



UEFA direct

No. 107 – 04/2011

35th Ordinary UEFA Congress in Paris



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UEFA

Route de Genève 46

CH-1260 Nyon

Switzerland

Tel. +41 848 00 27 27

Fax +41 848 01 27 27

www.UEFA.com

E-mail: uefadirect@uefa.ch



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Cover

The magnificent Grand Palais in Paris was the setting for the 35th Ordinary UEFA Congress, where Michel Platini was re-elected as UEFA president by acclamation.

Photo: Kovarik/AFP

An exciting landmark

The centralised marketing of matches is nothing new in football and the system used in the UEFA Champions League has long served as a reference and model. It is unanimously supported and clearly suits everyone involved.

Nevertheless, it was a bold idea to try to introduce the principle of centralised marketing for all European Championship and World Cup qualifiers. Every association has its own contracts and customs, the sporting value of teams is as varied as the size of domestic markets, and national associations are not run along the same lines as clubs.

That said, many associations believed in this project from the start, and with enough conviction to gradually persuade the more sceptical. The Executive Committee has also given the project its full support and is ready to provide funds if required. Now, all 53 member associations have signed up. This is both a powerful signal of their desire to raise the status of national team football and an exemplary act of solidarity on the part of the larger associations.

At a practical level, it will no doubt be a relief for the associations not to have to worry about the media value of the opponents the draws throw at them and instead to be able to concentrate fully on sporting concerns.



UEFA

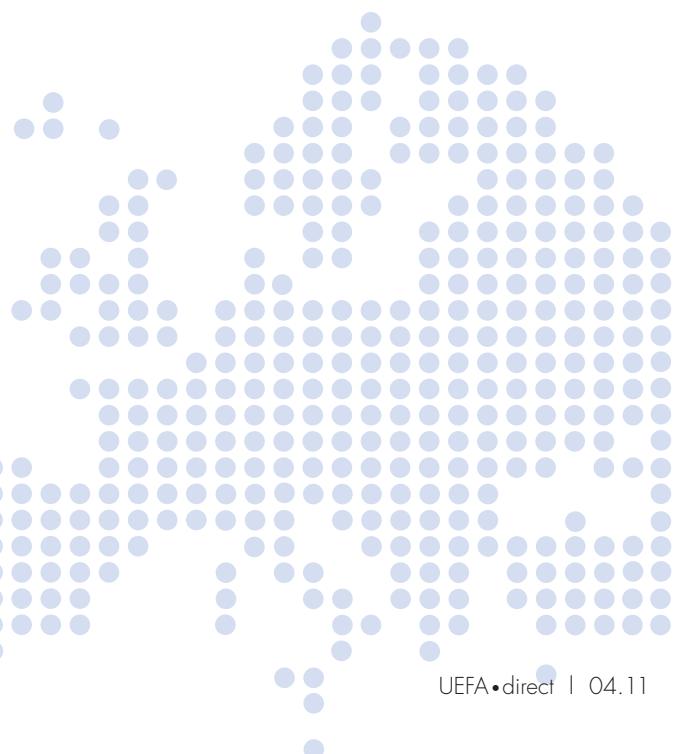
Last, but by no means least, this project has not been imposed from the top down; it is the result of consultation and a commitment to ongoing dialogue.

This is the approach I proposed when first elected UEFA president and the approach we have since adopted, together.

Thank you to all of you for your continued faith in me.



Michel Platini
UEFA President





A new term of office for Michel Platini

The 35th Ordinary UEFA Congress was held on 22 March at the Grand Palais in Paris, where Michel Platini obtained a new four-year term of office as UEFA president and seven members were elected or re-elected to the Executive Committee.

It was by acclamation that the delegates from all 53 UEFA member associations re-elected Michel Platini (France), the only candidate for the office of UEFA president.

Earlier, in his opening speech, Michel Platini looked back over his first four years at the UEFA helm, reviewing his accomplishments according to the five commitments that he made during his electoral campaign in 2007.

Regarding the first commitment, which was to reinforce the legitimacy of UEFA representatives, Michel Platini emphasised that *"Together we have enlarged the Executive Committee and strengthened its powers and scope (...). We have put the committees back at the heart of our organisation (...). We have made the*

presidents and general secretaries of our 53 member associations ever more influential (...). In short, together we have given back to our elected representatives the power to initiate and lead UEFA's sporting and strategic policies. You are once again the heart of our organisation and its driving force."

The second commitment was to increase solidarity payments and exchanges between national associations, a goal that was achieved thanks to various exchange programmes and the development of the HatTrick programme, as a result of which, *"we have moved up (...) from a total of €408 million redistributed to the federations in the period from 2008 to 2012 to almost €500 million for 2012–16."*



The Executive Committee during the congress



Photos: UEFA

Michel Platini addresses the delegates after his election

The third commitment was to guarantee the universality of competitions, which resulted, in particular, in the decision to increase the number of European Football Championship final round participants to 24 as from EURO 2016, the reform of the UEFA Champions League access list and the transformation of the UEFA Cup into the UEFA Europa League.

Michel Platini also promised to re-establish unity between football families, which led to the creation of the Professional Football Strategy Council, where all football families can have their voices heard. He also highlighted the excellent relations that UEFA now enjoys with FIFA: "We now work hand in hand with FIFA in many areas, in particular to protect national associations against any form of political interference."

Lastly, Michel Platini promised to work towards exemplarity in football, a commitment that was put into action with the launch of the Respect campaign, an increase in socially responsible actions and the introduction of measures to combat racism in stadiums and step up the fight against doping. Falling into the same category are the initiatives to combat corruption linked to betting, the strengthening and the improvement of relations with the European institutions and the launch of the financial fair play project in club football. "Without your support (...), none of this would have been possible", Michel Platini concluded before turning to the future and setting out his objectives.

Objectives

The first objective relates to national teams: "We have to do our best to (...) increase the value of national teams. It's up to us to get them back to where they belong."

The president set out the steps towards achieving this objective, starting with the centralised sale of the rights to the qualifying matches of the national teams. "I am delighted to officially announce that, as of today, everyone, without exception, is on board. We have received the signatures of all 53 national associations, marking the start of a great adventure."

Thanking those who had believed in the project from the start and those who have joined up since, the president emphasised that "[It's] a major endeavour which is also indicative (...) of UEFA's new form of governance: governance in which the new watchword is consultation!" He also added: "Nothing will happen without you! Because this UEFA is, above all, YOUR UEFA."

Formidable challenges

After mentioning the difficult challenge of organising EURO 2012, Michel Platini noted that: "Our role cannot be reduced to simply organising competitions. We are also, and above all, a governing body and a proactive force."

As such, UEFA is confronted with some formidable challenges. Recalling that for the year 2009 alone Europe's professional clubs accumulated losses of €1.2 billion, Michel Platini stressed that: "... there is a huge amount of money in football, but more importantly there is a moral problem in the way this money is sometimes generated and used... Financial fair play is a crucial project that will enable us to clean up certain practices within our game. It will be implemented in full in the course of my next term and we will apply the rules with the courage and resolution for which UEFA should be known."

Appeal to the authorities

It is also on these two virtues that the UEFA president is calling to combat violence in stadiums and fraud linked to betting. However, these two scourges will take more than courage and resolution to combat and cannot be beaten without the help of the political and state authorities, whom the UEFA president urged to: *"take the necessary steps. Every country should establish a whole battery of legal measures enabling them to ban hooligans from stadiums. Every country should appoint a prosecutor in charge of illegal betting and corruption in sport. (...) every country should also clearly and fully recognise the European sports model."*

Moving on to make reference to the strategy meeting that will be held in Cyprus this autumn (see page 11), Michel Platini emphasised that: *"We can use the meeting to shape the future of UEFA and European football. Everything is possible. But we must keep our faith and passion alive for the sake of the game, because at the end of the day it is a game. At the same time, we must ensure that our action is always transparent, responsible, open, exemplary and united."*

Three new faces on the Executive Committee

As well as the office of president, also up for election were seven seats on the Executive Committee, for which 13 candidates were in the running. Just one of the outgoing members was standing down: Joseph Mifsud, from Malta.

Candidates needed 27 votes – an absolute majority of the 53 votes – to be elected in the first round, and six candidates achieved this. They were:

- **Ángel María Villar Llona** (outgoing member, Spain, 47 votes)
- **Senes Erzik** (outgoing member, Turkey, 42 votes)
- **Peter Gilliéron** (new, Switzerland, 40 votes)
- **Grigoriy Surkis** (outgoing member, Ukraine, 38 votes)
- **Borislav Mihaylov** (new, Bulgaria, 28 votes)
- **Sergey Fursenko** (new, Russia, 27 votes)

In the second round, a simple majority was enough to be elected, allowing **Mircea Sandu** (Romania) to keep his seat with 15 votes.

