EC / IRIS - FRANCE

SEMINAR “FIGHT AGAINST MATCH-FIXING”

Date: 27 March 2014
Place: Paris (France)
Participants: cf. appendix

Main issues raised during the seminar:

Level of match-fixing risk and awareness:
- The match-fixing risk in France is considered by most of the participants as quite low (but a few participants think that it is quite high).
- According to participants, awareness about match-fixing issues still has to be improved (sports actors should from now on be considered as the main target) even if the country has organised several workshops and education programmes on that issue.

Who has to fight against match fixing?
- In France, public authorities determine a general framework for sport. They respect the autonomy of sports organisations, but sometimes include some specific obligations in the French Sports Code (which have then to be translated into disciplinary procedures by the national sports federations).
- The most concerned sports federations fight against match fixing and have developed their own tools (football, tennis, handball, basketball, rugby, etc.). These federations are used to accept public intervention in case of public order risks (for instance intrusion of organised Crime within sports structures).
- The National Olympic Committee (Comité National Olympique et Sportif Français) didn’t have to develop common rules because the French Sports Code anticipates this issue.
- The idea to develop new strong measures to protect sports integrity and to share information in an international cooperative way is seen as important by all participants. France supports the idea of an international convention to fight match fixing and was actively involved in the negotiations.

Sports betting:
- In France, many participants had a quite good knowledge about betting.
- The country adopted a new Law on gambling in May 2010 (including a regulation of the online sports betting market). This new law includes restrictions seeking to safeguard sports integrity (limitation of “risky” bets and of the annual pay out rate). In France, there is a monopoly for offline sports betting (Française des Jeux) and a system of licences for online sports betting (on the 31st March 2014: 9 licences allowed).
- The new gambling legislation includes provisions to fight against illegal betting (black list, IP blocking, payment blocking, advertising ban). Even if payment blocking (as most effective measure) has not been implemented yet, the part of the illegal market now remains under 10%. For most of the participants, fight against illegal betting is a main issue.

- In France, there is a binding cooperation between sports organisers and betting companies, through a "betting right". To offer bets on a French competition, betting companies have to sign an agreement with the organiser of this competition, to pay a "betting right" (around 1,1% of the sales in average, there was also a debate to know if it would be appropriate to increase this rate). Through this agreement, both parties also plan to exchange information on suspicious betting patterns and have to implement education and prevention programmes. According to some participants, it would be interesting to show other countries that the betting right's resources are used to implement measures to protect sport's integrity.

- For many participants, restricting risky bets / types of betting is a key issue, not only in France but also at an international level. The representative of ARJEL, the regulatory authority, explains that it is important to keep a strong and appropriate level of restrictions.

- During the seminar, there was a discussion about the possibility to extend the concept of betting right to betting companies located in other countries and offering bets on the French market.

- The ARJEL implemented a quite unique technical system from the start of the new betting law in 2010. It works with a “frontal bone”, what means the possibility controlling around 50 millions operations every day and monitoring all the individual bets placed online in France. This frontal is therefore able to detect suspicious sports events, thanks to different levels of alerts.

**Measures to protect sports integrity:**

- Participants give overwhelming support to education and information measures, clearly named as the first priority in the fight against match-fixing.

- Since 2011, many federations implemented very complete education programmes: football and tennis first, then the national Olympic committee (CNOSF), basketball, handball, rugby and cycling. Most of these programmes have been set up thanks to the technical expertise and the financial support of the French Lottery (FDJ).

These programmes include:

  o Training of the integrity officers, trainers, educators, etc. (football, tennis, basketball, handball, rugby, etc.);
  o Face-to-face sessions: basketball, football, tennis, etc.;
  o E-learning programmes: tennis;
  o Practical guidebooks (football, tennis, rugby, etc.).

- In France there are both conflicts of interest rules for sports actors and betting companies (and their employees):

  o Betting prohibitions for sports actors (including the possibility – through ARJEL - to check if sports actors bet with licensed online betting companies);
  o Prohibition for sports actors to disclose inside information (not known from the general public);
- Betting companies cannot control sports organisers if they offer bets on their competitions;
- Betting companies’ employees cannot register and bet on their own sports betting products.

- There is a good cooperation between the different stakeholders (betting operators, gambling regulatory authorities, the police – dedicated service for gambling and match fixing - and sports organisations) regarding alerts in case of suspicious betting patterns. It has to be noticed that the French monopoly on land based sports betting (FDJ) developed an efficient alert procedure offline.

- In France, there is a specific criminal offence on match fixing (article 445-1-1 and 445-1-2 of the Criminal Code – 1 February 2012). Anyone who commits that kind of fraud is liable to imprisonment of up to five years and/or a fine up to €75,000.
- International cooperation is a key issue for many participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Existing (Yes / No)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betting: Fight against illegal betting</td>
<td>YES (legislation allows gambling authorities to prohibit financial institutes and financial transaction providers to cooperate and assist in illegal gambling business / Should come into force in 2014)</td>
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<td>Betting: Authorised list of bets</td>
<td>YES (Types of bets / List of bets authorised by the sports betting regulatory authority - ARJEL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betting: Other restrictions (pay out, stakes)</td>
<td>YES (limitation of the pay out rate on an annual basis: 85%)</td>
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<td>Sport: Education programs</td>
<td>YES (major sports: basketball, football, handball, rugby, tennis, etc.)</td>
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<td>Betting prohibition for sport actors</td>
<td>YES (all sports – compulsory for sports organisers through French sports Code)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflicts of interest: Disclosure of inside information</td>
<td>YES (all sports – compulsory for sports organisers through French sports Code)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrity officer</td>
<td>YES for all sports organisers (coordination through the French Olympic Committee – CNOSF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport: Prohibition to control betting operators</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal offence &amp; Sanctions</td>
<td>YES specific criminal offence for sports fraud (Law - 1 February 2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betting: Prohibition to control sports when bets are offered</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract between sport and betting</td>
<td>YES (through the principle of a “betting right” – intellectual property for sports organisers on bets placed in France)</td>
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<td>Intelligence and monitoring</td>
<td>YES (through ARJEL, SportRadar (football) and ELMS)</td>
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Next steps and recommendations:

- France may possibly look into the 3 following priority items:
  - Implementation of an enhanced multi-stakeholders coordination at a national level, for example through the National Olympic Committee (CNOSF) and the betting regulatory authorities (Ministry of Budget and ARJEL). The objective aims in particular at taking advantage of the best practices implemented by LFP (football), FFT (tennis), etc.
  - Analysis of the sports actors’ behaviours towards betting and match fixing (knowledge about betting procedures and obligations, number of approaches, etc.).
Development of new cooperative agreements between ARJEL and other regulatory authorities. One of the objectives could be to determine an international standard of alerts based on the experience of the ARJEL’s frontal bone.

APPENDIX

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