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Former Belgian Prime Minister Dehaene appointed chairman of Club Financial Control Panel

Mr. Jean-Luc Dehaene, the former Prime Minister of Belgium, has been appointed as the first chairman of the newly-created Club Financial Control Panel by the UEFA Executive Committee at its meeting today in Nyon.

The body will comprise independent financial and legal experts and will conduct financial audits to ensure that the UEFA club licensing system is applied correctly across all 53 UEFA member associations.

A prominent figure in European politics, Mr. Dehaene also has extensive experience in the private sector, being a member of the board of several important European companies. He will be faced with the substantial challenge of enforcing UEFA's ambitious programme to restore financial discipline and rationality into club balance sheets, in order to protect the long-term viability and sustainability of European club football.

Commenting on this high-profile appointment UEFA President, Michel Platini, said: "The huge task that confronts us today in European football with regards to financial fair play requires an equally large personality to tackle it. I am therefore particularly happy to see that for this challenge we are able to attract a person with the quality and background of Mr. Dehaene. As the first chairman of the Club Financial Control Panel, he will set the standard in this area and in so doing will make history. It was crucial to have this new role handled by a man of his capacity and stature."

Speaking of his appointment, Mr. Dehaene said: "The rule of financial fair play is aimed at ensuring the healthy, lasting viability of clubs. By imposing this rule on all clubs participating in European competitions, UEFA has taken the path both the European Commission and Parliament had hoped for. By agreeing to chair the Club Financial Control Panel, I hope to be able to help achieve this ambitious objective, which is vital to the future of European football."

To achieve the ambitious objective of financial fair play, clubs of a certain size will be requested to balance their books, or "break even", which in simple terms means they will not be allowed to spend more than the revenue they generate. Incentives will also be given to promote and encourage investments for the long-term benefit of clubs, in youth and infrastructure development.

The Club Financial Control Panel will form an essential part in implementing and assessing the financial fair play concept, approved earlier today by the UEFA Executive Committee, following unanimous support received from the UEFA Professional Football Strategy Council in Monaco, the UEFA Club Licensing Committee, the UEFA Club Competitions Committee and the European Club Association (ECA).

Financial fair play is to be integrated within the current UEFA Club Licensing scheme and will be gradually implemented over a three-year period. It is expected to be fully in force by season 2012-13.

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