

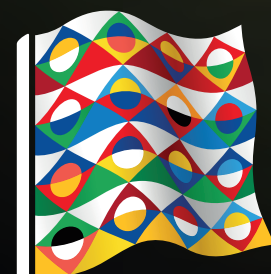
UEFA



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FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS



UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE™

Rejuvenating
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team football

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MORE THAN A GAME

As UEFA president, I have the opportunity to travel around Europe and beyond to meet many men and women who dedicate their lives to football. For me, it is more than just an opportunity – it is a privilege, because whether I go north, south, east or west, I see how this game inspires people of all genders, ages, ethnicities and social backgrounds to unite around the sport they love.

Over the last year, there have been many memorable moments from my trips that truly have moved and inspired me, but there is one that stands out. In September I was given the chance to visit the largest refugee camp in the world to inaugurate an artificial grass pitch. The Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan is home to more than 80,000 people who have been displaced as a result of the terrible conflict in Syria. Most of them have little to no hope of returning home and the thousands of children living in the camp are confined to a life of struggle.

As dramatic as this situation is, thanks to the amazing work done by the UEFA Foundation for Children, football has offered many of these children temporary respite from their daily strife. Since its inception, the foundation has helped coaches in and around the camp to organise

games for the boys and girls living there. As a result, 5,000 children and youngsters, including 1,300 girls, regularly take part in sports activities and the impact on their lives has been tremendous.

I got to see this at first hand when I inaugurated the new pitch alongside my good friend Prince Ali bin Al Hussein. It was such a wonderful feeling to experience how something as simple as this new facility could bring so much joy and happiness.

The smiles and the laughter I saw on that day in Zaatari will stay with me forever. They were further evidence that we are all working on more than a game, more than a sport. Football is a social movement and a force for good, and this we should never forget.



Aleksander Čeferin
UEFA President



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GENEVA CONGRESS SETS FUTURE COURSE

The 13th Extraordinary UEFA Congress took place in Geneva on 20 September. The ratification of two European Club Association (ECA) representatives as full Executive Committee members, the granting of one Executive Committee seat to the Association of European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL), and the election of a European member of the FIFA Council were the focal points.



After Helsinki in April, Aleksander Čeferin chaired his second UEFA Congress in Geneva.

The Swiss city's Hotel President Wilson welcomed senior representatives of UEFA's 55 member associations, and the decisions taken helped set UEFA's course for the future as the visions of the European body's president, Aleksander Čeferin, continue to take shape.

The associations ratified two representatives of the ECA to sit on the Executive Committee as full members with four-year terms of office: Andrea Agnelli (Juventus/Italy) and Ivan Gazidis (Arsenal/England). This is in line with the governance reforms proposed by the UEFA president and given the green light at the Ordinary UEFA Congress in Helsinki in April.

In addition, proposed amendments to the UEFA Statutes were approved which gave effect to a new memorandum of understanding between UEFA and the EPFL. Following the Executive Committee's

approval that afternoon, this gave the EPFL one full seat on the Executive Committee.

FIFA Council election

The Congress elected Alexey Sorokin (Russia) by acclamation as a new European member of the FIFA Council for a term of office lasting until 2021. Alongside this, four members of the UEFA Organs for the Administration of Justice were ratified, following their appointment by the Executive Committee at recent meetings: UEFA Appeals Body member Thomas Hollerer (Austria) and three UEFA ethics and disciplinary inspectors: Ivan Robba (Gibraltar), Edvinas Eimontas (Lithuania) and Nebojša Ivković (Serbia).

In his address to the Congress, the UEFA president highlighted various achievements since his election in September 2016. He emphasised, in particular, the importance of guaranteeing the competitive balance

of football in order to protect the game's well-being. It was essential, he said, "to ensure that smaller teams can continue to compete in the big league, and that we keep the dream alive for all. This is what makes football so special; this is the magic of football. We must protect it before it's too late – but we must be allowed to do so."

He called for European and national legislation to help football create measures to make the game fairer and better regulated, and improve its ethics and solidarity. "We are open," he stressed, "to any and all reforms that would serve the good of the game."

Positive progress

The UEFA president emphasised the positive progress being made by UEFA on a variety of fronts. "After one year and six days as UEFA president," he told the associations, "my – and our – actions speak louder than my words." Those actions included the launching of a social fair play programme promoting diversity and inclusion, revisions to the UEFA Statutes giving greater authority to holders of active offices within their national associations, and new bidding procedures for all UEFA competitions and finals that ensure greater transparency.

The UEFA president welcomed the dialogue and spirit of trust that marked UEFA's current relations with European football stakeholders. "These are times of harmony," he said. "We are a team once again. Everyone has found their place and seems ready and willing to support their team-mates."

"It is by standing together that we can re-establish the equilibrium that is so indispensable to the development and sustainability of European football." 🌐

2019 CLUB FINAL VENUES CHOSEN

A full day of work on 20 September, which began in the morning with the 13th Extraordinary UEFA Congress in Geneva, was completed that afternoon by the latest Executive Committee meeting in Nyon. Host venues for the 2019 UEFA club competition finals and a new memorandum of understanding with Europe's professional football leagues body were key items on the agenda.

UEFA received 14 bids from 10 national associations to stage Europe's showpiece club occasions in two years' time, and the Executive Committee took a vote to decide on the venues for each of the four club competition finals. Consequently, the Estadio Metropolitano in Madrid will host the UEFA Champions League final on 1 June 2019, and the Olympic Stadium in the Azerbaijani capital, Baku, will welcome the UEFA Europa League final the previous Wednesday, 29 May 2019.

The 2019 UEFA Women's Champions League final will be played at Ferencváros Stadium in Budapest (date to be confirmed), while the UEFA Super Cup match is to take place at Beşiktaş Stadium in Istanbul on 14 August 2019.

Memorandum of understanding

UEFA's positive relations with football stakeholders took another major step forward with the Executive Committee's approval of a new memorandum of understanding with the Association of European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL). As a result of amendments to the UEFA Statutes approved by the UEFA Congress earlier in the day, the EPFL will nominate a representative to sit on the Executive Committee. This representative will require ratification at the next Ordinary UEFA Congress in Bratislava, Slovakia, on 26 February 2018.

"I am pleased that, today, we have taken an important step by including the European Professional Football Leagues in our decision-making processes," said the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin. "They are an important stakeholder in European football, and I am looking forward to working closer with them in the future."

Brussels 2020 update

The Executive Committee received an update on the situation regarding the

Eurostadium in Brussels, one of 13 venues for UEFA EURO 2020. The committee asked for all relevant construction permits, as well as a realistic and guaranteed construction schedule, to be delivered by 20 November 2017. The committee also requested the UEFA administration to start, in parallel, a fast-track process to identify a replacement option. Those replacement options are Stockholm (Sweden) and Cardiff (Wales), which were both candidates to host EURO 2020 matches, as well as Wembley Stadium in

London (England), which is the only current host venue that would be available to host all the matches that should be played in Brussels. The Executive Committee will take a final decision on this matter at its next meeting in Nyon on 7 December 2017.

New vice-president

Following the recent resignation of Ángel María Villar Llona (Spain) from UEFA and FIFA functions, Michele Uva (Italy), an Executive Committee member since April this year, was appointed as a new UEFA vice-president. In addition, another UEFA vice-president, Fernando Gomes (Portugal), was appointed as a European member of the FIFA Council until February's Ordinary UEFA Congress.

Finally, the road towards the kick-off of UEFA's new national team competition, the UEFA Nations League, which starts in September 2018, saw the competition's regulations approved and the format of the competition confirmed (see page 8 for full details). ⚽



The Executive Committee at its Nyon meeting. Front row (left to right): Florence Hardouin, Peter Gilliéron, David Gill, Karl-Erik Nilsson, Aleksander Čeferin, Grigoriy Surkis, Fernando Gomes, Reinhard Grindel and Michele Uva. Back row: Andrea Agnelli, Ivan Gazidis, John Delaney, Sándor Csányi, Servet Yardımcı, Davor Šuker, Borislav Mihaylov, Michael van Praag and Zbigniew Boniek.



With the Nations League, what used to be a friendly between two footballing giants – like Germany v England in March – will now be a match with everything to play for.

Getty Images

NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

One of Europe's national teams will make history in June 2019 by winning the inaugural UEFA Nations League, which will culminate in finals involving the continent's top four sides.

The 2018/19 Nations League will be the first edition of UEFA's newest national team competition. It will also mark the end of a development process dating back to 2011, when the very first discussions took place regarding the possible launch of a new competition for UEFA's member associations with a view to giving national team football a

boost and sparking renewed enthusiasm among the public.

In the course of the discussions and through various meetings, a concept for the competition was devised, fleshed out and refined. The premise was this: while clubs enjoy high levels of visibility throughout the season, national teams tend only to attract the public's attention

during major tournaments and their qualifying competitions. Consequently, the aim was to revitalise the international calendar and add a little extra spice to national team fixtures.

There was a particular focus on international friendlies, which were thought to be too numerous, with not enough at stake and limited appeal among

While clubs enjoy high levels of visibility throughout the season, national teams tend only to attract the public's attention during major tournaments and their qualifying competitions.

spectators and TV audiences. Very quickly there was widespread consensus that a solution had been found: it was time to establish a new competition for Europe's national teams to position alongside the UEFA EURO as a cornerstone of the European football calendar, reducing the number of friendlies and giving greater structure to the intervals between major tournaments. In March 2014, UEFA's member associations were unanimous in approving the establishment of the Nations League. The fundamentals of this new competition were clear: Europe's national teams would be divided into four leagues, with a system of promotion and relegation. However, it was not until 20 September 2017, more than three years later, that the Executive Committee approved the full competition regulations. Those rules are fairly complicated, and it may take fans a while to get to grips with the intricacies of the system, but the essence of the competition is clear and it has everything it takes to add value to national team football and give greater meaning to matches between the nations of Europe.

55 teams, 4 leagues

For this inaugural edition of the Nations League, there will be 12 teams in League A, another 12 in League B, 15 in League C and 16 in League D, with all 55 of UEFA's member associations represented on the basis of the UEFA national team coefficient rankings as at 11 October 2017 – the day after the final group matches in the European Qualifiers for the 2018 World Cup. Thus, the 12 top-ranked sides have been placed in League A, the next 12 will compete in League B, and so on. Each league will be divided into four groups, with three teams per group in Leagues A and B, four teams per group in League D, and a hybrid system in League C involving one group of three and three groups of four. Thus, Group 1 of League A could conceivably comprise Germany, Italy and Poland, while Group 1 of League D could potentially be contested by Armenia,

CALENDAR

League phase draw:

24 January 2018 – SwissTech Convention Centre, Lausanne

Matchday 1: 6–8 September 2018

Matchday 2: 9–11 September 2018

Matchday 3: 11–13 October 2018

Matchday 4: 14–16 October 2018

Matchday 5: 15–17 November 2018

Matchday 6: 18–20 November 2018

Teams in three-sided groups will play competition matches on four of the six matchdays. On their two free dates they will arrange friendlies.

Final draw: early December 2018

Finals: 5–6 and 9 June 2019

UEFA EURO 2020 play-off draw:

22 November 2019

UEFA EURO 2020 play-offs:

26–31 March 2020

Luxembourg, Malta and Gibraltar.

The draw for the various groups will be made on 24 January 2018 in Lausanne.

Each team will play all of their opponents in their group home and away between September and November 2018, playing either four or six matches depending on the size of their group. There will be plenty to play for in every group of every league, with the final standings in the various groups determining the leagues that teams will contest in the second edition of the competition, in 2020/21. In Leagues B, C and D, the winners of each group will be promoted to the league above, while the teams finishing bottom of the various groups in Leagues A, B and C will be relegated to the league below. In League A, meanwhile, the prize on offer to the group winners promises to be even more alluring, with those four teams contesting the first-ever Nations League finals, hosted by one of the four finalists in June 2019. There will be two semi-finals, a third-place play-off and a final – a simple, compact format reminiscent of the early days of the European Football Championship, when, from 1960 to 1976, the final rounds of the first five competitions were contested by just four teams. →

New UEFA national team competition formats 2018–2020



*The four finalist teams will not play qualification matches in June

A place in EURO 2020 will be up for grabs in each of the four leagues, giving teams like Scotland and Slovenia, both in League C, an even greater incentive and opportunity.



Getty Images

Every match counts

While the system of promotion and relegation, and of course the finals, will be inherently interesting from a sporting perspective, the Nations League also promises to generate interest in relation to EURO 2020. The format of the qualifying competition for that tournament will strongly resemble that of the 2014–16 European Football Championship, with ten groups of five or six teams and the top two in each group qualifying for the final round, with play-offs held to fill the four remaining slots. However, there will be two major changes resulting from the establishment of the Nations League. The first concerns the calendar. While qualifying competitions typically start in September, shortly after the previous major tournament (qualifying for the 2018 World Cup began in September 2016, for example), qualifying for EURO 2020 will kick off in March 2019, leaving the last few months of 2018 free for the group stage of the Nations League.

The most significant change, however, concerns the play-offs for EURO 2020. The teams that enter those play-offs will do so not through the qualifying groups

Certain dates will still be reserved for friendly matches, not least so that European teams will be able to continue playing countries from other confederations.

for EURO 2020, but through the group stage of the 2018/19 Nations League. Moreover, rather than having four pairs of teams play each other home and away in the conventional manner, 16 teams will enter the play-offs for EURO 2020, which will be played in four 'paths' in March 2020. Each of the four leagues (i.e. Leagues A, B, C and D) will have its own play-off path, each comprising two semi-finals and a one-off final, and the winners of each league's play-offs will qualify for EURO 2020. Places in the play-offs will initially be reserved for the winners of the 16 Nations League groups, but if one of those teams qualifies automatically via the standard qualifying competition, its place will be taken by the next best team in that league. If a league has fewer than four eligible teams (because they have already qualified via the standard route), the remaining places will be given to teams from another league on the basis of their results in the Nations League group stage. It is conceivable, for example, that one or more teams from League B will end up taking part in the League A play-offs if Europe's major footballing nations all qualify for EURO 2020 without a hitch via the standard route.

Evolution, not revolution

Thanks to this system, a team from League D is guaranteed a place at EURO 2020. Looking at the teams that are in that league, only Latvia have taken part in a EURO in the past, so there is every chance

2018/19 UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

League composition based on the UEFA national team coefficient rankings as at 11 October 2017 on conclusion of the 2016-18 European Qualifiers group stage:

League A

- 1 Germany
- 2 Portugal
- 3 Belgium
- 4 Spain
- 5 France
- 6 England
- 7 Switzerland
- 8 Italy
- 9 Poland
- 10 Iceland
- 11 Croatia
- 12 Netherlands

League B

- 13 Austria
- 14 Wales
- 15 Russia
- 16 Slovakia
- 17 Sweden
- 18 Ukraine
- 19 Republic of Ireland
- 20 Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 21 Northern Ireland
- 22 Denmark
- 23 Czech Republic
- 24 Turkey

League C

- 25 Hungary
- 26 Romania
- 27 Scotland
- 28 Slovenia
- 29 Greece
- 30 Serbia
- 31 Albania
- 32 Norway
- 33 Montenegro
- 34 Israel
- 35 Bulgaria
- 36 Finland
- 37 Cyprus
- 38 Estonia
- 39 Lithuania

League D

- 40 Azerbaijan
- 41 FYR Macedonia
- 42 Belarus
- 43 Georgia
- 44 Armenia
- 45 Latvia
- 46 Faroe Islands
- 47 Luxembourg
- 48 Kazakhstan
- 49 Moldova
- 50 Liechtenstein
- 51 Malta
- 52 Andorra
- 53 Kosovo
- 54 San Marino
- 55 Gibraltar

that the team that qualifies makes history in doing so. Another advantage of this new format for the play-offs is that several smaller nations will get to spend a few days in the limelight as fans all over Europe watch on, waiting impatiently to see who will secure the last four places at EURO 2020 – which will itself have a new format, spanning 13 different countries in a Europe-wide celebration of the tournament’s 60th birthday. Dividing Europe’s 55 national teams into four leagues on the basis of their rankings will bring benefits for all. The teams in League A will have the opportunity to measure themselves against Europe’s top sides on a more regular basis, thereby offering fans more attractive fixtures and boosting both stadium attendance and TV audiences. Teams in Leagues B and C will have an additional qualifying route for the EURO that does not involve tackling one of Europe’s big beasts. And finally, the 16 smallest nations in League D will have the opportunity to play a series of games against broadly comparable opposition – and, above all, the tantalising prospect of landing a dream ticket to the EURO.

The Nations League’s arrival in the football calendar will necessitate a few adjustments, but it will not result in wholesale changes to the current situation as regards national team football. It will not, for example, entail an increase in the number of dates reserved for national team matches. Moreover, international friendlies will continue to be played – albeit in reduced numbers. Certain dates will still be reserved for such matches, not least so that European teams will be able to continue playing countries from other confederations.

