Improving football governance through supporter involvement and community ownership

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Brussels 8 April 2013
What We Do

- Assist supporters on over 20 countries in setting up democratic cooperatives: Supporters’ Trusts;

- Help supporters become involved in the decision making process at their clubs;

- Advise clubs, governing bodies and other institutions about alternative/inclusive ownership and governance models.

- Help facilitate implementation of Supporter Liaison Officers (Art. 35, UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations).
We Promote

- The **social and community value** of sports clubs;
- **Improved relationships** between governing bodies, clubs and supporters;
- **Good governance** and **greater transparency** in sport;
- **Democratic representation** for supporters at football clubs and governing bodies.
Project background

- Unsustainable financial models, weak governance and a lack of democratic accountability in the ownership and regulation of football in particular, which weakens the social function of sport.

- Growing number of supporters organisations seeking to ensure their clubs have secure and sustainable futures as community focused businesses; growing demand for capacity building on local and national levels.

- SD Europe started in 2007 - now working in over 20 countries.

- Lack of democracy, active citizenship and social integration in football.
- A clear need for the promotion of democratic supporter involvement to increase opportunities for stakeholders to make meaningful contributions to decision-making processes, good governance and increasing community outreach.
IMPROVING FOOTBALL GOVERNANCE THROUGH SUPPORTER INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

A project supported by the European Commission through the 2011 Preparatory Actions in the field of sport
Objectives

- Strengthen the European supporter ownership network;
- Promote good governance amongst supporters’ trusts/groups, clubs, and other stakeholders;
- Promote democratic ownership structures in football;
- Promote football's social value through supporter involvement;
- Develop a long-term vision for spreading good governance principles from clubs to governing bodies and other sports.
Needs analysis and national surveys
To inform the project of needs of supporters' trusts/groups in relation to the governance of their clubs and national associations

Establishment of national supporters’ organisations
New: Italy and Ireland;
Enabling and empowering: Sweden, Spain, Germany, France;
Supporting initiatives: Portugal

Workshops in seven countries
Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Sweden, Belgium and France
ALL stakeholders involved

Eight handbooks
About how to improve the governance of football in partners’ countries
Guidance and recommendations for supporters, institutions and governing bodies.
Madrid – 26\textsuperscript{th} January 2013
Workshop attended by
• Fans representing 30 football clubs
• Liga de Fútbol Profesional; Spanish government
• European Commission, UEFA

Agenda
• Presentation of survey results
• What is a football club? What is a supporters trust?
• The importance of supporter involvement at football clubs
• Panel discussion: Current situation of Spanish football: how we got here and how can we get out of here. The role of supporters.

Agreed actions
• Recognize the importance of supporters trusts and encourage them
• Government and league agreed to consult with supporters (open doors)
Workshop attended by
• Fans representing 15 football clubs
• General director, Serie A; President, Serie B; Federazione
• European Commission
• FASFE, Unsere Kurve

Agenda
• What are the problems facing Italian football, and;
• How democratic supporter involvement in the ownership and governance of clubs can help to address them

Agreed actions
• To continue setting up an umbrella organisation for supporters’ trusts
• Arrange meetings with Serie A and B
• Further growth of the movement (include new groups)
THE HEART OF THE GAME:

- Improving Governance in European Football
- Improving the Financial Sustainability of Football Clubs and Leagues
- Improving Transfer Operations
- Improving the Social Function of Sport
- Improving the Fight Against Match Fixing
- Reducing Discrimination and Violence
The launch of the Position Paper in the European Parliament was hosted by MEP Ivo Belet on the 7 November 2012. More than 100 participants attended the lunch-time panel debate.

The panelists from Supporters Direct, UEFA, SG Dynamo Dresden, and the EPFL discussed the involvement of supporters in the governance of the game.
The launch of the Position Paper in the European Parliament was attended by SD Europe’s network (fan representatives from 12 countries) and a wide range of key stakeholders such as...
“Supporters Direct Europe shows how fans can help to develop inclusive and sustainable structures at both the grassroots and professional levels, (…) and demonstrating how supporters can contribute to a better governed and more sustainable sport.”
What next?

1. Launching **8 toolkits in 8 countries**

2. Launch of the final report at SD conference **22 June**

3. Follow up meetings with **football authorities, MEPs and other stakeholders**

4. Launch national supporters’ organisations in **Italy and Ireland**