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# Final draw in Kyiv

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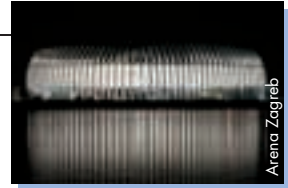
The groups have been decided and the schedule set following the 2010–12 European Football Championship final draw in Kyiv at the beginning of December.



Ceety Images

## Croatia eagerly awaiting UEFA Futsal EURO 7

Excitement is rapidly mounting in Croatia, with 12 teams on their way to compete in the final round of the European Futsal Championship from 31 January.



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The first UEFA women's competition – the predecessor of the European Women's Championship – was launched in December 1981.



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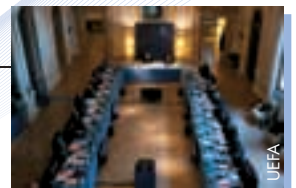
At a KISS workshop, UEFA presented new awards to member associations that have excelled themselves in the field of marketing.



UEFA

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Chaired by the UEFA president, Michel Platini, the Executive Committee met in Venice for its last meeting of the year.



UEFA

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The 12th issue of the *UEFA Grassroots Newsletter* brings you the latest trends and activities in grassroots football around Europe.



## Cover

The EURO-dressed Palace of Arts in Kyiv ready to host the group stage draw

Photo: Sportsfile

## WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL



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# May all our hopes and dreams come true

The festive season is often a time for reflection and reverie. It is also a time when we wish those around us a happy new year and that all their hopes and dreams may come true.

I am not going to break with tradition and therefore wish all our readers, and by extension all football fans, a happy and peaceful 2012. Since it is our love of football that unites us, I also wish you many more magical moments like the UEFA Champions League final we experienced at Wembley in May this year. The outlook for 2012 is promising, with the final round of the European Football Championship topping the bill. As well as being the year's headline act, UEFA EURO 2012 will be the culmination of an undertaking that, for many, seemed like a pipedream, or a dream of sorts at least.

Until an event is over, we must of course take care not to be too optimistic. But what has already been achieved in the two host countries, Poland and Ukraine, over the last few years is a lesson in perseverance and tenacity. We owe it to ourselves to

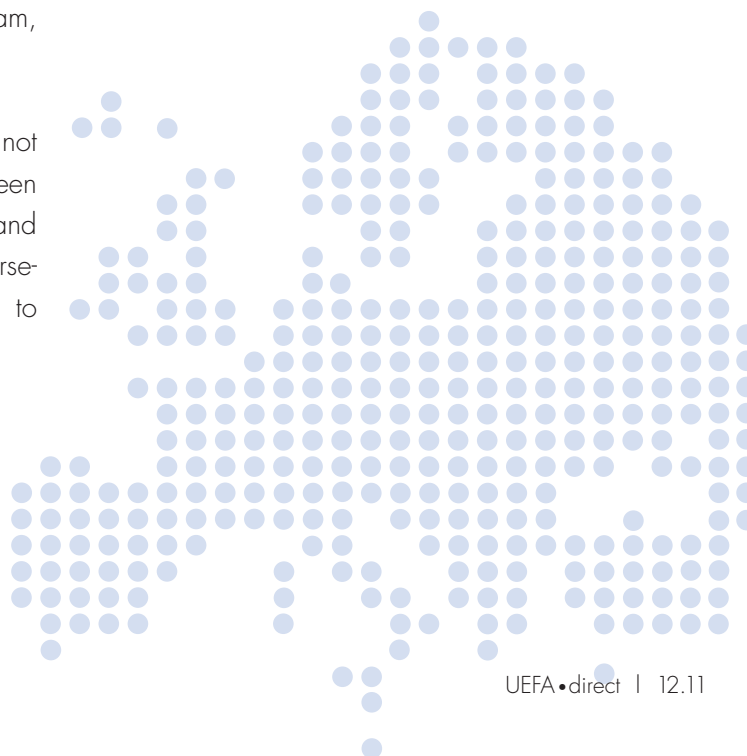
remember this as we turn our hands to other major challenges such as the establishment of financial fair play in UEFA's club competitions and the fight against match fixing, violence and all forms of discrimination.

It is only in this way that our hopes and dreams can come true.

Wishing you all the very best for 2012,



*Michel Platini*  
UEFA President



# Excitement guaranteed

The 2010–12 European Football Championship final draw was held in Kyiv on 2 December.



High-calibre groups were to be expected, with no fewer than 7 of the 16 participating teams among the top 10 in the FIFA world rankings. And the draw more than lived up to expectations. Which teams make it all the way is anybody's guess, but

the route to the final will be an exciting one, that much is guaranteed.



The coaches in Group A: Michal Bilek (Czech Republic), Dick Advocaat (Russia), Fernando Santos (Greece) and Franciszek Smuda (Poland)

## GROUP A – The unpredictables

In this group the race for the two quarter-final slots is likely to be a very open one. Co-hosts **Poland**, with striker Robert Lewandowski, have been drawn against three former European champions. For Franciszek Smuda's team, the big question is whether or not they will be ready after two and a half years without a competitive match. They have made a good impression in their friendlies to date, but for a real insight into their potential we must await their first group match, when Poland open the tournament against **Greece**. The 2004 European champions are also something of an unknown quantity. After a disappointing EURO 2008 and since Portugal's Fernando Santos took over from Otto Rehhagel, the team has been rejuvenated. In qualifying they let virtually nothing get in their way and remained undefeated to secure top spot in their group, suggesting that captain Georgios Karagounis and his team-mates have every reason to set their sights on a place in the knockout stage.

Since their strong performance at EURO 2008, **Russia** have gone through some changes. Dick Advocaat took the helm after they failed to qualify for the 2010 World Cup and has steered the *Sbornaja* through a relatively smooth EURO 2012 qualifying campaign. A lot can be expected of stars such as Andrey Arshavin and Roman Pavlyuchenko, but as is so often the case, the key will be how well the many talented individuals manage to work as a team. The **Czech Republic** have experienced a period shifts and changes over the last few years, but their success in qualifying was an important step towards greater stability. Coach Michal Bilek was also very happy with the final draw and the fact that all their group matches will be in Wroclaw, close to home. After a convincing win against Montenegro in the play-offs it is now up to Petr Cech, Tomas Rosicky and Co. to keep that smile on their coach's face.

## GROUP B – Clash of the titans

After the draw, opinions were unanimous that this is the toughest of all the groups. Runners-up in South Africa, the **Netherlands** seem to have maintained their World Cup form. With the help of the qualifying competition's most prolific goalscorer, Klaas-Jan Huntelaar (12 goals), they overcame a tricky group with relative ease. The *Oranje* are definitely one of the tournament's firm favourites, but Bert van Maarwijk and his team must focus on surviving the group stage before setting their sights any higher. Their second match, against arch-rivals **Germany**, could be decisive. The European Championship record holders have reached six of the last ten final rounds and have lifted the trophy more times than anyone else. They made qualifying for EURO 2012 look like a walk in the park, winning every one of their matches, and although the group stage will be far from easy, Joachim Löw has every position covered and it is hard to imagine his team not making it to the quarter-finals at least.

As they often seem to, **Portugal** had a hard time of it in qualifying, but in their spectacular 6-2 second-leg win against Bosnia and Herzegovina in the play-offs they also showed that they generally manage to rise to the occasion when it counts. Finalists at EURO 2004, there



Group B, with Joachim Löw (Germany), Morten Olsen (Denmark), Paulo Bento (Portugal) and Bert van Marwijk (Netherlands)

is no denying that Paulo Bento's boys are capable of making it past the group stage, something they have not failed to do so since 2002. After a recent slump, **Denmark** finally seem to be back on form and beat both Portugal and Norway in the battle for first place in their qualifying group. Long-serving coach Morten Olsen has built up a young, dynamic and defensively strong team whose no-frills game can create difficulties for any opponent. Nevertheless, his "Danish Dynamite" have a tough task ahead.

### GROUP C – Clear typecasting

In no other group is the casting as clearly defined as here. World and European champions **Spain** have overcome any tournament stage fright they may once have suffered and are clearly one of the firm favourites. Apart



Slaven Bilic (Croatia), Giovanni Trapattoni (Republic of Ireland), Cesare Prandelli (Italy) and Vicente Del Bosque (Spain) have been drawn together in Group C

from Germany, they were the only team not to drop a point in qualifying. No opponents at present are able to thwart the Spaniards' passing game and stop them dictating the tempo, meaning *La Roja* will be an extremely hard nut to crack. Four-time World champions **Italy**, meanwhile, snuck through qualifying but very convincingly so. Coach Cesare Prandelli is currently without any individual megastars, but this need not be a disadvantage – quite the opposite in fact. The question for the *Squadra Azzurra* is whether they can finally live up to their reputation as a tournament team at another European Championship.

The fact that the favourites, Spain and Italy, face one another first could play into the hands of the other two teams in Group C. **Croatia** were forced into the play-offs en route to the finals, but the 1998 World Cup bronze medallists made sure their opponents, Turkey, barely stood a chance. Slaven Bilic has a healthy mix of youth and experience on his squad, which is well represented at Europe's top clubs and more than capable of wrong-footing one of the favourites. Having been unlucky to miss out on the 2010 World Cup, the **Republic of Ireland's** qualification for EURO 2012 – their first for a major tournament since 2002 – must have been hugely gratifying for Giovanni Trapattoni. That said, the Italian coach-

ing legend was less than thrilled about the draw and the prospect of a head-to-head with his homeland. It will be exciting to see whether Robbie Keane and his team-mates manage to make the most of their underdog status.

### GROUP D – Open field

The lineup here is similar to that of Group A: the hosts are the biggest unknown quantity, but even the other three teams are hard to get a handle on. EURO 2012 will be **Ukraine's** first ever European final tournament. Coached by Oleg Blokhin and led by old hands Anatoliy Tymoshchuk and Andriy Shevchenko, they started off with mixed results in preparation for the tournament but have put in some good performances of late. Their first match, against Sweden, will be an extremely important one. **England** made it almost effortlessly through qualifying and are certainly among the favourites, although the Three Lions missed out on EURO 2008 altogether and have never made it to a European Championship final. It will be interesting to see how Italian coach Fabio Capello will prepare England, who are not considered a tournament team, and whether he will be able to compensate for Wayne Rooney, suspended for the first two of their three group games.



Photos: Sportsfile

**Sweden** qualified directly for EURO 2012 as best runners-up and have become regulars at major final tournaments. They have yet to hit the jackpot though, despite time and again producing outstanding players such as Zlatan Ibrahimovic. With every position well covered, will Erik Hamren manage to take his team to glory? Instead of riches, with **France** Laurent Blanc was faced with ruins after a disastrous 2010 World Cup. But he was quick to tap the country's near bottomless talent pool, getting some new, highly motivated players such as Loic Rémy on board and taking the direct route through qualifying. For *Les Bleus* anything is possible, depending on how tight-knit the new team has become and what form is shown by leading lights such as Franck Ribéry and Samir Nasri. ●

Group D:  
Oleg Blokhin  
(Ukraine),  
Erik Hamren  
(Sweden),  
Laurent Blanc  
(France) and  
Fabio Capello  
(England)

# Behind the scenes

With the UEFA EURO 2012 draw completed, the teams can start their final preparations for next summer's tournament and fans can start looking forward to it in earnest.

But what of the draw itself? It may have been over in an hour, but it was the product of detailed preparation, not least in the week leading up to the event in Kyiv on 2 December. The Palace of Arts was transformed; noticeable changes were made inside the venue and outside. EURO-branded banners – one of which featured a depiction of the Henri Delaunay Cup – were draped over the front of the building, while press conference areas, a dedicated media floor and security entry points were set up. Images of past tournaments, fans from the two host nations and EURO heroes adorned the welcome area and all six floors of the building.

## Full coverage

As the great and the good of European football filtered into the Ukrainian capital, the event received full coverage on UEFA.com. There was coverage of the official unveiling of the match ball for the tournament, the adidas Tango 12, and the opening press conference with the UEFA general secretary, Gianni Infantino, the president of the Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU), Grigoriy Surkis, and the Polish Football Federation (PZPN) president, Grzegorz Lato. There was also the announcement that UEFA EURO 2012's official song will be performed by Oceania, behind the scenes articles giving a flavour of Kyiv and live coverage of the event itself in UEFA.com's new DrawCentre, followed by full reaction.

