

WRITTEN QUESTION E-6486/08
by Ignasi Guardans Cambó (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Threats and interference by international sports federations in Member States' legal systems

The *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) has, in recent months, condemned as 'interference' certain actions taken by governments in some Member States concerning their sports federations. The Polish football association (the PZPN) is one such case; here the Polish Government has appointed a 'legal administrator' to the federation. Another case is that of the Spanish football federation (the RFEF) with regard to Ministerial Order No 3567/2007 of 4 December 2007 which determines electoral processes in sports federations.

In the Polish case, FIFA has gone so far as to threaten the Polish national team with disqualification from the qualifying rounds of the South Africa World Cup and with being barred from organising Euro 2012, which it is hosting with the Ukraine. In the Spanish case, FIFA's President, Joseph Blatter, threatened, during a public event held in Madrid on 17 February 2008, to bar the Spanish national team and Spanish clubs from playing in international competitions 'if the Spanish Government, through their Sports Council (CSD), continue to interfere in footballing affairs'. These threats were accompanied by other comments such as, 'it would be tough, but it would only take six hours to call a FIFA emergency meeting to hear and decide upon Spain's exclusion. Spain would not be able to play at Euro 2008 and their clubs wouldn't continue in the Champions League or UEFA Cup', and, 'I hope that the government thinks about the risk they are running'.

Bearing in mind Article 6 of the EU Treaty and Article 149 of the EC Treaty as amended by the Treaty of Lisbon, and in view of the fact that the Commission has underlined in the Helsinki Report the need for a partnership between football's governing bodies and public authorities, can the Commission answer the following questions:

Does the Commission consider FIFA to be the sole and supreme authority concerning football governance, even if its rules contradict legislation in the Member States? Will the Commission confirm that the sports federations are not subject to Member State legislation and, as a result, neither are they subject to Community law?

What measures does the Commission intend to adopt to prevent sports organisations placing themselves above the legitimate authority of Member States?