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Publication | 08.06.2015

Recent revelations of high-level corruption cases in FIFA

Greens/EFA motion for resolution

Tabled by ***Helga Trupel, Ernest Urtasun, Barbara Lochbihler, Igor Soltes*** *on behalf of the Greens/EFA group*

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the recent corruption scandals which tarnish FIFA,

– having regard to the choices as World Cup venues of Russia and Qatar, both strongly criticised from the point of view of human rights,

– having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2013 on match fixing and corruption in sport[1],

– having regard to the newly adopted directive on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing,

– having regard to the Commission's anti-corruption report of 2013,

– 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 sport[2],

– having regard to the Commission White Paper on Sport of 11 July 2007 (COM(2007)0391),

– having regard to the Commission communication entitled 'Fighting Corruption in the EU' (COM (2011)0308),

– having regard to its resolution of 15 September 2011 on the EU's efforts to combat corruption[3],

– having regard to the Commission strategy on gender balance on boards of companies and to the proposal for a directive on gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges (COM(2012)0614)

– having regard to the resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 21 May 2014 on the European Union Work Plan for Sport 2014-2017,

– having regard to the report from the Commission to the Council based on Article 9 of the Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA of 22 July 2003 on combating corruption in the private sector (COM(2007)0328),

– having regard to the Commission recommendation of 13 November 2012 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 results (COM(2012)0655),

– having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions of 18 September 2014,

– having regard to the Resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of 23 April 2013 on the reform of football governance,

– 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 the new Sport programme within Erasmus+ which aims to support actions that result in the development, transfer, and implementation of innovative ideas and practices at European, national, regional, and local level, and whereby sport actions should contribute to the development of a European dimension to sport, increasing cooperation and harmonisation between sport organisations,

– having regard to the report by Michael J. Garcia into allegations of corruption in association football, commissioned by FIFA in July 2012,

– having regard to Article 2 of the FIFA Statute, which establishes among the objectives of FIFA: ‘to promote integrity, ethics and fair play with a view to preventing all methods or practices, such as corruption, doping or match manipulation, which might jeopardise the integrity of matches, competitions, Players, Officials and Members or give rise to abuse of Association Football’,

– having regard to the revelations of Interpol to the newspaper ‘Politico’ on 3 June 2015 concerning arrangements with FIFA,

– having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the integrity of sports organisations is of great importance, since both professional and amateur sport play a key role in the global promotion of peace, respect for human rights and solidarity, bring health and economic benefits to societies, and play an essential role in highlighting fundamental educational and cultural values as well as in promoting social inclusion;

B. whereas 14 FIFA officials, including the Vice-President, were arrested on 27 May 2015 by the Swiss authorities in Zurich;

C. whereas the arrests were made at the request of the US Department of Justice;

D. whereas it is a proven fact that FIFA has operated for many years as an unaccountable, opaque and

notoriously corrupt organisation; whereas the recent arrests confirm the existence of systemic, widespread and persistent fraud and corruption in FIFA – as exposed in, among other sources, the report by Michael J. Garcia, whose contents have never been fully disclosed – as opposed to isolated cases of misbehaviour, as claimed by the former FIFA President Joseph Blatter;

E. whereas a separate criminal investigation into how the 2018 and 2022 World Cups were awarded to Russia and Qatar respectively has also been initiated by the Swiss and US authorities;

F. whereas corruption is a form of crime that is too often detected or denounced extremely late, and whereas it is practised blatantly by organisations shadowing their legal activities with illegal actions such as money laundering;

G. whereas criminal activities of this sort have been operating on an international scale and with connections across the globe, such that no single institution, country or organisation would be able to tackle corruption in an organisation such as FIFA on its own;

H. whereas one of the consequences of corruption is the disrepute earned by an entire sports domain and a loss of trust in all actions promoted by FIFA, such as the campaign against match-fixing launched jointly with the International Federation of Professional Footballers (FIFPro) and Europol;

