

Thursday 2 February 2017

I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

P8_TA(2017)0012

An integrated approach to Sport Policy: good governance, accessibility and integrity

European Parliament resolution of 2 February 2017 on an integrated approach to Sport Policy: good governance, accessibility and integrity (2016/2143(INI))

(2018/C 252/01)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which specifies the purposes of the EU sport policy,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 18 January 2011 entitled ‘Developing the European Dimension in Sport’ (COM(2011)0012),
- having regard to the Report of the EU Expert Group on Good Governance on ‘the Principles for Good Governance of Sport in the EU of October 2013’,
- having regard to the Report of the High Level group on Grassroots Sport on ‘Grassroots Sport — Shaping Europe’ of June 2016,
- having regard to the Report of the High Level group on Sport Diplomacy of June 2016,
- having regard to the Erasmus+ programme, which aims to tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of sport, promote and support good governance in sport, dual careers of sportspeople and voluntary activities in sport, together with social inclusion and equal opportunities,
- having regard to the Commission White Paper on Sport (COM(2007)0391),
- having regard to its resolution of 11 June 2015 on recent revelations on high-level corruption cases in FIFA ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 October 2013 on organised crime, corruption and money laundering: recommendations on action and initiatives to be taken ⁽²⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 407, 4.11.2016, p. 81.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 208, 10.6.2016, p. 89.

Thursday 2 February 2017

- having regard to its resolution of 10 September 2013 on online gambling in the internal market ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2013 on match-fixing and corruption in sport ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 2 February 2012 on the European dimension in sport ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 May 2008 on the White Paper on Sport ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 March 2007 on the future of professional football in Europe ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 June 2010 on players' agents in sports ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 November 2013 on Qatar: situation of migrant workers ⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2016 on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values ⁽⁸⁾,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 31 May 2016 on enhancing integrity, transparency and good governance in major sport events,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 26 May 2015 on maximising the role of grassroots sport in developing transversal skills, especially among young people,
- having regard to the Council resolution of 21 May 2014 on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 26 November 2013 on the contribution of sport to the EU economy, and in particular to addressing youth unemployment and social inclusion,
- having regard to the Council recommendation of 25 November 2013 on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 18 November 2010 on the role of sport as a source of and a driver for active social inclusion ⁽⁹⁾,
- having regard to the Council of Europe convention of 3 July 2016 on an integrated safety, security and service approach at football matches and other sport events,
- having regard to the Council of Europe convention of 18 September 2014 on the manipulation of sport competitions,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 93, 9.3.2016, p. 42.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 36, 29.1.2016, p. 137.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 239 E, 20.8.2013, p. 46.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 271 E, 12.11.2009, p. 51.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 27 E, 31.1.2008, p. 232.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 236 E, 12.8.2011, p. 99.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 436, 24.11.2016, p. 42.

⁽⁸⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0005.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 5.

Thursday 2 February 2017

- having regard to the case-law of the Court of Justice and General Court of the European Union and the Commission's decisions on sport matters, betting and gambling,
 - having regard to the Global Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals,
 - having regard to Article 6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A8-0381/2016),
- A. whereas with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the European Union acquired a specific competence for sport to build up and implement an EU-coordinated sport policy supported by a specific budget line, and to develop cooperation with international bodies in the area of sport, whilst taking into account the specific nature of sport and respecting the autonomy of sport's governing structures;
- B. whereas sport plays a prominent role in the life of millions of EU citizens; whereas amateur and professional sport is not merely a matter of athletic abilities, sporting achievements and competitions, but also brings a significant social, educational, economic, cultural and unifying contribution to the EU's economy and society, as well as to the EU's strategic objectives and social values;
- C. whereas sport represents a significant and fast-growing sector of the EU economy and makes a valuable contribution to growth, jobs and society, including at local level, with value added and employment effects exceeding average growth rates; whereas sport-related employment has been estimated at equivalent to 3,51 % of total EU employment, and the share of sport-related gross value added at EUR 294 billion (2,98 % of total EU gross value added);
- D. whereas sport is not only a growing economic reality, but also a social phenomenon which makes an important contribution to the European Union's strategic objectives, and to social values such as tolerance, solidarity, prosperity, peace, respect for human rights and understanding among nations and cultures;
- E. whereas practicing sports contributes to a better quality of life, prevents diseases and plays a fundamental role in strengthening personal development and health condition;
- F. whereas compliance with basic labour rights is essential for professional athletes;
- G. whereas sport also contributes to the integration of people and transcends race, religion and ethnicity;
- H. whereas the integrity of sport is of paramount importance if its credibility and its attractiveness is to be promoted;
- I. whereas sport has a specific nature that is based on voluntary structures and that is a prerequisite of its educational and societal functions;
- J. whereas recent corruption scandals in sport, and within sports organisations at European and international levels, have tarnished the image of sport, raising voices and questions about the need for genuine and structural reforms of sport governing bodies and organisations while taking into account the great diversity of sport structures in different European countries and the fact that sports organisations are by their nature largely self-regulated;

