Monopolizing Collective Selling of Sports Media Rights in The Middle East: Is There a Solution?

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MENA (Middle East and North Africa) is one of the largest markets for sports media broadcasting in terms of countries included in this single market, 23 countries, and population, about 411 million. BEIN Sports, formerly Al-Jazeera Sports, which is owned by Qatar government, is a huge media company with operation in five contents owns the vast majority of sports media broadcasting in this area, including all rights of Olympic Games, FIFA and competition, and NFL, MLB, NBA.

With the current situation in the Arabian Gulf, where four countries has boycott Qatar and all companies owned or sponsored by the Qatari regime, BEIN operation in these countries has been ceased that left about 100 million person in these countries without a legal path to follow their sports.

In this paper I will give a historical overview about how these countries became a single market instead of separate markets, also the decline of ASBU, Arabian States Broadcasting Union, the organization which used to buy the rights and send fee feeds for all member countries. Also I will study how European Union rules, with focusing on European Completion Treaty, has treated behavior of sellers and behavior of buyers in joint selling agreements, also the anti-trust laws in similar situations. The goal of this paper is to propose a legal solution for MENA countries to end monopolizing of the sports media rights.