



**2016/2143(INI)**

16.9.2016

# **DRAFT REPORT**

on an integrated approach to Sport Policy: good governance, accessibility and integrity  
(2016/2143(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on an integrated approach to Sport Policy: good governance, accessibility and integrity (2016/2143(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission communication of 18 January 2011 entitled ‘Developing the European Dimension in Sport’ (COM(2011)0012 final),
- having regard to the Commission White Paper on Sport (COM(2007)0391),
- having regard to its resolution of 11 June 2015 on recent revelations on high-level corruption cases in FIFA<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 October 2013 on organised crime, corruption and money laundering: recommendations on action and initiatives to be taken<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 September 2013 on online gambling in the internal market<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2013 on match-fixing and corruption in sport<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 2 February 2012 on the European dimension in sport<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 May 2008 on the White Paper on Sport<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 March 2007 on the future of professional football in Europe<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 31 May 2016 on enhancing integrity, transparency and good governance in major sport events,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 26 May 2015 on maximising the role of grassroots sport in developing transversal skills, especially among young people,
- having regard to the Council resolution of 21 May 2014 on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 26 November 2013 on the contribution of sport to the EU economy, and in particular to addressing youth unemployment and social inclusion,

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0233.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0444.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0348.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0098.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 239 E, 20.8.2013, p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 271 E, 12.11.2009, p. 51.

<sup>7</sup> OJ C 27 E, 31.1.2008, p. 232.

- having regard to the Council recommendation of 25 November 2013 on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors,
  - having regard to the Council conclusions of 18 November 2010 on the role of sport as a source of and a driver for active social inclusion<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the Council of Europe convention of 3 July 2016 on an integrated safety, security and service approach at football matches and other sports events,
  - having regard to the Council of Europe convention of 18 September 2014 on the manipulation of sports competitions,
  - having regard to the case-law of the Court of Justice and General Court of the European Union and the Commission’s decisions on sports matters,
  - having regard to Articles 6 and 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
  - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A8-0000/2016),
- A. whereas sport plays a prominent role in the life of millions of EU citizens;
  - B. whereas sport represents a significant and fast-growing sector of the EU economy and makes a valuable contribution to growth, jobs and society;
  - C. whereas the integrity of sport is of paramount importance;
  - D. whereas recent corruption scandals in sport and within sports organisations have tarnished the image of sport;
  - E. whereas good governance in sport refers to an appropriate regulation of sport through principles of effective, transparent, ethical and democratic management;
  - F. whereas sports organisations are responsible for ensuring high governance standards and should raise these further;
  - G. whereas a number of sports organisations have taken strong initiatives to improve governance in sport;
  - H. whereas the European organised sports model is based on the principles of territoriality and nationality, with one federation per discipline, and solidarity mechanisms such as promotion-relegation and open competitions;
  - I. whereas it is legitimate to require that any sports competition be played and decided in accordance with the internationally recognised rules of the game;
  - J. whereas sports tribunals have a central role to play in guaranteeing the universality of

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 5.

the rules of the game;

- K. whereas sport is confronted with match-fixing scandals involving money laundering which have coincided with the rise of online betting;
- L. whereas doping remains a threat to sport integrity and athletes' health;
- M. whereas acts of violence and discrimination may occur in sport;
- N. whereas athletes, who are often minors, face increasing economic pressures and are treated as commodities;
- O. whereas bad practices linked to agents and players' transfers have led to cases of money laundering, fraud and exploitation of minors;
- P. whereas grassroots sport offers opportunities to tackle discrimination, to foster social cohesion and integration and to make a strong contribution to the development of transversal skills;
- Q. whereas, overall, physical activity is stagnating despite a growing trend for recreational sports, such as jogging, which are practised outside any organised structure;
- R. whereas major sports events showcase the benefits of sport and should have a positive social, economic and environmental impact;
- S. whereas the further education and training of athletes is crucial to prepare them for a career outside sport;
- T. whereas volunteering is a fundamental condition for accessible, low-cost sports activities and events, especially at grassroots level;
- U. whereas sport can help strengthen dialogue with third countries and support EU external policy;
- V. whereas the media must be able to report freely and independently on sports events;

### ***Integrity and good-governance of sport***

1. Calls on sports organisations to commit to developing a culture of transparency, including disclosure obligations as to the compensation of top executives and term limits;
2. Recalls that good governance must be a condition for the autonomy of sports organisations, in compliance with the principles of transparency, accountability and democracy;
3. Stresses the need for a zero-tolerance policy on corruption in sport;
4. Underlines that the application of good governance principles in sport is a key factor to help eradicate corruption and other malpractices;

