



EUROPEAN FOOTBALL
UNITED
FOR THE
INTEGRITY OF THE GAME





European football united for the integrity of the game

- Recent publicity has highlighted the risk of match-fixing in European football. It is a global threat and a challenge for the sport in its entirety.
- Therefore, the European football family has decided to join forces in order to tackle the threat of match-fixing. The European football family is composed of the European Club Association (ECA), representing football clubs at a European level; the EPFL, the Association of European Professional Leagues; FIFPro Division Europe, the European association of player trade unions and UEFA, as the football governing body at European level.
- A joint action plan with a number of concrete initiatives focusing on education, prevention, monitoring and disciplinary sanctions, designed to protect the integrity of football in Europe, has been developed and is being implemented by the European football family. This is an absolute priority for all involved and underlines our zero-tolerance policy towards match-fixing.
- However, sports bodies do not have the means or the legal jurisdictions to tackle by themselves a problem, which often involves criminal organisations. "Sports fraud" should be recognised as a specific criminal offence in national legislations throughout Europe, as this would help to ensure a consistent, effective and coordinated means to deter match-fixing. At the same time, European states should consider dedicated prosecution services with a primary responsibility of dealing with sports fraud cases.
- Close cooperation involving information exchange between police services, investigating and prosecuting authorities, sports bodies and betting companies is essential. This would help sports bodies in the prosecution of disciplinary cases while at the same time allowing state authorities to benefit from their expertise in order to investigate and prosecute crimes.
- Recognition of a sports organiser's right in the context of betting would also help tackle threats relating to the integrity of sport, secure a fair financial return to sports bodies and their members, provide funding to further protect the integrity of the game, but also finance other areas such as youth, amateur and female sport to develop the economic and social role of sport.
- Finally, efforts towards the adoption of an international convention on match-fixing under the auspices of the Council of Europe should be encouraged – with full involvement of football stakeholders, as are all other proposed initiatives by the European institutions in this area.



1. Introduction

- 1.1. In recent years, football in Europe has been confronted with an increasing number of scandals linked to the manipulation of results (referred to as “match-fixing”). This has coincided with a rapid development of the gambling market, particularly in the online environment. Irrespective of whether matches are manipulated for sporting, financial or other reasons, match-fixing jeopardises the integrity of competition and damages the very soul of our sport.
- 1.2. Match-fixing can be closely associated with serious criminal activities, such as corruption, fraud and money laundering, with the resulting profits feeding other criminal networks. It typically transcends national borders, making detection and prosecution particularly challenging. Sports bodies, while committed to eradicating this problem through concrete initiatives, do not have the legal capacities or investigative powers to tackle the issue by themselves.
- 1.3. Related to this issue is the need to provide sport with a fair return from the betting industry, which will also contribute to reducing the risk of results being manipulated. This follows-up on the resolutions adopted by the UEFA Professional Football Strategy Council in 2010¹ and 2011².

¹ Professional Football Strategy Council resolution on match-fixing, 27 August 2010

² Professional Football Strategy Council resolution on betting, 10 March 2011



2. European football's initiatives to prevent match-fixing

The European professional football stakeholders have developed and financed a number of concrete steps designed to protect the integrity of the sport. Taken together, these initiatives illustrate the zero-tolerance approach taken towards match-fixing and form the cornerstones of the European football family's joint action plan to combat this threat.

