



European
Commission

The New European Bauhaus: opportunities for the sport sector

- Background paper -

SHARE

initiative



Sport

The New European Bauhaus: opportunities for the sport sector

In September 2020, President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen introduced the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative during her State of the Union address. The NEB is a **creative and interdisciplinary movement** that connects the **European Green Deal** to everyday life. It is a platform for experimentation aiming to unite citizens, experts, businesses and institutions in imagining and designing a **sustainable, aesthetic and inclusive** future.

The NEB is currently in the **co-design phase**, looking for contributions from citizens and organisations to shape its direction. The initiative aims to rethink our common spaces and move **beyond the boundaries of buildings or infrastructures** to include urban/rural spaces and the way citizens experience them. Topics such as mobility and movement are thus within the scope of the NEB.

In a second phase, the NEB will provide financial support to innovative ideas and products through ad-hoc calls for proposals and through coordinated programmes included in the Multiannual Financial Framework.

Back to the roots: sport in the original Bauhaus school

The NEB revives ideas from the twentieth-century **Bauhaus** (1919-1933). This German art school became known for its design strategy and strove to combine aesthetics with everyday function. Few people recall that **sport and physical activity were an essential part of the original Bauhaus approach**. Hannes Meyer, the second director of Bauhaus Dessau, ensured that one day a week was solely devoted to sport and gymnastics.¹ In 1930, Meyer employed two physical education teachers. The Bauhaus school even applied for public funds to enhance its playing field. The inclusion of sport and physical activity in the Bauhaus curriculum had various purposes. First, as Meyer put it, sport combatted a “one-sided emphasis on brainwork.”² In addition, Bauhaus instructors believed that students could **better express themselves** if they actively experienced the space, rhythms and movements of the body. The Bauhaus approach also considered physical activity an important contributor to **wellbeing and community spirit**. It took years for sport and physical activity to be included in the curriculum and their role remains largely overlooked in the current historiography of the Bauhaus. Yet for those who take a closer look, it is evident that sport and physical activity were essential to the interdisciplinary Bauhaus movement that developed revolutionary ideas and continues to shape our environments today.

Why should the SHARE ALLIANCE get involved in shaping the New European Bauhaus initiative?

The message is clear: while sport and physical activity are not always at the forefront, they are a necessity for any interdisciplinary project that builds on Bauhaus ideals. The NEB welcomes contributions from a wide plethora of stakeholders and domains, including the sport movement.

The NEB and the SHARE initiative have a mutual interest in **regional and local spaces** and subsequent thematic areas such as urban regeneration, social cohesion and active, healthy communities. The SHARE initiative already highlights the **contribution of sport to a smarter, greener, low-carbon Europe that is more connected, more social and closer to citizens**.

¹ Swantje Scharenberg (2003) Physical education at the Bauhaus, 1919-33, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 20, no. 3, 119.

² Ibid.

Moreover, the objectives of the SHARE initiative lend themselves well to the multidisciplinary and space-driven approach that the NEB envisions. The NEB thus provides an opportunity for the sport movement **to strengthen the position of sport on the European agenda.**

The following topics clearly link the benefits of sport and physical activity with the objectives of the New European Bauhaus. Thus, they can provide sport stakeholders with ideas and paths for development directed to shaping the NEB initiative.

1. **Active spaces:** sustainable and aesthetic places of living can successfully incorporate a rethinking and redevelopment of spatial planning, thus to maximise individuals' possibility to move in any moment of their daily routines. The concept of 'active spaces' is increasingly being applied in cities across Europe, transforming local communal space in order to help to decrease sedentarism and increase the health and wellbeing of citizens.
2. **Social inclusion through active spaces:** the concept of active spaces makes use of built environments in a smart way (whether buildings, green spaces or transport systems) in order to provide equal access for all, regardless of income category, social or cultural status or physical condition: wellbeing through movement should be accessible to all in a clean, sustainable and beautiful future.
3. **Playspaces - open to community-driven initiatives:** rethinking our shared spaces is also about creating the conditions for bottom-up initiatives and allowing activities to take place out in the open. Sport and physical activity are excellent ways to do this, mixing communities and creating new interpretations of existing places (e.g. street sports), with very limited risk of tensions that arise with the appropriation of public spaces for private interests. An example is provided by outdoor urban disciplines, such as the evolution of breakdance or skateboarding in public spaces, which not only create a common expression space for citizens, regardless of their socio-economic or cultural backgrounds, but also play a significant role in the promotion of health and wellbeing (especially in a post-pandemic recovery context). Moreover, getting local sport associations involved also provides a route to a greater engagement of a broad social mix in local NEB initiatives.
4. **New technologies - active spatial planning through wearables and tracking devices:** the ongoing convergence between sport practice and daily life and routine has developed a fertile testbed for technological innovation. Sport practice has thus become an important area of research for various technological innovations, facilitating the development of wearables and tracking devices as tools to measure physical performance and improve health. Technology can benefit spatial planning via the instalment of digital trackers in a space used for physical activity, which can connect with personal wearables in order to track and enhance the citizens' daily routine. Digital enhancements should occupy an important place in a sustainable, clean and beautiful future.
5. **Physical health and mental wellbeing through green spaces:** the evidence that correlates exercise in green spaces to improvements in physical health and especially mental wellbeing is now very significant.³ While there is clear evidence that increased fitness and better cardiovascular function, reduced blood pressure, obesity, resting heart rate and a positive influence on other health markers are all associated with physical activity – but the evidence now shows that participants gain greater benefits from exercising in green space. Research has further shown that exercise in green spaces generates positive effects for mood, resilience, feelings of revitalisation, positive engagement and restoration for people living in urban settings. Negative affective states like stress, depression, anxiety, tension, confusion, anger, rumination, loneliness and neuroticism could be reduced by exercise in green space.

