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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TASKS WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF SPORTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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Abstract: The state administration is part of the executive authority of the Republic of Serbia. As such, it performs administrative tasks within the rights and obligations of the Republic of Serbia. State administration bodies include ministries, administrative bodies within ministries, and special organizations, all established by law, with their scope of work also defined by law. Considering that this paper focuses on the Ministry of Sports, the aim is to highlight the importance of the state administration's tasks within the Ministry of Sports of the Republic of Serbia. The Law on Ministries regulates the scope of work of the Ministry of Sports. The methods applied in this paper are characteristic of social and humanities research. The most significant finding of this paper is that the Ministry of Sports systematically and continuously works on the development and improvement of sports, performing state administration tasks within its domain, as defined by legal and other acts. Without the Ministry of Sports, achieving the current and satisfactory level of results in Serbian sports would not be possible.

Keywords: State administration, executive authority, administrative tasks, sports, ministries

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Introduction

Sport plays a vital role in the lives of individuals and society as a whole. It is an established fact that for every human being, sports are second to oxygen in maintaining good health, leading to a happy life (Khan et al., 2024, p. 84). In society, sport contributes to social cohesion, overcoming prejudices, enhancing the positive influence on public opinion, and promoting ethical and universal principles (Strategy for the Development of Sports in the Republic of Serbia 2014-2018). Sport is an integral part of society and social processes (Perović et al., 2017, p. 89).

The concept of sport has gained special significance by highlighting its role in supporting physical and mental health, boosting self-confidence and socialization, and fostering unity (Yarasheva, 2024, p. 235; Begović & Parčina, 2021). Sports play a crucial role in society by promoting physical health, fostering social cohesion, and instilling values such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance (Bajić, 2023). On a national level, sports contribute to pride (Radaković, Marinković, 2021), international recognition, and the development of young talent. Furthermore, investment in sports can drive economic growth through tourism, events, and the sports industry (Dašić, 2018).

The benefits of sports include:

1. facilitating faster and better physical development, especially among children, through sports activities and school sports (Dašić, D., 2023);
2. fostering the development of positive psychological traits, thus having a developmental and therapeutic impact on young athletes;
3. serving as an excellent "gateway" to social life, promoting sociability, increasing social mobility, and preparing athletes for professional and family life (Dugalić, 2016, p. 6).

Engagement in sports is a fundamental human right for all citizens, and the Republic of Serbia guarantees this right. The level of sports involvement serves as a key indicator of a society's development (Dašić, 2023, p. 183). Sport represents a unique phenomenon that provides space, opportunities, and chances for every individual, regardless of their physical or psychological abilities, to participate and be an integral part of society (Milićević Marinković, 2022, p. 7). Sports activities have the power to shape and inspire contemporary lifestyles (Milić, 2023, p. 86; Mašić & Begović, 2023).

In the Republic of Serbia, the public and non-governmental sectors play key roles in the sports system.

The public sector includes the Ministry of Sports of the Republic of Serbia, the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth, the Institute for Sports and Sports Medicine of the Republic of Serbia, the Provincial Institute for Sports and Sports Medicine, the Anti-

Doping Agency of the Republic of Serbia, and local government units with their respective sports and youth departments. Other important bodies include the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Science, Technological Development, and the Information Society; the National Council for Combating Violence and Misconduct at Sporting Events; and the Sports Council. Accredited higher education institutions specializing in sports and sports management are also significant contributors to the sector.

The non-governmental sector consists of the largest territorial association, the Sports Association of Serbia, the Olympic Committee of Serbia, the Paralympic Committee of Serbia, national sports federations, territorial sports associations, sports organizations (including associations and sports enterprises), and other organizations involved in sports.

The primary legal framework governing sports in the Republic of Serbia is the Law on Sports (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 10/2016). This law regulates the rights and obligations of athletes and other individuals in the sports system, legal status, organization and registration of entrepreneurs and legal entities within the system, public interest and needs in the field of sports, financing, categorization, the national sports development strategy, school and university sports, physical education for preschool children, sports facilities, organization of sports events, national awards for contributions to sports, and record-keeping and supervision of organizations in the sports domain (Article 1, Law on Sports).

Given the topic, the remainder of this paper will focus on the Ministry of Sports and its legally defined scope of work.

