

The European Sports Ministers oppose the intrusion of politics

The Ministers responsible for Sport in 22 European countries met in London under the chairmanship of Mr. Denis Howell (GBR) from 3rd to 6th April 1978.

This important conference was also followed by many observers. Unable to attend, Lord Killanin, President of the IOC, appointed a representative. Mr. Thomas Keller, President of the GAIF and of the FISA, and Mr. Charles Palmer, Secretary General of the GAIF and President of the IJF, were also present at the discussions on behalf of the International Federations.

In an official communique issued at the end of this conference, the European Ministers agreed to ask their respective governments to draw up sanctions which should be applied when athletes are withdrawn from competitions for reasons that have no connection with sport.

The other principal points of the final communiqué are as follows :

1. The Ministers condemned discrimination in sport based on race, religion, politics or any other grounds incompatible with the Olympic Charter.
2. The Ministers called for the establishment of "constructive relations" with the Council of Europe, the International Olympic Committee and the International Federations to ensure sport's independence.
3. The Ministers invited the member governments of the Council of Europe to support the efforts of the developing countries in improving their sports infrastructure.
4. They requested the Council of Europe to examine urgently the reasons for violence at sports events, as well as Preventive measures.
5. The Ministers condemned the increasing use of doping substances. They agreed to encourage the setting up of regular anti-doping control systems and advocated the application of stricter sanctions on athletes using stimulants.
6. They recommended the Council of Europe to study means of regulating the relationship between advertising and sport in order to avoid all excessive commercial exploitation.

Lastly, the Ministers decided that their conference would take place every three years, and chose Spain to hold the next Conference of European Sports Ministers in 1981.

We shall come back to this conference in greater detail in our next issue.