

(Translation from the French text)

**By post**

Mr Jean-Claude Mignon  
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the  
Council of Europe  
Av. de l'Europe  
F – 67075 Strasbourg Cedex

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SG/wdg/fan

**Report: Good governance and ethics in sport**

Dear President,

I am writing in relation to the report on good governance and ethics in sport adopted on 6 March 2012 by the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

As you know, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) issued a media release after the report was published to rectify certain points in the text and to reiterate our stance, particularly on the points and references made to our institution and President in point 6 of the draft resolution.

Ahead of the forthcoming debate on this text by the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media as well as by the Parliamentary Assembly, I would like to draw your attention to certain passages of the text which are extremely problematic and even unacceptable from our point of view.

Besides feeling like we are the only organisation to be systematically criticised throughout the text (with only one positive reference made to us on the very last page of the text), the report on good governance in sport makes an appeal to our organisation and our internal running right from the very first page, thus undermining our institution. The references to our presidential elections, in particular, constitute not only direct intervention in the way in which a federation, an international federation in this case, is set up and run in accordance with its statutes and regulations, but also an insinuation regarding our President which is both derogatory and unfounded.

On many occasions in the past, we have provided information on the reform process of our governing structures, giving explanations and the exact details on the format of this process and its time frame, with our goal being to achieve specific proposals and the right results in the shortest possible time.

At the same time, we have also reiterated our stance on the publication of the non-prosecution order in the ISL/ISMM case many times, clearly stating that we are in favour of publishing this file, but in a

way which respects the legal restrictions and procedures required in this area, given that the decision currently rests with the Swiss Federal Tribunal.

Likewise, we have also provided full information on the results of proceedings and inquiries opened by the FIFA Ethics Committee concerning the FIFA presidential elections of June 2011. In this respect, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the accusations made by Mohamed bin Hammam, a former member of the FIFA Executive Committee and a former presidential candidate, against the FIFA President, who was also a presidential candidate at the time of the events, related to grounds which differ entirely from those insinuated in paragraph 6.3 of the draft resolution. Similarly, I would like to point out that Mohamed bin Hammam withdrew from the presidential race even before he was provisionally suspended by the FIFA Ethics Committee on 29 May 2011. Furthermore, I would like to inform you that the FIFA Statutes do not prohibit a single-candidacy situation for the office of FIFA President; the same is true for the football confederations and for several other federations for that matter. For instance, during the last elections held by the European confederation, UEFA, the elected president was the only candidate for the presidential elections and he was elected by acclamation. I might also add that at the 61<sup>st</sup> FIFA Congress, during the discussion on the approval of the Congress agenda, the motion for modifying agenda point no. 14 which proposed postponing the election, as requested by only one member association, was put to the vote and resulted in 17 votes for the postponement, and 172 against it. The agenda was then put to the vote and ratified by 198 votes in favour, with four votes against it.

Before concluding this letter, and given the fact that the report on good governance and ethics in sport also addresses a very sensitive matter, namely that of the migration of young athletes, an issue on which FIFA has been continuously working to ensure that the regulatory framework governing the transfer of minors is appropriately and properly applied and reinforced in all cases, may I remind you that the exception according to which the transfer of a player under the age of 18 may be authorised (based on strict criteria) is one of the principles requested by European authorities and ultimately established in the 2001 agreement between FIFA, UEFA and the European Commission.

Having said that, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance that we at FIFA attach to dialogue and cooperation with both European and international organisations. We always enter into discussions and debates with European bodies in a spirit of cooperation and aim to contribute to football governance issues as world football's governing body. I can assure you that for our part, we are ready to continue along this avenue of dialogue and exchange of views.

Moreover, I think you will agree that in order to achieve healthy, constructive discussions, all dialogue must be based on trust and respect, and must be mindful of the sacred principle of autonomy in sport. In relation to this last point, in the past your institution has acknowledged the value and importance of this autonomy in enabling sport to fulfil its cultural and educational role for the benefit of our society and particularly of younger generations.

The pyramid structure on which the international football family is based rests on the principles of democracy, transparency, participation and solidarity. Any changes which prove necessary are and will continue to be addressed by our competent bodies.

I can assure you of our enduring will to continue in this way.

We thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

FIFA

Jérôme Valcke  
Secretary General

cc:  
Mr François Rochebloine  
Rapporteur – good governance and ethics in sport report