The inaugural Nations League winners will be crowned in 2019 and their successors will follow hot on their heels in 2021, with the competition organised every two years in parallel with the European Qualifiers for the EURO and the World Cup. Can the Nations League secure a place for itself alongside those two prodigious national team competitions? Only time will tell, but one thing is certain: it has everything it needs to establish itself as a firm fixture in Europe’s football landscape. 🌐



UEFA Nations League 2018/19 – competition format

1. League phase

Teams play four or six matches depending on group size

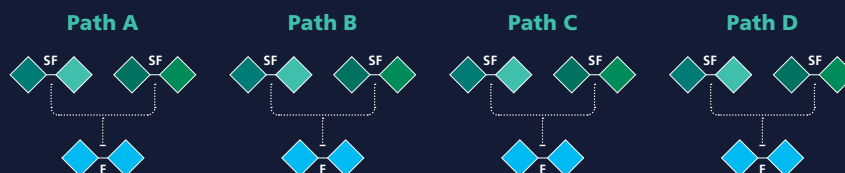
League A (12 teams)	League B (12 teams)	League C (15 teams)	League D (16 teams)
A1 A2 A3 A4	B1 B2 B3 B4	C1 C2 C3 C4	D1 D2 D3 D4

Finals: 4 group winners of League A compete to determine the winner of the Nations League

- Group winners advance to European Qualifiers play-offs, unless they have already qualified via the European Qualifiers group stage.
- In Leagues B, C and D, the winners of each group will be promoted to the league above, while the teams finishing bottom of the various groups in Leagues A, B and C will be relegated to the league below

2. European Qualifiers play-offs

Each path is composed of two semi-finals and a final



The four play-off winners qualify for EURO 2020



3. EURO 2020 Final Tournament

20 teams from EURO 2020 qualifying group stage plus four from the Nations League



Estonian FA

DEVELOPMENT TOURNAMENTS AND THEIR POSITIVE IMPACT

Together with its member associations, UEFA is determined to ensure that young female footballers who have talent and show promise are given sufficient support and opportunities as they progress along their early career paths as players. To that end, UEFA international development tournaments are helping these talented teenagers to hone their skills and accelerate their learning curve.

Eight separate development tournaments were staged across Europe at women's Under-17 and Under-18 levels this spring and summer. One national association plays host, supported financially by UEFA, with anything from three to six national women's Under-17 or Under-18 teams taking part. These international matches in a tournament environment are designed to complement the elite youth player pathways within UEFA's 55 member associations – and the accent is very much on helping players to progress and learn.

Women's Under-18 development tournaments were hosted by Bulgaria (visiting teams: Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro and Romania), Estonia (FYR Macedonia and Latvia), Kazakhstan (Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine) and Lithuania (Faroe Islands and Slovakia). The Under-17 host associations were Bulgaria (visiting teams: FYR Macedonia, Romania and Slovakia), Belarus (Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro and

Ukraine), Estonia (Azerbaijan, Finland and Malta) and Latvia (Faroe Islands and Turkey).

Playing and learning

UEFA's tournaments not only aim to further develop player performance and the standard of play – there is also an educational element, with players coming together at the events to discover about each other's countries and cultures. Coaches are able to use the tournaments to assess players in view of the UEFA women's Under-17 and Under-19 competitions. Nevertheless, the preferred emphasis should be on playing and progressing, rather than results.

Learning is equally key for referees at the tournaments. Local female match officials are appointed to give them a flavour of taking charge of international games. In addition, UEFA appoints experienced technical observers for each tournament to run the rule over technical and tactical aspects.

Coaches are able to use the tournaments to assess players in view of the UEFA women's Under-17 and Under-19 competitions.



Left: Montenegro take on Belarus. Opposite page: Azerbaijan's women's Under-17 team in Estonia.

The ongoing work is having a positive effect – fuelling a growing wish among girls to aim for fulfilling careers within the game. “The mentality has changed a lot,” says Azerbaijan women’s Under-18 coach, Vugar Asgarli. “Young players try their best and have the desire to learn. They see a perspective for the future.”

Striving to succeed

“The players want to prove themselves,” adds Kazakhstan women’s Under-18 coach, Pyotr Pak. “They fight now to reach the national team; they want to play in good clubs and take part in major tournaments.”

UEFA is helping to give momentum to the drive to bring more women coaches into significant roles through its ambitious new coach development project, which kicked off last year. The project aims to increase the number of qualified female coaches, as well as the number of clubs and national teams that are coached by women.

The women’s Under-18 and Under-17 development tournament rules stipulate that each team must have at least one female staff member, and the hope is that the number of female coaches at the events will increase rapidly. “It was great to see two female head coaches, who were very active and led their teams very well, as well as four assistant female coaches,” reflected Monika Staab, technical observer at the Under-18 tournament in Bulgaria.

“The mentality has changed a lot. Young players try their best and have the desire to learn. They see a perspective for the future.”

Vugar Asgarli
Azerbaijan women’s U18 coach

There has been a general thumbs-up for the development tournament concept. “It is a good idea,” says Ukraine women’s Under-18 coach, Natalia Zinchenko. “We are very grateful to UEFA for increasingly focusing on the development of women’s football.” The Faroe Islands’ women’s Under-17 coach, John Petersen, agrees: “The development tournaments are fantastic – they have a direct impact on keeping players in the sport. More and more girls are choosing football as their main sport.”

UEFA is fully committed to the campaign to nurture young female players across Europe, and the success of the women’s Under-18 and Under-17 development tournaments goes hand in hand with the positive impact enjoyed by the Under-16 development tournament concept, which has also proved its worth among boys and girls since its introduction in 2012. Stronger attention is planned for the women’s Under-16 sector, as UEFA wishes to focus on the development of female players at an even earlier stage. Indeed, at all of these women’s youth levels, the signs are that the work being undertaken by UEFA and its member associations will definitely have a significant impact in producing high-calibre footballers who will grace the European game in the years to come. ⚽



Neighbours Ukraine and Moldova go head to head in Belarus.



YOUTH INVESTMENTS PAY OFF

In the homeland of Alpine skiing, Women's EURO 2017 served as a reminder that Austria is also very much a football nation. Appearing in an international tournament for the first time, the Austrian women's team surprised many with their vibrant, high-quality performances and their place in the semi-finals. What may appear a minor miracle is just reward for a country that is planning for the long-term and investing more in its youngsters than ever before.



The Austrians caused a sensation by knocking out Spain to reach the semi-finals of the Women's EURO.



Getty Images

In 2011, Austrian football experienced something of a revolution when it was decided to establish a national women's football centre in Sankt Pölten, a city of 50,000 inhabitants half an hour west of Vienna. The Lower Austrian capital was chosen to be the home of an impressive, modern and highly functional facility in which the country's most talented 14 to 19-year-old girls train on a daily basis. The objective of this monumental project? To turn the Austrian national youth teams into giants of European football. "The Austrian FA has done a great job here," said Michel Platini, UEFA president at the time of the centre's inauguration in September 2011. "This centre will support girls playing at youth level to take the crucial step to reach the national A team."

Six years down the line, it is clear that the investment has paid off. The Austrian team's EURO campaign in the Netherlands

was hugely successful, as Dominik Thalhammer's players (with an average age of under 25) reached the semi-finals of their first-ever international tournament. Even more impressively, they finished with the competition's best defence, conceding just one goal, scored by France's Amandine Henry in the group stage. Attention has now turned to the 2019 Women's World Cup, to be held in France. With Spain, Finland, Serbia and Israel standing in their way, the Austrians will be determined to prove that they are worthy of their 20th place in the FIFA world rankings.

Top facilities for top players

While the Austrian team's performances belied their status as outsiders, they were certainly no accident. Opening the centre, in which talented girls can train in a highly professional environment, was a major leap forward for an association that did not even have a national women's team

until 1990. "Before the centre was established, the country's top female players only met together five or six times a year to train in their respective age categories," explains the centre's CEO, Karin Gruber. "There was a gap in the training pyramid for girls," remembers Irene Fuhrmann, assistant coach of the senior national team. "Up to the age of 14, girls could train with boys at our regional centres. But after that, they had to join a girls' team, where they only trained two or three times a week. Now they can combine school with football and train six or seven times a week."

All girls who train at the centre remain registered with clubs and join up with their team-mates each weekend. "It's vital that the girls get used to competitive football. That's why we want them to train with and play for their home clubs, so they become even better players," explains Michael Steiner, the centre's sporting director.

The national women's football centre has all the facilities necessary to give talented young players the best possible football education. As well as two grass and two synthetic pitches, it boasts indoor

Opening the centre, in which talented girls can train in a highly professional environment, was the first major leap forward for an association that did not even have a national women's team until 1990.



Families of supporters got together in the Rathausplatz in Vienna to follow Austria's progress.

as pupils attend school for longer than those in mainstream education. The school day is shorter but the academic programme lasts an extra year, which enables the players to combine their studies and training commitments without burning out. They can choose between a traditional high-school education (five years) and business school (four years). Girls graduate either with the Austrian Matura or do their business school finals. "The Matura is the gateway to further education", explains Gruber, who is fully aware that academic qualifications remain essential. Fuhrmann agrees: "At the moment, female players cannot play professionally in Austria because our

women's Bundesliga is still an amateur league." While Gruber acknowledges that joining a club in neighbouring Germany is often the only way of turning professional, Fuhrmann is quick to point out that things are not always so simple: "Even if they go to Germany, they do not necessarily become professional players. Our top goalkeeper, Manuela Zinsberger, for example, went to business school, obtained a vocational qualification and now plays for Bayern Munich and works in the club's commercial department."

At present, only two Austrian Bundesliga clubs have women's teams: SKN St Pölten and SK Sturm Graz. Elsewhere, FK Austria Wien works in partnership with neighbouring club USC Landhaus, which broke new ground for women's football in Austria when it became the country's first participant in the UEFA Women's Cup in 2001. →

This season, the national women's football centre has 49 student residents, all born between 1998 and 2003. The number is deliberately kept small to ensure each player can be given optimal support.

pitches, gymnasiums, weights rooms, physio rooms and massage rooms. The Austrian FA's former sporting director, Willi Ruttensteiner, confesses that the idea for the centre came to him during a visit to the French national technical centre at Clairefontaine 15 years ago. From a sporting point of view, everything is therefore in place to provide the players with the ideal training environment. What's more, with various other training centres a stone's throw away, the girls are not locked in a football bubble but are able to rub shoulders on a daily basis with the country's top young performers in other disciplines – from basketball to ballet and handball to ice hockey. In their leisure time, they can also make use of cultural and recreational amenities conveniently located next to the centre, while Sankt Pölten town centre is only a ten-minute bus ride away.

The centre's role is not simply to develop talent on the pitch: academic studies are also important. Since the centre has its own boarding house and school, the players have everything they need on their doorstep and travel is kept to a minimum. The school system is unusual in as much



The national women's football centre in Sankt Pölten enables promising young players to train in a professional environment while continuing their school education.

GROWING FOOTBALL IN AUSTRIA

Over the course of 2017, UEFA has been supporting the Austrian Football Association (ÖFB) with its plans and efforts to grow the game at all levels. Within the framework of the UEFA GROW programme, the collaboration began in February with a five-day workshop, sharing fact-based research and market data on the four key pillars of GROW: participation, engagement, image, and revenue. This week of analysis helped to provide a clearer picture of where the game stood in the country and resulted in the ÖFB deciding to establish an overarching strategic plan for Austrian football with

the help of UEFA and its GROW programme.

Since then, a lot of progress has been made: not only does the ÖFB now have its first strategic plan in place; it has also started working on its brand position, putting together commercial and grassroots participation plans, and thinking about how to tap into the digital world to enhance its activities. Under its president, Leo Windtner, and general secretary, Thomas Hollerer, the association is making great strides and moving forward with a wide range of measures, all of which are aimed at growing the game in Austria.

“There are still some structural problems, especially in big cities such as Vienna, where training facilities are scarce,” explains Michael Steiner, who coached SK Rapid Wien’s youth teams for two seasons. Having taken up his role in Sankt Pölten in September, he finds himself in familiar surroundings, having coached the St Pölten first team for a few months in 2014.

Care and forward planning

This season, the national women’s football centre has 49 student residents, all born between 1998 and 2003. The number is deliberately kept small to ensure each player can be given optimal support. “We recruit around ten players in each year group and try to build the national U17 and U19 teams around them,” explains Karin Gruber. Although they all aspire to participate in top-level international matches one day, the jump to the senior team remains a big one. “Nine of the current senior national side were trained at the centre. Of course, we would like that number to be higher, but that’s unrealistic. Each year, out of eight to ten players, one or two, sometimes three, manage to break into the first team,” says Irene Fuhrmann. The others continue their development at their clubs. “The training that we provide gives our players the ideal preparation and the opportunity to improve the standard of the league. It’s therefore very important for us and for women’s football in general.”

Despite its population size of just 8.5 million and fierce competition from skiing, Austria is a country with a long football tradition. Long-standing clubs in Vienna and other major cities such as Graz and Linz are watched by thousands of supporters every weekend. Founded in 1904, the Austrian FA currently has 2,226 affiliated clubs and 863,413 registered players. Although female players remain very much in the minority, their number is constantly growing, with 15% more registered now than in 2011. Austria currently has 19,153 registered female players, 11,633 of whom are under 18

years old. However, only 10 have professional status and 70 are semi-professional, a situation that the national women’s football centre was set up to address. “In fact, we have already found the solution: female players are being trained professionally and more and more girls are taking up football. Our team’s success at the Women’s EURO in the Netherlands has really boosted the image of women’s football in Austria. If things continue in this direction, the situation can only get better,” says an excited Michael Steiner.

Since the centre aspires to select only the very best candidates, financial concerns →



Getty Images

Austria made the perfect start to their first-ever Women’s EURO, beating Switzerland 1-0.

JENNIFER KLEIN

'Combining sport and studies is doable'

At the age of 18, St Pölten's Jennifer Klein represented Austria at its first Women's EURO. As a resident of the national women's football centre, she is also pursuing her academic studies.

When did you start playing football?

I come from a family that loves football.

My father played, as did my mother and brother. It was therefore natural that my sister and I should play too. My brother was a role model for me and I wanted to be just like him. My parents encouraged me right from the start by driving me to training and to matches. To begin with I played in boys' teams and it was never a problem. I joined the centre at 14 and I'm now starting my fifth year here.

You played at Women's EURO 2017 not long after your 18th birthday. How did you find it being part of the squad?

It was a fantastic experience. The atmosphere in the changing rooms was very relaxed and there was a real sense of togetherness among us. I think that was the key to our success.

Even though you are still young yourself, do you think you have become a role model for other girls who want to become footballers?

On a personal level, I don't know. However, through our performances at the EURO, we showed as a team that we can serve as an example for future generations. If one day I find out that I'm a little girl's favourite player, I will feel honoured, of course, but that's not the most important thing at the moment.

Isn't it difficult training to become a professional footballer and keeping up with school?

I must admit that it is not always easy because some training sessions are extremely intense and there isn't much energy left for school. However, our teachers are very understanding and often give us extra time to do our homework. With fewer lessons each day and one extra year than in mainstream schools, combining sport and studies is doable.

You will complete your Matura (school-leaving certificate) next summer. What are your favourite subjects at school? And what line of work would you have pursued if you had not become a footballer?

I like sports science and maths. I don't have a plan B because, as far as I can remember, I have always wanted to be a professional footballer! I'm currently concentrating on the 2019 Women's World Cup in France. It's up to me to do my best and to continue improving so I can be part of the adventure.



Getty Images

cannot be allowed to get in the way. Pupils pay €200 a month for a place in the boarding house. "The ÖFB covers the rest. We believe it's essential that every pupil can afford this training," says Gruber. As well as from the Austrian FA, the centre receives support from UEFA, the Austrian Bundesliga, the Austrian ministry of sport, the Lower Austrian state authority, the Lower Austrian football association and the other regional football associations.

The tremendous progress that has been achieved since the centre opened just six years ago shows that their investments are paying off. "Our U17 side qualified for the European Championship finals in 2013 and our U19s followed suit in 2016, so you can see how valuable the project has been," says Fuhrmann, who is also confident about the future: "Media interest is growing all the time and the national team's performance at Women's EURO 2017 did us the world of good."

Clubs also involved

Some 250km west of Sankt Pölten, Salzburg sits proudly at the foot of the mountains, the gateway between Austria and Germany, whose border is just a stone's throw away, on the other side of

"Our philosophy boils down to youth, style, intensity, attractiveness, attacking play and success."

Bernhard Seonbuchner
RB Academy sporting director

the Saalach river. Mozart's birthplace may be a cultural gem, but sport has always been one of its favourite pastimes. As well as being the home of the International Biathlon Union, Salzburg boasts one of the largest ski areas in Europe. But down in the valley, on the edge of the city, is a large building whose state-of-the-art architecture stands in stark contrast with the picture-postcard views of the surrounding peaks.

