CAFE Week of Action 2018

Total Football Total Access
Summary report

Alternative formats of this document are available upon request. Please contact CAFE:
E: info@cafefootball.eu
T: +44(0) 208 065 5108
Twitter: @cafefootball

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Contents

Executive summary................................................................. 3
Background ............................................................................. 4
Participating countries.............................................................. 5
Activities .................................................................................. 7
Legacy and next steps............................................................... 12
Contacting CAFE................................................................. 13
About CAFE......................................................................... 13
Executive summary
Since its creation in 2009, the Centre for Access to Football in Europe (CAFE) has worked with UEFA and other key stakeholders to improve access and increase disability awareness in and around football, using the unique power of the world's most popular game.

As part of the continuing legacy of UEFA EURO 2012, which saw accessible host venues created across Poland and Ukraine, CAFE ran a successful three-year legacy project in the region. As part of this, CAFE launched the CAFE Week of Action initiative to enable national associations, leagues, clubs, disabled fans and non-disabled fans to come together and celebrate access and inclusion. CAFE has delivered the CAFE Week of Action in Poland and Ukraine annually since 2013.

The initiative has exceeded all expectations and provided great exposure for the topic and our works. The CAFE Week of Action has received the support of disabled fans, and in 2016 we extended the reach of the CAFE Week of Action beyond Poland and Ukraine with activities taking place across 13 different countries. In 2017, this expanded further to 20 countries.

The CAFE Week of Action 2018 was celebrated in a total of 25 countries, and highlights have included:

- A high-profile half time ceremony celebrating Total Football Total Access hosted by FC Barcelona and broadcast worldwide;
- An event held by Dinamo Zagreb inviting 25 learning disabled fans to experience a match from the Presidential suite and meet their favourite players;
- Scottish champions Celtic FC wearing CAFE-branded t-shirts ahead of a Scottish Cup Quarter Final match;
- Activities right across Russia with over 20 clubs getting involved

There have been many great successes under the umbrella of the CAFE Week of Action over the past six years, and the initiative continues to grow organically and result in a vastly improved landscape for many disabled football fans across Europe.

The CAFE Week of Action is a unique opportunity to showcase the benefits of good access and wider inclusion, and Total Football Total Access continues to gain momentum. CAFE would like to extend many thanks to the participants in the previous six CAFE Weeks of Action, and we have already been contacted by countries wishing to take part in next season's CAFE Week of Action.

CAFE views the CAFE Week of Action as a sustainable project for disabled fan groups and footballing stakeholders to take ownership of, and to continue to deliver the initiative locally.
Background

The CAFE Week of Action – Total Football Total Access – is an annual initiative that
celebrates access for all and promotes the wider inclusion of disabled people in football.

Since its creation, the impact of the CAFE Week of Action has seen a significant rise in
awareness around access and inclusion, in both football and the wider society.

In 2017, UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin supported the CAFE Week of Action and CAFE's
works towards an accessible and welcoming game for all, explaining:

UEFA aims to utilise football's global reach to promote
and foster social inclusion. Our sport must be open to
everyone – people of all sexes, creeds, beliefs and
abilities, who all have a right to enjoy the game they
love. Together with our partners CAFE, we aim to
improve disabled people's access to football and help
them play a fuller role in society

Aleksander Čeferin

We would like to thank UEFA for their tremendous support and their continued
commitment to our shared goal of Total Football Total Access.

Since the birth of the CAFE Week of Action in 2013, the initiative has been hosted
successfully by Poland and Ukraine each season, with support provided by national
associations, leagues, clubs and their disabled fans groups. Highlights included:
After three seasons of ever-increasing activity, a number of other countries expressed an interest in taking part in the initiative.

The sixth annual CAFE Week of Action took place from 3-11 March 2018. Disabled fan groups, clubs, leagues and national associations were invited to join us in celebrating the initiative and promote both an accessible matchday and non-matchday experience for all disabled people.