The other candidates were the two outgoing members **Liutauras Varanavičius** (Lithuania) and **Gilberto Madaíl**

The new UEFA Executive Committee



Sergey Fursenko

Peter Gilliéron

Borislav Mihaylov

Shortly after the congress, the Executive Committee met in its new composition for a brief inaugural meeting. The committee will be as follows for the next two years: President: Michel Platini (France); 1st vice-president: Senes Erzik (Turkey); 2nd vice-president: Geoffrey Thompson (England); 3rd vice-president: Ángel María Villar Llona (Spain); 4th vice-president: Marios N. Lefkaritis (Cyprus); 5th vice-president: Giancarlo Abete (Italy). Members: Sergey Fursenko (Russia), Peter Gilliéron (Switzerland), Allan Hansen (Denmark), František Laurinec (Slovakia), Avraham Luzon (Israel), Borislav Mihaylov (Bulgaria), Mircea Sandu (Romania), Grigoriy Surkis (Ukraine), Michael van Praag (Netherlands), and Theo Zwanziger (Germany).

Two new honorary members

Following the Executive Committee's recommendation, the congress named two new honorary members:

Joseph Mifsud, who has just left the Executive Committee, was elected to the committee at the 1994 UEFA Congress in Vienna. He was a UEFA vice-president from 2009 to 2011, and served on the FIFA Executive Committee from 1998 to 2000 and as president of the Malta Football Association from 1992 to 2010.



Antonio Matarrese spent 12 years on the UEFA Executive Committee. Elected at the 1988 UEFA Congress in Munich, he became a vice-president in 1992 and held office until 2000, before becoming a special adviser to the committee from 2000 to 2002. He was also a FIFA vice-president from 1994 to 2002 and president of the Italian Football Federation from 1987 to 1996.

In addition, the UEFA Order of Merit was presented to:

- **Jean-Pierre Escalettes** (France)
- **Ellert B. Schram** (Iceland)
- **Ralph Zloczower** (Switzerland)

These three former presidents of national associations and UEFA committee members received the UEFA Order of Merit in Ruby.

The UEFA Order of Merit in Emerald was awarded posthumously to former Slovakian international **Ján Popluhár**, who died at the beginning of March.

The UEFA Congress also paid tribute to **Franz Beckenbauer**. Having reached the end of his term as European member of the FIFA Executive Committee, the two-time winner of the World Cup (the only European to have won it as both a player and a head coach) has chosen to devote more time to his family. ●



The national association delegates

(Portugal) as well as Ivan Hašek (Czech Republic), François De Keersmaecker (Belgium), Grzegorz Lato (Poland) and Norman Darmanin Demajo (Malta).

FIFA Executive Committee elections also featured on the agenda. Ángel María Villar Llona kept his position as vice-president while Theo Zwanziger (Germany) won a seat as a member. There were no other candidates and both were therefore elected by acclamation. Theo Zwanziger replaces Franz Beckenbauer, also from Germany, who did not run.

Michel Platini's re-election as the president of UEFA meant that he automatically kept his position as vice-president of FIFA.

The congress was also informed that the four British associations had entrusted Jim Boyce (Northern Ireland) with the seat guaranteed to them by the FIFA statutes. He will replace Geoffrey Thompson (England).

Healthy finances

Apart from the activity reports of the UEFA president and the Executive Committee as well as the UEFA administration (→ UEFA.com), approved by the congress, the delegates heard, in the form of a video, reports on the activities of the 19 UEFA committees, as summarised by their respective chairmen.

Regarding financial issues, the congress approved the 2009/10 annual accounts and the budget for the 2011/12 financial year. Marios N. Lefkaritis, chairman of the Finance Committee, reported that UEFA's financial situation was healthy, even though the past financial year had ended with a loss of €66.4 million – less than the budgeted loss of €80 million. This was explained by the fact that UEFA had adopted a four-year cycle whose financial peak coincided with the European Football Championship final round while the three other years were characterised by a negative result.

For 2009/10, UEFA's total revenue had reached €1,394.7 million, which had been used according to the policy of redistribution (€960.2 million to participating teams) and solidarity (€237.9 million). ●

Congress guest speeches

Representatives of FIFA, other confederations, honorary members of UEFA, members of the circle of former UEFA committee members and other personalities from the worlds of football and politics, as well as representatives from the media, were invited to attend the congress alongside the national association delegates.

Before the proceedings began, three speakers addressed the congress.

For the FIFA president, Joseph S. Blatter, meetings in Paris were always moving as it was in Paris, in 1998, that he had been elected president of world football's



Joseph S. Blatter,
FIFA president

governing body. As always, he stressed in his message to the congress the importance of the European confederation in world football – highlighting the remarkable success of European teams at the 2010 World Cup and thanking the confederation for its important contribution to the development of world football. "With UEFA," he added, "we have started work on a joint programme to protect young footballers and club identities."

On a more general topic, the FIFA president appealed for solidarity among all leaders to fight "all the little devils that exist in the world" and prepare a better future for the next generation.



Fernand Duchaussoy,
president
of the French
Football
Federation

Fernand Duchaussoy, president of the French Football Federation, emphasised the merits of the UEFA president, a man "who has a gift for succeeding in everything he does (...) and for turning his words into action." He also recalled that UEFA had some of its roots in Paris, mentioning the pioneering role of Henri Delaunay and the role of France in creating the UEFA competitions. He concluded by thanking UEFA for entrusting the French federation with the organisation of EURO 2016.



Chantal Jouanno,
French sports
minister

Chantal Jouanno, the French sports minister, came to read out a message from the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, who had been prevented from attending himself by the current "immense international challenges".

Through his sports minister, Nicolas Sarkozy said: "You have chosen France to host and organise EURO 2016, and France will live up to the trust you have placed in it and make this European competition a world event. We will keep our promises. You can be sure of my personal commitment in this respect."



Representatives of FIFA and its confederations

The French president also applauded the measures UEFA is taking to widen access to its club competitions, to promote financial fair play and to fight corruption, violence and racism, as well as to protect young footballers. He concluded by saying, "You know that you

can count on my full support to promote the human side and solidarity of football; football which is well-regulated and free of irregularities; in other words, football which remains first and foremost a sport, and, moreover, a team sport." ●

Paris - from 1984 to 2011

Only one other ordinary UEFA Congress has been held in Paris: the 17th, which took place at the Hilton International hotel, situated not far from the Eiffel Tower, on 26 June 1984. It was attended by representatives of the 34 member associations of which UEFA was comprised at that time.

Among the numerous congress delegates who gathered in the French capital on 22 March this year, a dozen had also attended the congress in Paris 27 years ago. One such person was the new honorary member Joseph Mifsud, who remembers that: "It was the first time that I had attended a UEFA Congress. I was vice-president of the Malta Football Association at the time, and we made a proposal relating to disciplinary procedure.

"It wasn't accepted at the time, but it has since become well-established practice."

The first UEFA vice-president, Senes Erzik, was a member of the Turkish delegation: "I had already attended the 1978 congress in Istanbul as a member of the organising committee and I had also taken part in the Dresden

and then on the Organizing Committee of the UEFA Club Competitions". Hungarian György Szilágyi, long-serving member of the Youth Committee, was also at the Paris congress in 1984. "What I remember above all is how emotional Jacques Georges was after he was elected. He could hardly speak."



Photos: UEFA

Gerhard Aigner with Lenart Johansson, who also attended the congress in 1984 as president of the Swedish Football Association



Dušan Maravic, member of the circle of former UEFA committee members

congress in 1982. I remember Jacques Georges being elected in Paris. He had already been acting president since the death of Artemio Franchi. I was a member of the executive committee of the Turkish federation at the time."

Several of those who attended the 1984 congress are now loyal members of the circle of former UEFA committee members. Dušan Maravic, for example, who was a representative of the Yugoslavian federation back in 1984, remembers that: "This congress was particularly emotional for me because I had played at Racing-Club de Paris for five years. It was this congress that was the start of my career on UEFA committees, first on the Committee for Problems concerning Radio and Television

Another election left its mark on Edgar Obertüfer, from Switzerland, who was for many years a pillar of the Control and Disciplinary Committee. "That year, the Swiss association put forward its president, Freddy Rumo, as a candidate instead of Lucien Schmidlin, who was the UEFA treasurer; the congress made Lucien Schmidlin an honorary member and our president was brilliantly elected." The same happy fate awaited the current president of the Swiss Football Association, Peter Gilliéron, this year.

On the administrative side, the current honorary member and former UEFA CEO Gerhard Aigner was also present at the 1984 congress, as a head of department. "It was a special congress for our general secretary, Hans Bangerter. He had just turned 60 and celebrated 25 years at the head of the general secretariat. The congress paid tribute to him and presented him with a painting by a Scottish artist."

