

# Evaluation of Play the Game 2013

Danish Institute for Sports Studies/Play the Game  
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**Title**

Evaluation of Play the Game 2013

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## Introduction and summary

After a tour around Europe with conferences in Iceland (Reykjavik 2007), England (Coventry 2009) and Germany (Cologne 2011), the eighth edition of the Play the Game conference returned to Denmark in 2013. The conference took place in Aarhus on 28-31 October at the Helnan Marselis Hotel.

Despite time constraints and the lack of co-financing from foreign partners, Play the Game feels that it succeeded in organising not only the biggest, but also the best Play the Game conference to date – a view that is supported by an anonymous online questionnaire survey conducted among the conference participants (appendix 3).

In summary, we can conclude that:

1. For the first time, the Play the Game conference achieved a satisfactory number of participants, including an improvement in the number of paying participants. In total, 346 participants registered for the conference (an increase of 10 percent since 2011) plus more than 50 guests. For the first time, the income from participants' fees came in on budget and added up to around 570,000 DKK.
2. After a minor fall in participants' satisfaction in 2009, Play the Game 2011 again saw a rise in satisfaction, and in 2013 this positive development was further consolidated. 56 percent of the respondents found the conference to be "very good" and a further 41 percent said it was "good", which amounts to a satisfaction rate of 97 percent.
3. Play the Game's growing international impact was confirmed by the presence of new speakers with a more official mandate, including FIFA's director of communications, the head of EU's Sport Unit, the head of communications for the local organising committee of the FIFA World Cup 2014, and the director of Interpol's anti-match-fixing programme.
4. The average quality of the presentations was higher than ever among both invited speakers and speakers who were selected based on their submitted abstracts. The total number of donors and programme partners was larger than ever and successful applications for external support of almost 750,000 DKK in cash and provisions compensated to some degree for the lack of financial support from foreign co-hosts.
5. At an organisational level, Play the Game and the Danish Institute for Sports Studies are very strong and have a lot of experience and expertise in hosting such a large event, which the conference participants acknowledged in the evaluation survey.
6. The visual profile (posters, banners, etc.) worked very well and coherently throughout the conference venue and the different social events gave an added value to the conference experience.

7. Now, as previously, Play the Game faces the challenge of making sure that the programme is regularly updated even if the essential issues facing international sports remain the same from year to year.
8. Despite our attention to the need for a larger number of female speakers during the preparations for the conference, Play the Game did not succeed in improving the gender balance this year. Efforts to secure more female speakers must be intensified for future conferences.

This evaluation has been prepared by Play the Game's own staff and is based on:

- An anonymous internet-based questionnaire with a response rate of 57 percent among 323 potential respondents (excluding the board and employees of the Danish Institute for Sports Studies and Play the Game)
- Individual feedback from participants and speakers during the conference and a stream of thank-you emails
- Correspondence with members of the programme committee
- Searches for media coverage of the conference in international media databases and online

The evaluation is seen in the light of Play the Game's main purpose, which is

- to create awareness of the role of sport in society at a local, national and international level
- to draw a many-sided picture of sport and support the right of the individual to choose and influence his or her own daily sporting activities
- to ensure a free, independent, open and fact-based debate on the current situation and future development of sport
- to provide journalists, researchers and political leaders with both the inspiration and the tools to explore the cultural, political, social and economic aspects of sport
- to create networks across national and professional boundaries in order to meet the challenges of a globalised sports and media world.

The evaluation focuses on some key elements regarding the programme and execution of the conference. Purely organisational and technical aspects will only be touched upon if they have affected the objectives of the conference.

## Preparations and lead-up

As mentioned, the preparations were to some degree delayed by a heavy workload within the organisation, with many other pressing tasks and strained personnel resources and economy.

After a bidding round in early 2012, the city of Izmir, Turkey, was initially selected as a host city for the 2013 conference thanks to the efforts of the independent consultant Tolga Senel, who had mobilised a large network of organisations and individuals to support the application. Despite assurances of a sizable contribution from Izmir's sports council and the prospect of valuable sponsorships with airlines and others, we were in the end not successful in getting sufficient institutional guarantees regarding economy and execution from local authorities or the local university.

In December 2012, Play the Game therefore announced that we had to look at alternative host cities. That decision should probably have been made a couple of months earlier.

Instead, Aarhus was selected in January 2013, partly because the city had applied to host the conference and was a sure runner-up in the bidding round, partly because of the obvious practical benefits of hosting the conference on home ground – and especially in the light of the ever-increasing time constraints.

The delay in a number of strategic areas – programme committee, call for papers, partnership arrangements, applications and more – created an added pressure on the preparations, and this pressure was magnified by the general workload throughout the organisation.

This caused a number of unavoidable disruptions to the planning process this year, but precautionary measures can be taken before the next conference by taking some key decisions and appointing a formal programme committee earlier. In the light of the very positive results from the participants' survey, it seems clear that we succeeded in keeping our problems to ourselves and that they did not visibly affect the result of the conference in a negative way.

The organisation has already agreed on appointing a programme committee and planning regular internal preparatory meetings in the year before the next Play the Game conference.

## Economy

The time constraints for the planning of the conference created an uncertainty about finances, seeing as the total income from the participants' fees and the result of applications for sponsorships could not be settled until late in the process. The fixed grant from the Danish Gymnastics and Sports Associations (DGI) of 500,000 DKK for Play the Game's international activities was a good starting point.

Despite the short time frames, it is encouraging that more applications for sponsorships than ever before were granted with a total amount of around 750,000 DKK. We therefore owe a thank you to the following contributors, in addition to DGI:

- National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark – 100,000 DKK
- Foundation for Culture and Sport Facilities – 100,000 DKK
- Team Denmark – 100,000 DKK
- Nordic Journalist Centre – around 75,000 DKK (estimated value)
- Sport Aarhus Events – 75,000 DKK
- Aarhus 2017 – European capital of culture – 75,000
- Aarhus Stiftstidende's fund – 50,000 DKK
- Danish Federation for Company Sports – 50,000 DKK
- Norwegian Union of Journalists (NJ) + the NJ/Norway foreign ministry Sochi project – 50,000 DKK (estimated value)
- Anti-Doping Denmark – 30,000 DKK
- City of Aarhus, Mayor's Office – around 20,000 DKK (estimated value)
- Danish Union of Journalists – 20,000 DKK
- Danish Sports Journalist Association – 15,000 DKK
- FIFPro – 10,000 DKK (estimated value)

Furthermore, we owe thanks to the Helnan Marselis Hotel for the flexibility in accommodating the sports and journalism students and to Sport24 for providing lanyards.

