



EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS



European Qualifiers 2020-22
Fixture list procedure

Fixture List Procedure for the European Qualifiers 2020-22

Starting points

- Based on the *FIFA World Cup 2022 Preliminary Competitions regulations* (in particular article 20) and the *2018-22 Commercial Regulations governing the European Qualifiers, UEFA Nations League and friendly matches*, UEFA is responsible for the *European Qualifiers Fixture List*.
- The present document describes the principles and processes that guide UEFA when deciding on the fixtures with the aim to issue a schedule that is fair for the participating teams, fulfils the expectations of our commercial partners and ensures with a high degree of probability that the fixture can take place as scheduled.
- The group matches of the European Qualifiers will be played on the following dates:

MD1	24-25 March 2021
MD2	27-28 March 2021
MD3	30-31 March 2021
MD4	1-2 September 2021
MD5	4-5 September 2021
MD6	7-8 September 2021
MD7	8-9 October 2021
MD8	11-12 October 2021
MD9	11-13 November 2021
MD10	14-16 November 2021

- UEFA will issue the *European Qualifiers Fixture List* with the dates and kick-off times of all 250 European Qualifiers matches in December 2020, as soon as possible after the conclusion of the draw (see Section E). The preliminary draw for the 2022 FIFA World Cup is organised by FIFA – time and location to be confirmed in due course.
- The four UNL Finalists must be in a group of five to be able to play the UNL finals in October 2021. The other teams drawn into groups of five will play two centralised friendly matches on the dates that remain free of competition matches. The procedure to schedule these friendlies is described in the present document (see section F) and must be concluded by 29 January 2021.



Guiding principles

A. Week of football: match scheduling pattern

- The matches are played with a minimum of two rest days between the two matches played by each team within the same international match week.
- The allocation of the ten match days to the international windows is done according to the following patterns:

In March and September, when three matches are played during the same week of football, a team would typically play on Wednesday-Saturday-Tuesday or on Thursday-Sunday-Wednesday:

Triple headers							
Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
EQ MD1	EQ MD1		EQ MD2	EQ MD2		EQ MD3	EQ MD3
Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
EQ MD4	EQ MD4		EQ MD5	EQ MD5		EQ MD6	EQ MD6

In October the two EQ match days must be played over two days instead of three due to the UEFA Nations League Finals that will be played in parallel during that week. Teams will, as rule, play on Friday-Monday or Saturday-Tuesday:

Double header with UNLF							
Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
UNLF SF1	UNLF SF2	EQ MD7	EQ MD7	UNLF	EQ MD8	EQ MD8	

In November a team would typically play on Thursday-Sunday, Friday-Monday or Saturday-Tuesday:

Double header							
Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
	EQ 1 st MD	EQ 1 st MD	EQ 1 st MD	EQ 2 nd MD	EQ 2 nd MD	EQ 2 nd MD	

- UEFA will strive to implement a match-day rotation for the teams which aims at a fair distribution of weekend days (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) and week days (Wednesday, Thursday, Monday, Tuesday).
- As a rule, teams in the same group play on the same day. However, deviations are possible, if one or several groups cumulate a high number of conditions (section C) as well as during the triple headers.

