



EU Sport Council reaches conclusions on health, statistics, doping, possible European Week of Sport, but no agreement on strategy to combat manipulation of sports results

On November 26-27, EU Sport Ministers met in Brussels to discuss sport issues.

The Ministers adopted conclusions on strengthening the evidence base for sport policy-making and promoting health-enhancing physical activities (HEPA). In particular:

- The conclusions on **evidence-based policy making** illustrate the economic importance of sport and its significant contribution to achieving the Europe 2020 strategic goals. They also call for concrete steps to improve the production and dissemination of sport statistics, including further work on Sport Satellite Accounts.

- The **conclusions on HEPA** invite the Commission to urgently prepare a proposal for a Council recommendation in this field.

Ministers held also a public debate on "From virtual sports to real sports: a step from the sofa to the playing field", which addressed in particular the future establishment of an Annual European Week of Sport, as a means of promoting the practice of sport and physical activity especially among children, teenagers and young adults, taking into account similar national initiatives and in cooperation with the relevant sports organisations.

In addition, the Council appointed the **three EU representatives on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Foundation Board** who will take up their mandates in January 2013 for 3-year mandate.

The new designates are:

- Mr Leo Varadkar, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Ireland)
- Mr Romain Schneider, Sports Minister (Luxembourg)
- Mr Alexandre Miguel Mestre, Secretary of State for Sport and Youth (Portugal)

The Council did not manage to agree on **conclusions to establish a strategy to combat the manipulation of sports results**. The text adopted in the end was in the form of "Presidency conclusions" (rather than "Council Conclusions"), which means that it probably won't have the same political weight, but can nonetheless serve as a basis for future initiatives. Although 26 Member States had agreed on the proposed text, Malta did not accept the text, arguing that the regulation of internet sports betting comes within the ambit of the internal market and that it is consequently not for the Sport Council to take this type of initiative.

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Erasmus for all: Culture Committee of the European Parliament approves funding for sport



Doris Pack, Chair of the CULT Committee and rapporteur for the "Erasmus for all" programme

On November 27, the Culture Committee of the European Parliament (CULT) approved the report drafted by German MEP and Chairwoman of the Committee Doris Pack on the Erasmus for All programme.

MEPs voted in favour of creating a specific sports funding programme within the EU budget.

For the first time, programmes dedicated specifically to sports will qualify for European funding. The programmes will cover grassroots sports as well as initiatives to tackle doping, violence, discrimination and intolerance.

The text adopted by the CULT Committee will be discussed and voted in plenary next year.

In 2013, the Parliament will enter into a triologue with the Council of EU and the Commission, to negotiate the final legislative resolution.

Commissioner Vassiliou expressed her satisfaction that the key points of the proposal have met with widespread support both within the Council and the Parliament.

European Parliament holds public hearing on "Playing by the rules: financial fair play and the fight against corruption in sport"

On December 18, the Culture Committee of the European Parliament organised a public hearing to discuss corruption in sport, especially in the context of increasing indebtedness among clubs, caused especially by the dependence of leading football clubs on income from advertising revenue and the associated inflation in players' wages. The hearing was chaired by MEP Doris Pack and featured a series of expert panellists, but also interventions from MEPs, the European Commission.

Nick Garlick, Senior Specialist at the Europol

Operations Department, spoke about the long history of match fixing and the new global dimension that the crime has taken, even for minor sport events.

Jürgen Mittag, Head of the Institute of European Sport Development & Leisure Studies at the German Sport University of Cologne, spoke about the problem of highly indebted clubs in Europe, with 60 clubs around Europe having more than €90 bn in debt. He also presented the UEFA Financial Fair Play Regulations and what are the programme's prospects for the future.

Jens Sejer Anderssen, International Director of Play the Game & Danish Institute for Sports Studies, gave some alarming examples of international sport federations where cases of corruption have been going on for the past years. He called for a stronger involvement of the EU institutions in the fight against corruption in sport and he proposed the establishment of an International Clearing House to monitor and prevent corruption in all sport.

MEPs were very interested in the debate and wanted to know how the EU can

contribute to the fight against corruption. MEPs Pack, Fisas, Bozkurt, Belet, Borys, Kammerevert and Løkkegaard participated actively in the discussion, although it was stressed more than once by Ms. Pack that the powers of the Parliament and the Commission are very limited in this field.

The experts unanimously agreed that EU institutions should take the lead in promoting transparency and stepping up the fight against corruption, match fixing and betting, which are now serious problems not just in Europe, but worldwide.

Conclusions of the latest meeting of the EU Expert Group on Sport Statistics

On September 10, the Expert Group on Sport Statistics held its third meeting in Brussels. The report of the meeting was made available in November.

