

Play True: The Right to Compete in Clean Sport

**Keynote address by David Howman, WADA Director General
European Sports Ministers Meeting
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Mr Chairman, Madame Commissioner,

Dear Ministers, Distinguished Guests, Friends and Colleagues,

Thanks to Belgium, our gracious and generous hosts; thanks to the EU for engaging us in your activities again.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share some thoughts with you today on a subject which I believe needs special attention, and a continued commitment.

To commence, I would like to take a brief moment to remind you where WADA has come from – as we are now 10 years old and celebrated our 10th birthday last December in Stockholm, Sweden.

Many of you will remember the Festina debacle in 1998, which turned the cycling world upside down and brought about the Sport Movement and Governments of the world to convene at the First World Conference on Doping in Sport in Lausanne in February 1999 and to commit to what is known as the Lausanne Declaration, in uniting to combat doping in sport. The Lausanne Declaration called for the creation of a global independent anti-doping agency, composed and funded equally by the IOC and governments. In November 1999, WADA was established as a private Swiss Foundation to fill this role with temporary headquarters in Lausanne.

Subsequently, following an extensive bid process engaging seven bid cities (most in Europe) and a thorough evaluation report, WADA's headquarters were moved to Montreal, Canada. This was the result of a vote by WADA's Foundation Board in 2001 at a meeting in Tallinn, Estonia. WADA has operated since that time out of Montreal pursuant to a contract with the

Federal Government of Canada, and the Provincial Government of Quebec, which now extends to 2022.

From the outset of WADA, Europe has been instrumental in its support and commitment not only to the concept of an independent international body, but also to its establishment and evolution. The experience gained from the European Convention and the Council of Europe has been passed on in many ways and we are very grateful for that assistance. The advent of the Lisbon Treaty creates opportunities to expand our mutual cooperation and work, and we welcome that. So we continue to liaise in an open and transparent way. We have frequent dialogue with European governments and all other stakeholders including regular attendances at CAHAMA meetings, and this has been invaluable as we advance the global fight against doping in sport.

Indeed we had a very fruitful and open meeting with the Commission on Tuesday and look forward to many more, with positive results. We welcome input from the EU.

At the outset, Governments of the world met regularly to discuss how they would operate within WADA (IGADS). Initially there were 17 seats around the Board table for Governments to be allocated. At the Cape Town meeting in 2001, governments decided that 4 seats would go to Europe, Asia and the Americas, 3 to Africa and 2 to Oceania. In 2004, an extra seat to the Sport Movement was added to provide for the International Paralympic Committee, and governments, following lengthy discussion, agreed that Europe should have a 5th seat.

Can I emphasize here that the way Europe chooses to fill these seats is up to Europe, not WADA – as is the case for all regions.

The Constitution was further amended in 2004/2005 to allow for the Vice President's position. This was filled by Brian Mikkelsen for several years and then Jean-François Lamour and for those periods actually provided an extra seat for Europe around the Executive Committee and Board tables.

As to the allocation of dues to WADA, this was also discussed and agreed in Cape Town. The percentages (now part of the UNESCO treaty) were accepted. Europe agreed to pay 47.5% of the governments' share of the budget which is nearly 24% of the total budget. The

formula used was based on a combination of GDP and numbers of athletes at Olympic Games (with some compromises). It was specifically agreed and noted that there was no connection between budget share and seat allocation. It may be of interest to you to know that of the research monies paid out of the WADA budget, European agencies/laboratories have received close to \$32.5 million of the allocated amounts, and in the last 2 years only European NADOs and labs have received \$2.8 million from the testing budget. Amounts indicative of the important role that Europe plays, but also indicative that much of the European governmental contribution to WADA actually goes back to Europe.

In addition the seats on our four working groups indicate a high number of Europeans. Our fight against doping must advance and not stand still, or be allowed to fall off the pace.

Athletes are our *raison d'être* at WADA and we work towards a vision of the world that values and fosters doping-free sport. We believe that athletes should compete in full trust of a level playing field, to allow them to concentrate on the pursuit of athletic excellence through their natural talent – “playing true.”

The biggest danger facing sport today is the loss of integrity that comes from cheating.

One of the forms of cheating is doping. Doping undermines the integrity of sport. The intrinsic value of sport, often referred to as the “spirit of sport,” is the celebration of the human spirit, body and mind, and is characterized by such values as: ethics, honesty, excellence, as well as respect for rules, self-respect and respect for others. When sport is void of these values, it might be argued it is no longer sport.

