



WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL

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IN THIS ISSUE

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Cover:

*Real Madrid won their fourth
trophy of the year at the
Club World Cup in Morocco
(Gareth Bale in white and
San Lorenzo de Almagro's
Juan Mercier)*

Photo: AFP/Getty Images

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

4

The UEFA Executive Committee held its first meeting of 2015 at UEFA's headquarters in Nyon on 26 January.



ELECTIONS IN VIENNA

5

Michel Platini is the sole candidate for the UEFA Presidential election at the UEFA Congress in Vienna in March, while 12 candidates are standing for seven seats on the UEFA Executive Committee.



REFEREE COURSES IN ATHENS

10

The annual winter courses for UEFA referees took place in Greece at the beginning of February.



PREPARATIONS FOR EURO 2016

15

With less than 500 days to go, preparations are gaining momentum.



SEMINAR ON INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION IN FOOTBALL

17

Amsterdam was the venue on 12 December for a UEFA seminar on institutional discrimination in football.



NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

19





FOOTBALL AS A FORCE FOR GOOD

Football is truly magical; therefore it does not surprise me that its popularity continues to soar. As I travel around Europe, it's clear to me that there are more and more fans who love our beautiful game and follow our competitions. This is something which makes me happy and proud. However, we must remember that with added popularity comes added responsibility, and UEFA must never forget its duty to make sure football is used as a force for good.

You know how passionate I have been about the HatTrick programme and other corporate social responsibility initiatives which have helped our national associations. You should also know that I care deeply about the recent education programmes we have launched.

The Women in Football Leadership Programme has been a success as it continues to give women the tools they need in order to increase their opportunities to work in football administration. The introduction of the Captains of Change initiative should also be praised since it supports projects in Europe aiming to improve the professional prospects of minorities within the game. This is incredibly important since I believe that diversity makes football stronger at every level.

Hopefully our programmes will help break stereotypes and challenge the way we have always looked at the power structures in our game. I wish all participants good luck and I assure them that UEFA will be there for them every step of the way. These initiatives will also

have the support of ambassadors like Christian Karembou and Clarence Seedorf, the latter having recently been named UEFA's Ambassador for Diversity and Change.

These legends of European football will work closely with UEFA to promote our initiatives around the world and hopefully they will pave the way for other former stars to join our cause. The more ambassadors we have, the more positive messages we can take to more people on our continent. This way football will continue to grow, and will do so as a force for change and a force for good.

Michel Platini
UEFA President

HOSTS CHOSEN FOR FORTHCOMING TOURNAMENTS

The House of European Football in Nyon staged the first UEFA Executive Committee meeting of the year on 26 January, and decisions on the host associations for forthcoming final rounds were high on the agenda.

Futsal has grown immensely in popularity, and the UEFA Futsal EURO has increased in stature as a result. Belgium staged a successful final round in 2014, with Italy taking the title, and Serbia will host Futsal EURO 2016 in Belgrade from 2 to 13 February next year. The Executive Committee decided in Nyon that Slovenia will stage the final round in 2018. Meanwhile, the finals of the European futsal club competition, the UEFA Futsal Cup, will be hosted in late April by one of the four finalists – Sporting Clube de Portugal – in Lisbon. The hosts will be joined in the finals by holders FC Barcelona (Spain), 2013 champions Kairat Almaty (Kazakhstan) and debutants ISK Dina Moskva (Russia).

The Executive Committee decided last January to increase the number of European Under-21 Championship final round participants from 8 to 12 for the 2017 edition. At its latest meeting, the committee appointed Poland as hosts of the 2017 final tournament. Poland will follow the Czech Republic, who stage the last eight-team final round in June this year.

Youth tournament appointments were also on the agenda in Nyon. The European Under-19 Championship final rounds in 2016/17 and 2017/18 will be staged by Georgia and Finland

respectively, while Croatia (2016/17) and England (2017/18) will host the European Under-17 Championship final tournaments.

Turning to women's youth competitions, the 2016/17 European Women's Under-19 Championship final round will take place in Northern Ireland, and the 2017/18 finals will be played in Switzerland. Finally, the European Women's Under-17 Championship final rounds in 2016/17 and 2017/18 have been awarded to the Czech Republic and Lithuania respectively.

UEFA EURO 2016 on course

The Executive Committee received a positive update on preparations for EURO 2016 in France next summer. The landmark of 500 days to go until the tournament arrived on 27 January, and an exciting qualifying competition resumes at the end of March. Following the completion of the qualifiers, the draw for the final round will take place in Paris on 12 December.

UEFA's newest member association, the Gibraltar Football Association, was admitted to the UEFA Referee Convention, which now comprises all 54 member associations. The convention aims, among other things, to enhance referee education, promote the role of the referee and improve refereeing structures and development within Europe.

The committee received a report on the recent Breaking the Glass Ceiling seminar which was staged in Amsterdam in December in partnership with the Royal Netherlands Football Association and the FARE network. The seminar focused on institutional discrimination in football and how to bring greater diversity into the game (see page 17).

The 2015/16 UEFA budget, to be presented to the XXXIX Ordinary UEFA Congress in Vienna on 24 March, was approved along with the final Congress programme and agenda, and the committee was given information about the final list of candidates for the UEFA Presidential, UEFA Executive Committee and FIFA Executive Committee elections to take place at the Congress. The Executive Committee will next meet in Vienna on 22 and 23 March, on the eve of the Congress. ●



UEFA Via Getty Images

ELECTIONS IN VIENNA

Vienna has a special place in UEFA's history. The Austrian capital staged the European body's inaugural Congress on 2 March 1955, and it was here that UEFA's first statutes were approved. Two further Congresses have taken place in Vienna since then, in 1972 and 1994, and UEFA returns to the city on 24 March this year for the XXXIX Ordinary UEFA Congress – with a series of elections on the agenda.

The first is for the office of UEFA President, as the current incumbent, Michel Platini, is coming to the end of his second term of office. By the deadline of 24 December, he was the only candidate to have put his name forward, and is therefore standing for a third term, from 2015 to 2019.

In addition to the election of the president, and carrying out the usual statutory tasks, such as approving UEFA's accounts and budget, the Vienna Congress is to elect seven Executive Committee members. Three outgoing members are not standing for re-election – UEFA first vice-president Şenes Erzik (Turkey), who joined the committee in 1990; Mircea Sandu (Romania), a member since 2007; and Sergey Fursenko (Russia), a member since 2011.

The four other outgoing members – Peter Gilliéron (Switzerland), Borislav Mihaylov (Bulgaria), Grigoriy Surkis (Ukraine) and Ángel María Villar Llona (Spain) – are all standing for re-election, with the names of eight other candidates joining them on the ballot papers.

In accordance with the UEFA Statutes (Article 19), the UEFA President and seven members of the UEFA Executive Committee are elected at the UEFA Congress in the calendar year preceding a final round of the European Football Championship. The other eight members of the Executive Committee are elected the year after the final round.

FIFA Executive Committee elections

The FIFA Executive Committee includes eight European members, and the UEFA President is an ex officio vice-president of world football's

MICHEL PLATINI (FRANCE)

Born on 21 June 1955. A former professional footballer and three-time winner of the Ballon d'Or, he played for AS Nancy-Lorraine, AS Saint-Etienne, Juventus and the French national team, which he then coached from 1988 to 1992.

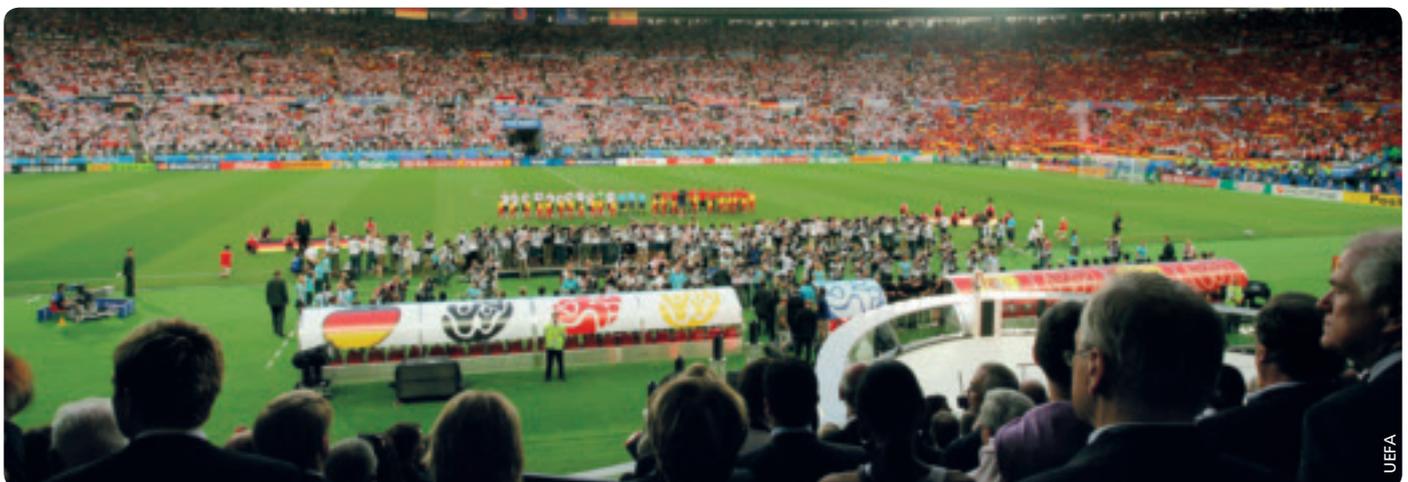
Co-president of the 1998 FIFA World Cup Organising Committee, Michel Platini was also vice-president of the French Football Federation and special advisor to the FIFA president, Joseph S. Blatter, before being elected as a member of the UEFA and FIFA Executive Committees at the UEFA Congress in Stockholm in 2002.

Michel Platini was elected UEFA President – and became an ex officio FIFA vice-president – at the UEFA Congress in Dusseldorf in January 2007. He was re-elected for a second four-year term at the Paris Congress in March 2011. ●



governing body. Elections will also be taking place in Vienna for one FIFA vice-president, one FIFA vice-president representing the four British associations (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and one FIFA Executive Committee member. Ángel María Villar Llona (Spain) is seeking a further mandate as FIFA vice-president, while Wolfgang Niersbach (Germany) is standing for election as a FIFA Executive Committee member. With regard to the FIFA Executive Committee vice-presidency reserved for the four British associations, two candidates are standing for election: David Gill (England), and Trefor Lloyd Hughes (Wales). All FIFA Executive Committee mandates are four-year terms. ●

After the final of EURO 2008, Vienna is hosting another major UEFA event



Ahead of the elections, all 12 candidates agreed to answer the following two questions:

A What do you see as UEFA's top priority in the immediate future?

B If you are elected (or re-elected), what personal contribution do you think you can make to achieving that objective?



Sándor Csányi (Hungary)

Born on 20 March 1953, he has been president of the Hungarian Football

Federation (MLSZ) since July 2010 and is currently first vice-chairman of the UEFA National Associations Committee. He has sat on UEFA committees since October 2010.

A It is a positive tendency that football involves more countries in the world, but we have to secure the position of European football so that the spirit of the game and the traditions are correctly represented.

I believe in solidarity in football. UEFA has a key role in guaranteeing the balance between the different parties.

The strengthening of financial fair play is important, and I fully support this progression. We must create a legal environment within the EU that focuses on the specificities of sport. Given that the current European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport comes from a Hungarian government that considers sport as a strategic target, UEFA should be able to move forward in this matter.

Coming from a country that has a great football heritage and as chairman of one of the largest banks in central and eastern Europe, I am sure that the biggest challenge is to maintain the balance between sport values and money. Football has learnt a lot recently from the financial world, but we have to keep the game as it was.

B The synchronisation of different motives and sectors is crucial when you think about the success of a project. I have been involved in football since the second part of the 1980s. I was a committee member within the Hungarian Football Federation and I have also had different roles in clubs. Thanks to my background and over 30 years of experience, I have had the opportunity to understand the mechanism of a sports association as much as that of a government or company, while I also understood the workflows of the EU. I can mediate between all of these different stakeholders for the sake of European football.

Football has always improved when new sectors of society have joined the game. We have to attract more people to play and support our game. The improvement of men's football cannot happen without involving women. It is time to consider women's football as equally as important as men's. I would support the countries where women's football is not so strong, to improve their activities in this field.

It would be a privilege to bring a lifetime's worth of football experience to the UEFA Executive Committee. ●



Peter Gilliéron (Switzerland)

Born on 5 May 1953, he has been president of the Swiss Football

Association since 2009, having previously served as its general secretary from 1994 to 2009. Elected to the UEFA Executive Committee in 2011, he has sat on UEFA committees since 1998 and is currently chairman of the UEFA Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee and deputy chairman of the UEFA Club Licensing Committee.

