



Union des associations européennes de football

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UEFA Executive Committee approves 24-team EURO Final Tournament from 2016

UEFA Early Warning System strengthened

The UEFA Executive Committee today approved the expansion of the final tournament of the UEFA European Football Championship from 16 to 24 teams, as from the 2016 edition.

The format of the final tournament will consist of six groups of four teams, followed by eighth-finals, quarter-finals, semi-finals, and the final. The top two from each group would qualify in addition to the four best third-ranked teams. This format would generate a total of 51 matches, compared to the 31 now, played over a period of 29 to 31 days depending on the match schedule.

This historic decision gives middle-ranked countries a much greater chance to qualify for the final tournament, thereby expanding the fan basis directly reached, and increasing the number of matches played and boosting the overall stadium capacity. The traditional qualifying phase format, with groups of 6 and 5 teams, will remain in place.

Importantly, the Executive Committee also agreed to reinforce UEFA's disciplinary services to help protect the integrity of football by improving the current UEFA early warning system. Two additional full-time staff and four additional disciplinary inspectors, with specific experience in criminal investigation and good police contacts, will be recruited to work full-time for UEFA.

In club competition matters the Executive Committee agreed to change the name of the UEFA Cup to the UEFA Europa League from season 2009/10 (see UEFA release no. 119).

Also approved was the amendment of the club coefficient system, from the 2009/10 season onwards, to take into account results obtained in the qualifying rounds, re-balance the distribution of points to better reflect the higher level of difficulty of the UEFA Champions League and reduce the weighting of the association coefficient contribution to the club coefficient from 33% to 20%.

The Executive Committee approved a request for aid by the FA of Moldova to the sum of EURO 600,000 in order to set up a fund to help repair football structures damaged by heavy floods in July and August.

The 3rd UEFA European Women's Football Under-17 Championship in 2010 will be in Nyon, Switzerland, and entrusted to the UEFA administration.

The next UEFA Executive Committee meeting is scheduled to take place at the House of European Football in Nyon, Switzerland, on December 11 2008.

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