

## Challenges for Sport Psychology in a divided continent

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*Despite a growing interest in the history of Sport Psychology, little is known about the specific challenges and the working procedures in the first 20 years of FEPSAC, when the continent of Europe was divided by the Iron Curtain. At the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FEPSAC, and based on document analysis, this article aims at shedding some light on the aims of FEPSAC's working committees, the difficulties encountered and the achievements made. More specifically, the Scientific Committee made attempts towards a common terminology and understanding of sport psychology concepts across the different European languages and the standardisation of tests for sport psychology. The Information and Documentation Committee was active in collecting and disseminating new publications. Despite considerable efforts and remarkable progresses, the long-term impact of those initiatives remained limited.*

KEY WORDS: Documentation, European sport psychology, FEPSAC, Iron Curtain, Terminology.

### Introduction

Around the beginning of this century, a series of articles, books, and book chapters dealing with the history of sport psychology have been published, indicating an increasing interest in the roots of the discipline. Many authors focus on the role of early pioneers in the area, dating back the beginning of sport psychology to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Examples are N. Triplett (Davis, Huss, & Becker, 1995), E.W. Scripture (Kornspan, 2007a), P. de Coubertin (Kornspan, 2007b), or P. Tissie (Bäumler & Klecker, 1994). Other authors concentrate on the contributions

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FEPSAC has started to build up an online archive. So far, minutes of the meetings of the Managing Council are available open source online, see <https://www.fepsac.com/fepsac-archive/> for more information.

Other documents from the archive are yet to be catalogued and may be sent upon request.

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from the period between World War I and II, for example C.R. Griffith (Gould & Pick, 1995) or D.H. Yates (Kornspan & MacCracken, 2001). Green and Benjamin (2009) refer to this period from 1890 to 1960 as “the prehistory of sport psychology” (p. 283).

Landers (1995) labelled the period between 1950 and 1980 ‘the formative years’, when the number of textbooks published increased and research societies and journals were established. Indeed, several of the international organisations in sport psychology were founded about 50 years ago. For example, the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) was established in 1965 in Rome, the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA) celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary 2017 in San Diego, and the European Federation of Sport Psychology (FEPSAC, the abbreviation of the French name ‘Fédération Européenne de Psychologie des Sports et des Activités Corporelles’) celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the 15<sup>th</sup> FEPSAC Congress in 2019 in Münster, Germany.

International organisations such as FEPSAC are often known and perceived as the organisers of major conferences and as responsible bodies for the publication of scientific journals or textbooks. For example, sport psychologists from around the world appreciate the high quality of the European congresses of sport psychology organised under the auspices of FEPSAC (Seiler, 2019), and the FEPSAC journal *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* has become a leading journal in the field (Ntoumanis & Strauss, 2019). More than 500 students have been enrolled in the FEPSAC initiated European Masters Programme (Lintunen, Apitzsch, Papaioannou, & Vanden Auweele, 2019), and a European certification process for applied sport psychologists is on its way (Wylleman, Moesch, & Debois, 2019). All these endeavours have made significant contributions to the development of both the academic and the applied field, and enthusiastic younger generations of sport psychologists are successfully developing further the science and the profession of sport psychology.

Whereas these service functions of the international sport psychology organisations are acknowledged and appreciated, their historical development and modes of operation are rarely the subject of publications. Morris, Hackfort, and Lidor (2003) investigated the first twenty years of ISSP from 1965 to 1985 based on an oral history approach involving interviews with five early leaders of ISSP, and also a range of documents. The article gives an interesting insight into the difficulties faced when trying to establish and manage an international organisation in those days, and also takes into account the political situation of the Cold War. Still, the authors conclude that “the present paper represents only a few snapshots of the early years of ISSP” (p. 136) and that many questions remained unanswered.

