THE BUDAPEST DECLARATION
ON THE SPECIFICITY AND AUTONOMY OF SPORT

Assembled today, Wednesday 21st October 2009, in Budapest, in the National Assembly of Hungary upon the invitation of its Sport and Tourism Committee:

- Representatives of Sports, Education and/or Culture Committees of the National Parliaments of the EU Member States,
- Representatives of the European Parliament,
- Representatives of the International Olympic Committee and of International Team Sports Federations for basketball (FIBA), football (FIFA), handball (IHF), and ice hockey (IIHF),

As well as
- Representatives of European Football Federations,

Gathered to discuss, debate and evaluate sport-political issues affecting the future of sport in Europe in light of the principles of specificity and autonomy of sport.

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In our fast-changing world, sport is at a critical moment as it is losing its national identity, cultural traditions and the century-old balance of values in Europe and in the world.

1) - We declare our deep concern as we need to restore a healthy balance between sport and business.

2) - We want to ensure that fair play is not undermined by sport competitions increasingly becoming a “playground” where success is de facto reserved for the richest, wealthiest clubs and nations, giving way for even bigger inequalities.

3) - We affirm that sport is not an economic activity per se. It is an integral part of our local, national traditions, culture and history. Sport plays a vital role in bonding communities, providing a healthy opportunity to demonstrate pride and belonging to the national and local community while at the same time bridging gaps between persons and countries.
4) - We commit ourselves to mobilize our connections and our efforts to preserve the autonomy of sport respecting the principle of subsidiarity, the competences of the member states as well as the pyramid of international sport.

5) - We urge the decision-makers in Europe to recognize, realize and support the specificity and the autonomy of sport in light of the Article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty as we need to safeguard these principles, the fairness and the openness of the competitions, the training of young players, youth development at club level and the national teams in all sports, in the spirit of the Nice Declaration adopted in 2000, of the document presented in September 2008 by the Olympic and Sport Movement, of the Declaration adopted in Biarritz in November 2008 and of the action developed by the Swedish Presidency of the EU to promote these principles.

6) - We call upon the European Institutions and all of the EU Member States, in particular Spain, Belgium and Hungary, which will preside the European Union in 2010 and in the first semester of 2011, to have the political will to support decisions strengthening the specificity and the autonomy of sport in the interest of future development for generations to come.

7) - We welcome the announcement made by the Spanish Prime Minister, Mr. Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, in Copenhagen on 2nd October 2009, to convene in April 2010 under the Spanish EU Presidency a Sport Forum on the specificity and autonomy of sport.

Time to act is now.

Adopted in Budapest, the 21st of October 2009.