

Sport 7 and its legal steps

- SPORT is a player management company founded in 2015 in Fribourg (CH).
- It soon realised that it would be impossible to make money legally in a football transfer market that is plagued by illegal and unfair practices, particularly with regard to the remuneration of player agents.
- Instead of doing what everyone else was doing, and in order to be able to be active in this market one day, Sport 7 has been tackling these illegal practices since spring 2017.
- Its legal steps, still in progress, have revealed either serious acts or dysfunctions, or a crass ignorance of the lawlessness of the transfer market and its sources, both within the football governing bodies and the Swiss and European public authorities.

Sport 7's findings

• Illicit conflicts of interest of player agents remain

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- Illegal practices between clubs and agents are the primary source of crime in the transfer market
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- FIFA 2023 Football Agent Regulations will have (almost) no impact on the lawlessness of the market
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Applying the law to stop its massacre

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The actors of the status quo

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Criminal authorities must initiate reforms

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Illicit conflicts of interest of football player agents

Agent vs Intermediary

- The 2015 FIFA Regulations on Working with Intermediaries only regulate the activity of intermediaries negotiating contracts, and not that of agents managing their players.
- All agents are intermediaries when they negotiate contracts on behalf of their players (or coaches).
 On the other hand, a number of intermediaries are not agents because they only work on individual
 transactions on behalf of players or clubs, maintaining a legal relationship with them only in the
 context of the transactions in question and not on a long-term basis (hereinafter "pure
 intermediaries").
- However, it is crucial to determine whether the player's representative is his agent or a pure intermediary, as their legal obligations, which are mainly based on the law of brokerage and the law of agency (or mandate), are not the same. In particular, an agent will never be able to lift a conflict of interest because he cannot derogate from his legal obligation to protect the interests of his player, which stems from the management relationship he has with him over time.



The website <u>www.check-your-agent.football</u> contains detailed information (dating from 2017) on the difference between an agent and a pure intermediary and on their respective rights and obligations, in particular with regard to their remuneration and conflicts of interest.

Agents' practices that constitute conflicts of interest

Agents act unlawfully with conflicts of interest when, inter alia:

- They get paid by the clubs their commissions for the management of their players; and/or
- They receive money from clubs in the context of double or triple representation practices; and/or
- They practice "switching" by legally binding themselves to clubs to negotiate employment contracts for and transfer agreements of their players, and are paid for this; and/or
- Unbeknownst to their players, they receive more money from clubs than they would if they
 were paid by their players.

All these current practices of agents, resulting from their collusion with clubs, have been their illicit business model for decades in a transfer market in which more than 95% of the actors are agents, the others being pure intermediaries.

The conflict of interest arising from the club's payment for the agent's management services

- Agents provide intermediation and management services to their players. Management services include
 defending the player's interests towards the club, whenever necessary.
- These management services are provided for in the 2023 FIFA <u>Football Agent Regulations</u> (the "Regulations"), although it is not clear whether these services, and in particular those of defending the player's interests towards the club, constitute «Football Agent Services" or «Other Services" within the meaning of the Regulations.
- The legal basis for the remuneration of intermediation services (a brokerage fee calculated as a percentage of the player's salary) differs from the remuneration of management services (usually based on the extent of the services rendered by the agent to his player). In practice, however, agents do not distinguish between these two types of remuneration and receive only one commission for all their services. This practice cannot be expected to change, especially in view of the presumption contained in Art. 15 para. 3 of the Regulations, which mixes these two types of services. The Regulations also merge the remuneration of these two types of services into a single fee (Art. 15 para. 4).
- In any case, whenever a club pays an agent out of its own pocket for the agent's management services on behalf of its player, there is an unlawful conflict of interest because the agent will no longer be able to effectively defend the interests of his player against the club that pays him for these services.

Conflict of interest arising from dual or triple representation practices

In 2007, the English Football Association (FA) had decided to abolish the illegal practices of dual representation of agents. 1 ½ years later, the Premier League clubs and the most influential agents forced it to go back, as agents were no longer interested in placing players with English clubs, preferring to continue being paid (more handsomely) by clubs in other countries. The clubs in the 2nd division had unsuccessfully opposed this return to a system that was anti-competitive for them.

Sixteen years later, Art. 12 para. 8 let. a) of the Regulations codifies the practice of dual representation of agents (player and engaging entity), even though it is illegal:

- Because agents have a legal obligation to protect the interests of their players and therefore cannot enter into a legal relationship with their players' clubs, nor can they lift the conflict of interest that such a legal relationship would create. The situation of pure intermediaries is different.
- Due to the fact that the "prior explicit written consent" of both clients (player and club) to the dual representation relationship is a red herring because it does not guarantee what would be imperative (but in any case not sufficient) in such circumstances, namely that the player's consent is informed. An informed consent that the Regulations do not want, moreover, because they do not provide for a mechanism similar to that of Art. 12 para. 4 let. a) and b). The players, who are usually unaware of the sums their agents receive from the clubs, are however the weakest party to be protected against abuse according to Art. 1 para. 2 let. e) and g) of the Regulations.

Conflict of interest arising from agents' "switching" practice

- The agents' practice of "switching", which consists of changing clients (player or club) according to their own interests and those of the club concerned with a view to a transaction to be carried out (negotiation of an employment contract or a transfer agreement), and which aims in particular to avoid the illegal practice of dual representation, is systemic in the transfer market.
- The practice of "switching" is also illegal because the agent moves from one client to another, who have opposite or potentially opposite interests, solely in order to further his own financial interests, while always returning to his player without whom he would be nothing because he could not carry out any transaction without him.
- The football federations admit that it is almost impossible for them to know which client the agent actually represents and when. Even the obligation for agents to produce their contracts does not prevent this practice from continuing.

