



GROW

UEFA EURO 2020 WENT VIRAL

A special tournament: on the pitch, and on social media.

Instagram post interface showing:
Gefällt 436.8
azzurri Un
23:54
Alle 1.77

Instagram post interface showing:
Campioni
Layout von instagram >



UEFA EURO 2020 in pictures



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Introduction

A tournament with unique requirements.

The original idea was unusual. Unique, in fact. To mark its 60th anniversary, the UEFA EURO would be held not in just one or two countries, but all over the continent for the first time in its history. Eleven host venues in eleven countries, involving 24 national teams – a continental festival for all fans in a united Europe. At least, that was the original plan.

In the end, however, it all turned out a bit differently. COVID-19 had a huge impact on EURO 2020, just as it did on all aspects of life in Europe. The global pandemic not only meant the tournament had to be postponed for a year, it also created numerous unprecedented challenges for its organisers. Match operations were severely hampered, matches were played in below-capacity stadiums, and fans were reluctant to travel. In many cities, the huge fan festivals that have

long been an integral part of tournaments like this were also either much smaller than usual or cancelled altogether.

As far as communication was concerned, many football fans watched the matches and associated coverage at home, either on TV or, for more and more of them, on the internet. As a result, the social media channels run by UEFA and the participating national associations became even more important during the four weeks of the tournament,

and were the first port of call and primary source of information for many supporters. Use of a second screen for social media, which was already on the increase, was boosted further as a result of the pandemic. So much so that it is no longer just what happens on the pitch that counts, as the old football adage goes, but also what happens on social media.

Indeed, for a long time now, football has been about much more than on-field



matters, and national associations use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok to raise the game's profile. And it's not just matches and training sessions that they cover. The (new) relevance of social media channels became clear during EURO 2020, especially when there were unusual incidents – not even all related to events on the pitch. Whether it was Christian Eriksen's tragic collapse, the Cristiano Ronaldo Coca-Cola controversy,

teams taking the knee as an anti-racism gesture, the 'rainbow arena' debate or the Greenpeace parachutist in Munich, all these images went viral in a matter of seconds, spreading like wildfire across social networks. Some triggered endless online discussions, posts were shared millions of times and various issues became topics of debate. The social media community embraced these socio-political issues and shared content via every conceivable platform.

Sport, however, was always at the centre. And so, therefore, were the 24 participating teams and UEFA, the organiser of the first transcontinental tournament. The national associations had devised numerous social media campaigns and strategies before the tournament. But which ones were really successful, and which less so? What impact does a team's performance on the pitch have on follower numbers and user engagement on social media? What makes a good

social media campaign these days, and what mistakes should be avoided when planning one? And how should a national association communications director respond online to unforeseeable events? This EURO 2020 social media guide addresses these and other questions, as well as providing readers with hints and tips for future campaigns in a world where the importance of social media, including for sports associations, is constantly growing.

Is sporting success synonymous with growth on social media?

The development of the social media channels of all participants during UEFA EURO 2020.

The EURO tournament reaches a global audience and social media platforms are often fans' first points of contact with the participating national associations. The following tables provide an overview of the evolution of the participating associations' followings during EURO 2020. We captured the social communities before the start of the tournament, after the group stage, where each of the teams played three matches,

and after the tournament. The final set shows the total community post-EURO and the growth during the tournament.

The official UEFA social media profiles for the tournament increased by 10 million followers overall, France and England gained more than 3 million followers each and the newly crowned European champions gained more than 2 million social media followers!

EURO 2020 SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT

TEAM	TOTAL FOLLOWERS	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	TikTok
EURO 2020	25m	13m	6m	2m	2m	530k
1 FRANCE	21m	6m	8m	5m	1m	458k
2 ENGLAND	19m	7m	5m	4m	1m	812k
3 GERMANY	14m	6m	3m	4m	212k	221
4 PORTUGAL	12m	4m	7m	986k	0	4k
5 SPAIN	9m	3m	3m	2m	191k	239k
6 ITALY	9m	4m	2m	1m	302k	0
7 BELGIUM	3m	1m	809k	879k	61k	0

May 2021

EURO 2020 SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT

TEAM	TOTAL FOLLOWERS	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	TikTok
8 POLAND	3m	1m	646k	314k	722k	274k
9 NETHERLANDS	2m	495k	1m	316k	198k	498k
10 TURKEY	1m	128k	1m	578k	9	39
11 RUSSIA	1m	203k	808k	665k	22k	44k
12 CROATIA	1m	577k	469k	222k	23k	222
13 WALES	962k	383k	288k	265k	18k	3
14 SCOTLAND	931k	494k	239k	123k	56k	0
15 UKRAINE	689k	272k	255k	13k	64k	0

May 2021

EURO 2020 SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT

TEAM	TOTAL FOLLOWERS	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	TikTok
16 SWEDEN	658k	290k	278k	16k	17k	43k
17 AUSTRIA	654k	240k	112k	49k	4k	246k
18 DENMARK	460k	216k	197k	14k	18k	0
19 SWITZERLAND	432k	183k	115k	128k	1k	0
20 CZECH REPUBLIC	359k	181k	112k	46k	19k	0
21 HUNGARY	318k	150k	72k	38k	57k	0
22 FINLAND	160k	77k	69k	4k	5k	0
23 NORTH MACEDONIA	150k	108k	38k	3k	158	0
24 SLOVAKIA	123k	72k	40k	7k	3k	0

May 2021

EURO 2020 SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES AFTER GROUP STAGE – 30 JUNE 2021

