



UEFA FOOTBALL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# Environmental Commitment

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**Preamble**

The commitment is in development, for approval by the Executive Committee.

## 1. Introduction

'Responsibility' is one of the pillars of the UEFA Strategy 2019–24, expressing its aim to ensure that football is trusted, engaging and responsible towards all stakeholders. Furthermore, UEFA recognises that European football, as a system, should more actively promote sustainable development and climate action.

UEFA wants to seize all possible opportunities for maximising the positive aspects of the game while mitigating any negative impact. The establishment of the responsibility pillar reflects a growing awareness by UEFA stakeholders and their willingness to make a better future for both football and society.

The UEFA Environmental Commitment set out here supplements UEFA's Human Rights Commitment published in July 2021.

Based on the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework, the Paris Agreement objectives for the sports sector and the European Climate Pact pledge, the commitment is the expression of UEFA's decision to support the European Green Deal.

Of the 11 policies in the responsibility pillar of UEFA's corporate strategy, all of which are inspired by UEFA's longstanding theme of *Respect*, four relate specifically to the environment<sup>1</sup>. The aim is to embed these policies into UEFA's strategic decisions to ensure we generate a tangible impact moving forward.

<b>Environment</b>	<b>Climate and advocacy</b>
	<b>Circular economy</b>
	<b>Event sustainability</b>
	<b>Infrastructure sustainability</b>

We recognise that in many ways all 11 policies are interconnected, and that an integrated and evolving approach is required to balance all aspects of sustainability. This may lead to the consolidation of some policies over the course of time.

<sup>1</sup> The human rights policies are: anti-racism, child and youth protection, equality and inclusion, football for all abilities, health and well-being, refugee support, solidarity and rights.

## 2. Scope

*We have a responsibility to ensure football fits in a sustainable, safe and diverse society. Our activities can only be implemented when the direct and indirect impact on environments, societies and economies has been acknowledged.*

Together for the Future of Football – UEFA Strategy 2019–24, p.13

This document sets out UEFA's Environmental Commitment. Once approved, it will serve as a foundation for the Football and Social Responsibility (FSR) Division objectives for environmental issues that are material<sup>2</sup> to football. The division will be in charge of developing and implementing initiatives based upon it in UEFA's operations internally, at its events and in its role as the football governing body in Europe.

## 3. UEFA's commitment

When announcing UEFA's support for the European Climate Pact in 2020, UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin stated the following:

*"By reaching a Europe-wide audience of millions, football has the potential to dramatically shift mindsets on climate change – a critical first step to getting everyone involved in creating a climate-neutral economy."*

Determined to contribute to the human right to a clean environment, UEFA strives to ensure that football will leave a positive legacy. We commit to leveraging its unique position within European football to help preserve and regenerate our shared environment, while empowering others to do likewise. By embedding environmental considerations into strategic decisions, we also strengthen the resilience of European football's physical and social infrastructure.

UEFA will use its voice and leverage the power of the football platform to raise environmental awareness and catalyse action throughout the European football ecosystem. Along the way, we will measure progress to document and communicate how we are preventing, minimising and remediating our sport's impact on the environment.

Responsibility for developing and implementing initiatives based on this commitment lies with UEFA's Football and Social Responsibility Division. It will consult with internal and external stakeholders and will commit resources to meeting the objectives set out below.

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<sup>2</sup> In the context of this document, 'material' issues should be understood as those "that have a direct or indirect impact on an organisation's ability to create, preserve or erode economic, environmental and social value for itself, its stakeholders and society at large," as defined in the Global Reporting Initiative.

## 4. Objectives

Based on the environmental policies introduced in section 1, UEFA's FSR Division has set out objectives to translate its Environmental Commitment into concrete actions. UEFA acknowledges these policies may evolve to include future developments and welcomes inputs from stakeholders.

To ensure transparency, progress against objectives will be reported on in the annual Football and Social Responsibility Report, which is available to the general public.

