

Unique traits of sports-related public procurements in the European Union

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on sports-related public spending in the Member States of the European Union (EU). Based on the public procurement database of the EU (TED), a sport-related public procurement database was built and analysed. Using data from 33 countries for the period 2017–2019, the paper describes the characteristics of sport-related public procurements. The research highlights that the public database is an adequate way of making the data on public procurements available, where traditionally the latency was high. The characteristics found for the eight most active Member States include a high proportion of construction works. There is a connection between countries and the dominant type of purchasing organisations, although the involvement of central purchasing bodies is not a game-changer in this area. Higher value contracts usually lasted for longer and the length of contracts has a strong connection to the contract types. Non-negotiated types of procedures show a far higher average contract value than negotiated procedure types. When the lowest price criterion was applied, the total procurement value was significantly lower.

KEYWORDS

economics of sport, price-based procurement, public procurement, international economics

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1. INTRODUCTION

Extensive research has been done recently on the efficiency of support and public spending connected to sports. The idea of analysing sports-related procurement arose from the

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publication of the European Court of Justice case C-155/19, which specifically found that the contracting authority was subject to public procurement in the field of sport. This decision gave importance to analysing sports-related EU procurements.

While earlier sport-focused papers enquired about the sources and motives of financing, public procurement research mostly aimed at legal issues. Still, little is known about sport-related public procurements and, in particular, quantitative analysis is rarely used in this field. Our paper aims to fill this gap by analysing the Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) announcement database. In addition to a general description of EU-wide sport-related public procurements, we also offer a cross-country comparison.

Our goal is to become acquainted with the characteristics of sport-related procurements in the member states of the European Union that post their public procurement notices in the Official Journal of the European Union. We produce a more in-depth analysis concerning the member states that use public procurement to the greatest extent in terms of value in order to enable a more comprehensive analysis of the individual characteristics based on the data of the Member States active in public procurement.

The analysis by [Nessel and Kościótek \(2020\)](#) using the DEA method, and the research by [Dallmeyer et al. \(2018\)](#), specifically looked at the role of the magnitude of funding, its period and consistency. These research reports only made a fleeting reference to public procurement criteria related to aid or did not mention them at all. The analyses, which expressly studied the relationship between state aid and government spending for sports purposes, dwelled much more frequently on the issue of public procurement. Typically, these analyses studied the nature of the aid from a legal point of view and they were less qualitative in nature in terms of sports in general, or football in particular ([Traupel 2014](#); [Van Rompuy – van Maren, 2016](#); [Nicolaidis 2015](#); [Cattaneo 2018](#)).

[Irizarry \(2017\)](#) took an interesting approach in a research project focusing on the analysis of a financing model and sport-related PPP, with very strong public procurement content. However, in researching the literature, we have not found any content expressly on the specificities and characteristics of sports-related public procurement spending.

This paper is to our best knowledge a first-in-kind, building on the TED data as the details of the individual announcements had to be transformed into a single consistent database to ensure a good overview. Also, the database needed considerable cleansing to sort out eventual issues in the records.

For the [TED database](#), we built on analyses that, although not related to a sports procurement, analysed the database earlier. [Svátek et al. \(2014\)](#) mainly focused on the analysis of data content, [Plaček \(2020\)](#) investigated the specificity of delays, while [Tas \(2020\)](#) looked for a link between regulatory quality and competition and efficiency by analysing TED data. [Fazekas and Kocsis \(2020\)](#) identified red flags in the announcements in a study specifically on corruption. Similarly, the development of www.redflags.eu by Transparency International aimed to identify corruption risks. They used the standards of the country publishing the notice to determine the extent to which it is considered risky, thus developing an explicitly dynamic indicator for the database and thus making TED data analysis increasingly diverse.

The abovementioned examples show that TED data are worth analysing, but there are limitations to this analysis. [Amman and Essig \(2015\)](#) quote the problems of data limitations and our own experience shows that the publicly available database requires a lot of work to make it suitable for academic studies. In order to move away from focusing on the announcements only,



we had to link the call for tender and the announcement of decision databases. This allowed us to investigate the specifics of public procurement at the procedural level. Muñoz-Garcia and Vila (2019) also linked microdata on selected bidders from the TED to the Orbis database in their study.

In a similarly innovative way, the so-called Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV code), was used to select sport-related procurements. This method allowed us to investigate the specificities of the procurement procedures of a given procurement object and sector, rather than the practices of a particular contracting authority.

2. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Based on the experiences of the literature explored, we carry out an analysis based on TED data, which combines the aspects of the source and nature of the aid (ministry, municipality, body governed by public law, EU funding) and those of ensuring competition (solely price-based competition, publication of prior notices, single bid procedures, auctions), and other aspects that take into account various other effects of spending (support to SMEs, use of long-term methods of procurement).