Thursday 2 February 2017

- K. whereas both professional and grassroots sports play a key role in the global promotion of peace, respect for human rights and solidarity, carry health and economic benefits for societies and have an essential role in highlighting fundamental educational and cultural values, as well as in promoting social inclusion;
- L. whereas good governance in sport should respect the appropriate regulation of sport through principles of effective, transparent, ethical and democratic management, participatory governance, processes and structures with the participation of stakeholders;
- M. whereas sports organisations are responsible for ensuring high governance and integrity standards and should raise these further, and adhere to them in all circumstances, in order to restore citizens' confidence and increase public trust in the positive value of sport;
- N. whereas balanced policies that aim to increase financial transparency, stability and credibility in sport are key to improving financial and governance standards;
- O. whereas the European organised sport model is based on the principles of territoriality and nationality, with one federation per discipline, and on solidarity mechanisms between elite and grassroots sports, as well as on promotion-relegation, open competitions and financial redistribution;
- P. whereas the recognition of the principle of a single federation per sport is of particular relevance and is rooted in the social importance of sport as the best means of safeguarding the interests of sport and the benefits that it delivers to society;
- Q. whereas it is legitimate and necessary for all stakeholders to require that any sport competition be played and decided in accordance with the internationally recognised rules of the game;
- R. whereas sport tribunals have a central role to play in guaranteeing the universality of the rules of the game, the right to a fair trial in sport-related disputes and good governance, since they constitute the most appropriate means of settling disputes in sport in compliance with fundamental EU procedural rights;
- S. whereas the increasing amounts of money circulating in the sport sector and in the organisations involved have prompted demands for better governance and transparency; whereas sport, as an economic activity, is confronted with a series of match-fixing scandals involving various other crimes and illegal activities such as money laundering, corruption and bribery;
- T. whereas increasing practices of doping remains a threat to the integrity and reputation of sport in that it violates sport's ethical values and principles such as fair play, and whereas the use of doping seriously jeopardises the health of the athletes concerned, often causing serious and permanent damage, and whereas the fight against doping is a matter of public interest and public health;
- U. whereas any act of violence, hooliganism and discrimination directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group, whether in an amateur or a professional sport, tarnishes its image and discourages spectators from attending sport events;
- V. whereas promoting sport for people with intellectual or physical disabilities should be a key priority at European, national and local level;
- W. whereas women's participation and visibility in sport and sport competitions needs to be improved;

