

# A step towards better governance in sport

## Preface by Play the Game/Danish Institute for Sports Studies

Over several decades serious questions about the governance standards of sport have surfaced in the public with irregular intervals. In the past couple of years, however, the accumulation of scandals in sport has grown so intensely that the credibility of sport and its organisations is shaken fundamentally, threatening the public trust in sport as a lever of positive social and cultural values in democratic societies.

Since 1997 Play the Game has worked to raise awareness about governance in sport, mainly by creating a conference and a communication platform ([www.playthegame.org](http://www.playthegame.org)) on which investigative journalists, academic experts and daring sports officials could present and discuss evidence of corruption, doping, match fixing and other fraudulent ways of behaviour in sport.

In the course of the years the need for not only pointing to the obvious problems, but also to search for solutions, became ever more urgent.

So when the European Commission's Sports Unit in 2011 launched a call for a preparatory action in the field of the organisation of sport under the framework of the Preparatory Actions in Sport, it was a most welcomed chance for Play the Game – now merged with the Danish Institute for Sports Studies – to widen and deepen the search for solutions.

In partnership with six European universities and the European Journalism Centre we were so fortunate to get a 198,000 Euro grant for our project which we dubbed Action for Good Governance in International Sports Organisations (AGGIS).

This action instantly developed beyond our expectations. Originally, we only set out to produce some reports on concepts of good governance, adding a set of guidelines to inspire sport.

But from the first very intense meeting with our partners in Copenhagen in January 2012 we decided to raise the stakes and the ambitions. This is why we were able to develop a new measuring tool in the world of sports governance:

The Sports Governance Observer.

This tool will enable not only Play the Game and our AGGIS partners, but any person with a serious commitment to sports governance, including people in charge of sports organisations, to register and analyse the quality of governance in the international or major national sports organisation they are related to.

The Sports Governance Observer is based on the best theory in the field, but adapted so it is not for academic use only. In the course of sometime it will reach its final form,

where each indicator will be equipped with a fiche that explains the criteria for giving grades and the rationale for including the indicator.

From today and some months ahead, the AGGIS group has committed itself to further test the tool, applying it on a large number of international sports organisations, and present the results at the next Play the Game conference in Aarhus, Denmark, 28-31 October 2013.

We welcome you to follow the testing phase and submit your comments via [www.aggis.eu](http://www.aggis.eu).

On this site, we also invite you to submit your papers, surveys, reports, proposals and thoughts about good governance, so we can have a common platform for the continued work.

On the following pages, you will find a number of scientific articles that explain the theoretical basis of the Sports Governance Observer by taking a closer look at the definitions of concepts like transparency, accountability, compliance, democracy – and, of course, governance itself.

In the course of the project, the group was also inspired to produce a variety of articles on issues related to the current situation in international sport. You will find two articles on the interaction between the EU and the sports organisations, an analysis of the prevailing one-nation, one-vote principle in sport, and an article of the highly topical issue of how Swiss legislation affect the international federations and the IOC.

As one of its first steps, the AGGIS project furthermore carried out a survey on various parameters in sports governance in the international federations – such as the gender balance in the top leadership, the existence (or not) of independent ethical committees, duration of leadership terms and geographical distribution of leaderships.

Last, but not least, you will find a review over existing literature in the field.

With this report our EU Preparatory Action has come to an end. However, all project partners are as committed as ever to continue the cooperation which, we hope, has delivered a product that will contribute to reforming sport, making it more transparent, accountable and democratic in the years to come.

We would like to give our warmest thanks to the European Commission's Sport Unit for its support and advice along the way, and to those experts outside the project who have contributed with corrections and advice.

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Journalism Centre – for their engagement in a process that has been inspiring, enriching and fun all the way through.

On behalf of Play the Game and the Danish Institute for Sports Studies,

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