The CAFE Week of Action 2018 was coordinated from the CAFE Head Office in Wembley with the support and cooperation of partners and stakeholders from across Europe. CAFE was delighted with the positive response that the campaign received, and the following sections of this report provide more detail about the activities that took place under the umbrella of Total Football Total Access.

Year-on-year, the CAFE Week of Action has continued to build on prior successes, activities have continued to grow and 2018’s edition has been no exception to this trend. The project has been an overwhelming success in helping to overcome many pre-existing attitudinal and infrastructural barriers concerning disability. We still have far to go, but we are sure the campaign will continue to improve access and inclusion for disabled people for years to come.

**Participating countries**

A new record of 25 countries hosted CAFE Week of Action celebrations this season, with an activity in the Republic of Ireland – which would have become the 26th participating country – postponed due to poor weather.

Of the 20 countries that took part in 2017, we are delighted that 17 hosted events to mark the CAFE Week of Action this past season. Activities were also held in Croatia, where the CAFE Week of Action was last celebrated in 2016.
This meant that the CAFE Week of Action was celebrated in 7 new countries for the first time in 2018 – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Moldova and Romania. This is a clear sign of the strength the CAFE Week of Action has to grow organically, and the initiative continues to develop year-on-year.

CAFE expects that the initiative will continue to develop across Europe and beyond in future years. With our expanded works in promoting the role of the Disability Access Officer, CAFE is currently active in more countries than ever before and is regularly liaising with many more national associations and clubs. CAFE will continue to welcome all of the football family to join us in celebrating Total Football Total Access.

Map showing reach of CAFE Week of Action since its inception in 2013 (not shown: activities in USA, Brazil and Canada).

Countries in red have participated in at least one CAFE Week of Action since 2013. Countries coloured in blue are non-UEFA national associations and play under the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and Confederation of African Football (CAF).
Activities
A wide variety of activities took place in a total of 25 countries during the CAFE Week of Action 2018. To follow is a summary of highlights from each of the participating countries.

The CAFE Week of Action 2018 saw clubs right across Russia celebrate Total Football Total Access. All clubs in the Russian National Football League issued statements of support, with many hosting pre-match ceremonies. Most notably, a CAFE Week of Action banner was held at FC Olimpiyetv vs Nizhny Novgorod, where disabled fans entered the field ahead of the game and met with their favourite players at full time. Furthermore, pre-match ceremonies were held by Russian Premier League clubs CSKA Moscow and Spartak Moscow. Both teams invited disabled children as player escorts and produced videos of the children meeting their heroes during pre-match stadium tours.

CAFE was delighted to see the increase in activities across Russia, which led to a significantly raised level of awareness before the 2018 FIFA World Cup. The CAFE Week of Action is a unique opportunity to improve understanding around disability, and this has been clearly evident in Russia. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with the Russian Football Union and clubs across Russia in the coming years.

Like Russia, Spain was also marking its second year of celebrating the CAFE Week of Action. La Liga champions FC Barcelona invited CAFE to attend a match against Atletico Madrid where the club held a half time celebration. The iconic Camp Nou stadium was turned blue, as CAFE Week of Action graphics were displayed on all stadium screens and advertising hoardings. At full time, First Vice President Jordi Cardoner presented a unique CAFE Week of Action Barcelona jersey. He was accompanied by Emili Rousaud - the head of the OAE department at the club which works to support disabled people in attending live matches at the stadium.

CAFE Media and Communications Manager Michael Rice then gave an interview to Barca TV, discussing the club’s commitment to wider inclusion. This gained significant exposure in a number of sports newspapers and magazines in Spain. We are very grateful to FC Barcelona for our ongoing cooperation.
In Croatia, 25 learning disabled Dinamo Zagreb fans were invited to watch a match from the club’s Presidential suite. The fans enjoyed a VIP experience, and met two of the club’s high profile international players at full time. Algeria international and reigning Prva HNL Player of the Year, Hillal Soudani, and Swiss international Mario Gavranović spent time with the fans and their companions, talking about their love for the club. Both players and the club as whole, created memories that will last a lifetime and Dinamo has continued to display their fantastic commitment to Total Football Total Access.