A It is important for the health of European football that all stakeholders (national associations, clubs, players, officials and referees) are involved in decision-making, so that we all work together to tackle the major problems that football faces (match-fixing, violence on the pitch and in the stands, racism and discrimination) and highlight the political and social significance of our

sport for society as a whole. UEFA will need to work with the national associations, who also have an important and decisive role to play in this regard.

B The UEFA Executive Committee is a team, and as in every team, the group is more important than the individual. However, in the event of my re-election, I personally could make use of my strong ties with all areas of the game. As the president and former general secretary of a national association, I have made a lot of important contacts over the years. If we in European football want to present a united front, we also need to build bridges, and I am convinced that I would be able to contribute to that. In addition, in my role as chairman of the Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee, I have worked very hard to tackle racism and discrimination. The national associations could play a much bigger role in this, with help from UEFA. ●



Fernando Gomes (Portugal)

Born on 21 February 1952, he has been president of the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF)

since December 2011. He is special advisor to the UEFA Executive Committee in charge of relations with all confederations, a member of the UEFA EURO 2016 steering group and second vice-chairman of the UEFA National Associations Committee. He has sat on UEFA committees since 2004.

A To support policies for associations with smaller investment capabilities, both in terms of funding infrastructures and grassroots work. We need to help less-developed countries to grow stronger in order to keep European football the most competitive in the world. Solidarity, among countries and towards people, should also be a key word for UEFA in the next years.

Every aspect concerning training, youth development, development of

women's football and futsal should continue to be among UEFA's top priorities.

Sports integrity and fair play are absolutely essential to the future of football in Europe. We need to keep enforcing zero tolerance against any sort of match-fixing. I also believe that an organisation such as UEFA cannot grow stronger without firm policies against violence, racism and xenophobia.

B All my life I've been involved in sports, in various areas, such as managing companies and clubs, and working on development projects for stadiums and training centres. I think that those skills, along with my experience of leading our national league and, now, our football federation, can help UEFA to achieve its objectives in the next years.

As an economist and a leader, I strongly believe that sports organisations should be led with vision, imagination, detail, transparency, passion, courage, loyalty, dedication and a respect for history and tradition. UEFA, as the leading body of European football, should always strive for credibility and excellence. ●



Yngve Hallén (Norway)

Born on 14 March 1968, he became president of the Football

Association of Norway (NFF) in March 2010 and is currently a member of the UEFA National Team Competitions Committee.

A Our top priority in UEFA for the coming years is to strengthen our position, while continuing to develop the game at all levels – grassroots, women's and elite competitions. Building closer ties to all of football's governing bodies and stakeholders will be vital in achieving this aim. A proper balance between the leagues, clubs and associations has to be found and maintained. We must emphasise our impact in the area of social responsibility, where football has a direct

effect on promoting values of respect and understanding to our players and fans in all of the national associations.

B My bid for election is founded on decades of experience as a football leader and administrator at all levels of Norwegian football, including top-level club management. The highlight of my football life so far is being president of the NFF and having the privilege of working with UEFA and all its member associations.

I promise to work tirelessly in building closer and stronger ties to all of football's governing bodies. As a member of the Executive Committee, I would seek UEFA's advice, be attentive to its views and value its opinions. My goal is simple: to bring my experience from a lifetime in football, together with the Norwegian culture of peace and diplomacy, into the great team that is the Executive Committee. Together, we can make UEFA a stronger unifying force in our own continent and throughout the world. ●



Borislav Mihaylov (Bulgaria)

Born on 12 February 1963,

he has been president of the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) since 2005, having served as vice-president from 2001 to 2005. A former international footballer, he played 102 matches for the Bulgarian national team. A member of the UEFA Executive Committee since 2011, he has sat on UEFA committees since 2006, and is currently chairman of the UEFA Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee and deputy chairman of the UEFA Football Committee.

A One of UEFA's top priorities would be to make football even more popular among children. Through the efforts of UEFA, the grassroots movement has developed really fast, but by elaborating a fine-tuned model of solidarity payments, more focused on the needs of the smaller European associations, it could gain additional impetus. Those national associations could be helped to make the game attractive and admired by schoolboys and schoolgirls.

Another important immediate goal for UEFA in the coming years is to protect the integrity of the game. To reinforce the principle of fair play – on the pitch and in finance – is of utmost importance for the even brighter future of football.

B One of the pillars of the BFU's strategic plan for 2014–18 is the integration of football into school education programmes from the earliest age. As president of the BFU, I'm well experienced in optimising the communication flows between the association and the government, as well as in the best practices of institutional interaction. It is essential for the smaller and medium-sized national associations to get ever more possibilities to organise UEFA youth and amateur tournaments, which is currently the trend, because it remains the best way to stimulate government and local authority support for turning football's development into a national strategic goal. Bearing in mind the complexity of the modern football infrastructure construction problem all over Europe, to host a UEFA tournament is one of the most appropriate approaches for inclusiveness in the European football family, as well as for further boosting the expansion of the game. ●



Trefor Lloyd Hughes (Wales)

Born on 11 December 1947,

and president of the Football Association of Wales (FAW) since August 2012, he has sat on UEFA committees since 2011 and is currently second vice-chairman of the UEFA Stadium and Security Committee.

A Football first. First today, first tomorrow. The top priority for UEFA is to ensure that we have a thriving tomorrow. More players, better players!

Football's future is dependent upon stronger grassroots that offer a safe and secure environment, where football is played with respect and integrity. Excellent facilities, great coaching and a safe environment to allow the next generation to prosper.

Remembering the basics, some kit, a ball to play, a place to play and a coach to help, are key items that sometimes we lose sight of. We must work together as

a team to be stronger from the grassroots to the top of the game.

B I have been involved in football for over 50 years, from being a player and club founder to becoming an administrator and president of my national association. I have worked across all aspects of football administration, from volunteer to club level, to the league and the association and through to the work that I have done at both UEFA and FIFA levels. But in all that time, I have never lost sight of my focus on youth development.

Professionally I am a (retired) trained ambulance paramedic, having served for 34 years in my local community and at football matches. I was a county councillor at the age of 19 and have over 30 years' experience. I was also mayor of my local town. I am a person who cares, a person who brings a sense of perspective to the decisions that need to be made, which have often, as a professional ambulance paramedic, been lifesaving decisions.

My focus on the grassroots of the game and on youth development complements those of my fellow Executive Committee candidates, and, working together as a team, we can be stronger. ●

Scottish FA



Campbell Ogilvie (Scotland)

Born on 1 May 1950, he became president

of the Scottish Football Association in June 2011. He has sat on UEFA committees since 2004 and is currently a member of the UEFA National Team Competitions Committee.

A UEFA's commitment to financial fair play provides a catalyst for future discussions on achieving a fairer competitive balance, helping to bridge the gap for clubs in smaller territories. I believe if we get the football decisions right, finance will follow.

The ever-changing European landscape will also allow us to debate future opportunities to expand the game's reach and attractiveness. Equally important to the identity of member clubs and national associations is a more focused approach to home-grown talent identification and development. New initiatives will maximise the development opportunities for our young professional players.

UEFA will also continue to be a model of great governance amid growing international challenges in the areas of match-fixing, anti-doping, racism and all other forms of discriminatory or unacceptable behaviour.

B I have been involved in some of football's most significant developments domestically, across Europe and internationally during my 45 years in the game, and in that time have worked for the national league body, two of its major clubs and, of course, the national association.

As president of the Scottish FA, I have chaired our board of directors through an unprecedented programme of modernisation on the field and off it. I believe I am a forward-thinker, as demonstrated with my involvement in the creation and ultimate execution of the original UEFA Champions League format.

I pride myself on attention to detail and forward planning, and believe I have the qualities and skills to contribute across the spectrum of issues that influence and affect the game.

It would be a privilege to bring a lifetime's worth of football experience to the UEFA Executive Committee. ●



HNS

Davor Šuker (Croatia)

Born on 1 January 1968, he is a former Croatian

international footballer, has been president of the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) since 2012 and is currently a member of the UEFA Football Committee.

A UEFA's top priority is protecting the game of football. It is, on the face of it, a simple goal but it involves dealing with many different challenges. The financial crisis is threatening our game and we must keep applying and further improving the financial fair play rules. Proper care and education of youth players is another key objective for UEFA, and we must encourage the local training of young players. Protecting the game also means dealing with match-fixing issues, tackling fan violence and racism in the stadiums and protecting sports intellectual property rights. Football attracts large sums of money, and our goal should be to distribute a significant part of that to player development, coach education, infrastructure improvements,

women's football and grassroots programmes.

B As a former player and a current football executive, I believe I have the necessary experience, knowledge and passion to work successfully on achieving these goals. I would be a good ambassador for the sport at European level, promoting positive football values and pointing out negative trends. I can also bring fresh ideas in safeguarding and improving our game. I have dedicated my life to football and it is my personal goal to protect the game that is so important to everybody involved, from the players and coaches to the officials, supporters and community in general. I have learned how important teamwork is in football, and I would cooperate intensely with the UEFA President, the other members of the UEFA Executive Committee, the national associations, clubs, players' associations, sponsors, broadcasters and all other UEFA stakeholders on improving and developing our game. I would personally support all worthy, positive and feasible projects, and would share constructive ideas on how to safeguard football by keeping it simple, attractive, understandable and playable by everyone at all levels with the same rules. ●



UEFA via Getty Images

Grigoriy Surkis (Ukraine)

Born on 4 September 1949, he

was president of the Football Federation of Ukraine from 2000 to 2012 and is now the federation's honorary president. Having been a co-opted member of the UEFA Executive Committee from 2004 to 2007, he was elected as a full member in 2007 and as vice-president in 2013. He is currently chairman of the UEFA Stadium and Security Committee and deputy chairman of the UEFA Marketing Advisory Committee.

have proved the timeliness and effectiveness of those UEFA reforms. Now the national team competitions are on the agenda. The increase in the number of EURO participants, the geographic expansion of the host countries, and the creation of the UEFA Nations League represent new challenges and also show that UEFA keeps in step with the times.

B I am determined to use the experience I have gained over more than two decades in football to make every effort to meet the expectations of all UEFA members, and to work together with my colleagues for the benefit of the noble mission of our organisation by developing the sporting aspects of its activities, expanding its geographical reach and promoting its great humanitarian mission.

I have said many times that UEFA EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine was my lifework. However, following this great event, I acutely felt the unique social, cultural and integrative role of football for hundreds of millions of people. From my current position as UEFA vice-president, I appreciate the honour of 'Creating History Together', a concept which acquires special significance for the whole of Europe in the current turbulent times. ●

A Europe is at the forefront of world football and leads the way for the development of the game. UEFA promotes the continuous evolution and modernisation of football, both at club and national team levels. Having replaced the European Champion Clubs' Cup and the UEFA Cup, the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Europa League



Geir Thorsteinsson (Iceland)

Born on 9 September

1964 and president of the Football Association of Iceland (KSÍ) since 2007, he has sat on UEFA committees since 1998 and is currently second vice-chairman of the UEFA National Team Competitions Committee.

A UEFA should help the member associations to prosper in today's society and to run challenging football activities – on their own terms. UEFA's projects should aim to assist the associations to perform to the highest level, so that the clubs, administrators, players, educators, coaches and referees continue to improve for the good of football. UEFA should encourage projects that endorse training sessions under the instruction of qualified coaches at grass-roots level already, to benefit both the youngest footballers and the game of tomorrow. UEFA must be both an inno-

vator and a solution-provider for the game, by exchanging know-how inspiring new ideas, and providing sufficient financial support to create better facilities and a long-lasting legacy.

B During my career of more than 30 years in football, I have been a youth coach, referee, club secretary, association general secretary and now president of the Football Association of Iceland. I have contributed at international level by serving on various UEFA and FIFA committees, as well as a delegate, since 1998. I have worked at all levels of the game, providing ideas and solutions, dealing with different stakeholders, in all kinds of areas, ranging from technical, administrative and financial to strategic matters.

Closest to my heart are the associations and working with everyone involved, professional or amateur. Using my experience and knowledge, I am eager to contribute to the development of football in Europe. I am ready to serve as a competent representative on the UEFA Executive Committee, and to face future challenges with confidence, solidarity and active participation.

Together, we can achieve UEFA's priorities. ●



Ángel María Villar Llona (Spain)

Born on 21 January 1950, Ángel María

Villar Llona played for Athletic Club de Bilbao and the Spanish national team before turning to football administration. He has been president of the Spanish Football Federation since 1988 and was elected to the UEFA Executive Committee in 1992, becoming a vice-president in 2000. He is currently also chairman of the UEFA Referees Committee and deputy chairman of the UEFA Players' Status, Transfer and Agents and Match Agents Committee. He has been a member of the FIFA Executive Committee since 1998 and a vice-president since 2002.

A Several problems come to mind which could jeopardise the future of football:

Firstly, violence on the pitch. Secondly, the issue of racism and xenophobia. And thirdly, the problem of integrity.