I. whereas deals concluded in an untransparent manner confront all stakeholders attached to sport, including sponsors, federations and foundations, with huge difficulties and with co-responsibilities which cannot yet be measured;

J. whereas the Commission and Council have recognised the need for a partnership between football's governing bodies and public authorities for the good governance of the game, which respects the self-regulatory nature of professional sport and which has led to the structured dialogue on sports;

K. whereas all sports can be affected and the integrity and ethics of sport are being threatened;

L. whereas current control mechanisms fail to detect corruption immediately owing to the global nature of the illegal activities concerned; whereas Interpol has already been found not to have fulfilled its role as enforcer of the law vis-à-vis FIFA;

M. whereas transparency, accountability and democracy – in other words, good governance – in sports organisations are prerequisites if the sports movement is to play any kind of successful role in fighting match-fixing and sports fraud;

N. whereas many sports organisations have already taken measures in this area, such as developing codes of conduct and adopting zero-tolerance policies, and deserve recognition for that;

O. whereas experts indicate that there is increasing concern over the malicious intentions of some individuals who take over football clubs, with corruption being practised as a means of furthering other criminal activities such as match-fixing and money laundering;

P. whereas players' unions point out that these criminal activities are also a problem in terms of potential intimidation and blackmailing of players;

Q. whereas while sponsoring is needed for sports organisations to perform, there should be a strict code of conduct on transparency of negotiations and distribution of funds, and under no circumstances should further lawful entities like foundations for fostering young talent be sucked into this spiral of corruption;

R. whereas all the main stakeholders individually must take responsibility and develop a comprehensive approach by complementing one another's efforts to combat corruption in sport;

1. Asks the Commission to continue to develop a coordinated approach to the fight against organised crime by coordinating the efforts of the main stakeholders in this area, such as sports organisations, national police and judicial authorities and gambling operators, and by providing a platform for discussion and for the exchange of information and best practice;

2. Asks Member States to cooperate effectively with Interpol and the authorities of third countries in investigating and pursuing organised crime in sports, provided that all doubts as to the independence of Interpol as enforcer of the law have been cleared;

3. Emphasises that the corruption allegations against FIFA and FIFA's lack of credibility will have a devastating impact on the entire football pyramid, from the top echelons of professional football down to amateur grassroots clubs;

4. Calls for a review of the decisions taken to hold the next World Cups in Russia and Qatar and for the reopening of the bidding process, taking into account human and labour rights as primary criteria for choosing the venue of the competition, as well as not choosing any country which is at war or in breach of international law;

5. Calls on all 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; in this case, specifically asks other football organisations, such as the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), to remain extremely attentive to their role in the communication of sports ethics;

6. Urges sports organisations to establish a code of conduct for all staff and officials (players, coaches, referees, medical and technical staff, and leading club and association figures) which sets out the dangers of untransparent activities and funding sources, includes a clear prohibition of illegal actions of any kind and a ban 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, corruption or intimidation of players, coupled with an adequate whistleblower protection mechanism;

7. Calls upon all sports governing bodies to commit to good governance practices in order to reduce the risk of falling victim to corruption; recommends in this regard a better observance of gender balance when appointing members to the boards and executive committees of all organisations, especially so as to recall that sports, and especially football, are not only a closed prerogative of men; believes that opening up would mean a gain in transparency;

8. Urges the FIFA Executive Committee to implement structural reforms in order to bring about transparency, equity and accountability, as well as guaranteeing open, balanced and democratic decision-making processes within the association;

9. Takes the view, in this regard, that Joseph Blatter's resignation paves the way for these needed structural reforms, which should also aim at shedding light on the matter and ensuring that there is no recurrence of allegations of corruption such as those that have tainted FIFA's reputation in recent years; believes, furthermore, that replacing Blatter immediately by an interim president who would serve until the next FIFA elections would facilitate this process;