Our disabled fans surprised us with a warm welcome. I would like to thank them because of that. I think all other clubs should celebrate their disabled supporters and there should be many more of these kinds of events

Mario Gavranović, Dinamo Zagreb player

Another high-profile club to join CAFE in celebrating the 2018 Week of Action was Celtic FC, the reigning champions of Scotland. Celtic’s players all wore CAFE Week of Action branded t-shirts ahead of a Scottish Cup Quarter Final, which they later signed and auctioned to raise funds for the club’s disabled supporters association. The club also launched a new accessible, audio version of the matchday programme and interviewed disabled fans about their experiences for the club’s official magazine.

Further activities in Scotland were held by Dunfermline Athletic, Rangers and St Johnstone. We are hugely grateful to all participants, and we look forward to working closely with all participating clubs in the future.

One of our first-time participating countries was Armenia where CAFE was approached by the Football Federation of Armenia (FFA) who were keen to get involved. Ahead of all Armenian Premier League fixtures during the campaign, players held a CAFE Week of Action banner on the pitch and read a statement of support to the crowds. Pre-match
ceremonies provide a great deal of exposure, and we are delighted that the FFA joined us in celebrating Total Football Total Access.

Another country that held a CAFE Week of Action celebration for the first time this season was Romania. CAFE was approached by representatives from Politehnica Timisoara—a phoenix club working its way back towards Romania’s top flight. The fan-owned club was determined to celebrate their disabled fans, and worked with local disability NGO Ceva de Spus to invite more disabled people to attend a match. A CAFE Week of Action banner was displayed throughout the match, and the club committed to continue working with Ceva de Spus to improve access to the stadium. The club is also looking to relaunch an accessible website, with a particular focus on enabling blind and partially sighted people to use the site. We continue to work with the club and its disabled fans, and we look forward to many more great stories in Timisoara.

Another first-time participant in the CAFE Week of Action was Moldova, with the celebrations led by Sherriff Tiraspol. The club invited many disabled fans to attend a match during the CAFE Week of Action and read a statement of support for the initiative prior to kick off. CAFE is working with stakeholders in Moldova and we are delighted that access and inclusion is being placed on the agenda in Moldovan football.

The final first-time participant in this season’s CAFE Week of Action was Azerbaijan. CAFE was contacted by the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) and worked together to arrange CAFE Week of Action celebrations at an upcoming international friendly. The AFFA also promoted the CAFE Week of Action on social media and projected a CAFE banner on the national stadium screens. Azerbaijan is another host of UEFA EURO 2020 and CAFE will be working with local stakeholders to further improve access and inclusion in the country.

Both Poland and Ukraine have participated in every CAFE Week of Action to date, and in 2018 disabled supporters associations in both countries continued this tradition. Klub Kibiców Niepełnosprawnych (KKN), the largest disabled supporters group in Poland from Śląsk Wrocław, joined us again in celebrating the initiative for the sixth time in celebrating Total Football Total Access. In Ukraine, the biggest celebration was led by Parafan Club Dynamo Kyiv. Both groups attended matches in large numbers, and displayed banners promoting their commitment to access and inclusion. CAFE has enjoyed a fantastic number of years in Poland and Ukraine, and we look forward to continuing this cooperation for many more.

