UEFA President conducts successful meeting with French and Dutch Ministers

European team sports and French and Dutch Ministers agree joint declaration to protect the specificity of sport

UEFA President, Michel Platini, today met with the French and Dutch Ministers for European Affairs, Jean-Pierre Jouyet, and Frans Timmermans, as well as representatives from the six main team sports (see list at end) at the House of European Football, in Nyon, and agreed on a joint declaration to further protect the specificity of sport. This comes with a view to presenting further concrete proposals before the end of the year, to be jointly examined during the forthcoming French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

After the meeting UEFA President, Michel Platini, said:

“We had a very positive meeting today with the French and Dutch Ministers responsible for European affairs and sport, and the other team sports federations. Our goal is to help protect the European sports model and the specificity of sport and to provide the legal security to allow sports federations to conduct their statutory tasks.”

The intention of the declaration overall is to guarantee stability and legal security for the European sporting movement in order to preserve, promote and develop sport in consideration of the benefits that it brings to society in terms of, for example, social cohesion, integration and education.

The declaration outlines three main areas of concern to team sports in Europe: training and education, governance of clubs, and players’ agents.

With regards to training and education it was agreed that it is necessary to underline the importance of sports federations in promoting training, in protecting young sportspeople, through the introduction of strict rules, and to encourage training through, for example, the introduction of rules which foresee a minimum number of locally-trained players in teams.

On the issue of the governance of clubs, the declaration recognises that the introduction by sports federations of a licensing system is an indispensable instrument for good governance.

Finally, on the issue of players’ agents, the declaration noted that the European Commission will shortly launch an impact assessment study and that this study will constitute the basis in order to better regulate this profession in the future, the aim being to better protect players and clubs from any irregular activities.

The full declaration is attached and can also be found at www.uefa.com
Joint Declaration adopted by the French and Dutch Ministers for European Affairs and responsible for Sport together with the governing bodies of basketball (FIBA Europe), football (UEFA), rugby (IRB, FIRA-AER), volleyball (CEV), handball (EHF), and ice-hockey (IIHF).

1. The parties recognise the great benefits that sport brings to society, in terms of, for example, social cohesion, integration and education. As such, it is vital that the central role and autonomy of sports federations in the organisation, regulation and promotion of their respective sports be recognised. It is also essential to stimulate the European Sports Model, with its pyramidal structure and its solidarity mechanisms.

2. Following up the Franco-Dutch Memorandum of 25 October 2007 on the Specificity of Sport in Europe, which raised a series of points to be clarified, it is possible today to start with three of the main areas of concern to team sports in Europe: training and education, governance of clubs and players’ agents.

   a. Regarding training and education it is necessary to underline the importance for sports federations of:
      i. promoting « dual training » (sporting and vocational) in order to secure the future of sportspeople after their sporting career,
      ii. protecting young sportspeople, as well as the clubs that invest in their training, by introducing strict rules linked to clear conditions and strong guarantees in order to ensure the greatest level of stability,
      iii. encouraging the training of young sportspeople, for example by introducing rules which foresee a minimum number of locally-trained (“homegrown”) players in teams.

   b. Regarding governance of clubs, it is recognised that the introduction by sports federations of a licensing system, or even a stricter European provision for financial control of professional clubs introducing in particular common financial rules, constitutes an indispensable instrument of good governance.

   c. Regarding players’ agents, it is noted that the European Commission will shortly launch an impact assessment. This study will constitute a basis for important reflection in order to better regulate this profession in the future on a European level, with the aim of better protecting players and clubs from certain irregular activities.

3. In addition to the three priority subjects mentioned above, the European sporting movement needs overall stability and legal security in order to preserve, promote and develop sport. As things stand, the European sports federations do not have the necessary legal security to be able to fulfil their statutory tasks, notably to be able to build the best national teams and to maintain the importance and status of international matches and tournaments.

4. The French and Dutch governments have already clarified their position on this subject in the abovementioned Memorandum, notably by asking the European Commission, which is competent and has the necessary legal means, to clarify the status of sport according to EU law on a certain number of points.

5. Today, the French and Dutch governments have asked the European team sports, in consultation with their respective international federations and internal interest groups, to present concrete proposals, so that they can be jointly examined during the French Presidency of the European Union in order to propose, before the end of this year, a series of concrete measures.

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Note to editors:

In attendance at the meeting were:

Jean-Pierre Jouyet  Minister for European Affairs  
Bernard Laporte  Minister of State responsible for Sport, Youth and Associations  
Sophie Dion  Member of the Cabinet of President Sarkozy  
Denis Simonneau  Head of Cabinet of Mr Jouyet  
Xavier Malenfer  Member of the Cabinet of Prime Minister Fillon  
Dominique Laurent  Director in the Ministry of Sport  
Philippe Duboscq  Member of the Cabinet of Mr Laporte  

drs. Frans C.G.M. Timmermans  Minister for European Affairs  
Sander Cohen  Private Secretary to the Minister for European Affairs  
Joanneke Balfourt  Deputy Head of European Integration division  
Peter de Klerk  Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Health Welfare and Sport  
Bonnie Horbach  Spokeswoman to the Minister for European Affairs  

André Meyer  CEV President  
Jean Brihault  EHF Vice-President  
Michael Wiederer  EHF Secretary General  
Bernard Lapasset  Chairman, IRB, International Rugby Board  
Pierre Camou  Treasurer, FIRA-AER, European Rugby Association  
Darren Bailey  Head of Legal, IRB, International Rugby Board  
Olivier Keraudren  Head of Legal, FFR, Fédération Française de Rugby  
Yves Vonlanthen  Administration & Legal Manager, Assistant to the President, IIHF  

Michel Platini  UEFA President  
David Taylor  UEFA General Secretary  
Gianni Infantino  UEFA Deputy General Secretary  
Alex Phillips  Head of Professional Football Services  
Jonathan Hill  Head of UEFA’s Brussels office  

FIBA Europe were unable to attend the meeting due to a tournament in China but fully support the declaration.