Seventy UEFA host broadcast staff – including production, technical, operations and satellite news gathering (SNG) specialists – were directly involved in televising the draw. The TV compound itself measured 2,100 square metres and 3 host broadcasting trucks, plus 12 unilateral ones (including SNG vehicles), helped beam pictures around the world. Around 10km of cabling was used in the host broadcasting effort – a figure that doubles when the unilateral elements and IT requirements are taken into account.

In addition, interviews with some of the 650 VIP guests – including Fabio Capello, Vicente del Bosque and Christian Karembeu – were filmed as they arrived

at the Palace of Arts for the ceremony. There were flash interviews with the coaches after the draw and two behind the scenes crews exploring Kyiv and covering the build-up to the event all week. The draw featured representatives from each of the teams that have previously won a European Football Championship – with



the likes of Marco van Basten, Peter Schmeichel and Zinédine Zidane helping to pick the balls – and many of these 13 “legends” also took part in filmed interviews.

## Hive of activity

A crew of 90 set up the stage where the draw took place, making sure the lighting and sound were just right, and an additional 50 UEFA staff – in particular from the competitions and event operations division – contributed to the smooth running of the event. There was also plenty of local expertise utilised, with 55 local organising committee representatives from Ukraine and 21 from Poland, as well as 260 volunteers – all ensuring every detail was covered.

On the day of the draw itself, the Palace of Arts was a hive of activity as the guests and all 16 national team coaches arrived along with the 330 media and 50 photographers who covered proceedings. With the last balls picked, the Palace of Arts could begin its transformation back into its natural state, with the 14th European Football Championship finals in Poland and Ukraine a big step closer. ●

# Huge interest in Croatia

There is no doubt that the Futsal EURO 2012 in Croatia will generate enormous interest not only at home, but also among the foreign public and media. With great confidence, Croatia is looking forward to the most well-attended tournament in the history of indoor football.



Futsal has definitely become one of the most popular branches of football and we are confident that the forthcoming final round, contested by the best teams in Europe, will prove it. There are a lot of reasons for our optimism. All activities linked to the organisation of the tournament have been carried

out according to plan and on schedule. The arenas in Split and Zagreb are simply fantastic, the ticket prices are very reasonable, and the hosts are raring to go. Also, the significance of the Croatian national football team's success and their qualification for EURO 2012 in Ukraine and Poland should not be overlooked, as it will significantly increase the interest of the Croats, unique football lovers, and their desire to spend a couple of winter weeks enjoying some top-class indoor football ahead of the summer's outdoor extravaganza.

## More than a game

This is the first time in its short history as an independent state that Croatia is hosting a major UEFA event, and for this reason alone everyone involved in its organisation is determined to show off Croatia to Europe and the world from 31 January until 11 February. That means presenting the country in its true light, not only as organisers and brilliant hosts, but also as a sport-loving country where football is more than a game, more than just a sport.

This is also a great opportunity to look back on Croatia's futsal history. Big tournaments have been organised in Zagreb and Split for a number of years now. Take *Kutija šibica*, a tournament which has been played since 1971, with 648 teams participating in its 15th edition in 1985. The Torcida Cup, played in Split, is no less reputable and also extremely popular. This is not overly surprising, given that futsal is actually the oldest form of football in Croatia, although initially it was more of an improvised game. The country's first championship match was played in 1921 on the Pelješac peninsula.

## The four groups

Twelve teams are taking part in the Futsal EURO 2012, all of them from among the world's elite. For the group stage, they have been drawn into four groups of three.

In Group A, alongside Croatia, led by head coach Mato Stankovic, are the Czechs and Romanians; Group B contains Spain, Slovenia and Ukraine; Group C Italy, Russia and Turkey; and Group D Portugal, Serbia and Azerbaijan. The top two teams from each group will qualify for the quarter-finals.

The tournament kicks off at the Zagreb Arena, with the opening match, Spain v Slovenia, at 18.00 on 31 January. The home team will play their first match the same day, kicking off at 21.00 against Romania at the Spaladium Arena in Split. The capacity of both arenas is over 10,000.

The promoters of the Futsal EURO 2012, Davor Šuker and Robert Jarni, were members of Croatia's bronze-medallist team at the 1998 World Cup in France, together with the current head coach of the Croatian national team, Slaven Bilic. This trio symbolically bought the first batch of tickets for the tournament.



Spaladium Arena

The Spaladium Arena in Split



M. Hegedac

The Zagreb Arena, venue for the opening match on 31 January.

With everything set and what promises to be a great Futsal EURO 2012 just around the corner, in the words of the president of the Croatian Football Federation, Vlatko Markovic: "We wish all the participants the best of luck. May the tournament be played in the spirit of fair play – a symbol and value of this noble game – and as a result, may the best team win." ●

Davor Gavran, press officer

# Thirty years of UEFA competition

*"To judge by the enormous growth in women's football and the booming interest shown in this sector of the game by various national associations, the new competition will become a reality next year."*

With these words, contained in his end-of-year message published in the UEFA Official Bulletin of December 1981, the then UEFA president, Artemio Franchi, announced the launch of UEFA's first women's football competition, reserved for national teams.

## Sowing the seed

The idea of a women's competition had originated in Zurich in February 1980, at a conference on women's football attended by half of UEFA's member associations at the time (17 out of 34). It was then discussed at the Ordinary UEFA Congress in Rome on 21 June that year, at the initiative of Danish delegate Carl Nielsen, speaking on behalf of the Scandinavian associations. This led to the creation of a women's football committee (the first such committee, set up in 1971, had been dissolved two years previously due to lack of interest). The committee's main task was to ensure that the national associations themselves took control of women's football, which was still far from being the case in many countries. At its first meeting in Zurich in March 1981, with Belgian Executive Committee member Louis Wouters in the chair,

the committee laid down the basic conditions for a competition: it should not be compulsory, would only be organised if at least 12 of the 34 member associations took part and should comprise regional groups in order to limit travel costs.

## The green light

At its meeting in Prague on 22 September 1981, the Executive Committee gave the green light to the competition, which had an annual budget of CHF 25,000 and regulations based on those of the Under-16 men's competition. Invitations to participate in the event were sent in December that year. Sixteen associations accepted, i.e. four more than the number required. Split into four groups of four, they played their first matches in August 1982, with Finland and Sweden contesting the inaugural fixture on 18 August.

## Penalties to designate the first winners

The Swedes, who won that opening match 6-0, went on to reach the final, a two-legged encounter against England in spring 1984. They won the first leg 1-0 in Gothenburg on 12 May, but England won by the same scoreline in London a fortnight later. With no further goals in extra time, Sweden won 4-3 on penalties to become the first winners.

The competition acquired European Championship status in 1989. Forty-five national associations are taking part in the 2011-13 European Women's Championship, which will culminate in Sweden in July 2013. ●



Empics Sport

Sweden, winners in 1984 of the first UEFA women's football competition

## Strong start to qualifying

The 38 teams competing in the qualifying stage of the 2011–13 Women's European Championship will resume play in February 2012.



Of these 38, 12 remain unbeaten: Italy (Group 1), Spain and Germany (Group 2), Iceland (Group 3), France and Scotland (Group 4), Slovakia and Finland (Group 5), the Netherlands and England (Group 6), and Denmark and the Czech Republic (Group 7).

The qualifying competition will last until September next year, after which the winners of the seven groups and the single best runners-up will automatically qualify for the final round, to be held from 10 to 28 July 2013. The other six runners-up will compete in play-offs for the last three places in the finals, which will also include hosts Sweden. ●



With Spain and Germany having drawn 2-2 in November, both teams remain unbeaten in Group 2 of the European Women's Championship qualifying competition

### KISS programme

## Women's football workshop

To coincide with the draws for the UEFA Women's Champions League quarter- and semi-finals, and the recent UEFA youth competition draws, a workshop was held for club and national association representatives.

The aim of this workshop, held under the umbrella of UEFA's Knowledge and Information Sharing Scenario, or KISS programme, was to discuss ways of further boosting women's football and maintaining the momentum of its spectacular rise. To this end, many tools were proposed at the workshop, including appropriate funding and effective provisions within the club licensing system, taking into account the differing levels of development seen from one association to the next.

The meeting highlighted the crucial role played by clubs in the evolution of women's football and the importance, therefore, of establishing strong clubs that are in a position to provide young players with good conditions for training and development.

The representatives of three national associations – England, Germany and Finland – each made presentations. England discussed the importance of its Women's Super League, Germany highlighted the need for a vision, clear objectives and ideas for effective development, and Finland presented the positive effects of a long-term strategy as one of the reasons women's football is as popular as it now is in Finland. ●

### UEFA Women's Champions League

## Quarter-final draw

The 54 clubs who lined up in the starting blocks for the 2011/12 UEFA Women's Champions League have been whittled down to eight, representing the six national associations of Germany and Sweden (two clubs apiece), England, Denmark, France and Russia.



Alongside the title holders, Olympique Lyonnais, three other competition winners are still in the running: 1. FFC Frankfurt, three-time champions (in 2002, 2006 and 2008), 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam, winners in 2005 and 2010, and Arsenal Ladies FC, who lifted the trophy in 2007. None of them are going head to head in the quarter-finals, for which a draw at the House of European Football in Nyon, Switzerland, on 17 November established the following lineup:

1. FC Malmö v 1. FFC Frankfurt
2. Olympique Lyonnais v Brøndby IF
3. 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam v FC Rossiyanika
4. Arsenal LFC v Göteborg FC

These quarter-finals will be played on 14/15 March (first legs) and 21/22 March (return legs). Then, the winners of matches 2 and 3 will meet in the semi-finals, as will the winners of matches 4 and 1. The first legs will be played on 14/15 April, and the return legs on 21/22 April.

The final, now played in the same week and city as the men's Champions League final, is being held in Munich on Thursday 17 May. ●

# KISS workshop in Paris celebrates marketing excellence

UEFA's Knowledge and Information Sharing Scenario (KISS) team went to Paris on 24 and 25 November to hold its latest marketing workshop for UEFA member associations.

The programme included a wide range of marketing case studies presented by the football associations of Wales, Malta, Slovakia and Finland. From outside the football family, delegates heard from the organisers of the 2012 London Olympics, who talked about their "fan experience" plans for next year's Games, while the International Rugby Board gave a debriefing on its 2011 Rugby World Cup commercial activities and Google demonstrated how to get the best out of its new social media platform, Google Plus. Returning to football, France's Ligue de Football Professionnel presented its marketing concept for the French League Cup.

The Paris workshop also introduced a new initiative aimed at celebrating marketing excellence. Marketing is part and parcel of football, simply because it can give a national football team, a club or a fan base an identity – and in a perfect world it can unite all these elements to create a bigger picture and shared values. UEFA's members excel in this respect and for the first time KISS has recognised some of the most outstanding projects with KISS marketing awards. Here is a selection of the winners and their stories.

## Best Social Media Campaign: Danish Football Association (DBU)

The **Football Feeling** video filmed by the DBU was part of an international promotion campaign for the European Under-21 Championship final round held in Denmark this year. The strategy for the video was ingenious: to turn an everyday Under-15 football match into a major competition match. With no prior warning, the

DBU organised a noisy crowd of supporters, music, national team jerseys, advertising boards – and senior national team player Martin Jørgensen, who acted as the match mascot and ball carrier. The resulting video, launched on YouTube, registered 90,852 hits in the first 24 hours, half a million hits within a week, and listings in more than 40 countries. Facebook had 10,000 shared video links and thousands of tweets were sent through Twitter. The element of surprise was the making of the video – producing such genuine reactions from the young players – but the distribution via social media platforms was also fresh and courageous, and resulted in worldwide recognition. You can watch the video on YouTube by typing "The Football Feeling" in the site's search engine.

## Best Loyalty Programme: French Football Federation (FFF)

The **Emotion Bleue** loyalty programme was launched by the FFF on 29 March 2011. It is specific to the men's, women's and youth national teams. The priorities are to recognise, reward and secure the loyalty of the fans, develop the FFF's image and business relations, as well as increase customer knowledge through interaction between the FFF and fans. This is a new approach by the FFF because it is entirely built on fan support and a two-way communication flow. Also essential to the project is the partnership and support of the sponsors, which not only increase their own visibility, but also extend awareness of the programme to a much wider audience and encourage increased membership, which is currently at an all-time high of 40,000. UEFA wishes the FFF every success with this programme, which is

The six  
UEFA award  
winners



innovative and has created an almost intimate link between them and the fans of their national teams.