During the data analysis, we decided to use both the contract notices and contract awards. Similarly, we cover both databases, as Svátek et al. (2014) concluded in their article, but with the difference that we combined the two databases and analysed the data at the procedural level. After downloading the details of public procurements for the years 2017–2019 from Tenders Electronic Daily, tender calls and result announcements had to be paired, sometimes even across years (any tender is recorded for its year of announcement). The database created contained data from 33 countries (EU28, UK, North Macedonia, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland). We cleaned up the TED database, leaving out the “CANCELLED” procedures from the data. We used the three most important contract notices and contract award notices of the TED database: (1) contracting authorities (Annex II), (2) utilities (Annex V), (3) concession procurements (Annex XXI) of Public Procurement Directives (2014).¹

Building on the data collected, we set up two databases. The first contained each tender only once and included tender level information only. The second database collected lot (purchase entity) level information implying that each tender showed up as many times as the number of lots linked to it. The lot database was used to analyse information like the number of offers received or the characteristics of the bid winner. At this stage, we worked with all public procurement data. The database was later narrowed down to sport-related procurement items. In many cases it was not possible to eliminate data gaps in the database, therefore we did not study technical issues in several cases, which would have been interesting but filling in the data was not mandatory in several EU member states, so if the data gap was too large, we rejected the subject matter of the study.

When reviewing the databases, it became clear that data cleansing was inevitable. It seems that the questionnaire collecting information from the member states was sometimes filled in using the digit 9 to show the lack of data creating confusion when numeric input was asked for. Thus, in the case of the total purchase value, we had to remove numbers containing only the

¹Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement (repealing Directive 2004/18/EC); Directive 2014/25/EU on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services; Directive 2014/23/EU on concessions.



digit 9. To keep realistic inputs only, we also removed any total tender value above 999 999 998 euros and below 10 000 euros. As for the lots, we deleted lot values below 100 euros. We decided to create the reviewed purchase value in a separate variable, so for statistics not building on the total purchase value, we may use the entire original database.

In the end, the tender level database contained 291 032 items of which 266 480 (91.6%) included acceptable information on the total tender purchase value. The lot level database (covering exactly the same tenders) consisted of 813 115 records of which 667 351 (82.1%) contained valid information on the total lot value.

As a next step, tenders (and related lots) were hand-picked for being sport-related. We used the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) codes indicating the subject matter of procurement to filter out the unambiguously sport-related subject matters of procurements (goods, services and works). The CPV codes include a number of procurement subject matters, which may be linked to sport-related procurements, but in order to study the clearly sport-related procurements, we narrowed down the scope of our study. Altogether 226 CPVs were classified as sport-related. Following the identification of the codes, we selected the notices launching and closing procedures from the TED database, whose main object was linked to a sport-related purpose. We did not take the subsidiary objects into account. We coded the data based on [TED CSV Open Data Notes & Codebook \(2022\)](#) Version 3.2, 2019-05-16. Altogether, 226 CPVs were classified as sport-related, [Table 1](#) provides some examples of these.

Of the records covering the period 2017 to 2019, 1754 (0.6%) tenders and 3109 (0.4%) lots qualified for being sport-related. Of all the 33 countries it was only Lithuania that did not report a single sport-related tender over those three years. Cyprus and Iceland recorded only one tender, while North-Macedonia and Malta had only two tenders each.

Table 1. Examples of sport-related CPV codes (including works, goods, services)

37415000-0 Athletics equipment	45212224-2 Construction work for stadiums
37416000-7 Leisure equipment	45212225-9 Construction work for sports halls
37420000-8 Gymnasium equipment	45212230-7 Fitting-out work for changing rooms
37421000-5 Gymnasium mats	45212290-5 Repair and maintenance work on sports facilities
37422000-2 Gymnastic bars or beams	45235200-5 Construction work for running tracks
37422100-3 Gymnastic bars	45235210-8 Resurfacing of running tracks
37422200-4 Gymnastic beams	45236100-1 Levelling work for various sports facilities
37423000-9 Gymnastic ropes, rings or climbing accessories	45236110-4 Levelling work for sports grounds
37423100-0 Gymnastic ropes	45236111-1 Golf-course resurfacing services
37423200-1 Gymnastic rings	45236112-8 Tennis-court grading services
37423300-2 Gymnastic climbing accessories	45236113-5 Levelling services for racetracks
37424000-6 Gymnastic vaulting equipment	45236114-2 Racecourse grading services
37425000-3 Gymnastic trampolines	45236119-7 Sports field repair services
	45242100-6 Construction work for water-sport facilities
	45242200-7 Construction work for pleasure-boat marinas
	77320000-9 Sports-field maintenance services

Source: CPV Regulation (2007).



