

*Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media
The Chairperson*

Strasbourg 3 December 2024

Dear President,

As Chair of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education, and Media of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I am writing to you regarding FIFA's decision on the host country of the 2034 Football World Cup. This decision is set to be announced on 11 December and we are aware that Saudi Arabia is the sole candidate.

We appreciate that, for the football family, it is essential to maintain an inclusive approach and offer to countries from different regions the possibility to organise major football competitions. Moreover, we recognise and respect your autonomy in decision-making processes.

However, we wish to share with you our concerns on the adverse consequences that this decision could entail, though we trust that FIFA is wholeheartedly committed to avoiding them.

In this respect, we see an opportunity for co-operation in ensuring that the 2034 FIFA World Cup sets an example of the promotion of human rights in and through sport. Labour rights should meet the International Labour Organisation standards and working conditions must be safe. Participants should be able to exercise their fundamental rights, notably their freedom of expression. The principles of inclusion and respect for others should be embedded in all aspects of the organisation of this event.

We trust that FIFA has gained significant insights from the challenges of past events, and that it shares our determination to prevent such tragedies in the future and to uphold the highest human rights standards, to avoid that the violations of those rights, as occurred in Qatar, do not recur.

The committee would have wished to have a constructive dialogue with FIFA on these issues, within the framework of the hearing on "*Protecting human rights in and through sport: obligations and shared responsibilities*". We deeply regret FIFA's absence and hope to meet with you to continue this dialogue in the near future.

As one of the world's most influential sport organisations, FIFA has the power to foster positive change. Hosting a World Cup is more than an honour; it is a responsibility. It is therefore crucial that FIFA sets clear and enforceable rules for Saudi Arabia, as well as for any other host country. In doing so, FIFA will meet the expectations, not only of our Assembly, but also those of the millions of fans who look up to it for leadership in creating a world where sport can equal fairness, dignity and respect for human rights.

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Mr Gianni Infantino
FIFA President
FIFA Headquarters
FIFA-Strasse 20
8044 Zurich, Switzerland

The Ministers Responsible for Sport highlighted, in their Resolution MSL18(2024)05 "*Collaborative governing and good governance in sport: supporting a fresh approach to match its societal importance*", the Council of Europe's mission "to assist and advise governments and sports organisations in order to advance human rights (...) in and through sport". This mission is also reflected in our committee's mandate. We stand ready to offer our expertise and support to ensure that the 2034 World Cup is an inspiring example of how sport can be a vector for positive change and sustainable social progress.

We look forward to the opportunity to work together and to see FIFA's leadership reaffirm its commitment to promote human rights and preserve human dignity.

Yours sincerely,



Linda Hofstad Helleland
Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media