

WRITTEN QUESTION E-6876/08
by Margaritis Schinas (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Introduction of salary cap in contracts of professional sportsmen

In professional sport, a salary cap is applied to the contracts of professional sportsmen by a number of sporting organisations in the USA and the UK (e.g. the UK rugby championship, the national hockey, football and basketball leagues in the USA). The introduction of a salary cap into professional sportsmen's contracts could lead to the creation of a healthy and competitive sports environment in which all teams could compete for honours on an equal footing. The current situation in sport in Europe allows the teams with the financial resources to spend enormous sums on their players' contracts, which creates championships of rich versus poor teams where the chances of upsetting the established order are nil.

Although the application of the legal framework governing professional sport is subject to the supervision of the Member States' sports federations at national level and the supervision of the Union of European sports federations at European level, professional sport in the EU is nevertheless an important market to which the general rules of fair competition should apply?

Having regard to the above, will the Commission say:

- to what extent it agrees with the idea of introducing a salary cap for professional sportsmen, bearing in mind that European professional sports organisations operate in accordance with free market rules, and
- to what extent it considers that such a measure will result in the creation of a fair and competitive sporting environment where everyone will have an equal chance of winning honours, which will also strengthen the competitiveness of professional sport in the EU?