2.1. Education programmes

- 2.1.1. It is vital that all participants, including players, officials and referees, are made fully aware of the anti-fraud rules, including their duty to report improper approaches. Where there is comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant risks, incidents of match-fixing can better be prevented.
- 2.1.2. For a number of years, UEFA has run an education programme for players, referees and match officials to inform, educate and provide them with general advice on the issues surrounding sports betting, including risks they may encounter and ways in which they can report suspicious approaches. Briefing sessions and workshops are organised all year round alongside UEFA tournaments. Particular attention is given to youth competitions.
- 2.1.3. Recently, the European Commission has earmarked an education and prevention programme called "Don't fix it" developed by FIFPro and supported by UEFA. The objective of this initiative is to raise awareness of the dangers of match-fixing among players, referees, officials, administrators and public authorities.
- 2.1.4. Similarly, the EPFL has teamed up with Transparency International and the DFL, the professional football league of Germany to advance the fight against match fixing, especially sports betting related, by engaging participants at the national level, such as young and professional players, referees, club officials and others. This EU co-funded initiative called "Staying onside" also commits specific target groups to taking part in various activities, as part of a broader action plan.
- 2.1.5. EPFL member leagues have introduced and will pursue a series of match-fixing prevention programmes initiatives at national level
- 2.1.6. ECA member clubs will continue to undertake individual programmes to encourage, advise and educate their players via various means, including codes of conduct and club charters, to refrain from match-fixing and even engaging in betting activity altogether.

2.2. Codes of conduct

- 2.2.1. In 2011, the EPFL drew up its Code of Conduct on Sports Betting Integrity, which it aims to implement in member leagues by the 2013/14 season. This document is aimed to safeguard and further protect the integrity of the leagues' competitions and provide guidance on the fight against unlawful betting and match-fixing. The EPFL Code of Conduct represents the EPFL commitment of preventing fraudulent betting practices in



football and to support and strengthen its member leagues' fight to protect the integrity of their competitions and maintain the overall credibility of the game.

- 2.2.2. The ECA, the EPFL, FIFPro Division Europe and UEFA aim to establish a code of conduct for the integrity of the game for all participants in European football, including players, referees, officials and administrators.

2.3. Agreements with the betting industry

- 2.3.1. Various memorandums of understanding have been signed with betting associations and major betting companies, under which these betting operators agree to provide information to assist football bodies at national and European level to identify and investigate suspicious betting patterns.
- 2.3.2. Although a positive step, it is clear that some of these voluntary arrangements did not always provide the level of cooperation and information required.

2.4. Betting fraud detection systems

- 2.4.1. UEFA operates a betting fraud detection system (BFDS), which monitors and analyses betting activities on about 30,000 matches in Europe each year (European competitions, the top two domestic divisions and cup competitions in each country throughout the continent). The system has been fully operational since the 2008/09 season.
- 2.4.2. The BFDS highlights irregular betting movements both pre-match and in-game in all key betting markets from all major European and Asian bookmakers. This anti-fraud system collects information, investigates suspicious matches and can be instrumental with a view to preparing potential disciplinary cases with a view to preventing and combating sports fraud.
- 2.4.3. A number of EPFL member leagues have signed agreements with betting operators to identify irregular or suspicious sports betting patterns. Under the terms of those agreements, betting operators commit to timely inform the leagues when the integrity of a specific game is at stake via betting monitoring systems.
- 2.4.4. A confidential and trusted reporting system, supported by all parties, will be established enabling participants to anonymously report attempts to manipulate football matches.

2.5. Integrity officer network

- 2.5.1. Recently, UEFA has established a network of integrity officers throughout its 53 member associations.
- 2.5.2. As well as acting as liaison officers between the football authorities and state law enforcement agencies in relation to suspected match-fixing, integrity officers exchange information and experience with the UEFA administration regarding the prosecution of



corrupt or criminal practices affecting football, monitor disciplinary proceedings and coordinate action in this sphere, and organise educational programmes for players, referees and coaches. UEFA's own integrity officer works alongside his national counterparts in a mutually supportive manner.

2.6. Disciplinary regulations

- 2.6.1. UEFA, the majority of its national associations and the member leagues of the EPFL, have introduced specific regulations applicable to their respective competitions to combat the risk of match-fixing.
- 2.6.2. For example, it is required that anyone bound by a football association's or a league's rules and regulations must refrain from any behaviour that is a potential risk to the integrity of matches and competitions. There is also a requirement to cooperate and report to the relevant competition organiser any suspicious approach, failing which serious disciplinary sanctions can be imposed.



3. The need for EU and state intervention

European institutions have frequently expressed concerns about risks to the integrity of sporting competitions, particularly as a result of the evolution of the betting market. Thus, there is now a consensus in favour of a firm and coordinated policy to deal with this matter. While efforts towards the adoption of an international convention on match-fixing under the auspices of the Council of Europe should be encouraged, additional action should tackle the following issues as a priority.