Adversely, Play the Game did not succeed in securing grants for the conference from Sport Event Denmark and in spite of an ambitious proposal from Play the Game, a formal conference partnership with Aarhus University could not be formed.

Not all of the contributions can be determined accurately as they cover different forms of grants, such as contributions aimed at specific speakers and participants or provisions of meals. It must also be noted that some of the contributions came with specific obligations such as additional reporting in newsletters, seminars and activities. It has therefore in some cases resulted in an increased workload to honour a number of the external subsidies for the conference.



At the time of writing the overall economy of the conference is still unknown, but a deficit of around 300,000 DKK is expected (excluding the fixed grant from the Danish Gymnastics and Sports Associations of 500,000 DKK). The preliminary result indicates that the conference has, to some degree, overcome the difficulties created by the lack of co-financing from a foreign co-host and the relatively high price level for hotels and provision of meals in Denmark (despite good cooperation with the Helnan Marselis Hotel and relatively fair prices on rooms and facilities by Danish standards).

It has always been a challenge for Play the Game to attract paying guests. It is therefore reassuring that the participants' fees this year equalled almost 600,000 DKK. It is also encouraging that we received 200 paying guests – constituting a 25 percent increase – but we still have to consider how we can create greater economic latitude in order to be able to invite close partners, selected journalists, sports leaders and scientists along with participants from less well-off countries (including those in Europe).

The isolated deficit must be seen in the light of the fact that the fixed grants from DGI and the Danish Ministry of Culture are also meant to be subsidies for Play the Game's conference activities taking place in accordance with the organisation's by-laws.

The uncertain economy also had its benefits. It forced us to ask a number of speakers from consolidated institutions if they would pay their own plane tickets and almost everyone we asked agreed to do so. This in itself is a testimony to the fact that these experienced representatives, to a great extent, make the Play the Game conference a priority.

## Number and composition of participants

It is uncustomary to be able to say that this year's conference had a satisfactory number of participants, but with 346 participants and around 50 registered guests, the conference has finally reached a size that is fair compared to the costs of the conference in relation to financial resources and time spent.

The increase in the number of participants from the last conference in 2011 was 10 percent. The 2011 conference also saw an increase of 10 percent from previous conferences. It would be reasonable to aim for a continued growth of 10-20 percent for the next conferences until we reach around 450-500 participants.

The conference participants represented 40 different countries on six different continents, which is similar to the previous conferences. It has been difficult to raise enough funds to be able to provide grants for journalists and scientists from developing countries. Denmark was naturally the strongest represented country with 40 percent of the participants.

Unfortunately we saw a decline when it comes to gender equality. In Cologne in 2011 we made a special effort to attract female participants and speakers and managed to reach a ratio of 33 percent of all participants. This year the ratio of female participants was 27 percent while the ratio of female speakers was less than 25 percent with 30 women out of 134 in total.

It is, by our assessment, mainly this year's choice of main themes that has caused the fall in the percentage of female participants. There are simply not that many women in leading positions in the areas of match-fixing and good governance – excluding the part of good governance that is specifically concerned with the number of female leaders. In addition, we received a number of cancellations from female keynotes relatively close to the conference which made the gender balance even more uneven, especially in the plenary sessions.

We can hardly make equality for women a main theme at every conference, as in 2002 and 2011, in order to attract more female participants. But we must increase our focus on this issue.

The composition of participants shows a decrease in the number of academics, both in the number of participants (from 84 to 71) and the percentage (from 27 percent to 21 percent). This may be due to the fact that we did not arrange the conference in cooperation with a university this year. The decrease also applies to the number of students – mainly because in Cologne we had an unusual amount of student volunteers.

On the other hand, we saw an increase in the number of journalists (from 48 to 65 – 16 percent to 19 percent) and participants from the sports sector and associated organisations (from 52 to 84 – 17 percent to 27 percent). The number of private consultants and participants from the sports business sector more than doubled (from 8 to 20 – 3 percent to 6 percent).

Four decisive factors underlie this development:

1. The cooperation with the Nordic Sport Law Conference attracted new groups of participants from Nordic federations and private practicing lawyers (an estimated 20-25 participants took part in the conference mainly because of this cooperation)
2. The programme sessions on change in sports participation and architecture
3. The focus on journalism had been strengthened in this year's programme with special workshops on the field of journalism
4. The increasing recognition of Play the Game as an important international forum for debate

## Media coverage

Comprehensive web searches using the names of all conference presenters + "Play the Game" along with a search in the Danish media database Infomedia has provided an overview of the coverage of Play the Game 2013 in private blogs, news aggregator services, sports websites, traditional media and other types of media (appendix 4).

Every search yielded new results and there are undoubtedly more contributions than the 266 different articles we have identified online. Articles from traditional media, such as TV, radio and newspapers, were most likely also made available offline in the "parent media". Only media coverage using the Latin alphabet has been registered and neither our own coverage nor the coverage of the journalism students from the Danish School of Media and Journalism (see below) is included in the overview.

## Geography

Geographically, most coverage has appeared in media and blogs from Europe (including Turkey) and South and North America – although the South American coverage was much less extensive than at earlier conferences, simply because of the absence of a journalist from the Spanish speaking branch of the DPA (German Press Agency). By and large, the media coverage from the conference mirrors the geographical composition of the conference participants, who have been very active and contributed to the conference coverage themselves.

Geographical proximity and relevance is still an important news criterion and stories without a national angle or source generally do not travel far. An exception is South America's interest in the story on West German swimmers who were pumped full of air on order to improve their performance and the wider interest in comments from FIFA's director of communications regarding the criticism of Qatar's hosting of the 2022 football World Cup.

## Coverage before, during and after the conference

Before the conference, the coverage relied heavily on press material from Play the Game itself and on the participants' own blog posts, etc., advertising their participation and the topic of their presentation.

The coverage during the conference was by far the largest category and it was also where we found the majority traditional news media coverage, which focuses mostly on current events.

After the conference we saw a number of different contributions: analytical afterthoughts, publication of presentations, newsletter round-ups and articles with links to coverage by the students from the Danish School of Media and Journalism and Play the Game itself, along with a number of in-depth background and follow-up stories, particularly by Danish media.

