



101

DESK RESEARCH REPORT ABOUT INTERNATIONAL  
FIGHT AGAINST MATCH-FIXING - ABSTRACT

# IAM

## Promoting Integrity Against Match-fixing through education among young athletes

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Match-fixing is a global problem. IAM desk research aims to analyse deeply the current situation regarding this threat to sport at international level, in particular in the partner countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Slovenia and Turkey) and in the EU context.

This document represents an abstract of the full report (available in English on the project website <https://codacons.it/progetto-iam/>) presenting the results of the “desk research” and secondary data, implemented by the IAM project research team.

The “desk research” activity was based on existing and recent official statistics, reports and articles from journals, newspapers, governments white papers and EU statistics on match fixing in the participating countries. Moreover, a focused analysis on implemented initiatives and projects at European and international level has been included, given the global dimension of match-fixing. Furthermore, a specific section concerns consumer protection, referring to technical papers and industry statistics concerning supporters perspective on the manipulation of results and matches.

The document aims to inform and raise awareness about match-fixing danger, its consequences and the existing solutions to fight against it through the promotion of education, prevention and sport values such as integrity, transparency and fairness.

Methodology used: Analysis of accessible literature sources and desk review of existing policies and practices, including observation and communication with stake-holders.



## 2. THE PROJECT

The promotion of integrity against match fixing is the main objective of **IAM project** /Promoting Integrity Against Match-fixing through education among young athletes/ and a specific priority of Erasmus+ Sport programme.

The core idea of our project is to fight this international contemporary threat facing sport through education among young athletes (aged 14-16 years old) in order to preserve transparency, fair-play and respect for others on the early level of sport activity.

### PROJECT PARTNERS

- CODACONS (Coordinator), Italy
- ISES, Italy
- BSDA, Bulgaria
- CRE.THI.DEV, Greece
- NK INTERBLOCK, Slovenia
- TOSF, Turkey

To know more about the project partners please visit

<https://codacons.it/progetto-iam/>

The challenges posed by the manipulation of matches need a strong cooperation on the European and international level today, in order to protect the future of sport as well as its ethics and integrity.

Match-fixing can be categorised in two broader groups. In European sports, there have been several occurrences of match-fixing by corruption, gambling, or betting. This is when third party agents influence individuals to engage in match-fixing.

The second category of match-fixing comprehends the manipulation of sports competitions by coaches or players, as either a tactic or strategy.

Anyone can manipulate competitions. Individuals with a criminal background can be the fixer, players and their teammates or club owners.

*But why do people involved in sport agree to match-fix?*

Coaches and players are more likely to fix a match when a specific game does not affect the final outcomes of the competition. 'Spot-fixing', is when an individual purposely carries out a certain action, but not necessarily with the intention of losing a game. Therefore, any feeling of guilt is significantly lower, meaning those involved may be more open to offers made to them.

Individuals involved in sport can be manipulated more easily than those who are part of a team. Therefore, referees are often a primary target as they have a high degree of influence on the outcome of competitions.

In addition to club officials, as they can influence the club and its entire culture.

The challenges posed by the manipulation of matches need today a strong cooperation at European and international level in order to protect the future of sport as well as its ethics and integrity.

For this reason, IAM supports EU match-fixing policies, such as the on going 2017-2020 work plan on sport, which aim to combat match fixing and is an important contribution to reach common goals for the integrity of sport on the European and international level. It underlines the importance of education to prevent the dangers of corruption and manipulation of results, as expected by the Erasmus+ programme. It stresses the importance of awareness raising, collaboration and exchange of information between competent authorities and organizations at national and international level, as IAM aims to do through the implementation of education activities.

Our project sets as the main priority the awareness raising of young sportswomen and sportsmen (aged 14-16) in order to preserve the fairness and the transparency of athletes. Since the potential gains of match-fixing are high, prevention efforts to protect players are necessary. In particular, at the beginning of their professional career, players must know the rules in order to protect the future of their sport.

