

P7_TA(2013)0098

Match-fixing and corruption in sport

European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2013 on match-fixing and corruption in sport (2013/2567(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Nicosia Declaration of 20 September 2012 on the Fight Against Match-Fixing,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 18 January 2011 entitled ‘Developing the European Dimension in Sport’ (COM(2011)0012),
- having regard to its resolution of 2 February 2012 on the European dimension in sport¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 March 2009 on the integrity of online gambling²,
- having regard to the Commission White Paper on Sport (COM(2007)0391),
- having regard to its resolution of 14 April 2005 on combating doping in sport³,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Fighting Corruption in the EU’ (COM(2011)0308),
- having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2011 on online gambling in the Internal Market⁴,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 23 October 2012 entitled ‘Towards a comprehensive European framework for online gambling’ (COM(2012)0596),
- having regard to the Commission Green Paper of 24 March 2011 on on-line gambling in the Internal Market (COM(2011)0128),
- having regard to its resolution of 15 September 2011 on the EU’s efforts to combat corruption⁵,
- having regard to the preparatory action entitled ‘European Partnerships on Sport’ and in particular to the assembling of projects focusing on the prevention of match-fixing incidents through the provision of education and information to relevant stakeholders,
- having regard to the Commission Recommendation for a Council Decision Authorising the European Commission to participate, on behalf of the EU, in the negotiations for an international convention of the Council of Europe to combat the manipulation of sports

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0025.

² OJ C 87 E, 1.4.2010, p. 30.

³ OJ C 33 E, 9.2.2006, p. 590.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0492.

⁵ OJ C 51 E, 22.2.2013, p. 121.

results (COM(2012)0655),

- having regard to the results of the March 2012 study entitled ‘Match-fixing in sport’, which was requested by the Commission,
 - having regard to the Council of Europe Anti-Doping Convention of 16 November 1989,
 - having regard to the Recommendation of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers of 28 September 2011 on promotion of the integrity of sport to fight against manipulation of results, notably match-fixing,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas a Europol joint investigation team (JIT) code-named ‘Operation Veto’ revealed widespread football match-fixing in recent years, with 680 matches around the world deemed to be suspicious, including 380 matches in Europe, and whereas it described a wide-ranging match-fixing network that struck at the sport’s core, with 425 people under suspicion and 50 others having been arrested;
 - B. whereas Europol has stated that these figures are merely the ‘tip of the iceberg’;
 - C. whereas a large number of Member States have been affected by match-fixing, this being a cause for serious concern since match-fixing is related to organised crime and is a major source of risk for the sporting establishment in practically all the Member States;
 - D. whereas match-fixing is a form of crime which generates high revenues, while sentencing and detection rates are extremely low, and whereas it is therefore used by criminal organisations in their illegal activities such as money laundering and human and drug trafficking;
 - E. whereas spot-fixing, an illegal activity in sport whereby a specific part of a game – but not necessarily the final result – is fixed, can be more difficult to detect than traditional match-fixing;
 - F. whereas criminal organisations are operating on an international scale and have connections across the globe, such that no single institution, country or organisation would be able to tackle match-fixing on its own;
 - G. whereas all sports can be affected and the integrity of sport is being threatened;
 - H. whereas current control mechanisms fail to detect fixed matches immediately owing to the global nature of these illegal activities;
 - I. whereas transparency, accountability and democracy – in other words, good governance – in sports organisations are prerequisites for the sports movement to play any kind of successful role in fighting match-fixing and sports fraud;
 - J. whereas many sports organisations have already taken measures in this area, such as developing codes of conduct and adopting zero-tolerance policies;
 - K. whereas bets on fixed matches are mainly offered by operators outside the EU, thus necessitating an international focus on the fight against match-fixing;