It is clear that information presented at the conference continues to have journalistic value beyond the time of the conference, and we can expect more features and articles over the coming months.

Unfortunately, a number of the contributions fail to credit Play the Game even though the authors have participated in or obviously have followed the conference sessions online. This also applies to a number of major media outlets. Often it is caused by carelessness or lack of consideration and when we point it out we usually receive an apology. But this also means that we cannot catch all articles coming from the conference.

It is noticeable that this year's conference did not see representatives from the international news agencies among the participants for a day or two. Their articles are instantly repeated across the world or in the relevant linguistic regions, and we must make sure to actively secure their participation at future conferences.

## **The most and least popular themes**

Match-fixing was the topic that attracted the most attention thanks to the presence of a number of key figures in the area, whom the journalists could use as sources. Again, the stories produced often saw the issues from a national viewpoint.

Governance, especially with regards to FIFA, was also a popular theme. The coverage of the FIFA session saw the widest international dissemination primarily because of the comment made by FIFA's director of communications Walter de Gregorio, who called it hypocrisy to criticise the choice of Qatar as hosts of the 2022 FIFA World Cup on the basis of the country's human rights situation. Mark Pieth and his criticism of the FIFA-reforms attracted an equal amount of coverage.

The single biggest story was the one about the former Play the Game award winner Laura Robinson and the attack against her by the former CEO of the 2010 Vancouver Olympics John Furlong. This was front page news for several days in Canadian newspapers and TV. Doubts were raised about whether or not Play the Game would allow her to speak at the conference, and the fact that we – of course – did became an independent story. Unfortunately, Play the Game's objective of freedom of speech was rarely included in the story.

The rest of the coverage was distributed across a wide number of sessions, which again reflects the fact that a lot of the coverage was generated by participants themselves or the organisations they represent.

Some sessions did not attract any coverage, including the sessions on sports law, architecture and running. This reflects a general difficulty in creating an interest in these otherwise important topics (see below).

## **From traditional media to networked platforms**

Though it is unlikely that we have collected all coverage of Play the Game 2013, we can see some interesting tendencies.

Traditional media accounts for less than half of the contributions. Many of these are written by participating journalists who have been involved with Play the Game for a number of years.

Blogs and social media such as Facebook account for a large part of the contributions. Both participants and their organisations posted their own articles along with press releases and articles produced by Play the Game or the Danish School of Media and Journalism. Also the official conference photos were widely used in blogs and traditional media.

This use of blogs and social media has seen a definite increase compared to the conference in 2011.

## **Active partnerships**

### **1. The Danish Broadcasting Corporation**

In the spring of 2013, the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) and Play the Game entered into a formal partnership regarding the conference. Play the Game wanted DR to produce live streaming of all plenary sessions and make the recordings available as video-on-demand afterwards. In return, Play the Game offered some favourable terms for participation for DR employees along with a number of pre-meetings to prepare DR journalists for the expected, comprehensive coverage on all of DR's platforms.

The cooperation was evaluated at a meeting on 28 November between Marco de Los Reyes, editor-in-chief at DR Sports along with Søren Bang and Jens Sejer Andersen from Play the Game/The Danish Institute for Sports Studies.

Even though both sides expressed satisfaction with the cooperation and mutual recognition of obligingness and flexibility in the process, they also agreed that a future cooperation should be drawn up differently.

First of all, DR's machinery is too advanced and demands too many resources just to be able to cover Play the Game's needs for live streaming and video-on-demand. This need can be covered using simpler solutions. Technically, DR produces files of such high quality that it is difficult to make them available quickly after the sessions as video-on-demand.

For the same reason, the live streaming took up so much broadcast capacity and journalistic manpower for DR that these resources could rather have been spent on producing smaller news articles for dr.dk and increasing the amount of TV and radio features.

In total, DR measured around 2500 unique visitors to their live streaming website over the four days of the conference. For Play the Game this is an 'OK' figure, although not entirely something to brag about, as 7-8 times more people get live access to the conference. But it is understandably at the very low end for DR and is in no way proportional to the amount of resources spent on producing it.

## **2. The Danish School of Media and Journalism**

For the first time since 2007, Play the Game was able to revive its previously successful cooperation with the Danish School of Media and Journalism (DMJX) and the 2013 conference once again confirmed that this cooperation is of great use and benefit to both parties.

DMJX sent 19 international TV students, 12 students from a class focusing on mobile platforms and two teachers to do back-to-back coverage of the conference content.

This way, Play the Game received a vigorous and versatile supplement to its own and the external media's coverage of the conference. The students' coverage can be viewed at <http://ptg2013.mediajungle.dk/> and the YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/user/DMJXTV?feature=watch](http://www.youtube.com/user/DMJXTV?feature=watch)

## **3. Nordic Sports Law Conference**

In the spring of 2013, Play the Game agreed on a cooperation with law professor at Aarhus University and expert in sports law Jens Evald, with the purpose of integrating the upcoming Nordic Sports Law Conference into Play the Game's programme. Participants from both conferences would have access to each other's sessions and the Nordic Sports Law Conference would be able to independently plan parallel sessions.

The cooperation provided considerable added value in the form of content, participants, quality and charisma to Play the Game's match-fixing theme. In general, we succeeded in attracting both a long line of experts from international institutions such as INTERPOL, Europol, the European Council, EU, ICSS and CAS and, as mentioned, in recruiting a new group of participants consisting of 20-25 sports lawyers and other experts.

Both during and after the conference, Jens Evald has received extraordinarily positive feedback and both parties are interested in renewing the cooperation if possible in 2015.

## **4. Foundation for Culture and Sport Facilities**

A generous contribution of 100,000 DKK from the Foundation for Culture and Sport Facilities (LOA) made possible a specific programme theme on sport and architecture, which was converted into the following activities:

- A parallel session and a plenary session on renewal in the field of sports architecture
- LOA exhibition on sports architecture

- Excursion to the Hall of Motor Skills and the DGI house in Aarhus, featuring a gymnastics and parkour performance, the possibility to try out the facilities, the provision of meals (provided by the City of Aarhus) and sports activities for the conference participants

The cooperation was affected by the organisation's general time constraints and did not quite go the way LOA had intended. Nonetheless, the final result and the quality of the sessions was nothing to be ashamed of and the excursion gave, besides its professional objectives, gave 100 of the participants a creative breathing space and renewed energy mid-way through the conference.