Table 2. Annual breakdown of the databases

	Total tenders	Tenders with valid values	Sport tenders
2017	92 517	81 384	684
2018	104 785	91 495	664
2019	69 178	59 219	406
Total	266 480	232 098	1 754
	Total lots	Lots with valid values	Sport lots
2017	229 854	217 483	1 133
2018	265 612	249 755	1 250
2019	171 885	160 537	726
Total	667 351	627 775	3 109

Source: collected by the authors.

Tables 2 and 3 offer an overview of the whole selection process. As most of the countries had very few sport-related public procurements recorded over the period under study, we separated eight countries (CH, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, SE, UK) with at least 50 sport-related tenders with valid total procurement values for analysing the country-level traits of the tenders.

When it comes to the total sport-related (valid) tender value, Italy and France have spent the most, followed by the UK (Fig. 1). Contrary to its relatively small size and population and a modest number of recorded tenders, Hungary had outstanding spending covering 7 percent of the total tender value considered.

The average tender value is quite different across countries (Fig. 2). Romania and Hungary had 20–40 times higher average tender values than Germany or Bulgaria. Also, these two countries have 6–8 times higher average sport-related tender values than their non-sport-related average. Due to the small number of recorded tenders in some of the countries, the cross-country paired T-statistic comparison was only performed for the eight countries with more than 50 tenders recorded. Results show that a number of significant pair-wise differences exist. At 5 percent significance the average sport procurement value for CH and DE is less than that in FR, IT, and PL (UK and SE had a huge SD across their tender values).

3. MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS

We present the results in two parts. First, we focus on all the sport-related public procurements applicable in our database. Next, the paper presents the results from the comparison of the eight countries with at least 50 sport-related procurements with valid total purchase value data.

3.1. Results of the analysis of TED sport-related procurement data

Countries spent close to 29.2% of their sport-related procurements on services, 3.0% on goods and 67.8% on works (Table 4). However, paired T statistics show a significant difference



Table 3. The country level breakdown of the tender database

	Total tenders	Tenders with valid value	Sport tenders		Total tenders	Tenders with valid value	Sport tenders
AT	3 934	3 850	21	IT	12 094	11 730	97
BE	3 615	3 428	13	LI	26	26	0
BG	8 584	6 541	16	LT	4 839	4 076	4
CH	7 065	6 861	59	LU	963	944	9
CY	314	298	1	LV	2 375	2 007	5
CZ	10 250	9 441	47	MK	775	687	2
DE	55 604	43 983	548	MT	628	601	2
DK	2 554	2 410	8	NL	5 350	3 374	56
EE	1 392	1 262	7	NO	3 703	3 450	27
ES	17 698	16 992	273	PL	44 805	36 464	63
FI	4 358	4 223	20	PT	3 335	3 125	8
FR	31 603	29 117	251	RO	3 425	3 065	15
GR	2 644	2 412	9	SE	12 624	11 135	68
HR	2 487	2 270	7	SI	2 369	2 177	5
HU	4 299	4 041	28	SK	1 052	1 029	6
IE	1 475	1 329	10	UK	10 025	9 544	68
IS	216	206	1	Total	266 480	232 098	1 754

Source: collected by the authors.

between ‘supplies and services’ and ‘supplies and works’ average contract values, thus works account only for 58.5% of the purchase lots. The procurements of supplies (goods) have an average value that amounts only to one-sixth of that of works.

As for the contracting authorities of the individual countries, most of the procurements came from regional or local authorities, and bodies governed by public law (“body governed by public law” is the contracting status of those sports market players that are mostly financed by public funds). Characteristically, latency is very high in this later group, because a list of contracting authorities including every one of them does not exist in some Member States (there is such a list, for instance, in Hungary). Interestingly, water, energy, transport and telecommunications sectors made a small number of high-value sport procurements (which could be explained by some outliers or data error), while ministries had a relatively high number of contracts with lower average values. When testing for statistically significant differences, we found that ministries’ average sport purchase values were significantly lower than for regional and local authorities and other players, but significantly exceeded that of the EU agencies (Table 5).