3.1. Specific criminal provisions dealing with match-fixing

- 3.1.1. In recognition of the growing problems associated with match-fixing, some European states have introduced a specific criminal offence dealing with the manipulation of the result of a sporting competition. At present, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Turkey have adopted such provisions, while Russia and Switzerland seem inclined to do so as well, since general offences (such as corruption, fraud, money laundering or insider trading) cover match-fixing only partially or incompletely.
- 3.1.2. In its Resolution on 22 September 2010³, the Council of Europe invited its member states to establish the manipulation of sports results as a specific criminal offence:

“[...] legal measures on combating “manipulation of sports results” could be introduced into the existing body of legislation, in, for example, the penal code”.
- 3.1.3. The European Parliament mirrored this opinion in its Resolution on the European dimension in Sport (2012)⁴, where it:

“[...] urges Member States to take all necessary action to prevent and punish illegal activities affecting the integrity of sport and making such activities a criminal offence; in particular where such they are betting-related”.
- 3.1.4. Since sports fraud is not uniformly recognised as a distinct criminal offence, differences in national legislation and criminal procedures can give rise to inconsistencies in the investigation and prosecution of cases. Therefore, the use of standard definitions would facilitate the sharing of information and experience as a means to tackle the problem effectively. This would, in turn, simplify international cooperation in this field.
- 3.1.5. The European Parliament came to this conclusion in its Resolution on the Integrity of Online Gambling in the Internal Market (2011)⁵:

“[...] a uniform definition of sports fraud should be set at European level and included in the criminal law of all Member States”.

³ Resolution on the promotion of the integrity of sport against the manipulation of results (match-fixing) (IM18 (2010) 7) adopted at the 18th Council of Europe Informal Conference of Ministers responsible for sport on 22 September 2010 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

⁴ European Parliament Resolution of 2 February 2012 on the European dimension in sport, paragraph 84.

⁵ European Parliament Resolution of 15 November 2011 on the Integrity of online gambling in the Internal Market, paragraph 34.



3.1.6. Thus it is fair to say that the major political institutions in Europe share the opinion that measures can and should be taken to encourage national governments to establish sports fraud as a criminal offence and tackle it effectively in a consistent manner.

3.2. The need for cooperation between sports bodies and public authorities

3.2.1. Close cooperation involving the exchange of information between public authorities and sports bodies is essential. Indeed, it is vital that criminal investigations can benefit from a good insight into the unique features of the sports sector and sports betting markets. This would be of assistance in the detection and prosecution of serious crime.

3.2.2. At the same time, disciplinary measures taken by the sporting authorities (often using information made available as a result of a state criminal investigation) can serve as an effective deterrent for those in the sporting community. The effective application of sporting sanctions will generally depend on the existence of a close working relationship between sports bodies and state authorities, so that information obtained in the context of criminal investigations is made available to sports bodies for the purposes of their own disciplinary procedures.

3.2.3. Structured cooperation of this kind would facilitate investigations in a manner fully in line with the European Commission White Paper on Sport (2007)⁶.

“[...] the Commission will support public-private partnerships representative of sports interests and anti-corruption authorities, which would identify vulnerabilities to corruption in the sport sector and assist in the development of effective preventive and repressive strategies to counter such corruption”.

3.2.4. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe emphasised the need for a strengthened cooperation between public authorities and sports bodies in its Recommendation on promotion of the integrity of sport against manipulation of results, notably match-fixing (2011)⁷:

“[...] Member States and sports organisations should work together to establish close co-operation involving exchange of information between law enforcement or prosecuting authorities and sports organisations.”

3.2.5. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe further stressed this idea in its Resolution on the need to combat match-fixing (2012)⁸, in which it calls on the national governments to:

“[...] develop, in co-operation with sports institutions, appropriate rules and mechanisms to ensure that any disciplinary penalties imposed by federations’ committees and any criminal law penalties for corruption are a sufficient deterrent and are effectively applied”

⁶ White Paper on Sport of the European Commission, 11 July 2007, COM(2007) 391 final, p.16.

