



European Elections 2014: A fresh start?

On May 22-25, voters from across Europe will come to the polls to choose their representatives in the European Parliament for the next five years.

The European Union ideal is more in doubt than ever, and an **increase in the number of Euro-sceptic MEPs** is looking all the more likely. However, this will have little impact on the overall balance of power in the European Parliament, with the centre-right (EPP) and centre-left (S&D) groups still gaining the most seats. For the moment, polls show a really **tight vote result** between these two, with both parties on course to end up with between 200-210 seats each.

The results of the European elections are also going to play an important role in the **appointment of the next president of the European Commission**, with the end of the mandate of the current Commission looming on 31 October. The European Parliament believes the post of Commission President should go to either the top candidate of the political party that wins the most votes or to the candidate who can get a majority among the groups. However, Member States have indicated that they will appoint the candidate as they see fit, meaning **a clash between the Parliament and Council on this issue is a possibility**.

The first plenary session of the newly elected Parliament will take place on July 1st. The new make-up of the Committees will also be in place by that time, with MEPs having their first meetings in July as well, before going into summer recess for the month of August.

Many of the MEPs that have taken an interest in sport are **standing for election again**, including Emma McClarkin from the UK, Morten Løkkegaard from Denmark, Sophie Auconie from France, Ivo Belet from Belgium and Santiago Fisas Ayxela from Spain. We hope to see many of these familiar faces returning to carry on their good work and ensure that sport issues will get even greater attention from MEPs in the next mandate.

We wish them all the very best of luck!

We will keep you updated on the results of the European elections and the new composition of the Parliament's Culture Committee in the next edition of our newsletter.

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European Commission publishes study on sports organisers' rights in the EU

On 25 April, the European Commission published the study conducted by TMC Asser Institute and the University of Amsterdam on sports organisers' rights in the EU.

The **specific objectives** of the study were:

- To map the **legal framework** applicable to the origin and ownership of sports organisers' rights in the 28 Member States;
- to analyse the **nature and scope of sports organisers' rights** with regard to licensing practices in the field of the media, taking into account relevant EU law provisions;
- to examine the **possibility of establishing licensing practices** beyond the media field, notably in **the area of gambling and betting**;
- to **provide recommendations** on the opportunity of EU action to address any problem that may be identified in the above mentioned areas of analysis

Part I of the study focuses on the various types of legal protection currently available to the organisers of sports events and part II examines how sports organisers' rights are managed and licensed in the field of media. Part III examines, from an EU and national legal perspective, the possibility for sports organisers to

license their exploitation rights beyond the media field, notably in the area of gambling.

The study's **main findings** are:

- In the majority of EU countries the interests of sports organisers find direct or indirect recognition in the **general laws of property and contracts**. The study does not point out an urgent need for a harmonising initiative in this respect.
- The **laws on copyright and neighbouring rights** that provide legal protection of the audiovisual recordings and broadcasts of sports events are almost completely harmonised in the EU.
- While the calls of sports organisations for effective enforcement remedies are comparable to those of the traditional content industries, the case for **expedient remedies** is arguably stronger for sport.
- It is recommended to establish a **centrally driven distribution system** that allocates the revenue derived from (commercial) betting or other gambling services to sports on the basis of transparent criteria
- **A right to consent to bets** could be considered as one of the available mechanisms to protect the integrity of sport from betting-related match fixing on condition that extensive and resource-intensive institutional and operational requirements necessary for its successful implementation can be satisfied. Other mechanisms may be explored by Member States to safeguard the integrity of sport competitions in relation to betting.

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EPP group organises hearing on “Football for Roma inclusion”

On 18 March, the parliamentary group of the European People's Party (EPP) organised a hearing on “Football for Roma inclusion”, under the patronage of Polish MEP Jerzy Buzek, former President of the European Parliament.

The **objective of the event** was to raise awareness concerning the role of sports in social inclusion, to promote the elimination of discrimination based on ethnicity and social disadvantage in the field of sport, to achieve better access for socially-disadvantaged Roma to mass and competitive sports, as well as to publicise the related opportunities provided by the European integration process in general and the **European Framework for National Roma Inclusion Policies** in specific.

This project aims at contributing to supporting and providing a European basic framework for breaking out of poverty through sports, promoting a healthy lifestyle, strengthening a positive identity among marginalised communities, facilitating crime prevention and the prevention of victimisation, as well as to positively influence the attitudes of football fans towards minorities and marginalised people.

Commissioner Vassiliou meets with MEPs on sports issues

On 18 March, European Commissioner Androula Vassiliou met with the members of the Culture Committee in the European Parliament for the last time before the upcoming European elections.

Sport was among the issues MEPs raised with the Commissioner, whose intervention was focused on the benefits of the **Erasmus+ programme**.

MEP Santiago Fisas-Ayxela (EPP/Spain) inquired about the **state of play of the European week of sport** and whether this is **still planned for September 2015**. The Commissioner confirmed that on 11 June a big conference will take place, where all stakeholders will be able to express their views on the European week for sport. The Commission is still planning to have the week in September 2015.

MEP Doris Pack (EPP/Germany) asked the Commissioner whether **sport events taking place annually could be funded through Erasmus +** and the Commissioner confirmed that such events are not precluded.

The first meeting of the Culture Committee under the new mandate will take place on 10 July.

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EU Ministers to discuss the economic, social and environmental sustainability of major sport events



On 20-21 May, the EU Ministers responsible for sport issues will meet in Brussels. Among other topics of discussion, the Ministers will also hold a public debate on the **economic, social and environmental sustainability of major sport events**.