Conflict of interest when the agent receives more money than he should

- Based on figures compiled by the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES) in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, Sport 7 calculated that in 2018 and again in 2019, agents worldwide earned an extra USD 1 billion for their intermediation services (employment contracts and transfer agreements) and management services, due to their illegal conflict of interest practices.
- A club's financial package for the signing of a player includes all costs associated with the signing, including agent fees. Thus, any amount that the agent receives in excess is an amount that the player is not entitled to, e.g. in the form of a higher salary.
- The Regulations favour the financial interests of the agent to the detriment of the ones of the player, as shown by the doubled fees in case of double representation (Art. 15 para. 2).
- Agents accept a conflict of interest in order to receive more money from clubs than they would receive
 if they were paid by their players for their services to them.
- The example of the FA's aborted initiative in 2007, those of the abolition of conflict of interest practices of agents in ice hockey in Switzerland (2016) and then at the level of world basketball (2022), as well as the announced legal fight by agents against the Regulations demonstrate that agents are seeking to maintain their past income at all costs, to the detriment of their players' interests.

Conflicts of interest are contrary to the law and FIFA regulations

Conflicts of interest are prohibited by general law, not only by the Swiss Civil Code but also at international level. Conflicts of interest are also prohibited by various FIFA regulations, in particular by Art. 19 of its Code of Ethics which applies to agents.

However, the Regulations contradict these prohibitions because:

- They only want to "limit" conflicts of interest (Art. 1 para. 2 let. c) when they should prohibit them;
- They allow for practices of agents that constitute conflicts of interest and provides no, or no effective mechanisms, to prevent them (see p. 7-10 above).

Furthermore, the Regulations refers to "permitted" conflict of interest in Art. 16 para. 3 let. c), what does not make sense: either a conflict of interest exists and is prohibited, or it has been validly lifted and no longer exists.

The Regulations thus demonstrate that practices constituting conflicts of interest for agents are voluntarily maintained whereas these practices are illegal, violate the interests of players, and are the primary source of the systemic criminality that undermines the transfer market.



Systemic conflict of interest practices of player agents as a primary source of the systemic criminality in the transfer market

Conflicts of interest are the modus operandi of agents in the transfer market

In 2018, the CIES produced a report for UEFA entitled "Intermediation market and transfers in football - State of play, empirical working and corrective measures". This report of some 200 pages is, however, kept secret because it is so critical of the practices in this market.

In a <u>summary of this report</u>, which has been made public, the CIES points out that conflicts of interest are at the heart of the functioning of the player transfer market and that they are mainly reflected in the practices of double representation and remuneration of agents:

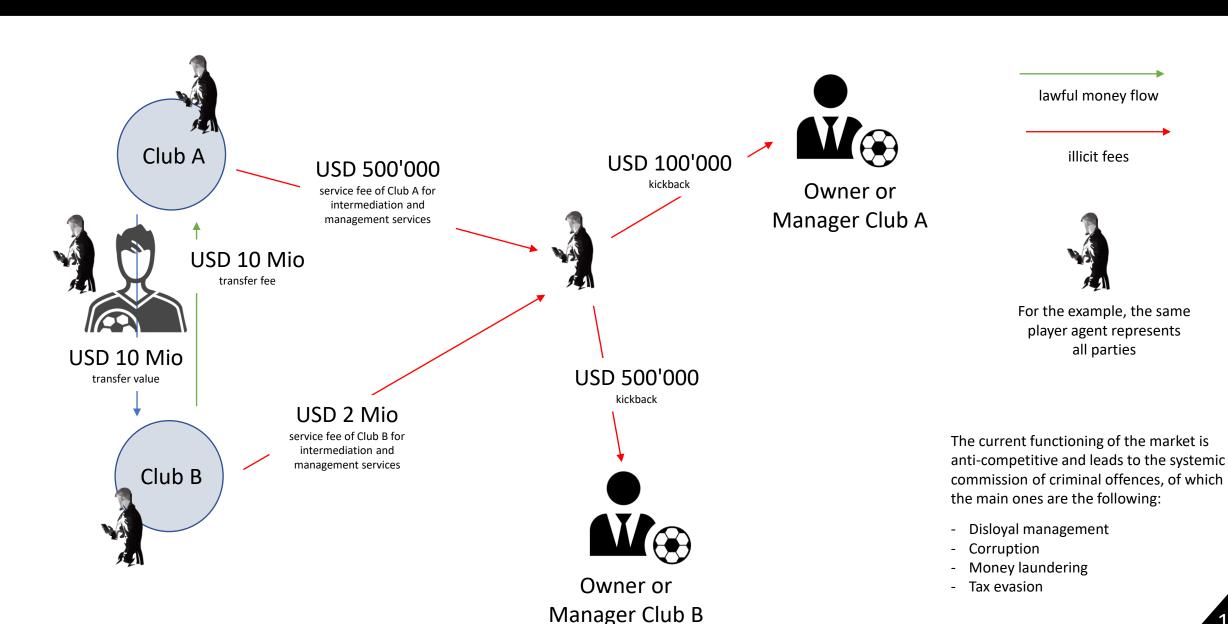
- "This has brought about much confusion on the effective role played by middlemen and contributed to putting conflicts of interest at the heart of the empirical function of the representation market in football."
- "the recurrent payment by clubs of agents representing players and the dual representation of both players and clubs make conflicts of interest the modus operandi in the football representation market. This goes against civil law and implies unfair competition for those who would like to act in a legal way."