B I think my extensive experience in European football as a player, as president of a national association, as a member of a wide range of international committees, and through the many contacts I have made over the years with stakeholders at all levels of European and world football, will enable me to continue to hold meaningful and constructive exchanges with people from all spheres of activity, to forge agreements and to work in cooperation with other parties to see that those agreements are implemented. I sincerely believe that this experience will help me to make a valid and a major contribution towards resolving the problems I mentioned earlier. ●



Servet Yardımcı (Turkey)

Born on 26 December 1957,

he is first vice-president of the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) and has been a member of the UEFA HatTrick Committee since 2013.

A At national level, the continued development of national team football and delivering a successful EURO 2016 in France is a priority. Beyond this, EURO 2020 will be a challenge but provide a huge boost for European football, spreading the game to new host countries and cities across the continent. Successful sales of the centralised rights to European qualifying matches for the EURO and the World Cup are also vital for the finances of UEFA's 54 member associations.

At club level, the top priority remains club licensing and financial fair play, in order to protect clubs while continuing to develop all UEFA's club competitions.

In terms of development, we must continue training referees and promoting all areas of the game, including women's football, youth football and futsal, to build a healthy future.

A final top priority must remain the protection of the game against match-fixing, racism and violence through a strict policy of zero tolerance.

B My love and involvement in football began back at the beginning of this century when, as a founding member of Çaykur Rizespor Football Club as a company, I was involved in stabilising the club economically and turning it into a successful business model.

As a successful businessman and chairman of the Yardımcı Corporation, I understand the complex world of business, finance and football. I would put this experience to good use as a member of UEFA's Executive Committee, to ensure that the financial interests and future well-being of all UEFA's 54 member associations are protected.

Since I have served as a member of UEFA's HatTrick Committee, I know the importance of the central funding of projects across member associations and the need for full transparency and accountability.

Since 2008, in my role as first vice-president of the Turkish Football Federation, I have undertaken important projects for the game, such as the recent opening of our new headquarters and state-of-the-art training facilities. I believe my strong international relationships, deep football experience and business acumen can make a contribution to the UEFA Executive Committee, and for the service of European football. ●

REFEREES PRIMED FOR THE SPRING

UEFA stages annual winter courses for its top men and women referees, as well as for men and women referees who are newcomers to the international list. The courses aim, among other things, to prepare referees for the second half of the season, and to introduce the new referees to their duties as UEFA match officials. Athens staged this season's courses, from 1 to 5 February.

UEFA's referee programme is designed to help the top referees maintain the highest standards, and to give new European referees important guidance and education as they set out on their international careers. The UEFA Referees Committee – former international referees themselves – were on hand in Athens to take the referees through a week of comprehensive technical and practical work, while fitness training and medical tests were undertaken to assess the referees' physical condition.

The newcomers to the international list were given invaluable advice by UEFA chief refereeing officer Pierluigi Collina, who offered them the benefit of his own years of experience as a referee at the highest levels of the game. *"The referee's job is a difficult one,"* he stressed. *"You have less than half a second to take a decision, often under heavy pressure and the scrutiny of the public and media. Your decisions can not only affect sporting results but may also have an economic impact. So a referee has to embrace responsibility. You have to know yourself, your strengths and your weaknesses. You must seek to improve until your very last refereeing assignment – and stay open to changes."*

Be confident, and be thoroughly prepared, was the message given to the young referees. Collina emphasised that referees had a duty to protect football's image, and to know the Laws

of the Game. *"On the field, the referee is the person who guarantees that a match is being played in accordance with the rules,"* he explained, *"and you must know the rules and their updated interpretation to be able to take correct decisions."*

In Athens, the referees were reminded of their overall responsibilities as Europe's top match officials. *"You are ambassadors for football and for fair play,"* said UEFA Referees Committee member David Elleray. *"As well as representing yourselves, your colleagues and your country, you are now representing UEFA. That means not just high-quality performances and diplomatic skills in managing a match on the field, but also high-quality conduct and diplomacy off the field."*

The referees were warned to stay vigilant in the face of attempts to involve them in match-fixing. They were reminded of UEFA's zero-tolerance policy towards those found guilty, and were encouraged to follow the 'three R's' principle – **Recognise** what is happening if approached; **Reject** the approach; **Report** the matter.

Reading the game

One aspect of a referee's preparation considered to be increasingly essential in the modern-day game is for match officials to study teams'



Referees are encouraged to be diplomats and ambassadors for UEFA and football

tactics and individual players' characteristics, to help them stay one step ahead in being able to take decisions in match situations. UEFA's chief technical officer Ioan Lupescu came to Greece to give an insight into why referees should learn how teams play to enhance their own performances. Lupescu not only focused on the various tactical systems that teams use in the European club competitions, but also highlighted the trends in modern-day top-level football, including rapid counter-attacking and the importance of set pieces – such as corners and or free-kicks – to create goalscoring situations.

Referee education was, as usual, an essential part of the Athens agenda. The referees were given invaluable advice in technical and instructional sessions and tests. *"We need to ensure the UEFA referees are given the best possible education for their development,"* said UEFA refereeing officer Hugh Dallas, who, together with fellow Referees Committee member Vladimir Sajn, conducted sessions which included, among other things, tests on the Laws of the Game; video clips shown to the referees to analyse match incidents and decisions; explanation of potential trends in match situations that officials need to be aware of; management of players; and consistency in decision-making. Video tests help to achieve the latter aim. *"As an example, we expect a referee from Portugal to have the same opinion when judging serious foul play as a referee from Poland,"* said Dallas. *"It's only fair to the competing clubs and national teams that the application of the laws is consistent, no matter which part of Europe the referee comes from."*

Fitness training

The pace of present-day football requires referees to be athletes as well as decision-takers and managers on the field. The Athens week included fitness training, for the first time involving the so-called Yo-Yo intermittent recovery test – which examines the ability to recover after intensive exercise. UEFA's Belgian fitness expert Werner Helsen and his team were present to put the referees through their paces. The match officials were given visual tests and a thorough medical examination, and weighing and body fat measurements provided essential data aimed at helping the referees to achieve maximum fitness levels.

UEFA's elite women referees, as well as newcomers to the women's international list, attended the courses in Athens. This is the third time that female match officials have joined their male counterparts at the UEFA sessions, reflecting not only the attention that UEFA wishes to give women referees, but also the



Sportsfile

The referees worked hard in training in Athens

development of European women's football in recent years. The elite referees included candidates to travel to Canada in the summer to officiate at matches in the Women's World Cup.

Specific parts of the women's courses were led by two UEFA Referees Committee members, Dagmar Damková and Bo Karlsson. The newcomers and elite referees undertook fitness tests and attended education and instructional sessions. The women referees worked together with the men in a number of technical sessions, including those on topics such as offside and severity of offences, while other technical sessions focused on the women's competitions.

The fitness tests in particular proved to be vital for the women referees in being able to measure their physical condition. *"The girls know they have to be at the top level in terms of fitness, and the tests are demanding,"* Damková explained. *"Women's football is increasing in pace, and you must be prepared."*

Role models

The chairman of the UEFA Referees Committee, Ángel María Villa Llona, wished the referees the best of luck for the future. *"We would ask you to act as role models, in particular towards the young referees in your countries,"* he said. *"Your behaviour should be exemplary and your teaching should be exceptional. We want the young referees to look up to you."*

While the leading referees are gearing up for action in the major men's and women's club and national team competitions, the new international referees are setting out on what they hope will be a fulfilling and successful career. Pierluigi Collina assured them of UEFA's full support: *"Congratulations on coming this far,"* he said. *"You have a dream of being a top referee ... and UEFA is here to try to help you achieve that dream."* ●

A SUCCESSFUL SECOND SEASON

The first season of the UEFA Youth League was such a resounding success that there was always a possibility that UEFA's newest competition would not be able to match those high standards in 2014/15.

However, as the knockout rounds get under way, it is safe to say that there has been no 'second-season syndrome' for this competition, which seems to grow in stature with every passing matchday. With 27 players going on to make their debut in the UEFA Champions League after featuring in this Under-19 competition (see below), the UEFA Youth League is acting as an effective springboard for talented youngsters making a name for themselves.

The chance to participate in this exciting youth competition has been embraced by Europe's clubs, whose academy players have thrived on this new stage. There has been plenty of entertainment for the fans, too. A total of 357 goals were scored in the autumn – including a 6-1 thriller between AFC Ajax and Paris Saint-Germain FC – 30 more than in last season's inaugural group stage.

Destination Nyon

Now that we are into the new year, the final is not all that far away, especially as the knockout games are all single-leg affairs. Despite some clubs being renowned for their academies, there are no obvious favourites or traditional powerhouses at this level. Nevertheless, four sides won their group for the second season in a row, including two that made it to the finals weekend last April: SL Benfica and Real Madrid CF.

In the round of 16, Real Madrid will play FC Porto, who were heading out until Leonardo converted a 94th-minute penalty against FC Shakhtar Donetsk on matchday six. Shakhtar themselves were one of only three unbeaten teams during the group stage, and something will have to give when they welcome Olympiacos FC on 23 February, with the Greek side having won all three of their away games this season.

FC Barcelona were the inaugural champions, and although they are away at an RSC Anderlecht side that impressively won Group D ahead of Arsenal FC and Borussia Dortmund, eight of the squad that lifted the Lennart Johansson Trophy last April played some part in their group stage campaign.

The teams that make it through the round of 16 will be within touching distance of a trip to Nyon. The quarter-finals are scheduled for 10/11 and 17/18 March, and the semi-finals (10 April) and the final (13 April) will then be played as a four-team tournament at Colovray Stadium, opposite UEFA's headquarters in Nyon.

The UEFA Youth League will enter a new phase next season, with countries' domestic youth champions joining the party, but the foundations have already been well and truly laid for the next generation of European football. ●

Atlético have already qualified for the quarter-finals, after eliminating Arsenal FC in the first UEFA Youth League round of 16 tie



MAKING THE STEP UP

One of the aims of the UEFA Youth League is to bridge the gap between clubs' youth sides and their senior teams. A good start has been made in this regard, with 27 players representing their clubs in the UEFA Champions League after playing in the UEFA Youth League. Here we profile three notable success stories.

Andy Kawaya (RSC Anderlecht)

Kawaya scored against Arsenal FC in the UEFA Youth League, before playing in the seniors' UEFA Champions League meeting two weeks later. He came on at half-time in that match and contributed to a remarkable fightback in which Anderlecht came back from 3-0 down to rescue a point.

Munir El Haddadi (FC Barcelona)

Perhaps the most recognisable graduate from the UEFA Youth League following his goalscoring exploits in the inaugural season, Munir has already made three UEFA Champions League appearances and has even turned out for Spain.

Bryan Cristante (AC Milan and SL Benfica)

In fact, Cristante appeared in the UEFA Champions League before the UEFA Youth League. He scored in the youth competition for AC Milan last season, before enjoying more senior action with SL Benfica this season. ●

DRAWS MADE FOR UNDER-17 AND UNDER-19 COMPETITIONS

On 3 December, four separate draws were made at the House of European Football in Nyon, determining the groups for the elite rounds of the 2014/15 European Under-17 and Under-19 Championships, as well as the groups for the qualifying rounds of next season's competitions.



In the Under-17 competition, the elite round will determine the 15 teams that join hosts Bulgaria in the final tournament. The 32 teams that are still in the running were drawn in the following groups:

- Group 1: **Spain**, France, Sweden, Israel
 - Group 2: Portugal, Croatia, Serbia, **Azerbaijan**
 - Group 3: **Netherlands**, Belgium, Georgia, Northern Ireland
 - Group 4: **Poland**, Republic of Ireland, Belarus, Greece
 - Group 5: Austria, **Russia**, Iceland, Wales
 - Group 6: **England**, Romania, Norway, Slovenia
 - Group 7: Czech Republic, Scotland, **Hungary**, Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - Group 8: **Germany**, Italy, Slovakia, Ukraine
- (The countries in bold will host the mini-tournaments, which will take place in March.)

The eight group winners and the seven best runners-up will qualify for the final round, which will take place from 6 to 22 May 2015. That final tournament will also act as a quali-



Keziah Veendorp (left), representing the Dutch U17s, and Niklas Stark for Germany's U19s pose with the fair play trophies won by their teams in the respective 2013/14 UEFA youth competitions

fyng competition for the U-17 World Cup, which will take place in autumn 2015 in Chile.



In the Under-19 competition, the winners of the seven mini-tournaments will qualify for the final round in Greece, which will take place from 6 to 19 July 2015.

The groups for the 2014/15 elite round were drawn as follows:

- Group 1: Spain, Portugal, **Georgia**, Turkey
- Group 2: Slovakia, Republic of Ireland, **Germany**, Czech Republic
- Group 3: Russia, **Sweden**, Belgium, Lithuania
- Group 4: **Netherlands**, Switzerland, Serbia, Norway
- Group 5: Montenegro, Ukraine, Poland, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**
- Group 6: Italy, **Austria**, Croatia, Scotland
- Group 7: England, **France**, Denmark, Azerbaijan

(The countries in bold will host the mini-tournaments, which will take place between 26 March and 3 June.) ●

QUALIFYING GROUPS FOR 2015/16

Draws were also made for the qualifying rounds of next season's competitions.