Throughout its operations and events, UEFA should optimise the consumption and life cycle of products, most notably food, packaging, branded items and waste. It should embed the 4R approach – reduce, reuse, recycle and recover – in everything it does, to minimise the impact of our sport on the environment and drive resource efficiency and cost savings.

UEFA aims to reduce European football's carbon footprint and be a credible reference partner for organisations working on climate protection, while preventing and reducing the degradation of the environment by the football ecosystem, and leveraging its reach and visibility to promote the urgency of action.

UEFA intends to achieve zero-impact football events through its sustainable event management system and set a new benchmark for the sporting event sector as a whole. To do this, it will devise, plan and run events with the intent of preventing and reducing any negative environmental impacts in host cities and surrounding communities.

European football should operate environmentally friendly infrastructure that provides long-term financial benefits for operators and enhances the legacy of shared spaces for local communities. UEFA aims to raise sustainability standards for football infrastructure, taking measures that encompass their design, construction, renovation and maintenance as well as their operations.

In addition, UEFA aspires for football to be a vehicle for environmental protection, engaging society and governments on key topics and providing information and education to raise awareness.

## 5. Environmental references

### Sports for Climate Action Framework<sup>3</sup>

Recognising that:

- the Paris Agreement represents a global response to the scientific consensus that human activity is causing global average temperatures to rise at unprecedented rates;
- the goals agreed in the Paris Agreement translate to reaching climate neutrality in the second half of the twenty-first century. Sports organisations need to take an active part in contributing to the realisation of these goals;
- delivering on the climate agenda also contributes to the broader Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development;
- all sports organisations, regardless of size or geography, have opportunities to take actions that will result in a measurable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions;
- actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions have multiple synergies and co-benefits with, among other things, expanding economic opportunity and securing livelihoods, using resources more efficiently, driving economic competitiveness and innovation, strengthening environmental, social and economic resilience in the face of increasing climate impacts;
- sports have a unique power to inspire a wider societal change that embraces a low-carbon future and keeps the planet safe for future generations.

We, the signatories to the Sports for Climate Action Initiative support the goals of the Paris Agreement in limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and affirm our commitment on behalf of our organisations to:

1. undertake systematic efforts to promote greater environmental responsibility;
2. reduce overall climate impact;
3. educate for climate action;
4. promote sustainable and responsible consumption;
5. advocate for climate action through communication.

### Paris Agreement on Climate Change<sup>4</sup>

The Paris Agreement seeks to accelerate and intensify the actions and investment needed for a sustainable low-carbon future. Its central aim is keeping the global temperature rise this century to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Acknowledging the sports sector's contribution to climate change through travel, energy use, construction, catering, etc., UEFA aims to play its part in contributing to the goals established in this agreement.

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<sup>3</sup> [Sports for Climate Action Framework](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#)

### **European Green Deal<sup>5</sup>**

As a European organisation, UEFA is aligned with the stated goal of this programme, which is to strive to become the first climate-neutral continent. Recognising the existential threat from climate change and environmental degradation, the programme aims to ensure no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, economic growth decoupled from resource use, and no person or place left behind. It includes the European Climate Pact that helps implement measures to combat climate change, to which UEFA is a signatory.

### **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>6</sup>**

As part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UEFA recognises the SDGs as a “universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve, safeguard and secure the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere”. In its memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Office at Geneva, UEFA declares it is committed to “promote the implementation of the SDGs in the European football context and to raise awareness among its member associations on how football can play an enabling role.”<sup>7</sup>

## **6. Conclusion**

This UEFA Environmental Commitment is submitted for approval by the Executive Committee. The FSR Division drafted it as part of the development of its 2030 strategy and in full alignment with the UEFA’s Together for the Future of Football strategy for 2019–24.

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<sup>5</sup> [A European Green Deal](#)

<sup>6</sup> [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Memorandum of Understanding between UNOG and UEFA](#)



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