Since 2014, the world-class, 100,000m² Red Bull Academy has served as the training centre for the youth teams of FC Salzburg, one of the Austrian Bundesliga's top clubs. A total of 180 boys in 11 different age groups train at the academy, from U7s to the U19 side that won the

UEFA Youth League final against SL Benfica in April 2017. Two concepts lie at the heart of the academy's philosophy: excellence and youth. "Young players form the basis and foundation of our club," explains Bernhard Seonbuchner, the academy's sporting director. "Our objective is to bring these players through into the first team of FC Salzburg. That is why the academy was created. We want to play an all-action, high-intensity style of football, which is easier to achieve with younger players, of course." Each year, the academy receives numerous applications from prospective players, including from countries on the other side of the world, such as India and Australia. At the same time, it runs a scouting network throughout Austria in order to spot the country's most talented youngsters, provided they fit in with the academy's football philosophy. "Our philosophy boils down to youth, style, intensity, attractiveness, attacking play and success," Seonbuchner says.

As in Sankt Pölten, education plays a key role in the young players' personal development. "We want our players to become professional, but we also want them to have a good education.



FCRB/GEPA pictures

The 100,000m² Red Bull Academy in Salzburg



FCRBS/GEPA pictures

The Red Bull Academy uses the very best technology to train its young players.

We partner with schools in Salzburg that are easy to get to. We want the boys to go to school in the city so that they experience a different social setting," explains the sporting director, who is always mindful of the academy's primary objective: "In principle, we want to prepare our players to play at the highest level. This means that every player is highly valued and we are happy to invest in them because we know that we will get something in return. Over the last three years, we have generated over €100m in transfer fees, something that was previously unthinkable in Austria."

Before making the leap into the first team and pursuing their dream of following in the footsteps of great names such as Sadio Mané, Kevin Kampl or, more recently, Dimitri Oberlin, the academy's youngsters are able to ease into the world of professional football at their own pace with FC Salzburg's cooperation club FC Liefering, who play in the Austrian second division. But when it comes to experiencing the cut and thrust of international competition, nothing beats playing for the U19 team, whose recent Youth League triumph demonstrates the quality of the training on offer. "Eight of the starting 11, plus one or two on the bench, joined us at U15 level. Others started with the U10s, or even the U8s,"



FCRBS/GEPA pictures

says Seonbuchner with obvious pride, adding that a few players of the team that beat Olympique de Marseille 1-0 in the UEFA Europa League on 28 September had played in the Youth League the previous season. Is everyone guaranteed success on the international stage? "Our focus is on development. Our goal is not to field a young player against Cristiano Ronaldo in the Champions League. Facing Marseille in the Europa League is a tough enough challenge in itself. This competition ticks the box for us because it enables us to

give our players international experience, and we manage to do this every year." At club as well as national team level, Austria appears to have developed a production line for young talent with a very bright future. It can now start to dream of repeating the kind of successes achieved at Women's EURO 2017 and in the Youth League on a more regular basis. The key to success lies in the combination of training and professionalism. A spark has been lit, but this is surely no flash in the pan. ⚽

ZEHRA BADEM - GERMANY

BITTEN BY THE FOOTBALL BUG

Girls can't play football? Don't ever dream of telling that to Zehra Badem ...

Zehra, from Berlin, lives and breathes football, and says she can't exist without it. At 17, she is captivated by its excitement and appeal. Since the age of four, she has gone through countless pairs of boots playing the game she loves. "Football is everything for me," she tells us.

Her feelings are crystal clear: "If boys can do ballet, why can't girls take up football?" She is absolutely right, of course. Zehra reflects the values embedded in UEFA's #EqualGame campaign when she says: "Everyone should get to play." Her father, Erkan, a taxi driver in the German capital, is a proud, fervent supporter – as is her mother, Fatma, a bookkeeper, who recognised the depth of her daughter's passion early on.

Zehra plays for local club Türkiyemspor Berlin. She feels a sense of belonging there, and enjoys the family atmosphere. Her school studies are going well, and she hopes to go to university, perhaps to study law, achieve good results and enjoy a fulfilling life. She is proud to be a Muslim, keeps up with world news and takes a keen interest in environmental issues.

There is something special about Zehra's football skills – she plays with a confidence, swagger and style that impresses all those who watch her. She also has a natural charm and endearing kindness that her club plans to put to good use, as she has been asked to coach young children from next year.

Football is helping Zehra to plan a positive future for herself, both in the game and in life. The signs are already there that plenty of success awaits her.

#EQUALGAME





"I FEEL VERY PROUD TO BE THE CAPTAIN BECAUSE IT'S AN HONOUR TO HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WATCHING OVER 15 OTHER PLAYERS"







**"MANY PEOPLE SAID TO ME, 'YOU'RE A GIRL,
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO PLAY FOOTBALL' –
BUT I DIDN'T CARE"**

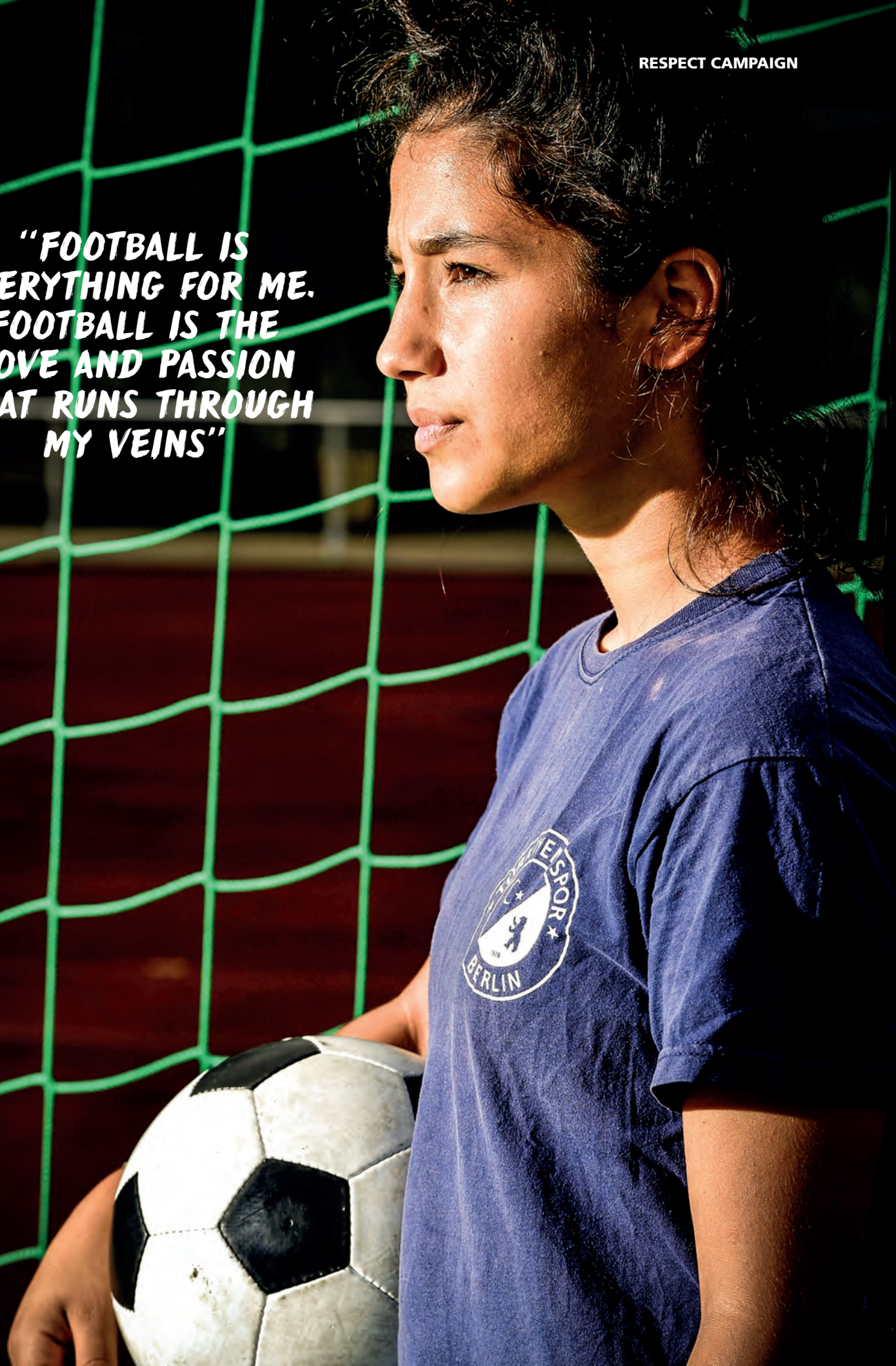
EQUAL GAME



"THE TEAM IS LIKE A SECOND HOME TO ME. THEY AREN'T JUST MY FRIENDS OR TEAM-MATES, THEY'RE FAMILY"



**"FOOTBALL IS
EVERYTHING FOR ME.
FOOTBALL IS THE
LOVE AND PASSION
THAT RUNS THROUGH
MY VEINS"**



STADIUM SECURITY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The crucial topic of safety and security in and around football stadiums took centre stage in Munich on 8 September at the latest UEFA-EU Stadium and Security Conference. UEFA confirmed its commitment to spearheading the campaign to make football matches a safe experience for everyone involved – spectators, players and officials.

Around 350 representatives of UEFA, the EU, national football associations, football clubs, police forces and other stakeholders came together in the Bavarian city for discussions and exchanges on the broad range of security-related issues surrounding the game.

The UEFA-EU conference is a unique platform for debate and proposals. Those present were kept abreast of current developments in stadium safety and security, a review was undertaken of the 2016/17 season, and UEFA reiterated the need for a Europe-wide approach to security that should include governments, municipal authorities, police, security forces, football authorities, supporters and local communities.

President pulls no punches

The UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, pulled no punches in his message to the conference. He emphasised UEFA's determination to eliminate negative phenomena from football that created potential risks at matches, and affected spectators' enjoyment of the match experience.

"Supporters are the lifeblood of football," he said. "Without them, the game would lose its atmosphere, its passion and its meaning. We believe that spectators have the right to expect football events to take place in a safe, secure, comfortable and welcoming environment – and that they should be able to feel excitement, rather than any kind of fear or concern."

The UEFA president stressed that considerable work was going on to reduce spectator violence. "However, we are still confronted with unsavoury incidents which occur inside and outside stadiums across the continent," he added. "There is also, of course, the threat of terrorist attacks



at venues. This has now become a very real and serious threat that we must never neglect."

Four-year strategy

UEFA has provided significant funding for the implementation of a comprehensive safety and security strategy over the next few years – a move welcomed by the chairman of the UEFA Stadium and Security Committee, Michael van Praag. "The strategy has at its core the delivery of integrated and balanced safety, security and service for the vast majority of fans," he said, "while at the same time

"Security is one of the areas where we can never think that our job is finished"

Adrian Dincă
Council of Europe

seeking to exclude the small minority of troublemakers."

He underlined that UEFA will work hand in hand with its 55 member associations to help them develop effective strategies and activities, and would also continue to nurture excellent relations and cooperation with the EU and the Council of Europe.

Adrian Dincă, vice-chairman of the standing committee of the European Convention on Safety, Security and Service at the Council of Europe, reflected the view of every stakeholder present in Munich when he warned against complacency. "Regardless of better governance, the improvement of infrastructures and new security technologies, every week we have incidents where people are injured in every part of the world," he told the conference. "That is why the safety and security topic must be continually discussed and refined. This is one of the areas where we can never think that our job is finished." 🌐

FOOTBALL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

UEFA has been supporting football-related academic research projects through its Research Grant Programme since 2010. This month, Jacopo Tognon analyses the link between football business enterprises, human rights and social responsibility.

Football is the most widely practised and watched sport around the world. It has an inherent transcendent capacity for bringing people together, thereby enhancing social cohesion and inclusion, and bringing about social change. Indeed, in the last decade its role as a vehicle for human rights enhancement has been fostered through strategies implemented by UEFA and its national associations. Human rights are of a universal nature, being rights inherent to all individuals. Hence, this research focused on the role of football with regard to the respect, enhancement and protection of human rights.

The spotlight was set on European football, looking at UEFA's 55 member associations. Building on the recommendation of the UN Human Rights Council to establish a framework for "sport and human rights", this study endeavoured to develop such a framework for "football and human rights". The core topic of the research was the human rights-related policies and practices of UEFA's member associations.

Research development

Thanks to the support of the UEFA Research Grant Programme, we carried out a study aimed at understanding how internationally recognised human rights principles and norms are perceived, evaluated and promoted in European football.

The research methodology used was inspired by the corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach, as well as by the standards set by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (BHR). The added value of this research was to have built a bridge between CSR and BHR. The purpose was to explore, on the one hand, how UEFA member associations promote human rights through their activities (CSR) and, on the other hand, how they are committed to protecting human rights (BHR).

In order to collect the data, we created an online questionnaire that was sent to all 55 UEFA member associations.

The high response rate of 74.5% clearly shows the extent to which human rights are a matter of interest to the member associations. Indeed, 80% of them have a formal



Jacopo Tognon (Italy), University of Padova, Jean Monnet lecturer in European sports law and policy, CONI consultant for the Erasmus+ Sport Programme, and CAS arbitrator.

commitment to human rights (however, this decreases to 12% in terms of the number of them which have a specific human rights policy). It was also interesting to see that the size of the associations – in terms of turnover – influences their ability to offer human rights-related activities. It was also noted that UEFA is the main donor for human rights projects using football as a tool.

All the associations agreed that non-discrimination – in all its forms – is a top priority, followed by integrity (fighting doping and match-fixing). Generally, the associations tend to take human rights into account when engaging in business with third parties and when deciding where to host tournaments. However, at the moment only a small percentage consider it an essential requirement. Resource constraints and embedding a human rights culture within the association were regarded as challenges when engaging in human rights activities.

Finally, of utmost importance is that 90% of UEFA member associations not only consider football as a powerful means to strengthen human rights, but also perceive that they bear responsibilities in promoting human rights. Consequently, we can state that human rights not only matter to the associations; they are committed to promoting and respecting them. 🌍

All the associations agreed that non-discrimination – in all its forms – is a top priority, followed by integrity (fighting doping and match-fixing).



Sportsfile

SARINA WIEGMAN

“WE GOT PEOPLE EXCITED – THAT IS WHAT WOMEN’S FOOTBALL NEEDS”

After only half a year in charge of the Oranje women, Sarina Wiegman led the Netherlands to a historic first-ever European title on home soil.

Sarina Wiegman, you have been head coach of the national team for six months now and have already achieved so much success. Did you ever imagine it would be like this?

Well, that it would be this big and this fantastic is the stuff of dreams. Of course, it’s fantastic it went like this and we put in such an excellent performance. It all came together. Our performance, teamwork and a bit of luck, which we went looking for. So yes, it was a dream come true.

You say you went looking for it: what did you personally contribute as coach?

People have worked very hard over the last couple of years to help this team and the players to grow, and I continued with that the very moment I was hired for the job.

What I did in particular was to add some new people to the coaching staff. Then we set up a plan leading up to 16 July and prepared ourselves as well as we could for anything that we’d come up against and might possibly happen during the EURO. We addressed those matters in the months prior to the tournament. But that process had already started before I was appointed as head coach.

During the tournament, it showed that we were very well prepared, both in the way we played and what we expected on the pitch, but also in what we expected off it. Only it became much, much bigger than we had hoped for and dreamed about.

One of our goals was to conquer the hearts of the Dutch people and we really did it together with them. Preparations played a very important role, but also the way in which we worked together. There was a very open atmosphere with the staff and the players and that appeared to be the right approach.

When looking back on the tournament, what stands out the most for you in terms of tactics or technique?

What struck me is that during this tournament the pace of the matches increased: the players are getting fitter and you also see that players from other countries are increasingly better coached. The conditions for young women and girls to develop into top, professional players are getting better and better, and you can see that during matches.

The next step is to improve tactically and also technically. The Dutch team had a very good tactical set-up. We saw that against England and Norway, for example: those teams are much stronger physically than we are, so we have to be stronger technically and tactically. We have to be clever. This is essentially the Dutch way of thinking about football. And that went very well at this tournament.

According to UEFA’s technical observers, the trend was very

much focused on ball possession and passing. Was this also something from which you derived your strength?

Yes, we have been working on that a lot in the past couple of years. When we first qualified for the Women’s EURO in 2009, the players started training more often and harder. The demands were higher and the players got fitter – that was the first step we did here in the Netherlands to make sure we made it to the EURO. But we also knew in 2009 that we weren’t ready yet to dominate ball possession. In the following years, we worked very hard on defending better and using that as a platform for more ball possession. We have been working on that; my coaching staff and I have continued to work on that. What happens is that the players also start developing as our positional play improves. This is linked to the fact that everyone knows how we want to play, but it’s also down to the quality of the players. →



Getty Images

Sarina Wiegman became coach of the Oranje women in early 2017, having herself received 104 caps between 1987 and 2001.

And yet, 9 out of 26 matches were won by the team with the least possession of the ball. England are an extreme example: they beat Spain with only 26% of the ball.