In the Under-17 competition, the final round of which will take place in Azerbaijan in May 2016, the following groups were drawn:

- Group 1: Switzerland, Netherlands, Albania, **Wales**
- Group 2: **Belarus**, Russia, Montenegro, Cyprus
- Group 3: Sweden, Republic of Ireland, Malta, **Finland**
- Group 4: **Hungary**, Georgia, Romania, Slovakia
- Group 5: Serbia, Austria, **Luxembourg**, Lithuania
- Group 6: Poland, Spain, **Latvia**, Andorra
- Group 7: Croatia, Czech Republic, Gibraltar, **Liechtenstein**
- Group 8: Denmark, **Iceland**, Greece, Kazakhstan
- Group 9: England, **Portugal**, San Marino, Armenia
- Group 10: Turkey, Belgium, Faroe Islands, **Slovenia**
- Group 11: Norway, France, **Israel**, Northern Ireland
- Group 12: Italy, Scotland, **Bulgaria**, FYR Macedonia
- Group 13: Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Moldova**, Estonia

(The countries in bold will host the mini-tournaments.)

The top two teams in each group, plus the five best third-place teams, will join Germany (who have a bye in the qualifying round) in the elite round.



In the Under-19 competition, the final round of which will take place in Germany in summer 2016, the following groups were drawn:

- Group 1: **Republic of Ireland**, Scotland, Slovenia, Latvia
- Group 2: **Croatia**, Hungary, Montenegro, Kazakhstan
- Group 3: Bulgaria, **Cyprus**, Poland, Luxembourg
- Group 4: Italy, England, Finland, **FYR Macedonia**
- Group 5: Turkey, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Azerbaijan**
- Group 6: Israel, Denmark, **Malta**, Iceland
- Group 7: Greece, **Portugal**, Lithuania, Moldova
- Group 8: Austria, **Georgia**, Albania, Wales
- Group 9: **Russia**, Norway, Slovakia, Northern Ireland
- Group 10: Netherlands, **France**, Gibraltar, Liechtenstein
- Group 11: **Romania**, Switzerland, Faroe Islands, Andorra
- Group 12: Czech Republic, Serbia, Armenia, **Estonia**
- Group 13: **Belgium**, Sweden, San Marino, Belarus

(The countries in bold will host the mini-tournaments.)

The top two teams in each group and the best third-place team will join Spain (who have a bye at this stage) in the elite round. ●

ANOTHER TITLE FOR REAL MADRID

Real Madrid CF finished 2014 on a high note, winning the FIFA Club World Cup for the first time. They beat Argentine side San Lorenzo 2-0 in the final at the Grand Stade de Marrakech on 20 December, having beaten Mexican team Cruz Azul 4-0 at the semi-final stage.

In so doing, Real Madrid followed in the footsteps of FC Bayern München, who won the previous tournament. In fact, since AC Milan triumphed in 2007, Brazilian side Corinthians are the only non-European team to have taken home the trophy. In 2008 Manchester United FC won the tournament, in 2009 and 2011 it was FC Barcelona, and in 2010 it was FC Internazionale Milano. ●



REPRESENTATIVES OF TEAM SPORTS' EUROPEAN GOVERNING BODIES MEET IN NYON

On 16 January the House of European Football was the venue for a workshop bringing together representatives of UEFA, the European Volleyball Confederation (CEV), the European Handball Federation (EHF), the European branch of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA Europe) and the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF).

Discussions sought to find solutions to various shared problems, highlight positive developments and share best practices regarding the organisation and promotion of events, as well as looking at each federation's grassroots activities.

Each federation talked about its main competitions, looked at the host cities and countries of recent and future tournaments, considered the factors that determine success and discussed the main challenges that it faced. A round-table discussion allowed participants to share their experience and know-how regarding ticketing, the organisation and coordination of events, organisational structures and human resources on site, commercial aspects, operational matters and the media. Other issues were also addressed, such as the creation of activities for supporters, the division of roles and responsibilities between organising committees and in-house teams, and development strategies. ●

FINAL ROUND IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND FOR THE UEFA REGIONS' CUP

The Republic of Ireland has been chosen to host the final round of the ninth UEFA Regions' Cup this summer. On 30 March a draw will be made at the Dublin Arena to divide the eight qualifying teams into two groups (the winners of which will contest the final on 4 July).

The eight finalists are Zagreb (Croatia), Württemberg (Germany), South Moravia (Czech Republic), the Eastern Region of Northern Ireland, Ankara (Turkey), Tuzla Canton (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Dolnośląski (Poland) and the Eastern Region of the Republic of Ireland. ●

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMPETITIONS

On 6 December the draw was made for the final round of the Women's World Cup, which will take place in Canada from 6 June to 5 July. The following groups were drawn:

Group A: Canada, PR China, New Zealand, Netherlands

Group B: Germany, Ivory Coast, Norway, Thailand

Group C: Japan, Switzerland, Cameroon, Ecuador

Group D: United States, Australia, Sweden, Nigeria

Group E: Brazil, South Korea, Spain, Costa Rica

Group F: France, England, Colombia, Mexico

For the European teams, this tournament will also act as a qualifying competition for the 2016 Olympic football tournament.

Meanwhile, on 19 January, with the destination of the Women's World Cup trophy yet to be decided, the starting gun was fired for the next European Women's Championship, with the draw for the preliminary round being made in Nyon. Of the eight teams participating in this round, two – Andorra and Moldova – are taking part in the competition for the first time. Moldova are in Group A, alongside Luxembourg, Lithuania and Latvia, while Andorra are in Group B with Georgia, the Faroe Islands and Malta. The two mini-tournaments will be hosted by Moldova and Malta respectively and will take place between 4 and 9 April.

The two group winners will join the 38 other teams in the qualifying group stage. The teams will be divided into eight groups of five teams, with the draw being made on 13 April. The Netherlands, who will host the final round in 2017, qualify automatically. ●

FULL STEAM AHEAD IN FRANCE

The final round of the European Football Championship will take place in France from 10 June to 10 July 2016. With less than 500 days to go before the start of the tournament, the company responsible for organising it – EURO 2016 SAS – takes stock of the progress made in preparation for the event.

At the end of January, a workshop bringing together the tournament's ten host cities and its national and global sponsors was held in Paris. This event, which was organised by EURO 2016 SAS, gave the host cities' official representatives an opportunity to unveil the communication projects and activities that they have planned, thereby creating new synergies with the tournament's partners. It also allowed the host cities to reassert their intention to take the tournament to all corners of the country – notably through the creation of fan zones. With less than 500 days to go before the opening match of the tournament on 10 June 2016, this workshop was further proof that preparations to host EURO 2016 are very much on track.

Stadiums

Ten stadiums will host matches at EURO 2016. The Stade de France will undergo minor renovations, while four brand new stadiums are being built in Lille, Nice (already completed), Lyon and Bordeaux. The Stade Vélodrome in Marseille has also been renovated and was officially inaugurated in October 2014. Meanwhile, in Paris, Saint Etienne, Lens and Toulouse, the areas around the stadiums are being redeveloped. "All stadiums will be delivered by the end of 2015, so we will have at least half a season to resolve any teething problems," explains Jacques Lambert, the president of EURO 2016 SAS.

Hospitality

Hospitality packages for EURO 2016 have been on sale since June 2014. Different types of pass are available, allowing buyers to tailor packages to their individual needs.

EURO 2016 SAS has teamed up with three prestigious partners – Do&Co, Hédiard and Joël Robuchon – to create the largest hospitality programme that France has ever seen: Le Club Henri Delaunay. As a result, companies using this programme for their business development activities will enjoy unparalleled levels of service.

Team base camps

For the first time, the base camp catalogue prepared for UEFA's 54 member associations is actually a website: <http://teambasecampseuro2016.uefa.ch>. This interactive tool will allow the national associations to find the facilities that best suit their needs. The extensive catalogue seeks to provide details of as many sites as possible across the whole of France.

Sponsors

A total of ten global partners will be associated with EURO 2016, and they will also have sponsorship rights for other UEFA competitions. Thus far, seven sponsors are on board: adidas, Carlsberg, Coca-Cola, Continental, Hyundai/Kia, McDonald's and SOCAR. There will also be six national partners, which will only have rights within France. At the time of writing one such contract had been concluded (with FDJ – Française des Jeux), but others are expected to be finalised in the first half of 2015.

Ticketing

The exact prices of match tickets are still under wraps at the moment. However, we can reveal that the ticketing process will be launched on 10 June 2015, precisely one year before the tournament's opening match. In the meantime, fans around the world can register on UEFA's website for regular updates on the next steps.

Legacy

Once the tournament has ended, UEFA and EURO 2016 SAS want to leave behind a tangible legacy: "Organising a EURO results in a number of benefits and certain revenues – particularly tax revenues – for the host country. Given the figures, I cannot see how EURO 2016 can be bad for France," Lambert says. "What is at stake here is France's attractiveness in economic terms and as a host of major events. We need to retain that attractiveness in the years to come." ●

The newly renovated Stade Vélodrome in Marseille was the setting for the friendly between France and Sweden last November



FOOTBALL AS A COMMON LANGUAGE

Acknowledging the role that football can play in uniting people, UEFA has commemorated the 100th anniversary of the football match in December 1914 that marked a truce during World War One.

"One of the men suggested a football match. And despite the turnips and the frozen surface, we played." The words of a German soldier ring out across the bleak autumn landscape near the wood close to the Belgian village of Ploegsteert where – a century before – a ball briefly replaced bullets.

A hundred years earlier, those present would have had to take shelter from artillery fire. Instead, on a blustery December day, the UEFA President, Michel Platini, and the sizeable crowd of dignitaries, schoolchildren and journalists merely had to protect themselves from the elements as they remembered the Christmas truce of 1914, when German and British soldiers briefly ended the slaughter of World War One and played football amid the shell craters of no-man's-land.

The interpretation centre, where a faded pack of German washing powder lies alongside a Canadian-issue penknife and photos of soldiers from as far away as New Zealand and Australia, provides a stark reminder that the hostilities spared no one. However, for one timeless moment in December 1914, football became the vehicle for both sides to show that they could lay down their weapons.

Emotional film

UEFA has helped to spread the soldiers' timeless message of fraternity through a powerfully moving film focusing on the remarkable events of Christmas 1914. With Sir Bobby Charlton, Paul Breitner and Didier Deschamps recounting events, Wayne Rooney, Gareth Bale, Philipp Lahm, Bastian Schweinsteiger and Hugo

Lloris read first-hand accounts from those who took part and witnessed that brief, touching moment – *"an improbable truce in an abominable war,"* as Gilbert Deleu, the mayor of the nearby commune of Comines-Marneton, who helped Michel Platini to unveil a memorial, fittingly described it.

A German soldier who had worked as an English teacher acted as an interpreter on the battlefield, conveying pleasantries and anecdotes from both sides. A century later, German and English, as well as French and Flemish, mingled just as easily as those who had come to see the UEFA President unveil the monument to the Christmas truce. That monument, a football atop a rusting shell case, was made all the more poignant by trenches re-dug in the Flanders mud just yards away.

"We owe a lot to these young recruits from a hundred years ago – to their example, their sacrifice, their pain and their ability to surmount the inconceivable, which has helped us to imagine this Europe, different and peaceful, which is home to us all today. Football provided this indispensable link to a spontaneous expression of common humanity," said Michel Platini, who was given a soldier's boot that had been recovered from the Flanders soil during the excavation of the trenches.

"I think it was important for us all, and for our children and grandchildren, to honour the memory of those who – by playing the most beautiful game in the world – sent us, through time, a powerful message of peace and fraternity." ●



11 December 2014: inauguration of the UEFA monument dedicated to the 1914 Christmas truce

"I find it particularly moving to imagine these young men, a hundred years ago, using football as a common language to express their fraternity," Mr Platini said at the newly opened interpretation centre dedicated to the hostilities near Ploegsteert – known by British soldiers at the time as 'Plugstreet'. *"Spontaneously, the soldiers had to find a common language, a shared pleasure ... football. We're here to celebrate this touching moment of fraternity and friendship, this small peace in the Great War."*

INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION SEMINAR

December's institutional discrimination seminar in Amsterdam, which focused on promoting tolerance, examining the 'glass ceiling' in football and creating opportunities for all.

Prominent representatives of UEFA joined the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) and the FARE network at Amsterdam's Olympic Stadium to discuss inclusivity and action on matters of discrimination.

Time for action

UEFA also took the opportunity to unveil Clarence Seedorf as its new global ambassador for diversity and change. *"It was wonderful to have an open discussion about such fundamentally important issues,"* said the former Netherlands international and four-time UEFA Champions League winner. *"I think the positive thing is that all the people involved are quite enthusiastic about this fact, and people don't have to feel embarrassed talking about certain issues, which is a great first step."*

Footballers, politicians, academics and key stakeholder groups joined in the debate, with the main issues identified as a chronic shortage of women and ethnic minorities in senior leadership roles and a lack of ethnic minorities in coaching positions.