Methodology

The characteristics of state administrative functions within the Ministry of Sports of the Republic of Serbia and its scope of work represent a highly relevant topic, as these functions are crucial for the overall development of national sports. This study employed various techniques, including a review of literature and legal regulations, analysis of official statements and documents, and statistical data processing, including percentage calculations. The methods applied include analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, and statistical methods.

Scope of Work of the Ministry of Sports as Part of the Public Sector

The Ministry of Sports of the Republic of Serbia performs state administration tasks related to (Strategy for the Development of Sports in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014–2018, p. 8):

- The system, development, and improvement of sports and physical culture in the Republic of Serbia;
- Implementation of national sports policy and the national strategy for sports development;
- Administrative and professional oversight in the field of sports;
- Implementation and monitoring of action plans and programs contributing to sports development in the Republic of Serbia;
- Participation in the construction, equipping, and maintenance of sports facilities and infrastructure of national interest to Serbia;
- Development and fostering of international cooperation in the field of sports;
- Creating conditions for access to and implementation of projects within the Ministry's scope financed by EU pre-accession funds, donations, and other forms of development aid;
- Creating conditions for greater accessibility of sports to all citizens, along with other tasks prescribed by law.

The scope of work of the Ministry of Sports is established by the Law on Ministries (Article 21 of the Law on Ministries). In addition to the Law on Ministries, the Law on State Administration and the Law on Sports outline the obligations of the ministry responsible for sports-related affairs, covering both systemic issues and funding responsibilities (defined as a matter of general interest per constitutional provisions). In other words, safeguarding the general interest in sports, as well as managing all activities, operations, and forms of civic associations through which this interest is realized, represents the core function of the Ministry in the field of sports.

The Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Classification in the Ministry of Sports (Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Classification in the Ministry of Sports) defines the internal units, their scope of work, and their interrelationships; leadership of internal units; authorities and responsibilities of unit heads; cooperation methods with other bodies and organizations; the number of state secretaries and civil servants in leadership positions and descriptions of their roles; the number of positions by rank (for civil servants) and by type (for support staff); job titles; descriptions of job roles and ranks (for civil servants) or types (for support staff) into which positions are categorized; the required number of civil servants and support staff for each position; and employment requirements for every position in the Ministry of Sports (Article 1 of the Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Classification in the Ministry of Sports).

Internal Organization and Scope of Work of Internal Units of the Ministry of Sports

The Sports Sector and the Sector for International Cooperation and European Integration are the core internal units of the Ministry of Sports that perform tasks within their respective scopes. The Secretariat and the Minister's Cabinet are special internal units within the Ministry of Sports. A narrower internal unit outside the Sectors, the Secretariat, and the Minister's Cabinet is the Internal Audit Group. Within the Sectors, the Secretariat, and the Minister's Cabinet, narrower internal units are established.

The scope of work of the Sports Sector includes the following tasks: the system, development, and improvement of sports and physical culture in the Republic of Serbia; implementation of national sports policy and the National Sports Development Strategy; administrative and professional oversight in the field of sports; realization and monitoring of action plans and programs contributing to the development of sports in the Republic of Serbia; creating conditions for greater accessibility of sports to all citizens; drafting laws, by-laws, and other acts concerning the Ministry's scope of work; participation in the preparation of international agreements in the field of sports and the implementation of bilateral and multilateral programs and agreements on cooperation in the field of sports; analysis of the compliance of regulations in the field of sports with EU regulations; harmonization of the Sector's regulations with Council of Europe standards and obligations assumed by membership in the Council of Europe; monitoring and analyzing EU comparative law relevant for drafting sports regulations, judgments of international courts, and arbitrations involving the Republic of Serbia in sports disputes; preparation of reports, initiatives, and draft acts, as well as participation in their implementation; monetary awards, scholarships, and national recognitions and operational-analytical tasks in sports; maintaining a Unified Registry of associations, organizations, and entrepreneurs in the field of sports and other sports-related records; preparation and drafting of acts in appeal procedures against registrar decisions under the law governing the registration process in the Serbian Business Registers Agency in second-instance procedures; preparation, drafting, and implementation of projects in the construction of sports facilities and infrastructure of national significance for the Republic of Serbia; inspection oversight in accordance with the law governing sports and regulations adopted based on that law; preparation and drafting of acts in appeal procedures regarding reports on professional oversight in second-instance procedures; preparation and drafting of acts in court and other proceedings before competent authorities and institutions within the Sector's scope of work; preparation of responses to parliamentary questions and questions based on public information access requests in the field of sports; handling cases related to complaints and grievances from individuals and legal entities in the field of sports; participation in

processes related to the professional development of civil servants in the Sector; proposing the drafting of the Public Procurement Plan within the Sector's scope of work; and other tasks within the Sector's scope of work (Article 4 of the Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Classification in the Ministry of Sports).