FEPSAC has enabled the publication of two monographs with the aim of documenting the history of the organisation. The first, edited by the long-time Secretary General Erwin Apitzsch and past president Guido Schilling in 2003, included testimonials of all past presidents, milestones and historical reviews, as well as reports on different FEPSAC activities such as congresses, publications and the masters' programme (Apitzsch & Schilling, 2003). The second monograph, published at the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FEPSAC, covers mainly the last 20 years until 2019 (Elbe & Seiler, 2019). It also includes some new topics such as the role women played in FEPSAC and European sport psychology (Stambulova, Elbe, & Ryba, 2019) and the changes needed in the statutes to become an International Nonprofit Association (Jannes & Wylleman, 2019).

In a hermeneutic interpretation of documents, published on the occasion of FEPSAC's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Seiler and Wylleman (2009) argued that the development of European sport psychology differed distinctly from the one in North America. Arguments for this different path were the cultural and language diversity, distinct psychological traditions and the separation of Europe in two political and socio-economical blocs. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the factual dissolution of the USSR 20 years after the foundation of FEPSAC lead to a new strategic orientation of the federation in a more unified Europe. A more recent publication of the two authors (Wylleman & Seiler, 2016) showed considerable developments in the meantime, but also identified new challenges.

Despite these efforts, our understanding of the role FEPSAC played in the development of the field of sport psychology in the period of the Cold War remains fragmentary. This is partly due to the fact that the number of contemporary witnesses is getting smaller and smaller. In addition, a systematic collection of historical documents is still in its infancy. The aim of this contribution is to shed some light onto the first 20 years of FEPSAC's history. More specifically, it should be analysed which modes of working were used to achieve the aims and scope of the organisation set out in the statutes, what particular obstacles and challenges had to be overcome, and what the results were.

### **Sources and empirical procedure**

This contribution is based mainly on a hermeneutical and partly quantitative analysis of official documents of FEPSAC, especially the minutes of the managing council meetings and general assemblies, but also reports and publications from the two committees, the Scientific Committee (SC) and the Information and Documentation Committee (IDC). In addition, some letters between the members of the committees were also used. These documents were

primarily found in the archive of long time FEPSAC MC-member Erwin Hahn, Germany. He joined the MC in 1972 and served as Treasurer from 1975 to 1995 and Vice-President from 1995 to 1999. He passed away in August 2009. In addition, some documents have been used from past president Paul Kunath. He was a member of the MC from the foundation of FEPSAC in 1969 and served as president from 1983 to 1991. Thirdly, a group discussion with Rolf Frester and Brigitte and Hans Schellenberger, three of the leading sport psychologists from the former German Democratic Republic, was led in June 2019.

## **Contextual frames**

### **BROADER HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The development of international sport psychology has to be seen in the broader historical context of the Cold War. After the separation of the European continent and Germany by the 'Iron Curtain', international tension increased, among others during the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, and accumulated during the Berlin Crisis 1961 and the confrontation during the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962, before the United States under John F. Kennedy and the Soviet Union under Nikita S. Khrushchev started to dismantle the missiles. In August 1968, the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet army anticipated what became known under the name 'Brezhnev doctrine'. Finally, the 'Détente' begun with the signing of the SALT I treaty in 1972. Still, the differences between the two ideological and economical blocs – a liberal capitalism in the Western European countries with a strong connection to the USA, and a Marxist-Leninist communism in the Eastern European countries under the leadership of the USSR – remained until 1989 when the revolutionary wave led to the fall of the communist governments in the Central and Eastern European Countries.

### **CONTEXT OF SPORT**

Sport activities have gained greater social significance in the 1960ies. Whereas the Olympic Games in 1940 and 1944 were cancelled due to World War II, the tradition was revived in 1948 with Summer Olympic Games in London and Winter Olympic Games in St. Moritz. The Soviet Union did not participate in the 1948 Games but only entered the Games in 1952, and was the most successful nation in terms of medals already in 1956 in Melbourne. Japan and Germany were admitted for the first time after WW II in 1952. Despite the fact

that the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in 1948 and the German Democratic Republic in 1949, the German delegation at the Summer Olympic Games 1956 in Melbourne comprised athletes from both states (Blakemore, 2018), surrounded by severe political disputes about the flag for the delegation (Gruson, 1959). Only beginning in 1968, at the Summer Olympic Games in Mexico, was the German Democratic Republic present with its own delegation – and was more successful than the Federal Republic of Germany.