We also investigated whether the involvement of a central procurement body had any effect on the average purchase value (Table 6). The assumption is that a professional central



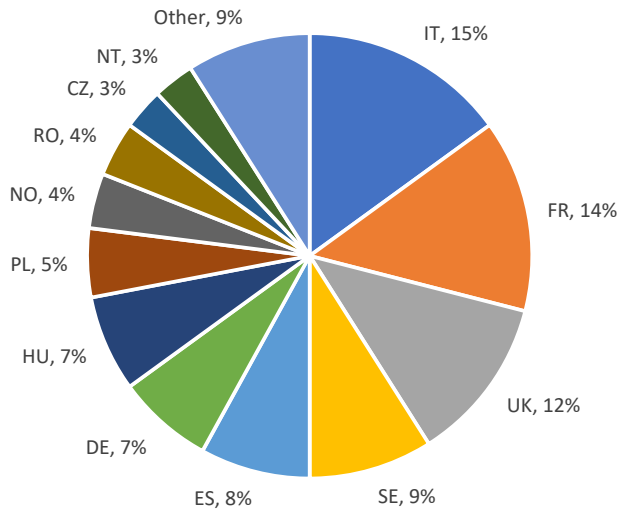


Fig. 1. The distribution of sport-related total tender value across countries
 Source: collected by the authors.

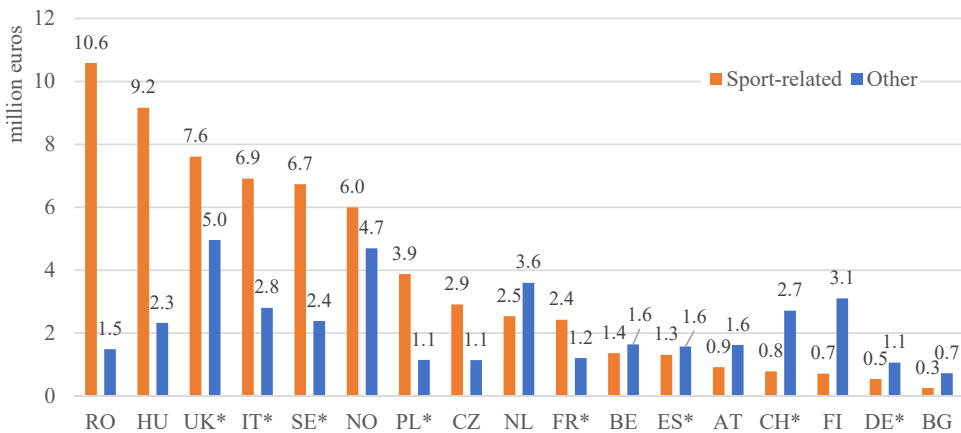


Fig. 2. Average tender value for countries with at least 10 reported sport-related public procurements
 Note: asterisk marks countries included in country-level analysis.
 Source: collected by the authors.

purchasing body could be more successful in reducing prices by reaching out to more contractors or choosing a better process type than other bodies. At the same time, central bodies tend to purchase bigger amounts than individual contracting entities. We found that while contracts signed by a central body had significantly higher average purchase values for non-sport-related items than the contracts of other entities, no statistically significant differences were identified in the case of sport-related items.



Table 4. Sport-related procurements lots in type breakdown

Contract type	N	Sum (euros)	Sum %	Mean	Std. Deviation
1 Services	711	1 326 808 497.02	29.20%	1 866 116.03	7 932 987.66
2 Supplies	460	137 545 123.32	3.03%	299 011.14	1 032 322.51
3 Works	1 651	3 079 204 934.68	67.77%	1 865 054.47	6 378 382.55
Total	2 822	4 543 558 555.02	100.00%	1 610 049.10	6 335 865.09

Source: collected by the authors.

Table 5. Sport-related procurements lots by contracting body type

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Total Value
1 Ministry or any other national or federal authority	160	674 770.41	2 172 497.81	107 963 265.57
3 Regional or local authority	1 726	1 711 435.44	6 899 777.92	2 953 937 567.89
4 Water, energy, transport and telecommunications sectors	14	16 453 591.40	27 560 237.66	230 350 279.57
5 European Union institution/agency	2	147 660.54	28 423.93	295 321.07
6 Body governed by public law	371	842 212.47	2 215 078.23	312 460 824.74
8 Other	392	1 858 033.78	5 671 108.02	728 349 243.04
Total	2 665	1 626 024.95	6 444 091.47	4 333 356 501.88

Source: collected by the authors.

Table 6. Involvement of a central purchasing body in public procurements

		Sport-related	Other
Central purchasing body	N	81	8 517
	Mean	2 850 972	2 387 278
	Std. Deviation	7 487 857	16 512 270
Other entity	N	1 341	202 967
	Mean	2 490 266	1 725 855
	Std. Deviation	8 644 258	12 436 965

Source: collected by the authors.



The correlation between the contract duration and the total purchase value was 0.333 and significant even at a 1 percent level, which implies that higher value contracts usually lasted for longer. The length of contracts has a strong connection to the contract types (Table 7). Any paired comparison for contract types showed a significant difference. The difference in length is particularly outstanding when contrasting building and service contracts: the former hardly exceeded 1.5 years while the latter averaged to almost 4 years.

