



Impact of Strasbourg and Luxembourg Courts on *Lex Sportiva*

University of Liverpool

Sport has traditionally been viewed as an autonomous system, capable of regulating itself without external legal intervention. This autonomy is widely acknowledged by states and international bodies, including the EU and the Council of Europe. Its legislative dimension is reflected in the extensive self-regulatory powers of international sports federations, culminating in the development of a *lex sportiva*—a transnational body of rules governing sporting competition. Judicial autonomy is exercised through internal disciplinary mechanisms and a distinct system of sports justice, headed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). CAS functions as the supreme judicial authority of the sporting world, wielding considerable influence owing to the broad acceptance of its jurisdiction. However, such autonomous regimes raise significant legal concerns. In modern sport, decisions with far-reaching consequences for athletes' livelihoods, private lives, health and reputations are made within this system, meaning that sports organisations' extensive powers can directly affect athletes' fundamental human rights.

Recent developments increasingly challenge the autonomy and monopolistic power of sports governing bodies, calling into question the sustainability of the current model. International courts now play a greater role, as illustrated by the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in *Semenya v Switzerland* and the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union in *Seraing v Belgium*. This workshop will examine how these courts may influence the sports regulatory regime—both positively and negatively—and how they might strengthen the protection of athletes' human rights.

Register for online attendance via [Eventbrite](#).

16 April 2026

18:00 **Conference Dinner**

17 April 2026

9:00 **Opening Remarks**

Professor *Valsamis Mitsilegas* (University of Liverpool, Dean of the School of Law and Social Justice)

9:10 **Key-Note Presentation**

Marko Bošnjak (Judge at the Court of Justice of the European Union, former President of the ECHR). Law and Sport between two European Courts

Moderator Professor *Michael Dougan* (University of Liverpool)

10:00 Panel 1: Conceptual, Institutional and Procedural Impact of Luxembourg and Strasbourg

Johan Callewaert (University of Louvain, Former Deputy Grand Chamber Registrar of the European Court of Human Rights (2006–2025)). European Case-Law on Sport: Challenges for National Judges

Schona Jolly KC (Cloisters Chambers). Towards Sporting Justice and Human Rights: Scrutiny and the role of the courts

Jaka Kukavica and Marjan Kos (University of Ljubljana). Positive Obligations of States to Protect the Integrity of Athletes

Moderator: Dr *Eleanor Drywood* (University of Liverpool)

11:30 – Coffee Break

12:00 – Panel 2: Athletes' Rights

Seema Patel (Nottingham Trent University). Discrimination in Sport: A Role for Europe?

Giorgia Bevilacqua (Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli). Running against the World or Running against Rule 50? The Answer of the Strasbourg Court on Freedom of Expression in Sport

Moderator: Professor *Kanstantsin Dzehtsiarou* (University of Liverpool)

13:30 Lunch

14:30 Panel 3: Domestic and External Views

Ariel Dulitzky (University of Texas at Austin). An Inter-American Reading of *Seraing and Semanya*: Opportunities and Challenges

Daniel Rietiker (Registry of the European Court of Human Rights, Suffolk University Law School, MA Boston). Between Judicial Restraint and Substantive Engagement: the ECHR's Differential Approach to International and Domestic Sports Arbitration

Moderator: *Rima Yustikaningrum* (University of Liverpool)

16:00 Closing Remarks

Frédéric Krenc (Judge at the ECHR)