## **5. Partnerships on sport for all, running culture, etc.**

In 2011, the merge between the Danish Institute for Sports Studies and Play the Game made it possible for the conference to put more focus on grassroots sport and involve a network of leading European researchers in sports participation, civil society and other related fields.

This focus was further strengthened this year. First, the Danish Institute for Sports Studies entered into a partnership with Aarhus 2017 (Aarhus as the European capital of culture in 2017) for 75,000 DKK and agreements were made with DGI, DIF and the Danish Federation for Company Sports to provide speakers for a number of sessions.

The partnerships were implemented as one main session and three parallel sessions on innovative approaches to traditional organised sport activities on offer to the population, partly regarding special target groups and partly regarding the global and European expansion in the running culture. Furthermore, there was a close thematic correlation to the sessions on architecture.

It is no exaggeration to say that the pieces of this puzzle came into place very close to the final deadline, but with regards to the content we succeeded in creating a relevant programme that attracted a satisfying number of participants, due in part to targeted marketing among Danish sports leaders. Furthermore, we succeeded in attracting a number of interesting scientists and event makers from the Danish Institute for Sports Studies' European network.

The theme of grassroots sport is an invaluable part of Play the Game, as the major sports organisations' neglect of the general population's needs and wishes is a direct consequence of their lack of good governance and constructive interaction with their surrounding societies.

But grassroots sport is, if possible, even harder to sell to the media than the more hard-hitting sports political and moral issues, and a great number of participants, especially journalists, choose not to take part in these more 'soft-hearted' sessions.

There is reason to keep considering how these issues can be best presented. More timely planning and the involvement of more partners will strengthen the sessions on grassroots sports at the next conference and make a wider international marketing of this type of content possible.



Despite the time constraints we did succeed in using the grassroots sports sessions to gather relevant partners from foreign research environments in Aarhus. We expect the sessions on running/grassroots events, sports participation and facilities to foster further cooperation between the Danish Institute for Sports Studies and international knowledge centres in the future.

## **6. Nordic Journalism Centre**

Early in the preparations, the Nordic Journalism Centre offered to finance a couple of key speakers, around 10-12 Russian journalists and provide grants for Nordic journalists in relation to Play the Game's desire to focus on the upcoming Winter Olympics in Sochi.

The Nordic Journalism Centre also offered to provide grants for the Norwegian journalists who participated in the now completed Sochi project, which was carried out in cooperation with Play the Game.

While next year's football World Cup has ignited serious democratic debate in Brazil, it has been almost impossible to establish a debate on the Sochi Games, estimated to be the most expensive Olympics to date. It is obvious that both journalists and other actors are restraining themselves so as not to confront the Russian regime in connection with an event in which Russia's international reputation is at stake.

After a lot of initial tribulation, we succeeded in putting together a panel of mainly Russian representatives offering different points of view. In total, the Nordic Journalism Centre attracted seven Russian journalists and three speakers. The debate at the end of this session left no doubt of the political minefields hidden under the snow in Sochi.

## **Website, app and social media**

Play the Game's conference activity is also reflected in activity on the website [www.playthegame.org](http://www.playthegame.org), which in the month of the conference (15 October 2013 – 14 November 2013) had an increase of visits of almost 60 percent when comparing to the number of visits in the same month the year before (11,889 from 15 October 2012 – 14 November 2012).

In the month of the conference, [www.playthegame.org](http://www.playthegame.org) had:

- 11,894 unique visitors (an increase of 23 percent when compared to the same month the previous year when the number was 9,673)
- 52,171 page views (an increase of close to 160 percent when compared to the previous year when the number was 20,096)

The visitors came from 154 countries on six continents.

The following extract from Google Analytics gives a graphical representation of the difference in the use of the website during the month of the conference and during the same month the previous year.

**Figure 1: Number of visitors on playthegame.org during the conference month**



## Social media

The conference also helped to raise Play the Game’s presence on social media platforms, and Twitter in particular was widely used.

Prior to the conference, a hashtag was chosen (#ptg2013) and this hashtag was tweeted almost 3,000 times during the conference. According to the statistics, the hashtag potentially appeared on more than 4.5 million so-called Twitter timelines. The relatively high activity on Twitter was partly due to the group of journalism students who covered the conference and had a special focus on mobile platforms and on Twitter as a communication channel.

Play the Game’s Twitter profile @playthegame\_org gained more than 100 ‘followers’ during the conference.

Play the Game’s Facebook account also saw an increase in activity during the conference and the number of people who ‘like’ and follow our page increased by more than 50.

## Conference app

For the first time, Play the Game 2013 had a dedicated conference app free to download and use on mobile phones. The conference app contained the conference programme, information about speakers, hotels, relevant sites, etc. The app was downloaded a total of 152 times and, according to statistics from the developer, was opened over 3,000 times between 10 October and 4 November 2013.

## Summary of the participant survey: Growing satisfaction

In the week after Play the Game 2013, we sent out an online survey to 323 conference participants, out of whom 182 answered, giving a relatively satisfying response rate of 56 percent. Persons affiliated with the Danish Institute for Sports Studies/Play the Game (employees, board members and freelancers) were sorted out.

Reading the complete survey and the several hundreds of valuable personal comments from the participants is bound to put you in a positive mood. Here is a summary:

We have managed to raise the satisfaction level from 94 to 97 percent, but even more noteworthy is the fact that as many as 56 percent gave the conference the top score "very good". Overall, this is somewhat better than in Cologne and on par with the satisfaction expressed in the first participant surveys conducted in 2005 and 2007, at a time when the pioneer spirit still prevailed among the participants.

