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Against match fixing - European Research & Education Program

Recommendations for stakeholders regarding
combating match-fixing

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Project Number : 590606 □ EPP□1□2017□1□PL□SPO□
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INTRODUCTION

This report aims to present selected key recommendations developed through in-depth analysis carried out by the project consortium.

The recipients of our recommendations should be, in particular, organisations introducing systemic solutions – sports federations, professional leagues, and organisers of sports competitions.

Under the project, a comprehensive analysis was attempted of so-called non-financial motivations in actions aimed at match-fixing by players and team members.

Research work was carried out to analyse the cases that had occurred using the desk research method, and a full analysis was conducted of surveys organised as part of the work of the Research Team, where answers from many European countries were collected.

In addition, as part of the Education Team, an individual assessment of interest in potential changes to international and domestic regulations was carried out.

All of these project activities contributed to the dedication of the following recommendations to a group of stakeholders interested in preventing the phenomenon of match-fixing. A comprehensive or holistic approach is to improve the effectiveness of educational campaigns, disciplinary and administrative decisions, or even proceedings carried out by dedicated law enforcement agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Final project conclusion proposals:

1. Strengthening cooperation between the disciplinary bodies of individual national institutions within the context of analysis of specific cases, and the creation of a case map on this basis to establish the most-effective methods of counteracting match-fixing (case study analysis).
2. Seeking to increase the intensity of cooperation between leagues and federations, and legal bookmakers. The need to expand IT systems and add additional provisions in sponsorship agreements in order to implement preventive educational activities and improved finding of suspects. Promotion of fair sports rivalry by bookmakers as an environment that significantly supports sport through sponsoring. The implementation by this environment of positive behaviours related to legal betting will ensure that a wide group of recipients is reached, and particularly in sport at a lower level or amateur sport can lead to greater effectiveness of educational and preventive measures.
3. Harmonisation of disciplinary penalties and criminal sanctions as part of European competitions – an example can be a licence provision in an agreement concluded in the Polish league regarding the return of remuneration and security of remuneration in the event of an indictment being brought to court.
4. A broader approach to confidential information – a recommendation to introduce the disclosure of confidential information as a punishable act – a recommendation to introduce into the legal order under criminal law in European countries. The definition of confidential information is a problem.
5. Whistleblowing as the basis for reacting to "suspicious" situations. Consideration of a provision in the contract on the obligation to report. You must report every situation that you believe does not meet the highest standards. The reason is to protect yourself and your TEAM. Anti-corruption directive as the foundation. Additional training for leagues and federations. Reporting tools to be as broad as possible – research shows that respondents are more likely to report events heading towards match-fixing in person or via e-mail, or possibly using a dedicated application.

6. More severe disciplinary penalties for involvement in illegal sports betting. Research shows that increasing penalties is one of the methods for the prevention of the phenomenon of match-fixing.
7. When it comes to the sports motivations of "intentional poor performance" or even match-fixing, it is necessary to promote a game system that ensures all teams have full motivation to play. Changing the structure of events to prevent matches that have no effect on the outcome of a competition or matches where there is an advantage to lose.
8. Conducting more-advanced research using all available methods, but first and foremost survey questions among a group of various stakeholders.
9. Despite the specifics of individual countries, further unification of preventive and educational measures as well as disciplinary sanctions is necessary. The creation of permanent educational tools to support all stakeholders. Football as the most popular sport in the world as a motivator for other sports.
10. Non-financial motivations are often not the direct cause of the phenomenon of match-fixing, but they can be the beginning of involvement in match-fixing as a result of financial incentives combined primarily with participation in sports betting. That's why the most important conclusion of our project is to promote among players, coaches, referees, managers long-term career development prospects and the right ethical attitudes of athletes and anyone involved who is able to influence the results of a match. This is the reason why the most important thing is to create more open educational solutions that can be used not only by a small group of entities. However, it's important to not forget about the individual features of specific countries, the sports culture, as well as regional and legal conditions. For this reason, every country should also conduct personalised educational activities.

SUMMARY

This report is only a summary of the work carried out by the Super Team under the project. It is not full documentation of activities analysed by the working team. In addition, the summary nature of this report allows you to read the recommendations easily. For anyone interested in obtaining more-detailed material, please e-mail: info@againstmatchfixing.com

The recommendations can be divided into "soft" actions encouraging the cooperation of various stakeholders. Some of these activities (e.g. analysis of individual cases and an attempt to create patterns of behaviour) are already carried out under, for example, National Platforms. In such recommendations, it's about strengthening and intensifying actions rather than changing them.

In the case of recommendations related to improving the functioning of IT systems, it is necessary to create a special system for funding support from the European Commission that will enable the development of even more-effective solutions for "tracking" suspected bets and bets carried out as part of "cooperatives" or even by organised crime.

As a result of the research, it must be said that most respondents highlighted the importance of disciplinary penalties. That is why we are of the opinion that there is a need to standardise preventive disciplinary provisions in competitors' contracts. A similar substantive background and the expected effect underlie the recommendations to disclose confidential information and more-severe disciplinary penalties for participating in illegal betting.

In the case of non-financial motivations, it must be stated that it is unfortunately very difficult to associate this element as a direct relationship with match-fixing. On the other hand, it should certainly be said that they are often an "additional element" of match-fixing that at present are clearly related to illegal corruption or match-fixing related to bookmaker bets.

An additional recommendation is to continually conduct and unify educational and preventive measures.