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UEFA Executive Committee meeting decisions from Vilnius meeting

Guidelines for match officials to deal with racist behaviour approved

The UEFA Executive Committee today completed its two-day meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, with the approval of a number of key topics.

The guidelines for match officials with regards to racist behaviour in football stadiums were approved by the Executive Committee and will enter into force immediately in all UEFA competitions. A three-step procedure, these guidelines state that in the event that the referee becomes aware of serious racist behaviour, or is informed of it by the fourth official, he shall as a first step, in application of Law 5 of the Laws of the Game, stop the match and ask for an announcement to be made over the public address system requesting the public to immediately stop such racist behaviour.

As a second step, if the racist behaviour does not cease once the game has restarted, the referee shall suspend the match for a reasonable period of time, e.g. five to ten minutes, and request the teams to go to the dressing rooms. A further announcement shall be made over the public address system to the public.

As a third and final step, if the racist behaviour does not cease after the game has restarted, the referee shall as a last resort, definitively abandon the match. All along the three-step process the UEFA delegate shall assist the referee, through the fourth official, in determining whether the racist behaviour has ceased, and any decision to abandon the match shall only be taken after all other possible measures have been implemented and the impact of abandoning the match on the security of the players and public has been assessed. The full and detailed guidelines will be made available shortly.

The disciplinary consequences (such as forfeit, stadium suspension, fines or others) shall be dealt with by the UEFA Disciplinary Bodies in accordance with the relevant regulations, in particular article 11 bis of the UEFA Disciplinary Regulations.

In the area of financial fair play the Executive Committee received a full update on the work being conducted in this area and agreed to act urgently on the matter. A decision on the concept and principles is scheduled to be taken at the next UEFA Executive Committee meeting in September 2009 after a meeting with the Professional Football Strategy Council (PFSC), and after consultations with the European Club Association (ECA), the European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL) and FIFPro Division Europe.

The key principle on the road towards a fairer and more transparent game is that football should reward those clubs living within their means. This means that clubs shall need to reduce their spending. To be viable, salaries and transfers should be proportionate to the generated income. Clubs should invest in their youth sectors, and use their homegrown talent to reinforce their squads. UEFA and the clubs are therefore committed to working together on the concept of financial fair play to curb excessive spending and promote investments for the long-term health of club football.

On the subject of the additional assistant referees experiment, the Executive Committee was informed that following the decision of the FIFA Executive Committee at their meeting of 30/31 May 2009, this would now be tested at a professional level in the forthcoming 2009/10 UEFA Europa League group stage.

The UEFA Referees Committee will select the fixed “trios” of referees composed of officials from the same country to officiate at these matches.

In other decisions, the Executive Committee approved the appointment of the new committee members for the 2009-2011 period, agreed the natural disaster donation of one million Swiss Francs to the Italian Football Federation for football and sports facilities in the Abruzzo region, and accepted the continuation of a revised format Baltic League, in Estonia/Latvia/Lithuania, for the seasons up to and including 2011/12.

The next UEFA Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for 14/15 September in Nyon, Switzerland.