At the same time, procedure types showed little difference when it came to contractual value. This is particularly interesting because for non-sport-related procurements we found significant differences across procedure types (Table 8). Paired *T*-tests only showed a significant difference between the average value of open procedures and competitive dialogues (COD) in the case of sport-related contracts, while for other contracts pairwise differences were significant in most of the cases. It seems that for high-value procurements, COD procedures dominated, while the lowest contractual value was linked to the most popular open procedures no matter whether the procurement was sport-related or not.

However, once we categorised the procedures based on whether those were built on negotiations or not, the difference became statistically significant (Table 9). Open and restricted

Table 7. Contract length (months) for various types of sport-related contracts

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1 S Services	504	47.95	61.75
2 U Supplies	282	19.88	29.65
3 W Works	860	16.89	41.62
Total	1 646	26.91	49.17

Source: collected by the authors.

Table 8. Contractual value across procedure types*

	Sport-related contracts				Other contracts		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1 COD	12	32.71	30.58	1 COD	619	21.73	68.80
2 NIP	3	4.21	3.47	2 NIP	66	2.49	6.94
5 NIC	62	7.02	15.05	5 NIC	13 847	3.84	25.32
6 OPE	1 448	1.91	6.74	6 OPE	209 863	1.44	9.74
7 RES	40	7.35	11.61	7 RES	5 605	5.38	24.68
8 AWP	0			8 AWP	162	1.02	2.92
Total	1 565	2.49	8.34	Total	230 162	1.73	12.43

Notes: AWP: award without prior publication of a contract notice; COD: competitive dialogue; NIC/NIP: negotiated with a call for competition (the abbreviation changed over the years); OPE: open; RES: restricted.

Source: collected by the authors.



procedures do not require negotiations and show a far higher average contract value than procedure types with negotiations.

The Chi-square test confirmed a strong connection between procedure and contract types (Table 10). One would see a particular preference of NIC procedures for service contracts and the same for restricted procedures in the case of construction works.

Table 9. Contractual value procedures with and without negotiations for sport-related procurements

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Negotiations involved	78	10 794 907.49	20 057 770.32
No negotiations	1 488	2 057 105.86	6 967 703.39
Total	1 566	2 492 322.04	8 339 022.73

Source: collected by the authors.

Table 10. Crosstab of procedure and contract types

Type of procedure		Type of contract			Total
		S Service	U Supply	W Works	
COD	Count	5.0	0.0	7.0	12.0
	Expected Count	3.8	1.9	6.3	12.0
NIP	Count	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.0
	Expected Count	0.6	0.3	1.0	2.0
NEC	Count	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	Expected Count	0.3	0.2	0.5	1.0
NEG	Count	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
	Expected Count	0.3	0.2	0.5	1.0
NIC	Count	28.0	3.0	30.0	61.0
	Expected Count	19.2	9.8	31.9	61.0
OPE	Count	505.0	276.0	843.0	1 624.0
	Expected Count	512.0	262.0	850.0	1 624.0
RES	Count	13.0	4.0	35.0	52.0
	Expected Count	16.4	8.4	27.2	52.0
Total	Count	552.0	283.0	918.0	1 753.0

Note: NEC/NEG: negotiated with a call for competition.

Source: collected by the authors.



Accelerated procedures were not significantly different in terms of contractual value from the rest of the procedures in the case of sport-related procurements. However, the 35 accelerated procedures had an average contract value of 1.3 million euro in contrast to that of 2.5 million for the remaining 1 531 procedures suggesting the practice of choosing accelerated processes for lower value procurements also in case of sport-related items, just like in the case of other contracts, where this difference was significant and similar in proportion.

Electronic auctioning is very rare for sport-related contracts. While the ratio was 1.93% for other contracts, only five sport-related contracts, representing no more than 0.33%, were reported using the electronic method.

Table 11. EU funding effects

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Sport-related	No EU funds	2 522	1 696 016.56	6 644 978.29	
	EU funds used	237	876 376.90	2 514 215.36	
	Total	2 759	1 625 608.95	6 399 611.78	0.059
Other	No EU funds	563 141	868 392.97	9 877 926.82	
	EU funds used	46 664	958 608.31	8 094 535.24	
	Total	609 805	875 296.50	9 753 009.65	0.055

Source: collected by the authors.

Table 12. Effect of awarding criterion

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
0 Missing	1 132	2 151 659.34	8 130 171.13
1 L Lowest price	712	906 103.95	4 061 694.56
2 M Most economically advantageous tender	978	1 495 638.21	5 164 427.87
Total	2 822	1 610 049.10	6 335 865.09

Source: collected by the authors.

Table 13. Contrasting sport-related contract lots with SME winners and other winners

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
No SME	1 120	2 270 739.94	8 221 952.58
SME winning	1 702	1 175 281.92	4 650 536.16
Total	2 822	1 610 049.10	6 335 865.09

Source: collected by the authors.



