

Media Release

6th of September 2011



ECA Member Clubs establish a common position on Good Governance

Geneva (CH) – Representatives from 139 member clubs attended the European Club Association's (ECA) two-day General Assembly in Geneva.

Season 2011/12 - 201 member clubs

ECA is pleased to announce that 7 new member clubs have joined the organization. The association now totals 201 member clubs (103 ordinary and 98 associated members) at the beginning of the 2011/12 season. The following clubs have been approved as ECA Associated Members:

- SK Sturm Graz (AUT)
- FC Viktoria Plzeň (CZE)
- FC Bnei-Yehuda (ISR)
- SSC Napoli (ITA)
- FK Zeta (MNE)
- Cliftonville FC (NIR)
- FC Oțelul Galați (ROM)

At the same time, three clubs have been removed from the membership panel and are no longer members of the European Club Association:

- FC Unirea Urziceni (ROM)
- Tampere United (FIN)
- FK Mogren (MNE)

A special focus on Governance

Over the last few months much of the focus within the football world has centred around the issue of Governance and the role occupied by stakeholders within the different structures. ECA used the occasion of the General Assembly to "tackle" this issue and develop a coherent message it wishes to present to the football family and the wider public.

ECA Members who were present were split into five groups to discuss Good Governance, and related matters such as democracy and transparency in world football. The group discussions

allowed for active participation of all member clubs with the aim of defining ECA's stance on these topics. The main conclusions from each group discussion were presented during the plenary session and can be summarised as follows.

Good governance

A proper balance within the governance system must be achieved enabling clubs to influence and determine the future of football taking into account the risks and responsibilities they assume in performing international activity. All stakeholders' interests have to be taken into account in relation to their contribution to the game. There is an urgent need for reform to the current governance system. For ECA, Good Governance would enable to overcome differences and achieve solutions to the varying interests of stakeholders and re-balance key areas where disagreements and disproportions exist, including:

- The **International Calendar** and the need to re-establish balance between club and national team football.
- Establishing an **insurance policy** covering players injured while on international duty;
- **Just compensation** to clubs for the release of players for all international matches;
- **Youth protection and development** with a special focus on fostering talent rather than erecting barriers based on origin.

Democracy

The international model should become democratic and adapt as have done most national models in which all stakeholders are directly represented in the decision-making bodies. Clubs should have equal rights as federations when it comes to decisions relating to all matters affecting club football.

Transparency

Procedures on how decisions are reached have to be available before and made public. All stakeholders have to be properly and directly informed about the specific reasons for the decisions. A set of procedure/decision cannot be changed without the explicit agreement of all involved parties. Certainty of rules is paramount.

Also addressing the issue of Governance was Ivo Belet, Member of the European Parliament. In his speech to the General Assembly, he highlighted the EU's demands that sporting governing structures meet the highest standards of 21st century democracy as they would in any other sector. The European Parliament is expected to adopt a report on the future of Sports by the end of 2011, which will, among other things, look into the issue of governance.

ECA Chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge summed up the club's position on Governance by stating: *"We believe that now is the time for proper reforms to the governance structures of international football. These reforms should ensure that all stakeholders including clubs occupy a position within the decision-making bodies which reflects their contribution to the game. Ultimately, these changes will reduce conflict allowing for the sustainable and long-term development of the game at all levels."*

Financial Fair Play

The beginning of the 2011/12 season coincides with the start of the Financial Fair Play era. ECA reiterates its strong support for the introduction of the new Regulations. Karl-Heinz Rummenigge underlined the importance for all members to take Financial Fair Play seriously and offered ECA's continued support in assisting clubs in meeting their obligations.

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