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Anti-Doping Convention (T-DO)

17th meeting of the Monitoring Group

Strasbourg, 29-30 April 2003

Follow up report

Consultative visit to Ireland on anti-doping policy

Dublin, 11-12 June 2001

1. Introduction

This consultative visit was organised at the request of the Irish authorities, particularly the Irish Sports Council's Anti-Doping Unit (ISC-ADU). The visit focused on assessing the Irish Anti-Doping Policy and Programme, the legal framework, national anti-doping structure, doping control system and procedures.

The team of the consultative visit was composed of Ms Pirjo KROUVILA (Executive Director of the Finish Anti-Doping Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Monitoring Group) and Mr Mesut ÖZYAVUZ (Council of Europe, Secretary of the Monitoring Group).

2. Background

The Irish Sport Anti-Doping Programme was launched in November 1999. The legal basis for the programme is found in the Irish Sports Council (ISC) Act 1999. In Section 6 of the Act, which defines the functions of the Irish Sports Council and the Council's task with regard to anti-doping is specified in Article 6(1) d: "*to take such action as it considers appropriate, including testing, to combat doping in sport*".

The same Act also constituted the legal basis for setting up the Irish Anti-Doping Committee (IADC). Section 18(1)(a) of the Act authorises the Council to "*establish committees to assist and advise it in relation to performance of its functions*".

3. Ratification Process of the Anti-Doping Convention

Recommendations

- Ireland should ratify the Anti-Doping Convention as soon as possible.

Ireland originally signed the Convention in 1992 and the Irish Government ratified the Anti-Doping Convention on March 1st, 2003.

4. National Anti-Doping Programme and Structure

Recommendations

-Ireland should consider the possibility in the future of setting up an independent anti-doping body, preferably co-managed by all interested parties. It was also stated that the independent national anti-doping body should have full authority and responsibility for planning, co-ordinating and monitoring the doping control process.

At present the Anti-Doping Unit is part of the Irish Sports Council, which is governed by the Irish Sports Council Act (1999). They are no plans at the moment to set up an independent Anti-Doping Body.

5. Legislation

Recommendations

-the combating of the traffic in doping agents and labelling of food supplements (on the basis of Rec(2000)16 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe)

-sanctions to be applied to the members of the athlete's entourage and the protection of minors (in the light of the Recommendation No. 1/97 of the Monitoring Group).

At present the Misuse of Drugs Act 1977 is being updated. This Act is to include Anabolic Steroids, Chroric Gonadotrophin, Erythropoietin in Schedule 3 of the Act were products become subject of appropriate control and this proposed amendment will mean that unauthorised possession of any of these products will become an offence.

As this is one section of the legislation, there has been a wide range of consultation for the amendments to Act and it hoped that the changes to the Act will be enacted as soon as possible.

6. Doping Control System and Procedures

Recommendations

- the number of out-of-competition tests be increased to 70% of the testing programme within 3 years and more controls be performed in amateur sport;
- the ISC-ADU ensure more consistent processing of test results and recruit and train its own DCOs, for a better mastery of the doping control process and quality;
- the disciplinary procedures, including doping controls rules and regulations for individual sports, be reviewed in the light of the Article 7.2.d of the Convention and the Recommendation No. 2/98 of the Monitoring Group. A clear separation should be made between the reporting, disciplinary and appeal bodies;

Each year since the inception of the Programme the Unit has reached it testing targets both in number of tests carried out and the ratio of out of competition and competition testing. Fifty-four sports are now fully signed up to the Programme.

In 2000 the ISC conducted 621 tests with a ration of 54% competition testing to 46% out of competition testing, this ration increased to 50% competition testing to 50% out of competition testing by 2001. By 2002 the ratio had improved to 55% out of competition to 45% competition testing. The sports that are tested vary from Ten Pin Bowling to rugby; about 95% of testing conducted in 2002 was in amateur sport.

The ISC carry out tests on behalf National Governing Bodies (NGBs) as all NGBs in Ireland are autonomous bodies. The issue of the processing of test results has been addressed, the ISC has written to each NGB requesting that they write to each individual athlete whether the result is negative or positive to ensure that there is closure to the testing process for the athlete. Athletes have been informed of this process.

The ISC has continued to have a good working relationship with IDTM, a contracted sample collection company. The contract expires in 2004 and at that point the ISC will review whether this service should be carried out internally.

At present Ireland is a member of International Project Team (IPT) 3, a project funded by WADA and IADA, the purpose of this Project Team is to facilitate the implementation of the ISO- certified quality systems in doping control according to the IADA Quality Concept. It is hoped that Ireland will be certified by November 2003.

In 2002, WADA announced its plans for a common worldwide policy, including results management, on Anti-Doping. The World Anti-Doping Code is intended to ensure harmonisation of anti-doping efforts across all sports and governments. This Code was adopted after the World Anti-Doping Conference in Copenhagen in March and the ISC will work very closely with NGBs to ensure that the Code will be operational and put into effect by the beginning of 2004.

7. Laboratory

Recommendations

- Access to accredited laboratories in other countries would be more appropriate, as is the practice at present.

After a comprehensive tendering process in 2001, the ISC has contracted Drug Control Centre, Kings College, London, IOC accredited laboratory, to carry out analysis on samples.

8. Education and Information

Recommendations:

- Education and information programmes and campaigns should include a greater focus on recreational sport, targeting young people in particular.
- With regard to research the resources available would be most profitably directed towards the behavioural, social aspects, and health consequences of doping.

The Education Programme has continued to be an integral part of the Anti-Doping Programme. In 2003 the ADU produced an educational Video & DVD, which provides information on testing procedures and banned substances. The DVD is interactive and is aimed to towards athletes and young people in sport and gives a clear description of testing procedure and furthermore gives information of banned substances and methods based on a story of two fictional young athletes.

The ISC has formed two partnerships with MIMS (Monthly Index of Medically Specialities) and Eirpharm.com to ensure that athletes and medical professionals have access to information regarding the IOC list of banned substances and methods. All listed licensed medications are labelled in MIMS, to identify their status in relation to IOC/WADA list of

prohibited substances. The ISC has endorsed the Eirpharm website, www.eirpharm.com, which provides information on over the counter medications.

The ISC has created a link to a new initiative in e-learning. A website www.yaadis.com - Young Athletes Against Doping In Sport, a website developed by Stockholm University College of Physical Education and Sports (IHS), and International Doping Tests & Management (IDTM), is an interactive site which guides young people through ethical decision making when faced with dilemmas of peer pressure and the emphasis on winning within sport.

The ISC identified two postgraduate research projects for funding during 2002.

The first is a “Comparison of the performance enhancing effects/side effects of a caffeinated carbohydrate beverage (stimulant drink) relative to equivalent combinations of the individual beverage constituents in elite male cyclists”. This project is being carried out by Trinity College, Dublin. The commencement of this project is set to begin in 2003.

The second project is an analysis as to “Why do athletes cheat? An investigation of Irish athletes’ understanding of, and attitudes, to cheating behaviour (including doping) in sport”. This project is being carried out by University College, Dublin. This study will be completed by early 2004.

The ISC has continued to survey relevant stakeholders, including athletes and Anti-Doping Officers of NGBs. The objective of these surveys was to provide an assessment of the operation of the Programme and to ascertain the general views of these stakeholders.

9. International Cooperation

The ISC has continued to participate in important international meetings and also contributed fully in a comprehensive consultation process on the World Anti-Doping Code. As stated previously Ireland is also a member of IPT 3.