Thursday 2 February 2017

- X. whereas athletes, in particular minors, face increasing economic pressures, and are treated as commodities, and have therefore to be protected against any form of abuse, violence or discrimination that may occur in the course of their participation in sport;
- Y. whereas there is a growing, worrying trend of third-party ownership in team sports in Europe whereby players, who are often very young, are partially or integrally owned by private investors and can no longer determine the future paths of their careers;
- Z. whereas bad practices linked to agents and players' transfers have led to cases of money laundering, fraud and exploitation of minors;
- AA. whereas grassroots sports offer opportunities to tackle discrimination, foster social inclusion, cohesion and integration, and make a strong contribution to the development of transversal skills;
- AB. whereas an increasing number of clubs rely mainly on the transfer market to compose their teams when they should pay more attention to local training;
- AC. whereas sport is perceived as a fundamental right of everyone, and whereas everyone should have equal right to engage in physical activity and sport;
- AD. whereas, overall, physical activity is stagnating despite hard evidence that it improves personal health, including mental health, and well-being, as a result of which Member States make significant savings in terms of public expenditures on health, and despite a growing trend for recreational sports, such as jogging, which are also practised outside of any organised structures;
- AE. whereas sport events and activities, and in particular major international competitions, showcase the benefits of sport and have a positive social, economic and environmental impact;
- AF. whereas national teams play an essential role not only in terms of fostering national identity and inspiring young athletes to reach the highest level of sporting performance, but also by promoting solidarity with grassroots sports;
- AG. whereas the further education and vocational training of athletes is a crucial part of preparing them for their careers at the end of their sporting careers;
- AH. whereas investment in and promotion of the training and education of talented young athletes at local level is crucial for the long-term development and societal role of sports;
- AI. whereas volunteers are the backbone of organised sport, providing for the development and accessibility of sport activities, especially at grassroots level; whereas, in addition, it offers a further excellent training and non-formal education opportunity for young people, also internationally and in association with cooperation and development programmes in non-EU areas in which dialogue needs to be strengthened and EU external policy supported;
- AJ. whereas sport, in its broadest sense, represents a value system for a community, and whereas these values form the basis of a shared language that goes beyond all cultural and linguistic barriers; whereas it can help, and should be considered an opportunity, to strengthen dialogue and solidarity with third countries, to promote the protection of basic human rights and freedoms worldwide and to support EU external policy;

Thursday 2 February 2017

AK. whereas infringements of sports organisations' intellectual property rights, including in the form of digital piracy, especially the unlicensed live transmission of sporting events, raise serious concerns for the long-term funding of sport, at all levels;

AL. whereas the freedom of press must be ensured at all sport events;

AM. whereas sport can contribute to fulfilling the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy;

Integrity and good-governance of sports

1. Repeats that fighting corruption in sport requires transnational efforts and cooperation among all stakeholders, including public authorities, law enforcement agencies, the sports industry, athletes and supporters;

2. Calls on international, European and national sports organisations to commit to good governance practices, and to develop a culture of transparency and sustainable financing, by making financial records and activity accounts, including disclosure obligations as to the compensation of top executives and term limits, publicly available;

3. Is of the opinion that developing a culture of transparency must be complemented by a better separation of powers within the sports governing bodies, better division between commercial and charitable activities and better internal self-regulatory procedures to advance, detect, investigate and sanction sport crimes and illegal activities within the sports organisations;

4. Recalls that good governance, which should be a priority in the next EU Work Plan for sport, must be a condition for the autonomy of sports organisations, in compliance with the principles of transparency, accountability, equal opportunities, social inclusion and democracy, including appropriate stakeholder inclusiveness;

5. Stresses the need for a zero-tolerance policy to corruption and other types of crime in sports;

6. Underlines that the application of good governance principles in sport, together with monitoring, supervision and appropriate legal instruments, is a key factor to help eradicate corruption and other malpractices;

7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, and on sports organisations and bidding entities, to ensure that bidding to host major events comply with good governance standards, with human and labour rights, and with the principle of democracy, in order to ensure a positive social, economic and environmental impact on local communities, whilst respecting diversity and traditions with a view to guaranteeing a sustainable legacy and credibility for sport;

8. Is of the opinion that countries bidding for or hosting sport events need to implement socially, environmentally and economic responsible planning, organisation, implementation, participation and a follow-up of those events; calls on sports organisations and countries hosting such events to avoid undesired changes in the living environment of local residents, including the displacement of local populations;

9. Calls on the Commission to develop a pledge board, and to explore the possibility of creating a code of conduct in the areas of good governance and integrity in sport; is of the opinion that sports organisations should lay down transparency rules, ethical standards, a code of conduct for their supervisory bodies, executive committees and members, as well as operational policies and practices to guarantee independence and compliance with the established rules; believes, furthermore, that exploring new instruments for cooperation between governments, sports organisations and the EU can help address some of the current challenges facing the sports industry;

10. Urges the Member States to make public funding for sports conditional, subject to compliance with established and publicly available minimum governance, monitoring and reporting standards;

Thursday 2 February 2017

11. Believes that improving good governance and integrity in sports requires a change in the mind-set of all relevant stakeholders; supports the initiatives taken by sports organisations and other relevant stakeholders to improve governance standards in sports and to enhance dialogue and cooperation with local and national authorities;

