

**Media Release**

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## ***Draw for the EURO 2004™ qualifying phase to take place in Porto***

### **Fifteen countries to join hosts Portugal for final tournament**

The UEFA Executive Committee has approved the new competition regulations for the UEFA European Football Championship in advance of the official draw ceremony for the qualifying groups for Europe's major national team competition. The draw will take place at the Europarque Congress Centre in Santa Maria da Feira, Porto on 25 January 2002 at 11:00 hours (local time).

According to the new regulations, the qualifying competition will be played in ten groups of five teams each, with the winners of each group qualifying directly for the final round together with Portugal, who as hosts are automatically qualified. The remaining five final-round participants will be determined in five home-and-away play-off ties involving the ten group runners-up.

Twelve dates have been reserved for the qualifying matches according to the international match calendar on which the national associations have to stage their eight qualifying matches (7/8 September 2002, 12/13 October 2002, 15/16 October 2002, 29/30 March 2003, 1/2 April 2003, 7/8 June 2003, 10/11 June 2003, 6/7 September 2003, 9/10 September 2003, 11/12 October 2003). The dates for the play-off matches have been set on 15/16 November 2003 and 18/19 November 2003.

For the draw, the reigning European champions, France, will automatically be seeded top. The remaining participants will be divided into five seeding pots on the basis of their results achieved in the qualifying competitions for the 2002 FIFA World Cup and the EURO 2000™. The total number of points obtained in the qualifying competitions of these two tournaments divided by the number of matches played will determine the coefficient used to establish the seeding pots. For Belgium and the Netherlands who did not participate in the qualifying competition for EURO 2000™, only the qualifying matches for the 2002 World Cup will be considered.

UEFA will confirm the final seedings for all the national teams involved nearer the time of the draw and once all qualifying matches for the 2002 World Cup have been played.