TEAM	TOTAL FOLLOWERS	f	ig	tw	yt	dk	vk	pn	ln	cd
EURO 2020	32m +7m	14m	8m	2m	3m	3m	0	0	22k	0
1 FRANCE	24m +3m	6m	9m	5m	1m	2m	0	0	82k	4.663
2 ENGLAND	21m +1m	7m	6m	4m	1m	1m	0	0	101k	0
3 GERMANY	14m +597k	6m	3m	4m	239k	986	51k	0	17k	0
4 PORTUGAL	13m +689k	4m	7m	1m	0	4k	0	0	0	0
5 ITALY	10m +785k	4m	3m	1m	337k	2k	0	0	14k	0
6 SPAIN	10m +337k	3m	3m	2m	201k	325k	0	0	0	0
7 BELGIUM	3m +481k	1m	956k	904k	68k	266k	0	0	11k	0
8 POLAND	3m +173k	1m	688k	319k	746k	358k	0	162	6k	0

July 2021

EURO 2020 SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES AFTER GROUP STAGE – 30 JUNE 2021

TEAM	TOTAL FOLLOWERS	f	ig	tw	yt	dk	vk	pn	ln	cd
9 NETHERLANDS	2m +327k	507k	1m	335k	209k	609k	0	0	40k	0
10 RUSSIA	2m +343k	204k	834k	664k	22k	98k	387k	0	0	0
11 TURKEY	2m +73k	129k	1m	519k	9	58	0	0	0	0
12 CROATIA	1m +39k	582k	494k	228k	26k	14	0	0	0	0
13 SCOTLAND	1m +232k	512k	287k	160k	61k	123k	0	0	18k	0
14 WALES	1m +89k	394k	319k	269k	19k	42k	0	0	6k	0
15 SWEDEN	815k +157k	294k	333k	22k	25k	126k	0	0	14k	0
16 AUSTRIA	776k +122k	250k	134k	52k	4k	332k	0	0	2k	0
17 UKRAINE	748k +58k	273k	305k	13k	72k	121	82k	0	60	0

July 2021

EURO 2020 SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES AFTER GROUP STAGE – 30 JUNE 2021

TEAM	TOTAL FOLLOWERS	f	ig	tw	yt	dk	vk	pn	ln	cd
18 DENMARK	663k +202k	248k	337k	27k	27k	6.750	0	0	15k	0
19 SWITZERLAND	509k +76k	187k	165k	132k	2k	18k	0	0	2k	0
20 CZECH REPUBLIC	387k +28k	185k	130k	51k	20k	0	0	0	0	0
21 HUNGARY	376k +57k	154k	93k	40k	57k	29k	0	0	0	0
22 FINLAND	280k +120k	86k	106k	58k	7k	17k	0	0	3k	0
23 N. MACEDONIA	174k +24k	115k	54k	4k	76	39	0	0	407	0
24 SLOVAKIA	133k +10k	74k	46k	7k	3k	1k	0	0	0	0

July 2021

EURO 2020 SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES AFTER THE TOURNAMENT

TEAM	TOTAL FOLLOWERS	f	ig	tw	yt	dk	vk	pn	ln	cd
EURO 2020	35m +10m	14m	8m	3m	3m	5m	0	0	23k	0
1 FRANCE	25m +3m	6m	9m	5m	1m	2m	0	0	83k	4k
2 ENGLAND	23m +3m	7m	7m	4m	1m	2m	0	0	102k	0
3 GERMANY	14m +772k	6m	3m	4m	244k	0	51k	0	17k	0
4 PORTUGAL	13m +843k	4m	7m	1m	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 ITALY	12m +2m	5m	5m	1m	389k	0	0	0	15k	0
6 SPAIN	10m +568k	3m	3m	2m	207k	344k	0	0	0	0
7 BELGIUM	3m +564k	1m	976k	911k	72k	306k	0	0	11k	0
8 NETHERLANDS	3m +977k	1m	1m	337k	209k	631k	0	0	40k	0

July 2021

EURO 2020 SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES AFTER THE TOURNAMENT

TEAM	TOTAL FOLLOWERS	f	ig	tw	yt	dk	vk	pn	ln	cd
9 POLAND	3m +194k	1m	691k	321k	748k	374k	0	163	6k	0
10 RUSSIA	2m +355k	204k	834k	664k	22k	109k	388k	0	0	0
11 TURKEY	2m +157k	127k	1m	618k	9	0	0	0	0	0
12 CROATIA	1m +41k	581k	495k	229k	26k	0	0	0	0	0
13 WALES	1m +101k	394k	321k	269k	19k	52k	0	0	6k	0
14 SCOTLAND	1m +113k	512k	288k	163k	62k	0	0	0	18k	0
15 UKRAINE	784k +94k	273k	339k	14k	73k	0	82k	0	64	0
16 AUSTRIA	777k +123k	250k	135k	52k	442	337k	0	0	2k	0
17 DENMARK	742k +281k	263k	402k	30k	31k	0	0	0	15k	0

July 2021

EURO 2020 SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES AFTER THE TOURNAMENT

TEAM	TOTAL FOLLOWERS	f	ig	tw	yt	dk	vk	pn	ln	cd
18 SWEDEN	737k +82k	294k	336k	22k	26k	42k	0	0	14k	0
19 SWITZERLAND	523k +90k	191k	192k	133k	2k	0	0	0	3k	0
20 CZECH REPUBLIC	392k +33k	186k	133k	52k	21k	0	0	0	0	0
21 HUNGARY	384k +63k	154k	94k	40k	57k	36k	0	0	0	0
22 FINLAND	286k +125k	86k	106k	58k	7k	22k	0	0	3k	0
23 N. MACEDONIA	174k +24k	115k	54k	4k	77	0	0	0	418	0
24 SLOVAKIA	132k +8k	74k	46k	7k	3k	0	0	0	0	0

July 2021

Take note of people's expectations

German social media expert Mario Leo on digital developments and insights at UEFA EURO 2020.



