

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear colleagues, Dear Friends of Sport,

On behalf of the Sport Intergroup in the European Parliament, I would like to welcome you to the High-Level Panel Session on Child Trafficking in Sport. I am very honoured to open this event and thank Baroness Young of Hornes, Mission 89 and Amesi Foundation for making it possible.

As a Member of European Parliament's Committee on Development and a Vice-Chair of the Sport Intergroup, I find it of crucial importance that we put the issue of child trafficking through sport, particularly from Africa to sports clubs in Europe, on the agenda of leading organisations in government and sport. Despite the progress made in the protection of minors and young athletes recently, further discussion between sports organisations, policymakers and other bodies working in this area must take place.

Here in the Parliament, with other colleagues who are interested in sport issues in Europe and beyond, we have established the Sport Intergroup, which organises workshops and conferences focusing on the range of sport-related topics. The Intergroup serves as a platform for communication and cooperation with different interest groups, NGOs, federations and associations in the field of sport.

From our point of view, it is crucial to create and raise awareness around the issue of human trafficking as related to professional sport and acknowledge the magnitude of the problem.

For this reason, the Intergroup will table a parliamentary question to the European Commission to encourage debate around the issue and place trafficking in sport on the EU political agenda.

Additionally, in order to commit to take action and determine how the EU can tackle this phenomenon, the Intergroup supports the idea of creating a set of multi-stakeholder guidelines specific to the protection of Child and Youth athletes from the dangers associated with migration & trafficking in sport. They could have a form of a Roadmap to tackle child trafficking at an EU Level.

I will give the floor now to our moderator, Mr Damien Grammaticas.

Thank you for your attention.