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Remarks

by

Gianni Infantino

UEFA General Secretary

**European Conference on Integrity in Sport**

**“Match-Fixing:**

**the ugly side of the beautiful game”**

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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address this conference, co-organized by INTERPOL and FIFA, dealing with the very serious issue of match-fixing.

The prevention and detection of match-fixing has been a priority for UEFA for many years, at both a domestic and international level.

We cannot and will not allow our game to be contaminated by criminals who have nothing but financial gain in mind.

Football, as you know, is a game based on fair competition between participants played to an agreed set of rules. The integrity of our sport, the physical and emotional well-being of both players and match officials is being severely undermined by these individuals who have direct links to organized criminal groups in both Asia and Europe.

UEFA has created a sophisticated Betting Fraud Detection System (BFDS). This system monitors all matches in UEFA competitions (around 1,800 matches per season) as well as over 30,000 domestic matches. We know that over 99 per cent of the matches we monitor show absolutely no irregular betting patterns, however the less than 1 per cent of matches that do show irregular betting patterns remains unacceptable.

UEFA has three key focus points that the BFDS addresses:

- education/prevention;
- Monitoring UEFA and domestic matches;
- Sanctioning both disciplinary and criminal sanctions.

As you are certainly aware, UEFA has also established a network of Integrity Officers, present today at this conference in Rome, whose responsibility it is to continue this battle at a domestic level. Their tasks include the implementation of education programmes for players, officials and administrators, and to liaise with UEFA on any integrity matter concerning their matches or their teams participating in UEFA competitions.

UEFA is building a comprehensive internal database containing match-related information and data from diverse sources which enables us to cooperate with law enforcement agencies and state prosecutors in their enquiries into cases of the corruption of matches.

Players and match officials have been banned from any involvement in football due to our 'zero tolerance' policy towards match-fixing and clubs have been excluded from UEFA competitions. FK Pobeda (FYROM) was excluded for eight seasons from UEFA club competitions, their president and a former player were banned for life. A Malta national team player was recently given a life ban by UEFA's disciplinary bodies, as were two international referees. And it goes

without saying that investigations and sanctions have taken place in our national associations with similar success.

We will continue to fight this cancer. With our continued programme of education for players, match officials and coaches, our sophisticated monitoring systems and our close links with law enforcement agencies and state authorities, under no circumstances will we surrender to match-fixers.

We have had highly successful discussions with members of the European Union and the European Parliament to include 'sporting fraud' as a specific criminal offence in all EU member states. This would obviously facilitate the prosecution of match-fixing at the national level.

We cannot win this battle alone, and we recognize the need for close collaboration with all the members of the football family and other sporting bodies whose goal it is to see the true values of football prevail.