I only saw part of that match, however I do know that Spain had a lot of ball possession, but mainly in their half of the pitch; they didn't go forward and attack a lot. And England, they dropped deep and let Spain have the ball in that area of the pitch. I can easily imagine how Spain had more possession of the ball, but in the end, it's all about scoring goals. England opted for the long ball, so they had less possession but they reached the opposition's goal much quicker. And that way they are more threatening, perhaps. So those statistics are all nice, but they are mainly useful to see what happens in football and what we're seeing in games. And then you can link the two. If you have a lot of ball possession and you're deep in the opponent's half, then it's much harder to keep the ball than when you are in your own half of the pitch. So, you have to



“England and Norway, for example, are much stronger physically than we are, so we have to be stronger technically and tactically. We have to be clever. This is essentially the Dutch way of thinking about football”



filter that out and find out where the numbers are coming from. Women's football is developing more and more, so the demands are increasing, especially when attacking and trying to score goals. And for that, you need quality and if you can mix it up with long balls and possession, I think it's a good development for women's football.

You did drop deep every now and again, but your game was more focused on going forward. Was that something you worked on?

Yes, we had starting principles in games, covering the four areas of the pitch and restarts. There were several things we thought were important and we continuously went back to them. We know that with the strikers we have and the players behind them, if we win the ball, we have players capable of brilliant passes but also strikers who can attack and score. So that is a big quality in this team. We had a plan about how we wanted to win that ball, where and at what moment, and how we wanted to get close to the goal – we really worked hard on that. The players have their jobs to do, and then you have to make use of the quality of the players. We all know that Shanice van de Sanden is really fast, so you shouldn't play the ball to her feet. Sometimes you must, but in general, the starting principle is that she always gets a long ball.

That is one of the things that has developed since 2013: fast switches of play were the key to success.

Yes, I think that you also have to take into

account the defensive qualities of the other teams. I am curious to find out if there's also information on that. How did the other countries do? It was quite difficult, but I think that we did a great job with our team as far as that is concerned.

The technical report mentions Austria as an example of a team that did surprisingly well but also played very defensively, put on a lot of pressure and were able to counter very quickly.

And they were very fit and really defended together as a team. I must say that I didn't see many of their games, but we played against them in the run-up to the EURO, when they were still working on some things. On that occasion, they went 2-0 down after 15 minutes. That match was a huge learning experience for them and they built on it during the EURO. And they were very successful there, so that was very clever. But also against us in June, they were a team that was physically very strong and very fit, which is a great achievement when it's your first EURO.

The technical report also states that one of your star players, Lieke Martens, was one of the few players who wasn't afraid to try to beat her opponent to create a misbalance in the other team.

I have seen more players who can do that but, of course, Lieke Martens has fantastic dribbling skills and can create numerical superiority by beating her opponent. Shanice van de Sanden can also get behind the defence, getting behind her marker

and creating numerical superiority, forcing the defence into a decision. It was a combination of Lieke, Danielle van de Donk and Jackie Groenen, who did very well in midfield when they were in possession of the ball, so it really was a team effort. We have many exceptional qualities in attack, but Pernille Harder and Line Hansen can also beat their opponents.

The technical observers concluded that the focus was on defence in this tournament and teams found it difficult to break through. Are crosses from the wings a good alternative then?

Yes, and the crossing opportunity itself. The quality and the opportunity of the pass in combination with the player's position in front of goal. If it takes too long, the opponent is already back in position, which is something you saw a lot.

And then it becomes difficult to break through and you have to come up with other things. That's something to work on together and to improve.

You played on the wings too. According to the statistics, you were not the most thorough with regard to assists, and yet you scored four goals from the flanks. Was that something you worked on?

Yes, of course we did. It's a quality we have in our team. Perhaps our assists weren't so good, but when you look at the number of assists and the percentages, I think we didn't do all that badly. We got behind the opponent's lines so often that the chance of things going the right way was quite big, but so was the chance of things not going the right way. If you have one player who manages to get behind the defence twice and chooses the right ball once, or you get behind the defence ten times and play the right ball five times, then it's the same 50% for both. But in that latter case, you're getting there ten times and not many players can do that. That was the case with us.

Plus, the most important thing: you scored four times from these areas.

Yes, also with set pieces. And those assists were quite good, yes. Four times: Shanice twice, Lieke once and Jackie once. Really good.



in numbers

2.19



The average number of goals per match was the lowest ever at a Women's EURO



18%

Increase in the number of attempts on goal compared with the last Women's EURO



35%

of matches were won by the team with less possession



88%

of matches were won by the team that scored first

The number of attempts on goal was also a noticeable trend: an increase of 18.5% compared with 2013. But in the end, the average number of goals was an all-time low of 2.19 per match. Is that the result of stronger defending?

I think that the pace of the game is much faster now, the defence is more organised and so the demands in attack are higher. That's a development we're going through and, as I said, I didn't watch all the matches, but when I look at how we did, we played some very open matches, I think. If you go towards your opponent's goal too slowly, then they will already have regrouped when you get there. So, you must do it faster and that requires better offensive play. And then you have to make choices: do you take a shot on goal straight away or do you decide on another pass? It's all about quality and higher demands because of better defensive play; this improves your game.

What also stood out was that there were quite a few errors made by goalkeepers when trying to reach high balls.

That also has to do with the development of the game. The game is faster, the quality of crosses, attackers and defenders is higher and the goalkeepers need to do better. That says a lot about the way the goalkeepers train. For example, we now have a young goalkeeper who was in the Under-19s last year. She was part of our squad last month and she was great. When she was playing with us everything moved faster. She played some matches in the Eredivisie and she has to act faster in front of her goal. She has to think faster, react faster and make decisions faster, and then sometimes she is not in the right position to claim the ball. So, she has to get faster in those situations. She has to experience it during training, so that she learns to make decisions faster. →

"You need experience, experience at the top level and that takes time - years, an age"



Getty Images

That was also the case at the EURO. The keepers were found wanting in that regard. They need to make the next step and that requires a certain way of training.

You just mentioned the Under-19s: the technical report also concludes that there's a gap between them and the senior players.

Yes, that's also our conclusion here in the Netherlands. The game has developed in a way that there's a big gap. For the group in between, there's a need to develop further.

We think about it with the coaching staff but also with other personnel. We've now played at four big tournaments – three European Championships and one World Cup – and we want to belong to the top bracket. We achieved something great by winning the European Championship in our own country. But we are still developing here and we don't want this to be a one-time-only achievement. We want more. So now we have to decide what steps to take, so that we belong in the top bracket of football nations.

Lieke Martens was named player of the tournament at Women's EURO 2017 and UEFA Women's Player of the Year for the 2016/17 season.

The variation in tactics has increased a lot. Is that also proof of the development of women's football?

Absolutely, it has been four years and a lot of Dutch players have moved to top teams and have become professional players. They play for top clubs now. You need experience, experience at the top level and that takes time – years, an age. It requires experience of playing at big tournaments, being together for a long time, being away from home and achieving at a high level. It requires you to keep the focus and a lot of players in our squad now have that experience. You need those experiences to keep on developing. The players can also pass on their experience to the next generation, who also need those

experiences. That's why it's important that the Under-17 and Under-19 teams play at big tournaments – European Championships and World Cups.

For the first time in history, our Under-19 team [Under-20 next year] will participate in a World Cup. This will speed up their development and build the experience the players need to play at the top level. When you look at what has happened in the last four years, when you look at the players individually from Sweden to the Netherlands, they now have that experience and it's reflected in their maturity, but also in the quality of their game.

Apart from the tactical, there's also the psychological aspect. There were huge crowds and



Getty Images



“One of our goals was to conquer the hearts of the Dutch people and we really did it together with them”

not all players were used to that. How do you prepare your players mentally for that experience?

In Canada, we played in front of 55,000 people against the Canadian team. It was great. We also played World Cup play-offs in sold-out stadiums here in the Netherlands. Some players have also experienced the Champions League at club level, so luckily they were prepared. What we did with the players in the build-up to the tournament was to talk with them about what they could expect and were expecting.

We were comprehensive. We asked them what they were expecting from their team-mates, agents and clubs. We managed expectations and made everything clear about what they should expect. We talked about everything because otherwise you don't know how the players will react while under pressure. We said, 'This is what happens. How do you react? What can you do to achieve and keep your focus?' We discussed those things and put the players under pressure during training.

It begins with playing good [warm-up] matches, for example hard matches that put you up against different styles of play. We had a great warm-up campaign with full stadiums and a lot of enthusiastic

people. In the end, our supporters were an incentive and that remained so throughout the whole tournament, keeping the momentum going. That was an advantage for us.

Pressure depends on the individual. For one person, a situation can be extremely stressful and for another person, it can be really motivating. We tried to make it motivating and we succeeded.

88% of matches in which goals were scored were won by the team that scored first. The final was an exception, as there were many goals. Was it a special aim for you to score the first goal?

We were looking for goals. In the beginning, it was our aim to show who we were: a team that wants to fight, work together and play good football. The spectators joined us in that enthusiasm.

Then you have to look for goals and defend well, have a tactical set-up: you can't just run around the pitch without a plan. We were not thinking we have to score the first goal. Fight, work together and play good football, then the results will follow automatically. We didn't focus on the result. We also said, 'We want to play like this when it's going well and when it's going badly.' You can't have the whole match entirely under control,

your opponent can score first, but you have to stick to your plan. When Denmark scored in the final, it was the first time it did not go how we wanted, but everybody knew that we had to stick to our plan and in five minutes we scored the equaliser. We had discussed that before it happened.

It was a beautiful tournament and the final was spectacular. Did the tournament and women's football generally need a final like this?

I don't know whether the tournament needed it, but I know we did. We thought, 'We're in our own country and the only thing we have to do is win this match. We've already achieved so much and now we can win even more!' That is how we went into the match. Last weekend, I was in France to watch Montpellier v Lyon: the players, directors and supporters told me they really enjoyed our style of play, and that we played the best football. Besides winning the tournament, this was the biggest compliment we could get. We got people excited – that is what women's football needs. We cannot all stand in front of goal and just kick the ball away for a counter. Nobody should do that actually. We have a responsibility to aim for good football. That is my opinion and that is what the tournament needed. 🌱

OVER €1.396BN DISTRIBUTED

The clubs that took part in the 2016/17 UEFA Champions League group stage, and the ten eliminated in the playoffs, shared more than €1.396bn in payments from UEFA.

Under the distribution system for the 2015–18 commercial cycle, which was introduced in 2015/16, all net revenue from the club competitions (including the sale of tickets and hospitality packages for the Champions League and Europa League finals and the Super Cup) is centralised and reallocated to the Champions League and Europa League clubs.

Once more, €50m was shared by the 20 clubs that took part in the play-offs, with the ten clubs that qualified for the Champions League group stage receiving €2m each and the other ten, who joined the Europa League group stage, each receiving €3m.

Each club was guaranteed a minimum payment of €12.7m for participating in the group stage, while additional performance

bonuses of €1.5m per win and €500,000 per draw were also paid out. The €500,000 surplus for each drawn match was pooled and redistributed to all clubs taking part in the group stage in accordance with the number of wins they achieved. Further bonuses were paid for each knockout round reached: €6m for the round of 16, €6.5m for the quarter-finals, €7.5m for the semi-finals, €11 million for the runners-up in the final and €15.5 for the winners. Monies from the market pool were divided according to the value of the TV market in each country, among other factors.

Finally, a surplus of €73m was allocated to all group phase clubs at the end of the season in proportion to the amounts generated by each club during the season.

The figures in the table opposite do not include solidarity payments to the clubs that participated in the qualifying rounds, nor the additional solidarity payments made to national leagues for clubs' youth development projects.



2016/17 UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: PAYMENTS TO CLUBS (IN EUROS)

	Play-offs	Participation bonus	Performance bonus	Market pool	Round of 16	Quarter-finals	Semi-finals	Final	Total
Group A									
PFC Ludogorets 1945	2,000,000	12,700,000	1,500,000	2,552,000					18,752,000
Paris Saint-Germain		12,700,000	6,681,000	29,932,000	6,000,000				55,313,000
Arsenal FC		12,700,000	7,908,000	37,965,000	6,000,000				64,573,000
FC Basel 1893		12,700,000	1,000,000	2,568,000					16,268,000
Group B									
Beşiktaş JK		12,700,000	3,727,000	17,368,000					33,795,000
FC Dynamo Kyiv		12,700,000	2,727,000	3,255,000					18,682,000
SSC Napoli		12,700,000	6,181,000	41,128,000	6,000,000				66,009,000
SL Benfica		12,700,000	4,454,000	5,386,000	6,000,000				28,540,000
Group C									
VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach	2,000,000	12,700,000	2,727,000	9,176,000					26,603,000
FC Barcelona		12,700,000	8,635,000	26,012,000	6,000,000	6,500,000			59,847,000
Celtic FC	2,000,000	12,700,000	1,500,000	15,540,000					31,740,000
Manchester City FC	2,000,000	12,700,000	4,954,000	24,550,000	6,000,000				50,204,000
Group D									
Club Atlético de Madrid		12,700,000	8,635,000	19,280,000	6,000,000	6,500,000	7,500,000		60,615,000
FC Bayern München		12,700,000	6,908,000	22,654,000	6,000,000	6,500,000			54,762,000
FC Rostov	2,000,000	12,700,000	2,727,000	3,021,000					20,448,000
PSV Eindhoven		12,700,000	1,000,000	9,286,000					22,986,000
Group E									
AS Monaco FC	2,000,000	12,700,000	6,181,000	23,804,000	6,000,000	6,500,000	7,500,000		64,685,000
Bayer 04 Leverkusen		12,700,000	5,454,000	14,439,000	6,000,000				38,593,000
PFC CSKA Moskva		12,700,000	1,500,000	3,699,000					17,899,000
Tottenham Hotspur FC		12,700,000	3,954,000	26,626,000					43,280,000
Group F									
Borussia Dortmund		12,700,000	7,908,000	19,717,000	6,000,000	6,500,000			52,825,000
Real Madrid CF		12,700,000	6,681,000	26,170,000	6,000,000	6,500,000	7,500,000	15,500,000	81,051,000
Sporting Clube de Portugal		12,700,000	1,727,000	3,753,000					18,180,000
Legia Warszawa SA	2,000,000	12,700,000	2,227,000	10,301,000					27,228,000
Group G									
FC København	2,000,000	12,700,000	4,954,000	14,444,000					34,098,000
Club Brugge KV		12,700,000	–	4,347,000					17,047,000
Leicester City FC		12,700,000	7,408,000	49,073,000	6,000,000	6,500,000			81,681,000
FC Porto	2,000,000	12,700,000	6,181,000	3,849,000	6,000,000				30,730,000
Group H									
Sevilla FC		12,700,000	6,181,000	7,999,000	6,000,000				32,880,000
Olympique Lyonnais		12,700,000	4,454,000	21,459,000					38,613,000
GNK Dinamo	2,000,000	12,700,000	–	2,282,000					16,982,000
Juventus Football Club		12,700,000	7,908,000	58,826,000	6,000,000	6,500,000	7,500,000	11,000,000	110,434,000
Clubs eliminated in play-offs									
APOEL FC	3,000,000								3,000,000
FC Salzburg	3,000,000								3,000,000
FC Steaua București	3,000,000								3,000,000
AFC Ajax	3,000,000			943,000					3,943,000
BSC Young Boys	3,000,000			197,000					3,197,000
FC Viktoria Plzeň	3,000,000								3,000,000
Hapoel Beer-Sheva FC	3,000,000								3,000,000
Dundalk FC	3,000,000								3,000,000
AS Roma	3,000,000			10,612,000					13,612,000
Villarreal CF	3,000,000			7,830,000					10,830,000
Sub-totals	50,000,000	406,400,000	143,982,000	580,043,000	96,000,000	52,000,000	30,000,000	26,500,000	1,384,925,000
Allocated to the European Club Association from the surplus of club distribution									4,200,000
Super Cup 2016 (Real Madrid CF - Sevilla FC)									7,000,000
Total									1,396,125,000

MORE THAN €423M FOR PARTICIPATING CLUBS

UEFA has distributed a total of €423,188,000 to the 48 clubs that contested the group stage of the 2016/17 UEFA Europa League and the eight clubs that joined the competition in the round of 32 after finishing third in their respective UEFA Champions League groups.



More than €423.1m in payments from UEFA have been shared by the 56 clubs that took part in the 2016/17 UEFA Europa League group stage and/or knockout phase – compared with over €411.1m in 2015/16.

Club competition revenue – which is centralised in a single pot and allocated to the Champions League and the Europa League clubs – is distributed to clubs involved in the Europa League as of the group stage as follows: 60% is distributed in fixed amounts, while the remaining 40% is distributed in variable amounts calculated on the basis of the commercial value of each national market.

The fixed amounts saw clubs receive €2.6m for participating in the group stage; €360,000 for each win in the group stage and €120,000 for each draw, with any undistributed money (i.e. €120,000 per draw) being redistributed across all clubs contesting the group stage in proportion to the number of victories achieved by each side.

Each group-winner received €600,000, and the runners-up €300,000. Every club taking part in the round of 32 earned €500,000, while clubs participating in the round of 16 each received €750,000. The eight-quarter-finalists received €1m each, and the four semi-finalists €1.6m each. Winners Manchester United earned €6.5m, and runners-up Ajax received €3.5m.