Others include bribery and corruption, each of which can now be seen to be linked to doping. INTERPOL tells us that the underworld involvement in pushing and trafficking steroids (in many countries still a legal activity and accordingly provides a high return on investment) is the same underworld engaged in illegal betting and hence bribery and corruption. Experience in the USA in major league baseball provides the same information. You may think the WADA model could provide a good way forward if those issues are to be seriously addressed by governments and sport. The upholding of the values and integrity of sport is important for our societies, most important for our youth.

In the interim we need a strong commitment from a legal perspective to ensure INTERPOL and its police members can actually intervene in the trafficking/distribution area, and reduce the availability of prohibited substances.

Inevitably, doping imperils public health. I must say that I am alarmed when I hear it suggested that the problem of doping is confined to the few hundred elite-level athletes at the very top of every sport, and therefore, why be so concerned with combating it?

The answer to this question can be very simple. Once there is the perception that some elite athletes are using these drugs in order to succeed in their sport, the message is that, if you want to play at that level, you will have to do the same. That message trickles down and out, from the elite-level to junior players and youth athletes. Subsequently, you are not dealing with a few hundreds, but instead thousands of young people who believe that not only is it OK to dope, but that it is necessary in order to succeed.

Not only now is this a perception, it is a fact, further enhanced by many young people who turn to steroids to “look good”. When the Internet readily makes the purchase of unregulated and hence unsanitary doping substances available to our youth, you have an instant social problem, which has already led to suicides and bad health problems for many young folk. Addressing it requires governmental work in education and health.

Society as a whole must address this issue. It is not simply a matter for sport, although sport gets the headlines and the attention.

Certainly, these are harsh realities that cannot, must not, be ignored.

The athletes who cheat destroy the whole purpose of what they set out to do, which was to see how far their talents could take them in competition with others, playing by agreed-upon rules. Instead of something which should be a triumph of the human spirit, their achievements become soiled, must be hidden from view, in fear of exposure and the disgrace that will follow. Disgrace to their sport, to their country, to their family.

We must also realize that, in most cases, it is not athletes acting alone to defeat everything for which they should stand. They are assisted, counselled, sometimes tricked and occasionally forced into the downward spiral of cheating. Coaches, trainers, medical doctors,

scientists, sports administrators – even some misguided parents - all of whom ought to know better and who have a professional or moral responsibility to the young people under their charge, conspire to destroy the value of what the athletes are trying to do.

The entourage who are part of a cheating program for an athlete make a mockery of their responsibilities and trivialize the years of training and dedication of the trusting athletes whom they betray.

One of our missions at WADA is to make sure that it is not only the athletes who are sanctioned for doping offences. Athletes are, of course, the instruments in which the doping occurs, but often they are less to blame than the coaches, doctors, lawyers, agents, trainers and others around them.

We must all work together to ensure that the entourage can be sanctioned. Sport may not always be able to do so, but governments can. Laws for trafficking and distribution can be passed and implemented and enforced across borders through the agreement we now have with Interpol. Regulations to professional malpractice and negligence can be enforced. Governments can tread where sport cannot. Doping will not and cannot be eradicated by sport alone, nor by science alone. Testing programs involving analysis of bodily samples has not proved to be the answer on its own. Remember Marion Jones – she competed for 7 years winning many medals. For 7 years she was tested (160 samples), none were positive, she constantly denied doping – even in her book. Yet she confessed after a federal inquiry to 7 years cheating and went to prison for lying, following a perjury charge.

Clean athletes should be honoured, not denied their fair opportunity. The World Anti-Doping Program is designed to create the chance for athletes to compete clean in a levelled playing field. We must remember to support the rights of the clean athletes and not be diverted to only looking at the rights of the few who cheat.

We are leading a broad-based, relentless effort. You—leaders of the sports policies—know because you are in the front lines of this effort. This effort was set in motion and has been led forward by WADA and by the tremendous work of a broad network of stakeholders in sport, government, anti-doping organizations, law enforcement and many other domains.

The fight against doping in sport is one of the defining challenges of our time. We are determined because the stakes are high for sport, the health of not just elite athletes, but also the millions of youth.

The integrity of sport must be maintained. Let's continue to work together. Let's continue our dialogue to ensure that common sense prevails. And let's ensure that we offer our youth and our athletes the right and the opportunity to compete on a level playing field.

Thank you.