As for the current UEFA president, Michel Platini, he was not at that congress. He was preparing for the final of EURO '84, in which he captained France to glory on home soil, and helped in no small way to secure France's first major title in international football. ●

Nine European groups for the 2014 World Cup

With the UEFA president in the chair, the Executive Committee met in Paris on 20 and 21 March for what would be the last meeting for at least one of its members, the last elections having taken place two years ago, at the 2009 UEFA Congress in Copenhagen.

The recurrent themes of Executive Committee meetings – preparations for EURO 2012, preserving the integrity of competitions, competition regulations and financial issues – also appeared on the agenda in Paris, along with more specific issues.

Integrity officers

Regarding the protection of UEFA's competitions in the face of illegal betting and associated corruption, the committee was given a report by a working party made up of selected Executive Committee members and supported the idea of creating a network of 'integrity officers' within the national associations. The committee also declared itself in favour of close cooperation with supranational and state authorities, including the police and public prosecutors. Collaboration with other international sports bodies who are confronted with similar problems is another

measure the committee would like to see taken, as part of a wider policy of sharing information. Preventative measures go hand in hand with a policy of zero tolerance not only towards the actual culprits, but towards anyone whose behaviour is in breach of the UEFA Disciplinary Regulations. The life ban imposed on a Ukrainian referee (upheld by the Court of Arbitration for Sport) serves as an example of UEFA's determination in this area.

Equality in disciplinary measures

With regard to the competitions themselves, the Executive Committee approved the regulations for the 2011/12 UEFA Champions League, the 2011/12 UEFA Europa League and the 2012 Super Cup. The modifications include how to separate teams who are equal on points at the end of group matches (by taking into account the number of goals scored in matches between the teams



concerned), what happens if a club is disqualified or withdraws from the competition before the end of the group stage (all their results and points are discounted), and what happens if a match has to be abandoned (in principle, only the time remaining is replayed). In disciplinary matters, single yellow cards and suspensions that are unspent at the end of the qualifying phase will not be carried forward to the group stage. This measure is intended to put the teams who take part in qualifying on an equal footing with those who enter the main competition directly.

The Executive Committee also approved the 2011/12 UEFA Women's Champions League regulations. The main modification concerns the access list: the stage at which the clubs enter the competition will be determined by the national association's UEFA ranking alone, and no longer by their position in their respective domestic leagues (winners or runners-up).

On the topic of women's football, the committee also approved a measure intended to protect the health of young players: from the 2012/13 season onwards, they will only be able to take part in one UEFA youth competition per qualifying round and only one national team final round each season.

Nine 2014 World Cup qualifying groups

For the final round of the 2014 World Cup, which will be played in Brazil, the FIFA Executive Committee has allocated 13 places to European teams and invited the confederations to suggest the format of their respective qualifying competitions. The UEFA Executive Committee declared itself in favour of using the same system for the European qualifying competition as was used for the 2010 World Cup, i.e. eight groups of six teams and one group of five, with the eight best runners-up competing in play-offs to determine which four teams will accompany the nine group winners to Brazil. The qualifying competition should begin shortly after EURO 2012, i.e. in September, and last until November 2013. This proposal will be submitted to FIFA for approval.

Another World Cup will already have taken place by then, namely the Futsal World Cup. The final round will be played in Thailand in November 2012 and will include 24 teams, instead of 20 as it was in 2008. Consequently, Europe will have one more representative than before, giving it seven places in all. The Executive Committee adopted the regulations for the qualifying competition in Paris. In principle, three rounds will be played: qualifiers, a main round of mini-tournaments, and play-offs.

The Executive Committee also approved:

- the Regulations of the UEFA Futsal Cup 2011/12; and
- the new UEFA Anti-Doping Regulations, which come into force on 29 May.

Next UEFA Congress in Istanbul

The Executive Committee decided that the 36th Ordinary UEFA Congress would be held in Istanbul on



After receiving a photo album at the Executive Committee meeting, Franz Beckenbauer is given another gift at the end of the congress

22 March 2012, for the first time since the Turkish metropolis hosted the European football governing body's general meeting back in April 1978.

Before that, the Executive Committee will meet in Cyprus on 22 and 23 September this year, after a strategy meeting with the presidents and general secretaries of the 53 national associations from 19 to 21 September, when several fundamental topics will be discussed, such as the international match calendar, the future of the UEFA competitions and relations between different members of the football family (leagues, clubs, the Professional Football Strategy Council, etc.).

Finally, in light of the continued evolution of women's football in Europe, where the number of registered members is growing constantly, the committee noted that women remain underrepresented within governing bodies. On the initiative of the UEFA president, the Executive Committee therefore decided to take the symbolic step of appointing a woman as chairman of the Women's Football Committee and inviting her to participate in Executive Committee meetings as of September.

■ At the end of its meeting, the Executive Committee paid tribute to Joseph Mifsud, who had just taken part in his last meeting after having served on the UEFA Executive Committee for 17 years, and as vice-president for the last two. The president gave him the symbolic key to UEFA headquarters. Franz Beckenbauer, who is leaving the FIFA Executive Committee after a four-year term of office, received a photo album documenting his long contribution to football as a token of UEFA's gratitude. Both Joseph Mifsud and Franz Beckenbauer were also honoured the next day by the UEFA Congress (see page 7). ●

An appeal to governments to support football on betting

During its meeting in Nyon on 10 March, the Professional Football Strategy Council reached a united position on the issue of betting and approved the following resolution.

The Professional Football Strategy Council:

- resolves to further strengthen joint efforts to prevent and combat match-fixing, in line with the resolution against match fixing adopted by the Professional Football Strategy Council in Monaco on 27 August 2010;
- recalls that financial solidarity depends on redistribution of revenue from the commercial exploitation of top professional football to the grassroots;
- expresses concern at the growing unauthorised commercial use of football competitions for betting purposes;
- considers that competition organisers/clubs should have the right, including intellectual property rights, to consent to their events being used by betting companies and that such companies should pay fair financial compensation;

• recalls that such financial compensation is also essential for funding grassroots football as well as fighting match-fixing and sports fraud;

• in line with recent initiatives of the European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Europe and certain national authorities, urges political authorities to adopt concrete national and/or Europe-wide legislation to address these matters and to ensure a fair financial return to football.

In addition to agreeing the above resolution, the PFSC received an update on the QC Leisure case (regarding territorial exclusivity agreements on the broadcasting of matches) following the publication of the opinion of the Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union. The international match calendar was also addressed, as was youth development. Finally, the PFSC discussed the next steps in the European social dialogue, and in particular how to implement the minimum requirements for player contracts. ●

Doping control officers' annual seminar

UEFA's doping control officers (DCOs) met on 31 March and 1 April for their annual seminar at the House of European Football in Nyon. The gathering highlighted their crucial contribution to the campaign against drug-taking in European football.

The DCOs perform in and out-of-competition controls in UEFA's competitions, covering everything from the major club competitions to youth, women's and futsal tournaments.

The seminar focused, among other things, on preparations for doping controls at UEFA EURO 2012, an analysis of doping controls in 2009/10 and 2010/11, a preview of next season's activities and a presentation of the 2011 UEFA Anti-Doping Regulations, which will come into force in May following their recent approval by the UEFA Executive Committee.

■ Demand for EURO 2012 tickets was tremendous, with no fewer than 12,149,425 applications received through the ticket portal on UEFA.com. Applications came from 206 different countries, although the vast majority (88%) were from Poland and Ukraine. Draws will be held to allocate the tickets. ●



Dr Michel D'Hooghe, chairman of the Medical Committee, addresses the doping control officers

Meeting with supporter representatives

UEFA and European supporter representatives discussed current issues at their fourth annual meeting on 14 March at the House of European Football in Nyon.

The supporter representatives came from Football Supporters Europe, Supporters Direct Europe and the Centre for Access to Football in Europe.

Items discussed included disciplinary issues affecting fans, ticketing and security-related matters, fan embassy and fan liaison questions, facilities for disabled fans and the further reinforcement of the ongoing constructive dialogue between UEFA and supporter representatives.

The supporter groups presented their activities, as well as a number of proposals and recommendations for further dialogue. UEFA emphasised its responsibilities in relation to spectators attending matches and welcomed the support of supporter groups in the drive to eliminate violence and racist conduct.

"The fans are football people – they represent football's identity, both at club and national team level," said the UEFA president, Michel Platini. *"Supporters are always there to follow their team through sunshine and showers, irrespective of whether the team is playing well or not."* The UEFA president pledged to consult the relevant FSE representatives on UEFA matters. ●

Women's futsal tournament in Ukraine

Thanks to the support of UEFA partners FARE and the Never Again association, Chrzaszczyki of Warsaw, Poland, took part in the fourth Królowe Hali (Queens of the Hall) futsal tournament, held in Lutsk, western Ukraine, on Sunday 6 March. Besides Poland's Chrzaszczyki, there were five teams from Ukraine and Russia: Legion (Lutsk), NRG (Kyiv), OMEGA (St Petersburg), Krylia (Moscow) and Spartak (Briansk). The tournament was organised by the Regional Futsal Association of Volyn.