IAM, focusing on young sportsmen and sportswomen, aims to promote the recognition and the rejection of manipulation and corruption since the very beginning of their passion for sport, as the UEFA campaign "Recognize, Reject and Report"

supports. Indeed, young athletes can be more vulnerable, facing the dangers of current technological changes, the speed and ease of global communication which can rise the potential risk of sports betting. It is also necessary to raise their awareness about the possibility of a corrupt environment in sport clubs and federations and to teach them how to protect themselves and their sport. Thus, it is essential to sensitize U-14 - U-16 players through the implementation of interactive workshops which will show risk factors, such as bad governance.

IAM project is coordinated by CODACON (IT) which is a consumers' rights protection association and for this reason, in our research we considered fundamental also the supporters (which can be considered consumers of sports events) point of view in order to protect them from fixed matches.

Supporters need to play an active role when it comes to awareness raising campaigns and prevention projects across their peer groups. In this context supporters need to cooperate with the sports movement, public and private bodies.

Better governance of football clubs including supporter involvement and ownership will reduce the risk of match fixing:

- Formalised and direct supporter involvement or community ownership (minority or majority shareholding) leads to more democratic decision-making structures within clubs and thus to more transparency and sustainability.
- The implementation of basic principles of good governance, such as democratic representation and transparency, creates an environment

in which match fixing is less likely to occur and the social value of football can unfold its full potential contributing to community development and active citizenship.

- Therefore, better compliance regulations with robust risk management and good governance must be an integral part of the fight against match fixing.

Each partner will play an active role, representing its own added value to the project and working together to ensure a positive impact on the young beneficiaries of IAM. Thus, the joint initiative of different stakeholders, representing the education sector, sport field and consumer and sport supporters protection will contribute to raise the awareness of young athletes about the need of a greater understanding of this present danger to preserve integrity, transparency and fairness in sport.



### 3. MATCH-FIXING IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE PROJECT'S DESK RESEARCH

The European legal landscape is not unified yet; whilst some countries focus on general offences of corruption or fraud, others have implemented specific sport offences to cope with match-fixing - contained either in their criminal codes (Bulgaria, Spain), sports laws (Cyprus, Poland, Greece) or special criminal laws (Italy, Malta, Portugal). In the UK, betting related match-fixing episodes are punished under the offence of cheating at gambling. Overall, these provisions differ greatly as regards the act to be criminalised as well as the scope, objective and subjective elements of the offences or the relevant sanctions.

Match fixing runs contrary to the principle of fairness in sporting competitions, which is one of the objectives of EU action in the field of sport (Article 165 TFEU)<sup>1</sup>. Addressing the issue requires concerted and coordinated efforts from public authorities, sport organisations and gambling operators. A number of regulatory (gambling licensing conditions, statutes of sport federations) and self-regulatory mechanisms (codes of conduct) are in place in the EU as well as educational campaigns, conflict of interest rules, bet monitoring systems and alert tools (whistle blowing, hot lines etc.).

Cooperation between stakeholders exists but is limited in scope. There is a clear need for more cooperation between betting operators, sport bodies and competent authorities including gambling regulators, both at national and international level.

Different European institutions, as the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union have promoted different initiatives to fight against match-fixing open to EU institutions and Member States (Communications, Green Papers, Resolutions, Conventions and Funding programmes).

More details on such initiatives can be found in the full report.

The full report, then, proceeds in presenting per each country:

- Match-fixing definition.
- Match-fixing related cases.
- Available statistics and analysis of the provided data at national level.
- Match-fixing initiatives at national level in project countries.
- Good practices.

Once collected all data, the activity responsible – BSDA, BG – analysed them to provide a comparative analysis of match-fixing situation in the project's participating countries and draw some conclusions and guidelines useful for the other project's activities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT>

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on a limited number of case studies, IAM research can highlight a number of key general conclusions with regard to the effectiveness of responses and particular features of promising practices in this area:

**There is evidence that the introduction of stricter legal penalties reduces levels of match-fixing:** Legal penalties have been shown to work in countries where there was previously a high prevalence of match fixing.