Sport was used as a platform to demonstrate the superiority of a system, and the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic were the two most successful nations in those days. This resulted in a rivalry also with regard to sport science and the medical and psychological care of the athletes. In this context, it is somehow astonishing that an international co-operation across the iron curtain in the field of sport psychology was successfully established. The narrower context of international sport psychology has therefore to be taken into account.

#### CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

The development of sport psychology in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been described from different perspectives. For example, Kunath (2003) highlights the role of UN-organisations, namely for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), and the International Council of Sport and Physical Education (ICSPE). ICSPE (later called ICSSPE) was founded in 1958 under the auspices of UNESCO and aimed at co-ordinating the development of sport science for the benefit of sport, physical education, and human wellbeing and health (Bailey, 1996). According to Kunath (2003), the Research Committee of ICSPE under the direction of Ernst Jokl helped connecting people working in the area of sport psychology and by doing so allowed bringing together the participants of the first International Congress of Sport Psychology in Rome in 1965 and the foundation of ISSP. Kunath also points to the fact that earlier “national conferences of sport psychologists and international meetings on physical culture and sport with psychological themes were held (Helsinki 1959, Innsbruck 1960, Warsaw 1961, Prague 1962, Leningrad 1963, Barcelona 1963 and others).” (2003, p. 23).

Anecdotes about the foundation of the European Federation of Sport Psychology suggest that the catalyst for the foundation was the second ISSP-Congress 1968 in Washington D.C. where the organisers did not offer congress languages other than English (Apitzsch & Schilling, 2003) and where some Europeans were scared that the North Americans would impose their working

principles on ISSP (Kunath, 2003). At the same time, the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 seemed to have made it difficult for many Eastern Europeans to obtain permission to travel to the United States, while others did not want to go as a sign of protest. Vanek argued that ISSP therefore was not perceived to represent sport psychology worldwide (Morris et al., 2003).

Based on the report of the first FEPSAC President about the work of the Managing Council (MC) (Geron, 1973), we know that the nine European countries represented at the International Congress of Sport Psychology in December 1968 in Varna, Bulgaria, discussed the option of founding a European Federation, based on a suggestion of Eric de Winter. Bearing in mind what Morris et al. (2003) called the “somewhat unorthodox” (p. 123) creation of ISSP in 1965, a preparatory committee, consisting of Ema Geron, Bulgaria, José-Maria Cagigal, Spain and Eric de Winter, France, was elected with the task of preparing a founding congress in the following year. Embedded in the ‘Congress of physical activities by age<sup>1</sup>’, the Constituting General Assembly took place on Wednesday, 4 June 1969, at 17.30 hrs in the Grand Hotel, Vittel, France. FEPSAC was founded as a democratic scientific organisation based on a federative principle, meaning that only national organisations could become member. A Managing Council was elected, and the cornerstones of statutes were adopted. French, English, German and Russian were the official languages of FEPSAC. During the first MC-Meeting right after the foundation of FEPSAC, two Committees were established: The *Scientific Committee* (SC) with Mihai Epuran as chair and the *Information and Documentation Committee* (IDC), chaired by Paul Kunath. Already at the third MC-Meeting from 19-21 May 1970 in Sofia, Bulgaria, the two committees gave progress reports: The SC reported on the projects “Terminology of sport psychology” and “Standardisation of diagnostical tests for sport psychology” (FEPSAC-MC, 1970). The IDC aimed at connecting the countries who worked in the area of documentation and producing and exchanging a documentation of literature on sport psychology. The rationale behind and the work of these two committees will now be presented and discussed.