Mario Leo has been advising UEFA and its member associations about digital communication for many years. It is therefore no surprise that the Germany-based expert followed EURO 2020 very closely online. In this interview, he discusses the latest developments and trends.

How was communication at EURO 2020 different from previous tournaments?

There were a number of changes, especially because EURO 2020 was the first major event to take place in front of spectators for 15 months. This meant the associations were finally able to use the emotions of stadium crowds in their communications again. These emotions were mainly combined with entertainment posts, which are increasingly replacing information content. Fan-centric content, i.e. content designed to meet the wishes and needs of the communities on the various social media platforms, was particularly used by the larger associations that had full control over their social media content. Cross-posting, i.e. posting of the same image and text on the different platforms, is becoming less common, which is a good thing because each platform targets a different cohort. There were also a lot more behind-the-scenes insights than at any previous tournament. It was clear to see at EURO 2020 that social media is becoming

an increasingly important strategic tool! In both a positive and negative way!

What worked well? And what didn't?

It is becoming more and more important to take account of people's expectations when it comes to social media posts, especially the written word. Posts can be used to steer the target audience's expectations – if the fans believe their team are clear favourites on paper in the run-up to a match, social media posts can stir up high expectations that can end in uproar if the team fails to win.

Some associations (e.g. Belgium, Switzerland and Austria) made excellent use of the build-up to the tournament to raise awareness among the social media community and make sure their national football community was behind the team. The eventual champions, Italy, managed to convey the team's unity across the social media platforms at the start of the tournament and maintain the full support of the entire nation for four weeks, making the most of the euphoria at the team's success.

What no longer works so well is social media providing information to journalistic standards – the target audience and online community want familiarity, emotions and entertainment. Transferring traditional sports reporting to the online world is doomed to fail!

Can you name a campaign that worked particularly well in this new environment?

It is very difficult to highlight one particular campaign and, if I did, many people would find it unfair or hard to understand. It's all subjective and people's tastes are very different!

However, something that really pleased me was the fact that most national associations put a great deal of thought into making the EURO a highly tangible and accessible event through their social media channels.

Several things stayed with me long after the EURO: Denmark's fitting, very sensitive and emotional communication after Christian Eriksen's collapse, the solidarity of the football family at that time and the coverage of the



player's improving health. Italy did the same after Leonardo Spinazzola was seriously injured. In both cases, the response of the online community was positive throughout, expressing maximum support through countless heartfelt messages.

When the Austrian squad for the tournament was announced, the first club that each squad member had played for at youth level was mentioned to highlight the connection between grassroots football and the national team – this worked very well.

And what about a campaign that did not work because of the uncertainties of a pandemic, and why not?

There were not really any negative campaigns because social media simply became part of the communication and marketing mix. One thing I noticed, however, was that some associations still do not have a clear strategy or plan for responding to negative incidents or experiences. Social media has been a relevant and constantly growing part of the

associations' work for a good ten years now – mostly in connection with positive events, but also with a few less-pleasant incidents.



The national associations should therefore be able to imagine these types of situations and prepare appropriate processes, so they are ready for when things go badly.

What lessons can be learned from social media communication for this EURO? What strategies were particularly successful?

Social media is global, emotional and passionate. A tournament like the EURO has worldwide appeal. UEFA and its member associations tried to stage it perfectly and, to a large extent, people's high expectations were met. In general, sporting aspects were to the fore in the associated social media communication, which is certainly how it should be in the run-up to and during a tournament. However, for many associations, marketing and partner activations are important, since they can generate new sources of income. The strategic relevance of social media will grow in the future, since all departments of an association, as

well as the target audience, will become bigger and bigger. There will therefore always be new possibilities and opportunities!

Will the associations return to their previous communication strategies at the next EURO or do you think they will repeat what they did at EURO 2020?

Digital means constant development. User behaviour and target audiences differ from platform to platform, and requirements in terms of content and participation (including interaction) are changing all the time. I don't think going back is an option. Global availability, the ever-growing social media community and target audience, as well as the increasing accessibility of (too much) information may lead to oversaturation, so fan-centred activities will be crucially important in the future!

What went well and what didn't?

Do's and don'ts in social media campaigns.

The media landscape has changed dramatically in recent years. In particular, through the rise of social media channels and the usage of social platforms around the world, the speed of circulation of any information has increased enormously.



The guidelines below are designed to provide you with assistance for the safe handling of social platforms. What's in it for me to be active in social networks? What are the risks and how do I overcome challenges? What is safe to post, and what not?

One of the biggest benefits of having your own social media profile on platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram is being able to target your content. Anyone can determine for themselves when to communicate, what they would like to say and how they would say it. Moreover, it is an opportunity to engage and interact with fans, strengthen your own personality and brand, sharpen your individual image and shape how you are perceived by the public.

But there are some challenges in using social media. The highest priority here is handling your information carefully and safeguarding against possible threats. Content published on social platforms can very quickly spread virally and develop a momentum that is very hard to stop. Even

posts shared only with a seemingly small audience can spread quickly.

