



EU Work Plan
for Sport

2014-
2017

Expert Group "Match Fixing"

Report from the 1st meeting (29 September 2014)

October 2014

Report drafted by the European Commission and adopted by the XG MF



1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission opened the meeting, welcoming members of the Expert Group (XG), and provided the context for the work of the Expert Group. The Expert Group on Match Fixing (XG MF) was created by the Council in adopting its European Union Work Plan for Sport for 2014-2017.¹ It is one of five Expert Groups, who each report to the Council. Together they will produce 16 deliverables.

The European Commission fulfils a secretarial function to support the work of the Expert Group. The Commission sent a letter to all Member States requesting them to appoint experts for the new Expert Groups in the field of sport and to indicate their interest in the chairmanship of any of these groups. By the time of the meeting, 22 Member States had provided nominations, 4 Member States had declined to participate in the XG MF, and a further 2 were still to reply.

The meeting in Milan was attended by 20 Member States - Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. The Commission was represented by DG EAC and DG MARKT.

As part of its introductory remarks, the Commission recalled the importance of match fixing and its growing impact and mediatisation over the past years. It has now become a priority area for many sports organizations and bodies. The XG needed to build on work already done.

The XG adopted the draft agenda without comments.

2. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSONS

The Commission informed that one Member State (Finland) had submitted its candidature to chair the XG MF. There were no other expressions of interest. Not being able to attend the XG, the Commission asked the Finnish representative to present the candidature of the proposed chair, Mr Harri Syväsalmi, in his absence. The XG unanimously elected the proposed chair as the group's chairman. The Finnish representative present was asked to take over as Chair.

3. ADOPTION OF THE WORK SCHEDULE

The Chair invited the Commission to present its proposal regarding the Work Schedule for the XG GG. The Commission noted that the EU Work Plan for Sport identifies the integrity of sport as one of three priority themes of the 2014-2017 Work Plan. Within integrity, the fight against match fixing is a key topic for EU level cooperation in sport.

Annex I specifies the deliverable as being the "Exchange of best practises regarding the fight against match fixing, in particular on a possible Commission Recommendation on best practises in the prevention and combatting of betting-related match fixing, followed by a report on state of play". For this, the XG GG is expected to produce its findings by mid-2016.

¹ Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 21 May 2014 on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1405431776701&uri=CELEX:42014Y0614%2803%29>)



The current state of play at EU level was outlined, including the completion of the 2012 Preparatory Actions and the two studies on betting-related match fixing. These would also feed into the preparation of the Commission initiative on betting-related match fixing. The Commission clarified that while the XG could provide important input (and follow-up if appropriate) from a sports point of view into the future Commission initiative, this was not the deliverable itself.

The outcome of the work of the XG should be achieved by mid-2016, and shall be presented to the Council Working Party on Sport (WPS) by the Chair. The Commission proposed a schedule of three further meetings (about every six months) until then.

The next steps regarding the Council of Europe Convention on match fixing could also be another consideration for the work of the XG. Malta reminded members of the XG that the Council of Europe Convention was not supported by everyone.

DG MARKT provided an overview of their future initiative, highlighted the main areas of prevention, detection and enforcement. They set out the likely timing and procedure, as well the work of the XG on Gambling. It was stressed that the work of this group should look at match fixing from the sports point of view, avoiding duplication.

The main points in the deliverable were the exchange of best practise and the report on the state of play. The UK, suggested the benefits of breaking the deliverable down into different work strands. As a first step, it was agreed that members of the XG would collect a first round of best practises by the end of January 2015.

4. DECISION ON OBSERVERS

The Commission presented briefly the 15 organisations (including one extra that had arrived after the document had been send out) that had expressed their interest in participating as observers in future meetings of the XG.

The XG then had a detailed discussion about how the list had been constituted, and the role of observers in the XG. While it was recognised that the observers could provide a real benefit to the work of the XG, there was also considerable reticence regarding the way they might take over the work of the XG.

Regarding the modalities, the group decided that, in the first instance, observers would be invited to submit written contributions on what they are doing in the field of match fixing and to present to the XG at the next meeting the most relevant aspects with regard to the work of the group. It was also considered that they would be present for only the morning session of the next meeting. The XG would then confirm how to deal with the observers at the next meeting.