12. Calls on sports organisations to put forward by 2018, and duly implement, concrete proposals to enhance good governance standards for sports organisations, sports governing bodies and their member associations, and to publish the outcomes; stresses that appropriate monitoring is essential in this regard;

13. Calls on the Member States to establish match fixing as a specific criminal offence and to ensure that any criminal activity, such as match fixing and corruption in sports, is subject to judicial proceedings and appropriate sanction, where this is not already the case, as match fixing and the manipulation of sport competitions violate the ethics and integrity of sports and are already subject to sanctions by sports authorities;

14. Points out that the challenges associated with the investigation of international cases of match-fixing require cross-border information-sharing and cooperation between sports bodies, state authorities and betting operators, within the framework of national platforms, in order to detect, investigate and prosecute match-fixing; calls on the Member States to consider introducing, where they have not already done so, dedicated prosecution services tasked specifically with investigating sports fraud cases; recalls that the Fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive introduces a requirement for gambling providers to carry out due diligence checks on high transactions;

15. Urges the Council to find a solution that will allow the EU and its Member States to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on the manipulation of sports competitions with a view to enabling its full implementation and ratification, and urges the Commission to support and facilitate this process and ensure that it is followed up effectively;

16. Reminds the Commission of its promise to issue a recommendation on the exchange of best practices in preventing and combating betting-related match rigging, and urges it to publish this recommendation without delay;

17. Calls on the Commission to strengthen interinstitutional links with the Council of Europe and, subsequently, to develop coordinated operational programmes ensuring the most efficient use of resources;

18. Supports, and further encourages, prevention, education and awareness-raising campaigns and information programmes serving to provide athletes, coaches, officials and relevant stakeholders at all levels with advice on the threats of match fixing, doping and other integrity-related matters, including risks they may encounter and ways in which they can report doubtful approaches; calls on the Commission and the Member States to propose concrete measures to be included in the next EU Work Plan, such as pilot programmes and projects, aimed at ensuring that young persons are given civic education in sports at as early an age as possible;

19. Calls on the Commission to continue to support anti-doping projects through the Erasmus+ programme, while assessing its impact and ensuring that it complements in a useful way existing anti-doping funding schemes;

20. Calls on the Commission to support good governance in sports management projects throughout the Erasmus+ programme;

21. Calls on the Member States to support doping controls, national testing programmes and legislations allowing coordination and information-sharing between state authorities, sports organisations and anti-doping agencies; calls on the Member States to enable the latter to establish extensive monitoring programmes for doping, and to process and exchange data in accordance with current and future EU data protection rules;

Thursday 2 February 2017

22. Notes the importance of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in the monitoring and coordination of anti-doping policies and rules all over the world; calls on the Commission and the Member States to work closely with WADA, UNESCO and the Council of Europe with a view to preventing and combating doping more effectively by reinforcing the legal and political commitments of the World Anti-Doping Code (WADAC); calls on the EU to encourage the exchange of information and best practices on health and prevention policies in the fight against doping worldwide;
23. Calls on the Commission and the Council to encourage and facilitate the negotiation of agreements between countries permitting duly authorised doping control teams from other countries to conduct testing, respecting athletes' fundamental rights, in accordance with the International Convention against doping in sport;
24. Is of the opinion that doping is also a growing problem in the recreational sports sector, where education and information campaigns, and experienced and professional instructors and trainers, are needed to help promote healthy behaviour with regard to doping;
25. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to work closely with WADA and the Council of Europe in defining a policy to protect whistleblowers;
26. Encourages sports organisations and national public authorities to establish coordinated anti-doping systems for cross-border monitoring, and to take concrete measures against the manufacture and trafficking of illegal performance-enhancing substances in the sports world;
27. Welcomes the new Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events, and urges the Member States to sign and ratify it without delay; reiterates its proposal for the introduction of the mutual recognition of stadium bans in Europe and the exchange of data in this regard;
28. Calls on the Commission to explore ways of information sharing in the context of violence in sports through the existing networks;
29. Notes that the threat of terrorism requires new efforts to ensure operational safety and security at sports events;
30. Stresses that sports bodies should ensure necessary access and news-gathering opportunities at all sport events for independent news media in order to allow them to fulfil their role as important and critical observers of sport events and of the administration of sports;
31. Condemns strongly all forms of discrimination and violence in sport, both on and off the field, and underlines the need to prevent such behaviour at all levels, to improve the reporting and monitoring of such incidents and to promote core values such as respect, friendship, tolerance and fair play; is of the opinion that sports organisations abiding by high standards of good governance are better equipped to promote the societal role of sports and to fight racism, discrimination and violence;
32. Recalls the need to boost the fight against human trafficking in sports, in particular the trafficking of children;
33. Welcomes good, self-regulatory practices, such as the Financial Fair Play initiative, in that they encourages more economic rationality and better standards of financial management in professional sports, with a focus on the long-term as opposed to the short-term, thereby contributing to the healthy and sustainable development of sport in Europe; emphasises that Financial Fair Play has encouraged better financial management standards and should therefore be applied strictly;
34. Welcomes transparent and sustainable investment in sports and sports organisations, provided that they are subject to strict controls and disclosure requirements and are not detrimental to the integrity of competitions and athletes;