The narrower internal units of the Sports Sector are the Department for Development and Improvement of the Sports System, the Department for Normative, Legal, and Operational-Analytical Tasks in Sports, the Department for Infrastructure Project Management, and the Department for Inspection Tasks in Sports, whose scope of work is defined in Articles 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the aforementioned Rulebook.

The scope of work of the Sector for International Cooperation and European Integration includes the following tasks: coordination of international cooperation in the field of sports; preparation, monitoring, and implementation of international agreements and conventions, as well as bilateral and multilateral international cooperation programs in the field of sports; processes related to Serbia's European integration within the Ministry's scope; harmonization of domestic regulations in the field of sports with EU law; monitoring EU law within the Ministry's scope of work; providing support to sports organizations and activities at the international level, especially in processes related to IPA projects and other international funds; preparation of the Ministry's participation in international gatherings; analysis of the effects and potential opportunities for international cooperation in the field of sports; drafting memoranda with a rationale for concluding international agreements; participation in the preparation of strategic and program documents for financing through international donor assistance and planning, preparation, implementation, and monitoring of projects funded by international development assistance in accordance with procedures; alignment and supervision of activities and other entities participating in projects during the planning, preparation, implementation, and monitoring of projects financed by international donor assistance; coordination of activities necessary to secure required national co-financing for programs and projects financed by international donor assistance; implementation of measures to establish, operate, and sustain the indirect management system of EU funds, in accordance with relevant procedures; preparation of reports on the preparation, implementation, and monitoring of projects financed by international donor assistance; drafting plans, programs, and work reports aimed at informing interested public, ensuring visibility, and maintaining transparency of the Ministry's work within the Sector's scope of work; monitoring the work of international organizations, agencies, and bodies in areas relevant to the Ministry's scope of work to perform tasks within the Sector's scope; cooperation with other internal units of the Ministry on issues within the Sector's scope of work; participation in preparing opinions on draft laws and other regulations prepared by other ministries, special organizations, and other bodies and organizations, or regulations adopted by holders of public authority in accordance with the law; parti-

cipation in processes related to the professional development of civil servants in the Sector; proposing the drafting of the Public Procurement Plan within the Sector's scope of work; and other tasks within the Sector's scope of work (Article 10 of the Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Classification in the Ministry of Sports).

The narrower internal units of the Sector for International Cooperation and European Integration are the Group for IPA Projects and International Funds and the Group for Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation and European Integration, whose scope of work is defined in Articles 12 and 13 of the aforementioned Rulebook.

The scope of work of the Secretariat of the Ministry pertains to the following activities: personnel, financial, and IT matters; public procurement tasks; coordinating the activities of the Ministry's internal units with other authorities; and participation in processes related to the professional development of civil servants within the Secretariat of the Ministry (Article 14 of the Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Classification in the Ministry of Sports). The narrower internal units of the Secretariat of the Ministry are the Department for Human Resources, Legal, and General Affairs and the Department for Financial-Material, Analytical, and IT Affairs, whose scope of work is defined in Articles 16 and 17 of the aforementioned Rulebook.

The scope of work of the Minister's Cabinet involves tasks related to advisory and protocol services, public relations, and administrative-technical duties significant to the Minister's operations (Article 18 of the Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Classification in the Ministry of Sports).

The scope of work of the Internal Audit Group pertains to the following activities: strategic and operational planning; organizing and executing internal audit tasks and reporting on the results of internal audits for all organizational units of the Ministry, all programs, activities, and processes under the Ministry's jurisdiction, including users of European Union funds, by verifying compliance with laws and adherence to internal control rules; evaluating the internal control system regarding adequacy, effectiveness, and completeness to minimize business risks; auditing operations to evaluate the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of processes, including non-financial operations; auditing the use of budgetary funds, EU funds, and funds from other international organizations; ensuring the functionality of the internal audit system; auditing the use of funds from the European Union and other international organizations by applying the regulations of the Republic of Serbia, internal audit standards, the code of professional ethics for internal auditors, and best professional practices; collaborating with the Central Harmonization Unit of the Ministry responsible for financial matters and the State Audit Institution; participating in processes related to the professional development of civil servants within the Group, and other activities within the Group's scope (Article 19 of the Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Classification in the Ministry of Sports).