- L. whereas experts indicate that there is increasing concern about the malicious intentions of some individuals who take over football clubs as a means of furthering match-fixing and laundering money;
 - M. whereas players' unions point to the fact that match-fixing is also a problem in terms of players not being paid their salaries in time and being intimidated and blackmailed;
1. Calls on all the main stakeholders individually to take responsibility and to develop a comprehensive approach by complementing one another's efforts to combat match-fixing in sport;
 2. Asks the Commission to develop a coordinated approach to the fight against match-fixing and organised crime by coordinating the efforts of the main stakeholders, such as sports organisations, national police and judicial authorities and gambling operators, in this area and by providing a platform for discussion and for the exchange of information and best practice;
 3. Calls on sports organisations to adopt a zero-tolerance policy on corruption (both internally and in relation to external contractors) in order to prevent their members from yielding to external pressure;
 4. Urges sports organisations to establish a code of conduct for all staff and officials (players, coaches, referees, medical and technical staff and club and association leaders) which sets out the dangers of match-fixing, includes a clear prohibition on manipulating matches for betting or other purposes, stipulates the associated sanctions and includes a ban on gambling on own matches and an obligation to report any approaches concerning, or awareness of, match-fixing, coupled with an adequate whistleblower protection mechanism;
 5. Calls upon all sports governing bodies to commit to good governance practices in order to reduce the risk of falling victim to match-fixing;
 6. Stresses the importance of education in protecting the integrity of sport; calls, therefore, on the Member States and on sports federations to inform and educate sportspeople and consumers adequately, starting from a young age, at all levels of sport, both amateur and professional;
 7. Encourages sports organisations to start up and persist with comprehensive prevention and education programmes entailing clear obligations for clubs, leagues and federations, in particular with regard to minors, and to set up a disciplinary body to deal with match-fixing;
 8. Asks the Commission strongly to encourage all the Member States explicitly to include match-fixing in their national criminal law, to provide for appropriate common minimum sanctions and to ensure that existing loopholes are addressed in a manner that fully respects fundamental rights;
 9. Welcomes the ongoing discussions on a possible Council of Europe convention to combat the manipulation of sport results, which will provide national systems with the necessary tools, expertise and resources to combat this threat;
 10. Encourages sports organisations to apply high and convincing standards of governance;

11. Asks the Commission to ensure that all the Member States prohibit betting on competitions involving minors;
12. Asks the Member States to create a specialised law enforcement unit to combat match-fixing and serve as a hub for communication and cooperation with the main stakeholders, and to require gambling operators to provide information on irregular gambling patterns to this specialised unit and to sports organisations for further investigation and referral to prosecution authorities;
13. Calls on the Member States to enhance European law enforcement cooperation through joint investigation teams and cooperation between prosecution authorities; stresses the need for the introduction and effective enforcement of measures to combat illegal betting websites and anonymous betting; believes that information should be exchanged concerning people who have been named in connection with, or sentenced for, approaching players about match-fixing deals;
14. Calls on the Member States to set up regulatory bodies to identify and combat illegal activities in sports betting and to collect, exchange, analyse and disseminate evidence of match-fixing, sports fraud and other forms of corruption in sport, both in Europe and beyond; stresses the need for close cooperation with other regulators, including licensing authorities, enforcement bodies and the police;
15. Urges the Commission to facilitate the exchange of information between these regulatory bodies with regard to illegal or suspicious sports betting activities;
16. Urges the Commission and the Member States to establish cooperation with third countries with a view to combating the organised crime associated with match-fixing, inter alia by taking part in the negotiations on an international Council of Europe convention to combat the manipulation of sports results;
17. Welcomes the publication by the Commission of a biannual Anti-Corruption Report, accompanied by country analyses for each Member State which include tailor-made recommendations (from 2013);
18. Encourages the Council to pursue the aims of the EU Work Plan for Sport for 2011-2014, insisting in particular on the development of education programmes in the Member States with a view to raising awareness of sporting values such as integrity, fair play and respect for others;
19. Welcomes the Commission's initiative with a view to the adoption in 2014 of a recommendation on best practice in the prevention and combating of betting-related match-fixing;
20. Welcomes the fact that the Fifth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS) will address the issue of integrity in sport and the fight against match-fixing, and believes this is a good forum in which to address the need for a global body dealing with match-fixing, and in which all the relevant actors can meet, exchange information, coordinate their action and promote concepts of good governance;
21. Calls on the Commission to identify third countries – such as those known as ‘Asian betting

havens' – that raise specific issues as regards betting-related match-fixing in respect of sports events taking place within the EU and to increase its collaboration with those countries in the fight against match-fixing;

22. Calls on the Council to proceed in a swift and ambitious manner with the discussions on the proposal for a new money laundering directive (COM(2013)0045) to address the use of online sports betting for money laundering;
23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and European, international and national sports organisations.