³ Barbara Eigenschenck et. al, *Benefits of outdoor sports for society*, 2019, <https://outdoorsportsbenefits.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/BOSS-Stage1-Full-Report.pdf>

6. **Transformational Knowledge Space:** a space that operates 24 hours a day and throughout the year, aimed at all segments of the population in its human diversity, which reproduces family and society environments, which provides the acquisition of knowledge and skills throughout life, formal and informal, which offers opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship through workshops, a space that combines aesthetics, technological innovation combined with environmental sustainability, which is a sine-qua-non resource to promote active citizenship, based on the regular practice of sport and physical activity and the promotion of healthy lifestyle habits based on knowledge for the quality of life and the planet.
7. **Environmental awareness and connections:** in the transition towards a greener economy, the awareness of our human dependence on nature and biodiversity is of significant importance. Europe's level of urbanisation reached 75% of its population and is expected to increase to approximately 83.7% by 2050.⁴ Therefore, the development of beautiful and accessible natural areas in our urban settings is becoming increasingly important by creating greater opportunity for citizens to connect with nature in their daily routines and experience its benefits.

How can the SHARE ALLIANCE practically get involved in shaping the New European Bauhaus initiative?

The current phase in the development of the New European Bauhaus is important in **determining the scope** of the initiative and in laying the foundation for further implementation. The above-mentioned topics provide important opportunities for sport stakeholders to involve sport in the shaping of this initiative. As such, SHARE encourages the sport movement, but also academia, business and research facilities who develop sport-related activities to get involved in the co-creation phase. Stakeholders can do so by:

1. Sharing their views

The European Commission invites all interested parties to submit their views through the dedicated [NEB website](#). People can share **examples of inspiring achievements** for the NEB, their **ideas** about how it should be shaped and how it should evolve, as well as their **concerns and challenges**. The European Commission will award **prizes** to existing examples that represent the integration of the key values of the initiative (i.e. **sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusivity**), and that can inspire discussions about, and the transformation of, the places where we live.

2. Hosting conversations

People can mobilise their network, organisation, institution, local movement, university or neighbourhood by hosting a conversation about the NEB. They can either use their own format or download the [conversation toolkit](#). Following the conversation, hosts can share their contributions via the [NEB website](#).

3. Becoming a partner

The NEB needs support from **organisations** across the EU that can act as **“Partners of the New European Bauhaus.”** They will act as promoters, community managers, sounding boards and key interlocutors throughout the development of the initiative. Partners should have enough outreach capacity to involve a substantial number of stakeholders and their core activities need to be relevant to at least one dimension of the NEB concept.

⁴ European Commission, Developments and Forecasts on Continuing Urbanisation, 2019, https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/foresight/topic/continuing-urbanisation/developments-and-forecasts-on-continuing-urbanisation_en#:~:text=Urbanisation%20in%20Europe,to%20approximately%2083.7%25%20in%202050

Partners will be mentioned on the website and will be involved in the future implementation of the initiative. Organisations that want to put more effort into their engagement in this process can become partners by responding to the [call for partnerships](#).

From **April onwards**, the European Commission will analyse the input of the co-design phase and move towards implementing the support framework. Sport stakeholders have thus the chance to **get involved as soon as possible** in co-designing the scope of the NEB movement.

Timeline

To oversee the NEB movement, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) created a **new NEB Unit (JRC.01)**. The unit, led by Xavier Troussard, provides important information for the initiative during the [information sessions](#) which are hosted throughout February and March. The NEB will unfold in **three phases** that will partly operate **in parallel: co-design, delivery and dissemination**.

- **Co-design (October 2020 – Summer 2021)**

The co-design phase starts a co-creation process to shape the NEB concept by exploring ideas, identifying the most urgent needs and challenges, and connecting interested parties. As one element of the design phase, the Commission will launch the first edition of the NEB prize in the spring of 2021 (up to €30,300 for each winner). In addition, the co-design phase will also lead to the opening of calls for proposals in autumn 2021 to bring the NEB ideas to life in at least five places in EU Member States using EU funds at national and regional level. The co-design phase will also refine the exact financing structure and clarify the role of other MFF programmes in the initiative.

- **Delivery (September 2021 onward)**

The delivery phase will begin by setting up at least five NEB pilots, through open calls. Flanking initiatives (both budgetary and non-budgetary) identified in the co-design phase as well as digital networks and platforms will complement the pilots by structuring and spreading the movement. A “community of practice” will monitor the five pilots: all the partners involved in the broader initiative, as well as participants in the co-design phase should be able to learn and benefit from the first experiments and thus create a greater impact.

- **Dissemination (January 2023 onward)**

The last phase will focus on diffusing good ideas and concepts to a broader audience in Europe and beyond. This phase will focus on networking and sharing knowledge between practitioners on the best available methods, solutions and prototypes. The NEB initiative should help all pioneers to replicate their experiences across cities, rural areas and localities. In addition, it will support the emergence of lead markets for new ways of living in buildings that are in harmony with the natural environment and the climate.

In parallel with these three phases, the NEB initiative will develop a **framework of deliverables** that aligns with the ongoing planning of the Multiannual Financial Framework.

More information

Website: https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/co-designing-new-european-bauhaus_en

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/neweuropeanbauhaus/>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/eucommission/new-european-bauhaus/>