"Going from discussions to real implementation shows everybody involved that there is progress," Seedorf added. *"The more concrete action points the better, because from what I have seen in Rome [at the Respect Diversity conference] and here in Amsterdam, people are ready. That's quite an inspiration for me already. People are ready to start implementing the tools that are needed to effect change."*

Hosting the event on the 125th anniversary of the KNVB, the association's president, Michael van Praag, joined Seedorf in calling for concrete action points to come out of the seminar.



Left to right: Clarence Seedorf, Jason Roberts, Humberto Tan (Moderator) and Bryan Roy (youth coach in Ajax)

"Everyone in football should have the same opportunities. That's why we pushed for an 'Amsterdam Pact' for a structured approach to tackling institutional discrimination."

Fittingly, contributions were also made by people who had made key breakthroughs in the areas of diversity and inclusion in football. Karen Espelund is an inspirational figure in this regard, having broken through the glass ceiling when she joined the UEFA Executive Committee. Meanwhile, former German international Thomas Hitzlsperger sent a video message from London, in which he called on managers and coaches to act as a sounding board for players, tackling discrimination in the dressing room and creating a supportive environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender players. ●

RESOLUTION

The resolution adopted at the seminar reads as follows:

1. – UEFA will aim to increase its female representation at the highest political and executive levels. All member associations and partners are asked to follow suit in identifying and promoting talented women into high-level political and administrative positions.
2. – UEFA will take steps to ensure that the diversity of Europe, with all of its ethnic and other minority communities, is fairly represented within football structures at all levels. This will also be reflected within events, competitions and activities organised by UEFA.
3. – UEFA recognises the under-representation of ethnic minorities in coaching and management positions in elite level men's and women's football. We encourage

all national associations, clubs and partners to address this under-representation in a proactive way, drawing on good practice seen in schemes such as the 'Rooney Rule' in operation in the National Football League (NFL).

4. – UEFA underlines the necessity of ensuring that everyone can be himself or herself in the world of football. Football must ensure the safety of minorities on the basis of sexual orientation and create an environment in which opportunity is not restricted by prejudice or exclusion. This will be done through education, information, support and diversity policies.

5. – UEFA pledges to work with partners on a re-evaluation of actions taken and progress achieved at a third seminar on the issue of institutional discrimination. ●

A NEW KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SHARING PLATFORM

The Scottish Football Association hosted an inaugural convention at Hampden Park on 3 December, with a star-studded line-up of guest speakers providing insights across the whole spectrum of Scottish football.

The convention, which was hosted by BBC Scotland's experienced broadcaster Richard Gordon, was a knowledge and information sharing platform for the members, sponsors and partners of Scottish football's governing body. It was part of a proposed modernisation of the Scottish FA council, with members voting at this year's annual meeting for a more modern, dynamic and representative format – one of the last remaining recommendations of the Henry McLeish Review of Scottish Football.

Speakers on the day included Barry Hearn, chairman of the hugely successful Matchroom Sport, who discussed the global success of his boxing, darts and snooker divisions. He was joined by Helmut Sandrock, general secretary of the German Football Association, who gave a presentation on Germany's journey to becoming world champions.

Football's future explored

Joe McLean and James Hichens of accountancy firm Grant Thornton opened the convention by exploring Scottish football's future, while Alex Stone, social media manager at world football's governing body, FIFA, told the story of the first fully connected FIFA World Cup in Brazil last summer.

*Stewart Regan,
chief executive
of the Scottish FA*



Lawrence Broadie of PR company Progress hosted a fascinating workshop on sponsorship investment, while the Scottish FA's judicial panel was explained by compliance officer Tony McGlennan and Andrew McKinlay, director of football governance and regulation.

The successes of Edinburgh-based Spartans FC – both on and off the field – were explained by Craig Graham, who went into great detail about the community work the team do with young people from the city's poorer areas.

The coach of Scotland's national team, Gordon Strachan, closed the event with a Q&A session on the team's progress approaching the midway point of the European Qualifiers.

An essential step

Stewart Regan, the Scottish FA's chief executive, introduced the event and updated the audience on the SFA's strategic plan – Scotland United: A 2020 Vision. He believes that the convention was an essential next step in the ongoing development of the game.

He says: *"I am proud to have hosted our members and invited guests from across the whole spectrum of Scottish football: member clubs, affiliated bodies, boards, council and staff – and, of course, the wider football family. The stature and breadth of the speakers we managed to attract to the national stadium ensured that there was something for everyone, regardless of club, position and budget.*

"The convention is intended to become an annual event shaped by our members for the benefit of our members. The programme looked at the key areas of the Scottish FA's strategic plan, Scotland United: A 2020 Vision, with presentations from experts in the field in the areas of performance, strong quality growth, growing football's finances and leading the game. It was a thought-provoking and idea-generating day. We are committed to our ongoing programme of investment at all levels of the game and equally committed to modernising and innovating off the field.

"This journey must be made together, with the assistance and support of all our members, and the convention is another step in the direction of a prosperous future for Scottish football." ●

David Childs



MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS



First annual awards ceremony

On 16 December, at a ceremony attended by 150 people plus members of the press, the Andorran Football Federation (FAF) presented its first annual awards, crowning its footballer, futsal player, coach and referee of the year, as well as honouring other players and clubs. The ceremony began with the unveiling of the FAF's new logo. The FAF's general secretary, Tomàs Gea, talked about the evolution of the logo and what the new image represents and seeks to convey – concepts that are closely linked to the federation, its values and its qualities: strong heart, social responsibility, historic, progressive, grassroots, modern, respect, pride, independence, young, heritage, training, friendly, multicultural and small nation.

Visually, the new logo depicts energy flows moving purposefully in the same direction, representing the FAF's evolution as it moves forward in unison. It uses the colours of the Andorran flag and resembles a ball – a direct reference to football.

Tribute was then paid to Andorra's most capped footballers and futsal players of all time. The footballers who were honoured were Óscar Sonejee (98 caps), Ildefons Lima (90), Manel Jiménez (80), Koldo Álvarez de Eulate (78) and Josep Manel Ayala (78). In futsal, tribute was paid to Jorge Dias (47 caps), Aitor Rubio (37), Oriol Anglora (36), Jonathan Pérez (34),

Diógenes Lino 'Cabinho' (33), Miguel Blázquez (32) and Neftalí Puyaltó (32).

One of the most eagerly awaited parts of the evening was the results of the votes determining the best football and futsal players and coaches of 2014. Andorran international and FC Santa Coloma midfielder Marc Pujol was voted the best player in the Andorran Premier Division, while Richard Imbernón was voted the league's best coach for the historic achievement of leading FC Santa Coloma to the second qualifying round of the UEFA Champions League. Meanwhile, FC Encamp's Moises Gonçalves was voted the best player in Andorran futsal's top flight and Luis Cruz of FS La Massana was voted the best coach. The award for the best football referee of 2014 went to Luis Do Nascimento, and Pablo Pérez won the award for the best futsal referee.

Tribute was also paid to the following clubs: **FC Santa Coloma:** For reaching the second qualifying round of the UEFA Champions League 2014/15



The 2014 award winners and the new logo

ENFAF Women's Senior: For reaching the Catalan second division (Group 4)
FC Encamp, CE Sanlòria, UE Sant Julià and ENFAF: For their development of women's football
Rànger's FC: Fair play award for senior football
FC Madriu: Fair play award for futsal
CE Sant Julià: Fair play award for grassroots football
FC Santa Coloma: Fair play award for grassroots futsal
FC Lusitans: Club with the best supporters
FC Encamp: Best grassroots futsal club and club with the most registered players
UE Santa Coloma: Best grassroots football club

● Silvia Casals



Theory and practical sessions with renowned experts

The Austrian Football Association (ÖFB) recently held its annual coach education seminar, which took place in Maria Enzersdorf (in Lower Austria) and at the Franz-Horr-Stadion in Vienna from 16 to 18 January. This coaching seminar represented further professional development for coaches in categories 1, 2 and 3 under the ÖFB's coaching regulations. More than 300 coaches participated in a varied three-day programme comprising theoretical lectures and practical exercises. The seminar, which was run by the ÖFB's sporting director, Willi Rutensteiner, and the head of its coach education department, Thomas Janeschitz, also



The seminar participants

featured UEFA's chief technical officer, Ioan Lupescu, as an international guest lecturer.

The practical sessions took place at the Franz-Horr-Stadion, the home of FK Austria Wien. Under the watchful eyes of the ÖFB's conditioning coach, Roger Spry (modern conditioning), Thomas Janeschitz (through balls) and former Austrian Bundesliga coach Peter Schöttel (position-specific exercises and play), participants were schooled in modern coaching techniques.

The ÖFB's successful coaching seminar was rounded off with a podium discussion on the subject of trends and developments in modern football, where Ioan Lupescu and Peter Schöttel were joined by Marcel Koller, the coach of the Austrian national team.

● Carmen Redl



New AFFA website

The Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) unveiled its new website (www.affa.az) in January. The design of the website had not been altered since 2008, and there had been a lot of innovation in the field of electronic communication in the intervening years, so it was in need of an overhaul.

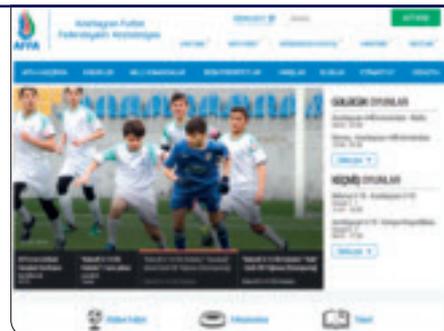
The revamped website is very different, with a new design and structure and a more modern feel. There are special groups in the news section so that users can easily find the news that interests them. A separate section has also been created

for sponsors and partners working with the AFFA, giving them an excellent opportunity to showcase their work with the national association.

In addition, it is easy to navigate from the new website to www.affavideo.az and www.affatv.az, which used to be entirely separate. The regulations governing all tournaments organised by the AFFA are now available on the site, which fans can also use to order tickets for matches.

Finally, the site contains a link to the AFFA's official online shop, where fans can buy kit and accessories linked to Azerbaijan's national team.

● Nubar Aghazada



The home page of the new website



Development Cup 2015

With the mid-season break coming to an end, Minsk recently hosted the Development Cup 2015, which took place from 18 to 25 January. This international Under-17 tournament was organised by the Football Federation of Belarus (BFF), with support from the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus and Minsk city council. This was the 11th time that this festival of youth football had been organised, having first been staged in 2005. Teams from 21 different countries all over the world have come to Belarus to compete for the trophy over the last ten years. At the opening ceremony, the BFF's president, Sergei Roumas, welcomed the young players and explained that the tournament's primary objective was reflected in its name. After thanking the BFF's partners for their assistance, he wished all participants luck and promised the crowd some spectacular matches.

After reaching a major milestone in 2014, the tournament made the headlines again this year, with the UEFA President, Michel Platini, attending a group stage match (Belarus v Czech Republic) during an official visit to Minsk. With a lack of football at this time of the year, the Belarusian spectators were treated to an impressive line-up at Minsk's indoor football arena. The hosts were joined by teams from Russia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Georgia (all of whom have qualified for the elite round of the European Under-17 Championship), as well as other tough European opponents from Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Moldova. There were also teams from Asia, with Japan, China and Iran all taking part.

The participants were split into three groups of four in the first round, and the sides occupying a given position at the end of that round (all the group winners, all the second-place teams, etc.) then formed new groups of three to determine the final positions. The three



Another successful Development Cup

first-round groups were won by Russia, Moldova and Latvia.

In the deciding game, Russia beat Latvia 1-0, securing a record fourth title. Despite Belarus only finishing sixth, the home crowd still had plenty to cheer about. FC Shakhtyor Soligorsk forward Vitaly Lisakovich was the top scorer in the competition, with five goals. Almost all coaches were extremely happy with the international experience gained and the standard of the competition. The BFF would be delighted to welcome new teams in 2016!

● Alexander Aleinik



A new national team coach

A meeting of the executive board of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation (NFSBiH) was held in December at the national training centre in Zenica to elect a new coach for the national team. Mehmed Baždarević was elected unanimously, replacing Safet Sušić, who had been fired after the 3-0 defeat to Israel on 16 November, paying the price for the disastrous start to the country's qualifying campaign for EURO 2016.

The new coach now faces the task of qualifying for that final tournament in France, and it will certainly not be easy. After four matches, the Dragons have just two points. Their next match will be on 28 March in Andorra. "I am excited, happy and proud. This is the highlight of my career – a dream come true. There's a lot of work ahead of me, and we have no time to waste. The road to France is a rocky one," Baždarević said.