#### Best Brand Strategy:

##### Football Association of Wales (FAW)

The Football Association of Wales had a straightforward but challenging goal: to put even more passion and fire into the national game. It was not so much an image overhaul, but the actual creation of a new and invigorating FAW brand to capture the spirit of Welsh football. The FAW launched its new brand to coincide with the Wales v England UEFA EURO 2012 qualifier played at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff on 26 March 2011. An extensive communications campaign delivered a stadium full to capacity (72,000 spectators). Also sold out was the newly branded FAW hospitality club, known as Club 1876 to commemorate the year the FAW was founded. The FAW membership scheme has since welcomed an additional 50,000 members. The overwhelming reaction and genuine excitement among fans as a result of the association's efforts clearly show that Wales is a nation that cherishes its national game, as well as its football association.

#### Best Sponsorship Activation:

##### Swedish Football Association (SvFF)

**Energifonden (Energy Fund)** is a joint programme created by the Swedish FA and national energy provider E.On. The Swedish FA encourages the development of football clubs at grassroots level in more rural areas of the country. Initially its work focused on infrastructure development, but in time it became clear that operating costs, and in particular electricity, were making it hard to achieve the goal of having a club in every village. Financially, some smaller clubs found it difficult to make ends meet. So the association and E.On put their heads together and the Energy Fund was born. To date, it has sponsored some 113 clubs, many of which estimate an annual energy saving of 40 to 50%. This means more resources for player and club development. And because of reduced costs, some clubs can stay open to their communities throughout the winter months. This is a resounding success for Swedish football, and it shows



The Danish video for the Under-21 final round was a real hit

that sponsorship should not only apply to the elite but can also nurture the sport from the grassroots up, promoting football for everyone. In fact, the benefits even extend outside the football family to a better all-round understanding of energy saving.

#### Best Fan Promotion:

##### The Football Association (The FA)

**The England Fan Fair** was a joint venture by The FA and the lead England sponsor, Vauxhall. This initiative took place before the England v Wales UEFA EURO 2012 qualifier on 6 September 2011. The five-a-side centre just outside Wembley Stadium was converted into a fan zone for three hours ahead of the match. The event was by invitation to ticket holders, with a special focus on the stadium's family enclosure to enable children to absorb the pre-match atmosphere as well as a wide range of exciting activities, including speed-kick, face-painting, inflatable pitches, competitions, street dancing, England fan membership registration and a photo opportunity with England coach Fabio Capello to name but a few. Just over 1,500 fans visited the fan zone, with 92% naming the brand connection to Vauxhall unprompted and 84% saying that the pre-match experience had been stimulated by the event. This is a simple and efficient example of a member association working hand in hand with a sponsor to unite fans, while at the same time achieving heightened exposure among their respective audiences.

#### Special Award from the jury:

##### Polish Football Association (PZPN)

In recognition of new initiative and creativity, the jury presented a special award to the Polish Football Association. Its remarkable progress towards a new brand concept, as well as the development of a loyalty programme for fans, deserves special acknowledgement and credit. Marketing is a newer focus for the Polish FA and its efforts have resulted in two very successful marketing projects. ●

#### The following football associations also received special mention:

- German Football Association (DFB) for its initiatives in referee loyalty and women's football development.
- Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) for its innovative approach to the segmentation of its target group.
- Israel Football Association (IFA) for its integrated marketing campaign set to music.
- Football Association of Ireland (FAI) for the most professional and high-level marketing awards entry and for the enthusiasm with which it has embraced the UEFA KISS marketing awards initiative.

# A resolution for the protection of the game

European Parliament supports all UEFA's key aims in the fight against match fixing.

The European Parliament approved a resolution on online betting at its plenary session in Strasbourg on 15 November. The resolution gave a significant boost to UEFA's efforts to combat match fixing in football and backed all of UEFA's key aims in the areas of betting and match fixing.

## Support of UEFA's efforts

The resolution, which includes many points on sport, is based on the Creutzmann Report on Online Gambling in the Internal Market, named after its author, German MEP Jürgen Creutzmann. This European Parliament resolution is not legally binding on EU member states but it supports UEFA's efforts to protect the integrity of sport and ensure a "fair return" for sport in the context of betting.

The final text can be regarded as a success for UEFA. This is despite the initial report having been subjected to heavy lobbying by the gambling industry, which was against the recognition of sports bodies' intellectual property rights to their own competitions, the so-called "betting right". The betting industry was also against legally binding agreements between betting operators and sports competition organisers.

## Protection of the integrity of sport

The resolution calls for measures to protect the integrity of sport through cross-border cooperation between

sports organisations and relevant public bodies. Importantly, it also recognises the added value an EU-wide approach can have in the area of online betting. It specifically recommends penalising betting fraud as a criminal offence throughout Europe.

The European Parliament's resolution on online gambling calls for the recognition of sports bodies' property rights to their competitions through a fair financial return from betting operators. France is the first country in Europe to have enshrined this right in law. Ultimately, this property right ensures cooperation between sports competition organisers and betting operators, which in turn leads to more transparency, improves monitoring and control mechanisms, and can help to fight money laundering through betting.

## General support

All EU institutions have now shown support for UEFA's fight against match fixing. The European Commission adopted a Green Paper on Online Gambling in the Internal Market in March, which launched a consultation process on match fixing, among other things. The resolution voted through by the MEPs in November represents the European Parliament's position on the Commission's green paper. Combating match fixing was also included in the Council of Ministers' conclusions last month. ●



The European Parliament in session in Strasbourg

# Sixteen-team Women's EURO

On 8 December in Venice, the Executive Committee convened for its last meeting of the year, chaired by the UEFA president, Michel Platini.

Following up on the strategy meeting with the presidents and general secretaries of UEFA's member associations, held in Cyprus in September, the Executive Committee took some decisions about the future of UEFA's competitions. For example, it decided to enlarge the field for the European Women's Championship final round from 12 to 16 as of 2017. It also decided to double the number of teams involved in the European Women's Under-17 Championship final round, meaning the current four-team tournament will be expanded to eight in 2014. The national associations will also be invited to host the tournament, which until now has always been organised by the UEFA administration at the Colovray stadium in Nyon.

The Executive Committee entrusted the Royal Belgian Football Association with the organisation of the European Futsal Championship final round in 2014, which will once again involve a field of 12 teams.

As regards EURO 2012, meanwhile, the Executive Committee took note of the progress seen in terms of stadiums, transport and accommodation, and approved a new provision in the competition regulations concerning abandoned matches. If a match must be abandoned for whatever reason, it will be resumed the next day, when only the time remaining will be played (instead of replaying the whole match), except in cases brought before the disciplinary bodies. Also, in preparation for the tournament, participating teams will have the right to play one single match against another participating team in the 30 days before the opening match, but only if they have not been drawn together for the group stage.

## HatTrick III

The HatTrick assistance programme enters its third cycle in 2012. Covering four seasons, HatTrick III will run until 2016. For this new cycle, the Executive Committee approved revised regulations which define, among other things, the maximum amounts available to the national associations. Each can apply for a total of €3 million during the cycle to finance investment projects (social or grassroots) with the aim of developing the game in their respective countries. In addition, up to €1,625,000 a year will be available to each association and paid in the form of a €600,000 solidarity payment to contribute

to general running costs and a €1,025,000 incentive payment for participating in UEFA's youth, women's and futsal competitions, for applying and implementing the UEFA club licensing system and the UEFA charters and



conventions on grassroots football, coach education and referee education and organisation, for implementing the UEFA good governance programme and for appointing an integrity officer.

## Social dialogue

The Executive Committee also approved an autonomous agreement on minimum requirements for professional players' contracts. UEFA, the Association of European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL), the European Club Association (ECA) and Europe's professional players' union (FIFPro, division Europe) are all parties to the agreement, which will be presented to the UEFA Congress for final approval in Istanbul in March and is expected to be signed by all parties in Brussels in April, in the presence of the European Commission.

Regarding the forthcoming UEFA Congress in Istanbul on 22 March, the Executive Committee took note of the provisional agenda and programme and agreed on the changes to the UEFA Statutes that will be submitted to the delegates for approval. It also gave the green light to UEFA's annual accounts for 2010/11 as these too must be approved by the UEFA Congress in March. ●

# Draws in Nyon

The first qualifying round of the 2012/13 European Women's Under-19 Championship will be played from 20 to 25 October 2012.

A draw held in Nyon on 15 November placed the 40 participating teams into the following ten groups of four:



## 2012/13 European Women's U19 Championship – First qualifying round

- Group 1: Republic of Ireland, **Serbia**, Cyprus, Latvia
- Group 2: **Austria**, Italy, Greece, Kazakhstan
- Group 3: Ukraine, Belgium, Faroe Islands, **Croatia**
- Group 4: **Hungary**, Poland, Lithuania, Northern Ireland
- Group 5: Norway, Scotland, **Turkey**, Belarus
- Group 6: **Denmark**, Iceland, Moldova, Slovakia
- Group 7: Spain, Finland, Estonia, **Bulgaria**
- Group 8: Czech Republic, Portugal, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, FYR Macedonia
- Group 9: Sweden, **Russia**, Slovenia, Azerbaijan
- Group 10: Netherlands, **Switzerland**, Romania, Israel

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

The top two teams in each group and the best third-placed team will qualify for the second qualifying round, to be played from 4 to 9 April 2013.

Four other teams are participating in the competition: Wales, who will host the final round from 19 to 31 August 2013 and are therefore exempted from the qualifying phase, as well as Germany, France and England, who all received byes for the first qualifying round thanks to their UEFA coefficients.

The teams from the same three associations also received byes in the 2011/12 edition and therefore joined the 21 teams who made the first cut as they gathered for the second round draw, which was also held on 15 November:

## 2011/12 European Women's U19 Championship – Second qualifying round

- Group 1: Norway, Czech Republic, Belgium, **Portugal**
- Group 2: Germany, **Sweden**, Poland, Northern Ireland
- Group 3: France, Iceland, Romania, **Netherlands**
- Group 4: Denmark, Republic of Ireland, Switzerland, **Serbia**
- Group 5: Spain, Scotland, Italy, **Russia**
- Group 6: **England**, Austria, Finland, Wales

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

The matches will be played from 31 March to 5 April. The six group winners and the best runner-up will participate in the final round in Turkey from 2 to 14 July, alongside the team of the host association.



Clarisse Le Bihan (U17) and Ramona Petzelberger (U19) received 2010/11 fair play awards on behalf of France and Germany respectively and participated in the women's competition draws

## European Women's Under-17 Championship

In the U17 category, the first qualifying round of the 2011/12 European Championship has been completed and the 14 qualifiers join Germany and the Netherlands in the four second-round groups drawn in Nyon on 15 November:



## 2011/12 European Women's U17 Championship – Second qualifying round

- Group 1: Switzerland, England, **Belgium**, Iceland
- Group 2: France, **Norway**, Republic of Ireland, Poland
- Group 3: Netherlands, Sweden, **Denmark**, Finland
- Group 4: Germany, **Spain**, Czech Republic, Serbia

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

The matches in this second round will be held between 19 March and 1 May 2012. The four group winners will then compete for the European title at the Colovray stadium in Nyon from 26 to 29 June. The semi-final draw has already been made, with the winners of Groups 1 and 2 due to meet in one semi-final and the winners of Groups 3 and 4 in the other.

Meanwhile, a record 44 associations have entered the 2012/13 European Women's Under-17 Championship.

The teams were split into 11 groups of 4 in another draw held at UEFA headquarters on 15 November:

## 2012/13 European Women's U17 Championship – First qualifying round

- Group 1: Switzerland, Belgium, Bulgaria, **Moldova**
- Group 2: England, Italy, **Northern Ireland**, Israel
- Group 3: France, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Lithuania**
- Group 4: Czech Republic, Iceland, Estonia, **Slovenia**
- Group 5: Denmark, Scotland, **FYR Macedonia**, Serbia
- Group 6: Sweden, **Austria**, Croatia, Azerbaijan
- Group 7: Germany, Russia, **Greece**, Romania
- Group 8: **Netherlands**, Ukraine, Montenegro, Kazakhstan
- Group 9: Republic of Ireland, Finland, Belarus, **Georgia**
- Group 10: Norway, Wales, **Latvia**, Turkey
- Group 11: Spain, Poland, Faroe Islands, **Slovakia**

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

These group matches will be played between September and November 2012. The group winners and the five best runners-up will qualify for the second qualifying round, to be played in April 2013.