5. Calls on sports organisations to ensure that bidding to host major events abides by good governance standards and fundamental rights, and guarantees a sustainable legacy;
6. Urges Member States to make public funding for sport subject to compliance with minimum governance standards;
7. Supports the initiatives taken by sports organisations to improve governance standards in sport;
8. Calls on sports organisations to put forward by 2018, and subsequently implement, concrete proposals to enhance their governance;
9. Reiterates that Member States should establish a specific criminal offence dealing with match-fixing and ensure that match-fixing and corruption in sport are subject to judicial proceedings;
10. Stresses that information-sharing between sports bodies, state authorities and licensed betting operators is essential to detect, investigate and prosecute match-fixing;
11. Urges the Commission and the Member States who have not done so to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on the manipulation of sports competitions;
12. Supports education and information programmes on the threat of match-fixing and doping;
13. Calls on the Member States to ensure that information-sharing between state authorities and anti-doping agencies is effective;
14. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to work closely with WADA and the Council of Europe in order to prevent and fight doping effectively;
15. Welcomes the new Council of Europe Convention on spectator violence and calls on the Member States to sign and ratify it without delay;
16. Notes that the threat of terrorism requires new efforts to ensure operational safety and security at sports events;
17. Condemns strongly all forms of discrimination in sport and underlines the need to prevent such behaviour;
18. Recalls the need to boost the fight against human trafficking in sport, in particular the trafficking of children;
19. Welcomes investment in sport provided it is transparent, subject to strict controls and not detrimental to the integrity of competitions and athletes;
20. Stresses that athletes must be protected from abusive practices such as third-party ownership which raise numerous questions of integrity and broader ethical concerns;
21. Reiterates its attachment to the European organised sports model, where federations play a central role, insofar as it balances the numerous diverging interests between all

stakeholders, such as players, clubs, leagues, associations and volunteers, with appropriate and democratic representation in decision-making;

22. Welcomes the efforts of the Commission and all concerned stakeholders to promote social dialogue in sport;
23. Calls on the establishment of transparency registers for the payment of sports agents;
24. Welcomes initiatives which encourage gender equality in decision-making roles in sport;

***Social inclusion, social function and accessibility of sport***

25. Believes that sport builds bridges across cultures and ethnic and social divides;
26. Emphasises the role of sport in integrating refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers;
27. Recognises the importance of grassroots sport in preventing and fighting radicalisation;
28. Supports effective dual career systems and access to further education and training for athletes;
29. Supports the mobility of coaches and exchange of good practices with a focus on the recognition of qualifications and technical innovations;
30. Underlines that participation in sport in schools and universities, as well as by older people, is vital;
31. Highlights that sport should be better promoted among socially excluded groups in the EU;
32. Stresses that disabled people should have access to all sports facilities;
33. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to ensure that children practise sport in a safe environment;
34. Supports the European Week of Sport and calls on all EU institutions and Member States to further promote this initiative while ensuring it is accessible to the widest possible audience;
35. Considers that traditional sports are part of the European cultural heritage;
36. Calls on the Commission to allocate more funds to sport under ERASMUS+, with a focus on grassroots sport and education, to enhance its visibility and to improve the mainstreaming of sport into other funding programmes;
37. Supports measures promoting the mobility of volunteers in sport;
38. Asks the Commission to issue guidelines on the application of state aid rules in sport;
39. Welcomes the contribution made by national lotteries to grassroots sport and calls on

Member States to make licensed betting operators subject to a mandatory fair financial return to the grassroots;

40. Maintains that the selling of TV rights on a centralised, exclusive and territorial basis with equitable sharing of the revenue is essential for the sustainable funding of sport at all levels and to ensure a level playing field;
41. Emphasises that infringements of intellectual property rights in sport threaten its long-term funding;
42. Recommends that the Member States introduce possibilities for VAT exemption in grassroots sport and tax breaks for volunteers active in sport;
43. Considers that sustainability and environmental protection should be an integral part of sports events;
44. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and to the European, international and national sports federations and leagues.



## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The European Union has held soft competence in sports policy since the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. Seven years later, this report aims at evaluating this policy path. It builds on the Fisas report on the *European dimension on sport*<sup>1</sup>. One of the targets of this report is to give guidelines and recommendations for the European Commission's work on evaluating its policy implementation and to give signals to Member States and the organized sport sector, in cooperation with national and European public authorities. The report is divided into three main themes: integrity, good governance and accessibility.

Sport reflects society. The reason why we launch a new sports policy paradigm, *accessibility*, is that access to sport is now perceived as a fundamental right<sup>2</sup> and everyone, including socially more vulnerable groups, such as older people, migrants and people with disabilities, must have equal rights to engage in physical activity and sport. Sport is a channel for integrating people across cultural, ethnical, societal and national lines. In today's Europe, which faces serious societal challenges, it has also become a key driver for social inclusion.

Physical activity is another issue relating to accessibility. Practising sports prevents degenerative diseases and contributes to a better quality of life and active ageing. The World Health Organisation lists a lack of physical activity as the fourth main cause of mortality in the world. Due to its ageing population, Europe will face demographic difficulties, which will cause budget challenges of increasing social expenditure. At the same time there is a growing trend of stagnation in physical activity. Improving physical activity must be at the heart not only of sport policies, but also in education, social and health policies. One concrete policy initiative to promote grassroots sports and volunteering in sport would be to provide for a VAT exemption for grassroots sports in all Member States.

Sport is not only a social phenomenon. The economic contribution of sports to society is huge and the trend is growing. Sport is an economic driver behind tourism, welfare, the goods industry and increasingly in digital services. More than 7 million Europeans work in the sport sector and the business of sport represents almost 300 billion euros.<sup>3</sup> That is why sport deserves cross-sectoral thinking in policy-making.

This report calls for zero tolerance for corruption in sports. Recent scandals in the *governance* of national, European and international sports organisations show that it is high time to react. We call on sports organisations at all levels to put forward concrete proposals as to how good governance could be effectively improved by 2018.

The European sports model is a unique and successful basis for organised sports. It has developed in Europe over more than 100 years. This model must be protected from a number of threats. At the same time, it has to address new challenges and balance many and varied

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<sup>1</sup> P7\_TA(2012)0025.

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO [Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport](#)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-IDA-565908-EU-sport-policy-overview-FINAL-28pages.pdf>

interests. It is clear that the European sports model is incompatible with any kind of abuse or malpractices which are unacceptable.

It is very important to understand that sports policy does not concern only organised sports. There is a growing trend of recreational sports outside any organised structures. Keeping fit, jogging, skateboarding or playing football at the park is as important as practising sport in an organised group. Even taking the stairs instead of taking the lift is a physical activity. EU's sports policy has to reflect this much welcome trend.

Sensitive fields and areas exist also in sport as stakeholders' interests vary for example between recreational sports and organised sports, between grassroots sports and elite sports, between national lotteries and private betting operators and between federations and clubs. The target of this report is to increase cohesion and build bridges. At the same time, enhancing physical activity at all levels of society must be the primary target.

Sport tribunals have great importance in securing an internationally coherent interpretation of the rules of the game, while guaranteeing access to justice for all. At the same time any failures and malpractices in governance must be processed in normal criminal procedure. The regime of public subsidies in sport deserves more clarity in the interest of local governments, sports organisations and taxpayers.

Elite athletes can be role models for the youth as long as they comply with the basics of *integrity* in sports. Unfortunately, in elite sports we face serious ethical challenges like doping, match-fixing and third party ownership, which must be tackled more efficiently. The solutions for integrity challenges can only be found at European and international level and protection of minors has to be at the core of these battles. The aim of this report is therefore to find solutions to tackle these integrity issues through concrete actions, e.g. a transparency register for sport agents, and thus bring more transparency in sport.

Ensuring a positive and sustainable legacy from major sports events is important not only for sports, but also for the cohesion of the cities and countries where such competitions are organised. Major sports events provide a great opportunity for organised sports to promote positive values, in particular when they comply with environmental policies. They also offer opportunities to use sport as a key driver for tourism and local businesses.

The Erasmus+ programme is the most effective tool of EU sports policy. However, it could be used even more effectively. There should be more communication between the European Commission and Member States. Also as a signal to address the challenge of physical inactivity in Europe, the EU must allocate more funds to sports under the Erasmus+ programme. The mobility of volunteers, coaches, athletes and trainers needs to be enhanced. Being a top athlete is a daily commitment, but the toughest moment comes often when the career is over. Improving the dual career system and engaging the Erasmus+ programme in this regard should be contemplated.

