

Public hearing

“Hands on, hands off? The role of politicians in reforming sports governance”

3 April 2017 in Aarhus City Hall, Denmark

Over the past decade, numerous scandals have eroded the public trust in international sports organisations. The need for sports reform has become urgent, but who should take the lead?

Some argue sports organisations should be left alone to change their governance as they deem necessary. Others claim that politicians must take action from the outside: without external monitoring and control corruption and mismanagement will continue as always.

How to ensure that public money invested in sport is used correctly? How to avoid abuse of the efforts done by athletes? Can sport be controlled without endangering association freedom? Are parliamentarians more credible than sports leaders in reforming sport?

*These are some of the questions addressed at the public hearing organised jointly by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and Play the Game **in the afternoon of Monday, 3 April 2017 (2-6 pm) in Aarhus City Hall.***

*The hearing, which is organised in the context of preparing a PACE report on **“The need for better international sports governance”** (Rapporteur: Mr Mogens Jensen, Denmark, Socialist Group), with the presence of **Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe**, will bring together a variety of viewpoints and stakeholders, including sports leaders responsible for carrying out reforms on the inside of sport, journalists who have struggled to expose wrongdoing, experts who bring data and facts into the debate – and politicians who must now decide if laws should be tightened and sport come under increased public control.*

Draft programme:

14:00 Welcome by Mr Thomas Feist, Chairperson of the PACE Sub-Committee on Education, Youth and Sport

14:05 Opening words by Jens Sejer Andersen, international Director of Play the Game and moderator of the hearing

14:10 Introduction by Mogens Jensen, Rapporteur on “The need for better international sports governance”

14:15 **Panel 1: International sports governance: dreams and realities**

What are the facts about international sports governance? Which value will self-reporting from the federations add to the conclusion of external reviews? In challenging times, how much can the IOC accomplish in the Olympic family ranks?

- Pâquerette Girard Zappelli, Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer, International Olympic Committee (IOC), Lausanne, Switzerland
- Arnout Geeraert, PhD, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium; author of the Sports Governance Observer 2015 report and scientific coordinator

Discussion

15:00 **Panel 2: Breaking the silence, opening doors**

All major reforms in sport have taken place after pressure from outside, as media reports have been followed by legal and political action. Whistle-blowers and investigative reporters have paved the way in spite of resistance from sport. Should these groups be protected and encouraged, and how? How can sport ensure internal debate, transparency of decision-making, checks & balances?

- Jean-Yves Lourguilloux, Deputy Financial Public Prosecutor, French National Finances Prosecution Office
- Hajo Seppelt, investigative reporter, ARD (German Public broadcaster), Berlin
- Brian Cookson, President, Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), Aigle, Switzerland

Discussion

15:45 *coffee break*

16:00 **Panel 3: Sports autonomy: where are the limits?**

The autonomy of sport is disputed. Is it a shield for corrupt practices or a civic right? How far can politicians go to enhance good governance without suppressing association freedom? Should sport and governments negotiate global standards for mutual rights and responsibilities? Do governments have the laws in place to combat sports corruption?

- Niels Nygaard, President of the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) and Board Member of European Olympic Committees, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Simon Morton, Chief Operating Officer, UK Sport, London
- Stanislas Frossard, Executive Secretary, Enlarged Partial Agreement of Sport, Council of Europe

Discussion

16:45 **Panel 4: Common ground on burning platforms**

What can we expect from dialogue and co-operation between governments and sports movements at international level? What mandate for a possible future International Sports Integrity Partnership?

- Francesco Ricci Bitti, President of The Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) and President of SportAccord Convention, Lausanne, Switzerland
- Harri Syväsalmi, Director, Finnish Centre for Integrity in Sports

Discussion

17:30 Final remarks by Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

17:45 Conclusions by the rapporteur and moderator

Programme is subject to change