

Mr Chairman,
Fellow speakers and colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the European Commission for offering ECA the possibility to play an active part in this conference. Our Chairman Karl Heinz Rummenigge and Jean-Michel Aulas both provided you with the clubs' perspective on this crucial issue that we are covering here in Brussels and I now wish to offer some added perspective on Licensing Systems to build on what was said yesterday.

Club Licensing appears to be a MUST if we are to ensure good governance in football just as it is in all other sectors of society. It is without doubt a pre-requisite for the future and sustained growth of the game.

Club licensing systems offer a powerful tool in ensuring the integrity of competitions. They help promote higher standards of governance and integrity of competitions by ensuring that all clubs involved in a given competition respect the same basic rules on financial management and transparency.

Different associations or leagues from different country and sport have developed their own measures. The task is facilitated by the fact that they belong to the same legal, fiscal and cultural framework which comes from being in one country. It is a greater challenge to find minimum parameters when dealing with Europe as whole.

In order to achieve a Licensing system which is well-functioning and viable for the long-term it is crucial that all stakeholders are properly involved in helping shape it.

European Team Sport Federations recently stated in a joint text entitled "Safeguarding the future of team sport in Europe" that the appropriate involvement of stakeholders in the decision making process as a primary condition for responsible regulators".

Furthermore, in Biarritz last year, EU Sports Ministers signed a Declaration in which a resolution called for a stronger consultation framework by setting up a consultative platform with representatives of the sports movements

For us at the ECA, we believe that the principle of inclusion takes priority: all stakeholders must be properly represented in the governance model which will lead to decisions impacting football being taken in greater harmony

The creation last year of ECA is a sign of improved governance within football for the 1st time clubs are provided with direct representation. It is one solution, not necessarily the only solution, but to-date we are happy with what we have achieved and it seems to work.

Since the creation of the ECA clubs have enjoyed greater powers in influencing the future of club football. The creation of the UEFA Professional Football Strategy Council is a move in the right direction, it allows for open dialogue and transparency. Similarly, the FIFA Committee for Club Football and the EU Social dialogue are welcomed initiatives in which the clubs are fully and meaningfully involved.

However, despite this increased club involvement in the decision-making process, we believe that there is still room for greater involvement of clubs in the governance structure.

The increased decision-making powers of clubs within the pyramid structure remains a long-term priority for ECA

So what exactly is it that ECA is pursuing in terms of good governance? One of the key objectives of our associations is sharing knowledge and best practise. This means:

- Collecting information and benchmarking it to make it available to all members to create a best practise approach.
- Taking into account several different cultural, social and legal frameworks coming from 53 countries and marrying them into one shared approach for the benefit of all.
- Being on top of the issues and contributing actively to the dialogue, being active and elaborating proposals as opposed to being defensive and reactive.
- Taking collective decisions which go beyond the individual opinion and interest of a member or group of members. This is the major challenge we are facing.

Recent developments are positive and are moving in the right direction We have been able to reach a number of important decisions in key areas which include:

- The recently approved Youth protection "resolution"
- The agreement to include an Anti-racism clause in all contracts signed by players representing ECA clubs. This was agreed in partnership with UNESCO.
- On the issue of player agents ECA is working closely with FIFA to find new ways to ensure that agent's operate within the rules,
- and of course on financial fair-play we are collaborating closely with UEFA to ensure that concrete measures can be brought in which ensure that clubs operate within their means and stop acting recklessly as some have over the last few years.

Our number one priority is the issue of financial fair-play. Developing an appropriate set of measures to achieve financial fair-play is a real test for our association and the well-functioning of the football governance model as a whole.

The opportunity offered by the European Commission today in gathering football and sports stakeholders provides a good opportunity for open discussion and offers a platform for an exchange of best practice.

Achieving and setting-up a system aimed at increasing financial stability will not come easily. It's a hugely complex matter. Finding common minimum parameters to be applicable in 53 countries will demand careful and creative thought. Any approach at trying to achieve financial stability will need to respect the principal of subsidiarity and of course measures proposed will need to be compatibility with EU law. So you can see ladies and gentlemen the road ahead is a complex one but one which must be trodden and ultimately lead to success

To achieve this, all football stakeholders must work together and prepare to sacrifice short-term gains to ensure the long-term prosperity of the game. This is a pre-requisite. Without acknowledging this, success, I fear will remain elusive.

Let me finish by repeating loud and clearly, ECA is prepared to take a leading role in achieving financial fair-play and understands the responsibilities clubs have in ensuring the continued the success of our game.

Thank you for your attention.