Monies from the market pool were divided according to the value of the TV market in each country, among other factors.

The total amount of €423.1m includes a surplus of €23.5m allocated to all group phase clubs at the end of the season in proportion to the amounts obtained by each club during the season.

The figures in the table opposite do not take account of solidarity payments made to clubs that participated in the qualifying rounds, nor does it include the additional solidarity payments made to national leagues for clubs' youth development projects.

2016/17 UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE: PAYMENTS TO CLUBS (IN EUROS)

	Participation bonus	Performance bonus	Market pool	Round of 32	Round of 16	Quarter-finals	Semi-finals	Final	Total
Group A									
Fenerbahçe SK	2,600,000	2,324,000	5,390,901	500,000					10,814,901
Feyenoord	2,600,000	922,000	1,855,857						5,377,857
Manchester United FC	2,600,000	1,904,000	29,649,170	500,000	750,000	1,000,000	1,600,000	6,500,000	44,503,170
FC Zorya Luhansk	2,600,000	240,000	900,028						3,740,028
Group B									
FC Astana	2,600,000	641,000	437,851						3,678,851
BSC Young Boys	2,600,000	1,042,000	714,540						4,356,540
Olympiacos FC	2,600,000	1,342,000	2,416,487	500,000	750,000				7,608,487
APOEL FC	2,600,000	2,204,000	629,148	500,000	750,000				6,683,148
Group C									
FC Qäbälä	2,600,000	-	300,291						2,900,291
1. FSV Mainz 05	2,600,000	1,162,000	6,927,112						10,689,112
AS Saint-Étienne	2,600,000	2,163,000	8,203,747	500,000					13,466,747
RSC Anderlecht	2,600,000	1,743,000	753,839	500,000	750,000	1,000,000			7,346,839
Group D									
Football Club Zenit	2,600,000	2,605,000	2,436,422	500,000					8,141,422
AZ	2,600,000	1,342,000	1,856,459	500,000					6,298,459
Dundalk FC	2,600,000	521,000	582,700						3,703,700
Maccabi Tel-Aviv FC	2,600,000	922,000	437,851						3,959,851
Group E									
FK Austria Wien	2,600,000	641,000	829,140						4,070,140
FC Viktoria Plzeň	2,600,000	761,000	465,596						3,826,596
AS Roma	2,600,000	2,163,000	8,201,895	500,000	750,000				14,214,895
FC Astra	2,600,000	1,342,000	1,331,879	500,000					5,773,879
Group F									
Athletic Club	2,600,000	1,623,000	4,797,148	500,000					9,520,148
SK Rapid Wien	2,600,000	761,000	829,140						4,190,140
KRC Genk	2,600,000	2,204,000	753,839	500,000	750,000	1,000,000			7,807,839
US Sassuolo Calcio	2,600,000	641,000	4,764,359						8,005,359
Group G									
AFC Ajax	2,600,000	2,444,000	3,800,703	500,000	750,000	1,000,000	1,600,000	3,500,000	16,194,703
R. Standard de Liège	2,600,000	881,000	747,530						4,228,530
RC Celta de Vigo	2,600,000	1,462,000	9,085,314	500,000	750,000	1,000,000	1,600,000		16,997,314
Panathinaikos FC	2,600,000	120,000	1,640,269						4,360,269
Group H									
KAA Gent	2,600,000	1,342,000	677,090	500,000	750,000				5,869,090
Konyaspor	2,600,000	120,000	4,754,233						7,474,233
FC Shakhtar Donetsk	2,600,000	3,006,000	1,302,809	500,000					7,408,809
SC Braga	2,600,000	761,000	2,197,424						5,558,424
Group I									
FC Schalke 04	2,600,000	2,605,000	10,280,479	500,000	750,000	1,000,000			17,735,479
FC Salzburg	2,600,000	922,000	952,922						4,474,922
FC Krasnodar	2,600,000	1,222,000	2,151,467	500,000	750,000				7,223,467
OGC Nice	2,600,000	802,000	7,215,813						10,617,813
Group J									
ACF Fiorentina	2,600,000	2,324,000	6,040,439	500,000					11,464,439
FK Qarabağ	2,600,000	922,000	302,399						3,824,399
FC Slovan Liberec	2,600,000	521,000	465,596						3,586,596
PAOK FC	2,600,000	1,623,000	1,928,417	500,000					6,651,417
Group K									
AC Sparta Praha	2,600,000	2,204,000	538,867	500,000					5,842,867
FC Internazionale Milano	2,600,000	802,000	4,764,359						8,166,359
Hapoel Beer-Sheva FC	2,600,000	1,342,000	479,014	500,000					4,921,014
Southampton FC	2,600,000	1,042,000	11,557,735						15,199,735
Group L									
FC Zürich	2,600,000	761,000	854,231						4,215,231
Osmanlıspor FK	2,600,000	1,923,000	5,390,901	500,000					10,413,901
FC Steaua București	2,600,000	761,000	1,101,361						4,462,361
Villarreal CF	2,600,000	1,462,000	4,797,147	500,000					9,359,147
Clubs from Champions League									
PFC Ludogorets 1945			102,910	500,000					602,910
Beşiktaş JK			3,872,995	500,000	750,000	1,000,000			6,122,995
VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach			1,748,600	500,000	750,000				2,998,600
FC Rostov			373,828	500,000	750,000				1,623,828
Tottenham Hotspur FC			1,875,756	500,000					2,375,756
Legia Warszawa SA			288,148	500,000					788,148
FC København			638,618	500,000	750,000				1,888,618
Olympique Lyonnais			6,008,227	500,000	750,000	1,000,000	1,600,000		9,858,227
Total	124,800,000	62,587,000	183,401,000	16,000,000	12,000,000	8,000,000	6,400,000	10,000,000	423,188,000

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PAYMENTS FOR 2016/17

European top-division clubs are receiving increased solidarity payments from UEFA this year for development of youth programmes. The payments are made from the revenue accrued in UEFA's club competitions in the 2016/17 season.

A total amount of €124.37m from the 2016/17 UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League revenue – compared with €120.83m last year – is being made available for distribution to clubs via their respective professional leagues or national associations.

Of this total amount, 80% will be distributed to clubs of national associations and/or leagues with at least one club participating in the UEFA Champions League group stage, and 20% to national associations and/or leagues with no clubs taking part in the UEFA Champions League group stage.

Clubs must use the payments for their youth development programmes and local community schemes.

Only clubs not participating in the group stage of either the UEFA Champions League or UEFA Europa League in 2016/17 will be entitled to a share of these solidarity payments.

The following amounts are available for the 2016/17 season:

- 17 associations and/or leagues with participants in the 2016/17 UEFA Champions League group stage (€99.49m, up from €96.66m in 2015/16);
- 37 associations and/or leagues without participants in the 2016/17 UEFA Champions League group stage (€24.87m, up from €24.16m in 2015/16);

The payments are based on the distribution system introduced two years ago, agreed by UEFA in close cooperation with the European Club Association (ECA).

The solidarity share earmarked for youth development programmes in clubs not involved in the UEFA Champions League or UEFA Europa League group stage represents 5% of the two competitions' overall gross revenue.

In addition, this distribution to national associations and/or leagues is no longer purely based on their market value. Under the new distribution arrangements, 60% of the



available amounts will be distributed in equal shares among all national associations and/or leagues, and 40% will be distributed according to the value of the TV market of each association in the UEFA Champions League, which results into greater benefits for clubs from non-top associations.

In principle, the money should be shared equally between all top division clubs not involved in the UEFA Champions League or UEFA Europa League group stages. Different distribution criteria may be approved, provided they are based on defined youth training criteria.

Any club, in order to receive funding, must run an approved youth development programme in accordance with the national club licensing manual accredited by UEFA.

PAYMENTS TO NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTED IN THE GROUP STAGE

2016/17 SEASON	€
England	13,337,820
Italy	11,385,922
Spain	9,321,420
France	8,740,561
Germany	7,956,750
Turkey	4,730,529
Scotland	4,604,490
Denmark	4,508,333
Netherlands	4,212,654
Poland	4,212,654
Portugal	4,207,406
Russia	3,883,734
Belgium	3,780,509
Ukraine	3,687,781
Switzerland	3,658,913
Bulgaria	3,641,103
Croatia	3,627,421
TOTAL	99,498,000

PAYMENTS TO NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS NOT REPRESENTED IN THE GROUP STAGE

2016/17 SEASON	€
Norway	2,779,239
Greece	2,722,760
Romania	1,382,323
Austria	1,043,448
Sweden	1,002,030
Hungary	945,551
Republic of Ireland	825,062
Serbia	812,260
Israel	674,451
Czech Republic	608,935
Slovenia	580,320
Cyprus	562,999
Albania	531,371
Bosnia-Herzegovina	524,857
Finland	516,310
Malta	489,200
Iceland	486,187
Slovakia	457,571
FYR Macedonia	457,195
Belarus	452,300
Montenegro	443,263
Lithuania	433,474
Kazakhstan	431,591
Azerbaijan	426,320
Georgia	422,328
Latvia	410,882
Moldova	409,376
Armenia	408,472
Estonia	407,117
Andorra	403,351
Faroe Islands	403,351
Gibraltar	403,351
Liechtenstein	403,351
Luxembourg	403,351
Northern Ireland	403,351
San Marino	403,351
Wales	403,351
Total	24,874,000



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€83M SHARED BETWEEN 183 CLUBS IN 2017/18

UEFA's solidarity payments for the 2017/18 season have been made in accordance with the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League revenue distribution system that was put in place in 2015/16.

This season, 183 clubs have shared a total of €83m, with solidarity payments being made to all the clubs that were knocked out in the three qualifying rounds of the Champions League and the Europa League, as well as those that bowed out in the Europa League play-offs.

Clubs involved in the Champions League

Domestic champions that do not qualify for the group stage receive €260,000 each, in addition to the amounts payable on account of their participation in the various qualifying rounds. Clubs that participate in the qualifying rounds and do not make it to the group stage receive the following amounts for each round contested:

- First qualifying round: €220,000
- Second qualifying round: €320,000
- Third qualifying round: €420,000 (eliminated clubs only)

No solidarity payments are made for the play-offs, but the 20 clubs involved are entitled to separate payments of €2m if they progress to the group stage and €3m if they are knocked out. Clubs that are eliminated in the play-offs retain the payments made on account of their participation in the first and second qualifying rounds, as applicable.



Clubs involved in the Europa League

All clubs taking part in the qualifying rounds receive the following amounts for each round contested, even if they qualify for the group stage:

- First qualifying round: €215,000
- Second qualifying round: €225,000
- Third qualifying round: €235,000

In addition, clubs that are eliminated in the play-offs receive €245,000. No solidarity payments are made to the winners of the play-offs for this round. However, the clubs retain the payments made on account of their participation in the first, second and third qualifying rounds, as applicable.



All figures in euros

Association	Clubs	Champions League	Europa League	Total
ALBANIA	FK Kukësi	580,000		580,000
	KF Tirana		215,000	215,000
	KF Skënderbeu		675,000	675,000
	FK Partizani		215,000	215,000
Association total				1,685,000
ANDORRA	FC Santa Coloma	480,000		480,000
	UE Sant Julià		215,000	215,000
	UE Santa Coloma		215,000	215,000
Association total				910,000
ARMENIA	Alashkert FC	800,000		800,000
	FC Gandzasar-Kapan		215,000	215,000
	FC Pyunik		215,000	215,000
	FC Shirak		215,000	215,000
Association total				1,445,000

Association	Clubs	Champions League	Europa League	Total
AUSTRIA	FC Salzburg	1,000,000		1,000,000
	SCR Altach		920,000	920,000
	SK Sturm Graz		460,000	460,000
	FK Austria Wien		235,000	235,000
Association total				2,615,000
AZERBAIJAN	İnter Bakı PİK		440,000	440,000
	PFC Zire		440,000	440,000
	Gabala SC		460,000	460,000
Association total				1,340,000
BELARUS	FC BATE Borisov	1,000,000		1,000,000
	FC Shakhtyor Soligorsk		215,000	215,000
	FC Dinamo Brest		225,000	225,000
	FC Dinamo Minsk		675,000	675,000
Association total				2,115,000
BELGIUM	Club Brugge KV	420,000	245,000	665,000
	KV Oostende		235,000	235,000
	KAA Gent		235,000	235,000
Association total				1,135,000
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA	HŠK Zrinjski	580,000		580,000
	FK Sarajevo		215,000	215,000
	FK Željezničar		440,000	440,000
	NK Široki Brijeg		440,000	440,000
Association total				1,675,000
BULGARIA	PFC Ludogorets 1945	1,000,000		1,000,000
	PFC Botev Plovdiv		675,000	675,000
	PFC Dunav Ruse		215,000	215,000
	PFC Levski Sofia		440,000	440,000
Association total				2,330,000
CROATIA	HNK Rijeka	580,000		580,000
	NK Osijek		920,000	920,000
	HNK Hajduk Split		705,000	705,000
	GNK Dinamo		480,000	480,000
Association total				2,685,000
CYPRUS	AEL Limassol FC		675,000	675,000
	AEK Larnaca FC		920,000	920,000
	Apollon Limassol FC		460,000	460,000
Association total				2,055,000
CZECH REPUBLIC	FC Viktoria Plzeň	420,000		420,000
	SK Slavia Praha	260,000		260,000
	FK Mladá Boleslav		460,000	460,000
	AC Sparta Praha		235,000	235,000
Association total				1,375,000
DENMARK	FC København	580,000		580,000
	FC Midtjylland		920,000	920,000
	Lyngby BK		675,000	675,000
	Brøndby IF		460,000	460,000
Association total				2,635,000
ENGLAND	Everton FC		235,000	235,000
Association total				235,000
ESTONIA	FCI Tallinn	480,000		480,000
	FC Flora Tallinn		215,000	215,000
	Nõmme Kalju FC		440,000	440,000
	FC Levadia Tallinn		215,000	215,000
Association total				1,350,000
FAROE ISLANDS	Vikingur	800,000		800,000
	B36 Tórshavn		215,000	215,000
	NSÍ Runavík		215,000	215,000
	KÍ Klaksvík		215,000	215,000
Association total				1,445,000
FINLAND	IFK Mariehamn	580,000		580,000
	SJK Seinäjoki		215,000	215,000
	HJK Helsinki		440,000	440,000
	VPS Vaasa		440,000	440,000
Association total				1,675,000
FRANCE	Olympique de Marseille		235,000	235,000
	FC Girondins de Bordeaux		235,000	235,000
Association total				470,000
GEORGIA	FC Samtredia	580,000		580,000
	FC Torpedo Kutaisi		215,000	215,000
	FC Chikhura Sachkhere		215,000	215,000
	FC Dinamo Batumi		215,000	215,000
Association total				1,225,000

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Association	Clubs	Champions League	Europa League	Total
GERMANY	SC Freiburg		235,000	235,000
Association total				235,000
GIBRALTAR	Europa FC	480,000		480,000
	Lincoln FC		215,000	215,000
	St Joseph's FC		215,000	215,000
Association total				910,000
GREECE	AEK Athens FC	420,000		420,000
	Panionios GSS		460,000	460,000
	PAOK FC		480,000	480,000
	Panathinaikos FC		480,000	480,000
Association total				1,840,000
HUNGARY	Budapest Honvéd FC	580,000		580,000
	Vasas FC		215,000	215,000
	Videoton FC		920,000	920,000
	Ferencvárosi TC		440,000	440,000
Association total				2,155,000
ICELAND	FH Hafnarfjörður	1,000,000	245,000	1,245,000
	Valur Reykjavík		440,000	440,000
	Stjarnan		215,000	215,000
	KR Reykjavík		440,000	440,000
Association total				2,340,000
ISRAEL	Hapoel Beer-Sheva FC	580,000		580,000
	Maccabi Tel-Aviv FC		675,000	675,000
	Beitar Jerusalem FC		440,000	440,000
	Bnei Yehuda Tel-Aviv FC		460,000	460,000
Association total				2,155,000
ITALY	AC Milan		235,000	235,000
Association total				235,000
KAZAKHSTAN	FC Astana	580,000		580,000
	FC Ordabasy Shymkent		215,000	215,000
	FC Kairat Almaty		440,000	440,000
	FC Irtysh Pavlodar		440,000	440,000
Association total				1,675,000
KOSOVO	Trepça 89	480,000		480,000
	FC Prishtina		215,000	215,000
Association total				695,000
LATVIA	FK Spartaks Jūrmala	580,000		580,000
	FK Liepāja		440,000	440,000
	FK Jelgava		215,000	215,000
	FK Ventspils		215,000	215,000
Association total				1,450,000
LIECHTENSTEIN	FC Vaduz		440,000	440,000
Association total				440,000
LITHUANIA	FK Žalgiris Vilnius	580,000		580,000
	FK Trakai		675,000	675,000
	FK Atlantas		215,000	215,000
	FK Sūduva		920,000	920,000
Association total				2,390,000
LUXEMBOURG	F91 Dudelange	580,000		580,000
	FC Differdange 03		215,000	215,000
	FC Progrès Niederkorn		440,000	440,000
	CS Fola Esch		675,000	675,000
Association total				1,910,000
F.Y.R. MACEDONIA	FK Vardar	1,000,000		1,000,000
	FK Rabotnicki		440,000	440,000
	FK Pelister		215,000	215,000
	KF Shkëndija		920,000	920,000
Association total				2,575,000
MALTA	Hibernians FC	800,000		800,000
	Floriana FC		215,000	215,000
	Balzan FC		215,000	215,000
	Valletta FC		440,000	440,000
Association total				1,670,000
MOLDOVA	FC Sheriff	1,000,000		1,000,000
	FC Milsami Orhei		215,000	215,000
	FC Dacia Chisinau		215,000	215,000
	FC Zaria Balti		440,000	440,000
Association total				1,870,000
MONTENEGRO	FK Budućnost Podgorica	580,000		580,000
	FK Zeta		215,000	215,000
	FK Sutjeska		215,000	215,000
	FK Mladost Podgorica		440,000	440,000
Association total				1,450,000
NETHERLANDS	AFC Ajax	420,000	245,000	665,000
	FC Utrecht		705,000	705,000
	PSV Eindhoven		235,000	235,000
Association total				1,605,000