**Table 14. Dominance of purchasing organisations across countries**

		1 Ministry or any other national or federal authority, including their regional or local subdivisions	3 Regional or local authority	4 Water, energy, transport and telecommunications sectors	6 Body governed by public law	8 Other	Total
CH	Count	2.0	57.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	59.0
	Expected Count	1.5	38.1	0.6	6.2	12.7	59.0
DE	Count	7.0	372.0	2.0	51.0	116.0	548.0
	Expected Count	13.8	353.7	5.4	57.2	117.9	548.0
ES	Count	6.0	176.0	4.0	22.0	65.0	273.0
	Expected Count	6.9	176.2	2.7	28.5	58.7	273.0
FR	Count	12.0	154.0	3.0	37.0	45.0	251.0
	Expected Count	6.3	162.0	2.5	26.2	54.0	251.0
IT	Count	4.0	54.0	4.0	9.0	26.0	97.0
	Expected Count	2.4	62.6	1.0	10.1	20.9	97.0
PL	Count	1.0	13.0	1.0	8.0	40.0	63.0
	Expected Count	1.6	40.7	0.6	6.6	13.6	63.0
SE	Count	2.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	68.0
	Expected Count	1.7	43.9	0.7	7.1	14.6	68.0
UK	Count	2.0	35.0	0.0	22.0	9.0	68.0
	Expected Count	1.7	43.9	0.7	7.1	14.6	68.0
Total	Count	36.0	921.0	14.0	149.0	307.0	1 427.0
	Expected Count	36.0	921.0	14.0	149.0	307.0	1 427.0

Source: collected by the authors.

We also tested whether the contracts related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds had any effect on the contract value (Table 11). While both for sport-related and other procedures the differences are only significant at a 6 percent level, it is worth underlining that sport-related procedures tended to have lower contractual value when partly financed from EU funds, while the opposite was true for the rest of the procurements.

The awarding criterion used to make the final choice among the offers had a statistically significant effect on the contractual value: the “Lowest price” method showed 40 percent lower average purchase value than the other two groups (Table 12). While unfortunately a lack of data was very frequent for this issue, the lowest price criterion seemed to radically lower the total procurement value. It is worrying that the highest contractual value was measured in the case where the purchasing entity forgot or did not want to provide information on the decision criterion applied. A pairwise *T*-test could not confirm a

Table 15. Contract types across countries

		1 S Services	2 U Supplies	3 W Works	Total
CH	Count	5.0	2.0	52.0	59.0
	Expected Count	19.0	8.1	31.8	59.0
DE	Count	31.0	32.0	485.0	548.0
	Expected Count	176.7	75.7	295.7	548.0
ES	Count	218.0	37.0	18.0	273.0
	Expected Count	88.0	37.7	147.3	273.0
FR	Count	64.0	34.0	153.0	251.0
	Expected Count	80.9	34.7	135.4	251.0
IT	Count	67.0	9.0	21.0	97.0
	Expected Count	31.3	13.4	52.3	97.0
PL	Count	24.0	20.0	19.0	63.0
	Expected Count	20.3	8.7	34.0	63.0
SE	Count	12.0	37.0	19.0	68.0
	Expected Count	21.9	9.4	36.7	68.0
UK	Count	39.0	26.0	3.0	68.0
	Expected Count	21.9	9.4	36.7	68.0
Total	Count	460.0	197.0	770.0	1 427.0
	Expected Count	460.0	197.0	770.0	1 427.0

Source: collected by the authors.



Table 16. Procedure types across countries

		1 COD	2 INP	5 NIC	6 OPE	7 RES	8 AWP	Total
CH	Count	0.0	0.0	0.0	59.0	0.0	0.0	59.0
	Expected Count	0.4	0.1	2.2	55.4	1.0	0.0	59.0
DE	Count	0.0	0.0	19.0	525.0	4.0	0.0	548.0
	Expected Count	3.5	0.8	20.0	514.2	9.2	0.4	548.0
ES	Count	0.0	0.0	3.0	268.0	2.0	0.0	273.0
	Expected Count	1.7	0.4	10.0	256.2	4.6	0.2	273.0
FR	Count	6.0	0.0	18.0	217.0	8.0	1.0	250.0
	Expected Count	1.6	0.4	9.1	234.6	4.2	0.2	250.0
IT	Count	0.0	2.0	2.0	90.0	3.0	0.0	97.0
	Expected Count	0.6	0.1	3.5	91.0	1.6	0.1	97.0
PL	Count	0.0	0.0	0.0	62.0	1.0	0.0	63.0
	Expected Count	0.4	0.1	2.3	59.1	1.1	0.0	63.0
SE	Count	0.0	0.0	0.0	68.0	0.0	0.0	68.0
	Expected Count	0.4	0.1	2.5	63.8	1.1	0.0	68.0
UK	Count	3.0	0.0	10.0	49.0	6.0	0.0	68.0
	Expected Count	0.4	0.1	2.5	63.8	1.1	0.0	68.0
Total	Count	9.0	2.0	52.0	1 338.0	24.0	1.0	1 426.0
	Expected Count	9.0	2.0	52.0	1 338.0	24.0	1.0	1 426.0

