

# UEFA works to expand cooperation with betting industry

UEFA President, Michel Platini, last week chaired an informal meeting between European football's governing body and key representatives of the European betting industry to discuss ways of strengthening the Memorandum of Understanding between UEFA and betting operators.

The meeting was attended by Betfair, the European Sports Security Association (ESSA), the European Lotteries and Verband Europäischer Wettunternehmer (VeWu). The purpose of the meeting was to look at the situation regarding betting and football matches and to identify how the existing early-warning system can be further improved.

With the current early-warning system, UEFA is able to request information from the various betting bodies, which identifies individuals behind any activity which has raised suspicion that corruption may have taken place.

Unlike certain other sporting bodies, UEFA has long acknowledged the importance of working with gambling associations in order to monitor gambling activities on its football matches. Back in 2005, UEFA signed Memorandums of Understanding with bookmakers and gambling associations, including the European Lotteries, Betfair and the European Sports Security Association.

UEFA President, Michel Platini, said of the meeting: "As a responsible governing body, UEFA is continuously monitoring football betting patterns, and it is clear that we will take the necessary actions in any cases where that may be justified.

Platini said that the efficiency of a control system is proven by the number of irregularities found. "Our system works very well," he said. "This is a clear message to individuals involved in these illegal practices that we are determined to root out any forms of corruption, or betting anomalies, that may distort the outcome of our matches.

"Today's meeting was all about exchanging further ideas and information with the European betting industry in an open and positive way, so that we may find ways of improving our already stringent early-warning system, and therefore protecting the game from any potential illegal betting activities. We have agreed to continue to work closely together in this field."

Speaking after the meeting, David Pittel, of the European Sports Security Association (ESSA), said: "Today's meeting with UEFA and the UEFA President, Michel Platini, was very productive. We have agreed to examine ways in which we can cooperate more closely with UEFA and football in general, in order to detect any suspicious betting activities, or patterns, very early on, thereby enabling us to pass on information which can be dealt with efficiently. We will continue to strengthen our ties based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2005."