

Sport and Recreation Alliance

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Preparatory Actions

The European Commission has issued a call for proposals for its preparatory actions in the field of sport for 2011-2012. The overall budget for this round of pilot projects will be about €2 million, with the programme designed to identify future policy priorities for a potential full sport funding programme from 2014. In order to qualify for this funding you will need to create a project with a number of European partners. The projects will focus on two main areas:

- a) The fight against violence and racism
- b) Promoting good governance

The deadline for applications is 29 July and [further details are available on the Commission's website](#) [1]. If you would like any information about the application process or European projects in general, please contact [David Foster](#) [2].

Future Sport Funding Programme

The European Commission recently adopted its budgetary proposals for the period 2014-2020 – the so called Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Sport has been mentioned in the MFF for the first time and it is the Commission's intention to have a 'Sport Sub-programme' as part of the broader 'Education Europe' programme from 2014 onwards. The Alliance has been campaigning for this with its European partners for some time. It will focus on tackling transnational threats like doping, violence, racism and integrity; developing cooperation through projects in areas such as dual careers and good governance; and finally supporting grassroots sports organisations in their efforts to tackle wider socio-economic challenges. In terms of precise figures, it is unclear at the present moment how much will be available – largely because the European Parliament and member states will also need to agree on the budget – but the Commission may be looking at a figure around €200 million. Only once the budget is finally adopted by the European Council in 2013 will the exact amount be clear.

What this means for sport

This is obviously good news as the sport movement in Europe will hopefully be able to access more funding in the future. Unlike the Preparatory Actions, projects that are eligible for funding will not need to be transnational in nature so local projects will be more likely to receive funding than is currently the case. For more information on European funding, please contact [David Foster](#) [2].

Match-fixing in sport

Following a meeting with Commission officials in Brussels recently, the Alliance has learned

that DG Internal Market will be conducting a study into match-fixing and corruption in sport. The study will examine the different legal frameworks that exist in the member states and may lead to further policy actions in this area, such as the possibility of establishing minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences.

What this means for sport

If member states were obliged to impose minimum rules governing sporting fraud then it would represent a shift towards tighter legal provisions around corruption in sport. If sporting fraud were to be officially recognised as illegal in all EU countries, match-fixers could be subjected to criminal prosecution proceedings. In the UK, the Gambling Act 2005 provides the legal context for match-fixing but the Alliance is campaigning for this to be strengthened. If you would like more information on betting integrity issues at EU or UK level, please contact [David Foster](#) [2].

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Communication on Sport

The Culture Committee in the European Parliament is currently preparing its report on the Commission's Communication on ***Developing the European Dimension in Sport***. The author of the report is Santiago Fisas, a Spanish MEP and former Minister for Sport in his home country. He formally presented his proposals on 14 July, when other MEP's had a chance to put forward their own amendments. These will then be voted on by the Committee in October and eventually the entire Parliament in November. The report focuses on four main areas: the social role of sport, the economic role of sport, sport governance and European identity through sport. There are many encouraging inclusions in the report, including references to continued territorial exclusivity for the sale of media rights, better use of the Structural Funds to finance sport projects and stricter protection for sports intellectual property rights.

The Alliance will work with MEP's to propose amendments to the report to ensure that the Parliament is sending strong messages to the Commission and Member states in favour of sport. If you'd like to know how and why you should interact with European Parliamentarians, contact our UK & EU Policy Officer, [David Foster](#) [2].

Corruption in sport

A Written Declaration on combatting corruption in European sport, similar to an Early Day Motion in Westminster, was tabled by a cross-party group of MEP's and gained the support of the required majority of 385 MEP's. Given that Written Declarations seldom achieve the required number of signatories to be formally adopted, this is an encouraging step in the fight against corruption in sport.

The document calls on the Commission, together with Member states, to conduct a full-scale study into corruption incidents in sport. It then goes on to highlight the strong links between organised crime and match-fixing, before also recommending greater regulation of online betting markets. It finishes by endorsing a fair return to grassroots sport through the recognition of a betting right to sports competition organisers. [The full text of the Written Declaration can be found here](#) [3].

What this means for sport

The Parliament has often been sport's friend, campaigning for more funding for sport in the past. On this occasion, the Parliament seems to be supporting the Polish Presidency's desire to act in this field, clearly demonstrating the political will in favour of tackling corruption and match-fixing in sport. Also encouraging is the endorsement of a fair return for sport from betting activities as this would see considerable additional funds being channelled back into sport.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Polish Presidency

Poland began its sixth-month EU Presidency on July 1st 2011, taking the baton from Hungary. The Polish Presidency has outlined an encouraging programme of work in the field of sport, which will focus on the first steps towards developing a European anti-doping policy, the social value of volunteering and also match-fixing. It is very positive to see the Presidency looking to tackle the issue of match-fixing, which is a particular concern for Poland given that they will stage the European Football Championships in 2012. The Sport and Recreation Alliance have already met with Polish officials in Brussels to discuss this particular area of work as well as inviting them to speak at the EU summit. It seems that the Poles are keen to push forward with concrete actions at European level in an effort to tackle the growing threats posed to sports integrity by match fixing.

