterized, at the national level (total federations), by the following data provided by INS (National Institute of Statistics) for the period between 1924 and 2012:
- 96 Olympic medals
- 976 medals at the World Championships and European Championships
- a drastic decrease in the number of registered athletes
- a decrease in the number of employed coaches, especially those with higher qualification

3.3.3. Adapted sport is organized based on the models of good practice provided by three institutions: Sport for All Federation (also concerned with the integration of sport for people with disabilities), National Paralympic Committee (performance level) and Special Olympics Romania (sport for all - with competitive and non-competitive forms).
3.3.4. Human resources. On 14 July 2016, the number of coaches in the records of CNPFA (National Center for the Training and Further Development of Coaches) was 41020, for the 66 federations acknowledged and for all categories: Master, 1st category; Senior, 2nd category; 3rd category; 4th category; assistant coach, 5th category. The records include people in the documents of the center, whether they are in the country, abroad, employed or not engaged in the profession.
Weaknesses: poor qualification (many people); non-involvement of specialists from higher education in awarding categories; unaccredited and not updated programs; lack of correlation between the training of coaches and the provisions of Law no. 1/2011; inexistence of an occupational standard for coaches; conflicts of interest between the institutions involved; inexistence of a Sectoral Committee for Sport; lack of professional associations, etc.
3.3.5. International resources. Scientific research and methodological assistance
The specificity of research is interdisciplinarity.
Factors involved: INCS (National Institute for Sport Research); few research centers for human performance within the faculties for physical education and sport; INMS (National Institute of Sports Medicine); scientific conferences.
Weaknesses: low international visibility; low transfer of knowledge to applications; low number of experts involved; precarious financing, etc.
3.3.6. Material resources - infrastructure. In 2013, in Romania, there were 417 sports organizations, among which: 276 clubs, central administration structures; 48 subordinated to MTS; 220 subordinated to MENCS (Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research); 141 structures/clubs subordinated to local administration; 69

structures of joint-stock companies; 3843 private structures/clubs.

3.4. Strategic targets and objectives

Strategic targets derive from the mission and generate the strategic objectives by subsystem:

- Examples of strategic targets and objectives for a subsystem
  - Increasing active and systematic participation of the population of all ages in sports activities to promote health, education, social integration and cohesion
- Increasing the number of participants and facilitating access to sports programs
- Enhancing the level of information and education about sports and other physical activities

- Examples of strategic targets and objectives for a sports club
  - Contributing to the improvement of general health status of the population registered at the club
  - Promoting annually 1 or 2 athletes from each section of the club to national sports teams
- Increasing the number of participants in sports competitions for all organized by the club
- Enlarging the selection base and making up 2 or 3 groups of children and juniors in each section

Each subsystem or organization ends with the performance indicators expressed in an objective way. For instance, increasing annually by 10% the number of participants in the competitions organized by the club

- Example regarding scientific research
  - Development of scientific research at the club level by assigning tasks to the own specialists
- Preparing information documents for the population about the sports actions organized and the assistance provided
- Improving the selection system and highlighting the dynamics of skills by age

The same methodology is applied for:

- Material resources - infrastructure
- Human resources
- Financial resources

3.5. Strategy implementation

- Factors involved
- Activities by factor
- Strategy restructuring depending on future evolutions of the external and internal environments

3.6. Forms of assessment

- Periodic balance sheet (annually or biannually)
- Auditing
- Synthesis reports

4. Discussions and conclusions

1. Developing long-term strategies in the field of sports, in general, or of sports branches, in particular, is necessary in order to guide the development, specify the performances achieved by organizations, formulate and implement decisions, systematically control the actions undertaken.
2. Strategies are characterized rather by generalities, they reflecting the external environment patterns, fully harmonized ideologically and politically.
3. The goals of the activity must reflect the conceptual structure of the assumed social mission, of policies, by teleological judgment, giving meaning to the involved parties.
4. Strategies, regardless of the type of sports organization and its level, are developed in the context of new communicational strategies.
5. The structure of any medium- or long-term strategy must comply with the scientific methodology of strategic management: mission, vision, values, purpose and/or strategic targets, objectives, activities, factors involved, performance indicators, implementation and forms of assessment.
6. Strategy proposals for the Romanian sports development in the past 20 years were developed in an artisanal, autodidactic way by people incompletely prepared, in the context of the conflicts of interest between departments, largely focusing on the financial aspects and those related to the material base. The professionalism of human resources was the task of departments associated to sports.
7. The disharmony existing between the statements of leaders and current realities, the lack of knowledge of the basic concepts and their contents, and consequently the sports-specific categories, the appointment of leaders based on political criteria and the sponsors unprepared specifically represent handicaps which are difficult to overcome when developing strategies in the field.

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(Note: Because the strategies submitted to authorities do not include the sources of inspiration, except for explicit official data on some situations, states and other exigencies, we present only the documents that have been used in this paper.)