Conflicts of interest of agents as a primary source of the systemic criminality in the market

Illegal practices of multiple representation and remuneration of agents as well as collusion between agents and club owners or managers lead to the systemic commission of several types of criminal offences, some examples of which are cited by the CIES in the summary of its report:

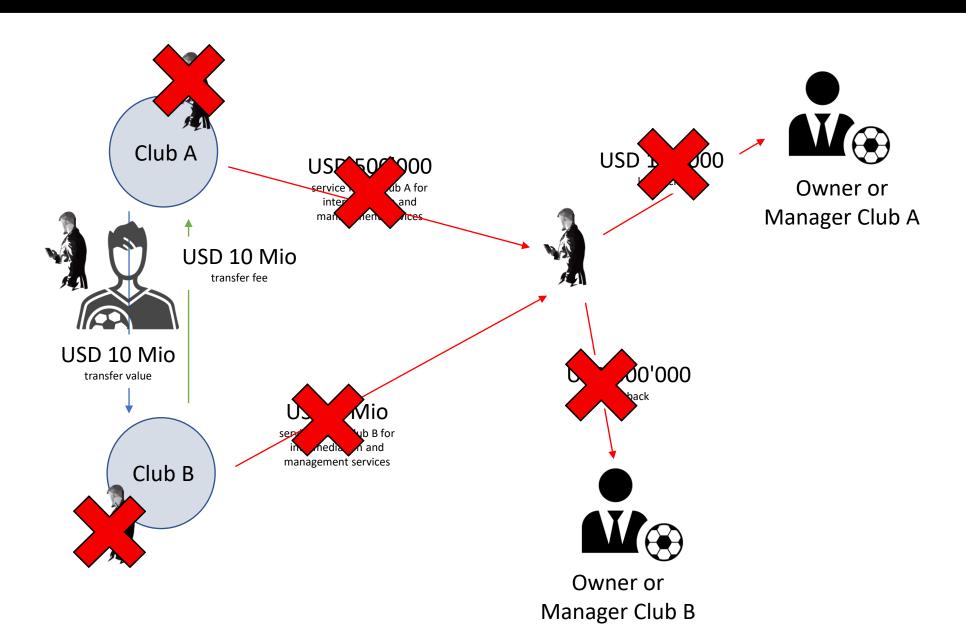
- "agents and intermediaries tend to go against the key principle of workers' freedom of movement as short-term personal profit is often the main rationale of their action. Different strategies are used to control players' careers such as indebting them, mismanaging their savings and filtering information."
- "widespread collusion between club members and agents or intermediaries gives rise to corrupt practices
 through which the actors involved misuse club funds for their personal profit, which raises many issues
 from a criminal law perspective."
- "payments to agents or intermediaries are often at the heart of tax evasion schemes through which
 money is sent to uncooperative tax havens, not only to the profit of agents and intermediaries
 themselves, but also to that of club owners and executives with whom they collaborate."

Agents put themselves in a position of multiple conflicts of interest to control the market

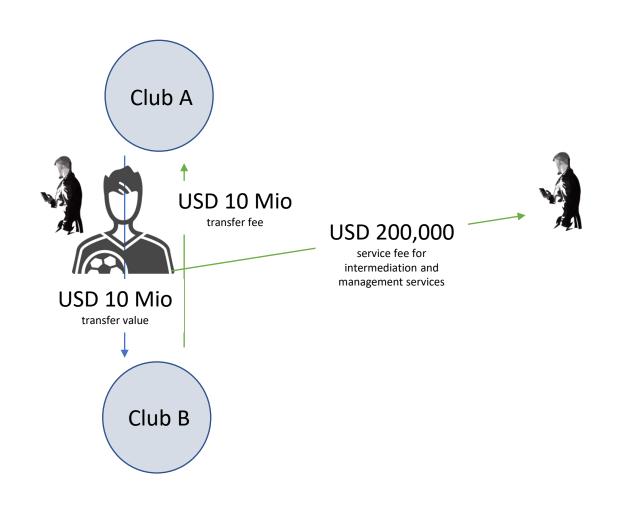




represent the illicit representation relationships and service fees



The system in conformity with the law as it should be if the prohibition of conflict of interest practices of player agents were applied



Organised crime money is invested and laundered in football, particularly through TPO transactions, which are often in the hands of player agents

One of the ways in which organised crime money is invested and laundered in football

Football clubs derive part of their income from the transfer fees they receive from other clubs when they agree to let go of their players who are still under contract. Many clubs have made this their business model and their survival may depend on it.

In this market, clubs that do not have the means to acquire a player or want to preserve their cash flow rely on external financing. This financing is notably carried out through TPO transactions ("Third-Party Ownership"), which are prohibited by FIFA but which remain very present in the market and at the heart of which are often player agents, as confirmed in particular by the CIES in the summary of its report to UEFA:

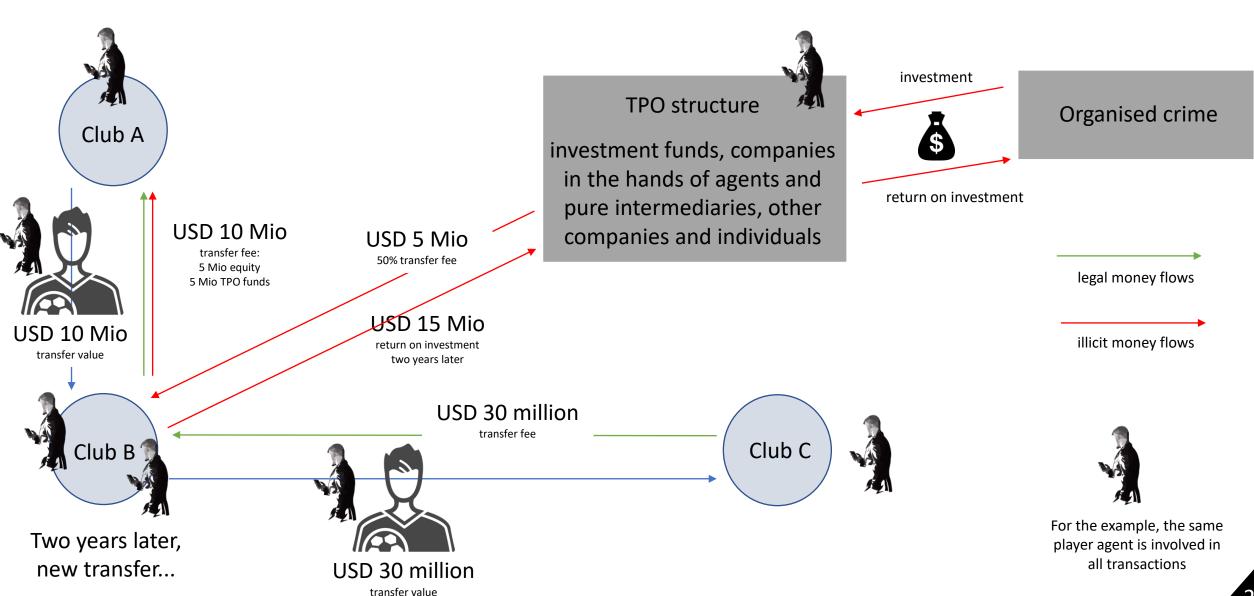
"while banned by FIFA, the third-party ownership of players' economic rights is still a well-established reality. Agents and intermediaries are often at the heart of this kind of arrangements, which in many cases explain the sizeable commissions that they are able to obtain from clubs."

"dominant agents and intermediaries have a solid control on the careers of a greater number of players, notably through third-party ownership arrangements, which puts them at advantage in the power game existing with clubs."

This TPO funding is not only illegal in itself, but also partly originates from organised crime which enters the market by buying the right to represent players, as the CIES further noted in the summary of its report:

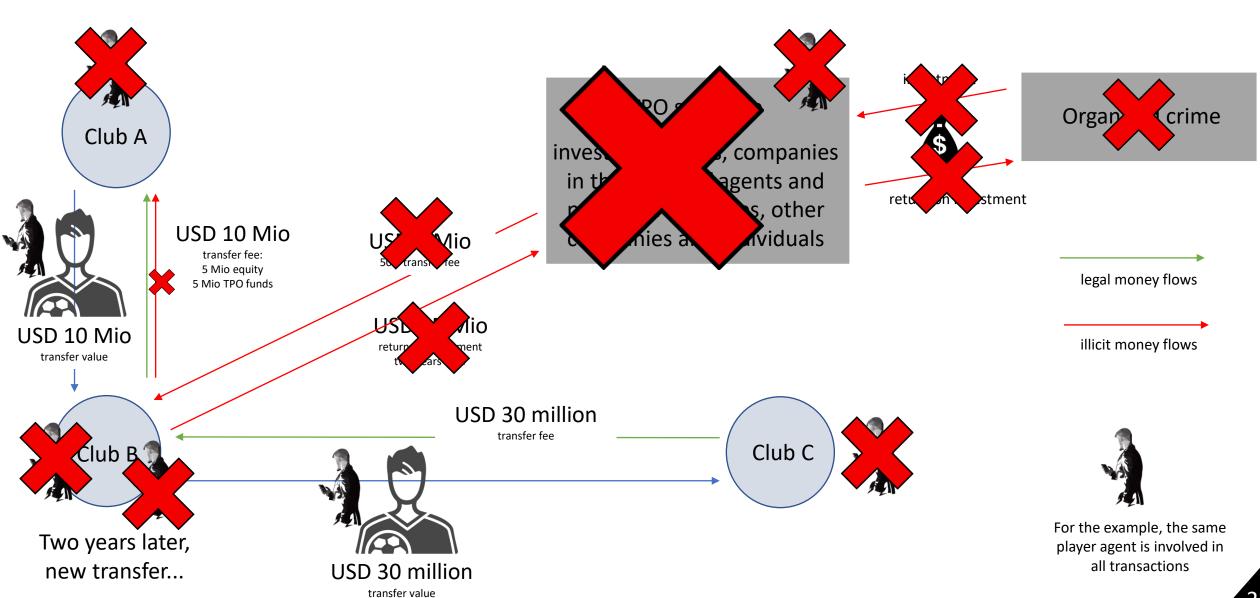
"the purchase of players' representation by organised crime goes hand in hand with money laundering operations. In addition, the payment of high commissions by clubs with no visibility or control on final recipients also raises issues from a money laundering standpoint."