Association	Clubs	Champions League	Europa League	Total
NORTHERN IRELAND	Linfield FC	800,000		800,000
	Coleraine FC		215,000	215,000
	Ballymena United FC		215,000	215,000
	Crusaders FC		215,000	215,000
Association total				1,445,000
NORWAY	Rosenborg BK	1,000,000		1,000,000
	Odds BK		675,000	675,000
	FK Haugesund		440,000	440,000
	SK Brann		225,000	225,000
Association total				2,340,000
POLAND	Legia Warszawa	1,000,000	245,000	1,245,000
	Jagiellonia Białystok		440,000	440,000
	KKS Lech Poznań		675,000	675,000
	Arka Gdynia		235,000	235,000
Association total				2,595,000
PORTUGAL	SC Braga		235,000	235,000
	CS Marítimo		480,000	480,000
Association total				715,000
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND	Dundalk FC	580,000		580,000
	Shamrock Rovers FC		440,000	440,000
	Derry City FC		215,000	215,000
	Cork City FC		440,000	440,000
Association total				1,675,000
ROMANIA	Fotbal Club Viitorul	680,000	245,000	925,000
	FC Astra Giurgiu		460,000	460,000
	Clubul Sportiv U Craiova		235,000	235,000
	FC Dinamo 1948		235,000	235,000
Association total				1,855,000
RUSSIA	Football Club Zenit		235,000	235,000
	FC Krasnodar		480,000	480,000
Association total				715,000
SAN MARINO	SP La Fiorita	480,000		480,000
	SS Folgore		215,000	215,000
	SP Tre Penne		215,000	215,000
Association total				910,000
SCOTLAND	Rangers FC		215,000	215,000
	Saint Johnstone FC		215,000	215,000
	Aberdeen FC		460,000	460,000
Association total				890,000
SERBIA	FK Partizan	1,000,000		1,000,000
	FK Crvena zvezda		675,000	675,000
	FK Mladost Lučani		215,000	215,000
	FK Vojvodina		215,000	215,000
Association total				2,105,000
SLOVAKIA	MŠK Žilina	580,000		580,000
	ŠK Slovan Bratislava		440,000	440,000
	MFK Ružomberok		675,000	675,000
	AS Trenčín		440,000	440,000
Association total				2,135,000
SLOVENIA	ND Gorica		440,000	440,000
	NK Olimpija Ljubljana		215,000	215,000
	NK Domžale		920,000	920,000
Association total				1,575,000
SPAIN	Athletic Club		235,000	235,000
Association total				235,000
SWEDEN	Malmö FF	580,000		580,000
	AIK		675,000	675,000
	IFK Norrköping		440,000	440,000
	Östersunds FK		460,000	460,000
Association total				2,155,000
SWITZERLAND	FC Luzern		225,000	225,000
	FC Sion		235,000	235,000
Association total				460,000
TURKEY	Fenerbahçe SK		480,000	480,000
	Galatasaray AŞ		225,000	225,000
Association total				705,000
UKRAINE	FC Dynamo Kyiv	420,000		420,000
	FC Olexandriya		480,000	480,000
	FC Olimpik Donetsk		235,000	235,000
Association total				1,135,000
WALES	The New Saints FC	800,000		800,000
	Bangor City FC		215,000	215,000
	Connah's Quay Nomads FC		215,000	215,000
	Bala Town FC		215,000	215,000
Association total				1,445,000
Total				83,090,000

ALBANIA

www.fshf.org

A NEW HOME FOR ALBANIAN FOOTBALL

GERTI CARCANI



A team of more than 300 construction staff and 30 engineers are working hard to build Albania's new national arena, the biggest sports investment ever made in the country. The 22,000-capacity, all-seater stadium is set to be ready by the end of 2018.

The president of the Albanian FA, Armand Duka, accompanied by the association's general secretary, Ilir Shulku,

went to inspect the progress of the construction work together with the Italian architect behind the project, Marco Casamonti. "The stadium will be an amazing achievement and a great asset for Albanian football. We are very satisfied with the work done so far," said Armand Duka.

"Fans will really enjoy watching matches in a covered stadium and being much

closer to the pitch. It will be like a theatre," he added. When completed, the national arena will be of the same high standard as other modern stadiums in Europe and throughout the world, a fact which fully justified its proposal by the Albanian FA as the venue for the 2019 UEFA Super Cup. Although not successful this time round, it will certainly be a strong candidate to host another UEFA event before too long.

AUSTRIA

www.oefb.at

FUN FOR ALL AT DAY OF SPORT

CARMEN REDL



On 23 September, the area in front of Vienna's Ernst-Happel-Stadion played host to Austria's annual Day of Sport. This yearly event, which is organised by the Austrian sports ministry, brings together all of the country's major sports associations, with as many as 400,000 visitors trying their hand at more than 150 different activities.

Once again, the Austrian Football Association proved extremely popular with visitors. The coach of Austria's successful women's national team, Dominik Thalhammer, and team members Nadine Prohaska, Jasmin Eder and Jennifer Klein spent more than two hours signing autographs and posing for selfies. Under-21 coach Werner Gregoritsch and

national team goalkeeper Robert Almer were also in attendance.

There was a temporary street football pitch, as well as table football, a goal where visitors could test the accuracy of their shooting and workshops organised as part of the integration initiative 'Teampay ohne Abseits' (team play without offside).

AZERBAIJAN

www.affa.az

PROMOTING GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

MIKAYIL NARIMANOGLU



More than 200 budding young footballers between the ages of 6 and 13 came together at the end of September for a festival organised as part of UEFA Grassroots Week by the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) at the Tahsil sports centre in Ganja in western Azerbaijan.

The boys' competition was first up, involving 160 players from 32 teams. It was won by the Kapaz team, with the Sport School team taking second place and Olimpiyakos finishing third. Mahammad Mammadov, born on 16 October 2011, was the youngest player in the competition and at the festival as a whole.



Girls' football was also well represented, with 50 players taking part in their competition. All the participants and winning teams were given AFFA gifts, and the volunteers who helped out at the event were presented with certificates

in recognition of their efforts.

The project serves to develop grassroots football, provide organised leisure activities for children and teenagers and get them interested in football and other sports, and promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

BELARUS

www.bff.by

LEATHER BALL

ALEKSANDR ALEINIK



From 3 to 8 September, the Football Federation of Belarus (BFF) hosted the finals of Leather Ball, the country's largest grassroots competition, at its technical centre in Minsk. A total of 43,475 children and 3,619 teams from all over the country took part in this year's competition, which had three different age categories: 9 to 10-year-olds, 11 to 12-year-olds, and 13 to 14-year-olds.

The annual national contest is organised by the BFF, the President's Sports Club, the ministry of sport and tourism and the ministry of education. To encourage new players to take up the game, only children who are not involved with football clubs and academies are invited to take part.

This not only increases participation at grassroots level, it also allows club coaches to discover new talent and select the most gifted children to play at a higher level.

This year was the first time the Leather Ball finals have been held at the home of Belarusian football. On the first day, the participants were invited to watch the World Cup qualifier between Belarus and Sweden at Borisov Arena. One of the lucky young players was even invited to join Belarusian footballing legend Sergei Kislyak on the pitch for the opening ceremony.

On the penultimate day, a competition was organised to test the youngsters' football skills and physical fitness. The players had to complete various tests and



football exercises under the watchful eyes of experts. After all the fun and games, the BFF president, Sergei Rumas, and former captain of the Belarusian national team Yuri Zhevnov gave out prizes at the final award ceremony.

The number of Leather Ball participants continues to grow each year. The next edition of the competition will also be open to girls, an important step for grassroots development in the country.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

www.nfsbih.ba

A MESSAGE OF PEACE, FRIENDSHIP AND UNITY

FEDA KRVAVAC



At the end of August, Bosnia and Herzegovina's qualifying campaign for the 2018 World Cup in Russia took them to Nicosia, where they suffered a thoroughly unexpected 3-2 defeat against Cyprus. Despite leading 2-0 at half-time thanks to goals by Toni Šunjić (33rd minute) and Edin Višća (44th minute), Mehmed Baždarević's men conceded three times after the break as Cyprus turned things around in the second half.

That was followed a few days later by an away game against Gibraltar in Portugal. This time, Bosnia and Herzegovina made no mistake, running out 4-0 winners, with Edin Džeko (35th and 85th minutes), Kenan Kodro (65th minute) and Senad Lulić (83rd minute) scoring the goals.

The Under-21s were also in action, losing 3-1 to Romania in Zenica in their third match of the qualifying round of the European Under-21 Championship. Following that match, Vinko Marinović's



men went to Niksic, where they played Montenegro in a friendly, drawing 1-1.

The Under-19s fared somewhat better in their two matches against Bulgaria in Sofia, drawing the first 4-4 and winning the second 2-0. The Under-15s, meanwhile, had less far to travel, playing two games against Montenegro at the national training centre in Podgorica. They won the first 3-2, but lost the second 2-0.

The women's Under-19 team headed to the Finnish town of Tammela in mid-September for the qualifying round of the European Women's Under-19 Championship. They lost 3-0 to Serbia in the first game of that mini-tournament, before losing 10-0 to hosts Finland in the

second match and drawing 1-1 with Israel in the third and final game. Before that mini-tournament, they played two warm-up games against Albania in Tirana at the beginning of September, losing the first 2-0 and winning the second 4-0.

In other news, the annual event organised at the national training centre in Zenica as part of UEFA Grassroots Week was attended by around 1,000 girls and boys from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina. Speaking at the opening, Jasmin Baković, general secretary of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation, said: "It's really nice to see almost 1,000 girls and boys gathered together in one place to celebrate Grassroots Day. This annual event, which is organised with the full support of UEFA, is an opportunity to send a message of peace, friendship and unity – to show that football is a great unifying force that brings together children and adults from all walks of life, regardless of the differences between them."

#EQUALGAME LAUNCHES IN BULGARIA

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEDIA DEPARTMENT



As part of its efforts to tackle discrimination and inequality in football, the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) has launched a new project in support of UEFA's #EqualGame campaign to promote diversity, inclusion and accessibility in the game.

To mark the occasion, the BFU organised a friendly match with representatives of the national dwarfism organisation, Little Bulgarian People, at its national football centre in Boyana. National team assistant coaches Georgi Donkov and Levon Apkaryan and the head coach of the Under-21 national team, Antoni Zdravkov, took part in the match, which was a friendly, fun occasion.

Also on hand to support the event were the BFU deputy general secretaries Anton Popov and Pavel Kolev, executive committee member Emil Kostadinov and the national team head coach, Petar Hubchev. All expressed their firm support for the fight against discrimination both on and off the pitch. Among the other guests was Dimitar Manolov, president of the Podkrepa trade union confederation.

The chairman of Little Bulgarian People, Svetoslav Chernev, and his team-mates were given kits and balls by the BFU and invited to come back and play at the home of Bulgarian football whenever they liked. At the end of the game, the national team doctor, Bisser Bochev, who is also a member of UEFA's Medical

Committee, gave a short lecture on the relationship between sport and a healthy lifestyle.



SUPPORT FOR WORLD HEART DAY AND ANTI-RACISM CAMPAIGN

TOMISLAV PACAK



On 29 September, the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) joined UEFA and the World Heart

Federation in supporting World Heart Day. Members of the Croatian national team, led by captain Luka Modrić, highlighted the importance of a healthy lifestyle by promoting three key messages: 'Move your heart!', 'Love your heart!' and 'Fuel your heart!'

On 3 September, the Croatian national team took part in another anti-racism campaign, holding up a banner reading 'With football against violence, discrimination, racism and hooliganism in Europe' before their match against Kosovo, providing further support to the World Roma Organization in its efforts to combat discrimination in football and society as a whole.

In other news, on 6 September GNK Dinamo Zagreb celebrated the 50th anniversary of winning the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, the predecessor to the

UEFA Cup, which remains the only European trophy ever won by a Croatian club. Dinamo Zagreb beat Juventus and Eintracht Frankfurt in the quarter-finals and the semi-finals

respectively, before overcoming Leeds United in the final. As part of the celebration of that triumph, the HNS honoured members of the team with commemorative plaques.



CZECH REPUBLIC

www.fotbal.cz

WALKING FOOTBALL KICKS OFF

MICHAL BLAŽEJ



The Football Association of the Czech Republic has launched a 'walking football' project for over-60s. Former Czechoslovakia captain Jan Fiala, who himself falls into the target age group, is the project's ambassador.

To celebrate the launch, a walking football international was organised between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which the visitors won 2-1. A walking football VIP tournament also took place,

with Under-21 coach Vítězslav Lavička, former international Libor Sionko, former national team coach Josef Pešice, and the head of the Czech FA's grassroots department, Otakar Mestek, taking part.

"We want people of all ages to have the opportunity to play, because football is a lifelong love. That's why we started our veterans' football project and now our new walking football initiative," said the Czech FA's general secretary, Rudolf Řepka.

The association plans to organise walking football competitions in all 14 regions, with the winners going through to national finals, like in veterans' football.

"This is a fantastic project because it combines three very important things: sport, prevention and social inclusion," said social projects manager Michaela Veselá. "It's a great way to bring people together through football."



FAČR

DENMARK

www.dbu.dk

DANISH FOOTBALL LOSES A LEGEND

ANDREAS HØJ



Former president of the Danish Football Association (DBU) Poul Hyltdgaard passed away peacefully on 27 September after a long illness. He was 88 years old and served as DBU president from 1991 to 2002.

With the passing of Poul Hyltdgaard, Danish football has lost one of its greatest personalities. More than anyone else, he worked tirelessly for 30 years to develop the Danish game, and was president of the DBU when Denmark were crowned European champions in 1992. Hyltdgaard's commitment over the years was instrumental in developing the popularity

and growth of football in Denmark.

"Poul's contribution to Danish football is probably the most important of anyone involved in the game. I had the privilege of working with him on the DBU board from 1998 to 2002," said the current DBU president, Jesper Møller.

Hyltdgaard joined the board of Danish club AGF Aarhus in 1968 and was club chairman from 1979 to 1981. In 1977, he was elected to the DBU board and from 1981 to 1991 he served as treasurer before being elected president. Among his numerous international roles, he served as member of the FIFA Executive Committee

from 1984 to 1996 and was named an honorary member of FIFA in 1996.

"Poul Hyltdgaard was deeply respected internationally and was always ready to challenge and impact UEFA, FIFA and the world of football with great objectivity during the 12 years he served as member of the FIFA Executive Committee," Møller added. "His achievements have helped the DBU and Danish football to gain a lot of respect and recognition at international level. For this, we all owe Poul great thanks."

Poul Hyltdgaard's funeral was held on 4 October in Aarhus.

ENGLAND

www.thefa.com

CELEBRATING INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

DANNY LYNCH



October is Black History Month and to mark the occasion this year The FA held a special Q&A with former Chelsea player Paul Canoville and an invited audience in London.

Paul, known as 'Canners' by the Chelsea faithful, was joined by Les Ferdinand, Chris Ramsey and Ricky Hill to discuss his experiences as Chelsea's first-ever black player back in 1983, a time when football terraces were infiltrated by racist gangs in the form of the National Front and the British National Party.

"Paul was a true pioneer," said Paul Elliott, another pioneering former pro who attended the event. "He played in an unforgiving era and shone so brightly. I remember it well because I had some of those same experiences. It was a great night to reflect on how far we've come ... and to hear some great stories too!"

Elliott is chairman of The FA's Inclusion Advisory Board and is keen for the organisation to keep working to help the game be more inclusive and diverse from the top down.

"The IAB's role is to check and challenge The FA Board around the inclusion, diversity and equality agenda – we ensure that it runs throughout the veins of the organisation. We're a support mechanism with specialist practitioners in different areas – equality and diversity, inclusion, disability or faith-related issues, LGBT and the women's game.