Throughout the tournament, the atmosphere on the field and in the stands was very positive and the event provided an opportunity to discuss anti-discrimination projects. ●



The Polish youth team at the tournament in Ukraine

FARE

NEWS FROM BRUSSELS

EU action on betting could be on the cards

Speaking at the UEFA Congress in Paris on 22 March, the UEFA president named the fight against match fixing as one of the key priorities for his second term in office.

A day later, some 250km northwest, in Brussels, the European Commission published its long-awaited paper on online betting, including match fixing. The European Commission Green Paper on On-line Gambling in the Internal Market seeks to establish whether the different national regulatory models seen in the various member states can continue to coexist and whether EU action in this area is needed.

The launch of this EU-level consultation is good news for sports competition organisers and the possibility of a common EU approach to betting is a very positive prospect for UEFA. The first step in the fight against match fixing is for all countries to recognise it as an illegal activity and make it a punishable offence. Creating a regulatory framework for online betting and acknowledging the intellectual property rights of sports event organisers are further steps on the road to combatting match fixing and ensuring financial solidarity in European football. The commission's green paper calls for contributions and views on all these points.

Stakeholders, including sports organisations such as UEFA, are invited to submit their contributions to the debate by the end of July 2011. The initiative is spearheaded by Michel Barnier, France's member of the European Commission, who is responsible for internal market policy. ●

More than finals

The climax to the European club season is fast approaching, with the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Women's Champions League finals to be held in London on 28 and 26 May respectively, after Dublin has hosted the UEFA Europa League final on 18 May.

It is 19 years since Wembley Stadium last staged a European champions' competition final, and the European club game will mark its return to London with a flourish. As UEFA hosts its first final in the new stadium, London will have its first experience of the UEFA Champions Festival, a week-long celebration of football in Hyde Park.



No London side has ever won a European champions' trophy, but the competition's history is closely tied to the British capital. Five previous finals have been held at Wembley, with AC Milan (1963), Manchester United FC (1968), AFC Ajax (1971), Liverpool FC (1978) and most recently FC Barcelona (1992) all claiming European club football's greatest prize on the hallowed turf.

Great memories

From George Best's brilliant solo effort in extra time against SL Benfica in 1968 to the thunderous free-kick with which Ronald Koeman secured Barcelona their first European champions' title, against UC Sampdoria in 1992, the 'home of football' conjures up so many great memories and classic moments.

Since then, of course, the venue has been entirely rebuilt. The old Wembley was pulled down in 2003 with the iconic twin towers replaced by a stunning arch that reaches high above the stadium. The breathtaking new ground boasts a seated capacity of 90,000 and opened for business in 2007. *"The new Wembley is magnificent,"* the 2011 UEFA Champions League final ambassador, Gary Lineker, said. *"Players will still dream of playing at Wembley and certainly they will dream of playing the UEFA Champions League final at Wem-*



Wembley Stadium and its iconic arch

bley. Walking up those steps to receive a trophy is just about as special a feeling as you can get."

Women's Champions League final

Two nights before Wembley returns to centre stage, attention will be focused further south on the banks of the Thames, where Fulham FC's Craven Cottage will stage the UEFA Women's Champions League final. Until last year, when the competition was transformed from the UEFA Women's Cup to the UEFA Women's Champions League, the showpiece had been played over two legs, but the resounding success of the one-off final in the Coliseum Alfonso Pérez in Getafe, where a crowd of 10,372 saw 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam defeat Olympique Lyonnais on penalties, has helped ensure the new format is here to stay.

Fulham's quaint riverside ground is no longer a secret to fans of European football following the remarkable run of London's oldest active professional football club to the UEFA Europa League final last season. Designed by the renowned stadium architect Archibald Leitch, Craven Cottage was built in 1905 and still boasts, in one corner, the famous cottage after which it is named. In the style of traditional English grounds, the stands sit tight to the pitch and with a capacity of around 22,500 the atmosphere for the final will be excellent if it comes anywhere close to matching that of Fulham's UEFA Europa League nights last season. *"It's fantastic for women's football in this country that the final is being hosted in London and at Fulham,"* England women's manager and 2011 UEFA Women's Champions League final ambassador, Hope Powell, said. *"It will be a great occasion."*

A long week

For the second year, the UEFA Champions League final will be played on a Saturday to give children and families a greater chance to enjoy the show. It will be the culmination of the week-long UEFA Champions Festival, which will bring the UEFA Champions League to the heart of London from Saturday 21 May to Saturday 28 May.

Held at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park, it will allow thousands of fans who might not have tickets to the main event at Wembley to still take part in the occasion. Organised fan festivities have been a major part of the UEFA Champions League final since the 2006 showpiece in Paris and they were taken to a new high last year with the introduction of the first week-long festival in the Parque del Retiro in Madrid.

That proved a huge success with locals and travelling fans alike, and there will again be something for everyone in Hyde Park. Kids will be encouraged to take part in skills clinics hosted by leading figures of the European game and past masters will be on hand to show them how it is done in the all-star Ultimate Champions match. Fans can find out more about the history of the competition in the Museum of Champions or relive some of its greatest moments in the Theatre of Champions. And no



Getty Images

visit to the UEFA Champions Festival would be complete without a photo with the trophy itself.

Grassroots Day

A major aim of the festival is to get children and communities involved and the skills clinics provide a glimpse of the work that will be going on across the continent, involving all 53 member associations, on Wednesday 25 May, the second annual UEFA Grassroots Day. Created to encourage participation at all levels of the game and to show that football is open to everyone, Grassroots Day is held in the week of the UEFA Champions League final to also emphasise that the game cannot flourish at the highest levels without solid foundations at the grassroots. To mark the excellent work being done to promote grassroots football across the continent, the UEFA Grassroots Awards for outstanding achievement will be announced by the UEFA technical director, Andy Roxburgh, in London that day.



But first, the spotlight will be on the Irish capital for the UEFA Europa League final. The stunning new Dublin Arena has been built on the site of the old Lansdowne Road stadium and its unique design, with a glass wall behind the north stand, gives it personality and a stamp of originality. It will be the first time a UEFA club final has been played in the Republic of Ireland and the event is a fitting finale to a memorable first season at the 50,000 capacity stadium, which opened on 11 August 2010 when Ireland played Argentina in an international friendly.

Lansdowne Road was home to Ireland's football and rugby union sides and many matches it hosted will go down in Irish history, not least the 2-0 win against Bulgaria in October 1987 which helped secure Ireland's place in the 1988 European Championship, the nation's first major finals. The UEFA Europa League final ambassador, Ronnie Whelan, was in that side and is sure the new stadium will also soon carve its own niche in history. *"The stadium is brilliant,"* he said. *"It wouldn't matter who got through to the final, even the biggest clubs in Europe: the stadium itself is fit for a big, big final."* ●

Dublin Arena was inaugurated at a friendly between the Republic of Ireland and Argentina



Seven qualifying groups for Women's EURO 2013

The 2011–13 European Women's Championship qualifying group stage draw was held at the House of European Football on 14 March.



Swedish international Hedvig Lindahl took part in the draw alongside Gianni Infantino, UEFA general secretary

Group 1: Italy, Russia, Poland, Greece, FYR Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Draw results

Group 2: Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Romania, Turkey, Kazakhstan

Group 3: Norway, Iceland, Belgium, Hungary, Northern Ireland, Bulgaria

Group 4: France, Scotland, Republic of Ireland, Wales, Israel

Group 5: Finland, Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia, Estonia

Group 6: England, Netherlands, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia

Group 7: Denmark, Czech Republic, Austria, Portugal, Armenia.

* If the federation's suspension is lifted. ●

Thirty-eight teams (including the two group winners from the preliminary round, FYR Macedonia and Armenia) have been split into seven qualifying groups (three groups of six teams and four groups of five). The seven group winners and the best runner-up will go straight to the final round, while the other six runners-up will compete in play-off matches, the winners of which will also qualify for the finals. The qualifying matches will start in September 2011 and will last 12 months, after which the play-off matches will be played as home and away matches in October 2012. The final round will take place in Sweden in July 2013. As hosts, Sweden qualify automatically.

European Under-17 Championship

Spain knocked out in U17 elite round

England reaffirmed their position as European U17 champions by again beating Spain, the 2010 runners-up, 2-1 on the last day of their elite round mini-tournament.



Having notched up three victories, England have secured their place in the U17 final round, taking place from 3 to 15 May in Serbia. The Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, France and Romania will also be competing alongside the hosts and the title holders. This will be the first time that Romania has taken part in a UEFA U17 final round.

