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P8_TA(2015)0233

Recent revelations of high-level corruption cases in FIFA**European Parliament resolution of 11 June 2015 on recent revelations on high-level corruption cases in FIFA (2015/2730(RSP))**

(2016/C 407/12)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission's EU Anti-Corruption Report of 3 February 2014 (COM(2014)0038),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 6 June 2011 entitled 'Fighting Corruption in the EU' (COM(2011) 0308),
- having regard to Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing ⁽¹⁾,
- 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 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 its resolution of 14 March 2013 on match-fixing and corruption in sport ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the Resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of 23 April 2015 on the reform of football governance,
- having regard to the new sport programme under Erasmus+, and in particular its objective of tackling cross-border threats to the integrity of sport, such as doping, match-fixing and violence, together with all forms of intolerance and discrimination, and to promote and support good governance in sport,
- having regard to the 'Stockholm Programme — An open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens',
- 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 Michael Garcia's report into the controversial 2018 and 2022 World Cup bidding process, which FIFA agreed to publish in December 2014,
- having regard to Rules 128(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 141, 5.6.2015, p. 73.⁽²⁾ OJ C 239 E, 20.8.2013, p. 46.⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0098.

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- A. whereas 14 FIFA officials, including its Vice-President, were arrested on 27 May 2015 by Swiss authorities in Zurich; whereas the arrests were made at the request of the US Department of Justice on the basis of charges of money laundering, racketeering, fraud, and bribery in excess of USD 150 million;
- B. 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;
- C. whereas FIFA has operated for many years as an unaccountable, opaque and notoriously corrupt organisation; whereas the recent arrests confirm that the fraud and corruption in FIFA are systemic, widespread and persistent rather than involving isolated cases of misconduct, as claimed by former FIFA President Joseph Blatter;
- D. whereas despite the arrests and charges made against FIFA executives and the crisis engulfing the organisation, Joseph Blatter was re-elected on 29 May 2015 as FIFA President for a fifth term; whereas the re-election of Joseph Blatter as president and the decision not to publish the findings of the Garcia report into the selection of Russia and Qatar as hosts of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups respectively show that FIFA has been acting in an irresponsible and unaccountable way and has remained unwilling to reform or to make the changes needed to improve the governance of international football;
- E. whereas the resignation of Joseph Blatter and the arrest of FIFA officials have created the conditions for radical reform of FIFA's structures and practices with a view to improving its governance and fighting corruption in the organisation, which must take place as a matter of urgency;
- F. 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 for societies and have an essential role in highlighting fundamental educational and cultural values and promoting social inclusion;
- G. whereas Tibor Navracsics, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, in his statement of 3 June 2015, condemned the latest developments within FIFA and called for the 'restoration of trust and the establishment of a solid system of good governance at FIFA';
- H. whereas the Commission and the 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 sport;
- I. whereas transparency, accountability and democracy — in other words, good governance — in sports organisations are prerequisites for such a self-regulatory regime, and for the sports movement to prevent and fight fraud and corruption in sport effectively and at a structural level;
- J. whereas Parliament has previously called on football's governing bodies to establish greater democracy, transparency, legitimacy and accountability (i.e. financial auditing by an independent auditing authority) and good governance, and has asked the Commission to provide guidance as to how legitimate and adequate self-regulation can be supported;
- K. whereas, if not addressed urgently and properly, corruption may continue to undermine trust in sports institutions and threaten the integrity of sport as a whole;
- L. whereas the fight against corruption is one of the priorities of the Stockholm Programme, which is guiding the Commission's actions in the field of justice and home affairs;
- M. whereas sport also represents a large and fast-growing sector of the EU economy and makes an important contribution to growth and jobs, with value-added and employment effects exceeding average growth rates;

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1. Condemns the systemic and despicable corruption exposed at FIFA and puts on record its view that these allegations are far from surprising;
2. Calls on sports organisations, the Member States and the EU to cooperate fully with all ongoing and future investigations into allegations of corrupt practices within FIFA;
3. Underlines the utmost importance of the investigation by the Swiss and US justice authorities into the decision by FIFA's Executive Committee to award the World Cup for 1998, 2010, 2018 and 2022 to France, South Africa, Russia and Qatar respectively;
4. Highlights the importance of ensuring that the follow-up investigation into past corruption practices within FIFA includes, wherever justified, the removal of all officials involved in financial misconduct, and a review of decisions linked to corrupt or criminal activities; calls for the EU to monitor this process closely and to enable the necessary conditions for an unbiased external investigation; welcomes the statement by the head of FIFA's Audit and Compliance Committee that the award of the World Cup for 2018 and 2022 could be invalidated if evidence emerges that the awards only came about as a result of corrupt activities;
5. Condemns FIFA's failure to publish the Garcia Report in full, which it agreed to in December 2014 but has thus far failed to do, and calls on FIFA to do so forthwith;
6. Recalls the importance of having clear and transparent rules for the awarding of World Cups, and of ensuring the establishment of adequate information and supervision machinery, in order to make sure that this procedure guarantees equality between bidding countries and a final decision based strictly on the merit of their projects;
7. Calls on all international sports organisations to ensure that any country bidding to host a major sporting event undertakes, in relation to all activities linked with the organisation and conduct of the event, to abide by international standards in respect of fundamental rights;
8. Expresses concern about the situation of migrant workers in Qatar building infrastructure for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, including: the kafala system, which constitutes forced labour, dangerous working conditions, being forced to work in extreme heat six days a week, and being forced to live in overcrowded and squalid labour camps; calls on Qatar to ratify, legislate for, and enforce fundamental labour rights and the UN's International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families;
9. Stresses that corruption and money laundering are intrinsically linked and a large number of Member States have been affected by match-fixing and other financial crimes often related to criminal organisations operating on an international scale;
10. Commends the investigative journalism that raised serious concerns over corruption within FIFA and the World Cup bidding process; in this regard, encourages all sports organisations to establish an effective regulatory framework to both facilitate and protect whistle-blowers;
11. Expresses its long-held view that corruption within FIFA is rampant, systemic and deep-rooted, and believes the organisation has seriously damaged the integrity of global football, having a devastating impact from the top echelons of professional football to the amateur grassroots clubs;
12. Strongly underlines that football, as the world's most popular sport, must not be tarnished by this culture of corruption and should be protected from, rather than stigmatised by, current developments within FIFA;
13. Reiterates the profound positive social impact of football and sport in general on the daily lives of millions of citizens and, in particular, young people;
14. Welcomes Joseph Blatter's resignation as FIFA's president, and the criminal investigations currently being conducted; urges FIFA's Executive Committee to implement structural reforms in order to bring transparency and accountability and to guarantee open, balanced and democratic decision-making processes within FIFA, including in the election process of the new president, and a zero-tolerance policy on corruption in sport;