⁷ Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)10 of 28 September 2011 of the Committee of Ministers on promotion of the integrity of sport against manipulation of results, notably match-fixing, paragraph 48.

⁸ Resolution 1876 (2012) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the need to combat match-fixing, paragraph, 6.7.



3.2.6. By the same token, national governments could follow the initiative suggested by the European Parliament in its Resolution on the Integrity of Online Gambling in the Internal Market (2011)⁹ which:

“[...] invites Member States to consider dedicated prosecution services with primary responsibility for investigating match-fixing cases”

3.2.7. All in all, there seems to be a consensus calling for the establishment of appropriate means of sharing information between sports disciplinary services and public investigatory and prosecuting authorities. Close cooperation and direct communication between the different parties is essential.

3.3. Recognition of sports bodies' rights to the competitions they organise

3.3.1. The commercial exploitation of sports competitions provides the main income streams for the funding of European football. Sports competitions are the result of intellectual, financial and human efforts on the part of sports bodies. Thus, these same bodies should be entitled to participate fairly in any financial gains generated by third parties as a result of the commercial exploitation of their work.

3.3.2. Businesses that profit from the commercial exploitation of sports events, such as broadcasters purchasing audio-visual rights or sponsors procuring advertising opportunities, pay a fair contribution for the benefits they derive from sport. Offering bets on a sporting event is a form of economic exploitation, engaged in by betting companies, for which sports bodies should be remunerated. It is only the gambling sector that is currently able to use sporting events for commercial profit without making any payment in return. This is the situation across the EU, with the noteworthy exception of France, which has recently recognised the rights of sports bodies within the context of betting.

3.3.3. In most European states, benefits flow only in the direction of the gambling industry, with the betting operators giving little if anything back to the sport. Thus, according to a report commissioned in 2009 by the Remote Gambling Association, out of an estimated total of €3.4 billion per annum provided to European sport by public and private sector gambling operators, €3.2 billion comes from compulsory statutory levies and national lotteries. Commercial payments from operators only account for €234 million per annum, or 7% of the total. The vast majority of this 7% is actually monies paid for sponsorship and advertising arrangements. This is therefore a discretionary commercial agreement by a betting operator for the use of a sport's advertising space or marketing association rights. It is not a payment for the exploitation of the sports event for betting purposes. This shows that, in spite of using sport for their betting product, gambling operators mainly contribute to the sustainable funding of European sports through statutory arrangements.

3.3.4. Recognition of sports organisers' rights would help contribute to the fight to preserve the integrity of sport. For example, betting companies could be required, as a matter of

⁹ European Parliament Resolution of 15 November 2011 on the Integrity of online gambling in the Internal Market, paragraph 33.



contract, to report irregular movements in betting patterns, establish integrity mechanisms and exchange information. Such an approach would place greater responsibility on both competition organisers and betting operators. The legislation that entered into force in France in 2010 may provide a pertinent example in this respect¹⁰.

3.3.5. Protecting sports competitions from any unauthorised commercial exploitation, such as betting, would also enable organisers to help public authorities to determine which aspects of the event may be the legitimate subject of betting, and thus reduce the risk of match-fixing and fraud.

3.3.6. In its Recommendation on promotion of the integrity of sport against manipulation of results, notably match-fixing (2011)¹¹, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe underlined the importance of prior authorisation of competition organisers for the offer of betting services.

“[...] Member States are invited to consider the possibility of ensuring that no betting is allowed on a sports event unless the organiser of the event has been informed and has given prior approval, in accordance with the fundamental principles of international and national law.”

3.3.7. In its Green Paper on online Gambling in the Internal Market (2011), the European Commission acknowledges that sports bodies should receive a fair return for the general commercial exploitation of their events by betting operators¹²:

“[...] there is a broad consensus that sport events, on which gambling relies, should receive a fair return from the associated gambling activity”.

3.3.8. The European Parliament, in its Resolution on the Integrity of online gambling (2011)¹³, endorsed the recognition of sports organisers' rights and underlined the need for appropriate mechanisms to ensure fair financial returns to sport.