Thursday 2 February 2017

35. Considers the ownership model whereby club members retain control of the club (through the 50+1 rule) as a good practice in the EU, and invites the Member States, sports governing bodies, national federations and leagues to start a constructive dialogue on, and exchange of, this model;

36. Stresses that athletes, in particular minors, must be protected from abusive practices such as third-party ownership, which raise numerous questions of integrity and broader ethical concerns; supports decisions by governing bodies to ban third-party ownership of players, and calls on the Commission to consider the prohibition of third-party ownership under EU law and to invite the Member States to take additional measures to address the rights of athletes;

37. Considers that a reassessment of the rules promoting local players is required in order to broaden the opportunities for talented young players to play in their clubs' first team and thus improve the competitive balance across Europe;

38. Calls on governing bodies and national authorities at all levels to take measures that guarantee compensation to training clubs with a view to encouraging the recruitment and training of young players, in accordance with the Bernard ruling of the European Court of Justice of 16 March 2010;

39. Reiterates its attachment to the European organised sports model, where federations play a central role, insofar as it balances the numerous diverging interests between all stakeholders, such as athletes, players, clubs, leagues, associations and volunteers, with appropriate and democratic representation and transparency mechanisms in decision-making, and with open competitions based on sporting merit; calls for more financial solidarity at all levels;

40. Welcomes the annual EU Sport Forum, promoting dialogue with stakeholders from international and European sport federations, the Olympic movement, European and national sport umbrella organisations and other sport-related organisations; points out that the dialogue structure with stakeholders, the functions of the forum and the follow-up of the discussion need to be improved further;

41. Welcomes the efforts of the Commission, and of all concerned stakeholders, to promote social dialogue in sport, which is an excellent opportunity to provide a balance between the fundamental and labour rights of sportspeople and the economic nature of sport by involving all stakeholders, including social partners, in the discussion and conclusion of agreements; acknowledges the responsibility of sporting organisations to commit to developing a culture of transparency; insists that the EU should actively promote minimum employment and labour standards for professional athletes across Europe;

42. Reiterates its call for the establishment of transparency registers for the payment of sports agents, underpinned by an efficient monitoring system such as a clearing house for payments and appropriate sanctions, in cooperation with relevant public authorities, in order to tackle agent malpractice; repeats its call for the licensing and registration of sports agents, as well as the introduction of a minimum level of qualifications; calls on the Commission to follow-up on the conclusions of its 'Study on sports agents in the European Union', in particular with regard to the observation that agents are central in financial streams that often are not transparent, making them prone to illegal activities;

43. Believes that an integrated approach to gender equality in sports can help avoid stereotypes and create a positive social environment for all; welcomes initiatives that encourage gender equality and equal participation in decision-making roles in sports, enable female athletes to reconcile their family and professional sport life, and seek to reduce gender-based remuneration gap and award disparities, as well as any kind of stereotypes and harassment in sports; calls on sports organisations to pay particular attention to the gender dimension by encouraging women participation in sports;

