



EU Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Professional Football

Resolution of European social partners on the key principles of the football transfer system and its reform

Meeting under the auspices of the European Commission within the framework of the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Professional Football, the undersigned parties – UEFA (as associate party and Chair of the Committee), European Football Clubs and the European Leagues (both as social partners representing employers), and FIFPRO Europe (as the social partner representing employees) have agreed on the following joint resolution on key principles of the football transfer system and its reform:

1. Context

- Over the years, the transfer system has been a cornerstone of the European and global football ecosystems. It is regulated and enforced by FIFA through its *Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Player (RSTP)*.
- In Europe, the transfer system has played a notable redistributive role. Transfer fees, training rewards and the solidarity mechanism are designed to enable financial flows between clubs, youth academies and the grassroots. This role is essential to the sustainability of football, its competitive balance and development pathways and should therefore be enhanced.
- The European Court of Justice (ECJ) judgment in *Diarra* (C-650/22) of 4 October 2024 challenged some of the key provisions of the RSTP that required adjustments to ensure compliance with EU law. On 23 December 2024, FIFA introduced an *Interim Regulatory Framework*, pending the development of longer-term proposals.
- The ruling also offered an opportunity to reflect more deeply on how the system operates in the European context, and how it can be reinforced to provide long-term stability, fairness, legal certainty, and a balanced regulatory environment in which both clubs and players can thrive.
- A well-functioning system is fundamental to the sustainability of European club football, its attractiveness and growth. Europe is at the heart of the global market – accounting for nearly 90% of worldwide transfer fees and the majority of international player movements.
- The European Union Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (EU SSDC) for Professional Football has a proven track record of fostering effective collaboration among European stakeholders – clubs, leagues, players, national associations and the governing body – within a legally secure framework grounded in EU law and mindful of national contexts.

- The EU SSDC is therefore an appropriate and competent platform to thoroughly examine the European dimension of the transfer system. Its work complements and feeds into the global process at FIFA level by addressing issues that are particularly relevant to Europe's specific environment. This process has been formally welcomed and is being appropriately supported by the European Commission. This combination provides an opportunity to have a system that is globally coherent while remaining adequate to the specific needs, demands and peculiarities of European football.
- In this spirit, the European Parliament, in its resolution of 7 October 2025 on the role of EU policies in strengthening the European Sport Model strongly endorsed the function of social dialogue in sport governance and explicitly stressed *"the importance of international bodies in ensuring a transparent and fair transfer system, in line with EU law and European specificities, and calls for a strong emphasis on safeguarding the rights of athletes across all sports, with particular attention to minors"*.

2. Findings

Following written and oral exchanges throughout 2025 – including formal EU SSDC Working Group meetings and subsequent technical meetings in a dedicated sub working group on the transfer system – UEFA and the social partners hereby endorse the following:

General principles underpinning the transfer system

- The EU SSDC is a recognised and competent platform for matters relating to collective labour relations in the professional football sector. Any initiatives concerning employment and player transfers in Europe benefit from bona fide representative stakeholder dialogue at European level, where a specific legal framework applies.
- As the current RSTP framework evolves, further long-term reform efforts must be fully aligned with EU law, while reflecting the distinctive features of European club football, including its pyramidal structure, the redistributive effects of the transfer system, the role of training clubs and collective governance, and be suited to the specific needs of European football. Reforms should remain consistent, not fragmented into national-law termination regimes, and deliver regulatory stability and legal certainty.
- The EU SSDC's work is intended to support a harmonious and constructive interaction with FIFA's remit and feed into its existing efforts in that domain. Ensuring a coherent European dimension within negotiated FIFA-led reforms will support its consistency and legitimacy.
- Any further reform requires a delicate balance between legitimate club interests, protecting players' individual rights and freedom of movement, while maintaining economic stability and adhering to EU legal standards.
- The transfer system must continue to uphold contractual stability as a foundation for long-term planning and security for clubs and players alike, investment in youth development, and the sustainability of club football at every level of the pyramid.

- Transfers play a redistributive role across the European football ecosystem. Reform should preserve such role – and, where possible strengthen – mechanisms that support training clubs and youth academies.
- Any further reform shall not be considered in isolation and requires a holistic and balanced assessment.
- It is crucial that any reform delivers clarity, proportionality and balance, so that clubs can plan and invest with confidence, players can pursue their careers under fair conditions, and the transfer system, as a whole remains credible to regulators, courts and supporters.