"Football is such a powerful medium to address so many issues. We try to set an example and ensure that The FA is inclusive and diverse, in keeping with our message of football for all.

"The demographics of society have changed. It is vital that The FA's structures and values reflect 21st-century multicultural, multiracial Britain."

FRANCE

www.fff.fr

DISCOVERING THE JOYS OF FOOTBALL

LAURA GOUTRY



'La Rentrée du Foot', an event organised by the amateur football league to mark the start of the new season, has become a regular fixture on the calendars of all French clubs and district associations.

This year was no exception, and throughout September France's 90 district football associations organised special activities for children to give them a taste of what football is all about and the opportunity to discover the fun and enjoyment of playing football together.

This year, two events stood out in particular. First, in Le Rheu in Brittany on 23 September, where 'La Rentrée du foot' in the U8/U9 category coincided with the

launch of the U20 Women's World Cup, which France is hosting in the region next August. The children got to see the trophy close up and the tournament logo and slogan being unveiled, giving them a glimpse of what goes into organising a big international competition and an insight into women's football. The second landmark event happened a week later, on 30 September, when 600 children in Montchanin, in eastern France, were invited to celebrate the creation of the new district association.

Altogether, around 250,000 children took part in this year's 'La Rentrée du Foot' at more than 3,000 venues around the country.

FAROE ISLANDS

www.football.fo

FOOTBALL FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

TERJI NIELSEN



Hans Erik Danielsen

Together with the national disability sport association, the Faroe Islands Football

Association recently started a new project for children with special needs. The idea behind the United Football project, as it is known, came from Faroese footballer Páll Mohr Joensen, who, as a teacher, has worked with many children with special needs over the years. He is also leading the project.

"We want to give children and young people with special needs the chance to train and play football in a more organised way," Mohr Joensen says. "You regularly see children with special needs at football matches all over the Faroe Islands, and they have a huge love for the game.

"Unfortunately there aren't any real options for them to train and play football, and that is what we want to change," he adds. "The project will enable children with special needs to train and play with more established players of their own age, helping them to integrate better and giving them the opportunities they deserve."

GEORGIA

www.gff.ge

A GRASSROOTS CELEBRATION

KETI GOLIADZE

 UEFA Grassroots Week saw representatives of the Georgian Football Federation (GFF) visit villages throughout the country with a view to helping local communities to renovate their football grounds. As a result, three villages in three different Georgian regions now have newly refurbished football pitches where local amateur and youth players can train, play and participate in regional football competitions.

In each of the three villages, GFF representatives helped to renovate the pitches, cut the grass, install goals and put up nets, benches and scoreboards. The GFF team also played matches against local sides and were beaten resoundingly by the Nigoeti women's team at their new home ground.

The week-long celebration of Georgian grassroots football culminated in Tbilisi on 30 September with the inaugural



Fathers and Children Cup – a four-a-side indoor football tournament jointly organised by the Georgian office of the United Nations Population Fund, the NGO 'We Care' and the GFF. A total of 16 teams took part, each of them needing to field both boys and girls in order to

participate. The tournament was won by a visiting team from Gori.


The GFF will continue to visit village football set-ups in various regions across the country, promoting grassroots football and encouraging local people to get involved and help develop the game.

GIBRALTAR

www.gibraltarfa.com

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STEVEN GONZALEZ

 On 8 September, the Gibraltar Football Association (GFA) held an extraordinary general assembly, at which the positions of president and vice-president were put up for re-election. Michael Llamas QC was unanimously re-elected as president for a four-year term, while Ian Torrilla was elected vice-president, also for a four-year term.

Following the elections, the presidents of FIFA and UEFA immediately contacted Mr Llamas to congratulate him.

Observers from both FIFA and UEFA were present at the GFA's general assembly, including Michael van Praag, president of the Royal Netherlands Football Association and a member of the UEFA Executive Committee. Commenting on the elections, Mr Van Praag explained that, largely as a result of the way in

which Mr Llamas had represented Gibraltar in his previous term as president, Gibraltar was not just accepted as a member of UEFA and FIFA, it was very well respected. Mr Llamas' appointment



as a member of the investigatory chamber of the FIFA Ethics Committee was, he said, a very clear indication of Gibraltar's standing in the world of football.

Delegates at the general assembly also unanimously approved the new GFA statutes. Over the last few months, the GFA has, with the assistance of both FIFA and UEFA, carried out extensive internal statutory reforms in order to bring the GFA fully into line with FIFA's requirements as regards the statutory organisation of member associations. This is the first time that FIFA and UEFA have worked together in this way to advise and guide a member association on statutory changes. Such has been the success of this joint initiative that the new GFA statutes will be used as a template for other associations to follow.

ELITE WOMEN'S FINAL COMES TO BUDAPEST

MÁRTON DINNYÉS



UEFA has selected Ferencváros Stadium in Budapest as the venue for the 2019 Women's Champions League final. Hungary has never hosted a UEFA club competition final before and the president of the Hungarian FA, Sándor Csányi, believes UEFA's decision is clear recognition of the association's efforts to develop women's football.

"At last we'll be able to see the best of European women's club football for ourselves here in Budapest," said Sándor Csányi. "We will be hosting the biggest women's football match of 2019 at Ferencváros Stadium, not forgetting of course the women's national team's key fixtures. The Women's Champions League final will help us draw attention to women's football and promote Hungary's capital among visiting fans," he added.

Budapest has hosted some significant UEFA events in the past. In 2012, 1,200 delegates from 208 countries met there



for the 62nd FIFA Congress. Two years later, the European Under-19 Championship final tournament took place in the Hungarian capital, and the 40th Ordinary UEFA Congress was held there in May 2016.

"We have hosted UEFA and FIFA congresses as well as the Under-19 finals in recent years, and we are currently preparing to host four matches at EURO 2020, which will be the biggest football event ever held on Hungarian soil. UEFA's decision not only confirms the quality of our improved infrastructure, but also recognises our efforts in developing women's football," Sándor Csányi concluded.

Since its inception in 2001, no Hungarian club has ever won Europe's premier women's football club competition and striker Zsanett Jakabfi, who has made 40 appearances for her country, remains the only Hungarian player to have lifted the Women's Champions League trophy so far, having done so with German club Wolfsburg in 2013 and 2014.

Women's football is one of the top priorities of the Hungarian FA's strategy. The aim is to get as many girls and women as possible involved in the game. The recruitment drive is already paying dividends, the number of women's football teams having grown from 107 to 320 in just six years.

ANTONIO GHIRELLI FOOTBALL WRITING AWARDS

DIEGO ANTENOZIO



The winners of the sixth annual Antonio Ghirelli prize for football books have been announced. These national awards are organised jointly by the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) and the Italian Football Museum to celebrate published works on football-related subjects that help to share and promote the culture of sport.

This year's winners were: *Duellanti* by Paolo Condò (in the Narrative Writing category), *La vita in novanta minuti* by Walter Veltroni (Essays), *Il leader calmo* by Carlo Ancelotti, with Chris Brady and Mike Forde (Management and Economics), *Il senso del gioco* by Francesco D'Arrigo (Coaching) and *Il calcio dei bambini* by Isabella Croce (Specialist Studies).

The awards ceremony, which was attended by the FIGC's general director, Michele Uva, took place at the Circolo dei Lettori in Turin. It was one of a series of events organised to coincide with the 2018 World Cup qualifier between Italy and FYR Macedonia. The jury was chaired by Alessandro Vocalelli, editor of the Italian sports newspaper *Corriere dello Sport*, and included a number of senior sporting and media figures including FIGC vice-president and president of the Italian Football Coaches Association (AIAC) Renzo Ulivieri, former head coach of the Italian women's national team Antonio Cabrini, head coach of the national men's Under-21 team Luigi di Biagio, coordinator of the national youth

teams Maurizio Viscidi, and sports journalists Riccardo Cucchi, Gaia Piccardi, Massimo Corcione and Matteo Marani.

This sixth edition of the annual awards saw a record number of contenders, with a total of 130 titles nominated across the various categories. The judges also noted an increase in the quality of the entries, singling out Gigi Riva's *L'ultimo rigore di Faruk* for a special jury award presented in memory of journalist Marco Ansaldo, while special mention also went to *Il principe della zolla* by Gianni Brera (edited by Gianni Mura), *Aveva un volto bianco e tirato* by Guy Chiappaventi, and *Dura solo un attimo, la gloria* by Dino Zoff.

KAZAKHSTAN

www.kff.kz

FOOTBALL FOR CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

MURATBEK BIMANOV



In late September, the Football Federation of Kazakhstan (FFK) helped to organise the first-ever tournament in Central Asia for children with cerebral palsy and neurological diseases. Six teams of children aged between 10 and 15 took part in the seven-a-side competition, which was held over two days in Almaty.

The event was the upshot of a grant offered by the International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football (IFCPF) earlier this year to organise a dedicated coach education course. A number of individuals from throughout the country were trained by international experts, giving them the skills and certification they need to coach and work with children diagnosed with cerebral palsy, and enabling the organisation of September's ground-breaking tournament.

"Football is a great form of rehabilitation for children with cerebral palsy. Just look at the results achieved by the IFCPF in Europe, where many players have been able to improve their health through football. Some have even improved so much that they are able to play mainstream football," said Chingiz Temerkhanov of the FFK's grassroots department. "Football also plays a social



role and helps the children to integrate and find their place in society. In the future they may go on to work as coaches or administrators of football teams, as doctors or in other specialist roles."

This project has huge social significance for the country. Giving children with cerebral palsy the opportunity to play football and train improves their health and increases their overall morale and self-confidence. Throughout the tournament, the children's enjoyment was clearly etched on their faces: they were able to play a game they love, using top-quality equipment, cheering each other on and giving it their all. This helped the children to believe in themselves, communicate and make friends, and it motivated them to continue playing football and enjoy being part of a team.

Cerebral palsy football, which is played according to slightly modified rules, is a Paralympic sport and officially recognised by FIFA. It is played in teams of seven

players, the pitch is much smaller than a regular-sized field, there is no offside rule and throw-ins can be one-handed. Each half lasts for 30 minutes, with a 15-minute break in between.

Cerebral palsy football players are arranged into different classes depending on their level of disability:

Class C5 – players who experience discomfort when walking, but do not feel any pain when standing or kicking the ball.

Class C6 – players suffering from impaired coordination when running.

Class C7 – players with hemiplegia (paralysis of one side of the body)

Class C8 – players who have only minor pathologies, but are still classified as Paralympic athletes under the International Paralympic Committee guidelines.

Each cerebral palsy football team must have at least one class C5 or class C6 player, and they are not allowed to have more than two class C8 players.

The FFK provides equipment for cerebral palsy players, pays for dedicated coaches and makes every effort to develop the game in Kazakhstan. By the end of the year, the FFK plans to form a national youth team for players with cerebral palsy to take part in international tournaments.

LATVIA

www.lff.lv

A FOOTBALL FESTIVAL IN THE HEART OF RIGA

TOMS ĀRMANIS



A very special event took place in Latvia in September to mark the start of this year's European Week of Sport and UEFA Grassroots Week, with a unique festival of football being organised at the foot of the Freedom Monument in the heart of Riga's historical centre.

This event took the form of a 12-hour non-stop marathon of football, with 12 matches being contested by a series of

special teams – businessmen versus the military, policemen versus firemen, the Latvian Football Federation versus the 2004 national team, the media versus journalists, musicians versus actors, identical twins versus each other, and much more besides. In addition to these unique matches, there were various performances by musicians and dancers, as well as competitions for spectators.



Everyone was encouraged to organise Grassroots Week events, with no limitations or restrictions – the more creative, the better! This resulted in more than 50 football-related events taking place all over Latvia under the slogan 'Bring football into your backyard', showcasing the accessibility and creativity of the game.

NICOLAS HASLER NAMED FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR

ANTON BANZER

 The Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) held its 2017 awards ceremony on 2 October. Nicolas Hasler (Toronto FC) was named footballer of the year and Vito Troisio (FC Ruggell) coach of the year. The LFV special award for outstanding achievements went to Maximilian Göppel (FC Vaduz) and the volunteer of the year award went to Franz Schädler, in recognition of his longstanding and varied service to FC Triesenberg.

These four main awards and a number of other distinctions were presented in front of an audience of the Liechtenstein football family. To mark his 100th match, Dietmar Kupnik, the national team's goalkeeper coach, received a shirt with the number 100 on the back from


national team goalkeeper Peter Jehle. Tributes were also paid to the three LFV honorary members, Oswald Gritsch, Erich Bürzle and Roland Beck.

The awards presentation was preceded by a series of charitable donations. As Liechtenstein's largest sports association, the LFV is fully aware of its social responsibility, a subject to which it attaches great importance and will give increasing prominence in the future. At the 2017 awards ceremony, sums totalling CHF 10,000 were presented to the Liechtenstein Association of People with Disabilities, Special Olympics Liechtenstein and a specialist group set up to combat the sexual abuse of children and young people.



A FIRST FOR MALTA

KEVIN AZZOPARDI

 Luxol St Andrews FC have become the first Maltese club ever to qualify for the main round of the UEFA Futsal Cup after winning their preliminary round group.

They did it in style, too, with a 4-3 victory over Israeli champions Maccabi Tel Aviv completing a perfect three wins out

of three in Group C. The Maltese champions issued an early statement of intent by beating Austrian hosts FC Diamant Linz 7-1 in their opening match, before overcoming Macedonian champions KMF Shkupi 1927 9-2.

In the main round, St Andrews were drawn in Group 8 along with Araz

Naxçivan (Azerbaijan), FC Deva (Romania) and FC Mostar SG (Bosnia and Herzegovina), for a four-team mini-tournament to be contested in Romania from 11 to 14 October.

In other news, a 60-hour football and volleyball marathon took place over the weekend of 22 to 24 September at Marsa Sports Grounds in aid of the Puttinu Cares cancer support group. As part of its football and social responsibility programme, the Malta Football Association provided kits for the opening match, which was contested by actors from two popular Maltese TV series, as well as making a donation to Puttinu Cares.

This annual charity event raised more than €2m, which will be used to build residential apartments in central London for Maltese cancer patients and their families who travel to the UK for treatment.



Joe Borg-MFA

MOLDOVA

www.fmf.md

CHILDREN ENCOURAGED TO LEAD AN ACTIVE LIFE

SVETLANA PATRAŞ



On 30 August, the Football Association of Moldova (FMF) launched the Tiny Healthy Player project at Stadionul Zimbru in Chisinau. This initiative, which seeks to encourage children to take an interest in sport and lead an active life, is being supported by UEFA's HatTrick programme.

As part of this project, sports activities will be organised at 13 different kindergartens. Children (including children with disabilities) will attend weekly sessions, which will involve both theoretical elements and practical football-related activities. Parents, grandparents and social workers have played a key role in the

development of these activities.

The FMF and Moldova's ministry of education, culture and research, who signed a partnership and cooperation agreement earlier this year, will take care of the organisation of all project-related activities.

The launch event was attended by kindergarten directors from Edinet, Ungheni, Ocnita, Balti, Soroca, Stefan Voda, Hirbovat, Copceac, Slobozia-Dusca and Bratuseni, while the football community was represented by project coordinator Svetlana Patraş, assistant coordinator Natalia Ceban, and assistant coordinator and psychologist Liliana Papina.



Vadim Caftanari

The ministry of education, culture and research was represented by Vasile Onica, a consultant in the directorate of pre-university education. Virginia Rusnac, the director of the Republican Centre for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance, was also in attendance.

The launch event was preceded by an open training session involving children from a local kindergarten, which included theoretical elements and many fun exercises.

NORTHERN IRELAND

www.irishfa.com

A NEW FOOTBALL PERFORMANCE SCHOOL

NIGEL TILSON



The Irish Football Association has opened Northern Ireland's first-ever football performance school. In partnership with Integrated College Dungannon, the new initiative will offer twelve 12-year-old boys the opportunity to combine their academic

studies with an in-timetable programme of football coaching and development.

Establishing elite performance schools is a long-term strategic objective of the Irish FA. The association aims to create six performance schools across Northern Ireland by 2019 and will develop the


programme in the future to provide the same opportunities to young female footballers.

The Irish FA's elite performance director, Jim Magilton, said: "Players in Northern Ireland lag significantly behind their counterparts in most other countries when it comes to the amount of time they spend each week with coaches. Through the programme, players will significantly increase their contact time and be better equipped to succeed in their footballing ambitions, while also being able to gain a solid education. I would like to thank Integrated College Dungannon for being the first school to partner with us in this way and I look forward to seeing these young footballers succeed both on the pitch and in the classroom."

The principal of the County Tyrone college, Andrew Sleeth, said: "This partnership will see us continue to deliver educationally while also having the Irish FA provide the highest standards of football coaching to these 12 pupils."

'NEVER FORGET WHERE YOU CAME FROM'

MATILDE DIAS

 Portugal's national futsal team recently took to the streets of Amadora, in the suburbs of Lisbon, to inspire the best local talent. The futsal stars spent several hours having a kickabout with a team of local youngsters who had won a nationwide contest organised by the Portuguese Football Federation.