Organised crime money is invested and laundered through TPOs and player agents

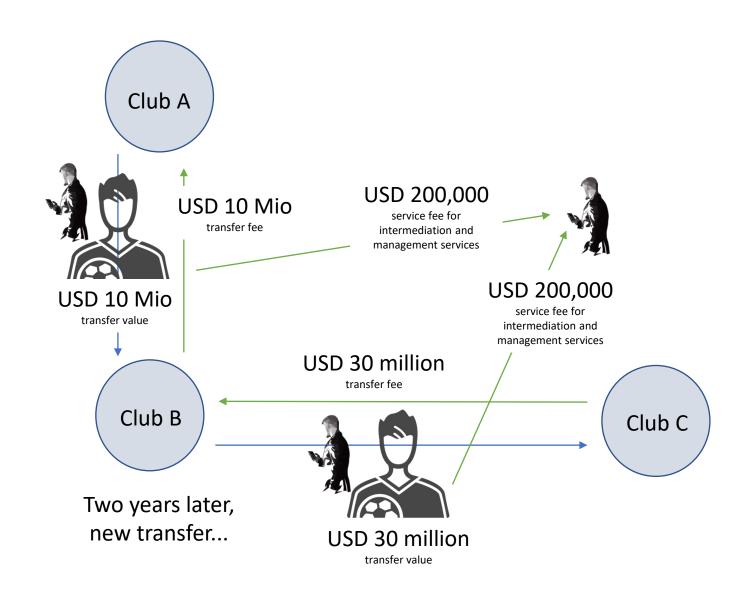


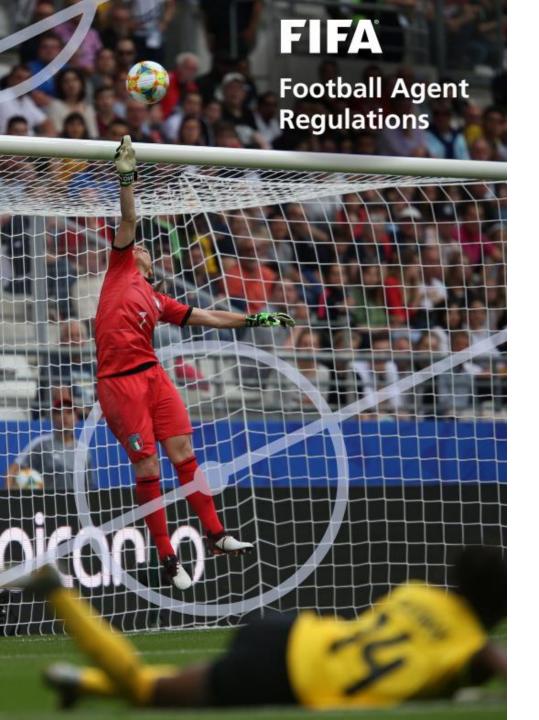
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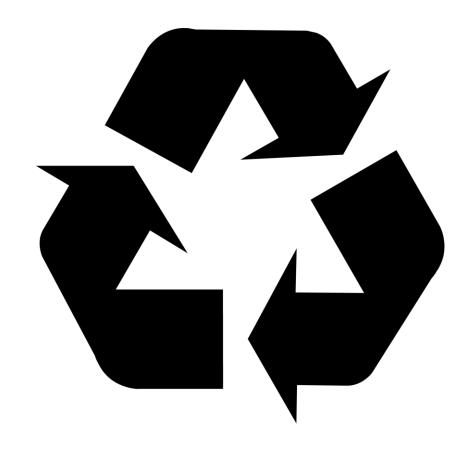
represent illicit entities, transactions and representation relationships



The system in conformity with the law as it should be if the prohibition of conflict of interest practices of player agents and of TPOs were applied







1991, 1995, 2001, 2008, 2015, 2023, 202?

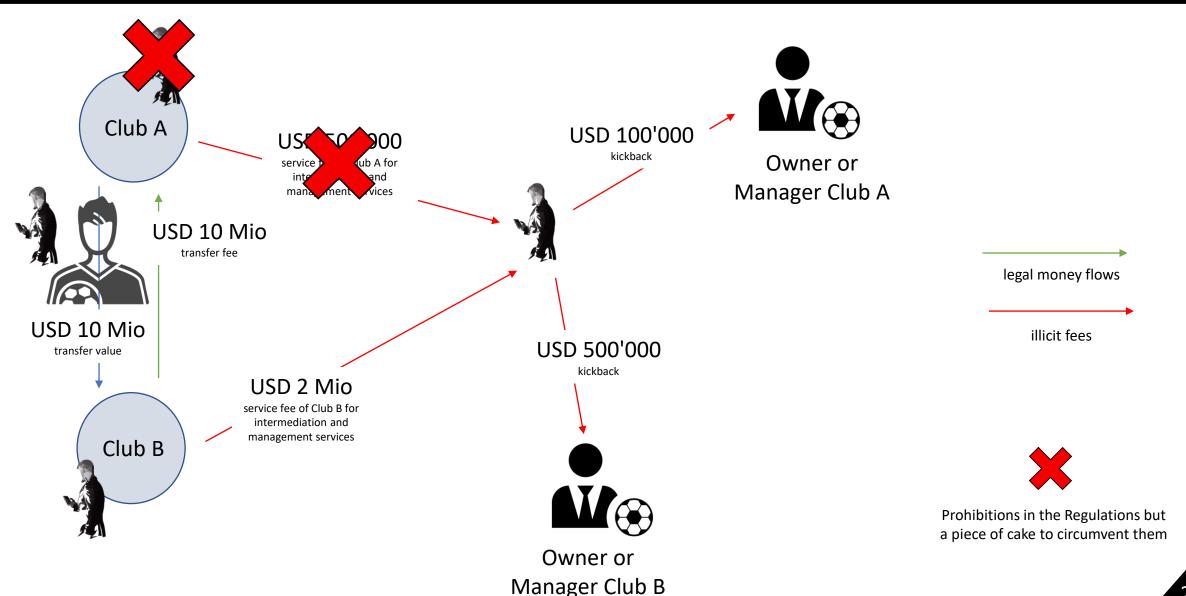
Perpetuation of conflicts of interest = Perpetuation of the lawless zone of the transfer market

Art. 12 par. 9 of the Regulations prohibits the double representation practices "player - releasing club" and "releasing club - engaging club" as well as the triple representation practices. FIFA thus recognises that these practices are problematic because they constitute conflicts of interest and must therefore be banned. If this were not the case, it would not ban them.