10. Calls on all contracted sponsors and broadcasters, on sportswomen and sportsmen, on all fans and on national and regional sports associations, including UEFA, to encourage and support the reform process at

FIFA by publicly rejecting corruption in sport;

11. 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 and at all levels of sport, both amateur and professional;

12. Encourages sports organisations to establish 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 sports ethics;

13. Asks the Commission to check on the effective implementation by Member States of the framework decision on combating corruption in the private sector, and in particular with regard to sports activities that include large numbers of clubs, federations, and major media interests, and to ensure that the remaining potential loopholes in Member States' legislation are addressed in a manner that fully respects fundamental rights; also asks the Commission to review the rules and market conditions relating to the fight against the betting sector in sports and to install due transparency on tax returns;

14. Calls on the Member States to sign the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions, or, if they have signed it, to ratify it without delay;

15. Calls on sports organisations to apply high and convincing standards of governance, in accordance with the priorities of the EU Work Plan for Sport for 2014-2017;

16. Asks the Member States to create a specialised law enforcement unit to combat corruption and serve as a hub for communication and cooperation with the main stakeholders, and to require it to provide information on detected potential irregularities for further investigation and referral to prosecution authorities;

17. Calls on the Member States to continue 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 corruption, at EU level and in an international context;

18. 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;

19. Urges the Commission to facilitate the exchange of information among these regulatory bodies with regard to illegal or suspicious corruption practices in sports organisation;

20. Welcomes the publication by the Commission (in February 2015 for 2014) of a biannual Anti-Corruption Report, accompanied by country analyses for each Member State and including tailored recommendations;

21. Encourages the Council to pursue the aims of the current EU Work Plan for Sport for 2014-2017, 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;

22. Encourages all stakeholders in the organisation of sports events (sponsors, media, public and private foundations and authorities) to be extremely attentive regarding their real independence of action, and to check on partners in activities beforehand, in order to restore trust in sports; recalls that Europol has

started an information campaign on match-fixing together with FIFA and FIFPro, and stresses that such actions are still valid in their spirit and should be carried out in all transparency once complete clarity has been achieved concerning FIFA;

23. Calls on the Commission to identify third countries that raise specific issues relating to respect for human rights with regard to sports events taking place both within and outside the EU;

24. Welcomes the adoption of the Money Laundering Directive, and issues an urgent call to the Member States to transpose and implement it as a matter of priority;

25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA), the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), the national football associations, the Association of European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL), the European Club Association (ECA) and the International Federation of Professional Footballers (FIFPro).

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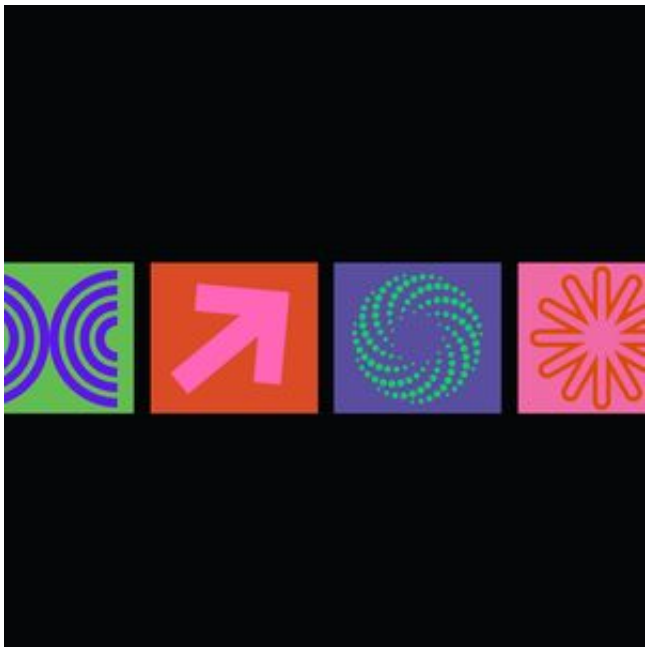
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