## Need for and ways of co-operation in sport psychology

### SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE: TERMINOLOGY PROJECT

The need for the terminology project resulted from the simple fact that Europe is a politically and culturally heterogeneous continent. To illustrate,

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Congrès des Activités Corporelles selon l’Age’.

out of the 18 member countries of FEPSAC in 1971, as listed in the president's report (Geron, 1973), nine were members of the NATO and seven of the Warsaw Pact, whereas two were neutral. Three different scripts (Latin, Cyrillic, and Greek) and probably more than 20 different languages were spoken.

In April 1970, chairman Epuran presented a document (in French language) with a set of theses about the anticipated difficulties and possible ways on how to proceed in the project. The difficulties he mentioned were:

- a) The different philosophical conceptions of those working in the field, which in turn influence the ways in which they establish the meaning of a key notion;
- b) The delimitation of terms belonging to theoretical psychology and to the different applied branches of psychology and terms of sport psychology.
- ...
- c) The unification of terms specific to sport psychology requires in many cases theoretical and methodological debates. Without a general consensus, this vocabulary will have to record and present the different statements of terms as they have been formulated by different authors, which is not satisfactory.
- d) The translation into other languages of certain specific terms will be deficient because of the absence of the corresponding satisfactory terms or because of their different meanings in the respective lexicon (either as scientific terms or as everyday language terms). (Epuran, 1970a, p. 1-2; our translation from French)

Epuran suggested that the Scientific Committee had two different options to establish a dictionary: either oriented towards all persons interested in sport psychology, for example, coaches, medical doctors, or even the broader public, or oriented towards specialists in the field with the aim to assist in the comprehension and translation of texts. Since he considered the latter option to be very ambitious, he proposed to focus on a broader understanding, which would not exclude a more specialised approach in a second step (Epuran, 1970a). This priority may also be partly due to the fact that the early initiatives to establish international sport psychology groups came from sport practitioners and scientists from other fields rather than from psychologists (Morris et al., 2003).

The SC aimed first at selecting the terms deemed important in sport psychology and presented a list of about 100 items. The second step was trying to establish a synthesis between different understandings across European



languages wherever possible. In cases where no consensus was found, the SC suggested to use international conferences or the newly established *International Journal of Sport Psychology* as a forum for further discussion.

Member countries were invited to nominate a person for contributing. Several countries, however, and despite repeated reminders, failed to nominate a representative. Finally, sport psychologists from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Romania and Spain submitted their interpretation of the terms. What is striking is that Russia, Great Britain and France did not participate in the survey and hence three major European languages were not included.

The SC translated the comments of 63 terms into French, the working language of the committee. To illustrate the different definitions and backgrounds, the interpretations of the term 'préparation volitive' (volitional preparation) are presented in an abbreviated form in Table I.

The result of the synthesis for the 63 terms was published for the FEPSAC Congress 1972 in Cologne, and in the preface, Epuran expressed his hope "to contribute to a better mutual understanding among sport psychologists from different European countries, for a bright future of sport psychology, for better performances, for peace." (Epuran, 1972, p. 3). A panel discussion was organised and the work of the SC was presented and discussed (see the summary report of Hahn, 1973). While the work of the SC was appreciated, there were requests to allow for operational definitions as well as for phenomenological descriptions, to exclude general psychological terms but in contrast to include interdisciplinary perspectives. The list was also published in the *International Journal of Sport Psychology* (Epuran,

TABLE I  
Sample Item 'Volitional Preparation'.

Country	Definition
Bulgaria:	Educational process to develop the capacity to consciously regulate an activity under difficult conditions.
CSSR:	Development of the qualities needed to adapt to a difficult situation and to consciously regulate the activity in it.
FRG:	Creation of training situation where the athlete has to go to the mental and physical limits, in order to overcome movement stereotypes and negative emotional experiences.
Hungary:	Motor activity with a load at the edge to develop volitional properties and best possible motor skills.
Romania:	<b>Part of the general psychological preparation aimed at the regulation of effort and behaviour.</b>
Spain:	Develop the 'will to can': inhibition power in order to avoid nervous symptoms or anxiety. Focus of attention.