## Men's youth competitions

Four draws were held in Nyon on 29 November for the men's Under-17 and Under-19 competitions.

The 28 teams which qualified for the elite round of the 2011/12 European Under-19 Championship were drawn into the following seven groups:



### 2011/12 European U19 Championship – Elite round

- Group 1: France, Netherlands, **Czech Republic**, Norway
- Group 2: **England**, Switzerland, Slovenia, Montenegro
- Group 3: Hungary, Germany, Romania, **Serbia**
- Group 4: **Portugal**, Ukraine, Republic of Ireland, Israel
- Group 5: Greece, **Denmark**, Turkey, Cyprus
- Group 6: Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Croatia**, Georgia, Austria
- Group 7: Spain, Belgium, Armenia, **Italy**

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

The seven group winners will participate in the final round, to be held in Estonia from 3 to 15 July 2012. This final phase will also determine which European teams will join Turkey, who have qualified as hosts, at the FIFA U-20 World Cup.

The 2012/13 European Under-19 Championship qualifying round will be played in autumn 2012.

The 48 teams involved were drawn into the following 12 groups of 4:

### 2012/13 European U19 Championship – Qualifying round

- Group 1: Austria, **Hungary**, Andorra, Bulgaria
- Group 2: Finland, Denmark, Montenegro, **Cyprus**
- Group 3: Poland, Netherlands, **San Marino**, Malta
- Group 4: Czech Republic, Greece, **Northern Ireland**, Moldova
- Group 5: Germany, Republic of Ireland, FYR Macedonia, **Luxembourg**
- Group 6: France, **Portugal**, Israel, Latvia
- Group 7: Belgium, Italy, Belarus, **Albania**
- Group 8: Slovakia, Norway, Kazakhstan, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**
- Group 9: **Scotland**, Switzerland, Armenia, Romania
- Group 10: Wales, Russia, Sweden, **Slovenia**
- Group 11: **Croatia**, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iceland
- Group 12: Ukraine, England, Faroe Islands, **Estonia**

Mini-tournament hosts in bolds

The top two teams in each group and the best third-placed team will qualify for the elite round.

Four other teams are participating in the competition: Lithuania, who qualify as hosts of the final round in summer 2013, and Spain, Serbia and Turkey, who are exempted from this first phase thanks to their UEFA coefficients.

## European Under-17 Championship

In the U17 category, the draw on 29 November produced the following seven groups for the elite round, which will be played at the end of March 2012:



### 2011/12 European U17 Championship – Elite round

- Group 1: France, Sweden, Italy, Switzerland
- Group 2: Czech Republic, Belarus, Poland, **Luxembourg**
- Group 3: Spain, England, **Georgia**, Ukraine
- Group 4: **Germany**, Portugal, Turkey, Bulgaria

- Group 5: Serbia, **Netherlands**, Republic of Ireland, Albania
- Group 6: Denmark, **Scotland**, Iceland, Lithuania
- Group 7: **Hungary**, Russia, Belgium, Wales

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

The group winners qualify for the final round, which will be held in Slovenia from 4 to 16 May 2012.

Another draw held at UEFA headquarters on 29 November divided the 52 teams participating in the 2012/13 European Under-17 Championship qualifying round into 13 groups of 4:

### 2012/13 European U17 Championship – Qualifying round

- Group 1: Belarus, **Serbia**, Moldova, Armenia
- Group 2: **Finland**, Germany, Andorra, San Marino
- Group 3: **Belgium**, Netherlands, Lithuania, Latvia
- Group 4: Spain, Poland, Azerbaijan, **Bulgaria**
- Group 5: Greece, France, Slovenia, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**
- Group 6: **Austria**, Switzerland, Cyprus, Faroe Islands
- Group 7: England, Northern Ireland, **Estonia**, Wales
- Group 8: Italy, **Hungary**, Albania, Liechtenstein
- Group 9: Norway, Portugal, **Malta**, Iceland
- Group 10: Republic of Ireland, Romania, Sweden, **FYR Macedonia**
- Group 11: Denmark, **Czech Republic**, Montenegro, Russia
- Group 12: Turkey, **Croatia**, Kazakhstan, Israel
- Group 13: Scotland, **Georgia**, Luxembourg, Ukraine

Mini-tournament hosts in bold

The top two teams in each group and the best third-placed team will qualify for the elite round. The final round, involving the seven elite round winners, will be held in Slovakia in May 2013. This final tournament will determine the teams sent to represent Europe at the FIFA U-17 World Cup to be held in the United Arab Emirates in 2013. ●

## SPAIN WIN MAURICE BURLAZ TROPHY

The Maurice Burlaz Trophy, named after the former vice-chairman of the UEFA Youth Committee, is awarded to the national association that has achieved the best results in the UEFA men's Under-17 and Under-19 competitions over the last two seasons. Spain, finishing just ahead of England and France, have just won the trophy for the eighth time.



The chairman of the UEFA Youth and Amateur Football Committee, Jim Boyce (centre), presented the trophy to Spain's Gines Melendez and Vicente Muñoz in Nyon.

# Fight against match fixing

UEFA held a keynote conference in conjunction with the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP) at the House of European Football on 24/25 November. The event theme was "kicking fraud out of sport".

Officials from the IAP, UEFA and world football body FIFA came together with state prosecutors, anti-corruption officials and police officers. The agenda focussed on fraudulent activity within regulated sporting activities, with special emphasis on match fixing and other criminal activity within football and other sports.

The topics discussed in Nyon included the prosecution of a match-fixing case, legal frameworks relating to sports fraud, betting issues and cooperation between sports bodies and law enforcement agencies.

"The fight against match fixing and corruption is certainly the top priority for UEFA, the UEFA president and the UEFA Executive Committee in the years to come," the UEFA general secretary, Gianni Infantino, said. "It is our job to protect football, it is our responsibility to do what we can against corruption, to fight against this cancer that we have to eradicate from football."

"It is obvious that if the fans and children have the impression that the result of a match is known before the match starts, then this clearly affects the soul of football or any other sport," he added. "We also need the help of the law enforcement agencies and authorities. We need to work hand in hand, we have to act very strongly and in a united way." ●

## Prize for contribution to football

### UEFA president wins Facchetti prize

On 14 November in Milan, Michel Platini received the Giacinto Facchetti International Prize, an award created in 2007 by the Italian daily *La Gazzetta dello Sport* in memory of the former captain of FC Internazionale Milano and the Italian national team.



The UEFA president with Giovanna Facchetti and Internazionale president Massimo Moratti

The prize was awarded to the UEFA president for his contribution to football as both a player and a football administrator, with particular emphasis on his efforts to introduce financial fair play.

Together with the prize, the UEFA president received a €10,000 cheque, which he donated to the Stefano Borgonovo Foundation, created three years ago by the former ACF Fiorentina player to fund research into treatments for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). ●

## RESEARCH BITE

Part of the work of the marketing research activities team within the UEFA administration consists of regularly monitoring audiences, gauging interest in sport, football and UEFA competitions, and asking fans for their impressions of the various events they attend or watch. The team's latest findings concern, for example:

- awareness of and interest in sports competitions (not just football) in 14 different markets, for an up-to-date overview of where major football competitions stand in comparison with other sports;
- the impact of sponsorship on brand perceptions;
- a comprehensive review of the European Under-21 Championship final round, which took place in June 2011 in Denmark (who was there, where they came from and what the fan experience was like);
- awareness of and interest in the European Under-21 Championship final round in seven European markets, where it stands in relation to other football competitions and how it is perceived.

The research team will regularly share interesting findings through the KISS research exchange platform and is available to provide further information. ●

# Estonian Football Association turns 90



Although 90 years have passed since the founding of the Estonian Football Association (EJL), in reality the association and football in the country are still rather young.

In 2009, Estonia celebrated 100 years since the country's first ever football match. It was more than ten years after that when, on 14 December 1921, the EJL was created, with judge Gustav Laanekõrb elected as its first president.

Succeeding Laanekõrb, Jaan Lepp, a hero of the Estonian war of independence, then served as president and led the EJL to full FIFA membership in May 1923.

## Tough history

The longest-serving president during the pre-occupation period was Ado Anderkopp. Anderkopp was also founder of the Estonian Olympic Committee, served on the Estonian parliament for almost 20 years and held the positions of both minister of war and minister of the interior and justice.

All three of the above presidents, as well as many other key officials and top football players, were killed during the Soviet occupation in the early 1940s. The occupation also meant that the EJL was disbanded and not re-established until over 40 years later, on 3 December 1988.

After the country had regained its independence in 1991, Estonia rejoined the international football scene in 1992 when it became a FIFA member again and joined UEFA. The longest-serving EJL president was Peeter Küttis. The current president, Aivar Pohlak, was elected in 2007.

"It was, of course, very hard at the beginning of the 1990s. Estonian football was basically extinct," says Pohlak, who has been on the EJL board since 1993. "But from the first day we had a clear philosophy, and as society did not put any pressure on us, we had time to build it up accordingly. We have never raced for results."

"We must not forget that in many ways our society had to start again from scratch. I believe that the key factor in the development of a small football country is unity. This is the first thing which an association must achieve. Fighting within the football family will never get the sport ahead."

## Society first

Nowadays, the EJL manages all the national teams, domestic professional and amateur leagues, cup competitions, coach education, referee development, women's football, grass-

roots, futsal and beach soccer, among other things. For all of this, the EJL has 35 full-time officials, making it the biggest sports organisation in the country. Remarkably, the number of EJL officials has tripled over the past eight years.

The importance of football in Estonia has also changed dramatically for the better. In 1994 there were only 3,500 players in the country; now there are 16,510, making it the biggest sport in Estonia. The EJL has set itself the goal of tripling this number by 2024.

"We have always developed our football based on the needs of society and culture. It is very hard to build identity and tradition in the 21st century, but when our national team reached the EURO 2012 play-offs we saw what football meant to people here," says Pohlak.

Recently, the star of Estonia's qualifying campaign, midfielder Konstantin Vassiljev, was presented with a citizen of the year award by the ministry of culture. He was also named player of the year.

The EJL's next big challenge is hosting the European Under-19 Championship final round in July and implementing an ambitious, long-term infrastructure development plan, aimed at taking the country's facilities to new heights. ●

Mihkel Uiboleht



The president, Aivar Pohlak, and Estonia's player of the year, Konstantin Vassiljev



Estonia at the 1924 Youth Olympics in Paris



### The advent of women's football

Although it is relatively young, with a modest history in Albania, women's football is aiming to establish itself as one of the top sports played and watched by Albanians.

Few championships and other national events have ever been organised, but this year a national team is taking shape.

Just a couple of months on, the Albanian women's national team is establishing its own profile, under the guidance of Alin Rraklli, head coach and former Albanian international who also played for more than a decade as a forward for various teams in the German Bundesliga. In addition to a number of talented players from the Albanian women's championship, many talented Albanian players have also emerged from women's teams outside Albania after a long and professional scouting exercise conducted by staff on the national team and at the Football Association of Albania (FShF). It might sound unlikely, but they have been coming from Australia, the USA, Germany, France and elsewhere, seeking a place on the national team and helping to form a very dedicated and committed side that hopes to play a modest but beautiful game.

As part of their preparations, a training retreat was held in November, in the lake-side city of Pogradec. During the week-long gathering, Rraklli and his staff performed a thorough evaluation of the team, with a view to identifying both their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve their work and target important issues.

*"We are just in the first stages, but considering the willingness of the players and how well prepared they are, I would say that we*



The newly formed women's national team

*will soon have a significant team that will play with dignity and take part in official international competitions in the near future."*

At the end of the retreat, the Albanian national team played a friendly match against the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in the Macedonian town of Struga. Albania won hands down, achieving a final score of 4-1 and, more importantly, putting on a wonderful display.

In cooperation with the technical sector of the FShF, a project aimed at consolidating and strengthening the women's national team is now under way, to be followed by the creation of a women's Under-17 national team. It is not premature to say that Albanian football experts are seriously thinking the Albanian women's national team will soon be ready to take part in official international events organised by reputable bodies such as both UEFA and FIFA.

● Tritan Kokona



The FAF and Special Olympics teams

### A unifying game

As a result of an agreement between the Andorran Football Federation (FAF) and Special Olympics Andorra (where sport serves as a means of integration for people with learning disabilities), a series of friendly matches between the two institutions have been organised throughout the past year.

