

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0152/09  
by Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Remarks on homosexuality by Fabio Cannavaro and Marcello Lippi

In an interview recently published in the Italian magazine 'Chi', Fabio Cannavaro, a well-known Italian footballer currently playing for Real Madrid, expressed his disagreement with the Spanish law allowing same-sex marriage. Arcigay, the main gay rights association in Italy, as well as other Italian gay organisations, have condemned Cannavaro's remarks, attributing the resistance to same-sex marriage to the influence of the Vatican. Similar views to Cannavaro's were expressed by the Italian national football coach, Marcello Lippi, in an internet radio interview reported in the Italian press yesterday: Lippi said that in his forty years in football, as a midfield player and later as a manager, he had not come across a single gay footballer. He nonetheless admits that he has been told that there do exist some footballers 'with a certain tendency', who, however, 'don't make it public'. The remarks of both Cannavaro and Lippi come across as disturbing, in view of both their content and the high public profile of their authors. At a time when it is vital to send out messages combating homophobia and supporting free choice of sexual orientation, remarks of this kind set a grave precedent on a matter which requires awareness and, if possible, preventive action by the Commission.

Can the Commission state its position with regard to remarks of this nature? Does it not believe that they point up the need for a bold and unambiguous campaign in favour of sexual freedom, which should include the participation of well-known sporting personalities who can send out a message countering that of Cannavaro and Lippi?

In addition, what concrete measures will the Commission propose to put an end to discrimination against individuals, whatever their sexual orientation, in the EU, recalling that this entails, among other measures, the recognition of same-sex couples and same-sex marriages independently of which country a couple chooses to live in?