CAFE has always worked closely to promote disabled fans’ experiences, and this first-hand feedback is priceless to us, our partners and many other disabled people across Europe. As part of the CAFE Week of Action 2018 celebrations, we carried out a number of disabled fans interviews to find out more about their typical matchday routines. Amongst other countries, this included disabled fans in Czech Republic, Germany, Greece and Northern Ireland. These interviews tell a powerful story and help to paint a picture of Total Football Total Access right across the UEFA region.
CAFE has worked closely with a number of different stakeholders in both Belgium and the Netherlands for many years, and both countries again played an important role in this season’s CAFE Week of Action. In Belgium, the KBVB commissioned a stadium access guide of the country’s national stadium in Brussels. The KBVB worked closely with CAFE and disabled fans to understand what information would be most useful for disabled fans planning a visit to the stadium. In the Netherlands CAFE met with De Zonnebloem, a disability NGO working to provide access appraisals of public buildings and stadiums. CAFE continues to work with De Zonnebloem on access appraisals and promoting the importance of increased awareness of accessible facilities.

A CAFE access appraisal was also carried out in Italy during this season’s CAFE Week of Action. As part of our works leading up to UEFA EURO 2020, CAFE is undertaking appraisals for all 12 host venues and our 2018 Week of Action coincided with an access appraisal in Rome. CAFE produced a detailed report which also included recommendations on how access can be further improved at the stadium, and we will continue our works with all UEFA EURO 2020 host venues right up until the tournament.

In addition to accessible facilities, it is also crucially important to consider accessible matchday services and the effect that they can have for many disabled people. In Switzerland, Radio Blind Power has provided audio-descriptive commentary for a number of years in partnership with the Swiss Super League. This season, Radio Blind Power has expanded its works from providing the service at two matches a week to three. Audio-descriptive commentary was available for partially sighted and blind fans at six Swiss matches during the CAFE Week of Action. We thank Radio Blind Power for their commitment to audio-descriptive commentary, and we look forward to continuing our cooperation.

CAFE has worked in France for many years, both in the build-up to UEFA EURO 2016 and in legacy of the tournament. During the CAFE Week of Action 2018, we worked closely with a number of disabled supporters groups in the country to celebrate access and inclusion in France. This included, most notably, the disabled fans group at Olympique Marseille – the largest group of its type in France. Their activities brought great attention to the club’s disabled fans and were celebrated by all inside the Stade Velodrome. We will continue to work with disabled supporters groups in France and across Europe to further empower disabled people through the unique power of football.

Our long-time partners in England and Wales, Level Playing Field (LPF), aligned their Weeks of Action with the European celebration of Total Football Total Access. Many of England and Wales’ biggest clubs, including Manchester City, Manchester United and Arsenal, all got involved alongside clubs right across the football pyramid. Welsh side
Newport County celebrated the LPF Weeks of Action with pre-match ceremonies and videos, whilst Swansea City announced they would be hosting LPF’s third Welsh regional forum bringing disabled fans from across the country together.

CAFE and LPF have worked closely together since our inception in 2009, and we will continue to do so for many years to come towards our shared goal of Access for All.

A unique CAFE Week of Action celebration was held in Malta this season, as the Malta FA worked with local NGOs to welcome disabled people with guide and assistance dogs to the national stadium for the first time. Guide and assistance dogs are an invaluable asset to many disabled people, and it is of the utmost importance that stadiums provide an accessible welcome not just for disabled fans but for their guide and assistance dogs also.

CAFE has been delighted to work with our friends at Apollon Limassol to celebrate the CAFE Week of Action in Cyprus for a number of years. This season, the club published their support for Total Football Total Access on their official website and a number of players met with disabled children at a local school. We are grateful for the club’s continued commitment to access and inclusion, and we look forward to working together for many years to come.

The CAFE Week of Action is a nine-day celebration of access and inclusion, but we also invite stakeholders to celebrate Total Football Total Access outside of the announced dates. Shortly after the CAFE Week of Action 2018, the Football Federation of Macedonia invited CAFE’s DAO Project Manager to provide Disability Access Officer training in FYR Macedonia. The seminar was a great success and a hugely positive dialogue was held on the importance of the role. The FFM consistently displays its commitment to the cause, and we are delighted they were able to join us again this season with their excellent seminar.

