



Press Release

A first in Europe: German Sport University Cologne hosts international GSUN Summit

International sports science comes to Cologne – members of the press invited to the opening on 7 October

Cologne, 01/10/2026

How can sports help address societal challenges? What role do science, politics, and sports organizations play in this? And how can scientific knowledge be more effectively applied in practice? These are among the questions that will be explored at the GSUN'26 Summit, taking place at German Sport University Cologne on 7 and 8 October. It is the first time that the annual summit of the Global Sport University Network (GSUN) is being held in Europe.

Under the theme “Leading Sport in a Global Society” the summit brings together international scholars with representatives from sports organizations, associations, the business community, and the media. Experts from around 25 countries and five continents are expected to attend. Keynotes, panels, and workshops will cover topics including sports and society, sports policy and governance, climate protection, athletes’ rights, parasports, and artificial intelligence in sports.

Opening ceremony with guests from politics, academia and the City of Cologne

The GSUN'26 Summit will officially open on Wednesday 7 October, from 8:30 to 9:15 a.m. Speakers include **Prof. Ansgar Thiel (Rector of the German Sport University Cologne)**, **Gonca Türkeli-Dehnert (State Secretary in the Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia)**, **Teresa De Bellis-Olinger (Deputy Mayor of the City of Cologne)**, and **Prof. Timothy Carroll (Chair of the Global Sport University Network)**.

Following the opening ceremony, Rector Prof. Thiel will open the academic programme with the plenary session “**Is Academic Freedom Still a Thing? Contemporary Research Between the Pursuit of Knowledge and the Pressures of Public and Political Discourse**”. The session will focus on how academic freedom can be safeguarded in the face of societal and political expectations and pressures.

Beyond that, the German Sport University Cologne is prominently represented in the programme: a total of 21 researchers from the university are participating in the summit with presentations, workshops, and panel discussions. The event therefore also provides insight into the breadth and international network of sports science at Germany’s only university dedicated exclusively to sport.

The event will be moderated by Cayana Adjei-Freeman.

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Invitation to the Media

Members of the press are cordially invited to attend the opening of the GSUN'26 Summit and to cover the event.

Wednesday 7 October 2026

Starting at 8:30 a.m.

Lecture Hall 1

German Sport University Cologne
Am Sportpark Müngersdorf 6
50933 Cologne

Please register in advance at:

presse@dshs-koeln.de

For more information about the GSUN'26 Summit and the full programme, visit: www.gsun.org