

The European Union and UEFA: The road to a possible partnership

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What is UEFA?



1995

‘The EU is trying to kill
club football in Europe’

Lennart Johansson, UEFA President

1995

‘Bosman is a decision taken by people that do not know anything about football’

Gerhard Aigner, UEFA General Secretary and CEO

1995

‘UEFA has to evolve, whether they like it or not. If they want war, then it will be war’

Karel van Miert, European Commissioner

2006/2007

‘UEFA sees the EU now as a long time strategic partner’

Jonathan Hill, Head of UEFA Brussels Office

‘The relationship with the EU is crucial for UEFA’

Lars Christer Olsson, former UEFA CEO (2004-2007)

2007

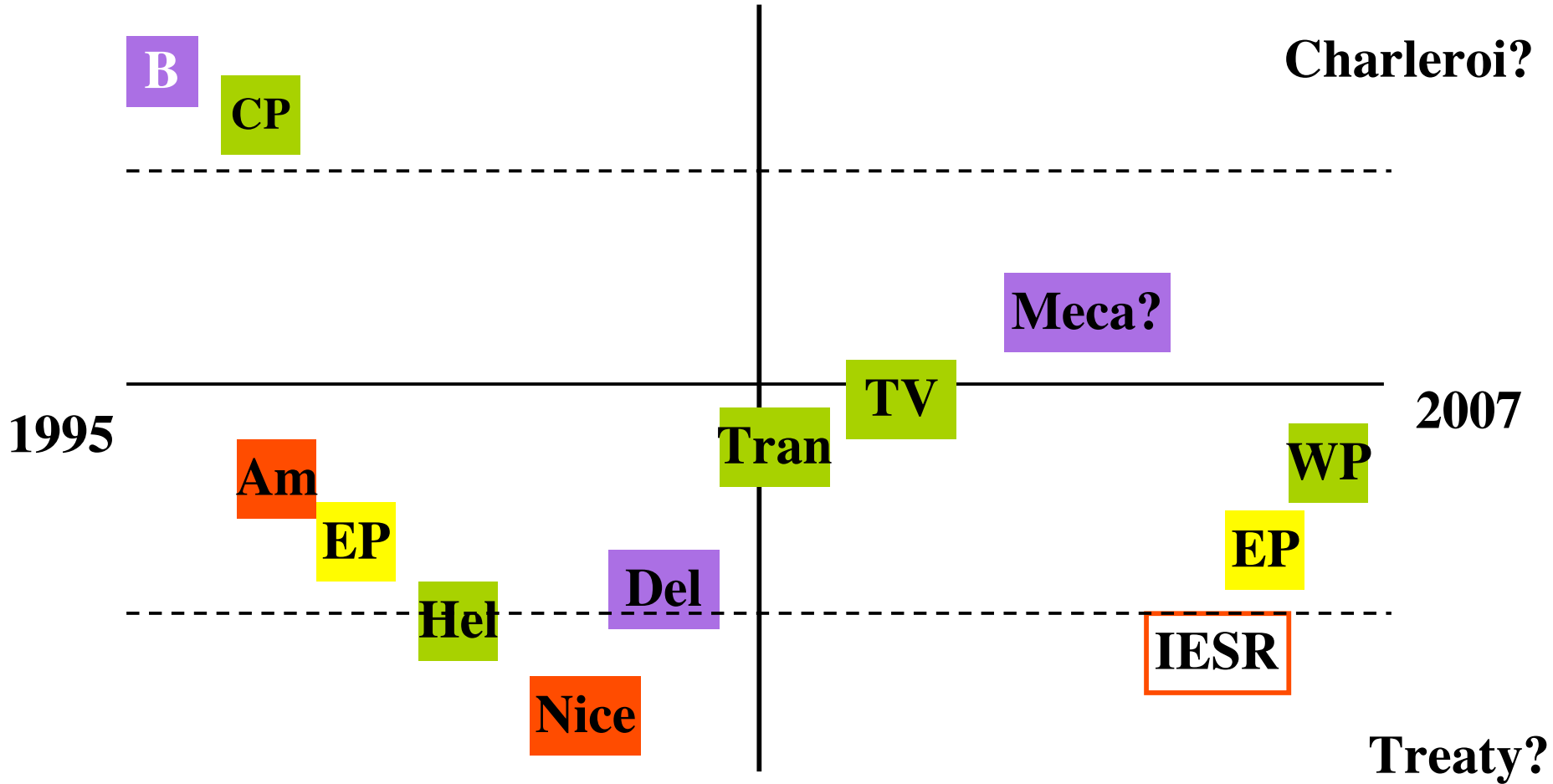
‘The two organisations [UEFA and the EU] intend to work together to promote the values that have made European sport such a success’

EC Press Release, IP/07/313, 12 March 2007

The EU and sport milestones

- ECJ: Bosman (1995)
- COUN: Amsterdam Declaration (1997)
- COUN: Nice Declaration (2000)
- COM: Competition settlements (2001-2003)
- ECJ: Delliège and Lehtonen (2000)
- IESR and EP Belet report (2007)
- COM: White Paper on sport (2007)

Definition A: Sport as business



Definition B: Sport as socio-cultural

Consequences

- Transformation of the pyramid
 - Emergence of new stakeholders
 - Distributive networks
 - Weakening of vertical channel of authority
- UEFA's legitimacy contested:
Change of policy venues (Dudley & Richardson 1996)
- Oversight: Importance of public law
- Opportunity: Supervised autonomy (Foster 2000)

UEFA's change of direction

- Obligated: 'We had no other option'
- Socialisation: 'You can reach satisfactory agreements with the EU'
- Re-definition: A new governing body
- Legitimacy: Internal (clubs&leagues) and external challenges (TV)

New policies, but...

- Improved consultation
- Professionalisation
- Solidarity
- Responsive to public authorities
- Engaging in wider public policy
- Assistance and standards
- Vision Europe
- Representation and internal democracy
- Just a lobby campaign?
- Reluctance to adapt: Still fighting quotas
- Reluctance to 'supervision': Meca-Medina, legal certainty
- Implementation?
- Platini? (FT 21/5/07)

UEFA in the policy community

- Re-positioned as ‘insider’ (Maloney et al. 1994)
- Political allies: EP, Sport ministers, DG EAC
- Improved image within EU institutions
- Access does not mean influence (Greenwood 2003):
Systemic agenda v. Institutional agenda
(Cobb and Elder 1978)

Conclusion: A possible partnership?

- Supervised autonomy is here to stay
- But, what is autonomy? And specificity?
- Trade off: Legitimacy – Public supervision
- The White Paper
 - Does what says in the tin. No threat of ‘regulation’
 - Less political, more pragmatic: Action plan
 - Modest budget: €2.85m / 5 years
 - Typical from Barroso Commission
 - Provides room for co-operation

Thanks!



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