“[...] the European Parliament [...] recommends that Member States protect [sports competitions] from any unauthorised commercial use, notably by recognition of a sport organiser's right” [and] stresses that the conclusion of legally binding agreements between organisers of sports competitions and online gambling operators would ensure a more balanced relationship between them”

3.3.9. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe¹⁴ is also of the opinion that betting operators should contribute to the financing of mechanisms designed to protect the integrity of the sport.

¹⁰ Loi n° 2010-476 du 12 mai 2010 relative à l'ouverture à la concurrence et à la régulation du secteur des jeux d'argent et de hasard en ligne.

¹¹ Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)10 of 28 September 2011 of the Committee of Ministers on promotion of the integrity of sport against manipulation of results, notably match-fixing, paragraph 20.

¹² European Commission Green Paper on online gambling in the Internal Market, 24 March 2011, COM(2011) 128 final, p.31.

¹³ European Parliament Resolution of 15 November 2011 on the Integrity of online gambling in the Internal Market, paragraph 40 and 41.

¹⁴ Resolution 1876 (2012) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the need to combat match-fixing, paragraph, 9.4.



"[...] the Assembly recommends that sports betting operators [...] contribute a proportion of their profits towards [...] the prevention of the manipulation of sports results."

3.3.10. In summary, although there appears to be a broad consensus on the recognition of a fair return for sport, only two countries, France and Poland (in the latter case, only for Poland-based betting operators), have enshrined such a mechanism in their domestic legislations. Spain is currently reviewing the opportunity to include a disposition in its new law on gambling. Therefore, national governments should recognise the right of sports bodies to be compensated by betting operators who use their competitions to run their own commercial operations, not only as a means to secure a fair financial return for sport, but also as means to strengthen the fight against match-fixing. It is only fair that the betting industry should contribute financially to the sports bodies on which it relies and also to the funding of measures needed to fight the manipulation of sports events.



Joint action plan for the integrity of the game *(to be fully implemented as of 2013)*

I. Code of conduct

- Creation and adoption of a joint code of conduct for all participants in European football, including players, coaches, referees, officials and administrators
- Introduction of provisions prohibiting players, coaches, referees and officials from, as a minimum, betting on matches and/or competitions in which they are involved, as decided by the relevant competition organisers
- Implementation of whistle-blowing procedures in each football organisation
- Inclusion of relevant provisions on match-fixing in player contracts

II. Education and prevention programmes

- Education campaigns at referee courses and UEFA youth competitions (players, coaches and match officials)
- FIFPro project "Don't fix it" – supported by the European Union
- EPFL project "Staying onside" with the DFL and Transparency International – supported by the European Union
- Prevention initiatives at national level by national associations
- Further education at club level through the ECA and the EPFL

III. Betting fraud detection and reporting systems

- Continued monitoring of European competitions, the top two domestic divisions and cup competitions in each of the 53 UEFA member associations
- Continued monitoring of national competitions by national football bodies
- Establishment of a confidential and trusted reporting system supported by all parties

IV. Coordination and cooperation through integrity officers network and other persons specifically-dedicated to integrity matters at national level

- Integrity officers in each national association
- Designated contact persons in each professional football league, professional football club and player union
- Exchange of best practices in the area of information-sharing of betting related data, also through regular conferences and workshops with networking opportunities for experts of football bodies, public authorities and police forces



V. Investigation and prosecution

- Zero-tolerance policy towards match-fixing
- Active cooperation with public authorities
- Common definition of “sports fraud” as a criminal offence
- Harmonisation of disciplinary and sporting sanctions at European and national level

VI. Contribution of betting industry

- Organiser’s right to a fair return in the context of sports betting as a compensation from the betting industry for the commercial exploitation of sports competition organisers’ rights
- Contractual and binding agreements with betting operators, also to establish the types of bet allowed
- Prohibition to offer bets on youth competitions at national and European level
- Financial revenues to be deployed in the fight to protect the integrity of sport, as well as to support grassroots sport, youth development or CSR activities
- Introduction of betting operators standards in cooperation with sports bodies