

Interview with ICSSPE's President – Prof Dr Annette R. Hofmann
29th of August 2025

1. You've been an active part of ICSSPE for many years, most recently serving as Vice-President. What does this new role as President mean to you?

First of all, it is a great honour to have been elected by our international membership community to lead ICSSPE for the next four years. Looking at ICSSPE's history and the distinguished individuals — such as Nobel Prize winner Philip Noel-Baker — who have chaired this organisation, it is still hard for me to believe that I am now its President. Following in the footsteps of my predecessors will certainly be a challenge.

I am also aware of the global challenges we face, from financial constraints to political uncertainties. Nevertheless, I look forward to contributing my time, energy, and ideas, and to working closely with our new Vice-Presidents and the wider ICSSPE community to build on the organisation's strong foundation.

2. Can you share a little about your professional journey and how it connects to ICSSPE's mission?

Since the beginning of my academic career in the late 1990s, I have actively participated in international conferences to present my research. Over time, I built a strong international network of colleagues, many of whom have become close friends.

My academic background is primarily in sport and culture, sport history, and sport pedagogy. From 2009 to 2021, I had the privilege of serving as President of the International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport (ISHPES), and I have been a member of its council since 2001. This experience naturally connected me with ICSSPE, where I developed a deep interest in its mission of linking experts and organisations across diverse fields of sport and physical education worldwide.

3. What are your top priorities for ICSSPE over the next four years?

One of my main priorities is to enhance the visibility of ICSSPE on a global scale. It is important that we reach more members and partners, and one way to achieve this could be by appointing regional representatives in different parts of the world. This will help us to build stronger connections and broaden our influence internationally.

Another key focus will be the celebration of ICSSPE's 70th anniversary in 2028. This milestone provides an opportunity not only to reflect on our history but also to evaluate our present and future. It will allow us to revisit the journey of ICSSPE, to examine where we stand today, and to consider what should be continued, adapted, or even revived.

I also believe that we need to place greater emphasis on physical education. It is in our name, after all. In the past, ICSSPE hosted a committee where international sport pedagogy societies could meet and exchange ideas. Reviving this group would create a platform to share insights and strategies, helping to strengthen physical education across the world.

In addition, we must engage more deeply with emerging global topics such as digitalisation and artificial intelligence, and explore how they intersect with sport, physical activity, and physical education. At the same time, we cannot lose sight of other critical themes such as health, sustainability, and diversity, which remain integral to our mission and values.

Finally, I wish to broaden our strategic partnerships. Our existing collaboration with UNESCO and the IOC — particularly with the IOC's Health, Medicine, and Science Department — has been highly valuable, but there is room to deepen these relationships. I see potential in strengthening our connection with the Olympic Studies Centre, expanding our work in Olympic education, and promoting the values of Olympism more widely. For example, we plan to continue marking Olympic Day each year through initiatives such as webinars, as we have successfully done in the past two years.

Of course, none of these priorities can be achieved in isolation. Real progress will depend on teamwork and the collective efforts of our office, our elected committees, and the many organisations that make up our membership.

4. How do you see ICSSPE adapting to the evolving global sport and physical education landscape?

Adaptation will come through international collaboration, innovation, and knowledge exchange. By engaging in diverse global projects and fostering connections among professionals in different areas of sport, physical activity, and education, we can remain at the forefront of emerging developments and challenges.

5. What motivates you most in your work with ICSSPE?

What motivates me most is the opportunity to work in a truly international environment with colleagues who share a passion for advancing sport, physical activity, and physical education in their various fields. The diversity of perspectives and expertise within ICSSPE is inspiring and energising.

6. What advice would you give to young professionals aspiring to make an impact in sport and physical education?

Be proactive and confident about your ideas. Don't hesitate to share your projects and seek support — there are many organisations eager to embrace innovative ideas. Start small, perhaps on a local or regional scale, and then build step by step towards broader initiatives.

7. In one sentence, how would you describe your vision for ICSSPE's future?

Inspiring, colourful and solid.