Note: retrieved from Epuran (1972). shortened and translated from French by the author.



1973a), and readers were invited to give feedback and contribute. However, no information is available so far about a continuation of the work and a sustainable effect on the terminology.

#### SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE: COLLECTION AND STANDARDISATION OF DIAGNOSTICAL TESTS USED IN EUROPE

The discussion about and the standardisation of tests used in sport psychology in EUROPE was the second aim of the SC. In March 1970, Epuran invited the presidents of the National Societies to answer the following questions:

1. Are tests applied in your country to sportsmen and women?
2. For what purpose? (research, diagnosis, prognosis, selection) and what is the extension?
3. Categories of tests and their names (for original tests, please indicate their main features).
4. If the tests are standardised - which ones and for which categories of athletes?
5. Which tests do you think could be proposed for general use (recommended for use by members of our association)? (Epuran, 1970b, p. 1-2; our translation from French)

After this call, seven persons agreed to collect tests, literature and results in the following areas: Psychomotor skills (Svetlana Dimitrova, Bulgaria); Psychodiagnostics (Albert V. Rodionov, USSR); Personality (Miroslav Vanek, CSSR); Test batteries (Roig Ibañez, Spain); Aggression (Guido Schilling, Switzerland); Selection (Pál Rókusfalvy, Hungary); Psychology of women in sport (Erwin Hahn, FRG) (Minutes of the MC-Meeting 16-17 March 1973 in Leningrad). Epuran (1973b) suggested criteria for the presentation of the tests in June 1973. As to our knowledge, the collection of tests did not come to a tangible result.

This by no means indicated that the SC ceased its work. In contrast, the SC analysed trends, publications and needs from different fields of sport and physical activities and, at its meeting in May 1977 in Bucharest, came up with a detailed working plan for the years 1978-1982 (Epuran, 1977). Among other topics, the SC proposed to focus on different types of sport activities (for example training, competition, leisure or educational activities, and also different sports), sport activities of women or of disabled people, sport and physical activity in different settings such as in the industrial professional

world, the army, or in medical and rehabilitation institutions, issues of preparation, assistance, and recovery in competitive sport, and psychological prophylaxis, psychopathology and psychotherapy in sport. Further, it was recommended to focus on the psychology of leaders, trainers, spectators, and of groups, on different states and processes and also on methodological problems. The SC recommended to organise debates at the occasion of international meetings and to influence the programmes of future congresses. As a result, at the 6<sup>th</sup> FEPSAC congress in 1983 in Magglingen, the results of a FEPSAC initiated project 'Anxiety in sport' were presented as a booklet (Apitzsch, 1983). 44 research projects in 13 different countries had been collected, and English abstracts of 36 studies were included.

#### INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION COMMITTEE

Consider that the access to information via the World Wide Web for the general public only started in 1989. In 1969, the year in which FEPSAC was founded, library catalogues usually consisted of index cards, and specific thematic bibliographies were edited. In the field of sport and physical education, 30 different documentations with short abstracts were counted in 1967 (Lachenicht, 1995).

Against this background, the Managing Council of FEPSAC, at its very first meeting in 1969, decided that collection and diffusion of publications among the European member countries should be one of the central aims of FEPSAC, and appointed the Information and Documentation Committee (IDC) under the presidency of Paul Kunath and with Walter Doil as secretary, both from the German Democratic Republic. The activity report of the IDC (Kunath & Doil, 1972) illustrates the work of the committee which collected information about 28 publications by December 1969 and shared the information with the MC-members and other leading sport psychologists. Some national member federations appointed responsible persons to establish a network, and in December 1970 and 1971, new collections were distributed. For the third FEPSAC Congress 1972 in Cologne, the IDC presented a printed list named '*Selected bibliography on sport psychology*' from the years 1968 to 1971 (IDC, 1972). The items included listed the author(s), the title in German language, the bibliographical references and the language of the contribution.

