



Union des associations européennes de football



**Media Release**

Date: 25/10/2007

**Communiqué aux médias**

No. 120

**Medien-Mitteilung**

## **European team sports back Dutch-French memorandum on specificity of sport**

The leading European team sports today welcomed a new initiative by the European Affairs Ministers of the Netherlands and France which aims to provide greater legal security for sport in Europe. Mr Frans Timmermans and Monsieur Jean-Pierre Jouyet, respectively the Dutch and French Ministers responsible for EU matters, have authored a Memorandum in which they outline their concerns regarding the lack of legal clarity in relation to key issues concerning sport, in particular, team sport in Europe.

While emphasising the importance of the Nice Declaration on Sport adopted in 2000 and also welcoming the European Commission's recent "White Paper" on sport published earlier this year, the Dutch and French Ministers observe that a "case-by-case" approach to all questions facing sport cannot deliver the degree of legal stability needed to ensure the healthy development of sport in Europe. Consequently, the Ministers have called on the European Commission to focus on certain practical matters facing sport today and to provide concrete guidance for the future, in particular with regard to specificity and the autonomy of sport. These matters include the composition of teams, the regulation of agents, rules on the training of players (in particular, "local trained player" requirements), the protection of minors, the central marketing of television rights, and club licensing systems.

UEFA President Michel Platini discussed these matters with the Dutch Minister earlier this month and was impressed with what he heard. He stated as follows: "This is a welcome initiative from Mr Timmermans, who has demonstrated a real interest in, and understanding of, the complex issues facing football today and the central role of sports federations. Sports governing bodies need a better legal framework within which to operate – to plan for the future development of their sports. The future of sport should not be decided by a series of court cases."

The Memorandum of the French and Dutch ministers is supported by the following European team sports:

Basketball (FIBA Europe)  
Football (UEFA)  
Handball (EHF - European Handball Federation)  
Rugby (FIRA-Association Européenne de Rugby (FIRA-AER))  
Volleyball (CEV - Confédération Européenne de Volleyball)

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