

InTerView



Ivo BELET



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Ivo BELET, MEP, author of a Report on the future of professional football in Europe, adopted in January 2007 by the European Parliament

The report you handed in to the European Parliament urged governing bodies to better regulate their activities in order to tackle the observed drifts and to restore some equity. What do you think about the measures recently adopted by UEFA in this field?

These initiatives aim at improving and guaranteeing financial fair play in professional football. The adoption of such measures is of major importance for the future of the football and we – at the European Parliament - fully support this progress. Thus we are carrying out everything we can so that these steps will be implemented by European leagues and clubs as soon as possible. The launch of the independent panel which will examine the evolution of clubs' accounts - under the Presidency of the former Belgian Prime Minister and actual Member of The European Parliament Jean-Luc Dehaene - proves that it is a concrete measure. No doubt that it will represent a real progress in terms of economical regulation in a very short period of time.

Beyond these measures, sport governance is a major issue in which I am very interested. I will pay close attention to these questions, especially as President of *Friends of Football* an informal group of the European Parliament.

Governance issues do not only concern football but sport in general as illustrated by doping cases or match-fixing. To your mind what are the ingredients

of good governance?

We have to be clear: it is not a task for politicians to regulate the sport world. We encourage autonomous sport governance but we do not want to give a blank cheque to these organisations. It is a supervised autonomy. And yet we can defend this sport specificity only if the organisations responsible for it would set in order their sport. Efficient regulation is needed to eliminate plagues such as doping, racism, violence. Thus we are ready to support these positive forces in the world of sport and take additional measures that are obvious at a European scale: guidelines or even, if necessary, directives, as maybe the coming regulation on sports agents' profession.

When thinking about the Lisbon Treaty which has recently received a new lease of life after the Irish "Yes" vote, could we imagine a larger implication of the European Union in sport governance in the future?

The Lisbon Treaty is a major step in the developing process of a real European sport policy. But the matter is not to regulate all European sports and this has to be highlighted for there exist a lot of misunderstandings about it. The new Treaty will enable us to develop initiatives which will support cross-borders actions in all sports. The forecast budget for 2010 is unfortunately extremely modest, but on the basis of these initiatives we can build a truly constructive policy. This new juridical basis will enable the European Commission to go beyond what has been presented in its White Paper. We also expect more juridical security for the sport solidarity system, such as the collective selling of media rights as well as the funding of grassroots sport. It is of crucial importance that the dialogue with the sport world will continue. In the European Parliament we are working in this way, especially through activities of the Sport intergroup which is an informal platform for MEP interested in these subjects.

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To be noticed

« Sport can bring EU closer to citizens ». Sean Kelly, Irish MEP, gives its opinion about opportunities linked with the new Community competencies in the field of sport contained in the Lisbon Treaty.

You can find his interview granted to information website Euractiv, Sport et Citoyenneté's partner, on: www.euractiv.com/fr/sports

A noter

« Le sport peut rapprocher l'UE des citoyens ». Seán Kelly, Eurodéputé irlandais réagit aux opportunités offertes par la nouvelle compétence communautaire en matière de sport insérée dans le traité de Lisbonne.

Retrouvez cette interview accordée au site d'informations Euractiv, partenaire de Sport et Citoyenneté sur : www.euractiv.com/fr/sports