



**#TIME  
FOR  
ACTION**



**WOMEN'S FOOTBALL STRATEGY  
2019-24**



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## FOREWORD BY THE UEFA PRESIDENT



## Women's football is the football of today. It is not the football of tomorrow.

Since my election in September 2016, we have made huge strides and worked harder than ever to maximise the potential of women's football. We have seen the popularity of our competitions surge, with UEFA Women's EURO 2017 in the Netherlands showcasing the best of the sport and the UEFA Women's Champions League becoming an unmissable spectacle in the calendar. This is reinforced by a strong commitment to the grassroots game, with our successful dedicated campaign, Together #WePlayStrong, inspiring young girls to increase participation and change perceptions.

As an organisation, we have given women's football its own focus by creating a specific women's football unit to promote change in how we govern and develop the sport. UEFA will build on these positive achievements to prepare for the future and to continue growing the game's popularity and providing opportunities for women in football. UEFA is committed to boosting participation, visibility and engagement in the game at all levels, while also recognising its ability to impact positively on communities and society beyond the pitch.

This year's UEFA Congress in February 2019 ratified the first-ever UEFA strategy, Together for the Future of Football 2019–24, a plan to unify and secure the sport's future. Women's football is central to this plan, and the UEFA women's football strategy forms a sub-strategy of the overarching UEFA strategy, dedicated to championing, innovating and accelerating women's football.

It is UEFA's duty as European football's governing body to empower the women's game. Accordingly, UEFA will put significant financial investment into the sport – underlining how UEFA dares to aim high, launch initiatives that instil hope, and make European football as great as it can be. The actions that we propose and commit to in 2019 will lead to a greater, more professional and more prosperous game by 2024.

Time for action!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'A. Čeferin'.

**Aleksander Čeferin,**  
UEFA President

Every girl deserves a place to play football; every elite player deserves to strive for the impossible. There should be no limitations, because women's football is football and it is for all. At UEFA we believe this, we commit to this and we will make a difference, together with anyone wishing to join us on the journey.

We know that this journey has begun because women's football has already reached new heights, and this is thanks to the commitment of all our stakeholders. The work of our member associations and clubs is indispensable, while our players, coaches, referees and administrators are the heart and soul of our beloved sport.

UEFA is a world leader in developing women's football, and we are determined to innovate further for the good of the whole game. This document serves as a road map to transform words into action and action into success.

Time for Action: UEFA Women's Football Strategy 2019–24 has been drawn up to create a step change in football and for women in football – within UEFA but also across Europe. We know that every success story starts with a vision, a plan for the road ahead, and belief. Those foundations could not have been laid without a process of working in partnership, and I would like to thank all those within and outside of UEFA that have given their time and energy to support women's football and help it on its way to reaching its full potential.

By further coordinating our efforts, this strategy will ensure that women's and girls' football flourishes with its unique core values and is championed, innovated and accelerated for and by all.



**Nadine Kessler**  
UEFA's Head of Women's Football

## MESSAGE FROM NADINE KESSLER





**THE**

**JOURNEY**

# INTRODUCTION



UEFA is committing to a five-year strategic framework with the aim of supporting, guiding and lifting both women's football and women in football across Europe.

To succeed, Time for Action: UEFA Women's Football Strategy 2019–24 is designed to be flexible and challenging, enabling us to adapt and shape the future of women's football. The focus of this strategy – involving five main priorities and five key goals that will help set a standard, direction and decisions – is to build the foundations within UEFA and to professionalise our working structures in order to give European women's football the best possible platform to thrive. UEFA will invest in programmes and initiatives to support a balanced delivery of this plan from grassroots to elite levels.

This strategy – goals, actions and outcomes – has been drawn up with the contribution of UEFA member

associations, leagues, clubs, players and other stakeholders, who have all united to contribute to its development. It is also built on the platform provided by the overarching UEFA strategy, Together for the Future of Football 2019–24, and its four pillars of football, trust, competitiveness and prosperity. All women's football priorities and actions directly reflect UEFA's core mission and policies to ensure complete alignment and preserve the football ecosystem.

Ultimately, this plan is for football, for UEFA, for our members, our stakeholders and everyone who wants to be part of the women's game, as we aim to change the current landscape and lead a joint call for action!

# THE JOURNEY

European women's football is in a position of health and strength! With fresh momentum, organic growth and strong progress on and off the pitch, women's football has never been in better shape!