Content requirements change very frequently in social media. They are sometimes driven by technology changes on the platforms, but most of the time by the ever-growing demand of the target audience. Content across social platforms should therefore adhere to the following principles:

DO's

- Be authentic, sympathetic and engaging.
- Think about what you want to say! Once it is public, it cannot be undone. Your profile is always of public interest and people will share or retweet immediately. Deleting or editing a post, message, comment or tweet will also create a reaction. **THINK BEFORE YOU ACT!**
- Be careful and respectful in dealing with your followers and society, and in general be positive. You are responsible for what you post. These are your words, which reflect your opinion.

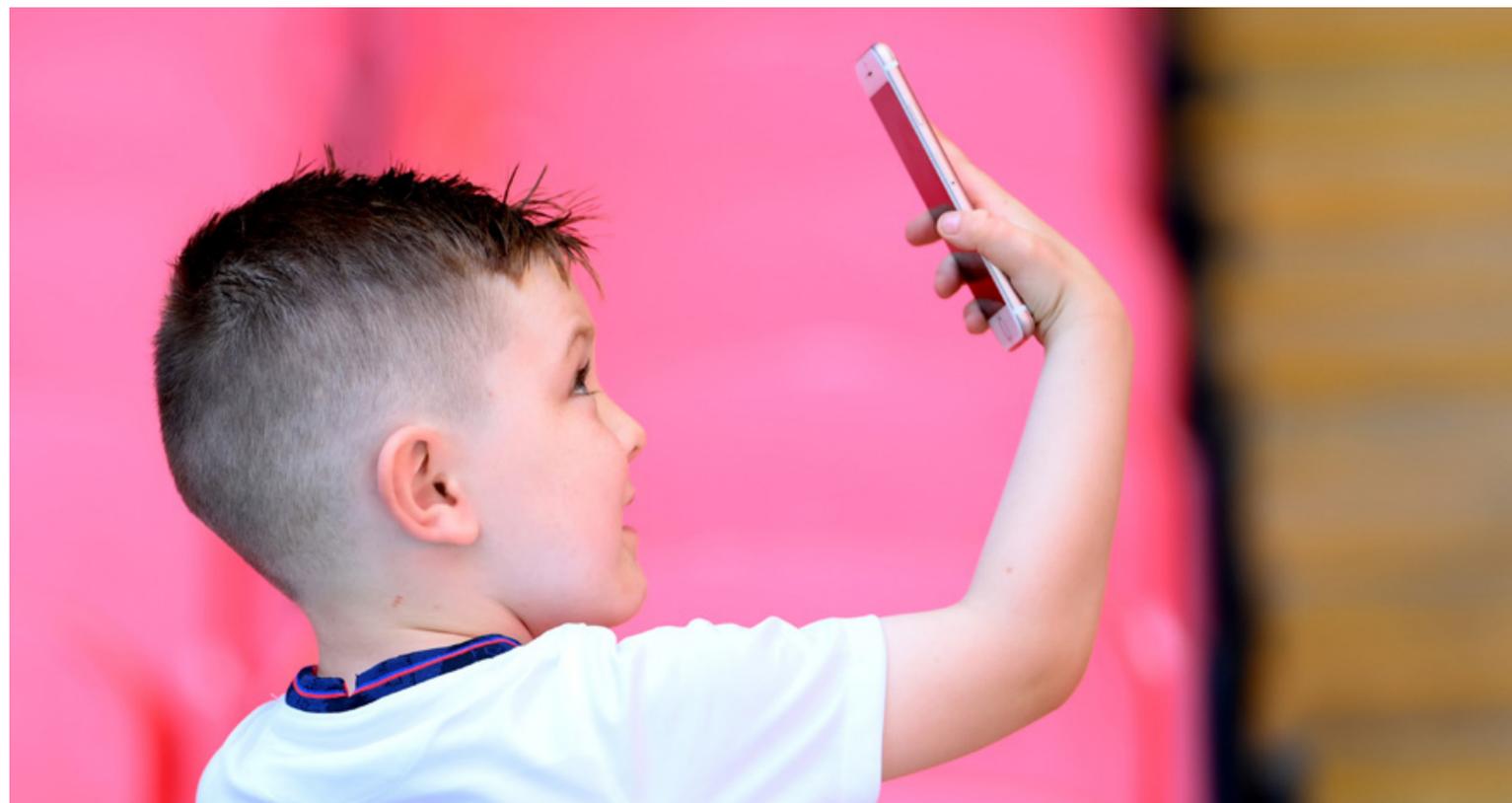
- Journalists may also use your contributions on social platforms.
- If you have any doubt as to whether something is allowed or not, check or get a second opinion before posting.
- Think about your image. How do you want to be perceived? How should your national association be perceived?
- Think of linking messaging to your organisational goals to highlight the contribution made to the development of the game or to remind people of your vision.
- Monitor growth, engagement and average reach every day during a campaign or tournament. If engagement is reducing and it's not related to the score, review the number of posts, as you might have saturated the target audience.
- Treat internal things such as tactics, formation, fines, lectures and training with absolute confidentiality.



- Make sure you project your privacy. Once something is published online, it remains detectable for a long time. Be very careful with confidential information.
- Protect your partners, brand and image, just as you protect yours.
- Experienced social media managers 'know' their audience sentiment – trust their feedback and guidance. If a social media manager has concerns about a specific post or a specific topic, reconsider or modify the content.
- In a moment of success, you should ideally show as many pieces of content as possible, especially from where the 'normal' fan can't be (i.e. behind the scenes).
- Be fast. Get the message out before others do. Fans always want to be up to date, and ideally to know more than others.