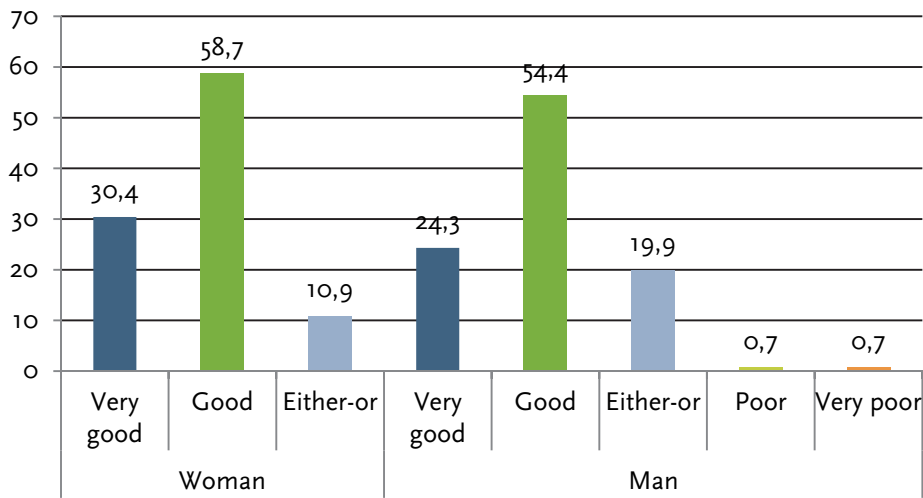
When studying each of the individual sub points, it is worth noting that the respondents probably belong to the more sympathetic part of the Play the Game audience. At the same time, the number of respondents is higher than before. The response rate is also satisfactory and higher than before, which to some extent compensates for any over-representation of 'core customers'.

Generally, one must be wary if, overall, there is more than 20 percent dissatisfaction/neutral stance in the answers to a question.

Compared to the actual composition of the participants, Play the Game debutants are under-represented in this survey. Therefore, respondents, who have an actual basis for comparison in previous conferences, dominate the survey.

Men and women are almost equally satisfied with the conference. However, there is a tendency that men are slightly more critical of the quality of the various presentations, including for example the plenary sessions:

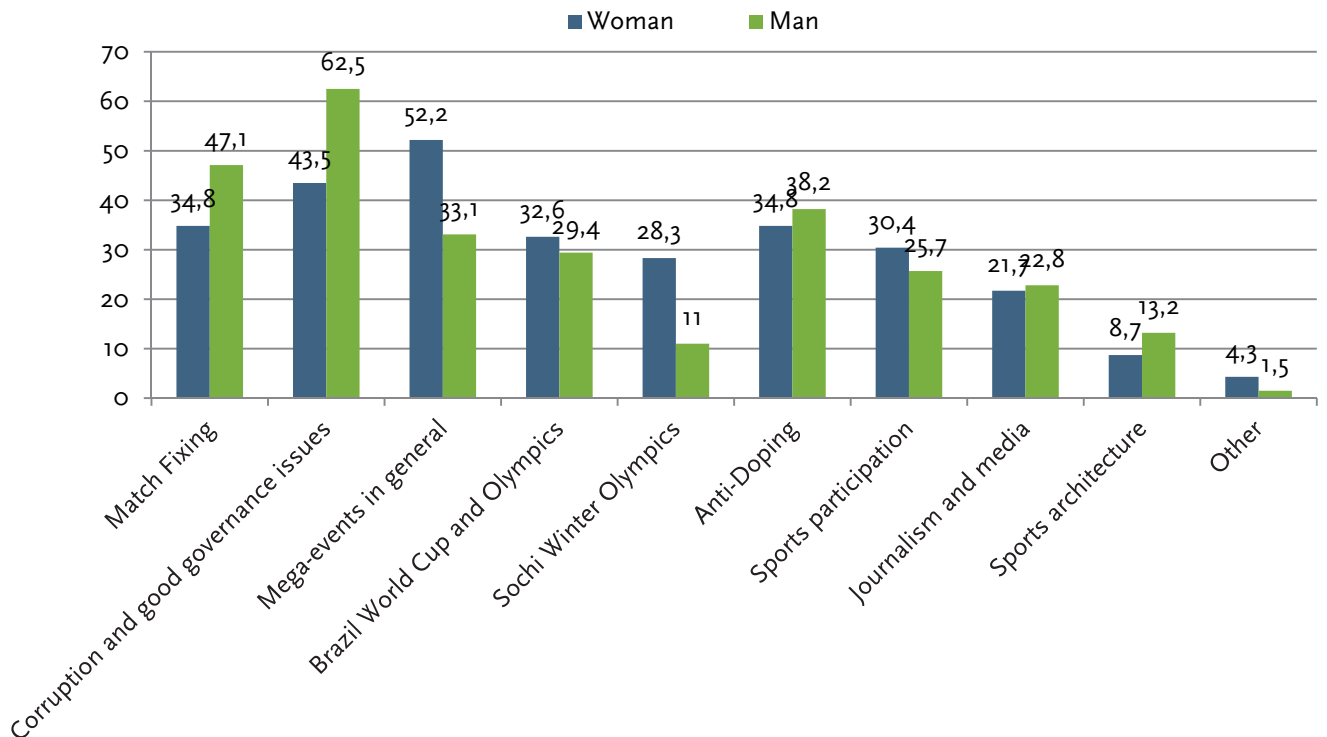
**Figure 2: General satisfaction with the quality of the presentations (percent)**



*What do you think about the general standard of the presentations during plenary sessions? Listed according to gender.*

It is not just a prejudiced statement to say that men and women have different interests. The survey results showed that men are especially interested in issues dealing with good governance, match-fixing and doping, while women take an interest in sport participation. Mega-events seem to be an interesting exception.