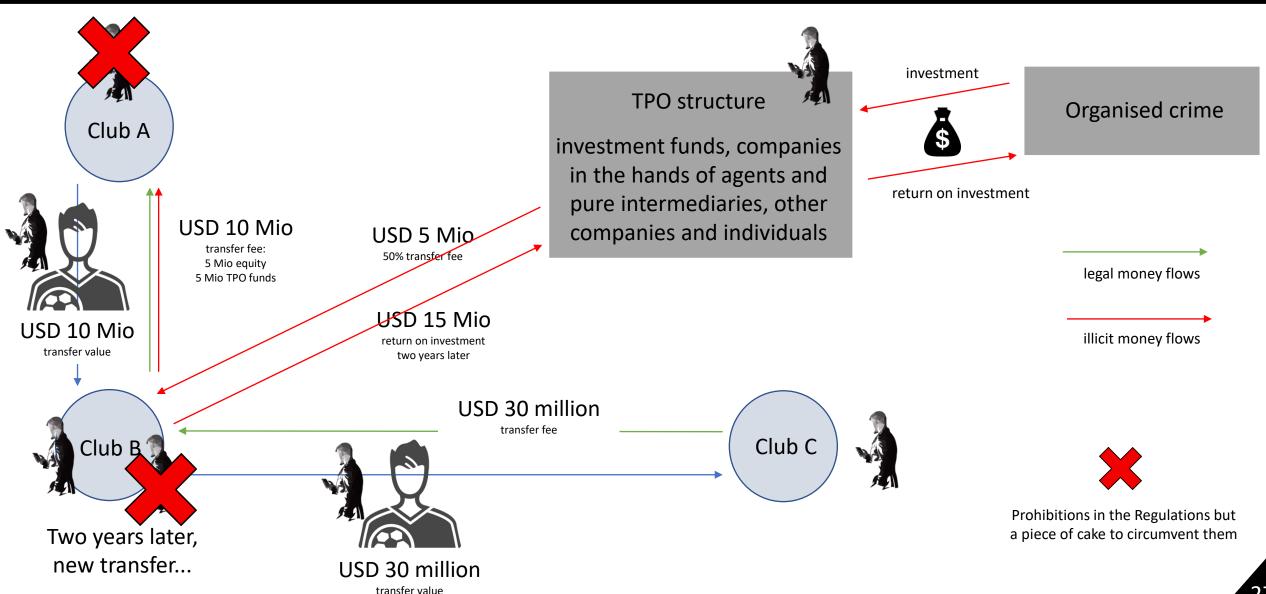
So why does FIFA not do the same with the practice of dual representation "player - engaging club", which is also a conflict of interest? Because, as the diagrams on pages 26 and 27 below show, the half-measure - i.e. allowing agents to link themselves to (engaging) clubs - will have no effect on their systemic illegal and criminal practices, which will remain the same as they are today. Even though the amount of service fees they will receive from clubs may decrease somewhat if the caps are respected.

Indeed, in the absence of a strict, total and global system that puts agents in their place, i.e. exclusively with the players who are their clients and without whom they could not exercise an activity as an agent, it is a piece of cake to circumvent the prohibitions put in place by the Regulations: through shell companies, through the practice of "switching", through the concealment of an agent in a transaction or that of the real agent who pulls the strings in this transaction, etc.

Player agents and club representatives will be able to continue their illegal and criminal activities in peace



Organised crime will also be able to continue to invest and launder its money in peace, particularly through TPOs and player agents



What are the answers to these essential questions?

How does FIFA intend to ensure in practice that agents comply with all their obligations and prohibitions, as set out in Art. 16 para. 2 to 4 of the Regulations?



How can FIFA prevent agents and clubs from circumventing the rules through shell companies, "switching", hiding an agent in a transaction or the real agent pulling the strings in that transaction, etc.?



How can FIFA prevent payments being made to agents outside its Clearing House?



How can FIFA prevent kickbacks from being paid to club representatives through tax avoidance schemes and then laundered?



Has FIFA raised these serious issues with the relevant criminal authorities? If not, why not? And is it relying on taxpayer-funded criminal authorities around the world to eliminate the systemic market criminality that has arisen in large part from the agent conflict of interest practices its Regulations continue to tolerate?



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Stop the headlong rush of this illicit and criminal system

There is no doubt that agents perform a necessary and important activity for their players and for the transfer market of their respective sport. Sport needs agents. The problem in football is that:

- The agents' business model has been based on illegal practices for decades, which they have built into a system over time, without the football governing bodies and public authorities reacting as they should have.
- The various actors in football have become accustomed to operating and living with these practices, or have been forced to follow the system, despite the fact that most clubs are penalised by this anti-competitive system, and the overwhelming majority of players are the ones to suffer.
- There is strong resistance to a regularisation of the transfer system: from agents who would be severely impacted by an in-depth and full reform of their practices; and from many of the richest clubs who do not want to lose their anti-competitive advantage of being able to continue to pay the most influential agents a high price in order to secure the services of their best players.

Agents cannot justify maintaining their illegal business model and the richest clubs cannot justify continuing to take advantage of the system to gain further anti-competitive benefits at the expense of other clubs. Therefore, like the ban on smoking in public places, one must have the courage to say ...

STOP

STOP

STOP

STOP

STOP

The world of football can not remain illegal

Unlike the ban on smoking in public places, which required new legal provisions to protect public health, it is sufficient to refer to existing law to enforce a total and global ban on the illicit practices of agents in the transfer market. A ban that will have the direct and positive effect of cutting off the primary source of the systemic criminality that undermines this market.

The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) has recently applied the law to its transfer system following too many abuses, by explicitly and consistently prohibiting the practices of agents constituting conflicts of interest in its new regulations on agents, which came into force on 1st January 2022. These regulations break a taboo of these conflicts of interest while putting the economic and legal relations between agents, clubs and players back on the rails of legality.

