



Union des associations européennes de football



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UEFA meets with supporter representatives

Supporter groups plan to hold first European Fan Congress in June 2008

On the occasion of the first-ever meeting between UEFA and various national supporter groups at UEFA Headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland, on Tuesday 04 December, UEFA President Michel Platini has requested that national supporter groups take the opportunity to create a coherent pan-European independent organisation in order to improve communication channels with UEFA.

Opening the meeting, UEFA President Michel Platini said:

"I want to hear from you how we can protect the game. You are the base of football. We know that fans are the only ones who show fidelity to a club or team basically from birth to death. There are those who have official roles who come and go, either presidents or coaches or players or whoever, and they sometimes forget the true identity of the club for which they are responsible. They often have different objectives, take what they want from the club and then leave."

National supporter groups intend to hold their first European Fan Congress on 1 June 2008 in London, but the UEFA President stated his desire for the groups to finalise their own solution:

"Do everything on your terms and find an independent solution not involving UEFA in order to legitimise yourself. Once this is completed, then we will have the opportunity to discuss matters in more structured and formal terms."

The approach was supported by Malcolm Clarke of the UK-based Football Supporters' Federation (140,000 members) who stressed the importance of establishing an organisation that had its roots in a "bottom up" solution rather than something being imposed from above. This "bottom up" approach was also reflected in the report on the study currently being undertaken by Supporters Direct – the study is examining the feasibility of expanding the highly successful UK initiative across Europe.

UEFA General Secretary David Taylor also stated:

"At UEFA, we insist that all parties seeking participation in the democracy of European football, must themselves present a democratic constitution. We understand that it is difficult for fan groups with various objectives or origins to organise themselves in an international arena. But that is precisely the challenge that faces you, the fan organisations. We seek that representative group to be established."

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The national supporter groups all took the opportunity to address UEFA directly, making their opinions heard from a wide range of issues from club ownership and the UEFA Club Licensing scheme to ticket distribution and the security issues.

Speaking after the meeting, Martin Endemann of Bündis Aktiver Fussball-Fans said:

"It was nice to get an invitation from UEFA, because it gives us the feeling that we can be a recognised partner and an important part of the game. But even if it was an honest atmosphere, it can only be the beginning and we are hoping that UEFA takes our requests into account."

UEFA is currently gathering information on all the different supporter organisations across Europe. UEFA would appreciate receiving any information on existing supporter organisations, which can be sent to the following email address: supporters@uefa.ch

Note to editors:

For the record, the groups attending the meeting with UEFA were the Football Supporters' Federation (FSF, UK), Supporters' Direct, Fédération des Associations de Supporters du Football Français (FASFootball, France), Danish Football Supporters' Federation (DFF), Aficiones Unidas (Spain), IG Unsere Kurve (Germany), Bündis Aktiver Fussball-Fans (BAFF, Germany), Association of Tartan Army Clubs (Scotland), Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE) and Kick It Out (UK).