Specifically, regarding ongoing discussions on Article 17 of the FIFA RSTP

FIFA has engaged in discussions on the reform of the compensation regime in the case of termination of a contract without just cause – and related provisions – following the Diarra judgment. Against this background, and without prejudging FIFA's prerogatives, the social partners and UEFA underline the following principles that should guide ongoing and forthcoming reforms:

- The concept of **liquidated damages / penalty clauses** may offer a viable regime for determining financial compensation to be paid in the case of termination of employment contract without just cause, provided such regime is implemented in a fair and non-abusive manner.
- **Where no such clause is agreed**, the method for calculating compensation remains under discussion. Approaches must ensure fair and adequate compensation, and contractual stability, while avoiding abusive elements.
- The **protected period** is a central mechanism of the transfer system. It aims to provide stability for both clubs and players, and safeguard the integrity of competitions. Protected periods and their application must be predictable, fair and evolve to a progressive system.
- The imposition of **sporting sanctions** in the event of termination without just cause plays a direct and important role in maintaining contractual stability. They must be predictable, fair, progressive and proportionate.
- It is necessary to protect and uphold the current operations and functioning of the **FIFA Dispute Resolution Chamber (DRC)** which provides independent, time-efficient and affordable access to justice; as well as consistent regulatory application.
- The social partners and UEFA also support the development and reinforcement of national dispute resolution chambers (**NDRCs**) in line with these principles, through social dialogue mechanisms fostered at domestic level – where they exist.

- Should any concept of an algorithm to calculate financial compensation be considered, it would require a collective process involving negotiations with social partners on legal, financial and football matters from the outset, given that any such algorithm would carry a high degree of risk and disruption, including unintended distortions within the contractual relationship and the transfer system.
- The international transfer certificate (**ITC**) process must never constitute an obstacle to players' right to exercise their profession or a club's ability to register and field a player. In that context, the issuance of an ITC should remain a purely administrative formality, delivered without delay and within a reasonable timeframe.

3. Topics for continued work under the EU SSDC

Alongside discussions within FIFA's global framework, the EU SSDC will continue to examine several structural elements of the transfer system that are of particular relevance in Europe. The objective is to ensure that solutions are adapted to European labour markets, comply with EU law, and support the European football pyramid.

Training rewards and solidarity mechanisms:

- Training compensation and solidarity payments play a critical redistributive role as they ensure that clubs investing in talent development are financially rewarded when players progress.
- Yet, these mechanisms do not sufficiently reflect the actual costs and risks borne by training clubs, including the fact that these amounts have remained unchanged since 2001, nor do they always avoid creating unintended obstacles to player mobility. The EU SSDC will therefore continue examining how to update and strengthen these mechanisms to: (i) increase fairness and consistency; (ii) reduce administrative and dispute-related burdens; (iii) increase amounts to better reflect current realities; and (iv) reinforce incentives for sustainable youth development.

Protection and career pathways for under-18 players:

- Any reform involving minor players must balance: (i) their protection as children; (ii) their progression as young professionals; and (iii) the financial sustainability of youth development systems.
- The EU SSDC will therefore assess how existing rules function in practice and whether refinements are necessary to safeguard both the well-being and rights of minors, further incentivise the efforts of training clubs and strengthen the legitimacy and viability of youth training models across Europe.

Strengthening national dispute resolution structures:

- Effective dispute resolution is fundamental to contractual stability, access to justice, and the coherence of the transfer system.
- The EU SSDC will continue supporting the creation or reinforcement of National Dispute Resolution Chambers (NDRCs) that (i) meet standards of independence, impartiality, and equal representation; (ii) provide timely and affordable access to justice for players and clubs; and (iii) ensure consistency with FIFA's global principles and EU law.
- This work recognises that national mechanisms established under these principles help reduce unnecessary escalation to international dispute bodies.

4. Next Steps

- The EU SSDC will forward this resolution to FIFA with a view to informing, complementing and helping steer ongoing and future reform processes, including through reinforced social dialogue-based initiatives at global level.
- The EU SSDC will continue its structured dialogue with the objective of developing concrete, jointly agreed proposals that reflect the principles set out in this resolution and address transfer system reforms in a comprehensive and balanced manner.
- The European Commission, based on its support and involvement to date, is invited (i) to take note of this joint statement; and (ii) to consider appropriate corresponding support in relation to providing for regulatory stability and legal certainty.
- UEFA and the social partners reiterate their shared commitment to a transfer system that is stable, fair, sustainable, and legally sound – one that protects players' rights, supports clubs' short and long-term investment strategies, and strengthens the redistributive effect of the transfer system as well as the integrity and competitiveness of European football.

Brussels, 26 November 2025