The final participant in this season’s CAFE Week of Action is outside of UEFA’s 55 national associations. Our friends in Ontario, Canada, who joined us to celebrate Total Football Total Access last season, again promoted the cause via their social media channels this year. The group runs a project designed to make football more accessible for young disabled people. This great initiative brought disabled people and non-disabled people together to break down barriers and demonstrate how football has a unique power to change lives. We are truly grateful for their support. We expect CAFE’s remit to extend beyond Europe in the future, and it is great to know we already have a strong ally in North America.
Legacy and next steps

This year’s activities and celebrations have been very well received, and the CAFE Week of Action 2018 has again played an important role in promoting wider access and inclusion for disabled people within the game. CAFE is continuing to promote the CAFE Week of Action with ever-increasing interest across Europe and beyond, and encouraging stakeholders to celebrate Total Football Total Access not just during our campaign but throughout the entire season.

The CAFE Week of Action continues to be seen as a unique opportunity for national football associations, leagues, clubs, disabled fans and non-disabled fans to come together to celebrate access and inclusion. CAFE considers the CAFE Week of Action to be a sustainable project, owned and delivered by local stakeholders across Europe and beyond. It often takes little cost to have a big impact, and we are seeing a much greater awareness of access and inclusion around European football.

With each year, improvements continue to be made and the experiences of disabled people, both on matchdays and non-matchdays, are becoming more positive. Disabled people and their access requirements are no longer an afterthought, and clubs, leagues and national associations across Europe are embracing the topic.

The interest in the CAFE Week of Action 2018 has demonstrated that many countries are keen to get involved with the initiative and promote Total Football Total Access. CAFE expects the CAFE Week of Action to grow organically and raise greater awareness year-on-year.

Many great initiatives continue to take place outside of the CAFE Week of Action, and CAFE has already received interest from other countries where stakeholders within the game are keen to host CAFE Week of Action events in the future. A number of countries felt the CAFE Week of Action 2018 came too soon for them in their journey, but are already formulating ideas about how they can get involved next season.

CAFE plans to host the CAFE Week of Action 2019 around a similar time of the football season and dates will be announced shortly on CAFE’s website and social media channels. We hope that the message of Total Football Total Access will continue to spread across Europe and beyond, and support and promote all activities taking place before, during and after the campaign.

Finally, we would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has taken part in the CAFE Week of Action 2018 and in previous years. Football has a unique power to bring about positive change and improve the lives of many disabled people across Europe and beyond. Initiatives such as the CAFE Week of Action are hugely important in promoting the vital roles that disabled people can play in the game.

We are witnessing many more participants formulating new and innovative ways to celebrate Total Football Total Access. As the understanding of football stakeholders increases, they are the best-placed people to host events that will be relevant to their own disabled fanbases and disabled people in the local areas.
Contacting CAFE
There are a number of ways that you can contact CAFE with any questions, queries or comments that you may have:

- **Email**: info@cafefootball.eu
- **Tweet**: @cafefootball
- **Facebook**: www.facebook.com/cafefootball
- **Instagram**: @cafefootball.eu
- **VKontakte**: www.vk.com/cafe_football

About CAFE
Disabled people are the largest minority group at >15% and rising (World Health Organization) and it can be fairly assumed that many of the one billion disabled people living today will be football fans – the world’s most popular sport. Many can still only aspire to watch live football with many stadiums around the world not yet accessible and inclusive.

The Centre for Access to Football in Europe was established in 2009 with support from UEFA to improve access and inclusion across the game using the special influence of football. CAFE works with national associations, leagues, clubs, disabled fans, fans groups, NGOs and key stakeholders to ensure a more accessible, inclusive matchday experience for disabled fans across Europe.

Further, by raising awareness and sharing best practice solutions, CAFE aims to improve access and inclusion across the game so that disabled people can take their rightful places as spectators, players, volunteers, coaches, administrators, and as leaders and decision makers.

[www.cafefootball.eu](http://www.cafefootball.eu)
Total Football Total Access
Total Sense