Discussions focused on **deliverables 1 and 2** of the group's work schedule, namely:

- Policy recommendations for the Contribution of sport to economic growth and employment – deliverable 1
- Drafting a manual for the Construction of a Sport Satellite Account (SSA) – deliverable 2

The policy recommendations included in the draft document to be submitted to the Council's working party on sport included:

1. Recognise sport as an important economic factor
2. Enhance labour productivity in the sport sector
3. Leverage the economic impact of voluntary activity
4. Foster convergence across EU Member States through sport
5. Capitalise on the sizeable growth-enhancing specialization advantages of sport – a) realise sport tourism-related growth potential, b) realise sport insurance-related growth potential, c) realise sport-related economic and legal consultancy growth potential
6. Foster investment in sustainable sport infrastructure
7. Propagate consistent sport documentation and the

exchange of best-practice models.

With regard to deliverable 2, the draft text of the manual for submission to the working party on sport was presented.

Three of the countries that have already produced an SSA, Austria, the Netherlands, and the UK, have also produced a manual on how such an SSA can be delivered.

The next meeting of the group will take place on Monday 25 February 2013 in Warsaw, Poland.

Study on the contribution of sport to economic growth and employment in the EU

On November 20, the European Commission published a Study on the contribution of sport to economic growth and employment in the EU. The study was contacted by SportsEconAustria (project lead). The Study was commissioned by the European Commission's Directorate-General Education and Culture to assess the sport sector's importance in the EU, in particular its growth and employment potential.

According to the study, the share of **sport-related value**

added (direct effects) of total EU Gross Value Added is 1.76% and amounts to € 173.86 bn. The direct effects of sport combined with its multiplier (indirect and induced) effects add up to 2.98% of EU Gross Value Added (€ 294.36 bn). Furthermore, the **share of sport-related employment (direct effects) amounts to 2.12% of total EU employment**, equivalent to 4,460,888 persons. If indirect effects are added, sport leads to employment of 7,378,671 persons (3.51% of EU employment).

The study looks at data from all 27 member states of the European Union.

The most important **policy implications** to be drawn from the outcomes of this study are:

1. Sport is an important economic sector
2. Sport represents a labour-intensive growth industry
3. Sport can foster convergence across EU Member States
4. Sport has growth-enhancing specialisation advantages.

DATES FOR THE DIARY: FORTHCOMING EU MEETINGS & EVENTS*February 26th*

Next membership meeting of the EU Sports Platform

March 8th

Conference of the Irish Presidency on Sport

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News in Brief

UEFA / FIFA appeals rejected by AG

On December 12, Advocate General Jääskinen of the Court of Justice of the European Union delivered his opinion on the appeals of UEFA and FIFA, who had brought a case against Belgium and the UK. Both countries drew up a list of events considered to be of major importance for their society, and as such they should be broadcast on free TV. Belgium's list included all of the matches of the World Cup finals, while the UK's list included all of the matches of the World Cup finals and of the EURO finals.

AG Jääskinen ruled that EU member states have the right under EU law to ensure "broad public access" to major competitions if these are considered by them to be "events of major importance for their society".

Online gambling

On November 12, Belgian police detained in Brussels Norbert Teufelberger, co-chief executive of Bwin.party. Belgian laws on online gambling make licences available only to operators already holding a Belgian licence for offline gambling, which Bwin.party does not have.

A European Commission spokesman said it may open formal infringement proceedings against Belgium

MEPs asked questions on money laundering in sport; the current situation regarding sports agents; financial irregularities during the preparation of big sports events; on betting and fraud; "dual career" training; funding of EU programmes to combat match-fixing; Corruption at Euro 2012 in Ukraine; child exploitation in sport.

Members of the European Parliament have the right to ask Parliamentary Questions to the European Commission on areas relating to European law, and sport is no exception.

Recent queries have included:

- What steps, including new legislation, does the Commission intend to take to monitor and combat fraud and money laundering in sport from Matteo Salvini (Italy);

- What stage been reached in the work on sport agents and what results the Commission has achieved regarding the possible standardisation of the profession of football agent at European level from Ivo Belet (Belgium);

- What measures the Commission has taken to monitor construction preparations and prevent financial irregularities during major sports events from Rebecca Harms (Germany);

- Whether the Commission shares the view that "pari mutuel", used for betting on horse racing is fraud-proof and whether the Commission acknowledges that if this is to

continue in the Member States that so wish, then it is vitally important to preserve the 'retour filière' (returns to racing) mechanism from MEPs Berra and Dantin (France);

- What action the Commission intends to take to develop 'dual career' training with a view to enhancing athletes' professional skills off the pitch and improving their prospects of employment after they have retired from competitive sport from MEPs Zanicchi and Scurria (Italy);

- What funds the Commission has made available for action to combat match-fixing during the current Multiannual Financial Framework and what has been the take-up rate by the Member States from MEP Papanikolaou (Greece);

- How the Commission intends to encourage more ethical behaviour by the EU's trading partners in public procurement from MEP Benahmias (France);

- What measures the Commission has in place in relation to the protection of underage players and players trafficked from outside the EU from MEP Aylward (Ireland).