

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1056/04

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to the Commission

Subject: Competition-restricting agreements between football clubs

Some football clubs in Italy indulge in practices known as 'administrative doping', based on the entering of fictitious surplus revenue in the accounts for transfers of players, the fees for which are allegedly inflated in order to conceal losses and avoid expensive compulsory recapitalisation.

Between 1998 and 2004 there were a large number of deals between the clubs Parma and Lazio, which until recently were controlled respectively by Calisto Tanzi, former chairman and managing director of the Parmalat group, and Sergio Cagnotti, former chairman of Cirio. The transactions total approximately € 200 million. Many of the transactions were not settled in cash, but by transfers of other players, whose value was often overestimated.

Gea World manages the contracts of a growing number (currently 250) of players and trainers in Serie A and Serie B. Gea was founded by Andrea Cagnotti, son of Sergio Cagnotti, and Francesca Tanzi, daughter of Calisto Tanzi. The shareholders include the company Football Management (controlled by the son of the general manager of Juventus) and the company General Athletic (whose shareholders in turn include the present general manager of Lazio and a relative of the chairman of the Banca Capitali, which finances important football clubs - including Roma, Lazio and Parma).

In view of the obvious repercussions on the Community, does the Commission not consider that the situation calls for an investigation into:

- the impact of GEA's dominant position;
- whether there are any competition-restricting agreements which may, precisely, benefit from GEA's importance and structure?