

For the attention of:

President of the European Commission, **Mr Jean-Claude Juncker**

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, **Mr Tibor Navracsics**

Commissioner for Competition, **Ms Margrethe Vestager**

Brussels, November 16th 2017

Dear President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker,

Dear Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Tibor Navracsics,

Dear Commissioner for Competition Margrethe Vestager,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, hereby request from the European Commission and the Euroleague Commercial Assets S.A. (ECA) to provide an urgent solution for the problem regarding the upcoming basketball World Cup qualification process, which also serves as qualification for the Olympic Games.

As you may be aware, there is a problem in European basketball which is a consequence of participation of a small number of basketball clubs organized as a company under the title of Euroleague Commercial Assets S.A. (ECA). The operation of the mentioned organization brings the organization of the basketball sport in the European Union into question. **The ECA uses Turkish Airlines Euroleague's fixture schedule as a means for preventing their players from playing for their national teams in World Cup 2019 qualification matches to be played this month, more precisely two weeks from now, as well as in February 2018, which also serve as qualification matches for the upcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020.**

In 2014. International basketball federation (FIBA) declared a unanimous decision on changing the competition system whereby host-guest team based playing was again introduced on the level of all continental international federations. Only four of those matches are played during the national leagues season, two in November and two in February.

In February 2017. the European Parliament brought a Resolution on an integrated approach to sports policy: good governance, accessibility and integrity 2016/2143 in which, among the rest, it is stated that: „national teams play an essential role not only in terms of fostering national identity and inspiring young athletes to reach the highest level of sporting performance, but also by promoting solidarity with grassroots sports“.

In July 2017. the ECA, more precisely 11 clubs from Israel, Russia, Turkey and four EEA countries (Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Spain) controlling it, issued a Euroleague fixture schedule for the season 2017/2018 which overlaps with schedules of qualifying matches in November 2017 and February 2019. as a tool to prevent Euroleague players from playing for their national teams and by doing it

they violated Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union by creating a monopolistic approach from ECA by excluding leading European basketball players from national team competitions, and thereby in fact boycotting national team matches.

Furthermore, the ECA's refusal to adjust the fixture schedule is in violation of written and oral guarantees provided to the European Commission and FIBA by the ECA itself. During the procedure held before DG Competition from September to November 2016 the ECA stated that it „fully respects the fixture schedule of national team competitions“ and confirmed that ECA rules „do not limit nor prevent players from playing for their national teams“, which is proving to be incorrect. **At this moment, we are extremely concerned about the situation involving players who are bound by employment contracts with clubs that control the ECA. Such decision affects over a hundred best European players who are of key importance for their national teams.**

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, therefore call on the European Commission to intervene in order to ensure the release of national team players because playing for the national team is not only the ultimate pride for every sportsman but also national team competitions foster the promotion of sports and their values that are consistent with the principles of fair play and integrity of sports like no other competition and as it stands in the Resolution on an integrated approach to sports policy stated above .

Yours sincerely,

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