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15. Expresses serious concern, however, that the credibility of FIFA, as world football's governing body, and the urgent reforms required, cannot begin in earnest until a new leadership is appointed, which, under FIFA regulations, might not happen for a further nine months; therefore calls on FIFA to select, in a transparent and inclusive way, an appropriate interim leader to replace Joseph Blatter forthwith;
16. Recalls that good governance in sport is a precondition for the autonomy and self-regulation of sports organisations, in accordance with the principles of transparency, accountability and democracy, and stresses the need for a zero-tolerance policy on corruption in sport; underlines the need for appropriate representation of all stakeholders in the decision-making process, and notes that best practice from other sports organisations can be adopted;
17. Calls for an unrestrained commitment from FIFA to a thorough review of past and present decisions and for complete transparency going forward, including in respect of the remuneration of executive and senior management, with a view to establishing internal self-regulatory procedures and effective detection, investigation and sanctioning mechanisms;
18. Believes this review should cover FIFA's statutes, structure, codes and operational policies and practices, the introduction of term limits and independent due diligence for members of the Executive Committee, including the president, and an external and fully independent financial audit assessing the reliability of its financial statements;
19. Urges FIFA to implement strict ethical standards and a code of conduct for its management and Executive Committee, to be supervised by an independent monitoring body;
20. Calls upon all sports governing bodies to commit to good governance practices and increasing transparency 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;
21. Calls on all contracted sponsors and broadcasters to demand and support the reform process within FIFA by making public pronouncements against corruption in sport, and to follow up their words with continued pressure;
22. Asks UEFA and the national football associations to step up their own efforts to push for the implementation of fundamental reform measures within FIFA, and in particular the recommendations set out in this resolution, both directly and through the agency of their representatives in the FIFA Executive Committee and national football associations, by the end of 2016;
23. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up and prioritise work and actions on good governance within the EU Work Plan for sport and to make sure that national sports associations are fully involved in acting towards better governance at European and international level;
24. Calls on the Commission, in coordination with the Member States and in cooperation with Interpol, Europol and Eurojust, to take all appropriate measures, including effective enforcement, to tackle any indication of corruption by FIFA and national football association officials on EU territory, and to enhance European law enforcement cooperation through joint investigation teams and cooperation between prosecution authorities;
25. Stresses that, in view of the transnational nature of corruption in sport, efforts to fight it require more effective cooperation among all stakeholders, including public authorities, law enforcement agencies, the sports industry, athletes and supporters, while emphasis should also be given to education and preventive action in this area;
26. Welcomes the new sport programme under Erasmus+, which supports transnational educational projects that tackle cross-border threats to the integrity and ethics of sport, such as doping, match-fixing and violence, together with all forms of intolerance and discrimination, and aims to promote and support good governance in sport;
27. Calls 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; 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;

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28. Welcomes the recent agreement on the 4th Anti-Money-Laundering Directive and supports the proactive use of all means provided for within the new legislation to tackle this issue; calls on the Commission to consistently monitor EU anti-money-laundering legislation to ensure that it is sufficient to fight against corruption in sport and ensure scrutiny of EU-registered sports governing bodies and their officials;

29. Insists that the fight against corruption with regard to the governance of FIFA must also be accompanied by clear commitments and measures on the part of FIFA, the EU, the Member States and other stakeholders against other crimes affecting sports organisations, in particular match-fixing, which are often related to organised crime operating on an international scale;

30. Stresses the need for all future reforms within professional sport, and football in particular, to include substantial provisions protecting the rights of athletes, trainers and teams; underlines, in this connection, the importance of addressing third-party ownership of players in European sport;

31. Supports the call of the New FIFA Now campaign for the establishment of an independent, non-governmental FIFA Reform Commission, to be overseen by an independent international authority;

32. 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 European Football Association (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' Associations (FIFPRO).