Thursday 2 February 2017

Social inclusion, social function and accessibility of sport

44. Believes that investing in sports will help us build united and inclusive societies, move barriers and enable people to respect each other by building bridges across cultures and across ethnic and social divides, and to promote a positive message of shared values, such as mutual respect, tolerance, compassion, leadership, equality of opportunity and the rule of law;

45. Welcomes transnational sporting events staged in various European countries insofar as they contribute to the promotion of key shared values of the EU such as pluralism, tolerance, justice, equality and solidarity; recalls that sporting activities and events promote tourism in European towns, cities and territories;

46. Underlines the value of transversal skills acquired through sports as part of non-formal and informal learning, and further stresses the link between sports employability, education and training;

47. Emphasises the role of sport in the inclusion and integration of disadvantaged groups; welcomes initiatives to give refugees, migrants and asylum seekers the possibility to compete as athletes at sport competitions;

48. Underlines the importance of education through sport and the potential of sport to help get socially vulnerable youngsters back on track; recognises the importance of grassroots sports in preventing and fighting radicalisation, and encourages and supports initiatives in this respect; welcomes two pilot projects adopted by the European Parliament: 'Sport as a tool for integration and social inclusion of the refugees' and 'Monitoring and coaching through sports of youngsters at risk of radicalisation';

49. Recalls that young European athletes are often faced with the challenge of combining their sports careers with education and work; recognises that higher education and vocational training are crucial to the aim of maximising the future inclusion of athletes in the labour market; supports the introduction of effective dual-career systems, with minimum quality requirements and appropriate monitoring of the progress of dual-career programmes in Europe, as well as the provision of career guidance services through agreements with universities or institutes of higher education; calls on the Commission and the Member States to facilitate the cross-border mobility of athletes, to harmonise the recognition of sport and education qualifications, including non-formal and informal education acquired through sports, and to strengthen the exchange of good practises;

50. Underlines the need to ensure sustainable financial support for dual-career exchange programmes at EU and national level through the Erasmus+ Sport chapter and to foster further research in this area; calls on the Member States to promote, in collaboration with educational institutions, cross-border exchanges of athletes and to provide access to scholarships for athletes;

51. Supports the mobility of coaches and other service providers (such as physiotherapists and dual-career advisers), and the exchange of good practices, with a focus on the recognition of qualifications and of technical innovations;

52. Calls on sports organisations to promote, together with the Member States, minimum standards for coaches that include criminal record checks, training in the safeguarding and protection of minors and vulnerable adults, as well as in preventing and combating doping and match fixing;

53. Stresses that lack of physical activity is identified by WHO as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality, with considerable direct and indirect social and economic impacts and costs for Member States; is concerned that, notwithstanding the considerable costs expended to promote physical activity, and despite the significant impact on general health of the lack of it, physical activity levels are falling across some Member States;

54. Calls on sports organisations and the Member States to cooperate on supporting the employability and mobility of coaches seeking to work across the EU, through a commitment to ensure quality controls of coaching competence and standards of qualification and training;