**There is a need to focus on preventative measures as well as legal penalties:** IAM analysis of practices in the participating countries has highlighted a range of education and awareness raising initiatives that have been shown to be successful in terms of take-up amongst sport professionals and, based on anecdotal evidence, their ability to improve understanding, influence behaviour and encourage reporting of suspicious behaviour.

**The role of multi-stakeholder groups for preventing and tackling corruption in sport:** some case studies reported by the partners have highlighted the potential for involving all relevant actors in addressing specific corruption practices including judicial bodies, government ministries, national sport agencies and federations.

Based on the analysed national landscapes, legislation, practices and initiatives regarding match-fixing and integrity in sport in this report, the project team has made the following conclusions, by country, and recommendations:

Although **Bulgaria** is a party in multiple international integrity instruments and match-fixing is considered as a crime both by the Penal Code, Physical Activities and Sports Act and Gambling Act, the topic is still not as prioritized as the importance of the phenomenon supposes. Some of the sport entities on the local level, such as Bulgarian Football Union and Bulgarian Tennis Federation has started their own initiatives to prevent and fight match-fixing, but there is still a huge floor for further development of both policies and practices on the national and local level.

Legal definition of match-fixing in **Greece** is concrete and well described, as well as there is existing legal framework of the topic, with exclusively awarded rights to a national football organization. The available legal arrangements anyway are somehow too limited to the match-fixing in other sports and their respective fight and prevention.

Interesting to be highlighted is the whistleblower protection policy. Engaging aspect is the phenomenon, called by project researchers in Greece "I deal with corruption in sport" that can be used as a source of inspiration for other Member States. Based on the report findings, the current policies have created the need for more elaborated

or resourceful ways to decrease the levels of corruption in sport. Even though tighter control measures have been taken, betting for example still remains widely uncontrollable and the overall level of good governance in the sector is still not on the proper level.

**Italy** is one of the countries in the EU with developing legal framework in the field of match-fixing. Since 2015, an additional legislation has been adopted that includes even confiscation of goods and properties related to match-fixers.

**Slovenia** has adopted specific legislation in the field of match-fixing in its Gambling Act under a licensing procedure. Although, there are recorded recent cases of misconduct in sport, recorded by project partners that lead to further actions needed on national level as even the country media is reporting the occurrence of this negative phenomenon, called by scientists even "soccer mafia".

Match-fixing is a crime in **Turkey**, based on the Law on Prevention of Violence and Irregularity in Sports that also provides a set of sanctions when the mentioned crime is recorded. Still, the lack of integrity is recorded in multiple media covered cases, that occurs in the country that lead to the need of further, stricter measures.

One of the big gaps that the IAM research team has reported is the lack of relevant and up to date statistics of the integrity in sport as Bulgaria, Greece and Slovenia do not possess with appropriate data to be evaluated. Italy and Turkey on other hand report available data – recent statistical data from 2020 (and previous one from 2004) for

Italy and academic researches with available data for Turkey. IAM project team recommends that a relevant statistics about the integrity in sport is implemented at a regular basis by the national institutions in the field of sport.

Both the sections for match-fixing initiatives and campaigns and the highlighted good practices are a source of inspiration for sport sector and IAM project team will be happy to set the line for more actions and successful projects and campaigns in the field of integrity in sport. Starting with small steps can lead us to a huge change in the future. IAM seeks to identify good practices and innovative approaches applied or tested at European level that fight match-fixing threat facing sport through education among young athletes in order to preserve transparency, fair-play and respect for others at the earliest level of sport activity. Based on the good practice examples, quality criteria and recommendations will be developed for the IAM methodologies and contents of the educational material. The table below summarises the practices identified and reported by their type (full data can be found in the IAM project research).

