

**AIUTI DI STATO E SOCIETÀ DI CALCIO IN DIFFICOLTÀ:
I RECENTI CASI “VALENCIA FOOTBALL CLUBS” E
“DUTCH FOOTBALL CLUBS”**

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ABSTRACT: In July 2016, the European Commission adopted several decisions on State aid granted to certain professional football clubs in the Netherlands and Spain. In five cases, the Commission assessed for the first time the compatibility of State aid granted to football clubs in financial difficulty in light of the criteria laid down in the 2004 Guidelines on State aid for rescuing and restructuring undertakings in difficulty (R&R Guidelines).

The analysis of the decisions reveals a lenient attitude of the Commission in the assessment of the compatibility of aids to football clubs in difficulty. While confirming that professional football constitutes an ‘economic activity’, entirely falling within the scope of State aid rules, the Commission also acknowledged that football is highly regulated both at national and European level. As a result, the Commission agreed that the R&R Guidelines criteria should be applied in accordance with the regulations adopted by UEFA and national federations with regard to the so-called ‘financial fair play’ policy.

Keywords: State Aid – Restructuring Aid – R&R Guidelines – Compatibility Assessment – Sport – Professional Football.

SOMMARIO: 1. Introduzione – 2. La prassi in materia di aiuti di Stato nel settore dello sport professionistico – 2.1 Gli aiuti per il finanziamento di infrastrutture sportive – 2.2 Gli aiuti alle società sportive professionistiche – 2.3 Le decisioni del luglio 2016 – 3. L’applicazione degli Orientamenti per il salvataggio e la ristrutturazione di imprese in difficoltà nel settore dello sport professionistico – 3.1 Le misure oggetto delle decisioni – 3.2 Società di calcio professionistiche e “imprese in difficoltà” – 3.3 I criteri di compatibilità previsti dagli Orientamenti – 4. Conclusioni

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