



School of European Sport Studies (3es)

Jean Monnet European Chair granted to **William Gasparini**, University Professor in sport sociology (STAPS) at the Faculty of Sport Sciences of the University of Strasbourg

As part of the "School of European Sport Studies" Chair, William Gasparini aims to develop innovative scholar knowledge on the European sport area by questioning the link between the European construction and sport, and cross-referencing European studies, sociology and social sciences of sport.

Through a work of transmission to students, researchers and young researchers, teachers and broadly speaking, to the general public, the question is to analyse sport and its institutional dynamics as a "European social fact" and a social construct. Through these educational, research and scientific activities programs, this project focuses on the study of sports practises in Europe, European sports policies, creation of the "European sport project", development of a European citizenship through sport, processes of identification with Europe through sports competitions or through the formal and informal Europeanization of sports policies. This project aims to contribute to the development of a political sociology of sport and its close cooperation with the research on European political sociology to work out the causes, characteristics and effects of the European integration.

The link between the European construction and sport represents a theoretical challenge for researchers, because of the diversity of institutions and their competences, but also because of an often disembodied perception of the European sports policies. To understand the internal logic of this area, it is important to focus not only on the institutions, but also on the players in the field of sport who are "entrepreneurs of Europeanization" (supporters, athletes, managers, local elected representatives and MEPs responsible for sport, economic and media agents, etc.).

Lastly, the program of the Chair aims to establish a network of researchers and teachers working on these issues and launch new research projects on "who makes the Europe of sport" rather than "what Europe does to sport", as well as on the contribution of sport to the potential Europeanization of citizens.

The project stems from William Gasparini's research works and European seminars conducted as part of the "Sport and social sciences" laboratory (EA 1342), the Institute of Advanced Studies of the University of Strasbourg -USIAS- (where he was appointed *fellow* from 2013 to 2015) and the Excellence Project on Europe of the University of Strasbourg, for which he is in charge of an international, travelling and interdisciplinary seminar on the Europeanization of sports policies and practises.

He is currently conducting researches on the informal Europeanization of sports by "European sports entrepreneurs" and on comparison in the analysis of sports practises and policies. He questions the circulation and issues of the scholar and practical European categories ascribing sport with sociocultural functions (such as the "European citizenship" or "intercultural dialogue"). Moreover, he studies the creation of the "European sport project" and structuring of the European sport area through a sociology of transnational areas, where the effects and attractions of several fields are simultaneously felt. Historically promoted by the players of sport organisations from European countries, away from the European construction, the Europe of sport takes shape as the sport federations turn the continent into an organised space for competitions. Sport gradually becomes a concern for the European institutions as it becomes a social issue and professionalises. Therefore, the European construction and sport constitute a dual theoretical challenge for sociologists: firstly, because of the complexity of its process, diversity of institutions and their competences, as well as the multitude of intervening agents; secondly, because of the overlooking and disembodied vision of the European sports policies. To understand the internal logic of this area, it is important to focus not only on the institutions, but also on the "entrepreneurs of Europeanization" (supporters, athletes, managers, local elected representatives and MEPs responsible for sport, economic and media agents, etc.). William Gasparini's Chair Program aims to develop new thoughts and trainings in the field of *European studies* and launch new research projects on "who makes the Europe of sport" rather than "what Europe does to sport", as well as on the contribution of sport to the potential Europeanization of citizens.