Job Classification in the Ministry of Sports

In the Ministry of Sports, there are 3 State Secretaries, as provided by the job classification, representing 100% staffing. State Secretaries are civil servants in appointed positions.

In the Department for Sports, there is 1 civil servant in an appointed position, as provided by the job classification. According to the job classification, 36 civil servants—executors—are planned in the Department for Sports (only 25 positions are filled), along with 1 ancillary staff member (the position is filled). The total number of classified positions in the Department for Sports is 38, while the actual number of employees is 27, or 71%.

In the Department for International Cooperation and European Integration, the job classification provides for 1 civil servant in an appointed position (the position is filled), 7 civil servants—executors (5 positions are filled), and 1 ancillary staff member (the position is filled). Therefore, the total number of classified positions is 9, and the number of filled positions is 7, or 78%.

In the Secretariat, the job classification provides for 1 civil servant in an appointed position (the position is filled), 15 civil servants—executors (10 positions are filled), and 4 ancillary staff members (2 positions are filled). Therefore, the total number of classified positions is 20, and the number of filled positions is 13, or 65%.

In the Minister's Cabinet, the job classification does not provide for any civil servants in appointed positions or ancillary staff members, but it does provide for 5 civil servants—executors (4 positions are filled). Therefore, the total number of classified positions is 5, and the number of filled positions is 4, or 80%.

All of the above is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Classified and Filled Positions in the Ministry of Sports, 2024.

	Civil servants in senior positions	Civil servants – executors	Clerks	Total
State Secretary	3			3
According to the systematization				
Filled positions	3			3
Sport Sector	1	36	1	38
According to the systematization				
Filled positions	1	25	1	27
Sector for International Cooperation and European Integrations	1	7	1	9
According to the systematization				
Filled positions	1	5	1	7

Secretariat According to the systematization Filled positions	1	15	4	20
	1	10	2	13 (+3 na mirova- nju)
Minister's Cabinet According to the systematization Filled positions	0	5	0	5
	0	4	0	4
Internal Audit Group According to the systematization Filled positions	0	3	0	3
	0	1	0	1

Source: Ministry of Sports. (2024). *Work Information – Updated Data for July 2024*, Belgrade, p. 9.

Table 2. *Comparative Overview of Filled and Systematized Positions in the Ministry of Sports, 2024.*

	Filled positions	Systematized number of positions
Department for Sports	27	38
Department for International Cooperation and European Integration	7	9
Secretariat	13	20
Internal Audit	1	3
Cabinet	4	5

Source: Ministry of Sports. (2024). *Work Information – Updated Data for July 2024*, Belgrade, p. 10.

The Ministry of Sports, in carrying out its responsibilities, directly cooperates with other ministries, bodies, and organizations, as well as with other state authorities when the nature of the Ministry's tasks requires it. They exchange data and information for work purposes, establish joint expert bodies, and engage in other forms of joint work and cooperation. Employees in all internal units of the Ministry are obliged to directly collaborate in performing tasks and duties within the Ministry's scope of work (Ministry of Sports, 2024, 16).

Conclusion

The state is the initiator and coordinator of administrative tasks that are socially necessary and beneficial for the country (Mašić, Begović, 2023). The state administration, as part of the executive branch of the Republic of Serbia, performs administrative tasks within the rights and duties of the Republic of Serbia. The state administration, among other things, includes ministries, whose bodies and areas of work are regulated by law. State administration bodies act according to professional standards, impartially, and politically neutrally, and are required to ensure equal legal protection for everyone in the exercise of rights, obligations, and legal interests. Considering the topic of the paper, the focus is on the administrative tasks of the Ministry of Sports, which performs state administration duties related to the system, development, and improvement of sports in the Republic of Serbia, as well as other tasks determined by law. The duties of the Ministry of Sports arise from the Law on Ministries, the Law on State Administration, and the Law on Sports. The primary activity of the Ministry of Sports is to care for the general interest in the field of sports. The Ministry of Sports includes basic internal units (Department for Sports and Department for International Cooperation and European Integration), special internal units (Secretariat and Minister's Cabinet), as well as the Internal Audit Group, a narrower internal unit outside the department, Secretariat, and Minister's Cabinet. Each of the mentioned internal units performs administrative tasks within their scope of work.

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