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B. Home / away sequences

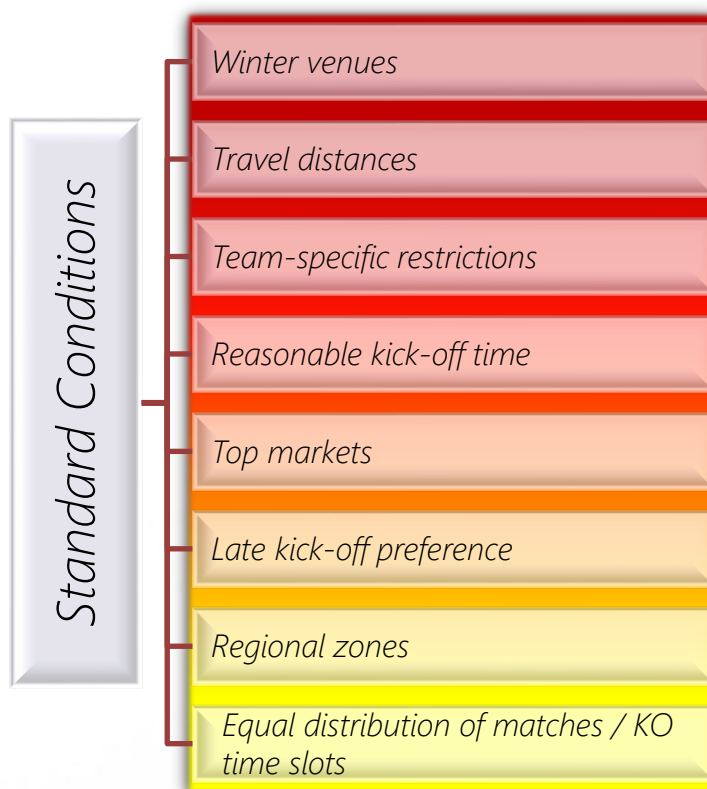
When compiling the fixture list, UEFA will strive to respect the following principles:

- Each team starts and finishes the competition with a home-away or away-home sequence;
- Teams do not play more than 2 home or 2 away matches in a row;
- The first round (=1st leg matches) is completed before the second round (=2nd leg matches).
- No home and away matches between the same two teams in the same window.

Deviations from these principles will occur, in particular when a “winter venue” and/or a pair of “distant teams” is part of the group and in general when one or several groups cumulate a high number of conditions (see section C). The principle of “first leg before the return leg match” cannot be respected for the groups which include UEFA Nations League finalists.

C. Standard conditions

- A number of conditions have been defined to ensure the competition can be organised in a sportingly fair manner and within the approved commercial framework.
- The enforcement of conditions depends on the outcome of the draw, for this reason, the conditions are only given a general order of priority.





C.1. Winter venues

- The list of winter venues is based on requests submitted to the UEFA administration by the national associations concerned as well as the risk assessment carried out by the UEFA administration.
- Two countries have been identified as “hard winter venues” where the risk of severe weather conditions during the winter period is high. Ideally, “hard winter venue” teams do not play at home in March and in November.
- Eight countries have been identified as “soft winter venues” where the risk of severe weather conditions during the winter period is medium. “Soft winter venue” teams shall play as few matches as possible at home in March and November without impacting the home-away sequence. Priority is however given to the “hard winter venues”.
- The draw procedure includes the condition that a group can include a maximum of two “winter venues”.

Hard winter venues	Faroe Islands
	Iceland
Soft winter venues	Belarus
	Estonia
	Finland
	Latvia
	Lithuania
	Norway
	Russia
	Ukraine

C.2. Travel distances

- The following excessive travel distance relationships (applicable both ways) have been identified and included in the draw procedure as a condition: a group can include a maximum of one such pair.

From/To	To/From
Andorra (Barcelona, ESP)	Kazakhstan (Nur-Sultan)
England (London)	
France (Paris)	
Faroe Islands (Torshavn)	
Gibraltar	
Iceland (Reykjavik)	
Malta (Valletta)	
Northern Ireland (Belfast)	
Portugal (Lisbon)	
Republic of Ireland (Dublin)	
Scotland (Edinburgh)	
Spain (Madrid)	
Wales (Cardiff)	

From/To	To/From
Gibraltar	Azerbaijan (Baku)
Iceland (Reykjavik)	
Portugal (Lisbon)	

From/To	To/From
Armenia (Yerevan)	Iceland (Reykjavik)
Cyprus (Larnaca)	
Georgia (Tbilissi)	
Israel (Tel Aviv)	

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- Excessive travel is considered from 8 hours or above and has been calculated based on direct flight times plus 90 minutes ground operations.

When compiling the fixture list, UEFA will strive to avoid excessive travel for any team in the group between the above destinations, between matches of the same match week.

C.3. Team-specific restrictions

- The national associations will be able to request UEFA to take into account that on certain dates they will not be in a position to host a home match.

