

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

2007/2261(INI)

29.2.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on White Paper on sport
(2007/2261(INI))

Draftswoman: Emine Bozkurt

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin¹, which prohibits all forms of racial discrimination in the areas of employment, education, social security, health care and access to goods and services,
 - having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation²,
 - having regard to its declaration of 14 March 2006 on tackling racism in football³,
- A. whereas sports play a crucial role in social inclusion, integration and equal opportunities, intercultural dialogue, and the promotion of voluntary work, and should be free of discrimination and of all manifestation of racism, violence, xenophobia and intolerance,
- B. whereas disabled sportspeople must not suffer discrimination compared to their able-bodied counterparts as regards social entitlements under the Member States' legal systems,
1. Calls on the Commission, in this connection, to observe the principle of subsidiarity;
 2. Asks the Commission to have due respect for the specificity of sports and to provide more legal certainty by creating, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and in a joint inter-institutional dialogue, clear guidelines on the applicability of EC law to sports in the European Union; calls on the Commission, in this connection, to observe the principle of subsidiarity;
 3. Asks the Commission, therefore, to commission a study on the scope of EC law, including labour and social protection rules, applicable to sport in the European Union, giving particular emphasis to transfers of players;
 4. Recommends that the prevention of and fight against doping should constitute an important concern for the Member States; calls for a policy aimed at preventing and combating doping at international level and stresses the need to fight irregularities through checks, research, testing, long-term monitoring by independent doctors and, at the same time, prevention and education;
 5. Endorses the basic applicability of EU non-discrimination legislation, banning all kinds of discrimination, to the field both of professional and amateur sports in the European

¹ OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

² OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

³ OJ C 291 E, 30.11.2006, p. 143.

Union and calls on all the Member States and the Commission to transpose and implement Directives 2000/78/EC and 2000/43/EC effectively; asserts that sport has a social function and can be regarded as a useful way both to foster cohesion, social integration, and cultural understanding among people of different sexes, races, and faiths, and to combat discrimination, intolerance, racism, and violence;

6. Calls on the Commission to launch, without delay, a dialogue with sports organisations aimed at reaching a viable agreement on improving the training of young people in sport and the employment of home-grown players;
7. Calls on the Commission to ensure that any derogations on the basis of the specificity of sport remain both legal and limited in scope;
8. Asks the Commission to guarantee free movement not only of professional athletes but also of coaches and support staff in line with the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Communities and Community legislation, whilst acknowledging the desire to strike a balance between the principle of free movement and the need of national sports teams for more home-grown players; in this context, asks the Commission to invest not only in the sporting but also in the vocational qualifications of athletes, and to enable further mutual recognition within the European Union of qualifications which have been acquired within the framework of sports activities on the basis of the common reference levels provided by the European Qualifications Framework by introducing the European certification of sports agents, thus making it possible to subject them to supervision, which will contribute to their long-term absorption in the labour market as well as to social cohesion in Europe; stresses the need to provide training accessible to all sportspeople to ensure their reintegration in the labour market after the end of their sporting careers;
9. Recognises that sport is a sector which creates jobs and contributes to economic growth and revival, especially in disadvantaged regions, and that other sectors are linked to it, such as education, medicine, the media and the manufacturing and marketing of special equipment and products;
10. Recognises the social and educational dimension of sport and calls on Member States to take all the necessary measures to ensure that those athletes who wish to do so may, at the end of their sporting career, undergo vocational education and training with a view to offering their experience and knowledge to young sportspeople;
11. Considers sport clubs and stadiums the working place of professional athletes; calls on sports clubs to do more to train, encourage and employ their own young athletes; calls on professional organisations and clubs in the field of sports to launch campaigns to tackle all forms of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia before, during participation in sports activities and during and after-sports matches, inside and outside stadiums; calls for the publication of annual reports on progress in this area; calls on Member States and local authorities to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sports grounds and facilities;
12. Maintains that it is essential for young sportspeople to be fully trained from the outset in both sports and academic subjects, since this will ensure that professional sportspeople

