

**Question for written answer P-005936/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Frédéric Daerden (S&D)

Subject: Cleaning up European football

Over the last few years, European football has become synonymous with a system that is completely unregulated, and is now seen by many as an economic bubble that is about to burst. Indeed, 56% of Europe's 733 professional clubs recorded losses in 2010, which amounted to EUR 1.6 billion in all. The long-term viability of the sport is increasingly being called into question. It is therefore vital for the whole sector to be cleaned up, and for its practices to be made morally acceptable.

The Executive Committee of UEFA recently adopted the Financial Fair Play Regulations, which will come into force at the start of the 2013/14 season across the whole of Europe. Several proposals have been made to supplement these regulations and strengthen regulation at European level. One such proposal involves imposing, as has taken place in the financial sector, a limits on sports clubs' indebtedness (debt-equity ratio). Another involves setting a two-fold salary limit (a salary cap for the entire squad, on the one hand, and ensuring that there is an acceptable limit in the discrepancy between salaries of players in the same squad, on the other). A third involves the introduction of a Football Transfer Tax (FTT), with the money generated being used to finance sporting infrastructure and promote both youth training and the core values of the sport.

1. Going beyond the strictly legal framework of Article 165 of the Treaty, does the Commission not consider it wise to support and encourage initiatives like those described above, in close partnership with UEFA, along the same lines as the Financial Fair Play Regulations?
2. Without these initiatives, is it not likely that competition between football clubs in the European Union will become increasingly distorted?