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The European sport model: need of preservation

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Arnaut and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

The European Sport Model is deeply rooted in European civil society and is an important expression of our culture and attitude towards sporting values. It is a democratic model that serves to ensure sport remains open to everyone. As a practical matter, the European Sport Model resembles a pyramid structure, with grassroots and clubs constituting the base of the pyramid and offering maximum scope for local participation.

The European Sport Model, based on this pyramid structure, is underpinned by the twin principles of financial solidarity and promotion and relegation.

Sport has a specific nature that sets it apart from any other field of business activity. Sport has important social, educational and cultural functions. It recognises that solidarity between different levels in sport (in particular, between professional and amateur) is a fundamental aspect of sport.

The independent nature of sports bodies should be supported and protected and their autonomy to organise the sport for which they are responsible should be recognised. The federation should continue to be the key form of sporting organisation providing a guarantee of cohesion and participatory democracy.

The European Sport Model is not only based on democracy but also on solidarity, which is perhaps also a distinct feature of European society.

The preservation of the European Sport Model is the best means to safeguard the interests of sport and the benefits that sport delivers to society.

The European Model guarantees dialogue and exchange between the professional and the grassroots levels of sport.

There is no doubt that sport has become more and more of a business and this trend has become particularly marked in the last two decades. We have witnessed the internationalisation of sport, and, above all, the unprecedented development of the economic dimension of sport, driven in particular by the value of television rights.

Recent scandals in several European countries, involving betting and manipulation of match results have seriously damaged sport in Europe. A number of mutually reinforcing mechanisms are

needed to reduce the risk of match-fixing, illegal betting or other forms of corruption. These problems will require the more active involvement of the state authorities.

The problem of “trafficking” young players became apparent in many European countries. It seems that international networks, coordinated by agents based in Europe, started to manage this “business”, especially in relation to young players coming from Africa and Latin America.

The current European sport framework is not sufficiently adapted to deal with this matter and it needs closer collaboration between the European sports authorities and public authorities.

Part of the social function of sport is to foster integration and bring people together from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored that sports events have often witnessed outbreaks of racism and xenophobia. This is part of a more general problem in society, also sometimes related to the problem of hooliganism.

The Council of Europe should study this issue and propose solutions.

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EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group