The 54-year-old began his playing career at FK Željezničar in 1978, where he played more than 300 games – including a UEFA Cup semi-final in 1985. Two years later he signed for FC Sochaux-Montbéliard, and in 1989 he was voted the best foreign player in France's Ligue 1. He later moved to Nîmes Olympique, before ending his career at Étoile Carouge FC in Switzerland. He made 54 appearances for Yugoslavia, as well as playing two games for Bosnia and Herzegovina during the qualifying campaign for the 1998 FIFA World Cup.

His coaching career began at Sochaux in 2002. The following year he took charge of FC Istres. He later coached Étoile Sportive du Sahel in Tunisia, whom he managed in the African Champions League. In December 2007 he became the coach of Grenoble Foot 38,



Mehmed Baždarević

securing promotion to Ligue 1 in his first season at the club. He stayed at Grenoble for three years, before returning to Sochaux.

The executive board also appointed the coaches of the other national teams: Darko Nestorović (Under-21s), Toni Karačić (Under-19s), Sakib Malkočević (Under-17s), Zoran Erbez (Under-15s), Boro Matan (futsal), Mirza Varešanović (Olympic/Mediterranean Games team), Samira Hurem (women's team), Nikola Nikić (women's Under-19s) and Ilija Lučić (women's Under-17s).

Meanwhile, a winter camp was organised in January for the country's youth teams (Under-15s to Under-19s) at the NFSBiH's training centre. Coaching staff worked with more than 150 talented young players from both domestic and foreign clubs.

● Fuad Kravac



Busy winter in Croatia

Through FIFA and UEFA, the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) has provided significant financial assistance to six football clubs that suffered infrastructure damage during the historic flooding in Slavonia last May. FIFA has donated \$600,000 from its emergency funds, while UEFA has allocated €500,000 to help the clubs and repair damage. The HNS donated HRK 386,736 to the village of Gunja in June and gave the same amount to the Red Cross. The HNS also helped all six clubs with a subsidy of HRK 24,000, while the members of Croatia's national team donated HRK 500,000 to both the village of Cerna and Caritas. All in all, the Croatian football family and the European and world governing bodies have donated HRK 9,497,470 to help Slavonia. "I am

thankful that UEFA and FIFA have heard our pleas, and I am glad that we have been able to give significant assistance to those clubs. It is important that football returns to those areas," said the HNS president, Davor Šuker.

Meanwhile, the HNS has organised its traditional winter camps for selected youth teams. About 100 boys (Under-14s to Under-16s) attended a camp in Makarska, while a second winter camp for girls (Under-16s to Under-19s) was held in Rovinj. In addition, the HNS recently hosted the 35th AECA Symposium, which brought together more than 250 coaches from around the world. "We are proud of the work of our youth academy coaches. It is the coaches that create modern football, and it is their task to keep our sport attractive to both fans and players," said Davor Šuker in his opening address.

Ferdo Milin has taken the reins of the Croatian Under-19 team. The 37-year-old Milin has signed a two-and-a-half-year contract, with the elite round of the European Under-19 Championship representing his first challenge.

December is traditionally award season, and this year the HNS received an award from the Croatian Olympic Committee. For a record fifth time, the HNS was declared the best promoter of Croatia around the world. The Croatian national team's official fan club 'Uvijek vjerni' (which translates as 'always faithful') named VfL Wolfsburg winger Ivan Perišić player of the year and gave him their Fiery Wings award. Tin Jedvaj of Bayer 04 Leverkusen was named 'hope of the year', while former player and head coach Slaven Bilić was given a special award for his contribution to the national team.

● Tomislav Pacak

FA People's Cup offers chance to emulate Wembley greats

The English Football Association (The FA) has launched the FA People's Cup – a knockout competition which brings the romance of the world's oldest domestic knockout competition to the masses. As many as 100,000 entrants will have the opportunity to sample the atmosphere of the FA Cup and be given the chance to taste the glory of lifting a trophy at Wembley Stadium on FA Cup final day. From Sunday league regulars to those who have only ever kicked a ball in their backyard, the FA People's Cup offers everyone the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of FA Cup greats such as Bryan Robson, Steven Gerrard and Nat Lofthouse.

FA chairman Greg Dyke gave his backing to the new competition, saying that it was a wonderful opportunity to get people active and involved in our national game. *"Football is everybody's game, and the FA People's Cup embodies that ethos,"* he said. *"It is completely free to enter, and whether you support a team that is fortunate enough to still have hopes of*

making it to the Wembley showpiece or one that went out in the preliminary round back in July, now you have your own chance of claiming honours at the home of football. I am passionate about increasing participation in grassroots football, and I applaud the BBC, which has given us a platform to further this work and ensure that the game continues to grow and flourish."

The competition begins on the weekend of 21 and 22 February, with more than 5,000 hours of football being played at venues nationwide. There will be ten different categories, with male, female and disabled players all eligible to enter and age groups ranging from Under-14s through to veterans (i.e. over-35s). It will also feature the increasingly popular walking football, which caters for those who enjoy playing the beautiful game at a more sedate – but no less competitive – pace.

After the first-round weekend, eight regional venues will host the

semi-finals, which will take place from 24 to 26 April. The finals will be held in Manchester on Monday 25 May (a public holiday in the UK), and the winning teams will then be invited to the FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium on 30 May to receive their FA People's Cup trophies.

● Anthony Snow



The winning teams in the FA People's Cup will get the chance to taste the glory of lifting a trophy at Wembley Stadium on FA Cup final day

Football helps youngsters to get back on track

The Estonian Football Association (EJL) is a leading partner in the country's new SPIN programme (a local version of the British Kickstart project), which is aimed at developing the social skills of children from deprived areas with limited opportunities. The EJL, the Estonian ministry of the interior, the city of Tallinn, the police and border guard board, the Good Deed Foundation, FC Flora Tallinn and FC Levadia Tallinn are the driving forces behind this project, which is financed by the European Social Fund. SPIN will initially run for six years, and €1.3m will be spent on the initiative.

The programme is open to young people between the ages of 10 and 18, who will have the opportunity, free of charge, to train with qualified coaches twice a week. They will also take part in various workshops, where they will develop social skills. More than 100 youngsters signed up before the first ball had even been kicked. The pilot project involves ten separate

groups from two areas of Tallinn, Estonia's capital city. *"In any kind of preventive programme, it is important to offer young people different kinds of activity. In addition to football, they will learn teamwork and other skills that are necessary for everyday life,"* said Hanno Pevkur, Estonia's minister of the interior, at the launch of the SPIN programme.

"The programme is based on a highly developed intervention model. The eight years of experience in England have shown that this combination motivates participants and helps them to fulfil their potential," said Keit Fomotskin, SPIN's project leader.

"For us, football is a means of improving society, and we are eager to cooperate with the government and state authorities. We believe that football has something to offer in this regard, as this amazing game touches everyone and gives us an opportunity to start a dialogue with young people from difficult backgrounds," emphasised Aivar Pohlak, the president of the EJL.

● Press office



The SPIN programme is launched

National five-a-side competition is launched

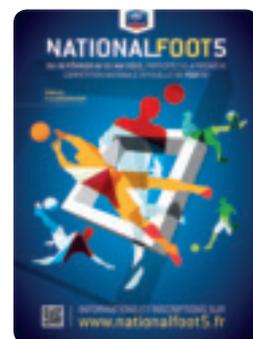
As part of its Blue Horizon 2016 project, the French Football Federation (FFF) is seeking to develop the various forms of football that are played in the country. The most important, in terms of both participation levels and infrastructure, is five-a-side football. Almost 2 million people regularly play five-a-side football at 235 private centres across France, the majority of which are located in urban areas.

The FFF's development programme for five-a-side football comprises three main elements: the construction of 150 mini-pitches at amateur clubs by 2016; cooperation with the main five-a-side networks (Le Five, Urban Soccer, etc.) and independent organisations; and the establishment of the country's first official competition for this form of the game – the National Foot 5.

This new competition will be run along the lines of a national cup: 36 qualifying events will be held at five-a-side football centres, followed by six regional events and a finals day at the national football centre at Clairefontaine. All five-a-side footballers are invited to take part in this first national competition, regardless of whether they are registered with the FFF. Almost 1,000 teams have signed up for the competition, which will begin in February.

Finally, the FFF is also in the process of drawing up standards for five-a-side facilities, as well as formalising the rules of five-a-side football.

● Laura Goutry



The poster for the National Foot 5 competition



Another successful Cavalcade Cup

This year's Cavalcade Cup, which took place on 3 January, was another resounding success. The event was sponsored by Gibtelecom and saw approximately 60 local veterans take part, each paying a £10 registration fee, which was donated to charity. The youngest player to take the field was 35-year-old Alex Lopez, while the oldest was 76-year-old Louis Ghio!

The honorary kick-off was performed by Umberto Beiso, formerly of Europa FC and Gibraltar's national team. The teams that took part were Britannia FC, Europa FC and Prince of Wales FC, and the results were as follows:
 Match 1: Britannia FC 0-1 Prince of Wales FC
 Match 2: Europa FC 5-1 Britannia FC
 Match 3: Prince of Wales FC 2-3 Europa FC

All participants received a memento – presented by the president of the Gibraltar Football Association (GFA), Desmond Reoch, its



You're never too old to enjoy winning!

CEO, Dennis Beiso, and Richard Bear – in the form of a set of pin badges of the four oldest football clubs in Gibraltar: Gibraltar FC, Prince of Wales FC, Europa FC and Britannia FC.

The Cavalcade Cup was then presented to the winners, Europa FC, by Eric Abudarham of the Cavalcade Committee. The GFA's grassroots manager, Leslie Asquez, then presented

mementos to all the match officials: Adrian Bacarisa, Dennis Fa, Ishmael Borg, Seth Galia, Denis Perez, Dennis Alvarez and Alex Lopez.

The GFA's veterans and grassroots committee would also like to thank Alan Asquez for providing the catering on the day, which was a tremendous success for all involved.

● Steven Gonzalez



Meeting on regional cooperation

The heads of the football associations of five central and eastern European countries – Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – meet annually in order to discuss shared issues and challenges, find successful solutions to those problems and improve the quality of football in their respective countries. All of those associations were represented at the meeting of the Visegrad Five that took place on 15 January in Budapest. This was the third such event, following meetings in Prague and Bratislava in 2013 and 2014 respectively.

With Hungary being the host country, Sándor Csányi, the president of the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ), kicked off the event with a presentation looking at promising recent developments and results in the area of grassroots football. The number of registered

players has increased significantly in Hungary in the last four years (rising from 133,000 in 2010 to 215,000 by the end of last year). A number of sections of society have embraced (or returned to) the world of football, such as children in kindergartens, secondary school pupils, girls and various disadvantaged groups. There is also now an extensive independent programme coordinating daily activities in the area of grassroots football.

In addition, grassroots football has benefited enormously from the MLSZ's infrastructure projects, with 380 new football pitches being built and 680 pitches being redeveloped in the last few years.

The members of the delegations shared details of best practices and discussed topics



Regional meetings are always a good opportunity to share experience and ideas

such as youth academy systems. They also talked about the forthcoming FIFA and UEFA elections and discussed the new regulations governing agents working in football.

● Márton Dinnyés



1. FFC Turbine Potsdam visit Israel for a friendly

Israel and Germany recently celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations with a football match in Israel between the national women's Under-19 team and top German side 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam.

The German players and club officials spent five days in the country, visiting Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, Masada and the Sea of Galilee. Delegations from both countries also attended an official dinner hosted by the German ambassador to Israel, Andreas Michaelis. In addition, the head coach and staff of the German team organised a professional workshop for 35 Israeli coaches. The workshop took place at the beautiful training centre in Shfayim, where all of Israel's national teams train. The match itself was a great event, as

well as good practice for Israel as it gears up to host the final round of the European Women's Under-19 Championship this summer. Turbine Potsdam won the match 5-0, but the real victories were secured off the pitch, rather than on it.

The Israel Football Association and the German Football Association will continue to work together in the future, cooperating on a number of other projects – a sign of the close relationship between them.

● Michal Grundland



The women's Under-19 team and 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam before the match

Ten stars of Italian football inducted into hall of fame

Ten new stars of Italian football – including Diego Maradona, Fabio Cannavaro, Carlo Ancelotti and Sandro Mazzola – have been inducted into the Hall of Fame of Italian Football, which was established in 2011 by the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) and the Football Museum Foundation. Fabio Cannavaro (in the Italian player category), Diego Maradona (foreign player), Giuseppe Marotta (Italian administrator), Carlo Ancelotti (Italian coach), Stefano Braschi (Italian referee) and Sandro Mazzola (Italian player) were joined by Carolina Morace, who became the first player in the newly established women's football category, which was created following a proposal by the FIGC. The jury, which comprised the heads of Italy's main sporting newspapers, also gave posthumous awards to Ferruccio Novo, Carlo Carcano and Giacomo Bulgarelli.

The ceremony, which was held at the beautiful Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, was attended by the FIGC's president, Carlo



Left to right: Giuseppe Marotta, Carlo Ancelotti and Stefano Braschi

Tavecchio, its chief executive, Michele Uva, a former FIGC president, Giancarlo Abete, and an honorary member of the FIGC, Antonio Matarrese.