The final round draw took place on 5 April at Belgrade city hall and was conducted by Jim Boyce, first vice-chairman of the Youth and Amateur Football Committee, with the help of Vladimir Petrovic, former Serbian international and now coach of the Serbian national team.

The draw produced the following groups:

Group A: Serbia, Denmark, France, England

Group B: Germany, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Romania

Novi Sad, Indija, Smederevo and Belgrade will host the 15 final round matches. The final itself will take place on 15 May at the Karadjordje stadium in Novi Sad. Nine matches, including the semi-finals and final, will be broadcast by Eurosport.

This final round will also determine which teams

represent Europe at the next U-17 World Cup, which is taking place from 18 June to 10 July in Mexico. The top three in each group will earn a place. ●

Women's Champions League

Germany guaranteed a place in Women's Champions League final

For the fourth year running, Germany will be represented in the Women's Champions League final.



The title holders, 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam, face FCR 2001 Duisbourg in the semi-finals, after they knocked out French team FCF Juvisy Essonne and England's Everton respectively. The two other semi-finalists are 2010 finalists Olympique Lyonnais, who put an end to the run of Russian team WFC Zvezda 2005 Perm, and Arsenal LFC of England, who beat Swedish team Linköpings FC. The final will take place on 26 May at Fulham's Craven Cottage stadium in London. ●



Germany v Switzerland in the elite round of the European U17 Championship

Vogel/Bongarts/Getty Images

Football comes to schools

Football in Albania may soon be a separate subject in schools. This has been confirmed by a high-level meeting held between the ministry of education and science and the Albanian Football Association (FShF). The FShF has been developing this idea for a long time and it is supported by UEFA and FIFA, the highest international organisations in football.

It was made clear at a recent meeting between the Albanian minister of education and science, Myqerem Tafaj, and the president of the FShF, Armand Duka, that the Albanian state is interested in pushing ahead with the initiative. At the meeting,



Football will soon be on the school curriculum

the pair discussed the best ways to implement it in the specific context of the Albanian education system.

Mr Tafaj welcomed the project and ensured it would find support in the near future. He said that the national school system needed to support such initiatives to help education reach the highest levels.

Mr Duka guaranteed the support of the FShF, not only in supplying educational materials but also in providing qualified personnel.

The introduction of football to the Albanian school curriculum is a major step forward in spreading this much-loved sport in the country.

● Press office

Beginning of the new season

March was marked by three interesting events in Armenian football. Firstly, the new season got under way in the Arme-

nian Premier League and the Armenian Cup. Eight teams – FC Pyunik, FC Banants, FC Ulysses, FC Mika, FC Impuls, FC Gandzasar, FC Shirak and FC Ararat – are competing in these competitions for the championship title and the cup. Cup matches are all knockout games, while the championship is a round-robin competition consisting of four rounds.

There was a good atmosphere at the match between Armenia and Russia



Meanwhile, Armenia's women's team successfully completed the preliminary round of the 2011–13 European Women's Championship. In a mini-tournament involving Georgia, the Faroe Islands and Malta, our team won first place. In the next qualifying round, Armenia will play Denmark, the Czech Republic, Austria and Portugal.

And finally, the main event of the month was the EURO 2012 qualifying group match between Armenia and Russia, which took place on 26 March at the Republican Stadium in Yerevan. The crowds in the stands emphasised the importance of this action-packed match. It ended in a 0–0 draw, but the fans out to support their team were not disappointed.

● Tigran Israelyan

Increase in registered members

In 2009, the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) announced a new registration project. At that time there were only 1,320 players and coaches registered in the AFFA database.

There are different reasons for the increase seen since the project got underway. The first is the organisation of youth tournaments and different grassroots projects. For the last two seasons, the AFFA has organised new youth leagues, including U13 and U14 leagues and an U16 women's league. The association has also organised different schools' cups and football lessons in schools. The total number of youngsters involved in these projects over the last two years is over 6,500.

The second factor is more extensive registration in different categories. When the AFFA first started the project, it focused on players and coaches in the domestic professional and youth (U17 and U15) leagues. The next step was to implement the system in amateur football, futsal, women's football and beach soccer, and to include referees, referee

observers and match delegates. The AFFA also registered staff from the clubs, the regional football federations and its own administration.

As of the start of the current season, all participants in all tournaments have to undergo this registration process and receive a special licence.

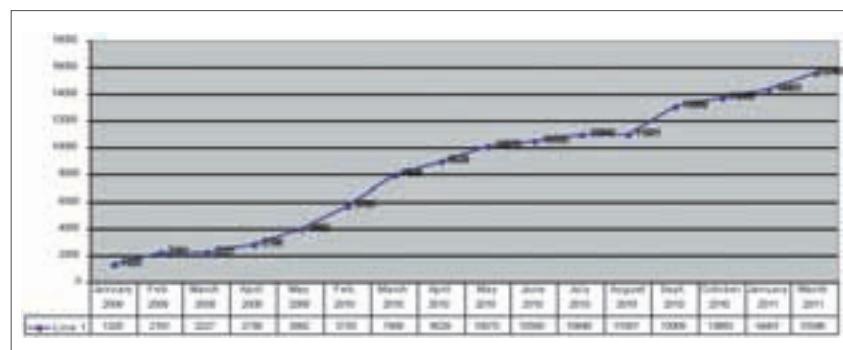
The AFFA database also contains:

- qualifications of coaches and other club staff;

- players selected by AFFA scouts;
- contact details of football associations, local clubs and clubs in other countries;
- statistics from all domestic leagues: teams, players, coaches (including age, nationality, etc.).

The AFFA football family is now more than 15,000 strong and growing daily.

● Elchin Mammadov



Membership is on the increase



Belarus
www.bff.by

FC Bobruichanka win women's super cup

On 26 March, the women's super cup was played on the artificial pitch at the SOK Olimpiyskiy stadium. FC Bobruichanka, the winners of the national championship, played against the cup winners, Zorka-BDU, who also finished second in the championship. The teams had already met in the cup final in November.

It was a game of both youth and experience. Marina Lis, one of the most experienced players in the Zorka-BDU squad and the Belarus national team, was on the bench having ended her playing career and become Zorka's coach. Her successors definitely lacked her attacking experience during the match but both teams clearly wanted to win the trophy, and as a result many players left the pitch only with the assistance of their medical staff.



BFF

Bobruichanka, winners of the women's Super Cup

After 90 minutes the score was 0-0 and the game, just like in November, went to a penalty shoot-out. This time Bobruichanka got the upper hand and won 4-3.

So the second Belarusian super cup heads to Bobruisk.

● Yulia Zenkovich



England

www.thefa.com

The excitement is growing

With less than two months to go until the culmination of the UEFA Champions League, excitement about the men's final at Wembley



The FA

The Wembley logo

on 28 May and the women's final at Fulham FC's Craven Cottage on 26 May is mounting every day.

It is a huge honour for everyone at The Football Association to be hosting our friends from UEFA and visitors from all over the world in May, particularly as it allows us to put the spotlight on Wembley Stadium, which was built for historic occasions such as this.

Finals are always one of the most exhilarating elements of sport and it is safe to say that a European final in front of a capacity crowd at Wembley will be a very special event, not only for those lucky enough to be in attendance, but also for the millions of people who will be watching around the world.

This will be the sixth European Cup final to be staged in London in the history of the competition, and the first time since Wembley re-opened its doors in 2007 that we have been able to stage the final of Europe's premier football competition. Club football in England continues to be as strong as ever, with five out

of the last six finals involving English clubs. While trying to remain impartial, we at The FA have our fingers crossed for another English finalist this year!

We are also proud to be hosting the UEFA Women's Champions League final, formerly the UEFA Women's Cup, which is now in its tenth season. It comes at a time when women's football in England is going from strength to strength, not least with the launch of the Women's Super League.

As previous hosts Madrid, Rome and Moscow will no doubt confirm, the UEFA Champions League final is a wonderful event, not just for the host stadium but also the host city. Through the Champions Festival that will be taking place over eight days in Hyde Park and the sight of the famous Wembley arch that will be lit on 28 May for all of London to see, we believe that Londoners will be able to connect to this year's final like never before.

● Nick Meakin



Georgia
www.gff.ge

Technical centre renovated

"My thanks to every single member of the Georgian Football Federation staff, who have worked 24 hours a day to complete our training centre," said Temuri Ketsbaia, Georgian national team coach, after their excellent match against Croatia (1-0) in Tbilisi on 26 March.

Work on the Basa training centre (named after Avtandil [Basa] Gogoberidze, a legendary Dinamo Tbilisi player) was started ten years ago by Merab Jordania, then president of the Georgian Football Federation (GFF), with investments from UEFA and FIFA. It was, however, never finished, and between 2005 and 2009 Basa was completely destroyed.