DON'TS

- Don't publish discriminatory content, for example in relation to age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- Don't post anything about tactics, training or non-public preparations, or anything that could provide your opponents with a competitive advantage.
- Don't release any information that you don't want to read in the newspaper or watch on TV. Your posts can be used as a quote. Always ask yourself before posting: „Would I also say this to a journalist?“.
- Don't be negative about team-mates, staff, players from other national associations, referees and/or public institutions. Don't use insults – be professional and maintain a respectful relationship on social platforms.
- Don't post pictures from the changing room, the team bus and/or team-internal content without prior approval from the head coach or the press officer.



- Don't post on social platforms about injuries, a diagnosis or reasons for a miss without prior approval from the head coach or the press officer.
- Don't post content that violates the ethical rules of sport!
- Don't provide false hope and raise expectations before a game or competition.
- Don't start or participate in any discussions with friends or fans on social networks. The content is always public and can be read by anyone.

- If you share or retweet posts or content contributions from fans, you are also responsible for what is seen. So don't post without checking whether the content and the profile pictures of the fans are reputable.
- Don't post for the sake of publishing – be considerate of the audience interest and expectation.

Creating solidarity

The Austrian Football Association's UEFA EURO 2020 social media campaign.

EURO 2020 was an extraordinary tournament in numerous respects. With reduced stadium capacities and widespread restrictions on interpersonal contact, the associations' social media communications were extremely important. A few 'small' associations coped particularly well with these new circumstances. Using the example of the Austrian FA, we will demonstrate what characterised their communication and what it was based on.

Social media strategy

One of the core objectives of the Austrian FA's strategy was to make the national teams and their players accessible and approachable. Through the use of its own photographs and videos, it was able to make followers feel part of the team. „As far as the national teams in particular were concerned, the focus was on creating closeness between players and fans, and making the players more accessible in order to increase their popularity and create solidarity. It's summed up by our motto, #GemeinsamÖsterreich,“ says Christian Wiesmayr, digital media officer of the Austrian FA (ÖFB).

A close relationship with the fans and followers was ultimately one of the main reasons why the Austrian FA decided, at least for the time being, not to market the national team as an international brand, as their German neighbours have done with 'Die Mannschaft', for example. „In the end, it's important for us to choose our own path

and direction. Everything needs to fit in with our own orientation and brand. Just because something works somewhere else, that doesn't mean it will work for us too," says Christian Wiesmayr.

Own production and video platform a key to success

An important step in the Austrian FA's efforts to make its external communications more professional was the launch of the ÖFB TV video platform, where it publishes its own photographic and video material. This step was hardly revolutionary in terms

of its implementation, but its detailed, rigorous format was certainly unusual. Rather than the traditional YouTube channel that national associations tend to use, the Austrians ÖFB opted for an all-round solution that covered all areas. It was therefore able to pursue its objective of player accessibility in exactly the way it wanted, using different formats. The ÖFB also adopted a multi-platform solution so that it could post the right content on the right channels. It used Instagram as a purely visual tool, and Twitter as a live ticker and update channel. It also made use of new

platforms, such as the TikTok video platform, where it tried to provide English-language content. Even its presence on the supposedly 'old-fashioned' platform Facebook was revitalised through new types of content and was an important means of reaching an older target audience than would have been possible with platforms such as Instagram and TikTok in particular.

Creative content to support brand objectives

To liven up its social media strategy, the ÖFB looked for ways to incorporate part

of the Austrian homeland in its content, very much in keeping with the #GemeinsamÖsterreich (#TogetherAustria) motto. One example of this was the presentation of the EURO 2020 squad in an Instagram carousel, in which each player was introduced in their own frame. Along with the usual information about the player's position and current club, the Austrian FA included a map showing the province in which each player was born, creating a direct link to local fans. The player introductions therefore triggered a huge response, with followers showing

their appreciation with a high number of interactions.

The Austrian FA even found a creative way of using traditional formats such as quotes, which it did not reproduce in the usual visual form. As well as the text itself, which appeared in the graphics one line at a time, the ÖFB included a short video of the speaker and the audio of the quote. Compared with previous formats with just text and images or graphics, these posts attracted a much higher interaction rate.

Summary

The Austrian FA's successful use of social media was based on two main points. First, the national association managed to motivate its fans and followers, united by a common goal, to make the journey together, and used exclusive behind-the-scenes content to make them feel part of the adventure. It also used its own communication channels, such as the newly created ÖFB TV, which gave it a unique selling point compared with other

small associations. Its decision not to pursue brand positioning helped it to retain its image as an approachable association rather than an artificial product. The primary lesson to be learned from the Austrian example is therefore the importance of defining your own path and basing communication around a central theme. It is important to draw inspiration from other associations and teams, but without copying their content and brand values.

Links to some useful articles:

Instagram:

www.instagram.com/p/CP48GOSHe02

www.instagram.com/p/CQDVmv_nxoQ

www.instagram.com/p/CQDbDFIHc8Z

www.instagram.com/p/CQDiVP9n18r

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/DasNationalteam/photos/4653559078006288

www.facebook.com/DasNationalteam/photos/4653559234672939

www.facebook.com/DasNationalteam/photos/4653559484672914

www.facebook.com/DasNationalteam/photos/4653559681339561

www.facebook.com/DasNationalteam/photos/4653559818006214

279 million impressions

UEFA EURO 2020 was also a huge success on UEFA's online channels.