<u>A note on the topic</u> details certain aspects of the FIBA reform and explains that many federations or leagues in other sports followed the same path in the more or less recent past in order to regularise their transfer system. How can the football world justify going it alone and remaining illegal?

In football, only one country has so far taken a big step in the right direction, following the outbreak of the so-called "Footballgate" scandal in October 2018: Belgium. On 1st July 2020, the Belgian Pro League implemented a package of measures designed to eliminate illegal practices in its transfer market. However, these measures do not go all the way in terms of conflicts of interest for agents; indeed, the Belgian Pro League has understandably had to find a compromise in order not to put its clubs out of the game on the international transfer market, while waiting for FIFA to ban all practices constituting conflicts of interest at global level.

Apply existing law and abolish the system of transfer agreements

Applying the law in force to the world of football means putting agents back in their exclusive place alongside their clients, the players, which means imposing the following measures, not on the agents - in respect of whom the regulatory measures taken by FIFA since 1991 have had no positive effect - but on the clubs:

- A blanket ban on clubs entering into legal relationships with agents, in particular in order to eliminate dual representation and "switching" practices which are systemic and out of control. This includes a ban on the use of agents to negotiate transfer agreements.
- A blanket ban on clubs paying agents in any way for the intermediary and management services they provide to their players.

These prohibitions, which may lead to others if they are not sufficient, do not prevent clubs from hiring pure intermediaries. However, a market of intermediaries would probably be rather limited, as clubs would not be interested in such intermediaries who do not have a permanent portfolio of players. In any case, it should be strictly controlled.

The question of abolishing the system of transfer agreements and transfer fees, which is the result of a compromise from the early 2000s, must also be put on the table. Firtsly to drastically reduce the attractiveness of the transfer market for organised crime. Secondly to (finally!) abolish the system's severe and unacceptable restrictions on the freedom of movement of players, who should be "treated exclusively as athletes, not as commercial assets", as FIFPRO points out. And who are victims of systemic abuse by their agents, as the CIES also points out in the summary of its report.

Regulations that promise to be just as ineffective as the previous ones

The Regulations give the impression of being able to control what FIFA has never been able to control since its first regulations in 1991: the activities of agents and the legality and quality of their services for their clients.

How can we believe that the new system will enable FIFA to trace the activities of suspected agents when the Belgian and Portuguese criminal authorities, who have conducted extensive investigations into crime in the player transfer business in recent years, know how time-consuming and difficul such investigations are? FIFA does not have the rights and enforcement powers of a criminal authority, nor does it have the resources and expertise to conduct effective criminal investigations. How does FIFA intend to achieve credible and dissuasive results? Does it intend to cooperate on its own initiative with the criminal prosecution authorities, which it has not done in the recent past?

How can one believe that FIFA will sanction with the necessary firmness all those who act in an illegal manner, all the more so as the Regulations themselves codify illegal practices? The almost total lack of sanctions pronounced by FIFA in recent years against agents and TPO structures raises doubts as to whether it is really willing to sanction offenders.

What is the point of having a whole licensing system for agents when in the past such a system has never encouraged them to suppress their illegal practices, nor has it ensured that their obligations to their players are respected. The long-standing agents may criticise the newcomers, but they have been acting illegally for longer than they have.

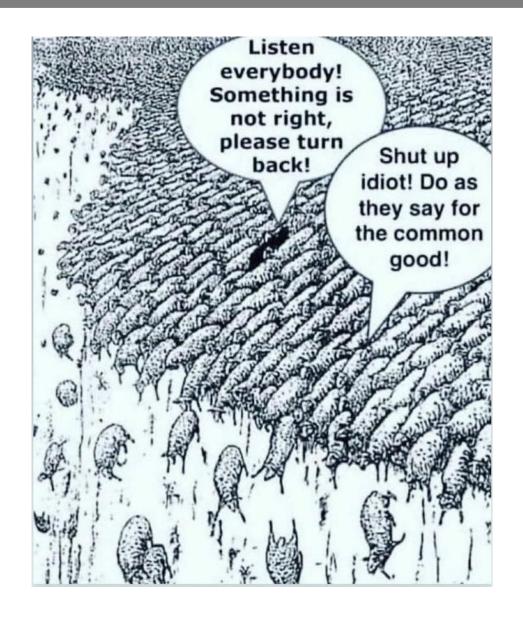
Is FIFA entitled to regulate the agent market? The question arises, since in a fully regulated market such regulation is superfluous, especially since agents have to train themselves in order to provide quality services to their players who pay them for this purpose. Only the activity of the clubs should be regulated.

The Regulations thus pose more questions than they solve and do not appear to be any more effective as the previous ones.

1991 - 2023



The world of football



The illicit practices of agents and their role as the primary source of the lawlessness in the transfer market are taboo subjects in the football world, with its most powerful actors blocking not to jeopardise the golden eggs.

Sport 7's legal steps have shown who the main actors in this status quo are: the national federations, certain FIFA officials and the agents' community.

FIFPRO? In view of the "outcome" of the Regulations, one has to wonder whether it still has a say on some crucial issues related to player protection.

The legal world of football? You can hear a pin drop. Some decision-makers are in the pay of the system in place.

National federations and FIFA

In 2017, Sport 7 filed a complaint with FIFA against seven national federations (BEL, DEN, GBR, GER, ITA, NED, POR) for refusing to sanction, under the applicable laws and regulations, practices of agents constituting conflicts of interest, despite their obligations in this regard.

FIFA's Disciplinary and Ethics Committees also refused to act on the complaint, despite their competence and obligations in this respect. They merely referred to the work that was beginning internally on the reform of the transfer system.