<b>No</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Country/ies</b>	<b>Website</b>
1	Play Fair Code	Austria	<a href="https://www.playfaircode.at/en">https://www.playfaircode.at/en</a>
2	SRM - Education through sport – Shaping role models for the future	Slovenia, Portugal and Croatia	<a href="http://safeyou.eu/">http://safeyou.eu/</a>
3	Training on Protected Reporting System for Professional and Grassroots Sport (T-PREG)	Portugal, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Slovenia	<a href="http://www.tpreg-training.eu/">http://www.tpreg-training.eu/</a>
4	About the POINTS	Belguim, Croatia, Czech republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Slovenia	<a href="https://www.points-project.com/">https://www.points-project.com/</a>
5	Data Integrity - Bulgarian Basketball Federation and the National Basketball League	Bulgaria	<a href="https://basketball.bg/news.php?g=20&amp;id=9719">https://basketball.bg/news.php?g=20&amp;id=9719</a>
6	Against match fixing – European Research & Education Programme	Bulgaria, Poland, Republic Of North Macedonia, Belgium, Italy, France, Austria, Germany	<a href="http://againstmatchfixing.com/">http://againstmatchfixing.com/</a>
7	FIX the FIXING	Greece, United Kingdom, France, Cyprus, Ireland, Austria	<a href="https://playthegame.org/media/7492285/Nikolaos-Theodorou.pdf">https://playthegame.org/media/7492285/Nikolaos-Theodorou.pdf</a>
8	WHISTLE	Greece, Cyprus, France, German, Romania, UK, Italy	<a href="http://sportwhistle.eu">http://sportwhistle.eu</a>
9	Staying on side	Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal and the United Kingdom, Norway and Poland	<a href="https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/staying_on_side_how_to_stop_match_fixing">https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/staying_on_side_how_to_stop_match_fixing</a>
10	PROtect Integrity	United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Spain	<a href="https://www.protect-integrity.com">https://www.protect-integrity.com</a>
11	AMATT – Anti Match-Fixing Top Training	Italy, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain	<a href="https://www.amatt.eu">https://www.amatt.eu</a>
12	INTEGRITY TOUR	Italy	<a href="https://www.lega-pro.com/progetto-integrity/cosa-e/">https://www.lega-pro.com/progetto-integrity/cosa-e/</a>
13	BE TRUE. BE YOU. BELIEVE IN SPORT	Italy	<a href="https://www.taekwondoitalia.it/new-s-fita/1822-be-true-be-you-believe-">https://www.taekwondoitalia.it/new-s-fita/1822-be-true-be-you-believe-</a>

			in-sport.html
14	DON'T FIX IT!	Slovenia, United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Romania, Finland, Hungary, Norway, Scotland	<a href="https://www.fifpro.org/en/rights/match-fixing/match-fixing-don-t-fix-it">https://www.fifpro.org/en/rights/match-fixing/match-fixing-don-t-fix-it</a>
15	FIFA INTEGRITY SUPPORT	FIFA members	<a href="https://www.fifa.com/who-we-are/legal/integrity/integrity-support/">https://www.fifa.com/who-we-are/legal/integrity/integrity-support/</a>
16	Oli Project	Turkey	<a href="https://www.olimpiyatkomitesi.org.tr/Detail/Guncel/14/1">https://www.olimpiyatkomitesi.org.tr/Detail/Guncel/14/1</a>
17	Olympic Mothers	Turkey	<a href="https://www.olimpiyatkomitesi.org.tr/Haber-Detay/PG-Turkiye%E2%80%99den-30-Yilinda-30-Sporcuyla-ve-Annelerine-Destek/1502">https://www.olimpiyatkomitesi.org.tr/Haber-Detay/PG-Turkiye%E2%80%99den-30-Yilinda-30-Sporcuyla-ve-Annelerine-Destek/1502</a>
18	I'm the joy of my school, I'm the fair play ambassador	Turkey	n/a

### *Recommendations to sport decision-makers*

IAM project team would like to welcome sport decision-makers, institutions leaders and stakeholders to:

- Empower match-fixing prevention and fight at all levels;
- Ensure proper educational opportunities, related to integrity in sport;
- Be ambassadors of good governance in sport.

### *Recommendations to sport organisations*

IAM project team would like to welcome sport organisation, clubs and federations to:

- Develop and implement specific integrity policies and internal/external integrity trainings in their entities;
- Adopt match-fixing prevention and fight behaviour;
- Promote good governance in sport at any level of their structures.