Analysis of the documents reveals some interesting findings. First, 626 documents in 17 different languages were included, with German and Russian being the most popular ones (see Table II). Second, when separating

between the political and socio-economical blocks, 376 contributions came from eastern European countries, which is 60%, and 250 from western European countries, including some North Americans. An explanation may be found in the composition of the editorial committee chaired by Paul Kunath (GDR): with Nawrocka (Poland), Kocian (CSSR), Lalajan (Soviet Union), Kovatchev (Bulgaria) and Rókusfalvy (Hungary), the Eastern part of Europe was largely overrepresented, as compared to Allemann (Switzerland) as the only Western member at that time. Third, when comparing the quality of the entries, it becomes obvious that criteria for inclusion were weakly defined at best. Abstracts from conferences, short articles in newspapers as well as PhD-theses were found. A rough estimate shows that approximately 5 % of the entries were theses, often from the East-German sport university ('Hochschule für Körperkultur') in Leipzig, and about one third was published in a more or less scientific journal, even if they are difficult to compare with the journals with rigorous peer-review procedures of our days.

In November 1972, the following persons were listed as members of the IDC: Kovatchev, Bulgaria; Essing, FRG; Lalajan, USSR; and Thomas, France (Kunath, 1972), giving the committee a better balance and more specific documentary competence. Essing and colleagues, by contacting 150 persons worldwide, had already edited a bibliography on sport psychology, covering the period until 1968 (Essing, Bertram, & Meckbach, 1969). Regular meetings of the IDC were organised to discuss criteria for including literature from the respective countries, definitions of the descriptors and fields to be recorded, such as a list of key words, characteristics, and the source of contribution. These steps were also indispensable in view of the development and co-ordination of electronic resources.

Another important point of discussion was the distribution of document lists and cards.

TABLE II  
*Languages Of The Bibliographical References In The Bibliography From 1972.*

Language	<i>n</i>	%
German	209	33%
Russian	115	18%
English	66	11%
Bulgarian	55	9%
Czech	47	8%
Hungarian	34	5%
Polish	31	5%
French	23	4%
Others	46	7%

The national representatives of the member countries were asked to collect and submit new publications, including bibliographical references in the original language and an English translation and abstract of up to 500 characters (FEPSAC-MC, 1973), limiting the size to an A6-card. This would allow to copy four entries on one page. The idea was to issue four shipments per year with 30 to 50 cards each, to be sent to the national societies for further distribution (FEPSAC-MC, 1972).

In June 1973, Kunath presented a working plan for the IDC for the five years until 1978, including a programme for annual meetings (Kunath, 1973). The members of the IDC should collect and translate information from their respective countries, and the secretary would then distribute the lists. Collection of teaching material, and of specific topics were aimed at, for example training and competition in 1976 and personality and sport, and sensorimotor tests in 1977. A collaboration with the ICSPE was also scheduled. In a memo to all FEPSAC members the Secretary General of FEPSAC pointed out that not only books and book reviews, but also congress reports and information about meetings should be collected (Schilling, 1973). Instructions about the information required for the documentation were announced. In February 1974, Doil and Kunath sent a set of documentation cards to the member countries of FEPSAC along with a call for co-operation by submitting information material.

In his report about the work of the IDC in the period from 1972 to 1975, IDC president Kunath (1975) reported that about 88 reference cards were disseminated in 1974 and 45 by April 1975. The cards in size A5 included key words and were numbered. Still, the report criticises that several members had not appointed a contact person, and that only from Romania, CSSR, FRG and Great Britain, information was submitted in the period reported. In addition, not all data met the standards for bibliographical referencing, and some sources were too old. It was also stated that the *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, starting from 1974, regularly published the information of FEPSAC's IDC.

