

Sport without corruption

Played and watched by billions of people across the globe, sport embodies specific values, such as fair play and respect for the rules. Corruption scandals such as those that have made headlines in recent years, be it in football or athletics, seriously tarnish its image, shaking public trust.

Background

[Defined](#) as 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain', corruption takes many forms. In the field of sport, experts distinguish between corruption within sporting institutions (occurring, for instance, in the context of elections to governing bodies; the granting of media, marketing and sponsorship rights; and bids to host sporting events), and corruption relating to competition and sporting outcomes, such as [match-fixing](#), which can be motivated by sports bets or by sporting objectives (winning, qualifying for a competition, avoiding relegation). While views differ as to whether doping or the use of performance-enhancing drugs constitutes corruption, it certainly represents a significant threat to the integrity of sport, violating its ethical values and breaching the principle of fair play. Though corruption in sport is not new, it appears to have been exacerbated by rapid changes in the industry, most prominently the [commercialisation](#) of sport, with a resulting influx of revenues. This is demonstrated in the size of revenues in the global sports market, which were [worth](#) an estimated US\$145 billion (around €117.5 billion) in 2015.

EU competence and action for clean sport

Preserving the integrity of sport is one of the top priorities of the EU's sports policy. The EU, however, only has a supporting competence in sports matters, meaning that it does not have the power to legislate in that field. Its role is one of coordination, assistance and guidance, and its action mainly takes the form of recommendations and financial support for specific initiatives. Steps taken so far against corruption in sport include the development of a set of good governance [principles](#) applicable to organisations across the whole sport movement, and the launch of a [pledge](#) to implement good governance in European sport, to which 46 federations and organisations have committed to date. Through the Erasmus+ [sports chapter](#) (with a budget of nearly [€266 million](#) over seven years), the EU finances projects that help fight doping and match-fixing, and improve sports governance. Examples include the [prePlay](#) initiative, based on a network of young anti-doping ambassadors; [PROtect Integrity](#), delivering face-to-face education to athletes on sport-betting integrity issues and the risks and dangers of match-fixing; and the [SIGGS](#) project, supporting national Olympic committees and sports federations in their efforts to apply good governance principles.

European Parliament

The European Parliament (EP) has tirelessly called for a 'zero tolerance' policy on corruption in sport. In its latest sport-related [resolution](#), adopted in February 2017, it addressed the issue in detail, calling for the development of a culture of transparency with better separation of powers within sports governing bodies, as well as better internal self-regulatory procedures to advance, detect, investigate and sanction sports crimes and illegal activities within sports organisations. It further called on the European Commission to explore the idea of creating a code of conduct in the areas of good governance and integrity in sport. The EP touched upon the question of bids to host major events, insisting on the need to ensure that the bidding process complies with good governance standards, human and labour rights, and the principle of democracy. In 2015, when FIFA faced widespread [corruption allegations](#), including bribery in the process of awarding the hosting of the 2018 and 2022 World Cup finals, and financial wrongdoing by football officials, the EP had taken a firm stance, [urging](#) in-depth structural reforms within the organisation.

This note has been prepared for the [European Youth Event](#), taking place in Strasbourg in June 2018.

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