An exchange of activities was developed during 2011 between the different sections of the FAF (men's football, futsal and women's football) and Special Olympics Andorra, in a unified and differentiated way.

The two institutions' collaboration was established some time ago and has no end

date. Apart from contributing equipment to Special Olympics, the FAF wants to take advantage of its own structures to advise on and develop projects, like friendly football, seven-a-side football and futsal matches, as well as some excursions outside Andorra.

According to the FAF's technical director, David Rodrigo, *"this is a good experience for both institutions."*

As Gualbert Osorio, the president of Special Olympics Andorra, added, *"the most important goal is that people with intellectual disabilities can adapt through sport. Integration is our aim and sport is an important tool we can use to achieve it."*

● Silvia Casals



### 20th national football awards ceremony

The 20th Armenian football awards ceremony was held on 26 November at the Arno Babajanyan state concert hall in Yerevan. By way of introduction, the audience was shown a summary of the 2011 season, after which the awards ceremony was conducted by Armenian TV sports commentator Eduard Kalantaryan.

First up, the champions' cup and gold medals were awarded to the 2010/11 futsal champions, Erebuni Yerevan. The league's best striker, Mher Nazaretyan (Politechnik), and player of the year, Hakob Uzunyan (Erebuni), were also honoured.

The Shengavit players and coaching staff were then invited onto the stage to collect their champions' cup and gold medals for winning the first division.

Fair play awards were presented to Ulisses FC and the Banants second team, winners of the fair play competitions in the premier league and first division respectively.

Bruno Correa won the award for best striker, with 16 goals to his name in the 2011 premier league.

Armenian premier league bronze medals were presented to FC Gandzasar, silver to FC Pyunik and gold to FC Ulisses. As the Armenian champions, Ulisses were presented with their cup and medals by

the president of the Football Federation of Armenia, Ruben Hayrapetyan.

Also during the ceremony, various companies presented their own awards. The Armenian Development Bank awarded FC Pyunik defender Varazdat Haroyan with a best young player trophy; FC Mika defender Andranik Voskanyan won the newspaper Football+'s "the Year" prize; and Bruno Correa was announced as the winner of the totalfootball.am website's Top 11 contest.

● Tigran Israelyan



FC Ulisses receive the championship trophy

## Presentation of the Women's U-17 World Cup mascot

Women's football is one of the top priorities of the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA), which holds numerous events and has launched various projects to develop the game in Azerbaijan. It was therefore delighted when the FIFA Executive Committee, on 19 March 2010, decided that the third FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup would be held in Azerbaijan in 2012.

It is now just under a year until the tournament kicks off in Europe for the very first time. New Zealand hosted the first tournament in 2008 and for the second edition it travelled to Trinidad and Tobago in 2010.

The logo of the 2012 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup was presented during a ceremonial event marking the 100th anniversary of Azerba-

ijani football on 6 June 2011 in Baku. The FIFA president, Joseph S. Blatter, and the UEFA president, Michel Platini, were both in attendance.

The official mascot was then unveiled before Azerbaijan's UEFA EURO 2012 qualifying match against Austria at Baku's Dalga Arena on 7 October. A young girl with the national flag painted on her cheeks, the mascot has yet to receive a name. She is dressed in a blue, red, green and white kit, just like the host's national team, and her brown ponytail is designed to resemble what is known as a *buta*, a curved motif widely used in Azerbaijani artwork.

After the match the mascot visited a jobs and training fair held at the Baku exhibition centre before attending a seminar at the Azerbaijani capital's international school. Staged jointly by the local organising committee and FIFA's media department, the seminar discussed the theme of teamwork in football.



A mascot awaiting a name

The AFFA is now holding a competition to find a name for this cheery figure, who they hope will inspire the host nation when they welcome the world next autumn.

● Mikayil Narimanoglu

## Under-21s going strong

November was a very successful month for the Belgian Under-21 national team. Their qualifying campaign for the European Under-21 Championship finals in 2013 had got off to a slow start with a disappointing 2-1 defeat at the hands of Iceland. They redressed the balance by beating Azerbaijan 4-1 at home, but unfortunately wasted more precious points with a 2-2 draw in Azerbaijan.

So they had ground to make up, but November was going to be tough time to do it, with both their matches against teams considered to be the heavyweights in the group: Norway (away) and England (home). Neither would be easy opponents, but the team had to secure some good results to keep hopes of qualifying for the final round alive. With this objective in mind, Francky Dury and his players more than lived up to our expectations.

On 10 November, the boys headed to Stavanger, where they faced an excellent Norwegian side. The locals pressed hard right from the word go, but our Under-21s nevertheless managed to get one passed them in the sec-



Celebrations after Belgium's winning goal against England

ond minute, thanks to Gianni Bruno. The Norwegians equalised in the second half and our young hopefuls responded almost immediately, taking the lead again with a superb long shot by Ziguy Badibanga. Unfortunately they only kept the advantage for ten minutes and the final score was 2-2. Given the strong opposition the team had to deal with, this draw has to be considered a success.

Then, on 14 November, it was our turn to host England, formidable opponents who had taken the maximum 12 points from their 4 previous matches, scoring 16 and conceding

none. We had a real challenge on our hands, but the motivation within the team was great and the stands at the stadium in Mons were full of supporters determined to help Belgium to victory. The match got off to a tricky start, with England scoring after 14 minutes, but our boys showed no sign of giving up. Instead they gave it their all and equalised in the 72nd minute with a goal by Jens Naessens. The fans were over the moon, and the best was yet to come. During stoppage time, Omar El Kaddouri made it 2-1 for Belgium and the stadium went wild. It was a brilliant goal and the reaction of everyone who had turned out to support the home side was a joy to behold.

With 8 points from 5 matches, our Under-21s are now in second place in the group, behind England (12 points from 5 matches), but ahead of Norway (7 points from 4 matches). The task ahead, i.e. qualifying for the final round in 2013, obviously remains a tricky one. The team still has to face England away, then Norway and Iceland at home. But given the courage shown by the whole group, we still have every reason to be optimistic.

● Pierre Cornez

## Mixed results for national teams

The Bosnia and Herzegovina men's national team came close but in the end failed to qualify for UEFA EURO 2012. Safet Sušić's players made it as far as the play-offs, which in itself is a huge success. Their first chance to secure a place in the final round came in their last group match, when 13 minutes of play stood between them and victory over France at the Stade de France in Paris. Bosnia and Herzegovina took the lead with an Edin Dzeko goal but Samir Nasri managed to equalise from a penalty. Interestingly, both the goals scored in this match came from Manchester City team-mates. With this draw, Bosnia and Herzegovina finished on 20 points, in second place in Group D. This was a record performance, bettering all their previous qualifying campaigns.

The players got another chance to qualify via the play-offs, in which they faced Portugal.

The two had already met in play-offs two years ago for the 2010 World Cup, when Portugal came out on top, with 1-0 wins in both legs. In their latest head-to-head, the first leg at Stadion Bilino polje was goalless, but in the second Portugal managed a convincing 6-2 win.

During their preparations for the play-offs, the Bosnia and Herzegovina national team played FK Željeznica in celebration of the club's 90th anniversary. Both sides put on a great show, which was won 2-1 by the national team, featuring four players previously from FK Željeznica – Edin Džeko, Semir Štilić, Sanel Jahić and Kenan Hasagić.

Looking to Bosnia and Herzegovina's other representatives, the women's national team celebrated a first victory in their EURO 2013 qualifying campaign. In Prilep, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, they beat the home side 6-2. The Under-21s, meanwhile, have played their last two qualifying matches of the year. In the first they lost 2-1 in Cyprus, but in the



A great atmosphere at the gala match to celebrate FK Željeznica's 90th anniversary

second they beat Greece 1-0 in Tripoli Arkadia. Vlado Jagodić's team will resume their qualifying campaign in second place.

The first part of the 2011/12 domestic season is also over, with Željeznica leading the pack after nine consecutive wins. On 35 points, they are 1 ahead of NK Siroki Brijeg and 6 ahead of both FK Sarajevo and reigning champions FK Borac Banja Luka. ● Fuad Kravac



**Croatia**

www.hns-cff.hr

### Optimism for the new year

The Croatian Football Federation is looking expectantly to the new year. In June the country's favourite national team will be representing Croatia in the UEFA EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine. This will be the fifth out of seven European Championship or World Cup finals in which the team have competed. All the players, their coach, Slaven Bilic, and his staff have the country's full support. After a great match, and a great victory, in Istanbul, we have high hopes for the EURO. This success contributes to the optimism needed to overcome the difficulties that some of our clubs are experiencing because of the recession. It is also significant for promoting the Futsal EURO 2012. We are grateful to UEFA for entrusting us with the organisation of this tournament. We want to organise a great event and expect our team to rise to the occasion. It is an excellent opportunity to revive memories of Croatia's great tradition of indoor football. The Croatian Football Federation was one of the first in Europe to integrate this massive, spontaneous game into an organised league sport and we are now celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first Croatian indoor football championship for Under-15s in Zagreb.

The development of indoor football in Croatia was encouraged by our former Yugoslavian association, which decided to devote its attention to the game. In 1969 the first Yugoslavian schools championship was held in Belgrade. The winners, the school from Nova Gradiska, were crowned Croatian champions and certain participants even went on to become officials responsible for futsal in Croatia. The most



National futsal team

notable among them was Boris Durlen from Zagreb, now a member of the UEFA Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee.

Elsewhere, our cooperation with football clubs founded by Croats around the world and representatives of Croatian national minorities continues. We organised a second world championship for clubs founded by Croats, for which eight teams from Australia, the USA, Canada and Europe qualified. The winners were reigning champions CNSC Croatia Toronto. Second place went to Canberra FC and third to SC Croat San Pedro. We also organised the third European championship for representative teams made up of Croatian national minorities. Nine teams competed and the winners were a side from the Serbian province of Vojvodina. The Burgenland Croats from Austria came second, and a team from Slovenia third.

● Ante Pavlovic



**France**

www.fff.fr

### Virtual facelift

One by one, the leagues and districts' websites are being given a complete overhaul, with the aim of meeting the new demands of users.

All of France's leagues and districts will soon have brand-new websites. By early December, 31 of them had already made the change. This long-term project will take until the end of 2012, by which time 130 different football bodies will be using the new system.

This move comes in response to heavy demand from the leagues and districts themselves, some of whose websites were created over ten years ago and have barely evolved since. A working group composed of representatives of the leagues and districts and staff from the FFF website, which piloted the technical elements, discussed the changes required. Their discussions also led them to consider the sites' content and their approach to online communication.

The option selected was to create a whole new site for each league and district, using their own graphic design style which, in many ways, is increasingly similar to that of fff.fr. As a result, the leagues and divisions will have much more modern, attractive websites that are easier for users to navigate. The sites will also be able to host more sophisticated slide-shows than before, with the possibility of also integrating videos from YouTube and Dailymotion. The site administrators, i.e. the leagues and districts themselves, will also get a new statistics tool that enables them to monitor activity on their webpages and precisely measure the main areas of interest among users, so that they can adapt their content if necessary.

The first league to launch its new-look site was Paris-Île de France, on 23 February 2011. By the end of 2012 all the others will have followed suit, hopefully to the great satisfaction of their members and other amateur football fans.

● Stéphane Lanoue



The homepage of one of the regional leagues



**England**

www.thefa.com

### The FA changes lives in Kenya

The Football Association's Football Futures programme aims to recruit, support and develop young volunteers who will form the next generation of grassroots football volunteers in England. As part of this programme, The FA has given four young people the opportunity of a lifetime to take part in The FA Changing Lives trip.

Amy Fisher, Jacob Odu, Lindsey Whitton (all aged 20) and Kieren Laverick (19) were selected to take part in the seventh annual trip in October 2011 on the basis of their outstanding commitment and contribution to volunteer-

ing in football. Accompanying the four young coaches were FA staff members Steve Swallow, Donna McIvor and Amreeta Bola, and experienced FA tutor John Heathcote. The FA party were based in Nakuru and worked in partnership with Kenyan second division club Nakuru Allstars, who themselves recruited 17 local young leaders aged 16 to 20.

Day 1 consisted of a leadership training programme delivered by The FA staff. This focused on generic leadership skills. For the next three days, the group visited schools around the Nakuru area, coaching children between the ages of 5 and 13. The school-based sessions were initially led by The FA's young coaches, but by the end of the week the leaders from Nakuru Allstars were confident enough to take the lead. In total, over 400 schoolchildren benefited from the coaching sessions.