This could be attributed to the burgeoning investment and belief of UEFA, its member associations, clubs and the individuals involved. The results are visible in the strong base of people that simply love to take part in the sport. Flourishing player numbers and record-breaking attendances at top matches in both club and national team football reflect its value, while football is contributing more than ever to breaking down the cultural and social barriers that women and girls face.

Since UEFA women's football sponsorship rights were unbundled from men's

football competitions, dedicated women's football partners have been keen to share in this ongoing success. Together, we want to increase access to football, provide higher professional standards and protection for players, as well as offering more opportunities beyond the pitch in administrative, leadership and technical roles.

Women's football is the biggest growth market in the sport. With increased resources, direction and the unity of governing bodies, clubs and partners, women and girls will be able to fully embrace football and build on the progress already made.

**1.3 MILLION**  
registered female players in clubs

**40,241**  
number of qualified female coaches

**285**  
active European international female referees

**50%**  
more professional players since 2017

**28%**  
of professional clubs offer football for women and girls

**42%**  
of amateur clubs offer football for women and girls

**First** pan-European dedicated women's football sponsors (2018)

**50%**  
more investment into women's football via the UEFA HatTrick Women's Football Development Programme from 2020 onwards

**€123M**  
total financial investment by national associations across Europe – a 10% increase since 2017

**5**  
record stadium attendances for women's club football in 5 countries since 2019

**51**  
senior domestic women's leagues

**48**  
national associations represented in the 2018/19 UEFA Women's Champions League

**2,200** average attendance at national team matches - up by one third since 2017 – DEN, ENG, ESP, FRA, GER, ISL, NED, POL, SWE average over 5,000 per match

**First** fully professional women's league – the WSL in England

**41**  
national women's football committees

**Twice**  
as many women working in managerial positions or higher since 2017 – 840 across all national associations

Cumulative audience of over  
**265 MILLION**  
watched UEFA Women's EURO 2017 across all media

UEFA Women's EURO 2017 cumulative stadium attendance of  
**615,000**

**36%**  
increase in stadium attendance for the 2018/19 UEFA Women's Champions League quarter-finals – 57,200 cumulative spectators



# GOALS





# GOALS

## BY 2024 WE WILL HAVE:

### Doubled the number of women and girls playing football:

- 2.5 million registered female players

### Changed perceptions of women's football across Europe:

- It is strong, inclusive, fun and inspirational
- Football is an accepted sport for both genders

### Doubled the reach and value of the UEFA Women's EURO and the UEFA Women's Champions League:

- UEFA competitions are Europe's most successful and competitive women's sports competitions

### Improved player standards:

- 55 minimum standard agreements for national team players
- 55 national associations with safeguarding policies in place

### Doubled female representation on all UEFA bodies

This is where we want to be in 2024. These goals are all linked to our strategic priorities and reflect UEFA's ambition to ensure, professional, safe and fun environments for women and girls who want to be involved in football.



## VISION

A celebrated sport globally, where every woman and girl can find a place to play

## MISSION

To champion, innovate and accelerate women's football for all

## VALUES

Strong, fun, inclusive and inspirational



# PRIORITIES



# DRIVE PARTICIPATION

To secure long-term affiliation with European football, we need to provide the right possibilities and opportunities to everyone who wants to be involved, regardless of talent, gender or circumstances. More girls and women than ever are participating in football in all forms, at all levels and in all areas. This number base can be built upon and grown to ensure a sustainable future.

## TO DRIVE PARTICIPATION, WE WILL:

Invest in participation programmes to **grow and retain** the number of girls and women in the game.

Ensure that every player has access to football, **regardless of talent**.

Guarantee **suitable environments and approaches to coaching** at all levels.

Increase the **quality and quantity of male and female coaches** at both grassroots and elite levels.

Improve the **quality and quantity of female referees** at both grassroots and elite levels.

Encourage men's **professional and grassroots clubs** to embrace women's and girls' football.



# DEVELOP THE GAME

The development of women's football and its foundations is fundamental to its success as a sport, both at amateur and professional levels. The game will go from strength to strength if we put the right foundations and direction in place for our members, clubs and stakeholders to capitalise on.

## TO DEVELOP THE GAME, WE WILL:

**Create regular playing opportunities** and pathways for talented girls, allowing them to continue their development.

**Professionalise elite women's football** through regulatory mechanisms and insight.

Encourage national associations to cooperate with educational institutions and recognise women's football as a **dual-career sport**.

**Establish regular insight** into participation, players, finances, pitch, football medicine, and other areas to better understand women's football and to make decisions.