Tavecchio said: "This is not simply a gallery full of memories. We are celebrating role models for the Italian football of the future." Uva added: "This edition of the award has made history, as we are celebrating Italian professionals who

have taken their skills and knowledge abroad, and because we are paying tribute to a great female player for the first time." Carlo Ancelotti donated his national team shirt from the 1990 FIFA World Cup, which was held in Italy, and received his award from Arrigo Sacchi and Italy's head coach, Antonio Conte. "I am delighted and honoured to enter the hall of fame," said the

Real Madrid CF coach. Stefano Braschi, in turn, donated the kit that he wore during the UEFA Champions League final between Real Madrid CF and Valencia CF in 2000, which was one of the highlights of his career. "I am very pleased with this acknowledgment from the FIGC. I think it rewards both my refereeing and my time as head of refereeing," Braschi said. Giuseppe Marotta, who was honoured for his work as a club director, said: "I am honoured to enter the hall of fame. I have dedicated my whole life to improving the clubs where I have worked."

● Paolo Corbi

2014 Latvian football awards

The Latvian Football Federation (LFF) recently held its annual awards ceremony. The event emphasised the importance of ethics and fair play, with all award winners signing a special fair play declaration. FC Baltika Kaliningrad and national team goalkeeper Aleksandrs Kojinکو were voted the best Latvian footballer, receiving the award for the second time in his career (having first won it in 2006). The award for the best female player went to Rigas Futbola skola midfielder Olga Matisa, the first time she had won it. Dmitrijs Jakovļevs was crowned the best beach soccer player, while Maksims Senjs of FK Nikars Riga and the national team was voted the best futsal player.

Edmunds Novickis (sportacentrs.com) was named the best football journalist, becoming the first recipient of a memorial prize honouring the late journalist Valērijs Karpuškins. Romāns Kokšarovs (Sporta Avīze/F64.lv) won the award for the best photographer, while sportacentrs.com was unanimously voted the best media outlet covering football.

FK Ventspils defender Deniss Bezuščonoks, captain of the Latvian Under-19 team and a

graduate of the LMT football academy, received the best young footballer award, while Rēzeknes BJSS forward Guntars Silagailis, the country's top scorer with 41 goals, was voted the best player and the best forward in Latvia's second tier. For the sixth consecutive year, Haralds Gudermanis (FIFA-qualified, Carnikava) received the award for the best assistant referee. Meanwhile, Andris Treimanis (FIFA-qualified, Kuldīga) was voted the best referee, receiving the new Amber Whistle award. Armands Viksna (Grobiņa Sports Centre) received the award for the best youth football coach/instructor, while the award for the best youth football administrator was presented to Jānis Apse (FK Dinamo Riga). Meanwhile, Metta was voted the most creative youth football club.

FB Gulbene, champions of Latvia's second tier, received the fair play award for that division, while the equivalent award for the Latvian First Division went to last season's debutants BFC Daugavpils. Latvian champions FK Ventspils received the award for the best match organisation in Latvia's top flight.

Finally, the recipients of the individual awards for the Latvian First Division were as follows:

- Best goalkeeper: Kaspars Ikstens (FK Jelgava)
- Best defender: Kaspars Dubra (FK Ventspils)
- Best midfielder: Jānis Ikaunieks (FK Liepāja)
- Best forward and goalscorer: Vladislavs Gutkovskis (Skonto FC; 28 goals)
- Best player: Jānis Ikaunieks (FK Liepāja)
- Best coach: Jurgis Pučinskis (FK Ventspils; champions)

● Viktors Sopirins



All the award winners signed a special fair play declaration

Liechtenstein's finest dies aged 56

Former Neuchâtel Xamax FC and Servette FC right-back Rainer Hasler, the most celebrated footballer in Liechtenstein's history, has died at the age of 56 following a long illness.



Rainer Hasler

Named Liechtenstein's Golden Player as part of UEFA's Jubilee celebrations in 2004, the right-back shone in Switzerland for Neuchâtel Xamax FC (1979–83) and Servette FC (1983–89), where he won the Swiss Cup in 1983/84 and the league title in the following season. He had started his career with Zurich side Grasshopper Club and also represented FC Vaduz, who are based in Liechtenstein but play in the Swiss league.

He retired from football in 1989, aged 31, having never turned out for the Liechtenstein national team, which did not begin to play official qualifying games until 1994. Following his retirement, he worked in an office in Switzerland, with his son Nicolas following his father into football. He plays for Vaduz and the national side.

● Anton Banzer



Youth development concept reaps rewards

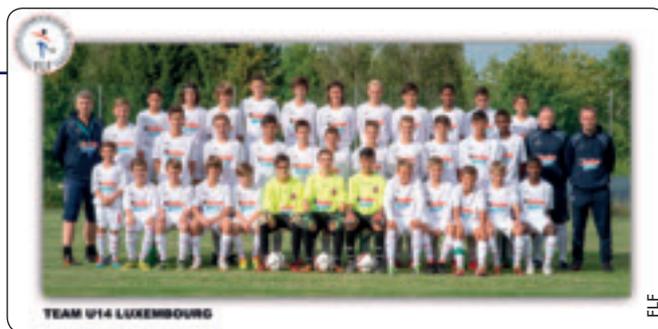
Back in January 2003, as operations were getting under way at the brand new football centre that the Luxembourg Football Federation (FLF) had just opened in Mondrange, few would have predicted that, 12 years later, 180 talented young players from across the country would be training and studying there from Monday to Thursday every week in the care of the national association. Over the years, the FLF's football school has developed into an internationally recognised performance centre for the country's most talented young players. A key point in that regard is the fact that the FLF places considerable emphasis on the quality of its various teachers and coaches.

Under the watchful eye of sporting director Reinhold Breu and 30 qualified coaches, players receive a rounded education, whether at the FLF's regional centres in northern, southern, western and central Luxembourg (Under-11s and Under-12s) or at the football school in Mondrange (Under-13s to Under-19s).

The FLF's youth development concept rests on four pillars:

- individual sporting development (technical, tactical, physical and psychological training for individual players);
- collective sporting development (raising a team's performance level by improving players' understanding of team tactics);
- scholastic/vocational education in the form of assistance with homework and supplementary tuition provided by qualified teachers specialising in the relevant subjects;
- the teaching of values and personal development (communicating the most important social values – the pillars of our society – through theoretical and practical lessons).

Minibuses pick all players up from collection points across the country early in the afternoon,



The Under-14s

and they then drop them off again in the evening. Thus, in addition to the organisation of training sessions and the scholastic side of things, there are also major logistical challenges to overcome.

The FLF is aiming to prepare players for a career abroad or in Luxembourg's top flight, in order to make the country's national youth teams – and, in time, the senior side – competitive at international level. While it is clear that not all players will reach that level, their years at the FLF's football school will at least have prepared them for later life.

● Joël Wolff



Integrity tour combats match-fixing

The Malta Football Association (MFA) is running a special education programme aimed at preventing problems associated with match-fixing, demonstrating its ongoing commitment to the promotion of integrity-related matters. The MFA's Say No to Match-Fixing integrity tour was officially launched in December 2013 in cooperation with Sportradar AG and was initially sponsored by online gaming company Betaland.

The integrity tour, which is run by the MFA's integrity officer, Franz Tabone, got off to a good start last year, with the national referees' association and all of the country's premier

league and first division clubs being visited and made aware of the growing problems in this area. Case studies were presented in order to stress the problems of match-fixing. The initiative has had a remarkable impact, and in light of the project's success and the level of interest shown, the MFA has extended the programme, with clubs in the lower divisions now being visited. Sessions with other target groups have also been held, and more are in the pipeline for schools and other organisations.

This programme is helping to foster greater awareness of the problems of match-fixing among a broad cross-section of Malta's football fraternity, as well as children and the general public as a whole.

● Alex Vella



Franz Tabone



Annual award ceremony

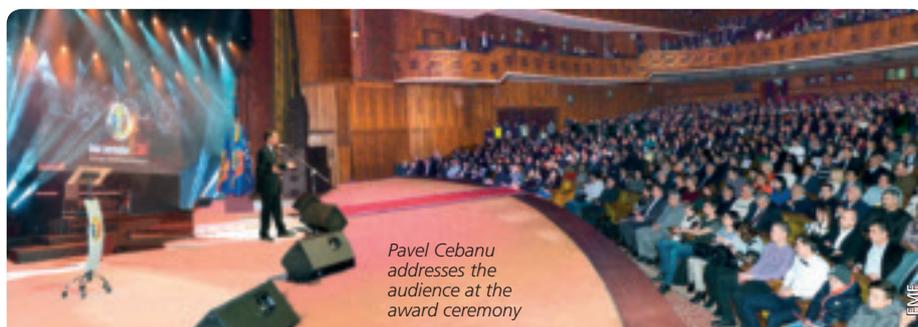
The Football Association of Moldova (FMF) recently held its annual award ceremony celebrating the year's outstanding achievements in the world of football. In front of 1,500 people, it crowned Artur Ionița – a midfielder who plays for Hellas Verona FC in Italy – Moldova's player of the year for 2014. Alexandru Epureanu (who plays for İstanbul Başakşehir FK in Turkey) and Ilie Cebanu (of Russia's FC Mordovia Saransk) completed the podium.

There were also awards for the best coach (Lilian Popescu of FC Veris), the best referee (Vladislav Ivancenco), the best futsal player (Cristian Obadă of Autbergamo Romania), the best female player (Victoria Gurdîș of Real Succes), the best beach soccer player (Ruslan Istrati of CS Djoker-Tornado) and the best football tennis player (Alexandru Sirghi of ȘS nr. 12 Vadul lui Vodă).

The ceremony continued with awards for the best goalkeeper in the national championship (Serghei Pașenco of FC Sheriff), the best defender (Petru Racu of FC Veris), the best midfielder (Alexandru Dedov of FC Zimbru Chișinău), the best forward (Radu Gînsari of FC Sheriff) and the top goalscorer (Luvannor Henrique of FC Sheriff). FC Sheriff also took the 2014 fair play award.

The FMF also presented awards to the Ungheni and Cahul Football Associations and the Technical University of Moldova for their work developing Moldovan football. A special award was given to Arcadie Zaporojanu, a former editor-in-chief of the newspaper Fotbal Hebdo, for organising the first annual award ceremony 20 years ago.

● Press office



Pavel Cebanu addresses the audience at the award ceremony



Northern Ireland

www.irishfa.com

A major tournament and an anniversary

The Northern Ireland cerebral palsy football team have qualified for the 2015 World Championships, which will take place in June at St George's Park in England. Currently at a record high of 13th place in the world rankings, an enthusiastic Northern Ireland squad will aim to continue their improving performances at major tournaments. Northern Ireland qualified for this prestigious event thanks to their impressive eighth-place finish at the 2014 European Championships in Portugal, which

included an amazing 1-0 victory over the football giants of Germany.

This year also marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of Northern Ireland's cerebral palsy football programme through the Irish Football Association, and participation at the World Championships will surely be a fitting way to celebrate this landmark. Cerebral palsy team coach and former Northern Ireland international Mal Donaghy said: "We have been progressing well over the years, and this is a great opportunity for the players to play in such a prestigious event as the World Championships at the excellent St George's Park facility in



The Northern Ireland cerebral palsy football team

England. Many of the players and staff have been with the programme from its inception, so it is a great reward for their dedication over the years." ● Alan Crooks



Russia

www.rfs.ru

Commonwealth Cup in St Petersburg

The 23rd Commonwealth Cup took place in St Petersburg from 16 to 25 January. Twelve national Under-21 teams (i.e. players born in or after 1994) from three different continents took part in the event. South Africa won the

tournament, with Finland and Belarus finishing second and third respectively.

As usual, the FIFA President, Joseph S. Blatter, attended the opening ceremony. During his visit to St Petersburg he also held meetings with the heads of the national associations that were represented at the tournament.

● Information department



San Marino

www.fsgc.sm

Key partnerships agreed with the universities of Bologna and Urbino

Following on from the excellent performance of San Marino's men's team in the latter part of 2014, which included a 0-0 draw with Estonia on 15 November and a climb from 208th to 180th in the FIFA rankings, two important agreements have been signed that are set to give football in San Marino a major boost. Prestigious partnerships with the University of Bologna and the University of Urbino will see final-year sports science students enrolled in placements to work alongside the technical staff of San Marino Football Federation (FSGC) teams. The agreements with these two academic institutions have been concluded in response to the huge numbers of requests for university traineeships every year. They will enable the young men and women taking part to put the theory they have learned into practice on the pitch, to further develop their theoretical knowledge and to provide added value for the trainers and coaches of the FSGC's youth, women's and men's national teams.

San Marino is a small country which, purely in terms of numbers, cannot compete with larger nations. Its population of less than 33,000 means that it has a fairly restricted pool of footballers to draw on. That is why all fitness-related issues, and particularly the prevention of sports injuries, is of paramount importance. In spite of its limited resources, San Marino does not allow naturalised or dual-nationality players to play for the national teams.

