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Football governance: business and values

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2221 (2022)

Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2221 \(2022\)](#) on “Football governance: business and values”. The recommendation has been brought to the attention of the governments of the member States and forwarded to the relevant committees for information and possible comments.²

2. The Committee of Ministers welcomes the Parliamentary Assembly’s interest in and commitment to protecting human rights in sport, in particular in football. It believes that the “values” component addressed by the Assembly in its recommendation is the cornerstone of sport. The need for values-based sport must be emphasised and supported in practice to protect sport from modern threats.

3. In this context, the Committee of Ministers endorses the outcomes of the 16th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport held under the auspices of the Greek Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, in particular [Resolution No. 2](#) on “Human Rights in Sport”. It informs the Assembly that the links between sport and human rights are enshrined in the Council of Europe strategic priorities for sport 2022-2025³ which were the subject of an informal meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies, held in January 2022 under the Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. In addition, the Committee of Ministers recognises the many benefits of sport as a vehicle for personal well-being, social cohesion and respect for human rights, as stressed in its Recommendation on the Revised European Sports Charter.⁴ The Charter emphasises that sport, particularly football, is also an important economic sector in Europe in its own right, contributing to economic growth, development and employment.

4. The Committee of Ministers shares the Assembly’s concerns about the many cases of child abuse in sport. Child protection is one of the Council of Europe’s priorities and, in this connection, the “[Start to Talk](#)” initiative, to which the Assembly refers, provides specialised advice and practical tools to governments, sport organisations and other interested stakeholders to help them identify needs, plan and implement measures towards safer sport for children. Reference should also be made here to the “[Child Safeguarding in Sport \(CSiS\)](#)” EU/Council of Europe joint project (1 March 2020-30 June 2022), aimed at guiding and accompanying European countries in the development of more effective child safeguarding in sport policies that ensure safe, positive and empowering sport environments for all children.

5. In reply to the Assembly’s proposals in paragraph 8 of its recommendation, the Committee of Ministers underlines, with regard to paragraph 8.1, that the Council of Europe’s relevant intergovernmental sector has contributed to the work leading to the establishment of an international “Safe Sport Entity”, a project initiated by the International Federation of Football Association (FIFA). The Council of Europe’s expertise will remain an essential compass in the entity’s further development and operational rollout.

1. Adopted at the 1440th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (13 July 2022).

2. Follow-up Committee on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (T-MC), Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events (T-S4) and Bureau of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS).

3. Document [SG/Inf\(2022\)2](#).

4. Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2021\)5](#).



6. With regard to the points made in paragraph 8.2, the Committee of Ministers welcomes the efforts made by FIFA to regulate football transfers. In this connection, it refers to its Recommendation on the protection of child and young athletes from dangers associated with migration,⁵ which notably encourages a ban on commercial transfers of athletes under the age of 18 and a ban on the payment of intermediaries for the transfer of athletes under the age of 18, while also highlighting the risks associated with migration in the context of aborted transfers. The Committee of Ministers also refers to the work of the Follow-up Committee on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions here.

7. With regard to paragraph 8.3, the Committee of Ministers welcomes the implementation of joint projects with FIFA, such as FLAGS (Football Local Alerts Global Strategy), and UEFA, through the Anti-Match-Fixing Assessment Group (AMFAG). In this context, the Committee of Ministers underlines the importance of the relevant Council of Europe conventions, for child protection in sport, respect for the integrity of sport and safety, security and service at sports events. It encourages Contracting Parties to implement them.

8. In conclusion, the Committee of Ministers is looking forward to further exchanges on the promotion of human rights in sport, and more specifically on the protection of children in sport, on the occasion of the 17th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport, to be held in Antalya on 26 October 2022, which will pave the way for future action and initiatives by the Council of Europe.

5. Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2012\)10](#).