C.4. Reasonable kick-off times (time zones)

- The standard kick-off times are 18:00 CET on Saturday/Sunday and 20:45 CET on all days.
- Selected matches will be scheduled at 15:00 CET on Saturday/Sunday.
- However, matches shall not be kicked-off later than 21:45/22:00 local time.
- Seven countries have been identified where adjustments will be required in order to respect this condition. As a rule, and with the exception of matches in Kazakhstan, the matches in these countries are played at 18:00 CET.

Wednesday		18.00 CET (exception)	20.45 CET
Thursday	---	18.00 CET (exception)	20.45 CET
Friday	---	18.00 CET (exception)	20.45 CET
Saturday	15.00 CET	18.00 CET	20.45 CET
Sunday	15.00 CET	18.00 CET	20.45 CET
Monday	---	18.00CET (exception)	20.45 CET
Tuesday	---	18.00CET (exception)	20.45 CET



a) Countries with a kick-off adjustment on all matchdays:

Country	Time Zone	Kick-off Time
Armenia	CET +2 from MD4 to MD8	18:00 CET or
	CET +3 for MD1/2/3 and MD9/10	15:00 CET on Saturday or Sunday
Azerbaijan	CET +2 from MD4 to MD8	18:00 CET or
	CET +3 for MD1/2/3 and MD9/10	15:00 CET on Saturday or Sunday
Georgia	CET +2 from MD4 to MD8	18:00 CET or
	CET +3 for MD1/2/3 and MD9/10	15:00 CET on Saturday or Sunday
Kazakhstan (Nur-Sultan)	CET +4 for MD4 to MD8	Preferably 16:00 CET, or 15:00 CET
	CET +5 for MD1/2/3 and MD9/10	on Saturday or Sunday

b) Countries with a kick-off adjustment in March and November only

Country	Time Zone	Kick-off Time
Belarus	CET+2 for MD1/2/3 and MD9/10	18:00 CET or 15:00 CET on Saturday or Sunday
Russia (Moscow)	CET +2 for MD1/2/3 and MD9/10	18:00 CET or 15:00 CET on Saturday or Sunday
Turkey	CET +2 for MD1/2/3 and MD9/10	18:00 CET or 15:00 CET on Saturday or Sunday

C.5. Additional standard conditions

Top markets

- For TV reasons, the teams of England, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Spain will, if possible, be distributed across the matchdays.

It must be noted that depending on the draw seeding and the draw result, it may occur that these teams play in the same group.

Late kick-off preference

- For TV reasons, the teams of France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain will be allocated preferably to a late kick-off time slot.

Regional zones

- Matches of teams from the same region are played when possible on different dates and/or at different kick-off times.

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- The following teams have been grouped into regional zones as follows:

UK + IRL	Scandinavia	Balkan	Baltic
ENG	DEN	ALB	EST
IRL	FIN	BIH	LTU
NIR	NOR	CRO	LVA
SCO	SWE	KOS	
WAL		MKD	
		MNE	
		SRB	
		SVN	

Equal distribution of matches / KO time slots

- The matches are distributed as much as possible over the available match dates and the standard kick-off time slots.
- The distribution of matches will not always be perfectly equal due to the need to fulfil, as much as possible, the defined fixture list conditions.

D. Possible manual adjustments

- It will not be possible to respect all fixture list conditions.
- The extent of conditions disregarded will depend on the outcome of the draw, which may lead to a number of conditions (including team-specific restrictions) being cumulated within the same group.
- Best efforts will be applied in all cases. In certain cases of conditions not respected by the computer-assisted procedure, and only when possible in the general interest of the competition, the UEFA administration is entitled to make manual adjustments in consultation with the NAs concerned like for example moving matches one day back or forward.
- Such manual adjustments will be validated by the Chairman of the National Team Competitions Committee (or, if necessary for neutrality reasons, by the Deputy Chairman).