The head coach of the San Marino men's national team, Pierangelo Manzaroli, has a pool of no more than 50 players at his disposal. Given the importance and prestige of international fixtures, and above all the quality of



A 0-0 draw with Estonia took San Marino up from 208th to 180th in the FIFA rankings

the opponents his team must face, it is essential to ensure that he has as many players as possible available for selection and that their physical preparation is faultless. In order for this to happen, it is vital to be able to call on specialists who are familiar with the latest programmes and ideas and who remain at the forefront of their field to provide players with the best possible preparation so they do not succumb to injuries that leave them unavailable for selection.

This was the rationale behind the decision to join forces with two of Italy's most prestigious universities. Through these partnerships, final-year sports science students will not only have the chance to gain practical experience, they will also be able to offer fresh ideas on physical preparation and injury prevention. After all, it is only through continual modernisation and the transfer of knowledge from the classroom to the training pitch that San Marino's national teams will continue to improve.

"The agreements with two such prestigious universities demonstrate the quality of our national association," explains Giorgio Crescentini, the FSGC president. "They were only made possible thanks to the organisational skills and hard work of everyone involved."

● Matteo Rossi



Sweden

www.svenskfotboll.se

Sweden gears up for Women's World Cup

Sweden's national women's team are now in the final stages of their preparations for the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup in Canada. A final tournament calls for a new shirt, so adidas has teamed up with Sweden's award-winning female fashion duo AltewaiSaome to create a new look for the women's home and away kits. The results were presented on the catwalk at Stockholm Fashion Week.

However, good-looking shirts will not be enough to ensure Swedish success at the 2015 Women's World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. The women's national team already boasts several world-class players (such as Lotta Schelin and Nilla Fischer), but in order to turn more of the younger players into truly great – rather than merely good – footballers, a project called 11+ was launched last summer. 11+ is a partnership between the Swedish Football Association (SvFF), the Swedish Olympic Committee and the Swedish women's league. Twelve national team players aged 19–26 were singled out for extra support and set individual development goals.

"We look at these players' physical and medical state, their diet and their psychological state, and we give them any support they need to perform even better," says SvFF sports scientist Helena Andersson.

"We think Sweden is a medal candidate for the women's football event in 2016 and we are strong believers in individual development, so we're happy to offer our support to this project," says Peter Reinebo of the Swedish Olympic Committee.

● Andreas Nilsson



Lotta Schelin and Kosovare Asllani model the new shirts



Fewer injuries at amateur tournaments

We have all seen them: the countless injured players at amateur tournaments – players who are not fit enough and have done no real training, but then suddenly end up playing in a tournament. Playing a number of games in a very short space of time significantly increases the risk of injury for amateur footballers, particularly when it comes to muscles and ligaments. Suva (Swiss accident insurance fund) and tournament organisers have been working together to raise safety levels at such events, and their efforts are paying off. In recent years, the number of accidents at Suva-backed tournaments has declined markedly. Thanks to close cooperation between Suva and the Swiss Football Association, organisers can also benefit from the involvement of qualified referees, who play a key role in the prevention of accidents.

Since its 2014 campaign was such a success, Suva is repeating its Safety at Amateur Tourna-



Players often get injured during friendly tournaments because of a lack of fitness and training

ments initiative, which offers considerable incentives to tournament organisers. The Swiss Football Association supports all Suva initiatives aimed at reducing the number of injuries in Switzerland's most popular sport. Last year's campaign, which was particularly aimed at organisers of amateur tournaments and people playing in them, had a marked impact, with a significant year-on-year decline in the number of football-related injuries.

"Those improvements in the prevention of accidents encouraged us to repeat the Safety at Amateur Tournaments initiative in 2015,"

explains Suva project leader Heinz Wyss. To that end, Suva is offering tournament organisers various incentives, with organising committees able to enjoy valuable support in the form of money or equipment.

● Pierre Benoit



Integrity training

The integrity tour launched by the Football Association of Wales (FAW) in October has now completed workshops at all 12 Welsh Premier League clubs, where players, management and club officials have discussed the threat of match-fixing and the new rules on betting. Following a risk assessment looking at Welsh football, the FAW has discovered that an average of £575,000 is bet on each Welsh Premier League match every week, with an average of £75m being bet in total every year.

Players, management and officials at all 12 clubs have been given unique tailored training on how to protect the integrity of football in Wales. Rob Dowling, the FAW's integrity manager, said: *"I have been really impressed by the way in which the information and advice has been received by those attending the workshops. Players, managers and club officials at every club have all seen the significance of the message that we have been putting across to them. Each participant will also go through an e-learning tutorial that will reinforce all the key aspects of the workshops."*

The e-learning tutorial is due to be launched in February via the FAW's website. Every player will follow a case study to reinforce what they have learned and further highlight the dangers of match-fixing in Wales.

This will be an important element of the education programme, as it will allow players, managers and officials to digest information in their own time and help to protect them against being approached to manipulate matches.

The e-learning tutorial that has been developed for the FAW has also been adapted by UEFA to deliver integrity training to players at forthcoming UEFA youth competitions. In addition, Welsh Premier League match officials will attend an integrity workshop later this season, and clubs in Welsh League Division One and the Cymru Alliance League will be visited in the course of the 2015/16 season during the second year of the FAW's integrity tour.

● Robert Dowling



New headquarters

The head offices of the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) are moving to new premises – the Hasan Doğan National Team Camp and Education Facilities in Riva, Istanbul.

The newly built premises are named after one of the TFF's former presidents, Hasan Doğan, who died in office in July 2008. The building work began in 2013 and was completed in just 450 days.

These unique modern facilities were officially opened by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the president and former prime minister of Turkey, on 4 July 2014.



The association's new headquarters

This is the fourth time that the TFF has changed its headquarters since it became independent.

● Aydın Güvenir



Final workshop for referees of the future

On 8 December, the Football Federation of Ukraine's refereeing committee and Ukraine's National School of Refereeing held a final workshop for young Ukrainians in the second



A final workshop for young referees nearing the end of their training

year of their refereeing programme, which aims to turn hot prospects into senior professional referees.

At the beginning of 2014, 64 young candidates – including one woman and representatives of almost all regional schools of refereeing – passed the basic course and qualified for the next stage of the programme. They went on to take part in a number of special workshops, improving both their knowledge of the game and their refereeing skills.

They practised by officiating in the Ukrainian Youth League, as well as the national championships for amateur teams and educational institutions. The 20 best referees were then selected for the Young Talents of Ukraine 2014 project.

These referees are certified specialists, and some of them will now have the chance to work their way up to the Ukrainian premier league and second division.

● Yuriy Maznychenko



Integrity workshops have been held at all 12 Welsh Premier League clubs

BIRTHDAYS

Benny Jacobsen (Denmark, 1 March) 70th

Luis Medina Cantalejo (Spain, 1 March)

Damir Vrbanović (Croatia, 2 March)

Jenni Kennedy (England, 2 March)

Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder (Germany, 3 March)

Hans Lorenz (Germany, 3 March)

Zbigniew Boniek (Poland, 3 March)

Alexandru Deaconu (Romania, 3 March)

Carolyn Rudolph (Germany, 3 March)

Patrick McGrath (Republic of Ireland, 4 March)

Franco Combi (Italy, 4 March)

Crawford Wilson (Northern Ireland, 5 March) 60th

Zoran Bahtijarević (Croatia, 5 March)

Ronen Hershco (Israel, 5 March)

James Samuel Shaw (Northern Ireland, 6 March) 70th

Boris Durlen (Croatia, 6 March)

Ichko Lozev (Bulgaria, 6 March)

Dan Ashworth (England, 6 March)

Pedro Maria Aurteneche Viñegra (Spain, 7 March)

Dušan Maravić (Serbia, 7 March)

Tomás Gea (Andorra, 7 March)

Josep Lluís Vilaseca Guasch (Spain, 8 March)

Giorgio Crescentini (San Marino, 8 March)

Diogo Paiva Brandão (Portugal, 8 March)

Kris Bellon (Belgium, 8 March)

Alexis Ponnet (Belgium, 9 March)

Vladimir Aleshin (Russia, 9 March) 70th

Henk Kesler (Netherlands, 9 March)

Ruben Hayrapetyan (Armenia, 9 March)

Herbert Fandel (Germany, 9 March)

Joseph S. Blatter (Switzerland, 10 March)

Mateo Beusan (Croatia, 10 March)

Ilkka Koho (Finland, 10 March)

Jasmin Baković (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 10 March) 50th

Diana Andersen (Denmark, 10 March)

Lucien Kayser (Luxembourg, 11 March) 70th

Sergey Fursenko (Russia, 11 March)

Olga Zhukovska (Ukraine, 11 March)

Jean-François Crucke (Belgium, 12 March)

Miroslav Vitković (Croatia, 12 March)

Thomas Partl (Austria, 13 March)

Yngve Hallén (Norway, 14 March)

Neil Jardine (Northern Ireland, 14 March)

Lucia Knappkova (Slovakia, 14 March)

Ivan Ćurković (Serbia, 15 March)

Götz Dimanski (Germany, 15 March)

Michael Thomas Ross (Northern Ireland, 15 March)

Cornelis Bakker (Netherlands, 17 March) 70th

Simeon Tsolakidis (Greece, 17 March)

Christos Skapoullis (Cyprus, 18 March)

Marcello Nicchi (Italy, 18 March)

Andreas Georgiou (Cyprus, 18 March)

Marina Tashchyan (Armenia, 18 March)

Ronald Zimmermann (Germany, 19 March)

Aristides Stathopoulos (Greece, 20 March)

Sándor Csányi (Hungary, 20 March)

Edward Foley (Republic of Ireland, 20 March)

James Boyce (Northern Ireland, 21 March)

Kai-Erik Arstad (Norway, 21 March)

Ginés Meléndez (Spain, 22 March)

Chris Georghiadis (Cyprus, 22 March)

Michail Kassabov (Bulgaria, 22 March) 60th

Luca Zorzi (Switzerland, 22 March)

Pafsanias Papanikolaou (Greece, 22 March)

Franz Krösslhuber (Austria, 23 March)

Andrea Lastrucci (Italy, 23 March)

Miroslaw Malinowski (Poland, 23 March)

Mahmut Özgener (Turkey, 23 March)

Hilda McDermott (Republic of Ireland, 23 March)

Outi Saarinen (Finland, 23 March)

Fernando Ruiz Hierro (Spain, 23 March)

Daniel Prodan (Romania, 23 March)

Dejan Dimovski (FYR Macedonia, 23 March)

Christoforos Zografos (Greece, 24 March)

Michael Kirchner (Germany, 25 March)

Wilfried Straub (Germany, 26 March)

Steen Jørgensen (Denmark, 26 March)

Anton Ondrus (Slovakia, 27 March)

José Antonio Casajus (Spain, 27 March)

Armen Minasyan (Armenia, 27 March)

Pavel Cebanu (Moldova, 28 March) 60th

Edgar Obertüfer (Switzerland, 29 March)

Ian Beasley (England, 29 March)

Stefan Ormandjiev (Bulgaria, 29 March)

Alan Snoddy (Northern Ireland, 29 March) 60th

Bernadette Constantin (France, 29 March)

Bernadino González Vázquez (Spain, 29 March)

Sanna Pirhonen (Finland, 29 March) 40th
William Hugh Wilson (Scotland, 30 March) 70th

Richard Havrilla (Slovakia, 31 March)

Matteo Simone Trefoloni (Italy, 31 March)

NOTICES

- Yerlan Kozhagapanov has replaced Adilbek Jaxybekov as president of the Football Federation of Kazakhstan.

- Filip Popovski has replaced Dimitar Zisovski as general secretary of the Football Federation of FYR Macedonia.

- Giorgios Girtzikis has replaced Giorgios Sarris as president of the Hellenic Football Federation.

- Andriy Pavelko has been named acting president of the Football Federation of Ukraine, in place of Anatoliy Konkov. Elections are due to be held in March.

OBITUARY

Former European member of the FIFA Executive Committee **Helmut Riedel** of Germany passed away on 27 November, aged 93. At UEFA he was a member of the Publicity Committee from 1964 and 1968 and the Youth Committee from 1968 to 1970.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

3 March, Nyon

Club Competition Committee

4 March, Nyon

Medical Committee

5 March, Nyon

Youth and Amateur Football Committee

20 March, Nyon

UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League: draws for the quarter-finals

22/23 March, Vienna

Executive Committee

24 March, Vienna

XXXIX Ordinary Congress

30 March, Dublin

UEFA Regions' Cup: final round draw

Competitions

10/11 and 17/18 March

UEFA Champions League: round of 16 (return legs)
UEFA Youth League: quarter-finals

12 March

UEFA Europa League: round of 16 (first legs)

19 March

UEFA Europa League: round of 16 (return legs)

21/22 March

UEFA Women's Champions League: quarter-finals (first legs)

28/29 March

UEFA Women's Champions League: quarter-finals (return legs)



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RESPECT