

Corporate Social Responsibility in Sport

Sylvia Schenk

Coventry, 11 June 2009

What it is all about

- CSR - a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment. Green Paper - European Commission 2001
- Financial crisis intensifies discussion on ethical behaviour
- Social criteria increasingly influencing the investment decisions of individuals and institutions (both as investors and consumers)
- Not just PR - but serious commitment needed
- Transparency of business activities brought about by the media and modern information and communication technology

And what about Sports?

Ideal...

- Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.
- The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.

Olympic Charter 1 and 2

And what about Sports?

... and reality in Sports:

- Doping
- Match fixing
- Manipulated elections, awarding of events...
- Players trafficking, child labour...
- Beijing, Sotschi...

Caused by

- Lack of democracy
- Lack of transparency
- Lack of accountability

Behind the Scenes

- Success in sport - joint interest of
 - Sports (athletes, coaches, federations, clubs etc.)
 - Politics
 - Sponsors
 - Media
- Who really wants a clean sport?
- Examples
 - Schachtjor Donezk (Ukraine – Football)
 - THW Kiel (Germany – Handball)
- ➔ No democratic or professional control

CSR in Sport

- To build up reputation takes a long time – to destroy it takes just one scandal
- Sport is no longer a guarantee for a positive image - but a risky communication platform
- Serious sponsors engaged in CSR will draw back from sport
- Newly rich like Russian oligarchs will still use sport to gain social acceptance
- ➔ Example: Consequences of doping in cycling 1998 (Festina) compared to 2006

What has to be done

- Sport organisations need to adopt business principles of transparency and accountability
 - This will not happen without pressure from outside
 - Sponsors are playing a key role for change
- ➔ Sport has no choice – if it goes on setting a bad instead of a good example, it will not only lose its credibility but its financial basis, too.

Thank you for your attention!