Be committed to promoting and developing women's football **globally**.

Be **proactive in considering innovative solutions** to advance the game in all areas.



# TRANSFORM COMPETITIONS

UEFA competitions must be dynamic, entertaining and ever-evolving for teams, players and fans. We must strive to supply the best possible stage to showcase the game's quality, inspire the next generation and ensure that we remain relevant to our audience. Our competitions need to be global benchmarks that have a strong competitive balance and are sustainable.

## TO TRANSFORM COMPETITIONS, WE WILL:

Deliver the best women's sports events with the highest possible operational quality.

Create inspirational and **engaging competitions** that appeal to our diverse audience.

Devise **legacy programmes** for competitions that focus on women's access to football.

Strive for **financial sustainability** within competition systems.

Use **club licensing** at UEFA and national association levels to improve standards and access to football.

Create appealing and relevant **brand propositions**.



# ENHANCE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Structural foundations and a central place in the decision-making process are key for the growth of women's football. We need to take strategic approaches to the women's game and encourage our members and stakeholders to do the same. The good governance of the sport and the further integration of women into football will only increase diversity and secure the game's future.

## TO ENHANCE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES, WE WILL:

Implement an appropriate **UEFA-wide strategic process** to further capitalise on in-house resources and accelerate the development of women's football.

Make sure that **women and women's football are well represented** in all UEFA bodies and the UEFA administration.

**Consult all stakeholders** on women's football matters and expand EU and government partnerships.

**Ensure good governance practices for women's football** throughout UEFA's rules and regulations.

Implement **educational, leadership and mentoring programmes** to improve the current culture at all levels.

Use solidarity programmes to nurture **appropriate strategic management** in all member associations.



# INCREASE VISIBILITY AND COMMERCIAL VALUE

Women's football and its competitions need to be seen and invested in to be believed. For this, we must ensure that we develop the right approaches and partnerships, as well as presenting the game in ways that are both far-reaching and innovative.

## TO INCREASE VISIBILITY AND COMMERCIAL VALUE, WE WILL:

Deliver a **communications and media plan** with coordinated messaging and **cross-promotion**.

Include **female footballers, coaches, referees and futsal players** in UEFA's wider activities alongside men.

Create innovative solutions, **commercial revenue and media rights models** with sponsors, partners and broadcasters that support UEFA's strategic goals.

Generate **fandom** around women's football, UEFA competitions and domestic football.

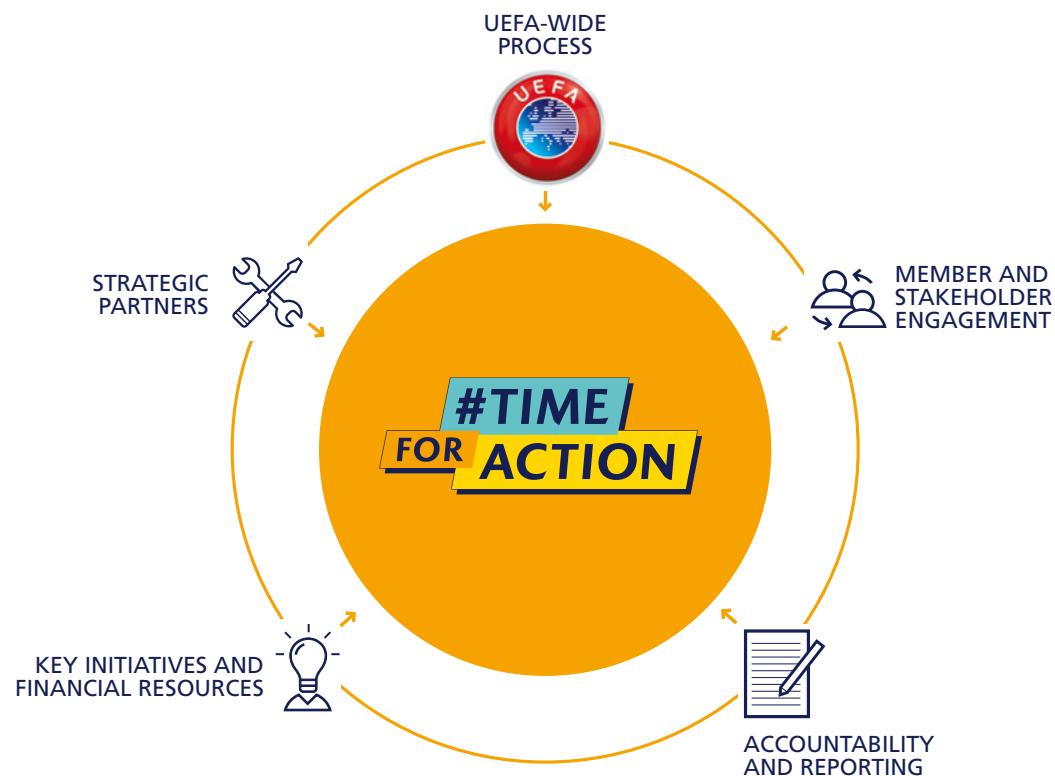
Further demonstrate the business case and **value of women's football** to member associations, clubs and society.