Source: collected by the authors.

statistically significant difference between the groups “Most economically advantageous tender” and “Missing”, though.²

As Table 13 describes, lots won by SMEs were of significantly lower value. Other firms typically gain contracts of 93.2 percent higher total value. However, the number of offers received or the number of offers received from SMEs had no significant connection to contractual value. Thus, it is not that SMEs would prefer smaller contracts or would not try to win bigger value procurements, they are just less successful with those.

²Two different awarding criteria can be indicated in the contract notice, despite the fact that the public procurement legislation provides for more than one possibility. Therefore, the data analysis allowed us to draw conclusions on these two criteria.



3.2. Results of comparing countries with the most sport-related procurements

Our cross-country analysis targeted the same variables that we reviewed in section 3.1. Our Chi-square test results show that there is a connection between countries and the dominant type of purchasing organisations (Table 14.) In Switzerland and Sweden, regional and local authorities dominate the sport-related procurements, while in Italy and Poland “other” organisations have a role more significant than elsewhere. However, in the UK “bodies governed by public law” play a more significant role than in the other countries.

During the period under study, radical differences emerged in contract types of sport-related public procurements (Table 15). While in Switzerland and Germany construction works gave the overwhelming majority of the contracts, Spain, UK, and Italy purchased more services than the average. The UK is also outstanding in supplies procurements, just like Sweden, and Poland.

The preferred procedure types also showed significant dispersion (Table 16). From Switzerland, only open procedures were reported, and with a few exceptions, the same was

Table 17. Processes with and without negotiations across countries

		No negotiations	Negotiations involved	Total
CH	Count	59.0	0.0	59.0
	Expected Count	56.4	2.6	59.0
DE	Count	529.0	19.0	548.0
	Expected Count	523.4	24.6	548.0
ES	Count	270.0	3.0	273.0
	Expected Count	260.8	12.2	273.0
FR	Count	226.0	25.0	251.0
	Expected Count	239.7	11.3	251.0
IT	Count	93.0	4.0	97.0
	Expected Count	92.6	4.4	97.0
PL	Count	63.0	0.0	63.0
	Expected Count	60.2	2.8	63.0
SE	Count	68.0	0.0	68.0
	Expected Count	65.0	3.0	68.0
UK	Count	55.0	13.0	68.0
	Expected Count	65.0	3.0	68.0
Total	Count	1 363.0	64.0	1 427.0
	Expected Count	1 363.0	64.0	1 427.0

Source: collected by the authors.



Table 18. The use of EU funds in sport-related public procurements across countries

		Only local funds used	EU funds used	Total
DE	Count	592.0	12.0	604.0
	Expected Count	552.3	51.7	604.0
ES	Count	315.0	8.0	323.0
	Expected Count	295.3	27.7	323.0
FR	Count	968.0	163.0	1 131.0
	Expected Count	1 034.1	96.9	1 131.0
IT	Count	107.0	3.0	110.0
	Expected Count	100.6	9.4	110.0
PL	Count	92.0	22.0	114.0
	Expected Count	104.2	9.8	114.0
SE	Count	73.0	0.0	73.0
	Expected Count	66.7	6.3	73.0
UK	Count	95.0	2.0	97.0
	Expected Count	88.7	8.3	97.0
Total	Count	2 242.0	210.0	2 452.0
	Expected Count	2 242.0	210.0	2 452.0

Source: collected by the authors.

true for Poland, Sweden and Spain. However, the competitive dialogue (COD), the negotiated (NIC) and the restricted procedures (RES) were more popular than the average in the UK and France.

Switzerland, Spain, Poland, and Sweden reported the near-exclusivity of processes without negotiations, while the UK, France, and Germany used negotiation-based procedures more extensively (Table 17). However, we could not identify statistically significant differences in the use of accelerated procedures and electronic auctions across countries.

While most of the countries hardly used any EU funds for sport-related public purchases, France and Poland had several such procurements (Table 18). In the case of the non-EU member Switzerland, this was not an option.