Subsequently, Sport 7 confronted FIFA with all the findings it had made in the course of its legal steps. But instead of doing what was necessary, in particular by banning all illegal practices of agents, FIFA remained silent. Then it was activated by some of its officials in order to attack Sport 7 and its lawyer after Sport 7 denounced to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), at the end of 2020, the role of FIFA and some of its officials in maintaining the lawlessness of the transfer market.

FIFA's complaints to four Swiss authorities for alleged violations of criminal, disciplinary, personality and competition law all failed. The virulence of these attacks to muzzle Sport 7 and its lawyer shows just how much is at stake in the background. And the debacle which followed for FIFA shows that Sport 7's criticism of the system is justified and has hit the mark.

Player agents

In 2019, Sport 7 raised the issue of illegal agent practices with the German Football Agents Association (DFVV) and then with the European Football Agents Association (EFAA). The only answer they gave, which says everything about their silence on the subject, was the following: "The Public Prosecutor's Office is solely responsible for the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences. We therefore advise to turn to the proper authorities."

For their part, the agents are also critical of the Regulations and want to take legal action to have them annulled, citing in particular:

- Their freedom to trade. However, this freedom can only protect lawful trade, which is not the case when agents
 earn money through remuneration practices that constitute conflicts of interest. Furthermore, in other sports
 where agents' practices are legal or have been regularised, agents do not complain that they would be prevented
 from working.
- The illegality of capping their service fees. This is not an issue with regard to the fees paid by clubs to agents because these are illegal, and what is illegal should not be due and therefore cannot be capped. Moreover, such a cap is unnecessary because in a regularised system it is up to the players to pay their agents and thus to determine the amount of their fees, so that only recommendations issued by the players' associations can be useful at most. Finally, public law sometimes provides for certain mandatory caps, e.g. in Switzerland, where the brokerage fee is limited to 5% of the player's salary over the first year of contract.

The total failure of public authorities

Illegal practices and malfunctions in the transfer market have only worsened since the Bosman ruling, with the staggering increase in the amounts involved attracting more and more greed beyond the control of the authorities. Over the past 20 years, many public and private bodies have produced a multitude of reports and recommendations on the state of the market, its issues and how to fix them. However, in view of the catastrophic state of the market at the beginning of 2023 and the "outcome" of the Regulations, these initiatives have not had the desired effect.

One of the reasons for this failure is that the public authorities, both administrative and political, are too "weak" to tackle the issue: either they succumb in various ways to the power of the football world, or they do not realise their role in regulating the system, or they are overwhelmed by a market and a system that is far too complex for them.

Sport 7's legal steps have also shown that there are people in some Swiss and European authorities who knowingly collaborate to maintain the system in place. This is particularly the case in the Swiss Parliament, the Swiss Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) and the Council of Europe.

The total failure of the public authorities as well as certain complicities with the system in place thus play a central role in maintaining the status quo.



Criminal authorities must initiate reforms

The football world has shown itself to be permanently unable of carrying out the drastic reforms that would be required to regularise its transfer market practices once and for all and to put an end to its lawlessness.

It is therefore up to the public authorities to act in place of the football governing bodies, but it has also been shown that those who would have the task are not fulfilling their responsibilities. It is therefore necessary, in one way or another, to push them to act in order to strictly apply the law in force in this market, because the public authorities, those who are supposed to work for the common good and defend the rule of law, have no choice: where there is law, where the rights of football players are systemically violated, where the gap between the ultra-rich and the rest is widening, and where there is systemic criminality, there is no room for pseudo-sports policy or pseudo-economic considerations that would justify the status quo.

The transfer market must therefore be regularised without further delay, and the criminal authorities seem to be the most likely to trigger the necessary reforms. Indeed, it is they who, as in Belgium and Portugal at present, have to take responsibility for the criminal prosecution of agent crime, and for the outcome of such cases. They are the ones who know better than anyone how difficult it is to track down this crime when it becomes international and gets lost in tax havens. They are the ones who know better than anyone the imperative need to dry up this crime as a priority at its source, as they do in drug trafficking by tracking down the heads of the networks rather than the small dealers who do their business in the park around the corner.

National federations are also called upon to act

The criminal authorities all around the world therefore have a priority interest in tackling the evil at its roots, and they have all the more interest in doing so since the proceedings underway, particularly in Belgium and Portugal, only touch a tiny part of the tip of the iceberg of the criminality in the market. An iceberg that has only grown in recent years.

Therefore, if the downstream prosecution of offences is to continue, the criminal authorities would be well advised to push the competent public authorities to impose on the football world an immediate, drastic and uncompromising regularisation of the practices of agents and clubs in the transfer market, in order to dry up its primary source of criminality.

This regularisation must be carried out both in the FIFA regulations and in those of the national federations, which, pursuant to Art. 3 of the Regulations, shall regulate national transfers by 30 September 2023 by adopting national regulations on agents, most of whose provisions must comply with those of the Regulations. However, if these federations were to adopt the provisions of the Regulations as they stand without completely abolishing the agents' practices that constitute conflicts of interest and without regularising the legal relations between players, agents and clubs, they would incur liability and their officials may be exposed to prosecution, particularly criminal prosecution, on their territory, for supporting the lawlessness of the transfer market.

The national federations would thus be well advised to submit this major issue and their situation to their competent criminal and administrative authorities. In this way, they too would become actors in the necessary reforms of the overall transfer system and would finally fulfil their obligations in this respect.



SPORT

Rte du Jura 37B/CP 160 CH-1701 Fribourg

+41 26 321 11 46 office@sport7.ch

www.sport7.ch