It was only after the election in October 2009 of the new GFF president, Zviad Sichinava, that a decision was taken to resume work on the training ground, located on the western side of Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia.

Sichinava built two more football fields, completely renovated the whole building and added an extra floor. He promised the GFF that he would finish Basa before their decisive match against Croatia, and therefore acted not only as supervisor of the construction process, but also as a worker himself, like all GFF staff. He cleaned corridors, carried furniture and helped to lay bricks, among other things. Thanks to such hard work before the game against Croatia, the Georgian national football team could train on the Basa pitch for the first time in ten years.

The renovated training centre will be completed by the end of 2011 and will include a floodlit stadium that can hold 3,000 spectators, two more pitches (one of them artificial),



The Basa centre

accommodation for 50, a swimming pool, rest areas and a billiards table on five hectares of land in total.

● Tatia Burduli / Mamuka Kvaratskhelia



The Icelandic U21s, ready for the final round in Denmark

Early start in Iceland

The start of the season in Iceland is just around the corner and is unusually early this year. The men's top division, Úrvalsdeild, will start on 1 May this year. That is ten days earlier than usual, but a regular season in Iceland, played in the summer, only has a time span of 20 weeks. So, even though the groundsmen at the clubs have to work overtime this year to get their grounds ready early, this is due to a rather "positive problem".

The Icelandic U21 men's team have reached the finals of the European Under-21 Championship for the first time in history. This year the finals will be played in Denmark and have been met with huge interest from fans in Iceland, who will go to Denmark in large numbers to cheer on their boys. Iceland's first game will be on 11 June and the tournament will end on 25 June. As a consequence of the number of players also playing in our top division, no domestic games will be scheduled between these dates. This promising U21 team has

played two friendlies against teams that will also be among the eight finalists in Denmark this summer. First they travelled to Kyiv, where Ukraine beat Iceland 3-2. Four days later Iceland played England in Preston for the first time in this age group. Iceland won 2-1 after England had scored the first goal. Both teams had key players missing but that gave others a chance to shine and push for a place in Denmark next summer.

● Thorvaldur Ingimundarson



O!Karte Latvian youth football league

This year's Latvian youth championship will be called the O!Karte youth football league after the Latvian Football Federation (LFF) and Latvijas Mobilais Telefons (LMT), Latvia's biggest mobile phone company, signed a sponsorship deal on 24 March. The O!Karte league is a Latvian youth football championship that will be played in nine age groups and involve



The LFF general secretary, Janis Mezeckis (right), and the LMT president, Juris Binde, presenting the new youth league

6,170 players from 331 teams and more than 60 clubs from all over Latvia, with more than 3,000 matches from April to November 2011.

In other news, the LFF has continued its UEFA HatTrick II programme by signing deals with councils in the Latvian cities of Daugavpils, Rezekne, Preili and Jūrmala. The LFF will donate full-size artificial grass pitches for these cities' stadiums. Meanwhile, the first football pitch sponsored by the UEFA HatTrick II programme will be opened in September at the new Riga Technical University football centre.

On Thursday 31 March, the LFF held its annual general meeting at the Islande hotel in Riga, where the LFF president, Guntais Indriks, the general secretary, Janis Mezeckis, and the deputy general secretary, Edgars Pukins, presented the work done by the association in 2010. They also presented the delegates with plans for the years ahead, including the proposed restructuring and statute changes. As usual, a UEFA representative was in attendance, this time in the form of UEFA Executive Committee member František Laurinec from Slovakia.

● Aleksander Keplin

● Media department



President re-elected for new term

The election congress of the Football Federation of Kazakhstan (FFK) took place in Astana on 11 March. The main item on the agenda was the election of the FFK president and executive committee members. The only candidate for the position of FFK president was the outgoing president, Adilbek Jaxybekov. The congress delegates expressed their full support for Mr Jaxybekov and elected him for another four-year term. Besides the president, the 14 FFK executive committee members were also elected. Following the congress, the FFK executive committee met for the first time in its new composition and re-elected Seilda Baishakov, Mikhail Gurman and Viktor Katkov as vice-presidents.



A new four-year term of office for Adilbek Jaxybekov

"On behalf of the executive committee members, I would like to express my gratitude to all the federation members and congress delegates. The re-election of the president and the executive committee members for a new term is a great responsibility for us. We have worked very closely for the last four years. We have

seen improvements in Kazakhstan football together. Great work has been done to create a healthy environment for competition and, to a considerable degree, we have accomplished this goal. Improvements have been seen in the championship, which has resulted in teams raising their game as well. We should continue to work in this area, but if we do not have spectators at our matches, we can say that all our work is in vain. We who work in football should all succeed in this direction. Currently, the performance of our national team leaves much to be desired. This is connected to the development of youth football. Much work is being done in this field in every region. Many aspects are handled by the regions or by private investors. This means that society as a whole is interested in football. We should involve the country's youth and invest in football. We have our own accomplishments, and we have our own difficulties as well. We are aware of them. We will do our best to resolve them and to develop football in Kazakhstan. I look forward to further cooperation", said the FFK president, Adilbek Jaxybekov.

● Aleksander Keplin

UEFA•direct | 04.11

2011 annual general meeting

The Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) held its annual general meeting in Triesenberg on 24 March. Besides the approval of the annual report and accounts, the agenda included various elections. The meeting was attended by high-ranking guests such as the president of the German Football Association, Theo Zwanziger, and FIFA representative and former Swiss international Jean-Paul Brigger, as well as representatives of the eastern Swiss and Vorarlberg football associations. Both Theo Zwanziger and Jean-Paul Brigger addressed the delegates, expressing their warm regard for the LFV and their recognition of its excellent work. The LFV president, Reinhart Walser, also reported on the work done, and on the association's vision and goals for the future. He reflected on the financial success of the last 12 months and looked forward to keener promotion of women's football and the construc-



From left to right: Heinz Biedermann, Matthias Voigt, Reinhart Walser and Urs Gerner

tion of the association's own technical centre. The routine LFV board elections resulted in just one new name. Matthias Voigt was elected in place of former vice-president Fredi Hilti, who stood down after ten years on the board. Georges Lüchinger also stepped down after five years of service. At the request of the

chairman, however, his position as marketing and communications director remains vacant for the time being, as the LFV is pursuing further, deeper cooperation with the clubs over the next few months, which is likely to have an impact on the composition of the board. Meanwhile, the LFV's director of grassroots football, Heinz Biedermann, was re-elected.

The LFV board is therefore now as follows: president: Reinhart Walser (existing); vice-president: Matthias Voigt (new); director of finance, Urs Gerner (existing); director of elite football: Rudolf Marxer (existing); director of grassroots football: Heinz Biedermann (existing); director of marketing/communications: pending.

● Anton Banzer


Malta
www.mfa.com.mt

Physical trainer course

The technical centre of the Malta Football Association (MFA) recently organised a course for prospective physical trainers in football. The course, held at the Ta'Qali national foot-



D. Aquilina

Luca Pagani, the kingpin of the course

ball complex, was intended to provide training in the field of specialised physical preparation for footballers, with emphasis on top fitness levels.

Lectures were given by several experts in the field, many of whom are of international repute. They included foreign speakers from Italy and England, with Maltese specialists completing the round-up.

The association's national teams sector, with Luca Pagani responsible for players' fitness training, is constantly engaged in this field of activity and the response from prospective trainers in the Maltese islands is very encouraging.

This was in fact the second comprehensive course of its kind, after 13 candidates successfully completed the inaugural training last year.

This initiative by the MFA has raised awareness of the importance of footballers achieving optimal levels of fitness in application of state-of-the-art science.

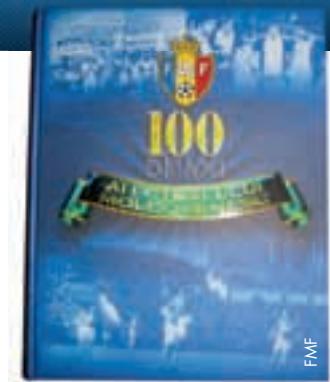
● Alex Vella


Moldova
www.fmf.md

A book for the 100th anniversary of Moldovan football

To mark the centenary of Moldovan football, Serghei Donets, president of the football history and statistics association, was commissioned by the Football Association of Moldova to produce a book about the history of Moldovan football.

Some 20 journalists and photographers were involved in producing this 575-page book, which includes 339 pages on the history of Moldovan football, its most famous players, its leaders and its infrastructure – all beautifully illustrated, with lots of archived photos. There is also a detailed statistics section, containing lists not only of competition winners, but also of Moldova's top scorers and players of the year as well as full statistics on the Moldovan



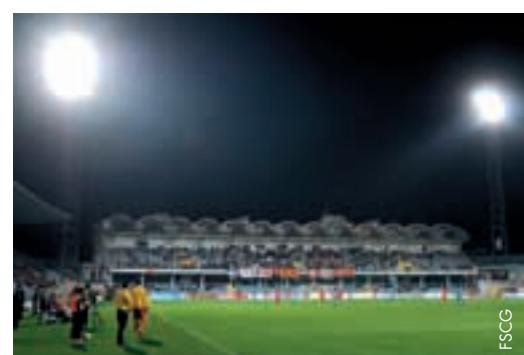
The book commemorating the centenary of Moldovan Football

national team, U21 team games, and all the matches of the Moldovan clubs in European competitions.

● Press office


Montenegro
www.fscg.co.me

New floodlights at Podgorica stadium



The floodlit Podgorica stadium

The national football teams of Montenegro and Uzbekistan were honoured to play the very first game under the new floodlights at Podgorica stadium, Montenegro's biggest stadium.

The renovation of the floodlights, as well as the installation of an electricity generator and emergency lighting, was carried out thanks to a \$1m donation from UEFA and the technical and business cooperation of the Football Association of Montenegro and the capital city.

The new floodlights provide average illuminance of 1.839lx towards the fixed cameras, which is much higher than the UEFA standard for category four stadiums. They provide 30% more light than the previous floodlights, while using 30% less power.

The new floodlights are another step towards our goal of completely renovating the stadium. This includes the construction of a new eastern stand, which should be under way by the end of the year, and the reconstruction and improvement of the western stand.

With a solid 1-0 win against Uzbekistan at the Podgorica stadium, the Montenegrin team extended their fabulous clean sheet to seven games (six of which they have won).

● Ivan Radovic



Exchange of experiences

World Cup referee Howard Webb was a guest of the Irish FA recently when he paid a short visit to Northern Ireland. He was the chief guest at a development seminar in Belfast



Howard Webb (centre top) with referees from Northern Ireland

attended by nearly 80 referees and observers. The topics discussed were leadership skills, decision-making and conflict management.

Sports psychologists Dr John Kramer from Queen's University and Michael Austin and Martin Walker from Train Your Mind all delivered excellent presentations, with Howard Webb using his personal experiences to illustrate the theory.

During his trip, Howard also visited the North East Ulster Referees Association, at which he spoke to over 100 members and took them through his experiences at the World Cup finals in South Africa. He also took time out to visit staff at the Irish FA headquarters. "It's always a pleasure to visit Northern Ireland. My first visit here was to referee at the Ballymena schoolboys' international tournament and I have happy memories as this coincided with the start of my international career," said Howard. "The world of refereeing has changed dramatically in the past ten years and it's great to see the Irish FA providing their officials with all this extra support."

Alan Snoddy, referee development officer for the Irish FA, added: "We are indebted to

Howard for taking the time to visit us. Obviously he is a very busy man and we value this support. Our senior officials, development group officials and referee academy group members all learnt a lot from his input."

● Sueann Harrison



Visit from Giancarlo Abete

There is great satisfaction in San Marino, following confirmation by Giancarlo Abete, UEFA Executive Committee member and president of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), of the excellent results achieved by the San Marino Football Federation (FSGC). His visit came a few days after the FSGC received UEFA's club licensing quality seal: for the seventh consecutive year, the federation has successfully met the requirements of the club licensing system.

After bringing greetings from the UEFA president, Michel Platini, Giancarlo Abete participated in the FSGC's general meeting. On the agenda were the approval of the final budget and forecast, a report by the president, Giorgio Crescentini, and the presentation of the FSGC's fair play trophy to S.C. Faetano.

Giancarlo Abete confirmed the great achievements of the FSGC, emphasising the good relationship it had with the FIGC. The work done



Ireland's top coaches graduate to Pro licence

The next generation of top Irish coaches, which includes some high-profile personalities from the game in Ireland and England, recently received their UEFA Pro diplomas.

Five of them – Curtis Fleming, Jeff Kenna, John Devine, Kenny Cunningham and Liam Buckley – are former Republic of Ireland internationals who bring to their coaching a total of 124 caps between them.

They also represent a wide range of top clubs, where the seeds for their interest in the coaching side of football were no doubt sown. Fleming was a cult hero at St Patrick's Athletic and Middlesbrough; Kenna at Southampton, Blackburn Rovers and Birmingham City; Devine at Arsenal and Norwich City; Cunningham at Millwall and Birmingham City; and Buckley at Shamrock Rovers, Waregem, St Patrick's Athletic and Sporting Fingal.

Cunningham has moved into TV punditry with ease, Devine has just launched puresoccer.ie, a coaching website, and Liam Buckley enjoyed

great success as manager of the now defunct Sporting Fingal, winning the FAI Ford Cup in 2009.

The League of Ireland is also well represented in the list of graduates, with Eddie Gormley, folk hero at Bray Wanderers and St Patrick's Athletic; Harry McCue, of Drogheda United fame; Martin Russell, currently a contender for manager of the year for his role at UCD; Tommy Dunne, boss of Cork City; and Paul Cook, the man who has transformed Sligo Rovers into FAI Cup winners and one of the most attractive teams in the league.

When men of this calibre are graduating from the FAI's coaching courses, one can be sure that the future of football in Ireland is in safe hands.

The other recipients of diplomas are also high profile. Steve Harrison is currently Coventry City's caretaker manager and was previously assistant manager at Middlesbrough and England under Steve McClaren, while Michael Browne works at the Aspire youth academy in Qatar.

● Fran Whearty



The new Pro coaches



Giancarlo Abete (left) presents the fair play trophy to S.C. Faetano

FSGC

in San Marino was assessed positively and declared in line with UEFA's objectives and programmes. In particular, credit was given to the federation's attention to youth development and youth sectors, but another important point was infrastructure, an area in which the FSGC has invested a lot over the years, ensuring UEFA's standards are met here too.

Giancarlo Abete acknowledged the "quality" work done by the FSGC and its president, Giorgio Crescentini. He also mentioned how the relationship between the FSGC and the FIGC would continue to grow over time, in the spirit of teamwork within UEFA. The federations' friendly relationship has been confirmed in recent years by Giancarlo Abete himself, whose latest visit was his fourth, following a first visit with the UEFA president, a visit to attend the inauguration of the reinforced natural grass pitch at the Stadio Olimpico in Serravalle, and a third visit for the renewal of the cooperation agreement between the neighbouring federations.

● Elia Gorini



Best player in Slovakia awarded Ján Popluhár prize

The results of the 2010 Slovakian player of the year poll were announced on Sunday 27 March at the PO Hviezdoslav city theatre in Bratislava. Marek Hamsík, the midfielder from SSC Napoli, has kept his title from 2009 and Miroslav Stoch has once more won the Peter Dubovský prize for best U21 footballer. Jozef Pavlík has been awarded the title of best referee of 2010 and Robert Jez has been named best player in the Corgon Liga (the highest league

in Slovakia). The woman footballer of the year was Eva Kolenová and the best coach was Vladimír Weiss.

A special prize was presented to Miroslav Karhan, who is the first Slovakian footballer to have played in more than 100 matches for the national team. A special honour was also presented to Jozef Vengloš for his 75th birthday, which was in February.

The prime minister of Slovakia, Iveta Radicová, remembered Ján Popluhár in her speech at the awards ceremony. Ján Popluhár was an exceptional character in Slovakian and world football



The president of the Slovak Football Association, Ján Kováčik (with the UEFA Order of Merit) and Iveta Radicová, the prime minister of Slovakia



Lars-Åke Lagrell begins final term as president



A new and final term of office for Lars-Åke Lagrell

The Swedish FA's annual meeting unanimously re-elected Lars-Åke Lagrell as president, but he announced that this, his 21st term, would be his last at the helm of the association. The Swedish FA holds presidential elections every year.

"I am honoured and privileged to have been elected for one more year, but as I declared earlier, it is in the best interests of both the FA and myself that I resign in 2012. And, of course, I will always be there to support Swedish football in the future."

Karl-Erik Nilsson (former FIFA referee and tournament director for the 2009 European Under-21 Championship final round) was elected as a new member of the board, replacing Gillis Persson, who decided not to stand for re-election. Kennet Håkansson and Jörgen Eriksson were both re-elected for two-year terms.

The meeting delegates also heard that the economic result for the 2010 fiscal year was SEK 10.3 million, while many other positive topics were discussed: the number of active players has increased for the eighth consecutive year, a number of modern stadiums are being built and excellent progress is being made in player development. Among the challenges the Swedish FA hopes to meet this year are improving attendance in the top leagues and qualification for EURO 2012.

● Andreas Nilsson

● Juraj Čurny



Turkey to host FIFA U-20 World Cup 2013

Turkey has won the bid to host the biggest event in its history. In a media conference held at FIFA headquarters in Zurich at the beginning of March, the FIFA Executive Committee announced that the 2013 U-20 World Cup would be held in Turkey.

