



Resolution 2080 (2015)¹

Rethinking the anti-doping strategy

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly highlights the importance of safeguarding sporting values and ensuring that the highest possible standards for the protection of these values are properly implemented. Doping is one of the scourges which undermines sports ethics and destroys the image of sport and of sportsmen and women. The Council of Europe has been working in the anti-doping field for many years; the Assembly welcomes the fact that the Organisation has had a positive influence on the revision of the World Anti-Doping Code and that it plays an active role in the World Anti-Doping Agency.

2. The Assembly welcomes the efforts of various national, European and international stakeholders to make anti-doping systems more efficient: important advances have been made with regard to the recognition of athletes' rights; progress on testing for new substances and the introduction of biological passports have improved the relevance and effectiveness of controls on athletes; major sports organisations are taking increasing steps to improve information on the risks linked to doping and on the anti-doping rules in force; co-operation between police forces is beginning to be organised at European and international level.

3. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, cases of proven doping by high-level athletes continue to emerge and those who develop new doping substances or procedures seem to be one step ahead of those who attempt to track down this type of sports fraud. Worse still, doping is taking on huge proportions in amateur sport and sports practised by millions of young people.

4. The Assembly is worried about the threat that doping poses to sports ethics, but it is even more alarmed by the major public health risks it engenders and the fact that trafficking in doping substances helps to enrich organised crime. It believes that preventive work with young amateur and semi-professional athletes and the fight against trafficking of doping substances should be among the priorities of the anti-doping strategy.

5. The Assembly firmly believes that only joint efforts involving all stakeholders can yield positive results. Various lines of enquiry would be worth exploring in this connection, including increased harmonisation of national legislation regarding the definition of offences and the severity of penalties, improved co-ordination between various State services and enhanced police co-operation, together with increased co-operation between the authorities and sports organisations and the pooling of information. In connection with the latter point, sharing and comparing the information held by various stakeholders could help to organise more precisely targeted, well-timed controls.

6. Therefore, the Assembly recommends that member States:

6.1. review and harmonise national legislation, bearing in mind the need to reconcile the imperatives of protecting athletes' rights with the effectiveness of control measures and of the prosecution and sanctioning of offences against anti-doping legislation, and, in this context:

6.1.1. ensure better adaptation of penalties to the actual situations;

1. *Assembly debate* on 2 October 2015 (36th Sitting) (see [Doc. 13852](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr André Schneider). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 2 October 2015 (36th Sitting).



- 6.1.2. increase the investigative resources available to police forces responsible for combating doping by allowing recourse to the “special investigative techniques” used in the fight against organised crime;
 - 6.1.3. give national anti-doping organisations the necessary authorisation to:
 - 6.1.3.1. perform surprise controls on amateur and semi-professional athletes following modalities similar to those for professional athletes, where there is serious presumption of doping;
 - 6.1.3.2. investigate not only the athletes but also the backup staff;
 - 6.1.3.3. set up telephone numbers for whistle-blowers;
 - 6.2. strengthen co-ordination and information exchange between the various State services involved in the fight against doping and develop interstate co-operation in the fields of controls and investigation of offences against anti-doping legislation, as well as in combating production of and trafficking in doping substances and the crime rings that derive profit from it;
 - 6.3. train, in each European country, specialised magistrates who would deal with doping and other sports questions, for example with cases of corruption or of tampering with sports results, and look into the possibility of giving them jurisdiction at national level;
 - 6.4. adopt national doping prevention programmes and, in this context:
 - 6.4.1. introduce awareness raising about doping (hazards linked to the use of doping substances, to self-medication and to dietary supplements) into school syllabi (for example, through the agency of physical education and sports teachers) and, at all levels of national education, develop action in the area of information and awareness raising, seeking to collaborate with other partners, in particular sports organisations and associations, including the promotion of sports ethics and values;
 - 6.4.2. set up a centre for monitoring accidents linked with doping, develop a policy on epidemiological research (particularly in respect of young people and amateurs) and improve biological profiling methods;
 - 6.4.3. support the anti-doping training of health professionals working in direct contact with athletes;
 - 6.4.4. set up mentoring agencies at regional or local level, with staff trained in anti-doping, with the task of encouraging:
 - 6.4.4.1. the development of preventive action by local and regional sports clubs;
 - 6.4.4.2. awareness raising and training for doctors, pharmacists and other health professionals directly involved with physical and sporting activities;
 - 6.5. ratify without delay the Council of Europe Convention on the Counterfeiting of Medical Products and Similar Crimes involving Threats to Public Health (CETS No. 211).
7. The Assembly recommends that national and international sports associations and federations:
- 7.1. ensure the provision of exhaustive information on anti-doping standards and mechanisms and develop information and awareness-raising programmes and action aimed in particular at young people, including as regards the dangers involved in the use of dietary supplements, especially if bought outside the official circuit;
 - 7.2. develop strategies for “intelligent” targeting of controls, including controls directed at non-winners and not just at the best, building on the knowledge gained about doping practices and more specific information upstream;
 - 7.3. facilitate pooling of information with police authorities and national anti-doping bodies;
 - 7.4. establish numbers for whistle-blowers to call;
 - 7.5. consider sports calendars, bearing in mind the risks of athletes and teams being overworked; think also about the possibility of limiting the number of competitions in which athletes are allowed to participate over a specific period;

7.6. promote, in co-operation with the relevant public authorities, the certification of sports halls and the dissemination of codes of conduct ruling out the marketing of doping substances – or any other form of encouragement for their consumption – with the aim of enhancing physical performance;

7.7. take action in primary and secondary schools, alongside the authorities, to raise awareness among young people about the risks of doping and help them to develop a sporting culture based on respect for values and sports ethics and not on winning at all costs.