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Glenn Micallef gathers young Europeans at Brussels football ground

The EU Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport convened 25 young people from across the bloc at a historic Belgian stadium on Tuesday to help shape the European Union's forthcoming sports strategy.

Glenn Micallef held a Youth Policy Dialogue on the European Sport Model at the Joseph Marien Stadium — home ground of Royale Union Saint-Gilloise in the Forest municipality of Brussels. The session formed part of the formal consultation process for an upcoming Commission strategy document, "A Strategic Vision for Sport in Europe: Reinforcing the European Sport Model", which the Commission intends to publish by the end of 2026.

The strategy will reaffirm a values-based model of sport, promoting sporting culture and healthy lifestyles so that all EU citizens, across generations, particularly young people, can enjoy the numerous benefits of sport.

Micallef talked of sport as "a bridge between communities, and a force for inclusion." The dialogue was structured around three groups of young participants: those who engage in sport as a grassroots hobby, those pursuing it as students or professionals, and competitive athletes, including para-athletes.

A public consultation published by the Commission's sport directorate ran from 15 September to 8 December 2025, drawing more than 200 responses from citizens, NGOs, academia and public authorities. Close to 80 per cent of respondents expressed support for EU action to safeguard the European sport model. The priorities emerging from that exercise were governance and integrity; solidarity and financial

sustainability — particularly at the grassroots level; and sport's broader role in public health, inclusion and social cohesion.

Tuesday's event was the second Youth Policy Dialogue hosted by Micallef himself since taking office. His first took place in Athens on 28 January 2025, under the theme "All in: Promoting Inclusiveness through Sports and Culture", focusing on access to cultural heritage and the role of sport as a vehicle for inclusion and social cohesion.