Robert Muthomi, owner of Nakuru Allstars FC, said: "We are extremely grateful to The FA for bringing their programme to Nakuru. They have left us with so much, and we will continue this work when they have gone."

The FA's national education manager, Donna McIvor, added: "This has been the most successful Changing Lives trip to date. Working with Nakuru Allstars has been fantastic and we can see the legacy that has been created here. Thanks also to Skillshare International and Coaching for Hope for helping us to create this link with Nakuru Allstars."

For more information on The FA Football Futures programme, visit [www.thefa.com/Get-IntoFootball/School](http://www.thefa.com/Get-IntoFootball/School)

● Steve Swallow



Budding coaches

The FA

FFF.fr

## Women's World Cup leaves green legacy

In its legacy report, the organising committee for the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup publishes details of the environmental impact of the tournament in Germany. It concludes that it was an environmentally friendly and climate-neutral event, and that sustainable environmental management had been implemented at eight of the nine stadiums used. "This report shows that Germany once again took the opportunity to prove itself to be a hospitable and enthusiastic host, as well as to stage an environmentally aware and climate-neutral tournament," said Theo Zwanziger, president of the German Football Association (DFB), when the report came out.

To offset greenhouse gases caused by the tournament, the organising committee and the DFB, with FIFA's support, voluntarily invested €600,000 altogether. This money went towards five projects in developing countries, offsetting 40,000 tonnes of carbon emissions in all. The projects meet the highest criteria



Getty Images

An environmentally friendly Women's World Cup

and the requirements of the so-called gold standard.

For the FIFA World Cup in 2006, Germany had already taken the initiative to plan and implement an environmental programme. Since then, FIFA has placed greater value on the subject, making environmental protection a binding condition of bids to host a World Cup final round. Claudia Roth, chairman of the

German green party (Alliance 90/Green Party) and environmental adviser to the DFB, said: "The FIFA Women's World Cup has left behind a green legacy. It has shown that big sports events can be climate-neutral and environmentally friendly. In this way, it has continued the pioneering work of Green Goal 2006 and set new benchmarks."

● Thomas Hackbarth

## Three UEFA youth tournaments in Hungary

Hungarian youth football achieved something special this year at U17 and U19 level. The younger team, led by former international midfielder István Pisont, qualified for the elite round of the 2011/12 European Under-17 Championship, having beaten Belarus, Andorra and Norway on home soil to take first place in Group 1. Meanwhile, Frigyes Tuboly's U19 side secured second place in their qualifying group, falling behind hosts Portugal on goal difference only.

Based on their coefficients, the two unbeaten Hungarian teams both got a place in pot A for their respective elite round draws. The U17s were placed fourth in the European rankings, and the U19s seventh. After the draws in Nyon it was decided that Hungary would host their U17 elite round mini-tournament next March, as well as both 2012/13 qualifying



mlsz.hu

Youth football is all the rage in Hungary

"We also have to congratulate the youth academies and clubs on this great result and we must be aware that this is a record of where we stand at present. We have to prove that we have a place among the best in Europe," said Tibor Nyilasi, the Hungarian Football Federation's sports director.

"Our main task in the near future is to find as many talented players for the senior national team as possible. The OTP-MOL Bozsik programme, our nationwide youth education initiative, is crucial to doing so and this result is a step in the right direction," the technical director, József Both, added.

● Márton Dinnyés

mini-tournaments (U17, U19) in the autumn. This is, in part, a result of the good organisation that visiting teams have experienced at the Hungarian Football Federation's technical centre in Telki.

programme, our nationwide youth education initiative, is crucial to doing so and this result is a step in the right direction," the technical director, József Both, added.

## The whole story

The second volume in the 100-year story of our national championship was published in December, following on from the first volume that came out at the end of April. One of Iceland's most experienced sportswriters, Sigmundur O. Steinarrson, is the man behind these ambitious books and he has gone to great lengths to find amusing stories and revealing pictures.

The first volume is 384 pages long and covers the competition from its first edition, in 1912, until 1965. The second volume, which runs to 512 pages, begins in 1966 and ends with the 100th season, which ended in October. In what is perhaps a rather fitting turn of events, KR Reykjavik won both the first title in 1912 and the 100th this year.

Also this month, the 31st Icelandic football yearbook, *Islensk knattspyrna 2011*, was published. The author, Vidir Sigurdsson, has recorded

every aspect of the 2011 season, from our top divisions and national teams to our youngest players taking their first steps on the football pitch. These yearbooks are an invaluable source of information on football in Iceland and very popular among the fans.

Getting back to the action on the pitch, the first task of the new men's national team coach, Lars Lagerbäck, was a friendly against Montenegro, played in Podgorica on 29 October. Lars formally starts his new job on 1 January and has an exciting challenge ahead of him. He will look to simulate the success of his colleague, Siggí Eyjólfsson, who has already taken the Icelandic women's team to a major competition, namely the Women's EURO 2009 in Finland. His team are also enjoying top spot in their Women's EURO 2013 qualifying group, but they face stiff competition from Belgium, Northern Ireland and Norway.

● Thor Ingimundarson



A 900-page history of the Icelandic championship

**Italy**  
www.figc.it

**Head of state invites national team to celebrate 150 years of Italian unity**

The Italian president, Giorgio Napolitano, held a reception for Italy's national team on 15 November, the day of their friendly match against Uruguay, played in Rome to round off Italy's celebrations of 150 years of unity.

All those present were touched by the words of the head of state. Accompanying the players were Gianni Petrucci, president of the Italian Olympic Committee, Giancarlo Abete, president of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), Antonello Valentini, FIGC chief executive, Cesare Prandelli, national team head coach, and Prandelli's whole staff.

On behalf of the FIGC, Giancarlo Abete thanked the Italian president: *"Thank you for honouring us in this way today. The national team will soon be on the pitch in celebration of 150 years of Italian unity, which is something very important to us and something we wish to honour at this difficult time for our country. Sport and football have always played a crucial role in Italy and we hope to continue that tradition. We have very fond memories of being with you on that fantastic night in Berlin in 2006. You have always been our number one, and we say that as Italians and as sports leaders."*



Gianluigi Buffon with the flag received from the Italian president, Giorgio Napolitano

The team captain, Gianluigi Buffon, spoke on behalf of Cesare Prandelli and the rest of the team: *"It is a great honour to be here ahead of tonight's game in commemoration of Italy's unification. We remain a relatively young people, a young nation, and at times we must still learn from our mistakes. Our people need a united, cultivated and responsible political class and an active state, which you represent with integrity and capability. As a nation we all await answers, so that we can pick ourselves up again after some very tough times. We aim to do our bit on the pitch and to honour Italy at all times. But right now the hardest job is yours, and we are the ones supporting you."*

The Italian president thanked the team captain: *"You are a keeper but today you scored a magnificent goal. Your words were wise and solemn. We must all work hard to remain united, rising above divisions and differences of opinion."* Turning to the others, the president added: *"Buffon's magnificent speech shows that even keepers can hit the mark, with very wise words for the political class. No sooner had I been elected in 2006 than you brought home the World Cup, and it is a shame there will not be one in 2013 to end my term in office with another victory. As long as I have the strength, I will support you, confident that you will do your country proud by flying this flag, which I present to your captain."*

The reception ended with gifts from both sides: having presented Buffon with the Italian flag, Napolitano was given a national team shirt and a football signed by the whole team.

● Barbara Moschini

**Kazakhstan**  
www.kff.kz

**Completion of the season**

On 13 November, Kazakhstan's 2011 football season came to an end. In keeping with tradition, the season ended with the final of the Kazakhstan Cup, at Almaty Central Stadium. This year it was between FC Ordabasy Shymkent and FC Tobol Kostanay. The only goal of the match, scored by Kazakhstan national team defender Mukhtar Mukhtarov, brought victory for Ordabasy. With the first trophy in the club's history also came a ticket for the 2012/13 UEFA Europa League qualifiers.

Earlier, on 29 October, the final matches in the Kazakhstan premier league were contested. The top division contains 12 clubs and the championship is played in two stages. In the first stage, a traditional double round-robin tournament is organised. In the second stage, the teams are then divided into two groups



FC Ordabasy Shymkent, Kazakhstan Cup winners

of six based on their rankings in the first stage. The top six teams play for places 1 to 6 and the other six for places 7 to 12. Also, the teams do not start the second stage from scratch, as they retain 50% of their points from the round-robin tournament.

The 2011 premier league was not decided until the final round, when FC Shakhter Karagandy emerged as the strongest club in Kazakhstan for the first time. Silver medals were won by FC Zhetysy Taldykorgan and bronze by FC Aktobe. Next summer Zhetysy and Aktobe will therefore enter the 2012/13 Europa League qualifiers, while Shakhter have a place in Champions League qualifying.

● Alexandr Keplin

**Liechtenstein**  
www.lfv.li

**Referee Day**

When it joined the UEFA Referee Convention, the Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) made a commitment to managing the education and organisation of its referees accordingly.

As part of its endeavours, the LFV celebrated its second annual Referee Day on 12 November, when young referees from the principality came together for a full day of further education, both theoretical and practical. Various training sessions were held, as well as a Laws of the Game quiz giving the referees a chance to test their knowledge of the rules. A lecture was given on the Austrian Football Association's referee inspection system and the Liechtenstein national team coach, Hans-Peter "Bidu" Zaugg, addressed the participants as guest speaker.



Training for the principality's young referees

By stepping up its activities in referee education and organisation, the LFV aims to encourage young and talented referees to take their hobby to another level and qualify to officiate in higher leagues, so that Liechtenstein one day has at least one UEFA referee.

● Anton Banzer

**Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**  
www.ffm.com.mk

**Award for Goce Sedloski**

Before the friendly match between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania, the president of the Football Federation of Macedonia (FFM), Haralampie Hadzi-Risteski, presented a special UEFA cap and medal to Goce Sedloski, the first Macedonian footballer to have played 100 matches for the national team. Sedloski could not conceal his delight on receiving the award, especially as it was presented, at his request, in the city and at the stadium where he became a renowned football player.



Haralampie Hadzi-Risteski presents Goce Sedloski with the UEFA award for his 100 national team appearances

*"Every player who reaches this number of caps is proud. I won them all for European Championship and World Cup qualifiers or friendly matches. To reach 100 is not easy. I put my heart into playing for the national team and will continue to work as a coach. I thank the FFM and Mr Toshack, the national team coach, who invited me to work on his professional staff. I will do my best to contribute to better results."*

Sedloski's career began with FK Bratstvo in Golemo Konjari. He went on to play for FK Pitu Guli in Krusevo and later moved to FK Pobeda Prilep. His international career began in 1996 with a move to HNK Hajduk Split, where he spent two seasons before transferring to Sheffield Wednesday FC in the English Premier League. He later returned to Croatia and spent two seasons with GNK Dinamo Zagreb. His next stop was Japan, where he played for Vegalta Sendai, after which he returned to Europe and spent a season at Diyarbakirspor in Turkey. His amazing career ended last year in Austria, at SV Mattersburg, where he currently works as assistant coach. His national team debut was on 27 March 1996, in a match against Malta in Prilep, and his last was against Azerbaijan last year, when he retired on 100 appearances and 8 goals.

● Zoran Nikolovski


**Malta**
[www.mfa.com.mt](http://www.mfa.com.mt)

## New horizons for players in domestic leagues

At the beginning of the 2011/12 season, the Malta Football Association introduced changes in the national league structure. These involved enlarging the premier and first divisions to 12 teams each, with 14-team second and third divisions below, providing competition matches for a total of 52 teams across four divisions.

Every team in the top division now plays every weekend, as is common in other countries in Europe. As a result, there will also be more incentives for teams and players in terms of competitive momentum, which they must be quick to maintain when the going is good and regain as soon as possible after defeat.

It is crucial for the top teams to play every week, especially those who field senior and



More matches for players at Maltese clubs

Under-21 Maltese internationals, who need to work on their skills and their physical condition more regularly. The new format has opened up new horizons for players who no doubt aspire to raise their game to the level of their foreign counterparts.

In this season's enlarged premier league, 192 matches are being played between August 2011 and April 2012. Each team will be in action no fewer than 32 times, which is a solid statistic when compared with the number of matches other teams play in many top divisions elsewhere in Europe.