Thursday 2 February 2017

55. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to make physical activity a political priority in the next EU Work Plan on Sport, especially for young people and vulnerable communities from socially deprived areas where physical participation is low;
56. Calls on international and national federations, and on other providers of education, to ensure that issues pertaining to integrity in sport are included in the curriculum of sport coaching qualifications;
57. Underlines that the promotion of physical education in schools is an essential entry point for children when it comes to learning life skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and understanding, as well as to enjoying lifelong physical activity; recalls that the participation in sports at universities and by older people play a vital role in maintaining healthy lifestyles and promoting social interaction;
58. Takes into account the fact that the EU population is ageing, and that specific attention should therefore be paid to the positive impact that physical activity can have on the health and wellbeing of the elderly;
59. Highlights the fact that sport and physical activity should be promoted in a better way across policy sectors; encourages local authorities and municipalities to promote equal access to physical activity; recommends the Member States and the Commission to encourage citizens to pursue physical activities on a more regular basis by means of appropriate health policies and programmes for their daily lives;
60. Calls on the Member States to promote sport better among socially excluded groups, and among people living in socially deprived areas, where participation in sport is often low, and to enhance cooperation with non-governmental organisations and schools active in this area, in particular in the urban planning and construction of sport facilities, so that the special needs of the public, and in particular of vulnerable groups, are taken into account; calls on the Member States to ensure full and equal access to public sports facilities in all areas, and to foster the establishment of new sports clubs, particularly in rural and disadvantaged urban areas;
61. Stresses that disabled people should have equal access to all sports facilities, and to the transport and other facilities — and the competent support staff — that this requires, and calls for greater integration of all sports-related components according to the principle that sports facilities should be accessible to all; urges the Member States to implement inclusive sport programmes for disabled people at schools and universities, including by providing trained coaches and adapted physical activity programmes, starting at lower levels at schools, so that pupils and students with disabilities can participate in sport lessons and in extra-curricular sport activities;
62. Recognises the fundamental role of the International Paralympic Games in fostering awareness, fighting discrimination and promoting access to sport for disabled people; calls on the Member States to step up the efforts towards the inclusion in sport activities of persons with disabilities, and to increase public media visibility and broadcasting of the Paralympic Games and other competitions involving disabled athletes;
63. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to ensure that children practise sports in a safe environment;
64. Welcomes the initiatives taken to promote inclusion, integrity and accessibility in sports through the use of new technologies and innovation;
65. Welcomes the success of the European Week of Sport, which aims to promote sport, physical activity and a healthier lifestyle for all across Europe regardless of age, background or fitness level, and calls on all EU institutions and Member States to take part in, and further promote, this initiative, while ensuring that it is accessible to the widest possible audience, particularly in schools;
66. Considers that traditional sports are part of the European cultural heritage;
67. Welcomes the Commission's study on the specificity of sport; calls on the Commission and sports organisations to consider further steps to develop sport specificity;

Thursday 2 February 2017

68. Stresses that funding is an important EU policy tool used to improve key fields of EU activity in sport; calls on the Commission to allocate more funds to sport under Erasmus+, with a focus on grassroots sports and education, and to enhance its visibility and accessibility in order to improve the mainstreaming of sport into other funding programmes such as the ESIF or the Health Programme; calls for better communication between the Commission and the Member States to allow these funds to be used more effectively and to minimise the administrative burden on grassroots sports organisations;

69. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to support measures and programmes promoting the mobility, participation, education, skills development and training of volunteers in sport, as well as the recognition of their work; recommends the exchange of best practices in volunteering by lending a hand in promoting the growth of sports practice and culture, including through the lines provided for by the Erasmus+ programme;

70. Asks the Commission to issue guidelines on the application of state aid rules in sport taking into account the social, cultural and educational goals in order to bring more legal certainty; considers, in this regard, that no sports organisations, in particular grassroots sports organisations, should be discriminated against when applying for public funding at national and local level;

71. Considers it crucial that financial solidarity mechanisms within sports establish the necessary link between professional and amateur sports; welcomes, in this regard, the contribution made by national lotteries to grassroots sports, and encourages Member States to make licensed betting operators subject to mandatory and fair financial return to grassroots sports and projects aimed at improving mass-access to sports, with a view to ensuring their sustainability, transparency and traceability, in complement to the financial contributions already made by the selling of media and broadcasting rights;

72. Maintains that the selling of TV rights on a centralised, exclusive and territorial basis, with equitable sharing of revenues, is essential to the sustainable funding of sport at all levels and to ensuring a level playing field;

73. Emphasises that infringements of intellectual property rights in sport threaten its long-term funding;

74. Recommends the Member States to introduce and use actively their respective tax systems to support VAT exemption, tax breaks and other forms of financial incentives in grassroots sport; recognises that State Aid rules should not apply to such support;

75. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to allocate more funds to open public sports grounds and playgrounds in order to enhance easy accessibility to grassroots sports;

76. Considers that sustainability and environmental protection should be an integral part of sports events and that sport stakeholders should contribute towards the Global Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals;

77. Encourages the national Olympic committees and sports federations of the Member States to adopt and use the EU flag and symbol, together with individual flags and national symbols, on the occasion of international sports events;

78. Emphasises that sport is a powerful factor in creating and strengthening a feeling of local, national and even European belonging;

79. Stresses the importance of having full transparency of ownership in professional sports clubs;

o

o o

80. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and to the European, international and national sports federations and leagues.