**Change perceptions** surrounding the game, leveraging programmes such as Together #WePlayStrong and #EqualGame.



# GETTING / THERE

# GETTING THERE



For UEFA to achieve its strategic goals, a process and commitment need to be put in place.

## TO ENSURE THE DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY, WE WILL:

### Put a UEFA-wide process in place:

- Ensure women's football processes and operations are in place across the organisation.
- Increase the human and financial resources.
- Capitalise on the experience and expertise that our organisation holds.

### Launch key initiatives:

- Invest in key projects that will facilitate a step change and move us closer to our targets in each of our five priority areas.

### Work alongside our member associations, clubs, players and other stakeholders:

- Use our member associations' and clubs' knowledge and ability to implement the strategy.
- Encourage member associations and clubs to commit to supporting our actions.
- Inspire member associations to create their own strategic frameworks and cascade the priorities in the UEFA strategy to fit their own ambitions.

### Engage strategic partners:

- Benefit from the outside expertise of strategic partners to spark innovative ideas.

### Demonstrate accountability:

- Remain accountable to the goals and actions to which we have pledged.
- Review results to ensure that we are on track.

# OVERVIEW

## PRIORITIES AND GOALS

## ACTIONS AND POLICIES

**DRIVE PARTICIPATION**  
2.5 million players

Invest in participation programmes to grow and retain the number of girls and women in the game.

Ensure that every player has access to football, regardless of talent.

Ensure suitable environments and approaches to coaching.

Improve the quality and quantity of male and female coaches at both grassroots and elite levels.

Improve the quality and quantity of female referees at both grassroots and elite levels.

Encourage men's clubs to embrace women's and girls' football.

**DEVELOP THE GAME**  
55 minimum standard agreements and safeguarding policies

Create regular playing opportunities and pathways for talented girls, allowing them to continue their development.

Professionalise elite women's football through regulatory mechanisms and insight.

Encourage national associations to cooperate with educational institutions and recognise women's football as a dual-career sport.

Establish regular insight: participation, players, finances, pitch, medical, etc.

Be committed to promoting and developing women's football globally.

Be proactive in considering innovative solutions to develop the game in all areas.

**TRANSFORM COMPETITIONS**  
Double the reach of the Women's EURO and the UEFA Women's Champions League

Deliver the best women's sports events with the highest possible operational quality.

Create inspirational and engaging competitions that appeal to our diverse audience.

Strive for financial sustainability within competition systems.

Devise legacy programmes for competitions that focus on women's access to football.

Use club licensing at UEFA and national association level to improve standards and access to football.

Create appealing and relevant brand propositions.

**ENHANCE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**  
Double the number of women in all UEFA bodies

Implement an appropriate UEFA-wide strategic process to further capitalise on in-house resources and accelerate women's football's development.

Ensure that women and women's football are well represented in all UEFA bodies and the UEFA administration as a whole.

Consult all stakeholders on women's football matters and expand EU and government partnerships.

Ensure good governance practices for women's football throughout UEFA's rules and regulations.

Implement educational, leadership and mentoring programmes to improve the current culture at all levels.

Use solidarity programmes to ensure appropriate strategic management in all national associations.

**INCREASE VISIBILITY AND COMMERCIAL VALUE**  
Changed perceptions

Deliver a communications and media plan with coordinated messaging and cross-promotion.

Include female footballers, coaches, referees and futsal players in UEFA's wider activities alongside men.

Create innovative solutions, commercial revenue and media rights models with sponsors, partners and broadcasters that support UEFA's strategic goals.

Generate fandom around women's football, UEFA competitions and domestic football.

Demonstrate the business case and value of women's football to member associations, clubs and society.

Change perceptions surrounding the game by continuing to deliver Together #WePlayStrong and #EqualGame.





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