The XG agreed to accept all applicants on the list (see Annex II), and that also both Europol and Interpol should be invited to become observers. The XG asked the Commission, as the Secretariat of the XG, to inform the applicants of its decision, and to invite Europol and Interpol. The group also agreed to allow the possibility to admit further observers, based upon a written application.

5. FIRST DISCUSSIONS ON THE OUTPUT OF THE EXPERT GROUP

To begin the afternoon session, two presentations were given by the contactors on the recent studies carried out for the European Commission on betting-related match fixing. These studies will feed into the impact assessment for the Commission initiative on match



fixing. The first study concerned the different ways that Member States deal with risk assessment management and conflicts of interest. The second covered the sharing of information and reporting suspicious betting activity, and the barriers that are encountered. Given the international nature of match fixing, cooperation and building up trust were considered as being essential. It also served to highlight the need to take advantage of the opportunities which will arise in the near future to tackle match fixing, such as changes in data regulation laws and the Council of Europe Convention on match fixing.

There then followed a 'tour de table' where Member States provided an update on developments in their country on match-fixing. A number of Member States announced they had signed the Council of Europe Convention, or intended to. Another common remark was the need to consider how international cooperation could be improved, in particular with reference to the national platforms as advocated in the Convention. Some regional cooperation (between Nordic countries for example) was also being undertaken. Austria offered to present their training initiative at the next meeting.

It was suggested that the next step to collect evidence on existing best practices at national level should also be accompanied by ideas and views on the establishment of the national platforms. To this end, the Commission will invite members of the group to provide further information on the basis of a written request later in the year.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The group initially proposed to meet next on 17 March, which was then later changed due to a clash of dates with another major event to Tuesday 24 March 2015.

**ANNEX I - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (MILAN, 29/9)**

1. AUSTRIA	MORITZER Severin TRIEBER, Harald
2. BELGIUM	SIRTAINE, Isabelle BRAEKEVELD, Dieter
3. BULGARIA	GEORGIEV, Tsvetan
4. CYPRUS	SOLOMOU, Costas
5. DENMARK	TINNING, Anders Voigt
6. ESTONIA	SEIL, Tonu KLAAN, Margus
7. FINLAND	SULANDER, Heidi HEIKKINEN, Petri
8. GERMANY	MOOG, Friedrich-Wilhelm
9. HUNGARY	KOVACS, Peter
10. ITALY	TURCHI, Luca
11. LITHUANIA	BISTRICKAITE, Ramune
12. LUXEMBOURG	HUSTING, Alexandre
13. MALTA	GATT, Corinne
14. NETHERLANDS	SPAPENS, Toine KUPER, Wendela
15. POLAND	PIECHOTA, Rafal
16. ROMANIA	BULANCEA, Marius Gabriel
17. SLOVENIA	REPENSEK, Darko
18. SPAIN	BARBA SANCHEZ, Ramon
19. SWEDEN	CLAESSON, Johan
20. UK	TOFILUK, Nick PATEL, Hitesh

**ANNEX II - LIST OF OBSERVERS (ACCEPTED BY XG ON 29/9)**

- 1 Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), Council of Europe
<http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/EPAS/>
- 2 European Elite Athletes Association
<http://www.euathletes.org>
- 3 European Lotteries (EL)
<http://www.european-lotteries.eu>
- 4 European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO)
<http://www.engso.eu>
- 5 European Olympic Committees (EOC) EU Office
<http://www.euoffice.eurolympic.org>
- 6 Association of European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL)
<http://www.epfl-europeanleagues.com>
- 7 ESSA Sports Betting Integrity
<http://www.eu-ssa.org>
- 8 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)
<http://www.fifa.com>
- 9 International Olympic Committee (IOC)
<http://www.olympic.org>
- 10 Professional Players Federation (PPF)
<http://www.ppf.org.uk>
- 11 Sport et Citoyenneté
<http://www.sportetcitoyennete.org>
- 12 Sport Rights Owners Coalition (SROC)
www.sroc.info
- 13 Supporters Direct Europe (SD)
<http://www.supportersdirect.coop>
- 14 UEFA
<http://www.uefa.com>
- 15 UNI Sport PRO
<http://www.uniglobalunion.org>