

European Update

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1. European Sports Ministers' Meeting

The European sports ministers' meeting was hosted in Biarritz as part of the French presidency of the EU at the end of November. The French presidency had a strong focus on sport which will not be replicated in the Czech and Swedish presidencies of 2009. The French proposals asked Ministers to recommend a Europe-wide system of control of sports organisations through a licensing system for clubs and limiting dialogue with the European Commission to European and International bodies.

CCPR, as part of DCMS's international working group, worked closely with other UK sporting bodies to present a coordinated case for sport to be governed at a national, not supra-national level. Thanks to this coherent national lobby and strong international support, the plans for European control of sports organisations were removed from the proposals, and the proposed structural dialogue mechanisms were changed to allow national organisations to have a voice.

Link:

http://www.ccpr.org.uk/Resources/CCPR/Documents/PDF/UE08PFUE_declaration_finale_ENG_281108_bis.pdf

2. European Commission: European Sport Forum

Alongside the European sports ministers' meeting in Biarritz, the European Commission staged its first annual sport forum, as proposed in the 2007 White Paper on Sport.

The event itself was overshadowed by the ministers' meeting held alongside the forum, and was dominated by football due to the high profile issues of quotas and European licensing systems for sport which meant UEFA and FIFA wheeled out their top executives in Biarritz to campaign for their goals.

The difficulty of transporting 160 representatives of the European sporting fraternity to Biarritz for the two events resulted in two half day conferences rather than the intended two full days of discussions, thus curtailing debate.

However, Commissioner Figel did state a desire to analyse the themes in which sport needed more legal certainty from European law. This move to a proactive theme by theme analysis rather than a reactive case by case examination in the courts should be welcomed- and moreover the sport movement needs to follow up on the Commissioner's Biarritz statements and ensure action is taken in 2009.

How can you help:

If you feel there are areas of EU law that need clarification with respect to sport contact [James MacDougall](#)

3. EU Heads of Government: Conclusions of the French Presidency

The conclusions of the French Presidency were announced during the EU heads of state visit to Brussels on 11-12 December and included an annex on sport. The conclusions were somewhat watered down when compared to the French presidencies original goals of allowing quotas in sport and proposing control mechanisms for the financing of sport across Europe, but nonetheless emphasise the importance of sport in the European Union and the growing influence Brussels has in the sport sector.

The conclusions noted the importance of sport values as essential to European society, underlined the necessity to take into account the specific characteristics of sport beyond its economic dimension, welcomed the structured dialogue in sport as implemented by the European Commission in the framework of the first EU sports forum and called for a reinforcement of this dialogue with the IOC and the representatives of the sport movement in particular in relation to dual training and education for young sportspeople.

The inclusion of the comments in the conclusions was unscheduled, and the UK Government is set to register with the European Institutions its interpretation of the statement, particularly its interpretation of “the specific characteristics of sport beyond its economic dimension”, to ensure that this is not taken as a partial endorsement of economic control of sport.

4. European Commission: Physical Activity Guidelines Announced

The European Commission published its EU Physical Activity Guidelines in November as proposed in the 2007 White Paper on Sport. The guidelines, established by a panel of 22 independent experts nominated by the individual member states, analyse sectors such as transport, environment, urban planning, public safety and the work environment. The proposals have no legal status and are meant as help for the member states, particularly those which do not have their own guidelines. The paper includes a number of good practice case studies from the UK.

Link:

http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/news682_en.htm

5. European Parliament: Report into Betting Integrity

As previously reported, the European Parliament has launched an own-initiative non-legislative report into integrity in online. The deadline for amendments has now passed, and the Parliament will vote on the final report in February. The Sports Rights Owners Coalition (SROC) supported by CCPR and numerous independent sports, met with report author Christel Schaldemose MEP in December to put across sports’ perspectives and emphasised the need to protect sport from integrity issues. SROC has submitted amendments to the Parliament to emphasise sport’s needs.

While the report is non-legislative, it is possible that the EU will be asked to submit a legislative proposal at the end of this process, especially given parallel working in gambling in the Competition Council in December (below) and the European Council’s working group on gambling.

Link European Parliament report:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-414.363+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

CCPR's analysis of integrity in sport through corrupt betting:

<http://www.ccpr.org.uk/news/newspages/Betting+research+exposes+risk+to+sport.htm>

6. Competition Council of the EU: Betting and Gambling

The Competition Council of the EU met on December 1 for an exchange of views on the legal framework and the national policies of EU member states in the field of gambling and betting. The forum concentrated on the protection of public order, the fight against addiction, protection of minors and consumers, combating illegal gambling and taxation.

With respect to sport, the report specifies that “exchanges could also be conducted with sporting bodies, to examine the potential for fraud and cheating in betting and possible solutions”

7. French Ministry for Health, Youth, Sport and the Voluntary Sector: Study of public and private financing of sport in Europe

As part of the French presidency of the European Union, the Ministry for Health, Youth, Sport and the Voluntary sector conducted a survey of the financing of sport in Europe. The report examines funding of sport in Europe examining both alternative mechanisms for financing sport in Europe and an analysis of how current national and European legislation adversely affects grassroots sport. It is hoped that this paper, and next year's study by the Commission into grassroots funding of sport, will provide a springboard for the effective analysis of the needs of sport, and that structured dialogue with sports organisation will enable the sharing of best practice and coherent analysis of problems.

The results of this survey are very valuable in highlighting some of the issues affecting European sport at the present time, and the paper stands as one of the few European documents which suggests concrete policy proposals. The report acknowledges the huge role volunteering plays in sport, but fails to recommend in sufficient depth the work that can be done to promote non-profit voluntary sports organisations.

Links:

For the French analysis go to:

http://www.ccpr.org.uk/Resources/CCPR/Documents/PDF/sport_financing_synthesis.pdf

For CCPR comment on the report go to:

<http://www.ccpr.org.uk/ourcampaigning/europe/euconsultations/>

8. European Parliament: Confirms budget line for sport in 2009

The European Parliament confirmed on December 18 a €6m budget for the European Commission to invest in pilot projects for sport in 2009. The budget line includes guaranteed funding for both the Special Olympics and the Mediterranean Games, but it is now down to the European Commission to define how the budget is divided. The Commission is unlikely to stray too far away from the Parliament's previous recommendations which will probably see a political compromise and around €1.5m going to these projects. The Commission is likely to recommend the remaining funds are used in the field of sport and health (establishing a network for enhanced physical activity), training, volunteering (network to provide information for non-profit sports organisations- legal and tax advice), the fight against doping, conferences and seminars and disability projects.

9. CCPR: EU:SPORT:FUTURE

EU:SPORT:FUTURE is a pan-European project designed to engage European citizens in the field of sports policy in Europe. The project aims to collect the opinion of EU citizens on the role of sport in the EU and provide recommendations to the European institutions on aspects such as health, social inclusion, employment, education and volunteering. The project, in which CCPR participates alongside umbrella sports organisations in Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Hungary and Slovenia, received funding from the Europe for Citizens programme in December and is now due to start next February.