

# FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION 2008

Presidency's Conclusions  
of the informal meeting of the ministers in charge of sport  
(Biarritz, 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> November 2008)

The European Union ministers in charge of Sport met in Biarritz (France) on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008 under the French presidency, in the presence of the European Commissioner in charge of sport and high-level representatives of the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the international and national sports and Olympic movement and the World Anti-Doping Agency. Their deliberations were an extension of the ministers' standing agenda and covered an exploration of the specific features of sport "package by package" in terms of topics proposed by the presidency.

The discussions focused mainly on investigating the societal values of sport, the assessment of its economic impact in Europe and promoting good governance in sport within the Union, as part of the implementation of the White Paper on sport.

At the end of their work, the European ministers in charge of sport approved a joint statement appended hereto; regarding all the other points addressed in debate but not covered in this statement, the French presidency noted the following conclusions:

## 1. SPORT AND HEALTH

After listening to the European Commission on the outcome of the deliberations of the EU "sport and health" working party, the European ministers welcomed the 41 recommendations framed by the group on behalf of the European Union in terms of physical activity as a health factor. They requested the presidency to convey the text to the European ministers of health so that they might be reviewed in the Council of ministers of health. They advocated widespread dissemination of these recommendations, *inter alia* over the internet, to all the protagonists concerned, more particularly the sports associations. They also agreed that best practice in this area should be publicised.

## 2. SPORT AND DOPING

### World Anti-Doping Agency

- 2.1 The ministers of sport invited the president of the World Anti-Doping Agency, Mr John Fahey, to speak on the follow-up to the undertakings he entered into in favour of Europe on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2008 in Ljubljana (Slovenia). They expressed regret at the lack of progress made in the revision of the statutes of WADA and called for the process to be resumed as soon as possible.
- 2.2 The ministers expressed regret at the fact that the European governments' request concerning the deferral of the entry into force of the "International standard for the protection of privacy and personal information" had been rejected by the Agency's Executive Committee and Founders Board at the meeting in Montreal from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2008. They stressed that they were determined that the Standard should comply with Community law and the laws of Member States. The Ministers noted the possibility of some Member States taking measures consisting of not implementing the Standard on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 including the use of the ADAMS database. They welcomed the collaboration between the European Union and the Council of Europe on the issue and expressed the hope that the 11<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe Conference of ministers of sport (10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> December 2008, Athens, Greece) would endorse the EU position. The French presidency handed the ministers action proposals on WADA for consideration at that conference. The Ministers invited the Commission and the EU "anti-doping" working party to keep track of developments in this regard.
- 2.3 The European Ministers took note of the fact that 25 states of the Union had ratified the UNESCO international convention against doping in sport. They urged those which had not yet proceeded to ratify to do so.

### On further cooperation between the public authorities and the representatives of the pharmaceutical industry

On cooperation between the public authorities and the representatives of the pharmaceutical industry, the ministers welcomed the proposal by the presidency presenting the protocol signed by the Ministry of Health, Youth, Sport and the Voluntary sector, the secretary of state in charge of sport, youth and the voluntary sector, the French health products safety agency, the drug companies and the president of the World Anti-Doping Agency. They proposed that this item be placed on the agenda of the EU anti-doping working party at its next meeting in January 2009.

### **3. SPORT AND THE ECONOMY**

The European sports ministers were agreed on the importance of the work being done to achieve a better appreciation of the economic importance of sport in Europe, in particular its impact on the determination of sports policies, on the organisation of major sports events on the territory of the Union and on vocational guidance.

#### Satellite sports accounts

The ministers expressed their pleasure at the progress made in the establishment of national and European satellite sports accounts, and their hope that the EU "sports and economy" working party set up under the Austrian presidency should pursue its investigations with the aid of the Commission, thanking France for hosting its next meeting in 2009 in Paris. They undertook to encourage national statistical authorities to become involved in this work, looking forward to it being taken over eventually at Community level via Eurostat surveys, for example.

#### Public and private funding of sport in Europe

The sports ministers expressed their general feeling about the risks that nowadays beset the future of sustainable funding in Europe, in particular because of the erosion of public finance and the contingencies affecting private funding, depending on the sport, but also because of the decline in voluntary input.

To contribute to rendering sport funding in Europe more secure, the French presidency made available to the ministers a report on the public and private funding of sport in the EU Member States, which is to be published and periodically updated.

The European sports ministers invited the European Commission to contribute to this topic, while awaiting with interest the results of the study on the funding of 'basic sport' announced in the White Paper.

#### Assessment of the economic impact of major international sports events

On the assessment of the economic impact of major international sports events, the ministers listened with interest to the presidency's report on the financial and societal impact of the 2007 Rugby World Cup and the methods used for the purpose.

#### **4. SPORT AND GOVERNANCE**

##### Policing the profession of players' agent

Probing deeper into the specific features of sport with regard to community law, the ministers took note of the headway made by the presidency on the policing of the profession of players' agent. They supported the Commission in its impact study, so that in accordance with the provisions of the White Paper on sport the malpractices associated with this business may be progressively put an end to.

##### European oversight of club management

After listening to the president of the French League of Professional Football, the Deputy Secretary General of UEFA and the Secretary General of FIBA, the sports ministers took note of the Commission's plan to organise a European conference on the system of awarding licences to professional clubs with a view to considering the development by the sports movement itself, Europe-wide, of a system of self-regulation applied to overseeing the management of these clubs.

#### **5. PRESENTATION BY THE CZECH DELEGATION**

The minister thanked the Czech authorities for the details they provided on their presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first six months of 2009. They took full note of their objectives: to explore various aspects of the 'autonomy of sport' and voluntary action, in particular during a meeting of the presidential team in February and a meeting of directors of sport on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April 2009 in Prague.

#### **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

6.1 The ministers welcomed the establishment in September 2008 of a system of information exchange and a shared benchmarking arrangement in this area in Europe. They encouraged Member States to take part in this project so far as their facilities permit and thanked the Commission for the effort put in to coordinate the network in the process of being set up.

6.2 The ministers took note of the German suggestion on a review of the relationship between sport and the 'the law on understandings'. They proposed that this review be undertaken by the EU 'sport and non-profit organisations' working party that was established in 2006.

- 6.3 The ministers addressed to the Greek authorities and the Council of Europe their best wishes for a successful outcome of the conference of 49 ministers of sport scheduled in Athens from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> December 2008.
- 6.4 The ministers expressed their gratitude to the national and European international and Olympic movements for their respective contributions to the success of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2008.

France/MSJSVA/09/12/08