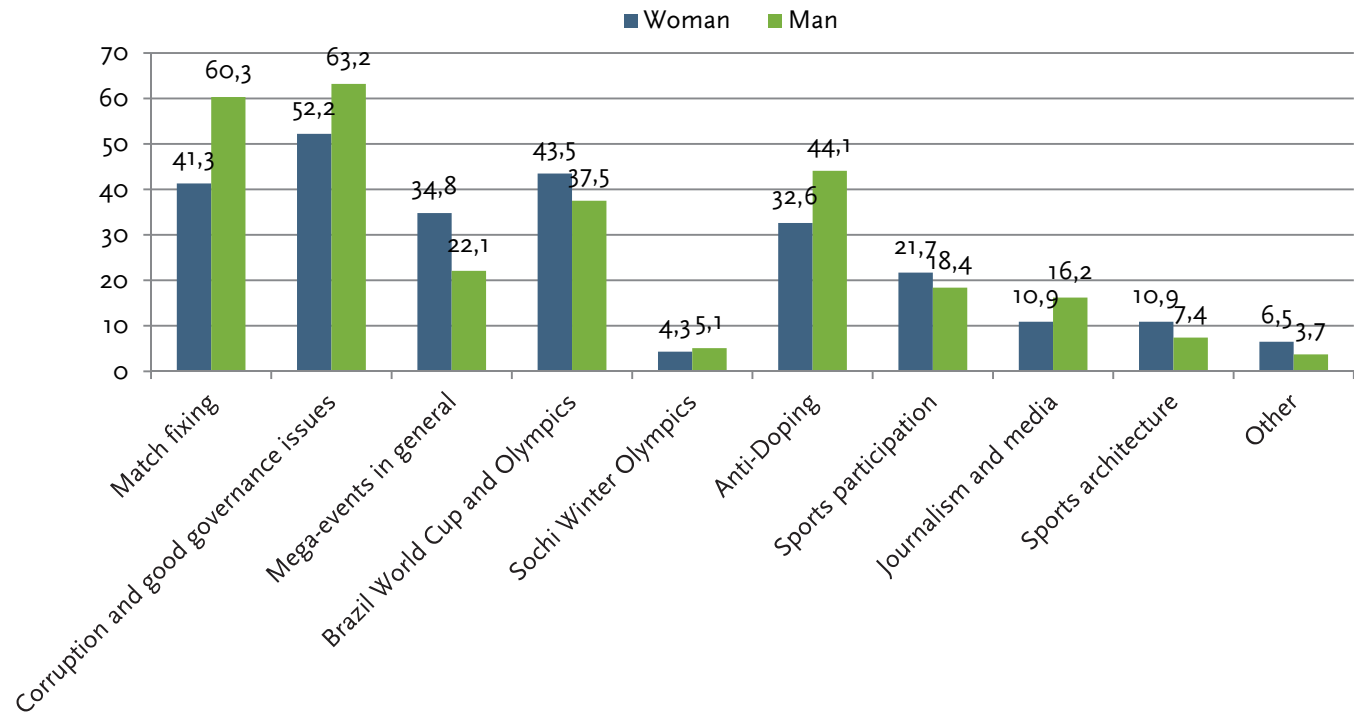
**Figure 3: The most relevant themes to the conference participants (percent)**



*Please select the three conference themes that had most relevance for you. Listed according to gender.*

Regarding the quality of the themes, both genders are more in line, with mega-events again being an exception.

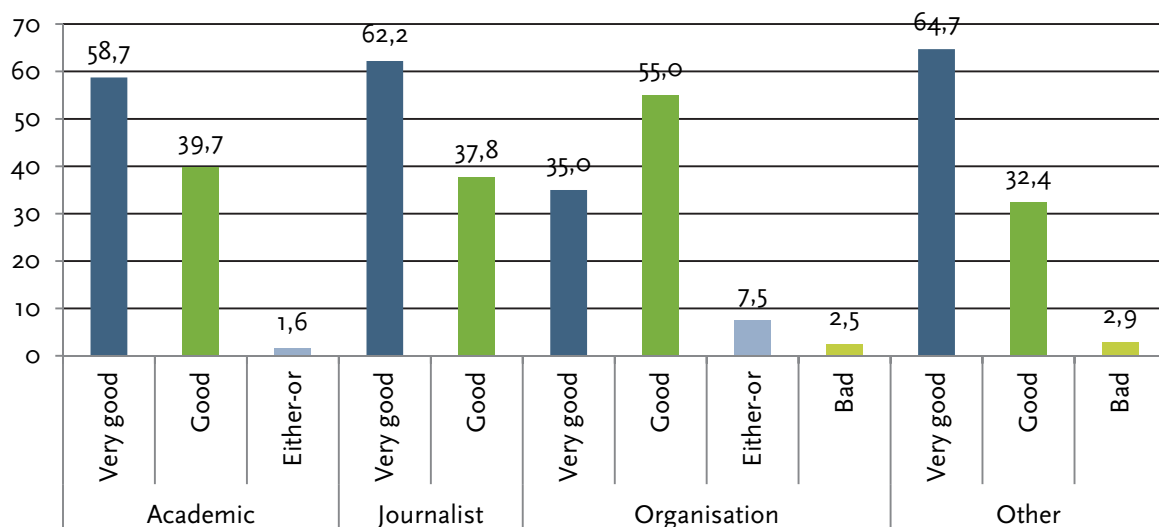
**Figure 4: Conference themes with the best content (percent)**



Select the three themes with the best content. Listed according to gender.

The overall impression of the conference is judged differently depending on which profession the respondents represent. Employees from sports organisations are more critical than others – as much as ten percent are indifferent or even negative.

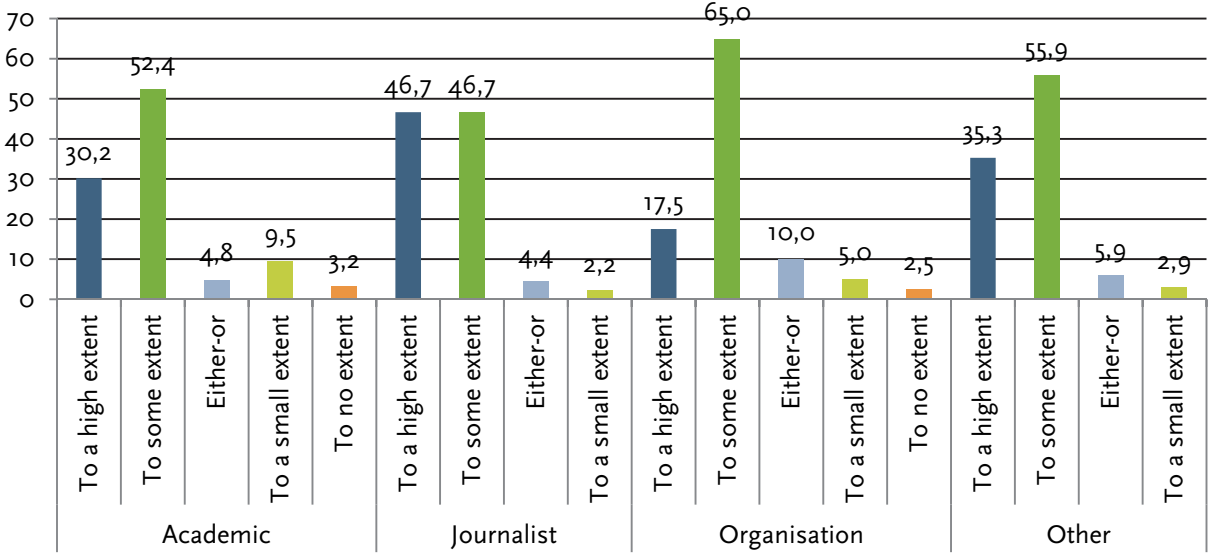
**Figure 5: Profession has influence on the general impression of the conference (percent)**



What is your overall impression of Play the Game 2013? Listed according to profession.

