

Media Release

5th of February 2013



ECA SHOWS SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN CLUB COMPETITION MODEL AS IT CELEBRATES ITS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Representatives from 153 member clubs attended the European Club Association's 10th General Assembly in Doha, Qatar.

ECA on fact finding mission

ECA used its presence in Doha to learn more about the Qatar 2022 Project. ECA is the first European football stakeholder to officially visit Qatar in order to get a better understanding of the Qatar 2022 World Cup. *"The clubs have a responsibility towards their players; therefore, ECA was happy to accept this invitation. It is important to get a first impression which is based on personal experience and not driven by third parties"*, ECA Chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said. All member clubs are offered the opportunity to visit the Qatar 2022 Legacy Pavilion, which presents the world cup project in much detail.

ECA 5th year anniversary celebration

The gathering in Doha coincides with the association's 5th anniversary. During its short existence, ECA has achieved significant progress for European club football and has developed very constructive relationships with fellow stakeholders within the European football family, most notably UEFA. This is highlighted by last year's signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding between ECA and UEFA. In his address to the member clubs, ECA Chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge congratulated everyone for the successful path the organisation has taken:

"When I look back at our history and at what we have achieved, I find it difficult to believe that we have only been around for 5 years. ECA's development is remarkable, but we should not rest on our laurels as there are still challenges lying ahead of us. I thank everyone, inside and outside ECA, for the commitment, respect and trust they have shown our organisation."

Future format of European club competitions

In light of the upcoming UEFA Club Competitions Cycle 2015-18, ECA Member Clubs were invited to participate in an internal ECA Survey on the future of both the Champions League and Europa League competitions. 87 member clubs from 36 different national associations responded to the survey, which achieved the following results:

- 75% expressed their "satisfaction" or "extreme satisfaction" with the current structure/format of UEFA's club competitions;
- 92% believe that the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Europa League should continue to exist in parallel;
- 61% would welcome offering the UEFA Europa League Winner/Finalists direct access to the UEFA Champions League Group Stage.

In summary, the results of the survey clearly show that European clubs are very happy with the

current competitions and do not wish to see major changes to their structure/format. The option whereby the UEFA Europa League Winner/Finalists automatically qualify for the UEFA Champions League Group Stage of the new season raised some interest and support provided that the effects on the access list are carefully considered.

Third-Party Ownership

In response to discussions taking place both within UEFA and FIFA in relation to a possible ban of third-party ownership (TPO) of players' economic rights, ECA invited its member clubs to express their opinion on this very important matter. The discussion was preceded by presentations from UEFA's Head of Licensing Andrea Traverso, who outlined UEFA's position, and Daniel Lorenz Pereira, Legal Director of member club FC Porto. The debate proved very lively emphasizing the importance of this issue for a number of clubs. It was made clear that TPO is a very complex phenomenon as there are many different aspects to the way it operates. Consequently, there is no unanimity among ECA Members as to whether TPO should be banned or not. ECA will further assess the merits and impact of TPO on the game and the repercussions of a possible ban. ECA will continue to engage and work alongside UEFA and FIFA on this matter.

ECA Women's Committee

In view of the growing interest in women's football over the past few years, the ECA Executive Board decided to create a women's football committee within the structure of ECA. The aim of this committee is to offer a platform allowing for European women's club football matters to be discussed and eventually brought up at UEFA/FIFA level. Furthermore, ECA will aim to develop membership services for ECA member clubs with a women's section. The committee will be chaired by Jean-Michel Aulas (Olympique Lyonnais) who will keep updated the ECA Executive Board on developments within the committee. The structure and exact composition of this committee are yet to be defined. The inaugural meeting is scheduled to take place on the occasion of the UEFA Women's Champions League Final to be held in London on the 23rd of May 2013.

Financial Fair Play

An update was given to ECA Members on the Financial Fair Play project. Clubs were reminded of ECA's support for the new regulations and were told to adhere to the rules which are seen as essential in ensuring the sustainable development of club football. Furthermore, the clubs were reminded of the upcoming deadlines which need to be respected. These include the need to provide information relating to the overdue payables and the break-even rule by the summer of 2013.

ECA to meet clubs from other confederations for workshop

The 2-day event in Doha concludes on Wednesday with a dedicated workshop for non-European clubs. For the first time, and in response to the positive feedback received from clubs around the world following ECA's achievements, ECA has decided to share its experience/knowledge with clubs from other confederations.

The workshop will be followed by a media conference at approx. 13h30 local time which will see the ECA Chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge sum up the two days in Doha. The media conference will be streamed live on www.ecaeurope.com.

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