Council Work Plan 2011-2014

The departing Hungarian Presidency leaves a significant legacy behind it in the shape of a new 'Work Plan' for sport. The Work Plan, which was agreed by the entire Council of Ministers [4], provides a framework for future Presidencies by setting out the major priorities for the EU in the field of sport. There are now six key policy areas that will remain on the rolling agenda at EU level for the coming years: anti-doping; good governance; education and training; sport, health and participation; sport statistics; and sustainable financing. Each of these areas will have its own designated 'expert group' comprised of key stakeholders from the member states.

The Alliance has sat on the Commission's working groups on sustainable financing in the past and will continue to be involved with the new expert groups moving forward.

EVENTS

EU Summit

The Sport and Recreation Alliance will hold its annual EU Summit on 20 October at the London offices of the European Commission Representation in the UK. The event will bring together representatives from the European Commission, European Parliament and key stakeholders from across sport to debate pertinent issues related to European sports policy, focusing particularly on good governance, match fixing and European funding. It promises to be an excellent event and we have a number of speakers confirmed, including Michal Krejza from the European Commission and Emma McClarkin MEP, as well as experts from UEFA and the Polish Ministry for Sport.

Invitations will be sent out in due course, but in the meantime if you would like any further information please contact David Foster [2] or register here [5].

Structural Funding Conference

The Alliance attended a conference at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels entitled **Sport and Regional Policy**. The objective of the event was to encourage the Commission to explicitly mention sport in the framework of the new Structural Funds regulations which are due to be presented in the autumn. Delegates and speakers from across the EU presented a strong case in favour of including sport in the new regulations which would provide another avenue of European funding for certain sport projects. Commission officials spoke positively at the end of the conference and were impressed by the existing sport-related projects that had received funding in the past. Indeed, Commissioner Hahn has also spoken in support of including sport within the new regulations so indications at this stage look positive for sport, although we must wait until the autumn to find out for sure.

If you would any further information about European funding, please contact David Foster [2].

SROC European Parliament event

The Sports Rights Owners Coalition (SROC) held a very successful event in the European Parliament on 30 May addressing the DG Internal Market (MARKT) Green Paper on on-line gambling. The event brought together European parliamentarians, Commission officials, representatives from the betting industry and sports rights owners. Several MEPs asked for legally binding relationships between operators and sport organisations and criticised self-regulation and Memorandum of Understanding. There were strong endorsements for a sport organiser's right and parallels were drawn with media rights to exemplify why such a right is appropriate if bookmakers wish to continue to use commercial data from sport. If such a right were introduced (as is currently the case in France), sport at all levels would benefit from the additional revenues that it would generate.

For more information on the [Sports Rights Owners Coalition](#), please visit their website ^[6].

CONSULTATIONS AND INQUIRIES

Online gambling Green Paper

DG MARKT has published its Green Paper on online gambling and will be consulting on it until 31 July 2011. The document contains a specific section relating to sport, raises some relevant issues on the intellectual property of sports rights owners and considers the possibility of a 'fair return' for sport from gambling operations. The Alliance will work with SROC and our members to develop a response to the consultation that will highlight the importance of upholding integrity in sport and advocate more sustainable financing for sport through improved recognition of sport's intellectual property rights.

What this means for sport and recreation

In the Green Paper the Commission raises a number of interesting issues including a reference to the French gambling model. This sees a non-exclusive sports betting right for gambling services to contribute to sports organisers work in ensuring integrity. Internal Market Commissioner Michel Barnier is an advocate of the model employed in France and it will be interesting to see how readily the Commission embraces the concept as it moves forward.

What can sport do?

The Commission will receive hundreds of responses to this consultation and it is important that sport makes its voice heard. If you wish to submit a response on behalf of your organisation, [the relevant page on the Commission website can be found here](#) ^[7]. The Sport and Recreation Alliance will be finalising its response in the coming weeks and this will be posted on the website in due course. In the meantime, please feel free to contact [David Foster](#) ^[2] if you would like to submit any comments from your organisation or if you would like any further information.

Grassroots sport and the EU

The Government has responded to the House of Lords EU Sub-Committee report into EU sports policy and grassroots sports. Pleasingly, a number of recommendations put forward by the Sport and Recreation Alliance which were included in the final report have also been endorsed by the Government. These include the explicit recognition of sport within the framework of the Structural Funds, consideration of sport in work on digital piracy at EU level and the mainstreaming of sport in to other policy fields at European level - such as health, education and employment.

What this means for sport and recreation

While the Government was not supportive of all of the recommendations in the report, it does show that there is a high level of agreement on certain key issues for sport. With this in mind, sport can be hopeful that the UK will be strong in advocating some of these measures in the Council of Ministers. <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub->

com-g/sports/.... " target="_blank">The final House of Lords report can be found here while the Government's response can be found here. [8]

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Links:

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/news1013_en.htm

[2] <mailto:dfoster@sportandrecreation.org.uk>

[3] <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+WDECL+P7-DCL-2011-0007+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

[4] <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st09/st09509-re01.en11.pdf>

[5] <http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=38>

[6] <http://www.sroc.info/>

[7] http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2011/online_gambling_en.htm

[8] <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-g/sports/sportgovresponse220511.pdf>.