



MEDIA RELEASE



28.03.2017

ECA MEMBER CLUBS DISCUSS FUTURE OF EUROPEAN CLUB COMPETITIONS

Representatives from 155 member clubs attended the European Club Association's (ECA) 18th General Assembly in Athens, Greece.

UEFA Club Competitions

The General Assembly provided a platform to review and reflect on the approved club competition reform for the 2018-21 cycle and to start the consultation and coordination process concerning the subsequent 2021-24 cycle.

More concretely, UEFA Deputy General Secretary, Giorgio Marchetti, used the opportunity to present a precise, fact-based analysis of the sporting and commercial value of the new 2018-21 competition concept. He highlighted the fact that both competitions, the Champions League and Europa League, will remain open to clubs from all associations, which is a key component for unity in European club football.

The new concept aims at addressing the need for increased sporting value to keep up the interest in the competition from fans and media alike. Giorgio Marchetti underlined that the Champions League must retain its position as the best club competition in the world. At the same time, the entire European club football community needs unity, stability and solidarity. On the latter, it was highlighted that solidarity payments from top to bottom have never been greater than with this reform: since the 2012-15 cycle, the Europa League distribution pot has increased by 264% and solidarity payments for clubs taking part in the qualification phases have increased by 224%.

Concerning the 2021-24 competition cycle, the consultation process involving all clubs has now begun. The present ECA Members had the opportunity to openly discuss and exchange views in breakout sessions. Discussions will continue over the coming months within the relevant ECA bodies.

Commenting on these two items, ECA Chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said:

"The club competition reform is without a single doubt very good news for all clubs in Europe. Everyone in European club football, and I am saying this with total conviction, will benefit from this reform. It is a fair, qualitative and serious decision that speaks to our solidarity in European club football. The reform will make the Champions League more emotional and stronger than ever before. I am convinced that we will find a good solution as well for 2021-24, which will further highlight our unity."

FIFA Stakeholders Committee

ECA Members were pleased to welcome FIFA's Deputy Secretary General, Zvonimir Boban, who briefly updated the General Assembly about the recently held first meeting of the newly established FIFA Stakeholders Committee. He underlined the importance for FIFA to be closer to all football stakeholders allowing for a direct and open exchange of views concerning matters affecting the professional game.

Commenting on his intervention, Zvonimir Boban said:

"I was very happy to address ECA Members today. For FIFA it is vital that we liaise directly and openly with clubs moving forward. Clubs are a key player in the professional game and need to be listened to. Testimony to this is the new FIFA Stakeholders Committee which offers a great platform to exchange our thoughts and ideas to improve the whole of football and the decisions FIFA takes."

At its first meeting, the FIFA Stakeholders Committee, in which ECA has a number of representatives, addressed the future of the international match calendar. It was recognised by all stakeholders that time has come to assess and review the current situation with the aim of creating a more harmonised and balanced international match calendar, which will ultimately reduce the burden on players.

* * *