Turkey outbid rival candidates Uzbekistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with a bid that proposed 10 cities (Antalya, Bursa, Gaziantep, Istanbul, Izmir, Kayseri, Manisa, Rize, Sanliurfa, Trabzon) and 13 stadiums which will put Turkey on the world football map. A final decision on the host cities will be made after visits by FIFA officials.

In a speech given after the announcement, the TFF vice-president, Lütfi Arıboğan, said: "We are honoured to be here today, winning the right to host the 2013 FIFA U-20 World Cup in Turkey. We are glad to see our six months of continuous efforts bear fruit. The president, prime minister, sports minister, general directorate of youth and sports, Turkey's clubs and also our government – from the ministries to the municipalities of the candidate cities – all provided the support necessary to strengthen our bid for the FIFA U-20 World Cup. We are grateful to them. We also thank our honorary president, UEFA first vice-president and FIFA Executive Committee member, Senes Erzik."

Lütfi Arıboğan emphasised that the tournament, which will last for a month, will inject around \$300 million into the economy, adding that "this year's U-20 World Cup in Colombia provided 9,000 jobs, of which 2,900 were direct employment. We are sure that these figures will increase in our country."

The FIFA U-20 World Cup is a chance for the star players of the future to demonstrate their skills on the world football stage for the first time. The tournament is also broadcast live in many countries. The 2013 finals will be held in June, with teams from 24 different countries participating.

● Communications Department



U21 preparations running smoothly

The final round of the European Under-21 Championship will be held in Denmark in June, with Switzerland involved for the first time since their appearances in 2002 and 2004. Following a win and a draw in the play-offs against Sweden and some other outstanding performances, expectations in and around the team coached by Pierluigi Tami are very high as the final round approaches. The positive impressions the team has been making for a long time were confirmed at their training camp in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, with victories in both practice matches, in which the whole squad took part.

Denmark, Iceland and Belarus will be Switzerland's group opponents in Denmark – difficult but beatable for a squad whose excellent team spirit is as impressive as

its performances on the pitch. "It is great to see that absolutely everyone is pulling in the same direction," said Tami after the ten-day training camp at the end of March. Captain, team leader and goalkeeper Yann Sommer has also been struck by the atmosphere among the players.

In addition to the players in the current squad, five talented youngsters who recently played for the national A team – Affolter, Derdiyok, Gavranovic, Stocker and Shaqiri – and who all made occasional appearances during the Under-21 qualifying competition, are all still young enough to play in the final round. The most experienced member of this group is Eren Derdiyok. The Bayer Leverkusen striker has already won 31 senior international caps, having scored in his debut against England at Wembley Stadium in February 2008.

● Pierre Benoit



Eren Derdiyok, in the national A team but still young enough to play for the U21s too

Birthdays

Patrick Daly (Republic of Ireland), referee observer, is celebrating his 70th birthday on 28 May. Before that, on 8 May, Marc Dobbeleir (Belgium), doping control officer, is turning 60, as is Suheil Daood (Israel), referee observer, on 25 May. On the same day, Hans Cooman (Belgium), doping control officer, is 50.

UEFA also extends birthday wishes for May to:

Campbell Ogilvie (Scotland, 1.5)
Peter Mikkelsen (Denmark, 1.5)
Ladislav Gádoši (Slovakia, 3.5)
Volodymyr Chorno-Ivanov (Ukraine, 3.5)
Anghel Iordanescu (Romania, 4.5)
Eleonora Gambillara (Switzerland, 4.5)
Peter Gilliéron (Switzerland, 5.5)
Costakis Koutsokounnis (Cyprus, 5.5)
Kenneth Ridden (England, 6.5)
Guðmundur Pétursson (Iceland, 6.5)
Stanislav Strapák (Slovakia, 6.5)
Karl-Erik Nilsson (Sweden, 6.5)
Pekka Luhtanen (Finland, 8.5)
Michel Pralong (Switzerland, 8.5)
Miroslav Tulinger (Czech Republic, 8.5)
Patrick Comninos (Greece, 8.5)
Ucha Ugulava (Georgia, 8.5)
Armen Melikbeyyan (Armenia, 10.5)
Jean-Marie Gantenbein (Luxembourg, 11.5)
Ernst-Peter Radziwill (Germany, 11.5)
Timo Huttunen (Finland, 11.5)
Henrik Ravnild (Denmark, 13.5)
Mattia Piffaretti (Switzerland, 13.5)
Odile Lanceau (France, 14.5)
Carlos Manuel Ferreira Matos (Portugal, 14.5)
Hans-Jörg Eissmann (Germany, 15.5)
Piotr Maranda (Poland, 15.5)
Håkan Nyberg (Sweden, 15.5)
Nikolay Levnikov (Russia, 15.5)
Evzen Amler (Czech Republic, 15.5)
Angel Bungurov (FYR Macedonia, 16.5)
Ľuboš Michel (Slovakia, 16.5)
Svein Johannessen (Norway, 17.5)
Lars Appelqvist (Sweden, 18.5)
Andreas Morisbak (Norway, 19.5)
Jozef Marko (Slovakia, 19.5)
Gaetano De Gabriele (Malta, 19.5)
Milovan Djukonovic (Montenegro, 19.5)
Rune Pedersen (Norway, 19.5)
Raimondas Statkevicius (Lithuania, 19.5)
Michał Listkiewicz (Poland, 20.5)
Serge Muhenthaler (Switzerland, 20.5)
Ivan Simic (Slovenia, 20.5)
Miodrag Belodedici (Romania, 20.5)
Ewa Gajewska (Poland, 21.5)
Nicolai Cebotari (Moldova, 21.5)
Costas Kapitanis (Cyprus, 21.5)
Theo van Seggelen (Netherlands, 22.5)
Karl Dhont (Belgium, 22.5)

Ainar Leppänen (Estonia, 24.5)
Packie Bonner (Republic of Ireland, 24.5)
Semen Andreev (Russia, 25.5)
Ivancica Sudac (Croatia, 25.5)
Evgeni Giner (Russia, 26.5)
Barbara Straková (Czech Republic, 26.5)
Robert Jeurissen (Belgium, 27.5)
Zdenek Sivek (Czech Republic, 28.5)
Jim Stjerne Hansen (Denmark, 28.5)
Jean-Pierre Escalettes (France, 29.5)
Jacques Antenen (Switzerland, 29.5)
Arnaldo Cunha (Portugal, 31.5)

Forthcoming events

Meetings

9–11.5.2011, Nyon

Referee talents and mentors seminar

11.5.2011, Braga

UEFA Regions' Cup final round draw

11–13.5.2011, Nyon

Course for women referees

13.5.2011, Nyon

HatTrick Committee

25.5.2011, London

Grassroots Day

31.5–1.6.2011, Zurich

FIFA Congress

Competitions

3/4.5.2011

UEFA Champions League: semi-finals (return legs)

3–15.5.2011, Serbia

UEFA European Under-17 Championship final round

5.5.2011

UEFA Europa League: semi-finals (return legs)

18.5.2011, Dublin

UEFA Europa League: final

26.5.2011, London

UEFA Women's Champions League: final

28.5.2011, London

UEFA Champions League: final

30.5–11.6.2011, Italy

European Women's Under-19 Championship final round

Notices

■ On 1 April FIFA and UEFA suspended the **Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation** (NFSBiH) until further notice due to its refusal to adopt statutes that conform to FIFA and UEFA's recommendations. This means that the NFSBiH loses all FIFA and UEFA membership rights. NFSBiH representative and club teams are no longer entitled to take part in international competitions and NFSBiH officials are no longer allowed to participate in any international match or event until the suspension is lifted.

■ On 11 March Adilbek Jaxybekov was re-elected as chairman of the Football Federation of Kazakhstan for four years.

■ Lars-Åke Lagrell has been re-elected as chairman of the Swedish Football Association for one year.

Match agents

Three new UEFA licences have been awarded to the following agents:

Brian Horne

Sporting Events Limited
15/16 Shafers Arcade
677 High Road
Benfleet, Essex
SS7 5SF, UK
+44 7710 103 310
bbjk@sky.com

Richard Ugoh

4 Francis Court
3 Myers Lane
New Cross, London
SE14 5RU, UK
+44 7534 171 633
richieugo@yahoo.com

Heinrich Rosenauer

SPI 2.0 GmbH
Sport for your identity
Rainerstrasse 15
4600 Wels
Austria
+43 664 284 15 99
rosenauer@spi.co.at

Obituary

Michel Daphinoff, former assistant UEFA general secretary, died on 15 March at the age of 85. Having previously worked in international relations at the Bulgarian Football Union, Michel Daphinoff joined UEFA in May 1961 as assistant to the then general secretary. He was in charge of financial matters until he retired in December 1990.



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