Journalists are the most positive, also when asked whether the conference will give value to their daily work. All groups however, express great appreciation:

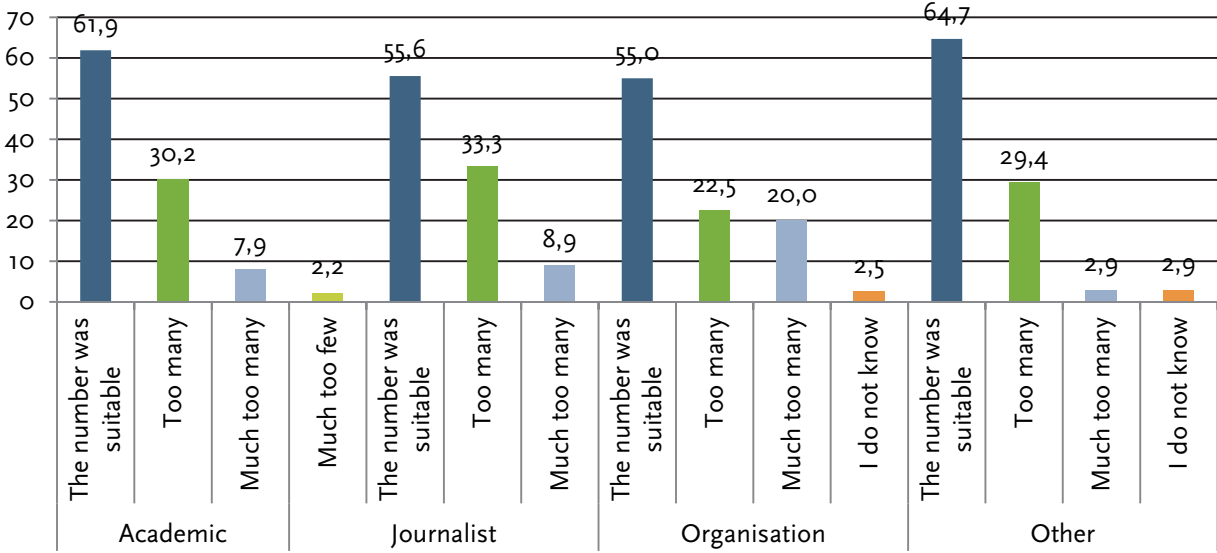
**Figure 6: Profession has influence on the appreciation of the conference (percent)**



*To which extent do you expect Play the Game to give value to your daily work? Listed according to profession.*

The number of presentations at Play the Game is a recurring point of discussion. Just as in 2011, 40 percent prefer a leaner programme and fewer difficult choices between parallel sessions during the conference.

**Figure 7: The number of presentation was suitable for most participants (percent)**



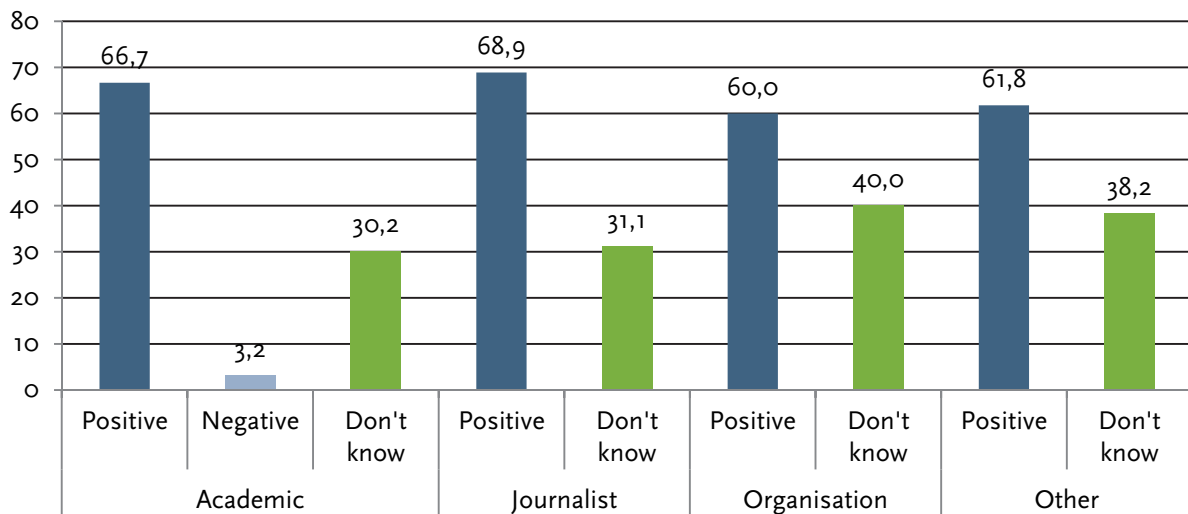
*What do you think about the number of presentations? Listed according to profession.*

The dilemma regarding the number of sessions and presentations is not an easy one to solve. Many of our participants rely on speaking time in order to get their travel, accommodation and

conference fee paid for. If we cut short the programme, we will have to exclude a large group of participants, and we do not wish to do that.

The vast majority of participants think that Play the Game is evolving in a positive direction. The most critical group is academics, of whom two participants responded that Play the Game is evolving in a negative direction. Moreover, around one third do not know in which direction Play the Game is evolving.