- can re-enter the labour market at the end of their sporting careers;
13. Supports a strengthening of solidarity between professional and amateur sport so as to encourage small clubs, promote school sports and develop the relevant local infrastructures;
 14. Considers it undesirable for professional athletes to have fewer rights than other contracted workers and considers it therefore important that professional athletes have a broad and transparent range of rights as workers, including the right to enter or refuse to enter into collective agreements and membership of professional unions;
 15. Calls on the Member States and relevant regulatory bodies to examine allegations of corruption and exploitation in the recruitment and employment of athletes, in particular under-age athletes from outside the European Union;
 16. Recommends that the specific associations for the different categories of persons involved in sport (players, trainers or coaches, referees, etc.) should all be appropriately represented in the decision-making bodies of international and national federations;
 17. Urges the Commission to ensure that all social entitlements earmarked for sportspeople are equally accessible to their disabled counterparts;
 18. Recognises the role of sport, including professional sport, as an important tool for promoting team spirit, fairness and a sense of responsibility, social inclusion and cultural integration, as a factor to promote growth and job creation, local and regional development, and urban renewal and rural development, and as a way of fostering values such as solidarity, tolerance, and fair competition, as well as combating obesity and overweight, and the important contribution it makes to handing on fundamental social, educational and cultural values; calls for a greater commitment to combating doping, crime and corruption within clubs;
 19. Calls on Member States to cooperate with physical education academies with a view to providing comprehensive quality education so as to impart the necessary knowledge to sportspeople, thereby enabling them to study at secondary and tertiary-level educational establishments and to enter the labour market;
 20. Proposes that access to sport and integration in social sports infrastructures should be considered an indicator of social integration and a factor for analysing the phenomenon of social exclusion;
 21. Stresses the importance of physical exercise and sport in curbing obesity and eliminating unhealthy lifestyle habits, since this phenomenon has a significant positive impact on citizens' health on the one hand and as regards reducing the cost of health insurance funds on the other; expresses, however, concern at the fact that the extension of working hours and existing employment conditions in general deter workers from taking regular exercise and devoting themselves more single-mindedly to sport;
 22. Asks the Commission and Member States, taking into account the principle of subsidiarity, to approve and fund project proposals linking social inclusion and sports as a

priority within existing budgets and programmes both at European and at national levels; supports the intention of the Commission to mainstream sport in different action programmes;

23. Points to the importance of encouraging people to play sports by guaranteeing access to sport for all and equal opportunities and investing in the training of teachers and sports coaches as well as in more public sports facilities; also calls for the necessary support to be provided to enable people with disabilities to have access to sport;
24. Considers sport and physical education to be central to high-quality education;
25. Welcomes the recognition by the Commission in its White Paper of the nature of non-profit activities of sports as social services of general interest; asks the Commission to treat sports accordingly;
26. Draws attention to non-professional sport, which is often neglected; points to the need for greater financial support, better working conditions, and other incentives and benefits to be afforded to non-professional sport, including non-profit-making clubs and amateur and volunteer athletes, trainers or coaches, and referees;
27. Expresses its support for sport governing bodies that invest in the education and training of young players by stressing the need for a minimum number of locally trained players in a club squad, regardless of their nationality;
28. Supports the Commission's recommendations to the Member States to develop strategies at national level which, under the educational programmes, would seek to increase and enhance children's and schoolchildren's physical activity from a very early age;
29. Recognises the link between the commercial and the social role of sports; recognises, therefore, that investing in the promotion of youth development, grassroots training, facilities and community based programmes, is highly dependent on the generation and reinvestment of media revenue from professional sport and through the effective enforcement of intellectual property rights in sport broadcasts;
30. Notes the fact that the Association of European Professional Football Leagues and FIFPro, have jointly requested that the Commission formally establish a social dialogue committee in the professional football sector; welcomes that development and encourages the further strengthening of the social dialogue.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	26.2.2008
Result of final vote	+: 42 -: 2 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Jan Andersson, Edit Bauer, Emine Bozkurt, Iles Braghetto, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Milan Cabrnach, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Luigi Cocilovo, Jean Louis Cottigny, Proinsias De Rossa, Harlem Désir, Harald Ettl, Richard Falbr, Carlo Fatuzzo, Ilda Figueiredo, Roger Helmer, Stephen Hughes, Karin Jöns, Ona Juknevičienė, Jean Lambert, Bernard Lehideux, Elisabeth Lynne, Thomas Mann, Jan Tadeusz Masiel, Elisabeth Morin, Csaba Öry, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Rovana Plumb, Bilyana Ilieva Raeva, Elisabeth Schroedter, José Albino Silva Peneda, Jean Spautz, Gabriele Stauner, Anne Van Lancker, Gabriele Zimmer
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Mihael Brejc, Gabriela Crețu, Petru Filip, Donata Gottardi, Rumiana Jeleva, Jamila Madeira, Csaba Sógor, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides