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Commissioner visits UEFA

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With the winter break coming to an end, the second half of the international season is just around the corner, meaning more EURO 2012 qualifiers and club competition matches. Liverpool (with midfielder Jonjo Shelvey, pictured up against FC Utricht's Edouard Duplan) are among those pursuing ambitions in the Europa League.

Photo: Getty Images

WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL



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Democracy: getting what we deserve

In the words of George Bernard Shaw, democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve – something to consider in view of the forthcoming UEFA elections. The Congress in March will be asked to decide on the composition of the UEFA Executive Committee for the next two years, with the terms of the president and seven members expiring in Paris.

Michel Platini is the only candidate for the position of UEFA president, which we can surely interpret as a sign of widespread support for the reforms he has introduced since he took office. Their scope and scale clearly require a certain continuity.

There are 13 candidates for the 7 other seats. Of the outgoing members, 6 are standing for re-election, while Joseph Mifsud is retiring after 17 years of valuable and loyal service. The 7 new candidates standing for election to the Executive Committee give the voters a broad field to choose from and are a sign of the vitality of our association.

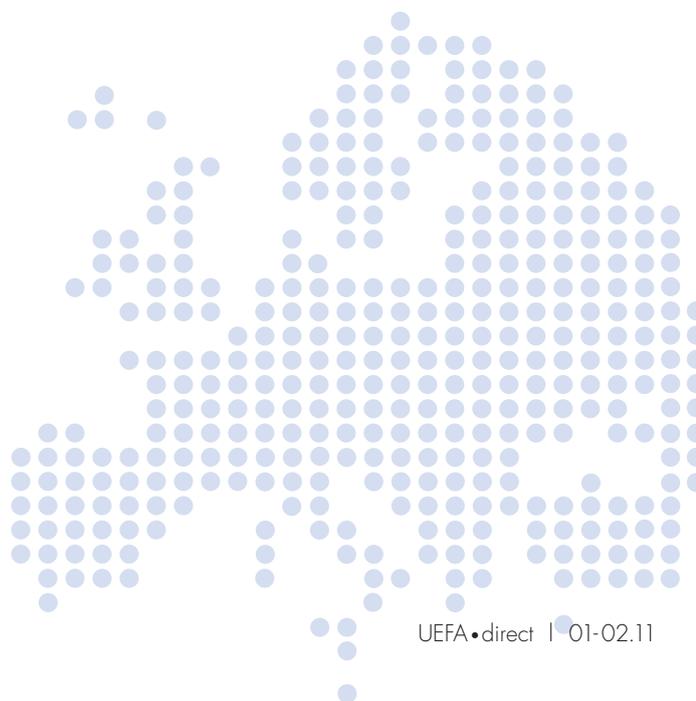
The elections go beyond the boundaries of Europe too, with three of UEFA's seven seats on the FIFA Executive Committee also up for renewal. Franz Beckenbauer's name is not on the ballot paper, as he has decided to

step down after four years of service on the committee and many more in football as a whole (where we hope he will remain active).

In this issue, we have the pleasure of introducing the different candidates and their manifestos. We hope this will go some way to helping our 53 member associations exercise their democratic rights in as well-informed a manner as possible. After that, it is up to them to make sure they elect the leaders they deserve!



Gianni Infantino
UEFA General Secretary



Under the electoral banner

Although UEFA was founded in Basel on 15 June 1954, its first administrative office was in Paris, at the French Football Federation's headquarters on Rue de Londres, where the general secretariat was led initially by Henri Delaunay, and then, after his death, by his son Pierre.

In December 1959, the French capital hosted the first Extraordinary UEFA Congress, held to determine the future of the general secretariat, which moved from Paris to Berne at the start of the following year, when Hans Bangerter took over the reins.

It was then almost a quarter of a century before the member association delegates met in Paris again, in June 1984, the day before the European Championship final, when France, captained by Michel Platini, won their first major international football title. The congress confirmed Jacques Georges as UEFA President, a position he had held on an interim basis since Artemio Franchi's death in an accident in August 1983.

A presidential election will also be on the agenda at this year's congress on 22 March, as the current UEFA President, Michel Platini, reaches the end of his term of office. By the deadline of 22 December, the outgoing president was the only candidate to have put his name forward.

As well as electing the president and carrying out the usual statutory tasks, such as approving UEFA's accounts and budget, the congress on 22 March will also elect seven Executive Committee members. The fifth vice-president, Joseph Mifsud (Malta), who has been an Executive Committee member since 1994, is the only one of the outgoing members not standing for re-election.

The other six, i.e. vice-presidents Senes Erzik (Turkey) and Ángel María Villar Llona (Spain), and members Gilberto Madaíl (Portugal), Mircea Sandu (Romania), Grigoriy Surkis (Ukraine) and Liutauras Varanavičius (Lithuania) are all standing for re-election, alongside seven other candidates. ●



Michel Platini (France)

Born on 21 June 1955. A former professional footballer and three-time winner of the Ballon d'Or, he played for AS Nancy-Lorraine, AS Saint-Etienne, Juventus and the French national team, which he then coached from 1988 to 1992.

Co-president of the 1998 FIFA World Cup Organising Committee, Michel Platini was also vice-president of the French Football Federation and special adviser to the FIFA president, Joseph S. Blatter, before being elected as a member of the UEFA and FIFA Executive Committees at the Stockholm Congress in 2002.

Michel Platini was elected UEFA President – and became an ex officio FIFA vice-president – at the UEFA Congress in Dusseldorf in 2007. ●

European representatives on the FIFA Executive Committee

The FIFA Executive Committee includes eight European members. The UEFA president is an ex officio vice-president of the world governing body. Another vice-president's seat is reserved for a representative of the four British associations (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales).

The third vice-president and one of the five European members are elected, in accordance with the UEFA Statutes, during the calendar year

preceding the final round of the European Football Championship. This year the terms of office of Ángel María Villar Llona (vice-president) and Franz Beckenbauer (member) are expiring. The latter is not standing for re-election and his compatriot Theo Zwanziger is the only candidate to replace him. Ángel María Villar Llona is also the only candidate for the vice-president's seat.

Presentation of the 13 candidates



**Norman
Darmanin
Demajo
(Malta)**

Born on 19 April 1952, Norman Darmanin Demajo has been president of the Malta Football Association since 2010, having previously held the position of treasurer from 1992 to 2001. At UEFA, he was a member of the Youth Committee from 1994 to 2001.

"I have decided to stand for election to the UEFA Executive Committee because I strongly believe in and support the values that UEFA is trying to instil in the football community, especially with regard to financial fair play, integrity and the priority given to the development of grassroots football. I think that the next few years will have a decisive effect on the future development of European football and I believe that with my financial background, combined with my passion for football, I can make a positive contribution to achieving the goals set by the UEFA Executive Committee. I would also like the opportunity to be part of the Executive Committee under the leadership of the current UEFA president, Michel Platini.

From a national point of view, I would like to maintain my country's presence on the UEFA Executive Committee as I also believe in the principle of solidarity and therefore support the fair representation of countries of all sizes in the UEFA executive.

My final motivation for standing for election was the great support I have received from the whole Maltese football community, who nominated me and to whom I would like to publicly show my appreciation and gratitude. I also take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Joseph Mifsud, for his contribution to European football during his many years of service on the UEFA Executive Committee." ●



**François
De
Keersmaecker
(Belgium)**

Born on 12 April 1958, François De Keersmaecker has been president of the Royal Belgian Football Association since 2006, before which he was vice-president for ten years.

"After more than four years as president of the Royal Belgian Football Association and thanks to my three years' experience as second vice-chairman of the UEFA Legal Committee, I have extended my knowledge and increased my network of international contacts, which I believe makes me an excellent candidate for one of the seats available on the UEFA Executive Committee.

My involvement in the Belgian/Dutch bid to host the 2018 World Cup, as well as my recent election to the FIFA Legal Committee, also show that my knowledge and expertise are valued.

If given the chance to work at the next level up, I would put my international contacts and legal insight to the service of UEFA's smaller member associations in particular.

As the European competitions continue to grow and become ever more important, dominating the international calendar, I wish to use my knowledge to protect the national teams and ease the congested international calendar. This objective is also perfectly in line with the strategy of the UEFA president, Michel Platini.

Moreover, I fully support UEFA's policy on centrally managing the national teams' TV rights, which would benefit all the associations. In fact, at the Royal Belgian Football Association, TV rights and commercial revenue have increased steadily over the last four years.

To sum up, with my knowledge and experience, I think I am perfectly placed to assume this crucial UEFA role." ●



**Senes Erzik
(Turkey)**

Born on 18 September 1942, Senes Erzik is honorary president of the Turkish Football Association, having been president from 1989 to 1997. He joined the UEFA Executive Committee in 1990 and is currently UEFA first vice-president, as well as chairman of the Club Licensing Committee and the Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee. He has been a member of the FIFA Executive Committee since 1996.

"The last elections, held in 2009, significantly changed the face of the Executive Committee. Although it is good and necessary to breath new life into the committee from time to time, I believe it

is just as important to retain a certain stability and to be able to rely on people with experience. There is no doubt that I am such a person, since I have been an Executive Committee member for more than 20 years. My desire to contribute to the life and reputation of UEFA and European football has not diminished in the slightest and I wish to continue devoting my efforts and experience to our sport.

I am also particularly attached to an area that I would like to see always associated with our sport, and that is its social responsibility. For football is more than a game, more than a sport. It can and should be an important means of integration, it can and should help our society to overcome the scourges of discrimination and violence in all their forms; to put it even more simply, it can and should contribute to the general well-being of the people.

European football is flourishing. Its public profile is huge. It is therefore an ideal platform for spreading the message of greater solidarity and greater sensitivity to the problems of our planet. It may be utopian, but it is certainly an ideal that I would like to continue to promote at the highest level of European football." ●

XXXV Ordinary UEFA Congress in Paris



Sergey Fursenko
(Russia)

Born on 11 March 1954, Sergey Fursenko has been president of the Russian Football Union since February 2010. From 2005 to 2008 he was chairman of FC Zenit St Petersburg, who won the UEFA Cup in 2008.

"During my term in office as president of the Russian Football Union, we have introduced many new things into the football life of our country. We have adopted a code of honour, reflecting the main values of Russian football, we have established an ethics committee to protect these values and combat negative phenomena, and we have organised an open national students' league, which will become a key pillar in the whole football structure of Russia and will help us to find new talents. Moreover, the open national students' league will enable us to stage competitions among the student leagues of Russia and our neighbouring countries. We have also estab-

lished a national football league body, which is responsible for organising competitions between our top division clubs and will promote football in the regions across virtually all of the country. Another big achievement has certainly been Russia being awarded the 2018 World Cup. This will have an important impact on football development not only in our country but in eastern Europe as a whole. Last but not least, we have developed and are now implementing a social campaign aimed at encouraging respect for representatives of all nationalities and countries, regardless of gender, ethnic background, religion or culture. I feel my responsibility in football is to develop our beautiful game and bring hope to those less fortunate than ourselves. This is what I believe to be the essence of fair play and solidarity throughout the world. My responsibility is also to contribute to a strong and united Europe without borders – to bring together western and eastern Europe through football. I wish to foster unity within the football family and to use football as model of fair play, tolerance, sportsmanship and transparency. The possibility of becoming a member of the UEFA Executive Committee represents for me both a chance and a huge responsibility: a chance for me to help to make a difference to people's lives, and a responsibility to take on the social impact of the game and to help to make the world a better place!" ●



Peter Gilliéron
(Switzerland)

Born on 5 May 1953, Peter Gilliéron has been president of the Swiss Football Association since 2009, having previously served as general secretary from 1994 to 2009. He has sat on UEFA committees since 1998 and is currently vice-chairman of the Stadium and Security Committee.

"I have been passionately dedicated to Swiss football at all levels for more than 15 years and I have experienced every aspect of European football. I now want to apply my experience in professional and grassroots football at European level, in the interests of UEFA and the other member associations. At the top of my agenda

is the qualitative and quantitative growth of UEFA and its member associations, without upsetting the financial balance, of course. From a sporting point of view, I want to dedicate myself to the promotion of national team and club football equally. The club and national team tournaments and championships staged by UEFA constitute the financial basis of the organisation and, by extension, many of its member associations too. It is therefore critical that these spectacular competitions are promoted and protected in equal measure. The national associations should use the funds they receive to promote both grassroots and professional football in their countries and, when doing so, remain particularly mindful of the long-term financial stability of their association and its clubs. Professional and grassroots football should develop alongside each other. The political, economic and social importance of football also needs to be better recognised in society. I know what needs to be done to consolidate and even improve the position of European football, and, being Swiss, I am used to working with people from different cultures and in different languages. Just like on the pitch, the focus must be on respect and fair play." ●



Ivan Hašek
(Czech Republic)

Born on 6 September 1963, Ivan Hašek, a former international footballer, has been president of the Football Association of the Czech Republic since 2009 after having been general secretary in 1999. He previously coached AC Sparta Praha and the Czech national team. At UEFA, he is a member of the National Team Competitions Committee and the Jira Panel.

"The Czech Republic is a country with a long football tradition. I could mention successes from the sixties and seventies or the glorious performances of the Czech team during EURO '96 and EURO 2004, but our history is not the only thing we can be proud of: this year is looking very successful for the Czech U21 team, which has a place at the forthcoming European Championship finals in Denmark.

The above facts were my first impetus to stand for election to the UEFA Executive Committee, as I feel that our country deserves to be represented at the top of the European football governing body. Also, we should not forget the tradition of Czech football's strong diplomatic presence in UEFA. Take long-time member and vice-president of the UEFA Executive Committee, Václav Jíra, for example, or our last representative in the executive, František Chvalovský. Both were people with a significant position in European football diplomacy and I would like to continue their efforts.

My standing for election to the UEFA Executive Committee cannot be considered as the personal ambition of Ivan Hašek. I am very well aware of the position of football in Czech sport. Ours is the biggest sports association, with more than 500,000 members, representing almost 5% of the population of the Czech Republic and therefore influencing social and cultural activities in our country. This also significantly influenced my decision to stand.

The Football Association of the Czech Republic does not care only for personal interests and problems. We see football in a global context and would like, in cooperation with other football associations, to take an active role in developing the central European football region especially. With this in mind, it would be useful for Czech football to have a representative in the highest organ of European football's governing body." ●



Grzegorz Lato
(Poland)

Born on 8 April 1950, Grzegorz Lato, a former Polish international, has been president of the Polish Football Association since October 2008 and is vice-chairman of the UEFA Football Committee.

"It has been over 40 years since Poland was last represented on the UEFA Executive Committee, by Leszek Ryłski. I have decided that now is the right time to make good use of my experience as a football player and official and stand in the coming elections. The efficient preparations for UEFA EURO

2012 have confirmed me in this decision. They are an example of the fact that, in order to achieve success, it is worth pursuing your greatest dreams and standing up to the most difficult of challenges.

If I am elected to the Executive Committee, I would like to support the development of children's and youth football, as well as protecting minors. I would also like to see the financial fair play regulations ensure the economic well-being of all clubs, including smaller ones. I pledge to look after the interests of smaller and medium-sized associations, ensuring the development of football in their countries and providing opportunities for growth across the whole of Europe.

My motto is 'football unites people'. The universal words of my great fellow countryman, Pope John Paul II, confirm me in this belief: sport can promote such values as loyalty, honesty, friendship and solidarity. I can assure you that these values have always been dear to me and I intend to support all efforts to ensure the close integration of our European football family." ●



Mircea Sandu
(Romania)

Born on 22 October 1952, Mircea Sandu, a former Romanian international, has been president of the Romanian Football Federation since 1990, after having served as general secretary. He first became a member of the UEFA Executive Committee in 2007 and is currently chairman of the Women's Football Committee.

"Firstly, I consider it a duty to share my 47 years of football experience as a player and administrator, at both domestic and international level, for the benefit of the whole European football family. I have tried, together with the other members of the UEFA Executive Committee, to initiate and develop several assistance, knowledge-sharing and cooperation programmes in various areas, and I believe that we have been successful, although I am well aware that there remains plenty to do and is still room for improvement. Acknowledging the total commitment of all the national associations to date, enabling UEFA to run all these projects, I also decided to stand for re-election because – in addition to the experience I have to offer – I would like the opportunity to continue to share and develop my ideas and projects, as well as to support the valuable programmes brought to the attention of UEFA by its members, its administration and other members of the UEFA Executive Committee. We are the representatives of UEFA's members, together we make up the European football family, and I consider myself to be well-placed to work on its behalf for another four years. It is not only a duty, but also a responsibility and a reason to be proud." ●



Gilberto Madail
(Portugal)

Born on 12 December 1944, Gilberto Madail has been president of the Portuguese Football Federation since 1996 and is a member of the national sports council. He was first elected to the UEFA Executive Committee in 2007, after having served as a co-opted member from 2004 to 2007. He is also currently chairman of the National Team Competitions Committee.

"Football is undoubtedly my passion and it was a great honour when I became a member of the UEFA Executive Committee in May 2004. Portugal is a small country in a global context but its love for football

is unique. This nation is proud to be the motherland of some of the best players and coaches worldwide and to usually have its national teams and clubs in the most advanced stages of the top competitions.

Having been president of the Portuguese FA for almost 15 years has given me a good and real insight into the needs and difficulties of small national associations, but also a wider perspective of the challenges and concerns faced at the highest level. In this long period the Portuguese national teams have become stronger than ever, achieving prestige and respect, and the federation itself has had the privilege of hosting EURO 2004, the 2005 UEFA Cup final, the European Under-21 Championship finals in 2006 and the European Futsal Championship finals in 2007, among other important international events appreciated by all involved.

I firmly believe that I can continue to contribute to the development of football and its unity, as I have been doing as member of the Executive Committee, chairman of the National Team Competitions Committee and deputy chairman of the Youth and Amateur Football Committee." ●



Borislav Mihaylov
(Bulgaria)

Born on 12 February 1963, Borislav Mihaylov has been president of the Bulgarian Football Union since 2005, after having served as vice-president from

2001 to 2005. A former international footballer, he played 102 matches with the Bulgarian national team. At UEFA, he is currently vice-chairman of the Referees Committee.

"My life has always been connected to football. My first memory as a child is of my father holding a ball in his hands. It could have been the same ball I later chased for 18 years as a professional player. I have had so many glorious moments and some disappointments on the field, because football is an extraordinary game – a projection of real life. I still love football as much as in my early years

and I am working with the same passion for an even brighter future for the game. I believe I could be very useful to the UEFA Executive Committee, with my football and sports management knowledge. Our beautiful game is facing some exciting challenges and the broader European football family must work hard every day to preserve and protect the spirit of the fair play. UEFA has created the most successful tournaments and brands in football and, at the same time, has never stopped developing the game all over Europe. I hope to get the chance, as a member of the Executive Committee, to help to achieve the goals of our organisation." ●



Grigoriy Surkis
(Ukraine)

Born on 4 September 1949, Grigoriy Surkis has been president of the Football Federation of Ukraine since 2000. He is also vice-chairman of the Ukrainian Olympic Committee. Having been a co-opted member of the UEFA Executive Committee from 2004 to 2007, he was elected as a full member in 2007. He is currently chairman of the Youth and Amateur Football Committee.

"Over the last four years, since the UEFA Executive Committee's decision to award Ukraine and Poland the hosting of EURO 2012, I have been assigned huge responsibilities. Right away, I started lobbying for the interests of central and eastern Europe on behalf of these two countries. Now, my colleagues and I are responsible for the esprit de corps of European football."

This is a relevant and well-timed challenge. Nowadays, in my view, it is important to establish the idea of our football family becoming stronger in new centres of the Old World, and to ensure a brilliant, unforgettable and unique event there for the European community.

My top priorities in my activities on the UEFA Executive Committee and standing committees are our basic principles – equality, justice, solidarity, respect, fair play and caring about football. In my time in office I have been able to acquire truly invaluable experience and apply this to real projects.

My current goals for EURO 2012 are similar to the objectives of the UEFA Youth and Amateur Football Committee, which I chair. In both contexts, we are talking about contributing to the future of football, providing a legacy of sports infrastructure, renovating and building stadiums, increasing the game's fan base and strengthening its grassroots.

As part of the UEFA team which creates football history and inspires supporters, I am honoured and determined to pursue this noble mission alongside my Executive Committee colleagues. We care about football as a diplomatic instrument and a powerful means to unite continents. I am proud of and utterly devoted to my work." ●



Liutauras Varanavičius
(Lithuania)

Born on 17 March 1970, Liutauras Varanavičius has been president of the Lithuanian Football Federation since 2000. He is also member of the Lithuanian Olympic Committee. He has sat on UEFA committees since 2002 and was first elected to the Executive Committee in 2009. He is currently chairman of the Media Committee.

First of all I would like to express my gratitude to the wide football community that supported my candidacy for a seat on the UEFA Executive Committee two years ago.

Prior to my election, I pledged to concentrate on the interests of the national associations, making their partnership with UEFA as effective as possible.

I strongly believe that UEFA should balance the interests of club football with those of the national associations. As one of the longest serving national association presidents in Europe, I am pleased to have noticed a shift in UEFA towards cooperation with the associations.

On my initiative, the Executive Committee has agreed to a new set of rules whereby every appointment of a member association official to a UEFA position is coordinated with the corresponding national association. I am also happy that my constant promotion of media rights centralisation has brought this idea to a point where it is very close to becoming a reality. This will be of paramount importance to the finances of the national associations across Europe and will allow us to concentrate on football development.

However, I feel making more progress was rather difficult during a relatively short two-year term in the office and I am perfectly confident of my ability to contribute more. Consequently, I have put forth my candidacy for another term at the UEFA Executive Committee.

I believe continuity is important in football and I hope that I can further pursue my objectives in working for the interests of the whole European football family. ●



Ángel María Villar Llona
(Spain)

Born on 21 January 1950, Ángel María Villar Llona played for Athletic Club de Bilbao before turning to football administration. He has been president of the Spanish Football Federation since 1988 and a member of the Spanish Olympic Committee since 1997. He was elected to the UEFA Executive Committee in 1992, becoming vice-president in 2000. He is currently also chairman of the UEFA Referees Committee. He has been a member of the FIFA Executive Committee since 1998 and vice-president since 2002.

"At 61, football has given me almost everything: happiness, disappointments, friends, challenges and unforgettable moments that demonstrate the beauty of the game, the skill of the striker, the agility of the keeper, the courage of the referee, the tactical prowess of the coach... It is these real-life experiences that have given me the strength today to want to continue dedicating my life to football and to what it can give to future generations by doing everything I can to ensure our game remains a symbol of unity and solidarity among all people – men and women."

My vision for football is based on 6 key areas, which are consistent with the 11 values adopted by the UEFA Congress in Copenhagen: football is a game, a sport and a form of entertainment; the equality of member association rights and obligations is fundamental; football must retain its autonomy, rooted in good governance; solidarity between national associations is vital; minors must be protected; and women's football and referee training and education are important areas for development." ●

Under-21s in Israel in 2013

The Executive Committee held its first meeting of the year, chaired by the president, Michel Platini, at UEFA headquarters in Nyon on 27 and 28 January.

With special guest Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth (see pages 10-11), in attendance, the meeting was used, among other things, to discuss current affairs in European football, including the possible suspension of the Football Federation of Ukraine as a result of state interference. The committee was unanimous in its support of FIFA's position on the matter, which is also in line with Article 7bis of the UEFA Statutes. Since the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation is also under threat of suspension, the Executive Committee took a precautionary measure with regard to the 2011-13 European Under-21 Championship. It decided that the teams of these two associations would be drawn into groups of six instead of five at the draw in early February, to minimise the potential for disruptions (result of the draw on UEFA.com).

The committee also had the task of appointing a host for the final round of the competition. After the withdrawal of Greece, Hungary and the Republic of Ireland, five candidates remained: the national associations of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, England, Israel and Wales. The National Team Competitions Committee's assessment of all five bids had been positive but in a single ballot the Executive Committee selected Israel.

Futsal Cup in Kazakhstan

The Executive Committee also decided who would host the final round of the 2011 UEFA Futsal Cup, which is taking place from 28 April to 1 May. It entrusted semi-finalists Kairat Almaty and the Football Federation of Kazakhstan with this task. The other teams in the final round are SL Benfica, ASD Città di Montesilvano C/5 and Sporting Clube de Portugal.

Another item on the agenda was the UEFA Convention on Referee Education and Organisation, which continues to extend its reach. The Executive Committee approved seven new signatories, namely the member associations of Andorra, England, Georgia, Latvia, Romania, Spain and Ukraine. It also authorised a special agreement with the Liechtenstein Football Association giving the association the status of partial signatory to the convention.

As regards the UEFA Grassroots Charter, the Football Association of Albania has obtained its first star, while Austria and Russia have both received their fifth. The next Grassroots Day will be on 25 May and the publicity



UEFA

campaign surrounding the event will be even bigger than last year, thanks to UEFA.com, big-name ambassadors and activities organised all over Europe, the flagship event being a Grassroots Festival in London in the week leading up to the UEFA Champions League final.

Regions' Cup in Portugal

In other matters, the Executive Committee approved the renewal of the memorandum of understanding between UEFA and the Alliance of European Football Coaches' Associations for another three years (until December 2013) and the programme and agenda of the Ordinary UEFA Congress, taking place in Paris on 22 March.

The committee was also given a progress report on the Legacy project, the aim of which is to preserve the video archives of European football, centralising, digitalising and cataloguing them, and then making them easily accessible online.

Finally, the committee noted that the final round of the UEFA Regions' Cup would take place from 21 to 28 June in Portugal. ●

European Commissioner visits UEFA

The UEFA Executive Committee had a very special guest at its meeting on 28 January in Nyon: the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Androulla Vassiliou of Cyprus, who – although it is not in her job title – also has responsibility for sport. This was a historic occasion, as it was the first time a European Commissioner had ever visited UEFA and was in itself a crystal-clear sign of the excellent relations between UEFA and the EU institutions.

The Executive Committee meeting on Friday morning started with the commissioner presenting the European Commission's recently published communication on sport, a sort of roadmap for sports policy in the EU. Many points raised in the document are fantastic news for European football. Among other things, the European Commission blueprint advocates the centralised sale of audiovisual rights and supports many of the cornerstones of the European sports model: financial solidarity between the grassroots and professional game, open competitions, the pyramid model and its principles

of relegation and promotion, as well as the organisation of sport as a national concern. Ms Vassiliou's presentation was followed by a lively exchange of views with the Executive Committee members.

Women's football gains ground

In her opening remarks, the commissioner noted the absence of women in the room, something that many Executive Committee members picked up on in their comments. Theo Zwanziger was the first to take floor, assuring the commissioner that UEFA *"takes the promotion of women's football very seriously."* He went on to highlight recent achievements in promoting women's football in Germany, and the chairman of the UEFA Medical Committee Chairman, Michel D'Hooghe, pointed out that in many European countries football was the number one sport among women. But, of course, a lot of work still remains to be done.

Hard work bears fruit

All the committee members complimented the commissioner on the perseverance and hard work that the ambitious communication on sport had required. Ángel María Villar Llona also thanked her for her vision: *"I think the document is overdue but it has arrived, so I congratulate you on that, because you led this effort and we are very pleased with it."*

Ms Vassiliou responded by noting that the document was the result of input by various stakeholders, *"by people like you"*, thanking UEFA for its valuable contribution during the consultation process. She specified that EU action in the field of sport was not about legislating or telling sport organisations how to go about things, but rather about adding value and sharing good practice between countries.



Androulla Vassiliou with the UEFA president



Photos: UEFA

In discussion with the members of the Executive Committee

Social intergration

Michael van Praag raised the issue of football as a means of social integration, something in which the European Commission also believes strongly. He stressed the importance of addressing the scourges of racism and violence, which have unfortunately made a nasty resurgence in European football stadiums of late. Joseph Mifsud also raised the issue of violence, asking the commissioner to take the matter up with the Swedish member of the European Commission responsible for home affairs. Mr Van Praag in turn urged the commissioner to promote the creation and reinforcement of networks between different countries, linking their different public authorities and police forces. These networks facilitate the exchange of information, which is vital to efforts to prevent violence in football.

Ms Vassiliou told the Executive Committee that addressing the problem of violence in football was close to her heart and that she fully agreed with the zero tolerance approach established by the UEFA president, Michel Platini. She also promised to discuss the issue with her colleague Cecilia Malmström.

Centralised sale of media rights supports grassroots

Mircea Sandu wanted to draw attention to betting as an important source of income for sport, especially at the grassroots. It was however important, he said, that betting activities be governed by rules which acknowledge the intellectual property rights of the competition organisers. Theo Zwanziger added that the centralised sale of TV rights was a way to redirect money from top-level football to the grassroots. *"It's all about solidarity,"* he said, and he hoped the EU institutions would remember that.

Ms Vassiliou noted that financial solidarity between the professional and grassroots levels was an important

issue for the European Commission, and this was reflected in its communication. *"Solidarity is the keyword,"* she said, and went on to spell out: *"Collective selling of TV rights – we support it."*

Transfers of minors

Allan Hansen and Geoffrey Thompson both raised the issue of the transfer of under-18s, hoping that this could be restricted in Europe as it is in other parts of the world.

Ms Vassiliou told the Executive Committee that she and her staff were already studying data submitted by UEFA on the transfer of minors. This work was being done together with her colleague László Andor, European Commissioner responsible for employment policy, as well as with the European Commission's legal services.

Long road travelled

Grigoriy Surkis, coming from Ukraine, a non-EU member state, took the floor to highlight the importance of dialogue between the football family and the EU institutions. He noted that by talking to representatives of football associations, politicians reached an important part of the world of sport.

Ms Vassiliou replied: *"We consider the sports movement, with football at the top, as our partners. There are many things we can't do alone, and you need us too, so it is a win-win situation."*

The UEFA president summed up the meeting: *"Relations between UEFA and the EU institutions have come a long way since the Bosman ruling. Commissioner Vassiliou has an open invitation to UEFA. She is always welcome to visit us here in Nyon, and we know that we are also welcome in Brussels."* ●

Securing a long-term balance

UEFA has launched its financial fair play concept, a move which is aimed at ensuring European club football's future well-being and curbing some of the financial excesses which have arisen in the European club game. The European body therefore devoted the day of 11 January to explaining the concept, as well as presenting its third club licensing benchmarking report examining club football finances.

UEFA emphasises that the financial fair play concept is vital, as it is designed to help clubs break free of the vicious cycle of escalating costs that has led to a number of clubs almost falling into the financial abyss. The measures are designed to protect European football's long-term health and viability, safeguard the integrity and smooth running of the competitions and stimulate long-term investment, for example, in youth development and sports installations. The UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations, issued last year, stipulate the requirements and criteria involved in the financial fair play measures, which supplement the existing licensing system under which clubs are assessed by the national licensing bodies.

Break-even requirement

The measures will be phased in over a period of three years. Tougher rules on overdue transfer payments and

payments to employees, as well as updated forecasts, will come into force next summer for clubs entering UEFA competitions. The centrepiece of the regulations, however, is the break-even requirement, under which clubs may not spend more than the income they generate. The break-even requirement will come into force for financial statements in the reporting period ending in 2012, to be assessed during the 2013/14 UEFA club competition season. Initial disciplinary measures against clubs who do not meet this break-even requirement will be possible in the 2013/14 season while the ultimate penalty – exclusion from competitions – could be imposed for the 2014/15 season. Clubs will be assessed on a risk basis by the Club Financial Control Panel, an independent group of experts who will communicate with the clubs via the national licensing bodies.

Addressing journalists, the UEFA president, Michel Platini, was unequivocal: *"It is a complex project, but*



one which I consider vital for football's future... Financial fair play is not aimed at putting clubs in difficulty. On the contrary, it aims to help them exit an infernal spiral which prevents certain of them from having a viable medium-term or long-term model. Supporters and lovers of football have no interest in seeing clubs that are part of European football's heritage disappear as a result of hazardous management. It was necessary for an authority to intervene, and this is what we are doing."

Disciplinary measures are envisaged for clubs who do not comply with the requirements laid down in the regulations and the president underlined that UEFA would not hesitate to take such measures: "If clubs do not respect the will of European football, they will have to face the consequences. There is no going back."

The financial fair play measures have been put in place with the cooperation and support of major European football stakeholders – including the clubs themselves. "From the first moment onwards, I supported this idea, because it was already clear at that time that European club football was going in the wrong direction from a financial point of view," said the chairman of the European Club Association (ECA), Karl-Heinz Rummenigge. "We have reached a good moment to take our foot off the pedal and put on the brakes, to get more rationality in club football." Mr Rummenigge expressed the firm conviction that clubs would do everything to comply with the rules, rather than miss out on a UEFA Champions League place for financial, rather than sporting, reasons.

Benchmarking report

The gathering also proved an appropriate moment to present UEFA's third club licensing benchmarking report on European club football. The report, published in English, French, German and Russian, covers financial results from 664 top-division clubs from all of UEFA's 53 member associations.

The report is comprehensive. Its content includes recent club licensing results and the evolution of licensing, information on the size and structure of domestic championships, average attendances and attendance trends, stadium structures and occupancy rates, the link between financial resources and on-pitch success, and the differences between countries in the timing of their transfer windows.

Club finances across Europe are examined in detail. The report states that football revenue continued to rise despite the economic recession – in 2009, total revenues for top division clubs reached a record €11.7bn (+4.8%). However, this increase in revenue was also accompanied by a larger increase of 9.3% in costs, which has had a severe effect on club profitability and contributed to record aggregate net losses of €1,179,000,000, almost double that of 2008.

More than half of European top clubs reported losses, with 28% reporting significant losses equivalent to spending €12 for every €10 of income. In addition, more than one in eight club auditors expressed uncer-

A panorama of European football



Published in English, French, German and Russian, the club licensing benchmarking report on the 2009 financial year can be downloaded in full from UEFA.com.

tainty over whether the club could continue as a going concern, reflecting these losses as well as many cases of club reliance on individual owners and/or precarious balance sheets.

Players' wages represent the most significant costs sustained by football clubs. The percentage of income paid to employees increased from 61% to 64% over the period. Transfer activity also slowed down owing to a lack of liquidity, and the consequence was increased financial difficulties for clubs which relied to a major extent on transfer revenue. The report says that an estimated €800m worth of transfer fees are not due to be paid for more than 12 months. With respect to youth football investments, top-league clubs generally gave priority to fielding experienced players with resultant higher salaries, or recruiting players trained at other clubs.

Average match attendance either remained stable or decreased in the majority of domestic championships, reflecting the tough economic times and a lack of new investment. The report states that just 19% of clubs own their own stadium, which means that most clubs cannot exploit their venue apart from on matchdays.

Top-division clubs across Europe face the same financial challenges, and the situation is even more challenging for clubs in lower divisions, where insolvency and bankruptcy are a real threat for many.

UEFA's financial fair play measures may be earmarked for the European competitions, but the report stresses that introducing similar measures at domestic level would also be beneficial in the long run. The objective of the measures is to encourage clubs to manage their finances in a more responsible manner, creating a balance between revenue, expenditure and investment. Clubs are being urged to get their finances in order now, so that they are in financially better shape for tomorrow... ●

A more professional approach

Each January UEFA brings Europe's top referees, as well as newcomers to the FIFA international list, to sunny climes to prepare for the second half of the season. Cyprus was the destination this year for the latest UEFA referee courses, from 30 January to 4 February.



UEFA

The 19th UEFA Advanced Course for Elite and Premier Referees featured 45 UEFA elite and premier referees, while the 20th UEFA Introductory Course for International Referees involved over 30 new European international referees.

The courses gave the referees and members of the UEFA Referees Committee an opportunity not only to review the first half of the season and prepare for assignments to come, but also to check fitness levels. Referees are now considered athletes as much as footballers are, and medical and weight checks are undertaken to ensure that they are in prime condition to conduct their role at the highest level. UEFA referee fitness expert Werner Helsen put the match officials through the exacting FIFA fitness test as part of the training element of the courses.

Visual tests

Innovation and development are the aims of the UEFA referee programme, and at the courses in Cyprus

a detailed visual test was introduced for all of the referees. "We have to look at referees' fields of vision," said Hugh Dallas, a member of the UEFA Referees Committee, "as well as their ability to 'fix a vision' – to take an instant photograph of an incident – their ability to focus on close or moving objects, and their ability to react to movements around them." Vision, focus and concentration are key parts of a top referee's armoury nowadays.

UEFA's new referees were instructed by UEFA Referees Committee members – themselves former top-level referees – on issues such as decision-making and positioning using footage from UEFA matches.

Experiences at the World Cup

The referees on the advanced course discussed a variety of issues with the Referees Committee, producing essential feedback in the constant search for improvement. Talks centred on referees' experiences at the FIFA World Cup in South Africa, as well as the ongoing experiment with additional assistant referees in the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and EURO 2012 qualifying competition.

The newcomers to the FIFA list were given a full introduction to their assignments at European level. They were tested on their English, this being the common language of refereeing, and were advised on how they should fulfil their roles as UEFA referees, from administrative tasks to conducting themselves as UEFA representatives when travelling to games abroad.

"The course also gives us our first opportunity to look at these new referees, and to look at their fitness levels – which are improving year after year," said Dallas. "I think we can put this down to the introduction of the UEFA Referee Convention, which has also provided funding to the national associations, and which is allowing them to invest in their referees.

"There is now a much more professional approach. We're now seeing at national level that referees are being monitored by fitness specialists and doctors – they are receiving all sorts of professional support." Such support by UEFA and the associations will doubtless help the referees to further improve their performance at the summit of the European and world game. ●

FC Internazionale Milano on top of the world

On 15 September 1965, Armando Picchi, captain of FC Internazionale Milano, lifted the European/South American Cup at the Avellaneda stadium in the Buenos Aires suburbs after his club had beaten Argentinian side Independiente over two legs (3-0, 0-0). The Italians had already won the trophy a year earlier by defeating the same opponents.

A little over 45 years later, on 18 December, FC Internazionale Milano found themselves on top of the world again at Zayed Sports City in Abu Dhabi, when their captain, Javier Zanetti, received the Club World Cup trophy after a 3-0 victory over the Congolese team TP Mazembe.

Two high points in the history of the Lombard club, one in black and white, the other in colour. Between these two events, the intercontinental club competitions underwent enormous change. Created in 1960 at the initiative of the South American confederation (CONMEBOL), with UEFA's support, the European/South American Cup was contested as an unofficial competition by the holders of the European Champion Clubs' Cup and the winners of its newly established South American equivalent, the Copa Libertadores. Initially played over two legs, with a third match if required in the early years (when goal difference did not count), the competition had a rather turbulent existence: calendar problems, acts of brutality, even on the pitch, and boycotts tarnished its image, to the point of bringing into question the wisdom of organising it at all. On more than one occasion, the European champions refused to participate and had to be replaced by the Champion Clubs' Cup runners-up. In 1975 and 1978, the competition was cancelled altogether.



Milito scores in the semi-final against Seongnam Ilhwa

Stabilisation

Nevertheless, the competition survived and found a new degree of stability when, in 1980, it was moved to a neutral venue, in Tokyo, where its sponsor created a new name and trophy for the match, which became known as the Toyota Cup. Japan continued to host the event until 2004, after which it was replaced by the Club World Cup, held in the same country.

Ever since the early 1960s, the competition had attracted the interest of other continents, initially North and Central America, whose confederation (CONCACAF) had asked, unsuccessfully, to participate. Its expansion came much later, when FIFA, which had refused to authorise the competition in the 1960s, decided to give it a global dimension in order to reflect the growing popularity and development of football in the other continents. The first global tournament was held in Brazil in 2000, but it was not really until 2005 that the current Club World Cup took off as the successor to the European/South America Cup.

A first

In December, a new breakthrough was achieved in terms of the competition's global dimension, when a club from a continent other than South America and Europe reached the final for the first time: TP Mazembe beat the Brazilian side Internacional in the semi-finals. Although the trophy was ultimately lifted by a European club for the fourth consecutive year – albeit with seven South Americans in their starting 11 – there is no doubt that a signal has been sent.

In the other semi-final, Rafael Benitez's Inter beat the South Koreans of Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma 3-0, thanks to goals from Stankovic, Zanetti and Milito. The three goals in the final were scored by Pandev, Eto'o and Biabiany. ●



Agência Estado

Twenty years of Russian championship

Women's football in Russia was born on 3 August 1911 when the Pushkin team beat Petrova Pazumovskaya 5-1 in driving rain.

Moscow had three women's teams at the time. Matches were still being played between men and women in the village of Nevinomisska in 1923, but the revolution and war meant that sport took a back seat. At that time, women's football was not established anywhere in the world. The Central Committee of the USSR declared it non grata, preferring more traditional sports such as gymnastics, cross-country skiing, swimming and athletics, in which the USSR won countless medals.

First championship

The first tournament held in the new Russia was organised in 1987 by the *Sobesednik* newspaper. The first Soviet championship took place in 1990, before it was renamed the Russian championship two years later, after more geopolitical upheavals.

Despite the relatively recent introduction of the sport, some Russian teams have already distinguished themselves in the UEFA Women's Champions League, including Zvezda-2005 and FC Rossiyanka. Zvezda, finalists

in 2008/09, will play in the quarter-finals in March. They have completed 20 matches at this level, winning 14, drawing 5 and losing only once, to FCR 2001 Duisburg in the 2009 final. FC Rossiyanka, winners of the domestic double last autumn, were knocked out in this season's round of 16, but reached the quarter-finals in 2007/08. Of 28 European matches, they have won 19, drawn 3 and lost 6.

Size problems

The Russian federation has faced problems linked to the size of its territory: the top division, which contains the best seven teams in the country, is organised on a national basis, but in reality these clubs are concentrated in western Russia, particularly the Moscow area. Perm, on the edge of the western Urals, is the furthest away. The seven elite professional clubs play each other four times, twice at home and twice away. Division one, the second national category, includes 32 clubs, spread all over the country, which would mean teams would have



Russia v England in a Women's EURO 2009 group match



Zvezda-2005 (Dariya Apanashchenko, No17) reached the 2009 final of the Women's Champions League

to cope with long journeys and time differences of up to seven hours if the division were not split into regional sections with varying numbers of teams: west, i.e. the St Petersburg-Moscow axis, south (Voronezh), central Volga (Samara, Kazan, Saratov), central Ural (Perm, Omsk, Ekaterinburg), Siberia (Krasnoyarsk) and east, which covers part of Siberia (Irkutsk, Vladivostok). Divisions two and three involve players aged over 14 and are organised on the same basis. The Russian Football Union (RFS) and the ministry of sport organise the Russian Cup (open to clubs from all the divisions), regional U19, U17 and U15 championships, a championship for sports and 'Olympic reserve' schools at U13 and U11 levels (the latter being mixed), a university championship and three tournaments designed to make up for the lack of regional competition: the Russian Leather Ball competition for U12s and two international tournaments, Kuban Spring (U19) and Euroasia (U17).

Annual calendar

Despite these arrangements, women players clearly have to deal with the same weather conditions as the men and their championships are played from spring until late autumn. Zvezda-2005 will therefore be emerging from a long winter break when they play their Champions League quarter-final.

Although competition from traditional sports remains fierce, the authorities promote the identification and training of young players by forcing the elite women's clubs to run a football academy or to train at least two groups of youngsters in the 10–12 and 13–15 age groups. Infrastructure also has to meet stringent criteria. The country's instability caused its population to shrink between 1988 and 1992, which has had an impact on the number of sportswomen in this age bracket, but there is no shortage of younger players. The RFS has appointed Dutch woman Vera Pauw as technical director for women's football. Part of her remit is to develop the sport throughout the country, since girls are currently only taking up football in a few regions, mainly Moscow, Krasnodar,

the Ural, the Volga region and Siberia. Irina Banarova, RFS spokesperson, describes the situation: "Vera Pauw is very dynamic and capable. She coached the Dutch national team for six years, leading them to the semi-finals at EURO 2009. She is drawing up a plan, particularly aimed at coaching boys and girls together. We are currently a middle-ranking country, a long way behind countries such as Germany, Sweden and a few others, but we want to join the international elite in the next two years."

The press, which is mainly interested in the national team, is waiting for success at global level before increasing its coverage of women's football, although three federal TV channels and five or six newspapers already report on the major events. The Russian women's team's greatest successes to date were achieved at the 1993 and 1995 European Championships, when they reached the quarter-finals. There are not many more rungs to climb before reaching the very top.

● Pascale Pierard



Vera Pauw, Russia's new technical director for women's football

Sportstyle

The Krasnoarmeysk complex

FC Rossiyanka, the main supplier of players for the Russian national team, are coached by a former player, Tatiana Egorova, and have a superb sports complex, SC Krasnoarmeysk, situated in the town of the same name, which was founded in 1947 around 40km north-east of Moscow. This sports complex, one of the best in Europe, is the training base for the club and the national team and illustrates Russia's desire to develop women's football. Designed to be a training centre and venue for large-scale events, the complex includes a sports centre with seating for 900 spectators, a grass pitch with a stand for 5,000, a heated artificial pitch with 450 seats, a football stadium and a sports hall, as well as extensive parking areas for coaches and cars, a hotel and bar, a banqueting hall, conference rooms, massage and relaxation facilities, an aerobics, wrestling and boxing hall, a swimming pool, a gym and saunas.

P.P.

Raymond Kopa honoured



Nascimbene/AFP

After Alfredo Di Stéfano, Sir Bobby Charlton and Eusebio, former French international Raymond Kopa is the latest in a distinguished line of ex-players chosen by Michel Platini to receive the UEFA President's Award, a tribute to great footballers who have shaped the history of European football and are exemplary in both their sporting achievements and personal qualities.

The ceremony was held in Reims, ahead of the Stade de Reims v Le Havre match on 5 February. Now aged 79, Kopa was one of the leading lights of the nascent European Champion Clubs' Cup, taking Stade de Reims to the 1956 final and winning the next three with Real Madrid CF.

He also took bronze with France at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden and was awarded the Ballon d'or in the same year. ●

Institutional discrimination seminar

The football associations of England and the Netherlands, the FARE network and UEFA joined forces to organise a seminar on institutional discrimination in Amsterdam on 19 January.

It was a first, vital step in the fight against a form of discrimination that, although not as prominent as racism, represents a collective failure by an organisation which can be both involuntary and unconscious. As explained by one of the speakers, Steven Bradbury, a

researcher at Loughborough University's institute of youth sport, this makes it a particularly dangerous phenomenon.

The first step therefore has to be to draw attention to institutional discrimination, in an attempt to overcome the ignorance it can stem from. On its own, however, this is not enough. It is also vital to clearly identify the contexts and specific situations in which people find themselves subjected to such discrimination as a result of their ethnic or cultural origins, gender or religion. Among other things, the seminar participants considered female representation and the level of training offered to women in the fields of both coaching and administration. In this area, Norway's quota system is one possible solution.

The participants also noted that, while great diversity is evident in the highest echelons of European professional football, the same can in no way be said of club management structures. Even in the management boards of national and regional associations, there are very few representatives of minority groups. Improvements in this area could be brought about with better guidance and education for young footballers in preparation for their post-football careers.

This first seminar at least gave the participants a fresh perspective on the situation and, in doing so, laid the foundations for change. ●

News from the UEFA administration

In December, Stéphane Igolén was officially appointed services director, having performed the role ad interim since July. The team of directors, who all report directly to the general secretary, Gianni Infantino, is now made up of Theodore Theodoridis (deputy general secretary and director of the national associations division), Alasdair Bell (legal affairs), Alexandre Fourtoy (communications), Stéphane Igolén (services), Josef Koller (finance) and Giorgio Marchetti (competitions).

As services director, Stéphane Igolén's responsibilities include supervising the construction of UEFA's third office building, which will provide some 190 additional workstations for UEFA staff by the end of the year, and the renovation of the Villa La Falaise next door to UEFA HQ, which is being converted into a place for receiving football leaders and other special guests. ●



UEFA

Albania
www.fshf.org

New regional structures to support football development

The Albanian Football Association (FSHF) has implemented a new organisational structure for 2011, restructuring and strengthening its technical, competitions and refereeing sectors and creating new departments such as marketing, legal affairs and licensing, and human resources. The most significant change is the establishment of six regional offices that will operate in Albania's main regions: Tirana, Durrës, Shkoder, Elbasan, Korçe and Fier.

The main reason for the executive committee's decision is its desire to help the general secretariat to cope with an increased volume of work and activities and to meet the ambitious objectives set for 2014. The aim is to in-

crease the popularity of football on a massive scale, as well as to improve standards within the game. Regarding youth football, the association's objective is to double the current number of teams and players by 2014. Albania's signing of the UEFA Grassroots Charter and the construction of several artificial pitches through UEFA's HatTrick programme have helped the association to gain momentum and given it a good chance of success.

Furthermore, the FSHF is preparing to launch an intensive, long-term programme in collaboration with primary and secondary schools all over the country. Negotiations with the government to include football in the primary school curriculum have progressed and if successful will be a massive step forward for Albanian football. As a first, immediate measure, several local and regional football tournaments for secondary school teams are starting up this year. Another ini-



The number of youth teams is set to double between now and 2014

tiative to develop football on a large scale is this year's launch of the country's first local tournaments for over-35-year-olds.

Achieving these objectives, at the same time as organising other regular activities, requires additional, qualified staff and a constant presence in the regions. The creation of regional offices will bring the association closer to clubs, youth teams, schools and all others involved in football activities in Albania.

● Press office

Armenia
www.ffa.am

National championship awards ceremony

The awards ceremony of the 19th Armenian championship took place on 23 December at the Aram Khachatryan concert hall.

To start, gold medals and the champions' cup were awarded to Kakhsi, winners of the 2009/10 futsal championship. One of the team's players, Armen Gyulambaryan, was also voted futsal forward and player of the year.

The players and coaches of FC Pyunik were then invited on stage to receive their premier league champions' cup and gold medals from the president of the Football Federation of Armenia (FFA), Ruben Hayrapetyan. Silver medals went to FC Banants and bronze to Ulysses FC.

Other awards were presented in various categories. Karlen Mkrtychyan (FC Pyunik)



FC Pyunik Ararat lift the championship trophy

was named Armenian player of the year; the award for best striker was shared by Gevorg Ghazaryan and Marcos Pizzelli, both of whom play for FC Pyunik and scored 16 goals each in 2010; and the head coach of FC Pyunik and the Armenian national team, Vardan Minasyan, was voted coach of year.

The creative team behind the Extra Time programme won an award for coverage of Armenian football, and various companies and media presented their own prizes.

The Armenian Development Bank's best young player award went to FC Banants midfielder Valter Poghosyan, who also received a prize from the Armenian weekly *Football+* in the discovery of the year category.

The information agency Panarmenian.net awarded a prize to Vardan Minasyan for his contribution to the successful performances of the national team, and the magazine *Totalfootball* presented an award for the player most often represented in the championship 'team of the day' to FC Pyunik captain Sargis Hovsepian.

Finally, members of the Football Federation of Armenia fan club awarded a prize to Yura Movsisyan.

● Tigran Israelyan

Austria
www.oefb.at

Football boosts Austrian TV ratings

At the end of January, Alfred Ludwig, CEO of the Austrian Football Association (ÖFB) and Austrian Football Marketing, was able to present some interesting and very positive facts and figures for last year to ÖFB sponsors and partners at a sponsors' workshop in Flachau, Salzburg.

The four friendlies and two European Football Championship qualifying matches played at home in 2010 were attended by a total of 116,700 spectators in Klagenfurt (v Croatia and Switzerland), Salzburg (v Kazakhstan) and Vienna (v Denmark, Azerbaijan and Greece). The Austrian national team was therefore watched by an average crowd of 19,450.

As usual, the national team also attracted high TV ratings last year. An average of 622,000 viewers watched ORF's coverage of the team's seven international matches

in 2010 (the four friendlies and two European Championship qualifiers at home, plus one European Championship qualifier away). The peak viewing figure for each match averages out at 686,572, the third-best figure in the past eight years. The second half of the "thriller in Brussels" even broke the 1 million barrier, with up to 1,022,000 fans watching the match of the year on ORF – a remarkable figure, considering that Austria has "only" around 8 million inhabitants.

Last year's advertising value for ÖFB sponsors was an impressive €39 million from only seven international matches, a similar figure to 2007 (€38.8 million) and 2009 (€40 million), when the national team played twelve and nine matches respectively.

The figures for the 2009/10 ÖFB Cup are also encouraging. The final between the winners, SK Sturm Graz, and SC Wiener Neustadt, played in a full stadium, attracted the largest ORF audience for any match

between two Austrian clubs and enthralled more than half a million TV viewers in May 2010. Over 21 hours of airtime was devoted to the ÖFB Cup last season, giving the competition's sponsor, Stiegl, a total of €2.21 million in advertising value during that period.

● Peter Klingmüller



Impressive audience figures for Austrian TV



Partnership contract and player of the year 2010

A partnership contract between the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) and Pasha Insurance was signed in the Rotunda Hall of the Landmark Business Centre on 21 December. Elkhon Mammadov, general secretary of the AFFA, and Nofal Rzayev, chairman of the board of directors of Pasha Insurance, put their names to the contract.

Elkhon Mammadov said: *"The ranks of the AFFA's partners will be boosted by another influential organisation – Pasha Insurance. We thank Pasha Insurance on behalf of the Azerbaijan football family for their decision to contribute to the development of football in Azerbaijan. We believe in this cooperation and are proud to declare that the AFFA and Pasha Insurance are one team."*

Nofal Rzayev added: *"I hope that the contract will have a positive impact on the development of Azeri football and that this cooperation will be long-term. We have seen the changes for the better that have occurred in Azerbaijan football, so decided that we should provide financial support to encourage this process."*

Another important event which took place on 21 December was an awards ceremony for the best Azerbaijan internationals of 2010. In a poll conducted among premier league coaches and captains, as well as the Azerbaijan national team head coach, Bertie Vogts, the AFFA's technical director, Bernhard Lippert, and veteran player Alakbar Mammadov, it was decided that the best Azerbaijan football player in 2010 was the national team captain, Rashad Sadygov (Eskisehirspor, Turkey). The AFFA general secretary presented the player of the year award to Sadygov, who scored Azerbaijan's decisive goal against Turkey (1-0) in their EURO 2012 qualifying round match in Baku.

An award was also presented to the most capped player in 2010, Mahir Shukurov (FC Anzhi Makhachkala, Russia), who notched up about 810 minutes of match time for the national A team in 2010.

Another important award went to Emin Kurdov (Azmetko FC), the best beach soccer player in the Azerbaijan championship.

The public voted for the best female footballer of the year, selecting Zhale Mammadova, who plays for the Azerbaijan Women's U15s. She also received a special prize from Mark Herward, UNICEF representative in Azerbaijan.

The best futsal player of the year, according to the results of the poll, was Vitali Borisov (Araz Naxçivan).

At the end of the ceremony the audience was shown a video clip prepared by the AFFA on the Azerbaijan national team. ● *Ulviyya Najafova*



The general secretary, Elkhon Mammadov (left), and Nofal Rzayev of Pasha Insurance sign the partnership agreement



BATE players in the spotlight

On 17 December, the Football Federation of Belarus (BFF) held its annual end-of-year ceremony after one of the most successful seasons in the history of Belarusian football.

The best players of 2010 received awards in various categories. Almost all these awards were picked up by the Belarusian champions, FC BATE Borisov: Sergey Veremko was named best goalkeeper of the year, Aleksandr Yurevich best defender, Renan Bressan best midfielder and Vitaly Rodionov best forward. Renan Bressan took home two more awards, for top goalscorer (15 goals) and best player in the national championship. BATE's coach, Victor Goncharenko, was also voted coach of the year, narrowly beating Georgy Kondratiev, who helped Belarus to qualify for the finals of the 2009–11 European Under-21 Championship taking place in Denmark.

The footballer of the year award went to Yuri Zhevnov, captain of the national A team and goalkeeper at FC Zenit St Petersburg. Zhevnov topped the poll organised by the BFF and its official publication, *Vsio o futbole* (All about football).

The following awards were also presented at the ceremony:

- Female player of the year: Oksana Shpak (FC Bobruichanka)
- Futsal player of the year: Aleksey Popov (FC Mapid Minsk)



A hat-trick of awards for BATE's Renan Bressan

- Beach soccer player of the year: Vadim Bokach (DUSSH Kirovsk)
- Referees of the year: Aleksey Kulbakov, Dmitry Zhuk, Stanislav Savitsky.

Sergey Kornilenko also received a special prize for his talent and dedication while playing for Belarus.

Having rounded off 2010, the BFF then kicked off the new year with the start of the first UEFA Pro-licence course in Belarus. As a result, 13 Belarusian football specialists will be studying from January to November, with a visit to VfB Stuttgart organised as part of the course.

● *Yulia Zenkovich*



Edin Dzeko remains national idol

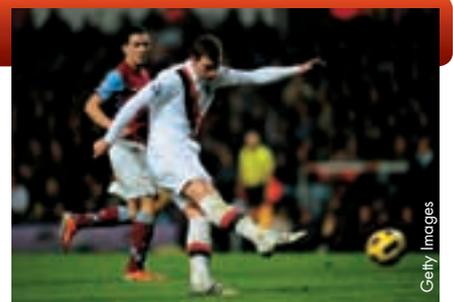
The Bosnia and Herzegovina national team striker Edin Dzeko (24) has been elected 'national idol' for the second time in a row. Meanwhile, ex-international Muhamed Konjic was given the task of compiling a selection of the country's best players of 2010. He picked the following ten: Edin Dzeko (VfL Wolfsburg), Emir Spahic (Montpellier Hérault SC), Miralem Pjanic (Olympique Lyonnais), Ermin Zec (Gençlerbirliği SK), Samir Bekric (Incheon United), Senijad Ibrić (HNK Hajduk Split), Sasa Papac (Rangers FC), Asmir Begovic (Stoke City FC) and Sejad Salihovic (TSG 1899 Hoffenheim).

Edin Dzeko's re-election as the country's national idol was doubtless both influenced by his being the top scorer in the Bundesliga last season, as well as his good performances for the national team.

"To get this award is a great honour and responsibility, especially as I am now the idol of the nation for the second time in a row. The competition, as in previous seasons, was very strong and if one of my team-mates on the national team were to have won the award instead, it wouldn't have been undeserved," he said.

Shortly after receiving his award, Edin Dzeko transferred from Wolfsburg to Manchester City FC for a record fee, not only for a player leaving the Bundesliga but for any player from the former Yugoslavia.

The best coach of 2010 was Vahid Halilhodzic, head coach of NK Dinamo Zagreb and former coach of the Ivory Coast, who he helped to qualify for the World Cup in South Africa. Vule Trivunovic of FK Borac Banja Luka was



Edin Dzeko debuts for Manchester City

named best player in the Bosnia and Herzegovina premier league and Amar Osim of FK Zeljeznicar was given the title of best premier league coach.

Finally, the football discovery of 2010 was the youngest member of the national team, Muhamed Besic of Hamburger SV.

A ceremony was also held recently at the coaches' training centre in Vogosca, where diplomas were awarded to coaches who had successfully completed UEFA Pro, A and B courses. UEFA Pro diplomas were awarded to Elvedin Beganovic, Anel Karabeg, Alexander Miljenovic, Milenko Radic, Denis Sadikovic, Sergio Barbieri, Tomislav Piplica and Azrudin Valentinc. Another 34 coaches received the UEFA A diploma and 32 the UEFA B.

And finally, the technical department of the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (NFSBiH) organised in Sarajevo a winter camp at the start of the year for the most talented girls born in 1995, 1996 and 1997. The aim of the camp was to gauge the technical, tactical and physical abilities of the girls and select players for the U17 national team, which is competing in European Championship qualifiers for the first time this autumn (2011/12 European Women's Under-17 Championship).

● *Fuad Krvavac*

Youth and amateur football awards

The ninth edition of the Czech youth and amateur football awards ceremony was held – this time for 2010 – at the historic Zofin Palace, opposite the national theatre in Prague, which has been staging numerous prestigious events for over a century.

The prize winners in the main categories were the same as the previous year.

AC Sparta Praha striker Václav Kadlec, for example, was chosen as the best young player of 2010, the 18-year-old having made his senior international debut, and even scored, in the EURO 2012 qualifier against Liechtenstein.

Lukás Reseťár (Era-Pack Chrudim) and Petra Divisová (SK Slavia Praha) also won player of the year awards for the second year running, in futsal and women's football respectively. They are both mainstays of the national teams.

Nikola Danihelková (AC Sparta Praha), Dominik Masek (1. FK Příbram) and futsal player Michal Seidler (Jistebník) were voted young talents of the year.

Coach of the year awards went to the head coach of the national futsal team, Tomás Neumann, for the fourth time in five years and to Vladimír Hruska, head coach of the national women's team.

Other youth coaches on the honours list included Petr Karoch, Zdenek Kosnovsky and Milos Krucky, who will soon celebrate his 80th birthday and used to coach the two former internationals and 1996 European Championship runners-up Pavel Kuka and Radek Bejbl at SK Slavia Praha.

The prizes for the best contributions to the 2010 grassroots campaign were awarded to sports journalist Frantisek Steiner for the book *Fotbal pod žlutou hvězdou* (Football under the Yellow Star), which describes the competitions organised in the Theresienstadt ghetto during



The 2010 award winners

the Second World War, and Czech television for the documentary film *Zaplatpánbuh za fotbal* (Thank God for Football), which won an award at a festival in Italy. ● Jaroslav Kolár

Advanced coaching in the Solomon Islands

The regional coach development manager of The Football Association, Geoff Pike, and FA coach and manager of Middlesex Wanderers AFC, Eddie McCluskey, delivered an intensive eight-day course in the Solomon Islands at the end of last year.

Their aim was to further the local coaches' coaching skills by giving them access to the licence level of The FA's international coaching award. They were accompanied by FA goalkeeping coach Billy Stewart who delivered a goalkeeping coaching course, the first of its kind run by The FA for the Solomon Islands Football Federation (SIFF).

Geoff has been instrumental in developing the international coaching award and was pleased with the outcome of both courses.

"The courses went extremely well, with all the coaches wanting more! They have a thirst for knowledge and are very studious with their work, spending hours in the classroom writing everything down. It has been a pleasure working with them and we leave the Solomon Islands as friends," he said.

Over 40 participants were trained over both courses and Eddie couldn't have been happier with their attitude: "A more enthusiastic group you could not wish to meet and they expressed a burning desire to acquire more football knowl-



Geoff Pike with two course participants

edge at all times, both for theory and practical work."

Billy was equally impressed. "The goalkeeping coaches all showed a massive improvement and a desire to keep learning. They will now go on to work in their coaching environment with a new understanding and the confidence to improve the future of the young goalkeepers of the Solomon Islands," he said.

The courses were closed by the SIFF president, Martin Alufurai, who praised the quality of the training that has been delivered to Solomon Islanders since the courses were first introduced in 2007.

"FA coaching courses have contributed greatly to the development of football in the Solomon Islands. I am sure that this year's course will help raise the standard of football further in this country," Alufurai said.

● Maria de León

Player development in focus

The FA of Finland and the Finnish Olympic Committee agreed on a development in sport programme in autumn 2009. A large working group was founded and, after a year of intensive work, produced its final report in January this year. Based on this report, the practical work can now commence.

Player development is a fundamental part of the FA of Finland's new strategy, for which the report sets out definitions and priorities. One

part of the development programme is the creation of a football training and research centre, which opens in February.

"The foundations have now been laid, and successfully I think. But the work which follows will determine the level we will ultimately reach. We are still in the early stages; the results will be seen only after long-term, systematic action," says Mika Laurikainen, Finland U21 head coach and one of the leading figures in the working group.

● Jukka Malm

Keeping up with the times

Always keen to expand its horizons, the French Football Federation (FFF) marked the start of the new year by launching an official Facebook page dedicated to its national team. Created for supporters of *Les Bleus*, the main aim of the site is to provide them with a virtual meeting place where they can share their passion with fellow fans.

It adds another string to the e-bow of the FFF, whose official website, fff.fr, has already secured the federation a high profile on the web. Moreover, the launch did not go unnoticed, with 100,000 Facebook users already fans of the page, which can be found at www.facebook.com/equipedefrance. For the FFF, the page and its following will help to promote the federation's official website and the loyalty scheme it plans to launch this spring.

The idea is to extend the federation's range of web platforms. Whereas the main purpose of the official website is to inform, providing exclusive content (official news, videos, photos, etc.) on the country's various national teams, the Facebook 'fan page' is above all a place for supporters of *Les Bleus* to meet and discuss their team. It is a platform for all those who have an allegiance to *Les Bleus*, who have celebrated their victories and suffered their defeats, to share these highs and lows, past and present, with fellow fans.

Aside from discussions and debates among users, the page will regularly include games and applications to enliven the virtual community, as well as tickets to the team's matches up for grabs in competitions run by the FFF. If you want to be in with a chance, it couldn't be easier: simply go online and join the new Facebook community! ● Matthieu Brelle-Andrade



The national team's official Facebook page



Georgia

www.gff.ge

Domenti Sichinava re-elected president

Domenti Sichinava has been leading the Georgian Football Federation (GFF) since October 2009. In this very short period of time, he has managed to improve the federation's financial situation, start developing its infrastructure, reconstruct its headquarters and technical centre, improve relations with sponsors and the media and resolve certain refereeing problems. He also appointed a talented former national football player, Temur Ketsbaia, as head coach of the Georgian national team, which has played eight games under his leadership without losing a single one (a feat only two teams in the world – Georgia and Croatia – achieved in 2010). As a result, the Georgian national team moved up to 72nd place in the FIFA world rankings (a leap of 53 places!).

Domenti (Zviad) Sichinava was re-elected president of the GFF at the federation's 19th ordinary congress, which took place in Tbilisi on 22 January. UEFA Executive Committee member František Laurinec attended the meeting on behalf of the European governing body.

A total of 30 delegates (from a possible 33) attended the congress and the outright majority voted for Domenti Sichinava, who stood unopposed for re-election.

The GFF president addressed the executive committee, delegates, invited guests and media representatives before the start of the election.

He presented to his audience the topics which, in his opinion, are most important to the development of Georgian football in the 2011–15 term. In his 20-minute speech, he talked about creating optimum conditions for the national teams, developing the national



Domenti Sichinava addresses the GFF congress

championship, enhancing football infrastructure, resolving problems in youth football, plans for refereeing, future collaboration with sponsors and partners, and the continued smooth running of programmes with FIFA and UEFA.

● GFF press center



Hungary

www.mlsz.hu

Great players honoured

At the end of last year, the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) held its traditional international players' Christmas meeting as an opportunity, before the festivities get going, for the

association to pay tribute to the great players of Hungarian football, past and present. This time, 150 former and current national team players gathered around the MLSZ's centenary monument at the Ferenc Puskás Stadion to place wreaths, sing the national anthem and remember those who have passed away since Hungary played its first friendly back in 1902.

Surviving members of the 1950s Magical Magyars, Jeno Buzánszky and Gyula Grosics, represented the golden age of Hungarian football, while Gábor Király and Vilmos Vanczák placed a wreath on behalf of the current team, who are 42nd in the FIFA world rankings. Finally, Sándor Berzi, MLSZ vice-president, and Sándor Egervári, head coach, placed an MLSZ wreath.

Later, the players enjoyed a special lunch, at which tribute was paid to the doyen of the company, László Gyelvai of Ferencvárosi TC. The 92-year-old left winger earned 17 caps for the red-white-greens between 1938 and 1942.

● Martón Dinnyes



László Gyelvai with Sándor Berzi (left) and former Hungary international Imre Garaba



Iceland

www.ksi.is

First futsal win for Iceland

In January, Iceland hosted the Group B mini-tournament in the preliminary round of the European Futsal Championship. The other teams were Armenia, Greece and Latvia. This was a historic event, it being the first time that Iceland had entered its national team in a futsal tournament. Their first match was against Latvia and was a thrilling start to the tournament. The visitors took the maximum three points with a 5-4 win but the Icelandic players' performance and drive were encouraging. The hosts went on to win their next two games, against Armenia and Greece, and ended second in the group, with Latvia winning the group and going through the next round.

Even though their preparations were short, the coach, Willum Thor Thorsson, and his staff did wonders with the team. Made up of footballers in the middle of their pre-season training, the team enjoyed the occasion tremendously



Iceland v Armenia

and gave Icelandic sports fans a new sport to follow and more matches to look forward to.

● Thorvaldur Ingimundarson



Italy

www.figc.it

UEFA President attends sports journalists' seminar



Discussing current affairs in European football

The UEFA President, Michel Platini, and the general secretary, Gianni Infantino, attended the fourth Italian sports journalists' union (USSI) seminar, entitled *Football and those who talk about it* and held in Coverciano on 24 and 25 January.

The seminar was an opportunity for the journalists to find out more about current topics in all areas of football, especially financial fair play. The UEFA President was categorical: the aim was not to punish clubs but to help them to balance their books. With no less ambiguity he said UEFA would be firm with those who did not respect the rules. Looking ahead, the UEFA President would get to grips with the problems of betting and match-fixing, an area the president of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), Giancarlo Abete, also considers a priority.

The UEFA President's contribution to the seminar was followed by that of Renzo Ulivieri, president of the Italian football coaches' association and director of the FIGC's coaching academy. Together with Maurizio Viscidi, assistant to the coordinator of the national youth teams, Arrigo Sacchi, Ulivieri spoke about the categories of Italian technicians, many of whom work abroad.

The chairman of FC Internazionale, Massimo Moratti, the director general of the FIGC, Antonello Valentini and the president of the USSI, Luigi Ferrajolo, also participated in the seminar. Guests included AC Milan coach Massimiliano Allegri and Arrigo Sacchi. Finally, representing the referees, Stefano Braschi, Paolo Tagliavento and Paolo Valeri explained the new rules applied at national and international level.

● Barbara Moschini



Latvia

www.lff.lv

New indoor pitch at Skonto hall

After a few years of downtime, football has returned to Skonto Hall in Riga, which now has the best pitch in the Baltic and one which has received FIFA's one and two star quality stamps. The Czech firm JUTAgrass delivered the 98m x 64m pitch, while sand for the base was brought from Estonia. Skonto Hall is Latvia's second indoor football facility and one of the most suitable venues for football in these wintery condi-

tions. The hall has six dressing rooms, meeting rooms and a conference hall, which will be used, among others, by the national team when they play at home at Skonto stadium.

In other news, the Latvian Virsliga has lost its title sponsor, LMT, but will nonetheless start in mid-April with nine teams competing in four rounds (SK Blazma Rezekne have dropped out for financial reasons). The Latvian Football Federation (LFF) often holds meetings with Virsliga clubs in order to involve them in the organisation and marketing of the league, in an effort to



Skonto football hall

make it as professional as possible. A working group has also been created to establish the new structure and legal basis of the league.

The 2011 season kicks off with Latvian Cup matches during the first two weekends in April, but for the referees 27 January was already a big day, as Latvia was approved as a signatory to the UEFA Referee Convention. This was followed by a seminar for all referees from the Baltic States, held in Jelgava, Latvia, and attended by UEFA Referee Committee member David Elleray.

● *Martins Hartmanis*



Liechtenstein

www.lfv.li

2010 awards ceremony

The Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) held its 2010 awards ceremony on 10 January 2011. The programme included the presentation of sports awards to the footballer, youth footballer and coach of the year, a tribute to the volunteer of the year and fundraising for a young mountain biker who has been paralysed from the waist down since a training accident.

Martin Stocklasa of the Austrian winter champions, SV Ried, and David Hasler of Liechtenstein's top club, FC Vaduz, successfully defended their titles as player and youth player of the year at the ceremony, each receiving the prestigious prize for the second time. Eric Orié, the Dutch coach of FC Vaduz, was named coach of the year, while Benno Gerner of USV Eschen-Mauren was presented with the volunteer of the year award.

The prize winners received their awards from former professionals Adi Noventa (Grasshopper-Club) and Manfred Moser (FC Zürich), and from Dietrich Weise, who was Liechtenstein's first full-time national coach between 1992 and 1996.

Hugo Quaderer, sports minister, presented the volunteer of the year award. As a special feature in the programme, the LFV raffled a shirt signed by the Spanish national team, raising a total of CHF 10,000 for the injured mountain biker Sarah Hundert.

● *Anton Banzer*



The 2010 award winners, from left to right: Benno Gerner, Eric Orié, Martin Stocklasa and David Hasler



Moldova

www.fmf.md

KISS workshop in Chisinau

The Football Association of Moldova (FMF) hosted its first ever UEFA KISS (Knowledge and Information Sharing Scenario) workshop at the end of last year, the topic of which was the HatTrick programme.

The workshop, which was held on 9 and 10 December in Chisinau, focused on the implementation of UEFA's HatTrick programme in the national associations. As a result, 57 participants from 38 national football associations all over Europe met in Chisinau to share their knowledge and ideas with each other.

Opening the workshop, the FMF general secretary, Nicolai Cebotari, welcomed the participants and thanked UEFA for giving the association the opportunity to host an event such as this for the first time. Case studies and group discussions took place and the delegates presented to one another their marketing strategies, the challenges they faced and the lessons they had learned.

● *Press office*



Malta

www.mfa.com.mt

New technical director

The Malta FA (MFA) recently announced the appointment of Robert Gatt as the association's technical director and head of the MFA technical centre.

He succeeds Vic Hermans, current head coach of the national futsal team and the man who temporarily replaced Dusan Fitzel after the latter had stepped down for personal reasons.

The MFA president, Norman Darmanin Demajo, held a series of meetings with Robert Gatt. They discussed and agreed on values, objectives and policies before the executive committee decided to give the job to the technician.

Robert Gatt, an instructor on coach education courses organised by the MFA, is one of the foremost coaches on the island. His pedigree includes coaching all the national youth teams up to and including the U21s. He has also served as assistant coach for the senior side, as well as having been head coach at two top Maltese clubs.



Robert Gatt, the MFA's new technical director

The new technical director will have a vast range of responsibilities, from overseeing the preparation of the various national teams under their different head coaches to managing and monitoring all MFA coaching courses, including training and organising the technical staff and head coaches running club 'nurseries'.

All this work will be carried out on the basis of the 'open house' policy advocated by the MFA, which is also seeking the new technical director's guidance on its project to invest in a sports science centre that will develop new techniques and software programmes aimed at refining the skills of players and coaches.

Under the supervision of Robert Gatt, regional scouting and coaching will also be re-introduced.

All this will surely be a welcome challenge for the new technical director, whose qualities are of the highest order.

● *Alex Vella*



The KISS workshop participants

Netherlands
www.knvb.nl

Dutch football loses two big names

Dutch football lost two of its big names at the turn of the year: Frans de Munck and Coen Moulijn. Frans de Munck, former international goalkeeper, died shortly before Christmas at the age of 88. He played with DOS Utrecht when they won the Dutch championship in 1958 and won 31 caps for the national team.

In 1953, he also played for an unofficial national team in a match against France, which the Dutch won 2-1. The proceeds of the game went to the victims of disastrous floods that had hit the southern part of the Netherlands earlier that year and in which more than 1,800 people had died. At the time, football was an amateur game in the Netherlands and the 1953 charity international is still considered as having been one of the catalysts for professional Dutch football. Frans was nicknamed 'the black panther' because of his striking black hair, trademark black shirt and panther-like reflexes.

Similarly, Coen Moulijn was considered one of the left-footed stars of Dutch football. He was an outstanding player on the pitch, but kept a low

profile after his playing days. Coentje (meaning little Coen, as he was lovingly known by the fans) died on 4 January, but a phenomenal celebration of his life in Rotterdam showed that he will not be forgotten. The manner in which the Feyenoord fans, the city and its inhabitants paid

tribute to him was impressive to say the least. The funeral procession stopped at the city hall – on which large posters of Coentje had been hung – to give the thousands of fans who had turned out time to express their feelings. They

chanted his name and sang club songs. Many big players were also present to pay homage to the best player Feyenoord has ever had. Coen played for Feyenoord for 17 years and was in the team when they became the first Dutch side to win a European trophy in 1970.

The national team coach, Bert van Marwijk, grew up when Coen was dominating the premier league as a left winger: "I copied his moves. He was a great role model. A phenomenon. Much later, when I was coaching at Feyenoord, I got to know him well. He was a wonderful, modest and caring human being. I was asked to hand him the first copy of his biography in 2009 in front of his statue at the stadium. 'A wonderful honour' he said to me, and I know he meant it was an honour for him, but I actually felt it was a tremendous honour for me to be presenting him with his biography."

Michael van Praag, president of the Dutch FA, attended both memorial services. "It is very unfortunate to lose two giants of Dutch football in such a short space of time," he said.

● Rob de Leede



Coen Moulijn and Frans de Munck

Northern Ireland
www.irishfa.com

New sponsor for national teams

The Irish Football Association (IFA) recently unveiled Vauxhall Motors as the new sponsor of the Northern Ireland national teams.

Vauxhall, one of Britain's leading automotive brands, with a 108-year history of car manufacturing in the UK, has signed a three-and-a-half year agreement with the Irish FA.

The sponsorship deal covers all senior international fixtures, including EURO 2012 and the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. As well as the senior men's team, the partnership includes the women's national team and all national youth teams.

Announcing the partnership at Windsor Park, the IFA chief executive, Patrick Nelson, said: "This is truly fantastic news for Northern Ireland football. Attracting a sponsor of the calibre and prestige of Vauxhall is great testimony to the progress we are making here. The support of Vauxhall will be invaluable in helping us deliver further footballing progress at a senior and junior level."

Vauxhall's managing director, Duncan Aldred, added: "We are making a big commitment to football and Northern Ireland is an extremely important piece of this commitment. Football and cars are two of our nation's biggest pas-

sions and this partnership is a clear and unequivocal sign that Vauxhall is not only firmly behind a successful Northern Ireland senior team but is also committed to supporting grassroots initiatives covering youth and junior football as well as women's football and disability football."



Duncan Aldred (left) and IFA president Jim Shaw shake hands to seal the deal under the watchful eye of the national team head coach, Nigel Worthington.

Nigel Worthington, Northern Ireland manager, said: "I'm delighted that Vauxhall are putting their faith in Northern Ireland football. We are all really pleased to have them on board and are sure this is going to prove a very fruitful and successful partnership."

● Sueann Harrison

Poland
www.pzpn.pl

A year marked by changes

The changing world presents new challenges to national associations, so the board of the Polish Football Association (PZPN) has decided to create a strategic action plan for the years to come, with the help of the FIFA management programme, which is designed, among other things, to help associations to identify and improve internal processes. As well as changes in all significant areas (including finance, committees, IT systems, communication and stakeholder relationship management), the PZPN is implementing a new corporate identity. It will be applied to all PZPN activities, especially those that have the greatest impact on the image of the association. A brand-new logo is therefore being prepared for the flagship national team, the domestic cup and league, and the youth, futsal, beach soccer and women's national teams. The PZPN's new corporate identity will be unveiled shortly and the whole action plan is due to be implemented in 2011/12.

This year also started with a nice surprise for all of us. Polish sports journalists publically recognised many years of hard work in the promotion and development of amateur football by voting Tomasz Zabielski, coordinator of the UEFA grassroots programme in Poland, best amateur sports coordinator of 2010.

● Agnieszka Olejkowska, Elzbieta Klimaszewska



Republic of Ireland

www.fai.ie

John Giles launches Walk of Dreams campaign

Former Republic of Ireland captain and manager John Giles, who in 2004 was voted the greatest Republic of Ireland player of the last 50 years at the UEFA Golden Jubilee Awards, has launched a major fundraising initiative in Ireland to support local community programmes and raise funds to improve football clubs throughout the country.

The John Giles Foundation's Walk of Dreams will take place on Sunday 27 March in various locations throughout Ireland. It will bring together all the football clubs in Ireland to walk in solidarity, as a family, while raising funds both for their respective clubs and for the John Giles Foundation, to continue the growth of football. John Giles, who became a big name following spells with

Manchester United FC and Leeds United AFC, wishes to harness the great energy of the Irish football family and bring everyone together on 27 March to demonstrate that football clubs form a large and very important part of Irish community life, offering many thousands of people an outlet to enjoy themselves and make friends.

The John Giles Foundation was established to use football as a vehicle for social change, to build community cohesion, increase participation in the game and improve health and education.

Half of the funds raised by the Walk of Dreams will be retained by the football clubs themselves, while the other half will go to the John Giles Foundation for community football projects. Clubs, schools and community groups can all apply to the foundation for funding to implement or improve football-based community projects.

● Fran Whearty



John Giles, at the service of the community, and young people especially



San Marino

www.fsgc.sm

National training centre enters second season

A training session held on 7 September kick-started the second season of San Marino's national training centre project organised for the best two youth players from each of the country's clubs. For the 2010/11 intake, this means players born in 1998 and 1999. All their training sessions are being held at the Faetano sports centre, complete with artificial pitch. The

sessions are led by coaches Claudio Bartoletti and Firmino Pederiva (responsible for technical and tactical aspects), Davide Gasperini (expert in skills and coordination training methodology), Carlo Casadei (responsible for coaching the young goalkeepers) and Professor Emilio Cecchini (responsible for the overall coordination of the four-part project).

The young players are split into small groups for a form of circuit training in which they practise all the different exercises prepared by the

technical staff, who have put an emphasis this season on the different phases of the game and team formations on the basis of studies and the methodology applied by the technicians, Emilio Cecchini and Enrico Battisti. After the winter break, training resumes in February, with sessions twice a week until June. The main purpose of the project is to develop future San Marino internationals and ensure they achieve the highest standards possible.

● Emilio Cecchini



Slovakia

www.futbalsfz.sk

International football medicine congress

After 20 years of annual meetings for doctors, masseurs and physiotherapists working with all the different national teams and the clubs in the first and second divisions, for five years we have also benefitted from a football medicine congress, which brings together international delegates and guest speakers. The last such meeting was held in Senec, Slovakia, in December. The two main topics were how to protect against sudden cardiac death (primary and secondary prevention) and muscle injury (prevention, diagnosis and recovery).

New methods are especially being sought in the primary and secondary prevention of sudden cardiac death. One such method was presented to the congress by Professor Oravec, a Slovakian with extensive international experience. He explained that a new form of lipoprotein analysis, specifically aimed at detecting the possibility of atherogenic destruction, could be very effective, especially among youth players in the 12 to 18 age bracket, who could have normal lipoprotein levels but a high risk of blood-vessel destruction and sudden cardiac death. The relatively new approach presented by Professor Oravec is known as the Lipoprint method.

Thromboembolic disease is also a major risk factor in sudden cardiac deaths. We need to know everything about the roots of this dangerous disease because it is often seen in very young players. It is also important to carry out



Pavel Malovic, chairman of the SFZ medical committee

specific tests on at-risk players (known family history) as a means of prevention. Professor Slysco, also of Slovakia, presented this topic.

The final risk factor discussed at the congress was energy drinks containing caffeine and taurine, which young players drink like they are water or some other harmless, refreshing fluid. The risk of the sudden death was demonstrated in a few cases by Dr Pavel Malovic, UEFA doping control officer.

Turning to the second topic on the agenda, Professor de la Tualaye, a famous French nutritionist, gave a presentation on muscle injuries, which are a problem not only in terms of prevention and healing. Perhaps the biggest difficulty is recovery, according to Professor de la Tualaye, who explained the principle of glucose protein regeneration in muscle overuse and injury. The congress was then successfully rounded off with a presentation on electrotherapy for muscle injuries by Andrea Bolchi of Italy.

● Juraj Curny



Slovenia

www.nzs.si

Slovenia welcomes Dany Ryser's ideas on coach education

The FA of Slovenia (NZS) recently had the honour of welcoming one of UEFA's Jira Panel members to its headquarters in Ljubljana. In mid-January, the Swiss coach of the year and winner of the FIFA U17 World Cup in Nigeria, Dany Ryser, came to Slovenia to inspect the coach education programmes the association has in place.

Ryser sat down to discuss the programmes with Aleš Zavrl, general secretary of the NZS, Branko Elsner, head of coach education, Matjaz Jakopic, head of the technical department, and Miloš Rus, member of the technical department. Ryser had a lot of positive things to say about the current programmes, but also shared some comments and ideas which will be incorporated into the association's UEFA Pro-licence programme.

● Matjaz Krajnik



Alex Zavrl (centre) and Dany Ryser discuss Slovenia's coaching programmes



Sweden

www.svenskfotboll.se

Exercises to prevent injuries

A simple exercise programme greatly reduces the risk of serious knee injuries among young female footballers. A unique scientific study (by Markus Waldén and Martin Hägglund from the University of Linköping) followed more than 4,500 young players at 341 women's teams for a full year and found that the group who performed the exercise programme every week had fewer than half as many knee injuries as the control group.

The Swedish FA and its insurance partner, Folksam, initiated the project – dubbed *Knäkontroll* – in 2008. According to research, a young



Markus Waldén and Martin Hägglund present the results of their research

female player is more than three times likelier to suffer a serious knee injury (especially the dreaded ACL injury) than a male player of the same age. *Knäkontroll* aims to educate coaches,

physiotherapists, parents and players in how to prevent injuries among female players from the age of 12 upwards.

The exercises are designed specifically for footballers, to improve their strength, landing technique, balance and coordination.

"We recommend teams to perform these exercises in their regular training sessions, during warm-up. They take 10 to 15 minutes and, if correctly performed, teach the girls a pattern of movement that is now proven to reduce the risk of injury," says Annica Näsmark, one of the Swedish FA's physiotherapists responsible for *Knäkontroll*. ● Andreas Nilsson



Switzerland

www.football.ch

Swiss referees in Gran Canaria



Dany Ryser leads a national U17 training session

Once again, Super League referees and assistants headed to Gran Canaria recently for their traditional week-long training camp in preparation for the second half of the season.

Switzerland's top referee, Massimo Busacca, was among the participants, and full of praise for the course, the importance of which he thinks cannot be overestimated: "It was a very good week and the best possible physical and mental preparation for the second half of the season. There was also a very good atmos-

phere between us. I'm sure that we'll now enter the second half of the season with confidence and that the referees will perform well."

The participants were visited in Gran Canaria by the league president, Thomas Grimm, and two club chairmen, Christian Constantin (FC Sion) and Ancillo Canepa (FC Zürich). Having witnessed the referees' preparations first hand, all three were clearly impressed.

FIFA instructor Esse Baharmast travelled from the US especially, while the technical director of the Swiss FA (SFV-ASF), Peter Knäbel, led one of the sessions and showed the referees how coaches and players used tactics, aerial and on-the-ground tackles and their arms, explaining what they considered to be a fair challenge and when they thought the referee should intervene.

Alongside their daily training sessions, the referees also worked on leadership and communication in what can only be described as a very successful week.

Previously, in December, an awards ceremony was held to honour the best Swiss athletes of 2010 and football was, of course, well represented. The success of the country's U17s, who won Switzerland's first football World Cup in the 115-year history of the SFV-ASF, earned

them first place in the team rankings, ahead of the national ice hockey team and FC Basel 1893 (league and cup winners).

Dany Ryser, the man behind the team's success, was also named coach of the year.

● Pierre Benoit



Ukraine

www.ffu.org.ua



Oleg Makarov doing what he did best

FC Putrivka triumph at Makarov Memorial

Every year in January, Ukraine holds a tournament in memory of the illustrious FC Dynamo Kyiv goalkeeper Oleg Makarov.

The Makarov Memorial is a traditional all-Ukrainian winter tournament in memory of an illustrious goalkeeper, honoured master of sports and honoured coach of Ukraine who spent his best years at FC Dynamo Kyiv. The aim of the tournament is to give teams of various levels an opportunity to play during the winter break while they are preparing for the official season.

The first Makarov Memorial matches were played 15 years ago, in 1996. Since then, FC Dynamo-2 have lifted the competition trophy seven times. The tournament, which is traditionally held under the aegis of the Football Federation of Ukraine, is organised by the Kyiv regional football federation.

This year, 18 teams lined up on the starting grid on 15 January. Approaching the finishing line, only two teams remained – FC Lviv and FC Putrivka. The latter were stronger in the final duel, which was played on 26 January and ended 2-1.

After quite a nervous start for both teams, Putrivka were the first to get their wits about them. Defender Yaroslav Vyshniak was tripped by Lviv goalkeeper Anton Sytnykov inside the penalty area and Roman Lytovchak opened the scoring from the spot. Two minutes after the break, Vyshniak doubled Putrivka's advantage. Lviv's Anton Prykhodko responded with a goal ten minutes before the final whistle, but it was not enough to close the gap. ● Dmytro Sobko



Turkey

www.tff.org

First CORE-inspired course completed

The Turkish Football Association (TFF) held its first referee development camp based on UEFA's Centre of Refereeing Excellence (CORE) programme from 14 to 21 December.

A total of 8 referees and 16 assistants – all aged under 30 and forming one team from each region – were accompanied by 4 instructors from the remaining regions. The programme included athletic tests measuring speed, endurance, reaction times and coordination. One of the key messages of the camp was the importance of self-assessment, with a sports psychologist working with the referees to enhance this important tool for their development. All the technical presentations were in line with the UEFA CORE programme and managed by the Turkish Football Association's referee committee.

The on-pitch exercises, on the offside rule for the assistants and on cooperation for the complete referee teams, were a great success, especially as a result of the debriefings, for which the

exercises were filmed. The referee teams also officiated at high-level amateur games in Istanbul at the weekend. The matches were filmed and the debriefings conducted by Oguz Sarvan personally, chairman of Turkish referee committee. After the course all the referees, coaches and referee committee members were very happy and agreed that it was the best seminar they had ever had. The TFF and its referee committee are planning to hold a Turkish CORE course once a month throughout the season.

● TFF communications office



Advanced training for referees

Birthdays

Match delegate **Mateo Beusan** (Croatia) turns 60 on 10 March. He is followed on 29 March by **Ian Beasley** (England), member of the Medical Committee. On 19 March, **Helmut Spahn** (Germany), security officer, celebrates his 50th, as does **Mirosław Malinowski** (Poland), member of the HatTrick Committee, on 23 March.

UEFA also wishes many happy returns to:

Benny Jacobsen (Denmark, 1.3)
Luis Medina Cantalejo (Spain, 1.3)
Damir Vrbancic (Croatia, 2.3)
Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder (Germany, 3.3)
Carolin Rudolph (Germany, 3.3)
Zoran Bahtijarevic (Croatia, 5.3)
Boris Durlen (Croatia, 6.3)
Liana Melania Stoicescu (Romania, 6.3)
Pedro Maria Aurteneche Vinegra (Spain, 7.3)
Dusan Maravic (Serbia, 7.3)
Kenneth Scott (Scotland, 7.3)
Tomás Gea (Andorra, 7.3)
Josep Lluís Vilaseca Guasch (Spain, 8.3)
Giorgio Crescentini (San Marino, 8.3)
Alexis Ponnet (Belgium, 9.3)
Vladimir Aleshin (Russia, 9.3)
Henk Kesler (Netherlands, 9.3)
Ruben Hayrapetyan (Armenia, 9.3)
Herbert Fandel (Germany, 9.3)
Joseph S. Blatter (Switzerland, 10.3)
Lucien Kayser (Luxembourg, 11.3)
Olga Zhukovska (Ukraine, 11.3)
Jean-François Crucke (Belgium, 12.3)
Thomas Partl (Austria, 13.3)
Lucia Knappkova (Slovakia, 14.3)
Ivan Curkovic (Serbia, 15.3)
Markus Merk (Germany, 15.3)
Cornelius Bakker (Netherlands, 17.3)
Liutauras Varanavicius (Lithuania, 17.3)
Christakis Skapoullis (Cyprus, 18.3)
Marcello Nicchi (Italy, 18.3)
Andreas Georgiou (Cyprus, 18.3)
Marina Tashchyan (Armenia, 18.3)
Hogni i Storustovu (Faroe Islands, 19.3)
Antal Dunai (Hungary, 21.3)
Jim Boyce (Northern Ireland, 21.3)
Ginés Meléndez (Spain, 22.3)
Chris Georghiades (Cyprus, 22.3)
Michail Kassabov (Bulgaria, 22.3)
Franz Krösslhuber (Austria, 23.3)
Andrea Lastrucci (Italy, 23.3)
Mahmut Özgener (Turkey, 23.3)
Outi Saarinen (Finland, 23.3)
Fernando Ruiz Hierro (Spain, 23.3)
Daniel Prodan (Romania, 23.3)
Michael Kirchner (Germany, 25.3)
Wilfried Straub (Germany, 26.3)
Kemal Kapuluoglu (Turkey, 26.3)
John McClelland (Scotland, 27.3)
Anton Ondrus (Slovakia, 27.3)
Joseph Gauci (Malta, 27.3)

José Antonio Casajus (Spain, 27.3)
Armen Minasyan (Armenia, 27.3)
Pavel Cebanu (Moldova, 28.3)
Edgar Obertüfer (Switzerland, 29.3)
Stefan Ormandjiev (Bulgaria, 29.3)
Alan Snoddy (Northern Ireland, 29.3)
Bernadette Constantin (France, 29.3)
Miriam Malone (Republic of Ireland, 29.3)
Sanna Pirhonen (Finland, 29.3)
William Hugh Wilson (Scotland, 30.3)

Forthcoming events

Meetings

14.3.2011, Nyon

2011–13 European Women's Championship: draw for the qualifying round

18.3.2011, Nyon

UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League: draws for the quarter- and semi-finals

20/21.3.2011, Paris

Executive Committee

22.3.2011, Paris

Ordinary UEFA Congress

31.3/1.4.2011, Nyon

Doping control officers' seminar

Competitions

8/9.3.2011

UEFA Champions League: round of 16 (return legs)

10.3.2011

UEFA Europa League: round of 16 (first legs)

15/16.3.2011

UEFA Champions League: round of 16 (return legs)

16/17.3.2011

UEFA Women's Champions League: quarter-finals (first legs)

17.3.2011

UEFA Europa League: round of 16 (return legs)

23/24.3.2011

UEFA Women's Champions League: quarter-finals (return legs)

Notices

■ On 27 November, Ruben Hayrapetyan was re-elected president of the Football Federation of Armenia.

■ On 13 December, Michael van Praag was re-elected president of the Royal Netherlands Football Association.

■ On 17 December, Vlatko Markovic was re-elected president of the Croatian Football Federation.

■ On 22 January, Domenti Sichinava was re-elected for a four-year term as president of the Georgian Football Federation.

■ On 25 January, David Bernstein was elected chairman of the English Football Association.

■ As of 1 May, Steven Martens will be the new general secretary of the Royal Belgian Football Association.

■ On 20 December, Jozef Venglos (Slovakia) was re-elected president of the Alliance of European Football Coaches' Associations (AEFCA).

Match agents

Six match agents have recently been granted UEFA licences:

Richard Trafford (England)
 Cassius Management – London
 +44 7788 538 070
 richard@cassiusmanagement.com

Tomáš Klečka (Czech Republic)
 Nehoda Sport a.s. – Prague
 +420 602 311 164
 tk2574@gmail.com

Marcus Häusler (Germany)
 soccal Sports GmbH – Rosenheim
 +49 179 1067371
 marcus.hausler@socca.de

Sergey Polikarpov (Russia)
 AMB-TOUR – Moscow
 +7 985 786 0196
 polikarpov@ambtour.ru

Christiane Heitz (France)
 +33 6 12 28 93 42
 christiane.heitz@gmail.com

David Touré (France)
 +33 6 99 25 08 11
 david.toure@hotmail.fr

In addition, **Mark Gibbon** (England) has had his licence renewed for eight years.

Obituaries

Since the death on 13 September of 66-year-old **Zbigniew Kalinski**, former general secretary of the Polish Football Federation and member of the UEFA Club Competitions Committee from 1986 to 1990, two other national association general secretaries have passed away:

■ On 17 December, **Wilfried Gerhardt**, general secretary of the German Football Association from 1984 to 1992, died aged 80. At UEFA, he was a member of the Study Commission for Problems concerning Radio and Television from 1976 to 1990, a transfer disputes expert from 1984 to 1992, and a member of the Media Committee from 1990 to 1992.

■ On 5 January, **Dario Borgogno**, general secretary of the Italian Football Federation from 1971 to 1986, died aged 87. He was one of UEFA's experts on transfer disputes from 1984 to 1986.



RESPECT

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The Game