What did we want to achieve?

Our main goal ahead of EURO 2020 was to help our audiences understand how earnings from the tournament are poured back into the development of the game. UEFA's HatTrick programme has been one of European football's best-kept secrets, distributing revenue from UEFA's European Championship to our member associations for investment in football development projects since 2004.

The programme has grown into one of the largest solidarity initiatives in sport, channelling an average of 60% of each EURO's revenue back into the game. Between 2020 and 2024, €775.5m will help to fund activities across Europe.

Our aim was to provide engaging and interesting examples of how UEFA teamed up with its member associations to grow the game at all levels and ensure it is accessible to everyone in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Content creation

We created a variety of different content strands to ensure we were reaching as many people as possible with our HatTrick messaging.

1. Eye-catching videos

A short series of videos focusing on one successful HatTrick initiative provided an overview of activity and the results of the programme, reinforcing the message that EURO earnings are reinvested in the game.

2. 'Did you know?' content series

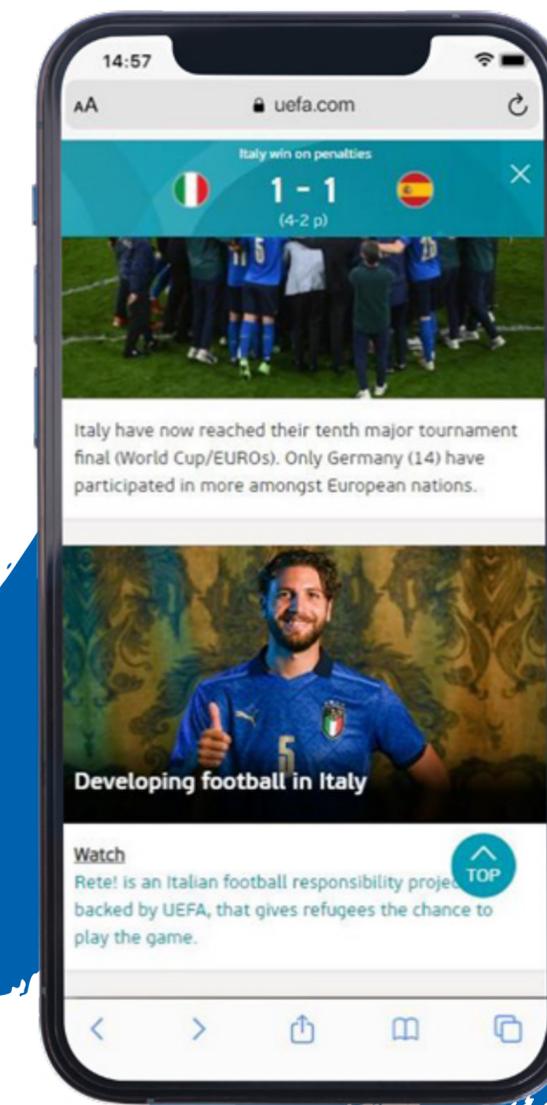
A collection of articles offering a more in-depth explanation of HatTrick impacts, from how early HatTrick payments helped support European football through the COVID-19 pandemic to how maintenance and improvements at Wembley Stadium, the venue of the EURO 2020 final, were subsidised by HatTrick. A HatTrick A-Z feature showed how the scheme has helped all 24 participating associations, as well as host countries Azerbaijan and Romania, to develop the game.

3. National association homepages overhaul

All 55 associations have their own profiles on UEFA.com. Previously these were a long stream of text detailing key moments of the association's past, so we revamped these pages for participating countries to provide a clearer description of how UEFA and the HatTrick initiative support the development of football in that country. We were also able to add information on the work of the UEFA Foundation for Children in each nation, turning the previous timeline text into a more reader-friendly rundown of key moments and events.

Promoting our content

We adopted a range of tactics to ensure our corporate content reached as wide an audience as possible, complementing rather than clashing with the work of our match-focused editorial team, and capitalising on the global attention on each of the 51 matches. With our largest digital audiences generated through the EURO 2020 website and app, we took a three-step approach to delivering



content about HatTrick and its impact on football in qualified and host nations:

1. Website and app match centres

With UEFA's largest native digital audiences generated through the EURO 2020 website and mobile app, we published an animated video series on the relevant pages at times of peak interest, in the build-up to each nation's matches, when a large audience was tuning in for the latest news and information about the games. Users could then click through to each national association's homepage to learn more about how UEFA is helping to promote the game in that country.

2. Inside UEFA web section

As well as upgrading national association pages, we shone a light on them by promoting them directly at key moments through the Inside UEFA section of the UEFA website. Leaning on eye-catching photography captured in the run-up to the tournament, we were able to strategically feature each association

on matchday, when interest was at its highest, in addition to our corporate news about the tournament.

3. Social media

We incorporated the HatTrick videos and updated national association pages into our pre-match build-up on Twitter. Using the platform's focus on news and current events, we were able to promote each association's activities in advance of its matches, picking out key details, statistics or facts to attract the reader. This allowed us to focus on various successes and impacts on different matchdays, while repeatedly delivering positive messaging and a focus on the HatTrick programme.

Of course, different platforms require different approaches. To reach Instagram's younger audiences, we used stories to create interactive quiz questions ahead of each match, inviting users to guess one of the facts about the participating nations. Once the answer was revealed, users were able to follow a link to the related association's page to find out more.