An internal report (Kunath, 1977) indicated that the activity of collecting and submitting information was not satisfactory in all countries. Bulgaria was mentioned as a positive exception in producing Bulgarian translations and spreading the information among Bulgarian sport psychologists. The representative of the USSR announced a translation of the so far existing 300 references into Russian, for further dissemination in the Soviet Union. Whether this has been done, we cannot judge conclusively.

The members of the IDC were active in building up the documentation, but the quality varied, as documents in the FEPSAC archive indicate. For

example, Kodým compiled 34 references from the CSSR including English abstracts, published in 1977, similar to Holdevici who collected 11 publications from Romania, or Whitehead with 16 abstracts from the BSSP-conference 1976 in Exeter. The 13 abstracts from Hungary submitted by Nagykáldi were in German and covered the period from 1974 to 1976. Later, Genov submitted a list of 62 annotations in German language of Bulgarian publications.

With the increase in publication activity, the collection and editing became an important task and several institutions were active. Essing and colleagues continued their work and edited several bibliographies (Essing, Meckbach, & Hubert, 1979). The Documentation Centre of the Federal Institute of Sport Science (BISp) in Cologne, FRG, built up a computer based database on sport science and included the documents collected by the FEPSAC representatives. Thanks to Erwin Hahn, who worked at the BISp, FEPSAC was able to regularly issue computer based publication accession lists from 1979 to 1987. The selection of items of relevance was however made by the BISp. Items in different languages were included, for example, in the first half of 1981, out of 200 new entries, 41% were in English, 41% in German, and 13% in Russian language, which shows a clear bias in favour of western publications.

The work of the IDC encountered several problems. Quite obviously, the translation remained a major challenge, as had been stated in the terminology work of the SC. Further, the different specialised databases in various countries had incompatible descriptors, different languages of the abstracts, and computer systems were largely incompatible. An easy electronic transfer seemed difficult or impossible, and the collection relied on the individual members of the IDC and representatives of different member countries of FEPSAC. With the rapid development of database and internet technologies, the 'manual' collection of publications by FEPSAC countries became obsolete.

For the production of the database, FEPSAC depended on producers and providers. For example, the BISp in Cologne supported the collection of sport psychology references with 60'000 DEM for the period of 1979-1981, an amount of money that was far beyond the financial possibilities of FEPSAC.

In 1973, the Coaching Association of Canada established the Sport Information Resource Center (SIRC) with the aim of advancing sport through knowledge and evidence (Coach.ca, n.d.). This database rapidly developed into a major player in the field. The database of the American Psychological Association (APA), Psycinfo, equipped with more resources, also

covered most of the sport psychology publications and became an important source of information.

The emerging dominance of those North America based databases produced a heavy language bias, to the detriment of European languages. For example, German and Russian sport psychology publications, which represented an important part of the scientific productivity in the early years of FEPSAC (see Table 2), are literally inexistent in those databases. Table III shows the result when searching four different databases with the combination of the following search terms: <sport psychology>, publication years <1969 to 1989>, and language<German> and <Russian>, respectively.

An important gap in the North American databases, as compared to the German one, is that the leading sport science journal from the Soviet Union in Russian language, called *Teorija i praktika fizičeskoj kul'tury* (Theory and Practice of Physical Culture) was not included.

## Conclusions

In this short historical review, the work of the two working committees established by the FEPSAC Managing Council as early as 1969 has been reconstructed, as well as the current state of the archive allowed. To the best of our knowledge, no publication has yet attempted, based on sources from the first twenty years, to elaborate the significance of the organisation for the development of sport psychology. Although the sources are not yet fully identified and many may no longer be traceable, some preliminary conclusions can be drawn.

FEPSAC had, from its very beginning, a high sensibility for intercultural and language issues. This became apparent on the one hand in the determination of four official languages of FEPSAC, but even more so in the effort to establish a common understanding of the most important concepts of the young scientific discipline, as a basis for future collaboration and exchange.