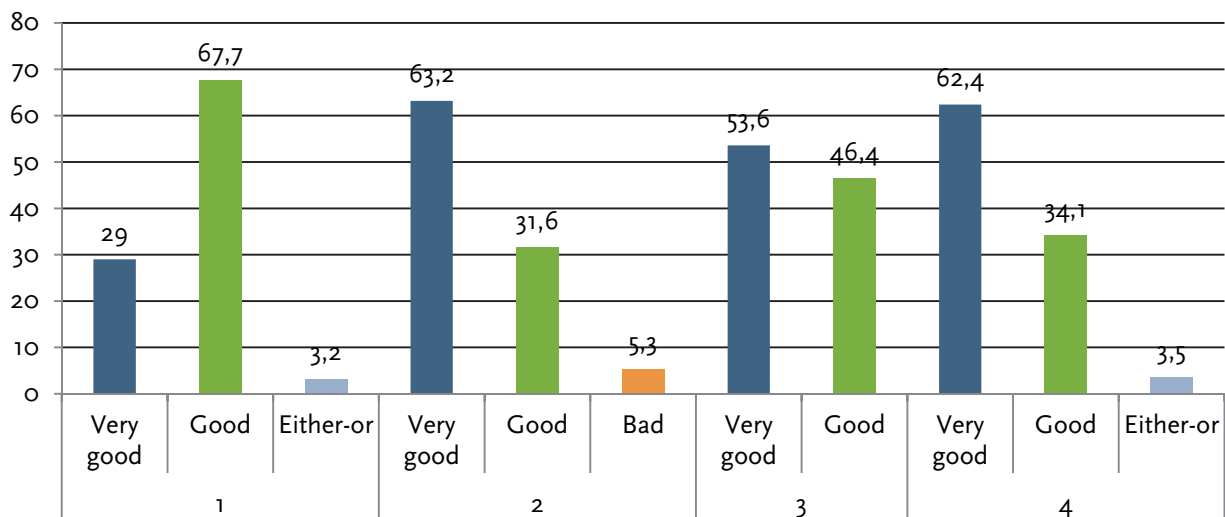
**Figure 8: Play the Game develops in a positive direction (percent)**



*Does Play the Game develop in a positive or negative direction? Listed according to profession.*

The longer time the participants attend the conference, the more satisfied they are. 31 respondents participated for one day, 38 participated at the conference for two days, and 28 respondents participated for three days. Almost half, 85 respondents, attended the conference for the full four days.

**Figure 9: The more days participating at the conference the more satisfied (percent)**



*What is your overall impression of Play the Game 2013? Listed according to number of days of participation.*

## Improving content

Compared to all previous conferences, the submitted abstracts were screened more thoroughly and systematically, and they were allocated differentiated time – the standard was 12 minutes + 3 minutes for debate, but some were only given 7-8 minutes. This was done on the basis of criticism of the parallel sessions in particular, which at previous conferences have been perceived as too light content-wise.



This improved screening has paid off both in percentage and in the participants' comments. We were also very fortunate that most submitted abstracts were of a high standard and that they were better interconnected, making it easier to organise them thematically.

In many ways, we have found an appropriate format for our sessions, but we will naturally continue to strive to innovate and improve the conference. The length of the presentations and the time management, which for the first time managed to stay right on track with a few exceptions, reaped satisfaction and praise from the participants.

Still, we should improve at allocating time for networking and discussion. This is a clear message from the survey.

### **Personal comments in the survey**

The participants' personal comments in the survey reflect a large degree of satisfaction and enthusiasm:

- Absolutely world class. I met the leading writers and thinkers in my field from five continents – it's hard to beat that.
- Even for the "knowledgeable" there is always something new to be learned or another perspective to be appreciated.
- The huge amount of the variety of subjects was just wonderful. I think there was something for everybody.
- I thought the range and quality of discussion was PTG's best to date. In fact, the problem was choosing between equally interesting parallel sessions
- The mixity of the crowd [sic] (coming from sports, academia, the media, politics, etc.) was absolutely great in providing pluralist views and breaking thinking and framing silos.
- Fantastic location, having the event where people stayed should be a feature that continues.
- Your staff were on the ball. Attention to detail and customer service outstanding.
- I attend many conferences - I am very impressed with every aspect of PTGs registration and organization.

But there are also a few critical voices, typically like these:

- Disappointing to see so few female plenary speakers.
- PTG moves a bit in circles – the same themes, the same 50 core participants, the same presenters that get speaking time, the same old friends that get the PTG-award etc.
- Perhaps it has become a little less critical over the years. Pound called it maturing. That was somewhat worrying.
- I think that more solutions to all the problems in sport could be presented.
- Apart from a group of South Americans only a handful of Global Southern were present. Also Southern & Eastern European were not many.

- What about a database, or password accessed repository, where attendees can upload contact details along with a photo?
- Many speakers spoke many times when I was in sessions where speakers time was reduced - with varying time allowances inexplicably. Allow equal time for speakers.

## Future developments and improvements

Now, more than ever before, Play the Game is faced with the challenge of providing a forum for constructive discussion and development of solutions to the challenges of international sport without reducing the critical nerve.

Play the Game's increasing official recognition and participation in various consultative forums must always go hand-in-hand with an active search for information and perspectives that illuminate the true state of sport, even when it happens to differ from the established stances, including those of Play the Game.

It is also a challenge for Play the Game to preserve freshness and innovation in its approach to the themes that have turned out to be integral elements of the programme: sports governance, match-fixing, doping, mega-events and grassroots sport. These themes are crucial and cannot be sacrificed on the altar of renewal, and we cannot expect to conjure new, pioneering experts and whistle-blowers every second year. However, it strengthens Play the Game that the organisation is able to provide qualified content to the conference and to attract foreign lecturers through its daily network, for example, the EU-funded AGGIS project, the preparation of, or participation in, international index studies such as the World Stadium Index, the International Sports Press Survey and the World Event Index, and the institute's own research on sports e.g. participation, facility operations.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to keep on thinking creatively and imaginatively in order to bring new perspectives and new formats to the debates that will inevitably contain repeats and repeaters from conference to conference. There are also specific tasks to ensure a better balance of male and female participants and presenters, and sharp and inspiring perspectives on grassroots sports and associations.

Externally, we will try to put together smaller regional conference and seminar activities in collaboration with countries where it would not be realistic to organise a full Play the Game conference. We have a lot of practical and substantive expertise to offer, and we have good experiences from the past year's activities in Sao Paulo (2012) and in Brussels (2013). However, we should not launch new projects without foreign partners who are ready to take on part of the primary financial and organisational responsibility.

Next time, we must start the planning sooner with a first "call for interest" to potential host countries in the beginning of 2014. We will also set up an internal organising team that will set up milestones in the preparation for the next conference and follow up with regular meetings.

## Appendices

There are a number of appendices for the evaluation of Play the Game 2013 that can be required at the Danish Institute for Sports Studies by appointment:

- Final programme for the conference
- Final participants list
- Main results of the email survey among participants compared with the survey results from the four previous conferences (2005-2011)
- Overview and description of the external media coverage of the conference