Links to some useful articles:

HatTrick overview:

www.uefa.com/insideuefa/football-development/hattrick

HatTrick A-Z:

www.uefa.com/news/026a-127cadf4628b-88044072faf0-1000--uefa-hattrick-an-a-z-guide-of-how-the-euro-supports-european-fo

Revamped national associations page:

www.uefa.com/insideuefa/member-associations/ita/?iv=true

Wembley maintenance:

www.uefa.com/returntoplay/news/026b-12aee50b-3def-2cb5ff038109-1000--euro-2020-wembley-primed-for-fitting-finale/?iv=true

How the EURO funded football during the pandemic:

www.uefa.com/returntoplay/news/026a-12863e60f54f-53ba13d3e18a-1000--how-uefa-euro-funds-helped-european-football/?iv=true

Results – How did we do?

The unprecedented levels of interest in EURO 2020 allowed us to drive similarly unprecedented levels of engagement through our social media channels and traffic to the Inside UEFA pages on UEFA.com.

In total, UEFA social media posts (excluding Instagram Stories) during the tournament period (7 June – 18 July) produced 279 million impressions and almost 800,000 clicks through to UEFA.com. This prompted more than 550,000 new followers across UEFA's corporate social media accounts.

What comes next?

1. National association page updates

Upon completion of EURO 2020, our attention turns to what comes next. The immediate priority is to replicate the updates for each of the non-participating associations, highlighting how they are collaborating with UEFA to grow the game and turning this website section into a hub of ongoing national association activity.

Some links to social content:

Twitter:

twitter.com/UEFA/status/1414273278747815938

twitter.com/UEFA/status/1412833798241325059

twitter.com/UEFA/status/1414211622453796865

twitter.com/UEFA/status/1412466372798402569

twitter.com/UEFA/status/1411019337612156928

Instagram:

www.instagram.com/p/CQrAcqMjUJ/

www.instagram.com/p/CQnqY3fMRet/

www.instagram.com/p/CQqs_DsMUH/

2. UEFA Women's EURO

With England 2022 on the horizon, we can also engage our participating national associations and share with our audience the pan-European efforts being made by the HatTrick programme to develop women's football.

UEFA's Time For Action strategy, launched in 2019, seeks to double participation among both girls and women throughout Europe by 2024, as well as the value of UEFA's women's football competitions. HatTrick is a key component of this, helping associations to develop their women's football strategies.



Crisis response: The reaction and interaction were beyond anything we had experienced

Jakub Hoyer, the Danish FA's media director, discusses the communication around the player Christian Eriksen's collapse.

It was without doubt the most shocking moment of UEFA EURO 2020. In the 43rd minute of the match between Denmark and Finland (0-1), Danish player Christian Eriksen suddenly collapsed on the pitch and lay motionless on the ground. It was an extraordinary situation that demanded clear communication. Media director Jakub Hoyer explains how the Danish FA (DBU) covered this incident through its social media channels.

Where were you when Christian Eriksen collapsed on the field and how were you informed about what had happened?

Jakub Hoyer: We were sitting behind the bench with the other team officials. The incident with Christian took place on the other side of the pitch. Our doctor and medical staff ran across the pitch to deal with the situation and we were informed through them.



Christian Eriksen is awake and has gone for further examinations at the Rigshospitalet.

Match is temporarily postponed. More info at 19:45.

First tweet after the incident
DBU – Part of something bigger
@DBUfodbold – 12 June

35,385,670 impressions

When Christian was taken to hospital, we went to the dressing room to talk to the coaches, players and staff. We kept in touch with the relevant people to stay updated on Christian's situation.

How did you deal with communication to the media and the fans just after the incident?

First of all, we needed to be sure of Christian's situation and condition – and that his family had been informed. Then we used Twitter to inform both media and fans. We tweeted twice during the break between the incident and the resumption of the match.

What other decisions were made regarding communication on that evening?

After the match, we went to the dressing room and talked to the coaches, players and staff. We usually have two players in super-flash right after the match and four to six players and the coach in flash 10 to 15 minutes later. On this occasion, I decided to protect the players and let them avoid interviews as they were very affected by the situation. I asked our coach, Kasper Hjulmand, whether he was ready – and he was. He gave interviews along with Peter Møller, our director of football.



How did you cope with the pressure and interest from international media?