Finally, for the different decision-making methods, the reporting discipline was very heterogeneous (Table 19). While Germany performed very well, the UK, Italy, and Sweden had a huge proportion of missing data. When we considered the procurements with known decision-making methods only, it became clear that the “lowest price” method is preferred in Germany and Sweden, while the rest of the countries had a strong preference for the “most economically advantageous tender” method.



Table 19. The use of different decision-making methods across countries

		0 Missing	1 L Lowest price	2 M Most economically advantageous tender	Total
DE	Count	84.0	486.0	38.0	608.0
	Expected Count	253.9	129.4	224.7	608.0
ES	Count	171.0	14.0	187.0	372.0
	Expected Count	155.4	79.2	137.5	372.0
FR	Count	557.0	6.0	568.0	1 131.0
	Expected Count	472.4	240.7	417.9	1 131.0
IT	Count	71.0	8.0	38.0	117.0
	Expected Count	48.9	24.9	43.2	117.0
PL	Count	33.0	6.0	76.0	115.0
	Expected Count	48.0	24.5	42.5	115.0
SE	Count	58.0	15.0	0.0	73.0
	Expected Count	30.5	15.5	27.0	73.0
UK	Count	76.0	0.0	22.0	98.0
	Expected Count	40.9	20.9	36.2	98.0
Total	Count	1 050.0	535.0	929.0	2 514.0
	Expected Count	1 050.0	535.0	929.0	2 514.0

Source: collected by the authors.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Our research project focused on the study of sport-related public procurement in 33 European countries for the years 2017–2019. To date, there has not been an expressly public procurement type antecedent to this research project. This was the first attempt to identify sport-related procurements and, after building our own database, to explore the characteristics of procurement.

Based on the total sport-related tenders, Italy and France have spent the most, followed by the UK. Contrary to its relatively small size and population, and a modest number of recorded tenders, Hungary had outstanding spending accounting for 7 percent of the total tender value considered. Romania and Hungary had 20–40 times higher average tender values than Germany or Bulgaria. Also, these two countries have 6–8 times higher average sport-related tender values than their non-sport-related average.

One of the most interesting facts is that the largest share of public money is spent on construction. In other words, public support is typically in the form of construction activities in the countries surveyed.

Importantly, in addition to regional and local governments, bodies governed by public law are the majority of contracting authorities. In our experience, this is an area of sport where it is



extremely difficult to establish the existence of a public procurement obligation and therefore the level of evasion of public procurement rules is relatively high.

For example, the perception of a body governed by public law depends on the type and extent of the source of funding defined by the economic operator. Much depends on the willingness of the stakeholder to take risks and the likelihood of scrutiny when deciding on its own procurement status.

The involvement of central purchasing bodies is not a game-changer in this area. The use of negotiated procedures is less widespread (mostly used for services), and in this respect, sports procurement follows the characteristics of non-sport-related procurement.

Higher value contracts usually lasted for longer and the length of contracts has a strong connection to the contract types. The difference in length is particularly outstanding when contrasting building and service contracts: the former hardly exceeded 1.5 years while the latter averaged almost 4.0 years.

It seems that for high-value procurements, competitive dialogue procedures dominate, while the lowest contractual value is linked to the most popular open procedures, no matter whether the procurement is sport-related or not. Procedure types that require negotiations showed a far lower average contract value than procedure types without negotiations.

SMEs are more successful for lower values in sports procurement. Nevertheless, the number of offers received or the number of SME offers received had no significant connection to the contractual value.

When contrasting individual countries, various significant differences came to light. In sport-related procurements, Switzerland and Sweden stand out in the percentage of local government purchases. In Switzerland and Germany, construction works make up the overwhelming majority of the contracts, while Spain, the UK, and Italy purchased more services than the average. The UK is also outstanding in supplies procurements, just like Sweden, and Poland. Predominantly open procedures were reported from Switzerland, Poland, Sweden and Spain, however, in the UK and France, competitive dialogue, restrictive procedures and negotiated procedures with call for competition are more popular than the average.

Switzerland, Spain, Poland, and Sweden reported nearly exclusively processes without negotiations, while the UK, France, and Germany used negotiation-based procedures more extensively. However, we found no differences in the use of accelerated procedures and electronic auctions across countries. Only France and Poland tend to use EU funds for sport-related procurements regularly. When it comes to deciding on the best offer, the EU legislation explicitly lays down the obligation to choose additional evaluation criteria instead of the lowest price, although the lowest price criterion seemed to radically lower the total procurement value. Still, Germany and Sweden prefer the “lowest price” method, while the rest of the countries favour the “most economically advantageous tender” method.

Our analysis is constrained by the fact that the data subject to the national regimes, i.e., below the EU threshold, are not comparable and available in an appropriate structure. Results are also limited by the lack of valid data in the case of some non-obligatory TED variables. Data quality may also differ across countries leading to biases.

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