● Alex Vella


**Northern Ireland**
[www.irishfa.com](http://www.irishfa.com)

## A very positive model

The Irish FA-endorsed World United project has been highlighted as a best practice example of how football governing bodies can use the universal power of football to tackle racism and promote respect for diversity. It was singled out in a 2011 report produced by Dr Steven Bradbury of Loughborough University, entitled Representation and Structural Discrimination in Football in Europe: The Case of Minorities and Women.

World United is an intercultural football project based in Belfast and designed to increase participation in organised football among refugees, asylum seekers and members of "settled" minority communities, as players and coaches. It is also intended to encourage increased social capital and community integration among minorities. The project presently features around 40 players drawn from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds spanning Somalia, the Ivory Coast, Portugal, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Poland, and Iran, as well as players from both sides of the Catholic and Protestant religious divide.


**Moldova**
[www.fmf.md](http://www.fmf.md)

## The future for youth players

The Football Association of Moldova (FMF) recently organised the fifth edition of its *Viitorul* tournament (meaning "the future"), involving the country's most talented young players born in 1997, selected from all of Moldova's regions.

In the semi-finals, the northern team beat the eastern team 4-0, and the team from the west won 5-0 against those from the south. In the third-place play-off, the southerners overcame the eastern team to win 4-0. The final, meanwhile, proved to be a very close and tense affair. Dan Grubii opened the score for the northern team after 15 minutes but then Emil Ciornii from the western team equalised from a penalty in the 47th minute. The match was therefore decided by a penalty shoot-out in which luck was on the western



The western team won the tournament

team's side (coached by Victor Afanasiev), who ran out as winners on a final score of 6-5. They were presented with their trophy by FMF vice-president Radu Rebeja.

The tournament attracted great interest from the public and youth team coaches. It was created to discover talented new players and has already become a regular feature on the Moldovan calendar.

● Press office


**Netherlands**
[www.knvb.nl](http://www.knvb.nl)

## Dutch captain to promote women's football

Daphne Koster has joined the ranks of the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) to help better position and promote girls' and women's football in the Netherlands. The 30-year-old captain of the national women's team has already worked for the KNVB, from 2008 to 2010, helping to develop women's



Daphne Koster promotes women's football

football. In recent years it has become the largest team sport for women in the country, with a current membership of over 125,000.

Koster, who has won 118 caps over the last decade and is aiming to qualify for the UEFA Women's EURO 2013 in Finland with the *Oranje*, joined newcomers Telstar in the women's premiership this season after a four-year stint with AZ Alkmaar and a successful summer at Sky Blue FC in the USA. "The FA has laid a good foundation to build on. I saw in the USA that clubs want to get closer to their fans. That is what we do at Telstar when we sign autographs after each match. And after home matches of the national team we kick signed footballs into the stands as a token of appreciation for the fans. They really love it," Koster said.

Daphne Koster will closely cooperate with former treasurer of the board Johan van Kouterik, who will act as women's football project manager for the next few years. Another indication of the professional approach to grassroots football in the Netherlands is Hans Schelling's recent appointment as futsal manager.

● Rob de Leede



UEFA's women's football ambassador, Steffi Jones (second from left), with players from Women's World United

With support from UEFA and Peace III, over the last 12 months the Irish FA's community relations department has also established a new World United Women's Team, with over 30 women of more than 20 different nationalities enjoying football in a fun, safe and inclusive environment. In addition, the Irish FA's Peace III-funded community relations department works with a variety of partners to deliver free anti-racism and anti-sectarian workshops all over Northern Ireland.

The Irish FA's head of community relations, Michael Boyd, said: "Both racism and sectarianism must be challenged in all their forms. There is no place for bigotry of any form in sport or society. World United is a very positive model of how we can use the universal power of football to promote respect for diversity and it is great it has been recognised in this recent international report."

● Michael Boyd



**Republic of Ireland**

www.fai.ie

**FAI launches coaches association**

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) recently launched its new coaches association. The FAI offers a range of coaching courses, from Kick Start 1 and 2 right through to UEFA Pro licence courses, and it sees the coaches association as a vital component of future success. Nationally, the FAI has almost 28,000 registered coaches and this number has been increasing steadily year on year as clubs and leagues recognise the benefits of quality coaching for player development.

The FAI coaches association will provide coaches at all levels with access to useful and insightful coaching tips and advice, including session plans (technical, tactical and fitness), video content and interviews. Membership will



Tactical talks between the senior national team coach, Giovanni Trapattoni (right), and the U19 coach, Paul Doolin, at the launch of the coaches association

also include access to top-class session planning software that allows coaches to design and print their own session plans. The same

software is used by Chelsea, West Ham United and Fulham, among others.

● Fran Whearty



**Romania**

www.ffr.ro

**Event design and ticket launch**

The road to the 2012 UEFA Europa League final started on 25 November in exactly the same place as it will end at around midnight on 9 May 2012.

The design and logo for the 2012 UEFA Europa League final was unveiled by UEFA at the national arena in Bucharest during a ceremony held in the stadium's VIP hospitality lounge. More than 150 guests and 80 media representatives attended the launch, which took place in the presence of Miodrag Belodedici, the 2012 Europa League final ambassador and first man to win the European Champion Clubs' Cup twice as player with two different clubs: CSA Steaua Bucuresti in 1986 and FK Crvena Zvezda five years later, in 1991. Also present were the mayor of Bucharest, Sorin Oprescu, the president of the national sports and youth authority, Doina Melinte (former athlete and Olympic champion in Los Angeles in 1984), the president of the Romanian Football Federation (FRF), Mircea Sandu, representatives of UEFA and local sports personalities.

As a symbolic gesture, Gheorghe Hagi, Gheorghe Popescu, Dorinel Munteanu, Miodrag Belodedici and Bogdan Stelea – five big names from the "golden generation", who wrote history for Romanian football – signed autographs on the pitch of the 2012 final for 50 children, all of them hoping to become professional players themselves.

The Europa League final has been given a complete design package and its visual identity

carries a distinctive flavour of the host city – the design shows a solitary beam of light flowing through the Bucharest cityscape on the way to its ultimate destination, the stadium. The visuals also contain the intricate structure and detailing of Romanian arts and crafts, which are integrated within the swoosh of light.

Speaking to the assembled dignitaries, Mircea Sandu and Sorin Oprescu emphasised the prevailing feeling of pride at having this opportunity to host the final and assured those present that every possible effort was being made to ensure that Bucharest would be staging the best possible final. Belodedici added that the final would be a major boost for Romanian children and young players. The fact that the country had been entrusted with such an important occasion could only increase their interest in both the grassroots and the professional game.

On the same occasion, ticket sales for fans living in Romania were officially launched. More than 20,000 tickets, almost half of the national arena's 55,000 capacity, have been set aside for the local market.

"Bucharest is a warm city and our visitors will experience this for themselves when they travel to our capital in early May 2012. We already welcome them. Meanwhile, our fans are very passionate and they will give the final its all-important, local flavour," said the FRF president, Mircea Sandu.

The passion is high and so is the interest: all 20,000 tickets allocated to Romanian fans were sold within a matter of days.

● Paul Zaharia



**Sweden**

www.svenskfotboll.se

**Football gala and regulation changes**

The football gala for the 2011 season in Sweden helped Zlatan Ibrahimovic expand his trophy cabinet yet again as he was awarded the player of the year award (Guldbollen) for the sixth time. Lotta Schelin, meanwhile, was crowned women's player of the year. The UEFA president, Michel Platini, attended the



The UEFA president presents Kurt Hamrin with his award

gala as a special guest to present a lifetime achievement award to Kurt Hamrin, a true gentleman and ambassador for the sport who started out with AIK Stockholm before going on to score 190 goals during 15 seasons in the Serie A with Juventus, Padova, ACF Fiorentina, AC Milan and SSC Napoli. Hamrin was also an integral part of the national team when Sweden claimed silver at the 1958 World Cup.

Looking forward, the Swedish FA has approved a number of changes in the domestic regulations ahead of the 2012 season. Among the more notable is the decision to allow more time and effort to resume play in matches that are stopped due to crowd disturbances. A game that, in spite of all efforts (including emptying the arena), cannot be concluded the same day can now be resumed on a later date at the minute and score where play was halted. Previously, the only option was to replay the entire 90 minutes from 0-0. In another change of format, from now on the Swedish Cup will be played from summer to spring, with the first round in July and the final in May.

● Andreas Nilsson



Young faces full of excitement at the prospect of hosting the Europa League final

Nicușor Proft, Romanian FA



## Switzerland

www.football.ch

### Heinrich Schifferle elected president of the Swiss Football League

At their annual general meeting at the Stade de Suisse in Berne, the clubs in the Swiss Football League, representing professional football in Switzerland, elected Heinrich Schifferle, their former financial director and current vice-president of Challenge League club FC Winterthur, as president of the organisation. Alongside the new president, three committee members were also elected, namely Bernhard Heusler (FC Basel 1893), Ilja Känzig (BSC Young Boys) and Walter Stierli (FC Luzern).



Heinrich Schifferle

The outgoing members were Thomas Grimm (President, BSC Young Boys), Aniello Fontana (FC Schaffhausen) and former Swiss international Alexandre Rey (Xamax FC).

The newly elected president, whose initial three-year mandate will take him to 2014,

identified three objectives for his term in office. "My top priorities are the best possible implementation of TV and marketing contracts, a reduction in violence in and around stadiums and an improvement in cooperation with the clubs," he said.

Just a few hours after Schifferle's election as president of the Swiss Football League, and therefore his automatic appointment as vice-president of the Swiss Football Association, the town of Winterthur had another reason to celebrate: in a round of 16 penalty shoot-out, relative minnows FC Winterthur knocked out hot favourites BSC Young Boys from the Swiss Cup.

● Pierre Benoit



## Turkey

www.tff.org

### Avcı named new Turkey coach

The Turkish Football Federation (TFF) has announced Abdullah Avcı as the new Turkey coach, having signed a contract with the former Istanbul BB SK boss until 31 May 2015.

Speaking at the contract signing ceremony held at the TFF headquarters in Istanbul, the president of the Turkish Football Federation, Mehmet Ali Aydınlar, said: "As a European Under-17 Championship winner and U-17 World Cup semi-finalist, Mr Avcı deserved this post and he got it. I believe he'll put his mark on many successes during his tenure."

"It's an honourable job and a huge responsibility. I am very happy to have this opportunity and know we will take important strides

forward for Turkish football," Avcı added. Born in 1963 in Istanbul, Abdullah Avcı played for Vefaspor, Fatih Karagümrük SK, Çaykur Rizespor, Kahramanmaraşspor, Bakırköyspor, Kasımpaşa, İstanbulspor AS, Küçükçekmecepor and Nisantasispor, before hanging up his boots in 1999 at the club where he first started.

Avcı's coaching career began that same year at İstanbulspor AS, followed by a spell as head of the Galatasaray AS youth academy. He then took over Turkey's U17 team and in his first season secured victory at the 2005 European finals in Italy and reached the U-17 World Cup semi-finals in Peru.

In August 2006 he moved to İstanbul BB SK, leading them to promotion in his first season and keeping them in the Super League ever



The new national team coach, Abdullah Avcı (left), and the TFF president, Mehmet Ali Aydınlar

since. He guided İstanbul BB SK through a total of 205 matches and helped them to the Turkish Cup final last season for the first time in the club's history.

● Türker Tozar



## Ukraine

www.ffu.org.ua

### Stadium boom in Ukraine

Last month there was a real stadium boom in Ukraine, which will be hosting UEFA EURO 2012 next summer alongside Poland.

In November, inaugural matches were played at three new arenas within the space of ten days. The Olympic Stadium in Kyiv staged a friendly between Ukraine and Germany on 11 November (3-3) and four days later the new Arena Lviv was tested by another friendly, in which Ukraine beat Austria 2-1.

These two stadiums were reconstructed in preparation for EURO 2012, but the third one, in Odesa, has nothing to do with the European Championship. Furthermore it was rebuilt by

FC Chornomorets Odesa, a club which does not attract stars of the Ukrainian Premier League and only dreams about the European stage.

It opened its doors on 17 November by hosting a match in the 17th round of the Ukrainian Premier League between the local team and FC Karpaty Lviv (2-2). After the match, the Chornomorets head coach noted the importance of such new arenas: "It is very good that new stadiums are being built in Ukraine, because it will stimulate development in football and attract fans to matches."

The new Chornomorets stadium is located in one of the central parks of Odesa, near the Black Sea coast, as was the club's old home.

