

**Follow-up Committee
on the Manipulation of sports competitions**

(T-MC)

Council of Europe Convention on the
Manipulation of Sports Competitions
(CETS n°215)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

NETWORK OF MAGISTRATES/PROSECUTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR SPORTS (MARS)

STRASBOURG

24 & 25 November 2022

CONCEPT NOTE

25/10/2022

VERSION 2.0

BACKGROUND

■ For decades, the Council of Europe has been fighting for sports integrity. First against violence and doping, then against the manipulation of sports competitions. In September 2019, the “Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions” (Macolin Convention, CETS n°215) entered into force.

■ The phenomenon is not new, but it has evolved significantly in recent years with the outburst of online betting. It goes beyond the world of sports and national borders. Nowadays, sport is heavily affected by organised and financial crime, with seldom sanctions. The procedure starting with an alert relating to suspected sports manipulations of any kind, and moving towards prosecution, is lengthy and involves the cooperation of many actors. As a result, sports corruption is a low-risk and high-reward activity for criminals.

■ The international dimension of the problem requires coordinated intergovernmental action. The Macolin Convention was drafted to meet this challenge. The text provides a common legal framework to facilitate cooperation – both at the national and international level – and better prevent, detect and sanction the manipulation of sports competitions. States Parties are requested to establish a National Platform (NP) to bring together sports organisations, betting operators and national authorities.

■ Prosecutors are still rarely involved in setting up and developing a National Platform. However, prosecutors have an essential role in the fight against sports manipulation at the level of investigations, trials and sanctioning procedures. Moreover, only a few prosecutors are aware of the threat's seriousness. Often, they lack the resources to work effectively. It explains the low rate of investigations and prosecutions.

■ In the past, initiatives have been taken at the national or international level to strengthen the relationship between prosecutors and, for example, sports organisations or law enforcement agencies. The Macolin Convention Secretariat had planned to organise the first meeting of a network of prosecutors in March 2020 in Paris. Unfortunately, it did not materialise because of the health crisis. In December 2021, at the conference on Sports Integrity organised by the Council of Europe under the Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, participants recalled the importance of constituting a group of prosecutors with relevant knowledge and practical experience in the field of sports manipulation.

ROLE OF THE MAGISTRATES PROSECUTORS' NETWORK

■ The Network of Magistrates/Prosecutors Responsible for Sports (MARS) set up by the Council of Europe, with the assistance of INTERPOL, shall act as an “expert group” with a view to:

- Mobilise the Prosecutors in a maximum of countries, enabling them to know their counterparts in other jurisdictions;
- Provide practical and operational tools for Prosecutors to exchange information and best practices;
- Provide an international “forum” (reference body) devoted to investigation and criminal proceedings; capable of responding to sectorial expectations expressed by sports movement, law enforcement and judiciary.

■ The Network of Magistrates allows them to have direct and professional contacts. The discussions should clarify the Prosecutors' roles and responsibilities in fighting sports corruption, considering specific legal and institutional situations in the different countries.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE FIRST EVENT

■ The overall objective is the formal creation of a network of magistrates/prosecutors specialising in sports integrity and more specifically in the manipulation of sports competitions.

■ The first day's objective is to raise awareness about the latest trends in sports threats (with a focus on sports manipulation), the difficulties of investigation and prosecution and finally, the essential role of prosecutors.

■ The objective of the second day is to focus on specific issues enabling the Network of Prosecutors to be set up and implemented:

- Defining the relevant and simple governance structure (chair, procedures, the role of the Secretariat, etc.);
- Defining priority areas for action (exchange information in a secure manner, strengthen expertise with webinars, share knowledge on typology and modus operandi);
- Defining the relevant “communication strategy” consolidating the network as the reference body for prosecutors fighting against sport competitions manipulations (creation of a web page on the CoE website).

TITLE

■ *Launch of the first network of Magistrates/Prosecutors Responsible for Sports (MARS).*

DATE AND LOCATION

■ The event occurs from Thursday, 24/11/2022, to Friday, 25/11/2022, at the at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

MEETING TYPE

■ Day 1: hybrid meeting for approximately 50-60 persons (including partners) with interpretation.

■ Day 2: hybrid meeting for approximately 20-30 persons (only prosecutors + invited experts + CoE Secretariat) without interpretation.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Day	Time	Description
24/11	13:30-14:00	Arrival of participants
24/11	14:00-14:45	Panel 1: Setting the scene
24/11	14:45-15:30	Panel 2: General overview of sports competitions manipulation, organised crime and betting landscape
24/11	15:30-16:00	Break
24/11	16:00-16:45	Panel 3: Main challenges in investigation and prosecution
24/11	16:45-17:30	Panel 4: Concrete examples of national and international cooperation
24/11	17:30-17:45	Conclusions by a magistrate
24/11	19:30-22:30	Dinner

Day	Time	Description
25/11	08:30-09:00	Arrival of participants
25/11	09:00-09:30	Round table of the participants
25/11	09:30-10:30	Session 1: Governance structure of the network
25/11	10:30-11:00	Break
25/11	11:00-12:15	Session 2: Priority areas for action
25/11	12:15-12:30	Conclusions
25/11	12:30-14:00	Lunch
25/11	14:00	Departure of participants