

Media Release

5th of September 2011



ECA presents its annual awards

Celtic FC wins award for the Best Community & Social Responsibility Programme

On the occasion of the official dinner of the European Club Association (ECA) General Assembly, the four winners of the ECA Internal Awards 2011 were announced.

The Awards were first introduced in 2010 with the aim of rewarding outstanding club performances, encouraging best practice, highlighting successful club management and strengthening relationships between ECA Member Clubs. The European Club Association rewarded the following achievements:

European Club of the Year 2011

FC Barcelona (ESP) - for their outstanding results during the 2010/11 season at both European and domestic level

Best Sporting Progress 2011

SC Braga (POR) - for their great progress in European competition in the 2010/11 season

Braga's participation in the Champions League Group Stage 2010/11 was their first-ever participation in the competition. They finished third in their group which allowed them to continue their European adventure in the Europa League where they eventually reached the final against FC Porto (0-1). This performance allowed the club to improve significantly in the UEFA Club Coefficient Ranking 2011.

Best Achievement (non-sporting) 2011

FK Baku (AZE) - for the development of a new Youth Academy

FK Baku has set new standards in the development of youth players in Azerbaijan by building a state-of-the-art youth academy for more than 400 players to the benefit of the club and Azeri football in general.

Best Community & Social Responsibility (CSR) Programme 2011

Celtic FC (SCO) - for their CSR Programme "Ability Counts".

Celtic FC launched a programme specifically designed for children with Down's Syndrome in November 2010. The programme has been a huge success, with excellent feedback from parents, participants and Down's Syndrome Scotland. The three main objectives of the programme are:

- To engage within the heart of the community, focusing on children with Down's Syndrome providing an opportunity to play football in a fun, but challenging, environment;
- To improve overall fitness levels and health and wellbeing in children with Down's Syndrome and increase social skills through teaching individual and team skills
- To promote inclusion and enhance society's acceptance of diversity through the positive presence of this programme.

For the first time, the ECA CSR Award Winner was nominated by an independent panel composed of the following members:

Mr. Senes Erzik, UEFA Vice-President and Chairman of the Committee for Fair Play & Social Responsibility at both UEFA (2009-11) and FIFA,

Mr. Avraham Burg, Chairman of Mifalot, Hapoel Tel-Aviv FC's Education & Social Project (Winner of the ECA CSR Award 2010),

Mr. Ivo Belet, leading Member of the European Parliament (MEP) on football matters; author of the European Parliament report on the future of professional football in Europe.

Mr. Ivo Belet presented Celtic FC with the award and congratulated them for their outstanding CSR Programme: *"This is a perfect example of how a club's role goes well beyond the field of play. The ability to enrich their local communities, I believe, knows no bounds."*

* * *