TABLE III  
Language Bias In Data Bases: Number Of Hits In Total And In German And Russian  
(Search Date: 30 April, 2020)

Database	Producer	Country	Host	N <sub>tot</sub>	N <sub>Germ</sub>	N <sub>Russ</sub>
Sport Discus	SIRC	Canada	EBSCOhost	6753	511 (7.6%)	34 (0.5%)
PsycINFO	APA	USA	OvidSP	990	7 (0.7%)	4 (0.4%)
Spolit	BISp	Germany	SURF	5964	2382 (39.9%)	284 (4.8%)

To this end, the different linguistic, philosophical and psychological backgrounds of the terms were to be clarified and a common synthesis to be attempted, which was to be further discussed at congresses and conferences. The goal of creating a dictionary of sport psychology was, however, ambitious and could hardly be achieved by a voluntary and part-time collaboration of the Scientific Committee. The communication via letter post, which was common at that time, must also be taken into account due to the long delivery time and high costs. The reasons why the project was not continued in the longer term cannot be conclusively clarified. One possible reason could have been that three major European languages were not involved in the development, namely English, French and Russian. The publication in the *International Journal of Sport Psychology* was in French (Epuran, 1973), and it can be assumed that there was therefore hardly any echo from the Anglo-Saxon countries.

The efforts to collect and standardise sport psychology tests proved to be extraordinarily demanding against the background of linguistic and cultural diversity. Cultural adaptation of a test is a difficult task (see for example Vallerand, 1989), which becomes even more difficult if the terminology is not clear enough. Not surprisingly, the Anxiety project (Apitzsch, 1983) was based on the widely established American STAI (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970), which could be used in 10 different languages.

The initiatives of the Information and Documentation Committee for the dissemination of new publications were quite creative. Overall, numerous publications were compiled and made available, although the quality of the literature collection showed major differences between countries. The increase in publication activities pushed the ICD to its limits and increased its dependence on third parties. The development of computer-supported databases finally made the work obsolete. Nevertheless, the collections provide evidence of the considerable scientific productivity of European sport psychology during the period under consideration in this article. The fact that a large part of these contributions are missing in today's common literature databases leads to a distorted perception of the achievements of those early European pioneers, as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon ones. It also led to a loss of theoretical concepts, such as those successfully developed in the activity theory of Soviet psychology, and may also have contributed to the unclear future perspective that prevailed among sports psychologists after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as reported by Straub, Ermolaeva, and Rodionov (1995).

The political differences and the fact that the blocs were in sporting competition resulted in some suspicion and mistrust on both sides. Alto-



gether, the cooperation and scientific activity in FEPSAC was nevertheless good. Some study results, e.g. about the preparation of top level athletes, were kept secret and not shared, but all were curious about what others did. For example, Frester remembered that GDR sport psychologists benefited from the ideomotor training that the Soviets developed for the cosmonauts. Historical studies on scientific cooperation between west and east suggest that there was also more or less formalised cooperation in other and maybe more sensitive areas such as science, although it was clear that only a selected group was allowed to travel from the socialist countries (Niederhut, 2007).

To conclude, the narrative that European sport psychology only started after 1990 and that before, “the bulk of scientific production originated in the US” (Roberts, 2019, p. 83) is obviously biased by an Anglo-Saxon perspective. As has been shown, the activities in the early years were numerous, driven by an interest in the development of sport and all kind of physical activities, and with a high sensitivity for cultural differences and languages. On contrast, one has to admit that many of those early initiatives were not sustainable in the long run. Ironically the end of the divided Europe may have contributed to establish the predominance of the Anglo-Saxon sport psychology tradition, almost completely neglecting the contribution of the Eastern European colleagues in scientific and applied sport psychology (Ryba, Stambulova, & Wrisberg, 2005; Stambulova, Wrisberg, & Ryba, 2006).

Based on historical documents made available in the online archive, the history of FEPSAC and European sport psychology has to be developed further. The findings presented here are necessarily of preliminary character. Still, it is my hope that this article will contribute to deepening our understanding of the early years of European sport psychology, and comments are highly welcome.

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