The modern construction was built on the site of the former complex, which had been a feature of this picturesque area since 1935. Long-standing supporters have seen a lot of great clubs play there, including Real Madrid CF, FC Internazionale Milano, S.S. Lazio, SV Werder Bremen and even Brazil's CR Flamengo.

The new stadium's exterior is inspired by the architecture of the main historical buildings of the city, such as the Odesa Opera and Ballet Theatre, the city hall, elements of the Quarantine Harbour Fortress and, more generally, beautiful hotels such as the Londonskaya, the Chervona and the Chorne More.

● Igor Linnyk



## Wales

www.faw.org.uk

### Alun Evans has passed away

The Football Association of Wales (FAW) is saddened by the death of its former general secretary Alun Evans.

Alun was born in 1942 in Porth, in the Rhondda Valley in South Wales. Having been in poor health for some time, he passed away on Saturday 12 November. Alun took over from Trevor Morris as secretary of the Welsh association in 1982 and continued until 1995, when he left the association and was succeeded by David Collins. He also sat on many UEFA and FIFA bodies. Later, he returned as the League of Wales representative on the FAW Council. For many years he was also involved in the Universities Athletics Union and was the secretary of Welsh League side UWIC.

A forthright individual, Alun was instrumental in the formation of the League of Wales and was a strong leader of FAW policies. He is survived by his wife and two children. We are sure that many of his former colleagues around Europe will join with us in mourning his passing.

● Ceri Stennett



Alun Evans



Chornomorets' new stadium in Odesa

Ivan Cherevatenko

## Birthdays

### BIRTHDAYS IN JANUARY

**Aleksei Spirin** (Russia), referee observer, is celebrating his 60th birthday on 4 January. He is followed on 21 January by **Maria Teresa Andreu Grau** (Spain), member of the circle of former UEFA committee members. Meanwhile, on 6 January **Sergei Safaryan** (Belarus), member of the HatTrick Committee, is celebrating his 50th birthday, as is **Nelly Viennot** (France), referee observer, on 8 January. UEFA also wishes many happy returns in January to:

**Necdet Cobanli** (Turkey, 1.1)  
**Vlatko Markovic** (Croatia, 1.1)  
**Davor Šuker** (Croatia, 1.1)  
**Monica Ortigueira** (Switzerland, 2.1)  
**Gerhard Sager** (Sweden, 3.1)  
**Andreas Demetriou** (Cyprus, 3.1)  
**Kuanysh Kanapyanov**  
 (Kazakhstan, 4.1)  
**David George Collins** (Wales, 5.1)  
**Mariano Moreno** (Spain, 6.1)  
**Walter Clarke** (Northern Ireland, 6.1)  
**Rudolf Marxer** (Liechtenstein, 6.1)  
**Sergii Lysenchuk** (Ukraine, 6.1)  
**Bernhard Neuhold** (Austria, 8.1)  
**Franco Ferrari** (Italy, 9.1)  
**Velid Imamovic**  
 (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 9.1)  
**Herbert Hübel** (Austria, 10.1)  
**Michel Dumoulin** (Belgium, 11.1)  
**Hans-Dieter Drewitz** (Germany, 11.1)  
**Olivier Brochart** (France, 11.1)  
**Elnur Mammadov** (Azerbaijan, 11.1)  
**Juan N. Garcia-Nieto Portabella**  
 (Spain, 12.1)  
**Derek Kirkwood** (Scotland, 13.1)  
**Drago Kos** (Slovenia, 13.1)  
**Sofoklis Pilavios** (Greece, 13.1)  
**Sarah O'Shea**  
 (Republic of Ireland, 13.1)  
**Sergei Ilyich** (Belarus, 13.1)  
**Luis Horta** (Portugal, 14.1)  
**Iljo Dominkovic**  
 (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 14.1)  
**Martin Iseli** (Switzerland, 14.1)  
**Nodar Akhalkatsi** (Georgia, 14.1)  
**Alessandro Lulli** (Italy, 15.1)  
**Phivos Vakis** (Cyprus, 15.1)

**Atanas Furnadzhiev** (Bulgaria, 15.1)  
**Mitja Lainscak** (Slovenia, 15.1)  
**Cleomenis Bontiotis** (Greece, 16.1)  
**Sune Hellströmer** (Sweden, 17.1)  
**Stephen Bennett** (England, 17.1)  
**Blazenka Logarusic** (Croatia, 17.1)  
**Fabrizio Tonelli** (Italy, 18.1)  
**Bujar Kasmir** (Albania, 19.1)  
**Lars-Åke Lagrell** (Sweden, 20.1)  
**Pedro Ángel Galán Nieto**  
 (Spain, 20.1)  
**Bjorn Vassallo** (Malta, 20.1)  
**Anders Mattsson** (Finland, 21.1)  
**Ángel María Villar Llona**  
 (Spain, 21.1)  
**Vladimir Iveta** (Croatia, 21.1)  
**Are Habicht** (Estonia, 22.1)  
**Urs Meier** (Switzerland, 22.1)  
**Alan Freeland** (Scotland, 22.1)  
**Lassin Isaksen** (Faroe Islands, 22.1)  
**Teuvo Holopainen** (Finland, 23.1)  
**Harry M. Been** (Netherlands, 23.1)  
**Pat Quigley**  
 (Republic of Ireland, 24.1)  
**Patrick Watterbled** (France, 24.1)  
**Gevorg Hovhannisyán**  
 (Armenia, 25.1)  
**Metin Kazancioglu** (Turkey, 26.1)  
**Miroslaw Ryszka** (Poland, 26.1)  
**Florence Hardouin** (France, 26.1)  
**Krister Malmsten** (Sweden, 27.1)  
**Cosimo Bolognino** (Italy, 30.1)  
**Brian Lawlor** (Wales, 31.1)

**The offices of the UEFA administration in Nyon are closed from 23 December to 2 January inclusive.**

### BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY

**Volker Roth** (Germany), member of the circle of former UEFA committee members, is celebrating his 70th birthday on 1 February, followed the next day by **Trygve Bornø** (Norway), member of the Stadium and Security Committee. On 14 February **Manuel Lopez Fernandez** (Spain), referee observer, is turning 60, as are **Pertti Alaja** (Finland), member of the circle of former committee members, and **Antonello Valentini** (Italy), member of the Media Committee, both on 18 January, followed by **João F. De Magalhães Marques** (Portugal), doping control officer, on 20 January, and finally **Maarten Fontein** (Netherlands), member of the Professional Football Strategy Council, on 23 January. Turning 50 in February are **Jordi Pascual** (Andorra), match delegate, on 18th and **Fevronia Minodora Ion** (Romania), referee observer, on 25th. UEFA also wishes many happy returns in February to:

**Karen Espelund** (Norway, 1.2)  
**Kyros Vassaras** (Greece, 1.2)  
**Leonardus van der Kroft**  
 (Netherlands, 2.2)  
**Igor Shalimov** (Russia, 2.2)  
**Steen Dahrup** (Denmark, 3.2)  
**Mark Blackbourne** (England, 3.2)  
**Renata Tomasova** (Slovakia, 3.2)  
**Jelena Oblakovic-Babic**  
 (Serbia, 3.2)  
**Vaclav Krondl** (Czech Republic, 5.2)  
**Gabriel Weiss** (Slovakia, 6.2)  
**Erich Rutmöller** (Germany, 8.2)  
**Yusuf Namoglu** (Turkey, 8.2)  
**Michael Appleby** (England, 8.2)  
**Fino Fini** (Italy, 9.2)  
**Donald McVicar** (Scotland, 9.2)  
**Daniilo Filacchione** (Italy, 9.2)  
**Zoran Lakovic** (Serbia, 9.2)  
**Tomislav Karadžic** (Serbia, 10.2)  
**Luc Rabat** (France, 10.2)  
**Dani Koren** (Israel, 10.2)  
**Stewart Regan** (Scotland, 10.2)  
**William McDougall** (Scotland, 11.2)  
**Annelie Larsson** (Sweden, 11.2)  
**Fritz Stuchlik** (Austria, 11.2)  
**Borislav Mihaylov** (Bulgaria, 12.2)  
**David McDowell** (Slovenia, 12.2)

Oleksandr Bandurko (Ukraine, 13.2)  
 Pierluigi Collina (Italy, 13.2)  
 Christian Mutschler  
 (Switzerland, 13.2)  
 Marinus den Engelsman  
 (Netherlands, 14.2)  
 Thomas Weyhing (Germany, 14.2)  
 Livio Bazzoli (Italy, 14.2)  
 Peter Bonde (Denmark, 14.2)  
 Juan Carlos Miralles  
 (Andorra, 14.2)  
 John McBeth (Scotland, 15.2)  
 Susanne Erlandsson (Sweden, 15.2)  
 Athanassios Machairas  
 (Greece, 15.2)  
 Katriina Elovirta (Finland, 15.2)  
 Leif Sundell (Sweden, 15.2)  
 Svitlana Shkil (Ukraine, 15.2)  
 Orkhan Huseynzade  
 (Azerbaijan, 15.2)  
 Adalbert Kassai (Romania, 16.2)  
 Roman Sowinski (Poland, 16.2)  
 Karoly Török (Hungary, 16.2)  
 Tervel Zlatev (Bulgaria, 16.2)  
 Helena Fernandes (Portugal, 17.2)  
 Gudrun Inga Sivertsen  
 (Iceland, 17.2)  
 Jozef Venglos (Slovakia, 18.2)  
 Borislav Alexandrov (Bulgaria, 18.2)  
 Flemming Serritslev (Denmark, 18.2)  
 Patrick Kelly  
 (Republic of Ireland, 18.2)  
 Constantin Gheorghe  
 (Romania, 18.2)  
 Mikael Santoff (Sweden, 18.2)  
 Vasily Melnychuk (Ukraine, 18.2)  
 Janis Mezeckis (Latvia, 19.2)  
 Lars Arnesson (Sweden, 20.2)  
 Edward Potok (Poland, 20.2)  
 Eggert Magnusson (Iceland, 20.2)  
 Patricia Moyersoén (France, 20.2)  
 Ralph Zloczower (Switzerland, 21.2)  
 Asim Khudiyev (Azerbaijan, 22.2)  
 Holger Hieronymus (Germany, 22.2)  
 Vladimir Sajin (Slovenia, 22.2)  
 Ana Caetano (Portugal, 22.2)  
 Peter Jones (England, 24.2)  
 Janos Ring (Hungary, 24.2)  
 Petr Dolezal (Czech Republic, 24.2)  
 Oleg Harlamov (Estonia, 24.2)  
 Miroslav Radoman (Serbia, 25.2)  
 Vladimir Hrinak (Slovakia, 25.2)  
 Ghenadie Scurtul (Moldova, 26.2)  
 Egidius Braun (Germany, 27.2)  
 Allan Hansen (Denmark, 27.2)  
 Aron Schmidhuber (Germany, 28.2)  
 John Beattie (England, 28.2)  
 Markus Stenger (Germany, 28.2)

## Forthcoming events

### ■ Meetings

#### 24/25 January, Nyon

Executive Committee

#### 29 January–3 February, Antalya, Turkey

Referees course

#### 30 January, Antalya, Turkey

Referees Committee

#### 9 February, Nyon

Club Competitions Committee

### ■ Competitions

#### 31 January – 11 February, Croatia

European Futsal  
 Championship final round

#### 14/15 + 21/22 February

Champions League:  
 round of 16 (first legs)

#### 16 February

UEFA Europa League:  
 round of 32 (first legs)

#### 23 February

UEFA Europa League:  
 round of 32 (return legs)

### Notices

- Miroslav Pelta was elected president of the Football Association of the Czech Republic on 17 November.
- Pafsanias Papanikolaou was appointed CEO of the Hellenic Football Federation in November.
- Ebru A. Köksal was appointed general secretary of the Turkish Football Association on 1 December.
- Zdislaw Krecina resigned from his position as general secretary of the Polish Football Federation at the end of November.

### Obituary

Former general secretary of the Football Association of Wales **Alun Evans** passed away on 12 November at the age of 69. At European level he served on the UEFA committee for the delivery of licences to agents negotiating matches from 1984 to 1996, as well as on the group of experts for transfers from 1992 to 1996. He subsequently became a member of the circle of former UEFA committee members known as the *Amicale des Anciens*.



*The UEFA president, general secretary, directors and staff wish all UEFA-direct readers a happy and prosperous 2012.*





**RESPECT**

The Opponent



**RESPECT**

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