The Amadora team is part of a social and health development project being run within the disadvantaged communities of Amadora and aims to prevent social exclusion and increase integration through sport and by promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Ricardinho was a real hit with the locals, who were clearly surprised to have the futsal legend in their midst. Named best player in the world for the last three years by Futsal Planet, he and his team-mates demonstrated their amazing skills, chatted to the youngsters, and made their day by signing autographs and posing for hundreds of photos.

Afterwards, the Portuguese winger told journalists how much he had enjoyed the experience: "These initiatives are part of our social responsibility. It was fantastic. I also started playing futsal in my neighbourhood – futsal was born in the suburbs. I'll never forget this day.



The kids' eyes were sparkling with happiness."

It was also a special moment for futsal star Djô, an Amadora local, who said: "Never forget where you came from. My whole family was here watching the game. It was a very emotional experience for me because I began playing futsal right here. I hope to inspire these youngsters to follow their dreams."

INAUGURAL WOMEN'S FOOTBALL CONVENTION

GARETH MAHER

 In September, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) held its first women's football convention at the FAI national training centre in Abbotstown. Organised as part of the association's commitment to further developing women's football, the event was attended by delegates representing girls' and women's football clubs and leagues, as well as other stakeholders from across the game.

The convention follows the full integration of women's football into the FAI set-up, which included the creation of the FAI Women's Football Committee and eight regional women's football committees. Previously, the women's game was run under the auspices of the Women's Football Association of Ireland.

Among the keynote speeches delivered at the convention was a strong presentation on UEFA's women's football marketing campaign, Together #WePlayStrong. The campaign, launched in June, focuses on driving participation levels and reducing dropout rates through six key pillars:

- strong local participation;
- changing the image of women's football;
- using new types of content to engage girls and women;
- using new media channels;
- working with a network of sponsor partners to expand the programme's reach; and
- supporting national associations by providing them with extensive toolkits.

The English FA's national women's football participation manager, Rachel Pavlou, was also on hand to share insights into her association's successful growth and retention of female players.

The FAI's chief executive, John Delaney, who is also the deputy chairman of UEFA's Women's Football Committee, highlighted the FAI's support for the growth and ongoing development of the women's game and its commitment to ensuring female players in Ireland have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. The delegates were also informed about the development of the women's game since its integration into the FAI set-up.



The FAI's head of women's of football, Sue Ronan, revealed her department's ambitions for the women's game, and the delegates approved the appointment of 20 members to the Women's Football Appeals Committee pool.

While women's football in Ireland has made huge progress on the pitch – with record numbers participating in summer camps, the growth of the Women's National League and the success of the Republic of Ireland national teams – there is a lot still to be done at grassroots level. The FAI clearly recognises this fact, and the latest developments augur well for women's football in Ireland.

ROMANIA

www.frf.ro

RAISING FUNDS FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

PAUL ZAHARIA



At the start of the year, the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) signed a partnership agreement with UNICEF to raise awareness among the Romanian football community of the problems faced by vulnerable and socially excluded children. The partnership aims to promote their integration, prevent violence and aggression against children, and raise funds for UNICEF's programmes in Romania and the rest of the world.

As part of the initiative, the FRF launched a new campaign, 'Together, a team for children', at the World Cup qualifier between Romania and Armenia in Bucharest on 1 September. The campaign fundraising video was given

its first airing at half-time. It stars legendary Romanian footballer Miodrag Belodedici and Antonel, one of the more than 20,000 vulnerable children currently receiving support from a UNICEF project in Romania.

The video delivered a strong message to the crowd of more than 20,000 spectators, raising their awareness of the importance of giving children the opportunity to go to school and gain an education, thereby offering them a better chance in life. Currently, some 300,000 children in Romania do not go to school, while one in five spends less than eight years in full-time education. Children living in rural areas, mostly in extremely poor

families, as well as members of the Roma community and disabled children are the most affected by this sad reality.

In the video, Belodedici, who himself comes from a rural area, makes an emotional appeal to all Romanians: "Together, we wish to give vulnerable children a chance. We want to offer them the opportunity to succeed and we need your help to make this happen. Please make a monthly donation and help all these children to become winners." Donations can be made online and by SMS.

With the support of stars such as Belodedici, the FRF's campaign looks set to be a winner.

SAN MARINO

www.fsgc.sm

UEFA PRESIDENT VISITS SAN MARINO

PRESS OFFICE



Monday 25 September 2017 will long be remembered in San Marino for the visit of UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin, who used the occasion to reiterate his support for the work of the republic's national association, the FSGC. "Football in San Marino is growing by the day, and it is our intention to do everything in our power to support this positive trend," said the UEFA president.

San Marino may have one of the smallest footballing set-ups in Europe, but it has always been able to count on the support of UEFA, particularly with regard to improving its facilities. As the UEFA president underlined, "Football cannot exist without infrastructure; without a pitch, young people cannot play. We are working closely with the FSGC on projects designed to overcome the geographical limitations that are inherent for a country of this size."

Accompanying Aleksander Čeferin was UEFA vice-president Michele Uva, who was making his first official trip since his



appointment, while also representing the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) in his capacity as general director. "San Marino and Italy enjoy a very positive relationship," he noted. "It is not simply a question of geographical proximity; the relationship has grown out of a genuine affinity and an ongoing spirit of cooperation. Our work in organising the finals of the European Under-21 Championship in 2019 is a perfect example of how large national associations like the FIGC can, and must, work with their smaller counterparts such as the FSGC. The national association here may be small, but it is made up of great individuals."

FSGC president Marco Tura said that the visit was a huge honour for his association: "It is as positive as it is extraordinary because it further strengthens the sense of friendship and mutual esteem that the FSGC, FIGC and UEFA have cultivated for some time," he said. "We have a lot of hard work ahead of us if we are to keep pace with developments and maintain the standards UEFA expects of us. In that regard, we are looking forward to the finals of the European Under-21 Championship [of which three matches will be played at San Marino Stadium], which will be a hugely significant event. We aim to match the standards set by the FIGC, which means working to the very best of our abilities."

PETER FRANCE JOINS THE RANKS OF UEFA'S SECURITY OFFICERS

PETER SURIN



Peter France, the Slovak FA's security officer, has been appointed as one of the new UEFA stadium and security officers – the first-ever Slovak to take on such a role. There are currently 24 officers in all, nine of whom were appointed at the UEFA-EU Stadium and Security Conference in Munich at the beginning of September.

Terrorism, other emergencies, crowd disturbances, violence and racism are just some of the challenges that match organisers have to deal with. UEFA and FIFA are keen to achieve diversity in football, ensure accessibility for all, and guarantee the comfort and safety of fans in stadiums that meet all their

requirements. The UEFA stadium and security officers play a vital role in all these regards.

For Peter France, being appointed to the ranks of UEFA's stadium and security officers is an acknowledgement of his hard work and commitment over the years at the Slovak Football Association. The highlights of his career so far include accompanying Slovakia's national teams at EURO 2016 in France and this year's European Under-21 Championship final tournament in Poland.

"I am very honoured to have been given the opportunity to join the team of UEFA safety and security officers. I am looking forward to the opportunity to pass on my

experience, while expanding my own knowledge and improving our domestic safety and security set-up," he said.

Working with colleagues from the UK, Peter France has already had his first taste of a stadium and security officer's job in the UEFA Champions League, at the Anderlecht v Celtic group match. Their task was to ensure UEFA's safety and security regulations were met before, during and after the match, monitor the situation and then report back to UEFA. Looking over the security checklist, he said: "I hope I never have to deal with the last point on the list – providing support in response to emergencies." We hope so too.

EX-INTERNATIONALS HEAD TO THE TOP OF EUROPE

PIERRE BENOIT



More than 30 former Swiss internationals accepted the invitation of the Swiss FA's president, Peter Gilliéron, and general secretary, Alex Miescher, to participate in this year's excursion for ex-internationals.

This time, the group aimed high in the truest sense of the word – even higher than last year, in fact, when the 2,128m Mount Pilatus was their destination. This year's target was the 3,454m UNESCO-listed Jungfrauoch, known as the Top of Europe and the location of Europe's highest railway station.

The former footballers met early in the morning for coffee and croissants at the railway station in Berne before being whisked away by coach to Lauterbrunnen. Already in good spirits, their mood was lifted even further by some glorious weather, which nobody had predicted. The party was met at Lauterbrunnen railway station by the Jungfrau railway's



CEO, Urs Kessler, who accompanied the group for the whole trip, and shared some fascinating stories about the railway, from when it was built to the present day. The ex-internationals journeyed via Kleine Scheidegg to the Jungfrauoch, where the weather was fantastic and the hungry travellers were treated to a magnificent buffet lunch. With Urs Kessler as their guide, the group were given VIP

treatment, getting to sample some fine whisky in the whisky bar, and enjoying the opportunity to try their hand at curling.

After a wonderful trip on the Jungfrau railway, and having each been presented with a stamped 'Swiss passport' to certify that they had conquered the Jungfrauoch, the ex-players rounded off a memorable day with a delicious evening meal in Grindelwald. Here, they were able not just to reminisce about the past, but to demonstrate how much they knew about the history of the Swiss national team. Marco Zwysig and Georges Bregy showed off their knowledge by answering all ten quiz questions correctly. Meanwhile, the oldest participant, former FC Zürich winger Bruno Brizzi, 84, proved that he retains a keen interest in the national teams and knows more or less everything there is to know about the history of the Swiss FA.

BIRTHDAYS

Marc Batta (France, 1 Nov.)
György Szilagyi (Hungary, 2 Nov.)
Francesco Bianchi (Switzerland, 2 Nov.)
Gianluca D'Aloja (Italy, 2 Nov.)
Jenny Palmqvist (Sweden, 2 Nov.)
Mark Bullingham (England, 2 Nov.)
Amir Navon (Israel, 2 Nov.)
Matthew Paris (Malta, 2 Nov.)
Łukasz Wachowski (Poland, 2 Nov.)
Georgios Vourvachis (Greece, 3 Nov.)
Damien Neven (Belgium, 3 Nov.)
Anne McKeown (Scotland, 3 Nov.)
Andrea Ferretti (Italy, 4 Nov.)
Lars Richt (Sweden, 4 Nov.)
Diana Bianchedi (Italy, 4 Nov.)
Luís Figo (Portugal, 4 Nov.)
Dilan Deniz Gökçek İşcan (Turkey, 4 Nov.)
Lennart Johansson (Sweden, 5 Nov.)
Georgi Popov (Bulgaria, 5 Nov.)
Mircea-Mihaiu Pascu (Romania, 6 Nov.)
Efraim Barak (Israel, 6 Nov.) **60th**
Nadezhda Ulyanovskaya (Russia, 6 Nov.)
Peter Gardiner (Scotland, 7 Nov.) **90th**
Vladimir Badura (Slovakia, 7 Nov.)
Sergio Di Cesare (Italy, 8 Nov.)
Haris Loizides (Cyprus, 8 Nov.)
Gjergji Bitri (Malta, 8 Nov.)
Charlotte Cowie (England, 8 Nov.)
Michele Uva (Italy, 8 Nov.)
Aurel Mihail Ionescu (Romania, 8 Nov.)
Rudolf Zavrl (Slovenia, 9 Nov.)
Willi Hink (Germany, 9 Nov.) **60th**
Thomas Hollerer (Austria, 9 Nov.)
Michal Mertinyak (Slovakia, 9 Nov.)
Marc Van Geersom (Belgium, 10 Nov.)
Andy Ambler (England, 10 Nov.)
Muharrem Zihni Aksoy (Turkey, 11 Nov.) **60th**
Mehmet Murat Ilgaz (Turkey, 11 Nov.)
Uno Tutk (Estonia, 11 Nov.)
Kadir Kardaş (Turkey, 11 Nov.)
Willi Ruttensteiner (Austria, 12 Nov.)
Milan Vojtek (Slovakia, 12 Nov.)
Milan Spirkoski (FYR Macedonia, 12 Nov.)
Karol Belanik (Slovakia, 12 Nov.)
Nasser Al-Khelaifi (France, 12 Nov.)
Howard Wilkinson (England, 13 Nov.)
Peter Fröjdfeldt (Sweden, 14 Nov.)
Samira Huren (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 14 Nov.)
Ciprian Paraschiv (Romania, 14 Nov.)
Otto Demuth (Austria, 16 Nov.)
Wolf-Günter Wiesel (Germany, 16 Nov.) **70th**
Susan Ann Hough (England, 16 Nov.)
Radenko Mijatović (Slovenia, 16 Nov.)
Sylvain Grimault (France, 16 Nov.)
Ján Fašung (Slovakia, 17 Nov.)
Ivica Tončev (Serbia, 17 Nov.)
Per Svärd (Sweden, 18 Nov.)
Stanisław Piłkowski (Poland, 18 Nov.)
Knarik Abelyan (Armenia, 18 Nov.)
Jacques Liénard (France, 19 Nov.)
Horst R. Schmidt (Germany, 19 Nov.)

Petr Fousek (Czech Republic, 19 Nov.)
Cécile Grandsimon (France, 19 Nov.)
Jean-Louis Piette (France, 20 Nov.)
Johan Johqvist (Sweden, 20 Nov.)
Jyrki Filppu (Finland, 22 Nov.)
Emilia Wnuk (Poland, 22 Nov.)
Conrad Kirkwood (Northern Ireland, 22 Nov.) **50th**
Dimitrios Davakis (Greece, 22 Nov.)
Izabella Łukomska-Pyrzalska (Poland, 22 Nov.) **40th**
Nikolai Pisarev (Russia, 23 Nov.)
Clive Whitehead (England, 24 Nov.)
George Koumas (Cyprus, 24 Nov.)
Zbigniew Przesmycki (Poland, 26 Nov.)
Borislav Popov (Bulgaria, 26 Nov.)
Styrbjörn Oskarsson (Finland, 26 Nov.)
Marcos Del Cuadro (Switzerland, 26 Nov.)
Evelina Christillin (Italy, 27 Nov.)
Michalis Mitas (Cyprus, 27 Nov.)
Marios Lefkaritis (Cyprus, 28 Nov.)
Ante Vučemilović-Šimunović (Croatia, 28 Nov.)
Andrey Medintsev (Bulgaria, 28 Nov.)
Tomaž Ranc (Slovenia, 28 Nov.)
Marko Ilešič (Slovenia, 29 Nov.) **70th**
Alojzije Šupraha (Croatia, 29 Nov.)
Ruta Banyte (Lithuania, 29 Nov.)
Stavros Tritsonis (Greece, 30 Nov.) **40th**

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

6 November, Netherlands
 Women's National Team Coaches Conference

15 November, Nyon
 Medical Committee

16 November, Nyon
 Youth and Amateur Football Committee
 Club Licensing Committee

17 November, Nyon
 HatTrick Committee

20 November, Nyon
 Players' Status, Transfer and Agents and Match
 Agents Committee

21 November, Nyon
 Stadium and Security Committee

23 November, Nyon
 Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee
 Marketing Advisory Committee

24 November, Nyon
 UEFA Women's Champions League: draws for the
 quarter- and semi-finals
 European Women's Under-19 and Under-17
 Championships: draws for the 2018/19 qualifying
 rounds and for the 2017/18 elite rounds

27 November, Nyon
 Legal Committee

28 November, Nyon
 National Team Competitions Committee

NOTICES

- On 8 September, Michael Llamas was re-elected for a four-year term as president of the Gibraltar Football Association.
- On 30 September, Tomas Danilevičius was elected for a two-year term as president of the Lithuanian Football Federation.

OBITUARIES

- Karel Vertongen** (Belgium) passed away on 23 September at the age of 78. A member of the circle of former UEFA committee members, he sat on the Stadia Committee from 1990 to 2000, serving as vice-chairman from 1996 onwards, and was a member of the Stadium and Security Committee from 2000 to 2009.
- Former president of the Danish Football Association **Poul Hyldgaard** passed away on 27 September at the age of 88. He served as chairman of UEFA's Women's Football Committee from 1992 to 1996 and member of the Development and Assistance Committee from 1994 to 1996.

Competitions

1 November

UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 4)
 UEFA Youth League: UEFA Champions League path
 group matches (matchday 4) and domestic champions
 path second round (first legs)

2 November

UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 4)

6–14 November

European Under-21 Championship: qualifying matches

8/9 November

UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 16
 (first legs)

9–14 November

European Qualifiers for the 2018 World Cup: play-offs

15/16 November

UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 16
 (return legs)

21/22 November

UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 5)
 UEFA Youth League: UEFA Champions League path
 group matches (matchday 5)

21–26 November

UEFA Futsal Cup: elite round

22 November

Youth League: domestic champions path second round
 (return legs)

23 November

UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 5)

23–28 November

Qualifying matches for the 2019 Women's World Cup



A PITCH FOR HOPE

The new synthetic pitch at the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan was built with the support of the UEFA Foundation for Children. More than 80,000 displaced persons live in the camp, 57% of whom are children or young adults.





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