E. Distribution and publication

- The same process will be applied as for the previous European Qualifiers fixture lists.
- The European Qualifiers fixture list will be distributed to the national associations after the draw in two ways:
 - Electronically to all NAs, to a maximum of two dedicated email addresses as soon as possible after the draw
 - Printed copies will be made available at the hotel reception the next morning



- The delivered fixture list is final. No changes may be requested by the national associations. As an exception, CET+1 countries may submit requests to UEFA for 18:00 CET kick-offs for matches on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Mondays and Tuesdays, under the condition that the visiting team agrees. UEFA will review such requests and provide a final decision, considering the contractual obligations with the relevant broadcasters and in the interest of maintaining a balanced distribution of matches per kick-off slot.
- The fixture list will be released to the media 30 minutes after the distribution to the national associations' representatives.

F. Friendly matches

Starting points

- Based on the *2018-22 Commercial Regulations governing the European Qualifiers, UEFA Nations League and friendly matches*, the participating associations will arrange friendly matches on the dates that remain free after UEFA has established the *European Qualifiers Fixture List* and subject to the UEFA Nations League Finals in 2021.
- In priority the national associations concerned shall make their own agreements, and UEFA shall assist upon request and in all cases where associations would not reach a bilateral agreement.

Friendly match consolidation procedure

- For the friendly matches to be scheduled during the EQ group stage period, the procedure is organised according to the following steps:
 1. Before the draw of December 2020 and before the fixture list is confirmed, UEFA and the national associations gather information on preferences and wishes and establish an overall inventory.
 2. As soon as the draw has been made and the fixture list is published, the national associations start negotiating the bilateral agreements which will always require the validation by the UEFA administration.
 3. Within two months after the draw, by 29 January 2021, the associations have time to finalise their friendly match arrangements, while keeping the UEFA administration duly informed.
 4. Associations that by 29 January 2021 still need to finalise their arrangements must attend the "Friendly Match Consolidation Day" at UEFA headquarters in Nyon on Tuesday, 2 February 2021. The list of available teams and solutions will be made available to all associations concerned.
 5. On the "Friendly Match Consolidation Day", the associations will be asked to confirm if solutions have been found. If necessary, the UEFA administration will apply the "first pick"-procedure* according to the UEFA Nations League overall ranking of 18 November 2020. If required and as the conclusive step of the procedure, the UEFA administration holds a draw for the last teams with no friendly match.

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- Following the "Friendly Match Consolidation Day", UEFA will publish the complete list of friendly fixtures to be played during the European Qualifiers period from March to November 2021.

**Notes on "first-pick procedure":*

- The highest ranked team will have the right to first make a proposal of friendly fixture to the available teams.
- The offer can be accepted or refused by the teams in question.
- Available teams = European and non-European teams at disposal
- If the highest ranked team has concluded an agreement, respectively if all available teams have refused its proposal, then the right to make an offer is given to the next highest ranked team.
- This process is continued until all fixtures have been decided, respectively all teams have made an offer.



Financial agreements for friendly matches

- The two associations involved in the friendly match shall reach a bilateral agreement, and UEFA shall assist upon request.
- In case no bilateral financial agreement is reached, the UEFA administration will act as arbitrator together with the Chairman (or Deputy Chairman) of the National Team Competitions Committee:
 - Host to cover on-site transportation and local accommodation for visiting delegation
 - Host to pay “appearance fee” to the visiting association based on revenues that the host can effectively generate from tickets, hospitality and sponsorship sales
 - As a minimum, the appearance fee has to contribute to cover the visitor’s international travel costs
 - The National Team Competitions Committee has agreed on the range of maximum amounts** that may be applied (see table).

Non-UEFA	As per contract
League A	€ 150.000 - € 300.000
League B	€ 75.000 - € 150.000
League C	€ 25.000 - € 75.000
League D	up to € 25.000

****Notes on “maximum amounts” with example of League A:**

- Maximum of 300,000€ applies to commercially successful matches generating substantial ticketing revenue.
- The commercial attractiveness of the visiting team is a factor to be taken into account.
- 150,000€ is the maximum for “smaller” teams.



UEFA
ROUTE DE GENÈVE 46
CH-1260 NYON 2
SWITZERLAND
TELEPHONE: +41 848 00 27 27
TELEFAX: +41 848 01 27 27
UEFA.com

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