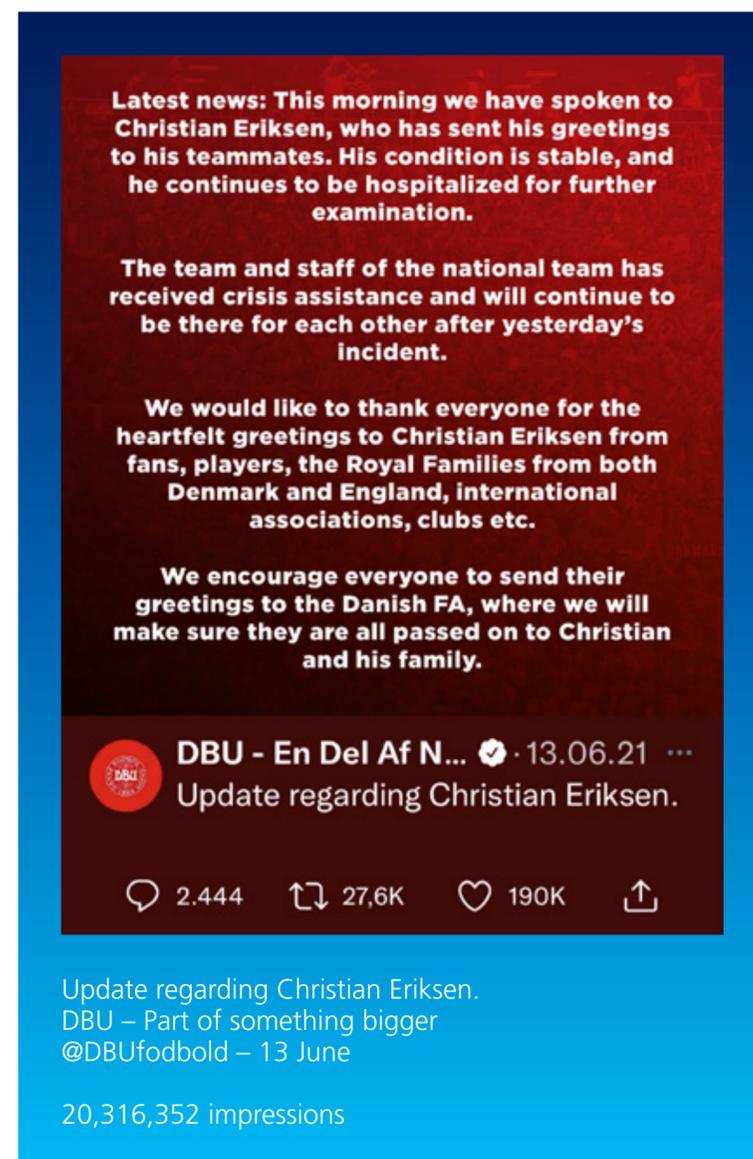
The reaction – and interaction – following our tweets about Christian on 12 June were immense and beyond anything we had ever experienced. We received calls, texts, etc. from international media all over the world: many European countries, the US, Africa, South America, Asia. Everybody wanted news, interviews, etc.

Christian Eriksen is awake and his condition remains stable. He remains hospitalised at Rigshospitalet for further examinations.

The match against Finland will be played tonight. This comes after the players were reassured that Christian is okay. The match resumes at 20:30.

Update on Christian Eriksen and the match resuming
DBU - Part of something bigger
@DBUfodbold – 12 June

11,523,583 impressions



The day after the match, we held an online press conference with 150 to 200 media represented. At the press conference, our team doctor gave an update on Christian's condition, while our head coach spoke on behalf of the team and reflected on his personal feelings and experiences. Our director of football also gave his own point of view. We decided to be honest and open about our feelings – both the grief and shock, and the relief that Christian was well. There were many social media responses to the press conference.

On the same day, we sent out a tweet with a photo of Christian at the hospital and a personal greeting from him. It was seen by 24.5 million people on Christian's and the Danish FA's Twitter profiles.

At another press conference two days after the match, three players – Kasper Schmeichel, Pierre-Emil Højbjerg and Martin Braithwaite – described their experiences and feelings. We had prepared them for all sorts of questions, but the answers were their own – no script, no communication plan. It came from their hearts.

What's the situation now?

We still get three to ten calls, emails or texts every week regarding possible interviews. We don't communicate about the incident, or about the current situation. That's up to Christian Eriksen himself.

What advice on communication in general and on social media could you give after this experience?

On the night of the incident, our main focus was on getting the facts right, taking care of Christian and his family... and then communicating to fans, media, etc. In general, I would say: Be short, be accurate – don't make mistakes in situations like this. Be aware of your target group and stakeholders – e.g. family/relatives, officials, fans, media. Be personal and emotional when relevant and possible. Keep press interviews with coaches and players brief – they are energy-sapping. Focus on quality rather than quantity when it comes to public statements.



Courage rewarded

UEFA EURO 2020 set new standards.

The EURO set new standards not only in terms of logistics, with matches played in stadiums all over the continent, but also in communication and (online) interactions between national associations, teams and fans. In these sectors in particular, the tournament inspired many creative ideas that supporters will remember for a long time to come and which are likely to form a kind of blueprint for other tournaments in future.

EURO 2020 once again showed how important it is for national associations to maintain direct contact with fans and followers on social media, and how this can enhance and reinforce an association's image and brand over the longer term. The event also provided striking evidence of the associations' different approaches, demonstrating that there was not just one single road to success, but that every campaign had strengths and weaknesses.

Whether through rainbow flags, support for Black Lives Matter or, not least, the solidarity shown by the football community after Christian Eriksen's collapse, EURO 2020 proved that basic respect and camaraderie remain a fundamental principle of continental tournaments, with numerous topics extending beyond the traditional scope of the game. Moving forward, national teams and associations will continue to be measured by their words but even more by their deeds. In a world of constant change, the fans look up to their national teams as role models. They expect their associations to take a stance on certain issues, and have the courage of their convictions. Similarly, they want to be taken

along for the ride and shown where the journey will end.

The upcoming UEFA Women's EURO 2022 in England this year will give the associations their next opportunity to show what they have learned and the way they want to face the future. It will also be a chance for them to continue developing their own approaches and brands. Because one thing that EURO 2020 clearly demonstrated was that there is no right or wrong way. The fans reward creative ideas, honest communication and a willingness to take them along. A close bond can soften the blow of a poor result or possible elimination, and if the conditions are right, it is (almost) impossible to put a foot wrong. You just need to show courage.

The next UEFA Strategic Communications Guide will focus on highlighting communications success stories on the back of UEFA Women's EURO 2022. If you would like to see your story featured or share your experience with other national associations, please write to us at: NA.Communications@uefa.ch



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