To that end, the Greek Presidency of the Council has drawn up a discussion paper as the basis for the Ministers' debate. The document looks at the increasing **importance of leverage and legacy** when planning major sporting events. The 1964 and 1976 Olympic Winter Games in Innsbruck, the 1992 Games in Barcelona and the 2004 Athens Olympic Games are cited as examples of how important it is to ensure that a long lasting legacy and leverage benefits from major one-off sporting events are achieved, even more **in times of financial crisis**.

The goal of this discussion is for Member States with significant experience in the organisation of such events to share positive and negative experiences. Mr David Grevenberg (CEO of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games) has been invited to the meeting as an expert speaker.

Commissioner Vassiliou: "Football needs more female coaches"

Androulla Vassiliou, the European Commissioner responsible for sport, met with UEFA President Michel Platini in the margins of a meeting of the UEFA Women in Football Leadership Programme in Switzerland on April 30 and **called for UEFA to do more to promote female coaches in football**.

Commissioner Vassiliou proposed **strengthened cooperation between UEFA and the EU on gender issues**, including the fight against discrimination and sexual harassment.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, the Commissioner said: *"The low number of female coaches means that **European football teams are missing** out on a lot of coaching talent, in both men's and women's football. More female coaches could also encourage more girls and women to take up the sport."*

While football is an increasingly popular sport for girls and women, they are still under-represented on a professional basis and as volunteers. It is estimated **that only 20-30% of all football coaches are female** and 20 out of 52 European sport federations do not have a single woman on their board.



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Greek Presidency: Seminar on "Gender based violence in Sport: minors protection"

On 20 March, the Greek Presidency of the Council of the EU organised a seminar entitled "Gender based violence, minors' protection", with the aim to contribute to **one of the most sensitive, complicated and difficult aspects of the issue of gender equality in sport.**

During the seminar, experts from the 28 Member States, Governmental and Non-Governmental sport bodies, state and international organizations officials and academics approached the problem.

The seminar produced concrete proposals on gender equality in sport in the form of a declaration, which calls upon the European Commission, the Member States and all relevant actors to assess the nature and extent of gender based violence in sport, in particular on elite sport, the coach-athlete relationship, the entourage in sport-athlete relationship and the peer athlete-athlete relationship.

You can find the full declaration at the following link:

<http://gr2014.eu/sites/default/files/DECLARATION-gbv.pdf>

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European Commission's Eurobarometer on sport reveals high levels of inactivity in the EU

On 24 March, the European Commission published the results of the latest Eurobarometer survey on sport and physical activity, according to which, **59% of EU citizens never or seldom exercise or play sport, while 41% do so at least once a week.**

Northern Europe is more physically active than the South and East. 70% of respondents in Sweden said they exercise or play sport at least once a week, just ahead of Denmark (68%) and Finland (66%), followed by the Netherlands (58%) and Luxembourg (54%). At the other end of the scale, 78% never do so in Bulgaria, followed by Malta (75%), Portugal (64%), Romania (60%) and Italy (60%).

The survey shows that **local authorities in particular could do more to encourage citizens to be physically active.** While 74% of respondents believe that local sport clubs and other providers provide sufficient opportunities for this, 39% think their local authorities are not doing enough.

This Eurobarometer survey was carried out for the European Commission by the TNS Opinion & Social network in the 28 Member States between 23 November and 2 December 2013. Nearly 28,000 respondents from different social and population groups took part in the poll. The survey follows comparable surveys conducted in 2002 and 2009, and will contribute to providing data to support the development of policies to promote sport and physical activity.

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Dates for the Diary

- 20-21 May** Meeting of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Ministers of the EU (EYCS Council)
- 11 June** European Commission event: European Week of Sport – Preparing for the launch 2015
- 13 June** 3rd European Conference on Sports Innovation in Voiron (Isere, France)
- 16-17 June** Pan-European “Sport and Prison” Conference
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News in brief

EC approves £110 million 3 sports stadiums in Belfast, Northern Ireland

On 9 April, the European Commission announced that Northern Irish plans to grant £110 million for the reconstruction of three sports stadiums in Belfast is consistent with EU State aid rules. The Commission found that the proposed funding contributes to urban regeneration and social cohesion, in line with EU objectives, without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market.

EC asks Spain to end indirect discrimination towards basketball players from other Member States

On 16 April, the European Commission published its request to Spain to change its rules on the composition of basketball teams as the current quotas for locally trained players lead to indirect discrimination towards players from other Member States. Spain now has two months to notify the Commission of the measures taken to remedy this situation; otherwise, the Commission may decide to refer Spain to the EU's Court of Justice.

Parliamentary questions

Members of the European Parliament have the right to ask Parliamentary Questions to the European Commission on areas relating to European law, including sport. Recent queries have included:

- The creation of the “Nations League” by UEFA and the Commission’s view on whether the League promotes European spirit from MEP Iñaki Fernández (Spain);
- The recent changes by the Italian Basket Federation to the championships for the 2013-2014 season and relevant concerns for the free movement of sports workers in the EU from MEP Sergio Berlato (Italy);
- Whether the plans for building a new Belgian national stadium on land belonging to the City of Brussels are compatible with EU competition rules from MEP Mark Demesmaeker (Belgium);
- Whether the Commission considers it appropriate to expand its investigation into the public funding of certain Spanish professional football clubs to Atlético de Madrid FC from MEP Francisco Sosa Wagner (Spain);
- If there are any European regulations governing first aid at sporting events from MEP Sergio Silvestris (Italy);
- Whether the Commission intends to tackle the restrictions imposed by broadcasters on customers who wish to watch sports events outside their home Member State from Syed Kamall (UK);
- What are the Commission’s actions at European level, together with anti-doping authorities, to encourage and assist attempts to catch doping cheats from MEP Diane Dodds (UK);
- What the Commission is doing to attract more women to sport from Claudette Baldacchino (Malta).

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