

Including

MEDICINE



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Photos: UEFA-plwoods.ch

# Message of the president

## Extra pairs of eyes

Everyone agrees on the need to help referees. With football getting ever faster and the players ever fitter, it sometimes seems the men in black face a mission impossible. For some players it has become almost second nature to use hands and arms to pull their opponent's shirt, push them or hold them back, to the point where the culprits seem genuinely surprised when they are penalised and simulation has become an everyday part of the game.

But while there is consensus on the need to assist the referees, opinions differ on how: for many video evidence is the solution, as it is considered perfectly suited to our modern world and used successfully in other sports.

For others – and it is no secret that I am one of them – video refereeing would only spoil football, as it means the game would have to be stopped, however briefly (or not), to review the scene, ideally in slow-motion and if necessary comparing the footage with that of another camera because, as everyone knows, a different angle can invite a different interpretation.

Of course, the human eye is not foolproof either. But thanks to the radio system in place, additional pairs of eyes on the penalty area can be of valuable assistance to the main referee. Not only can they change the behaviour of players, who, knowing there are extra eyes on them, are less likely to use underhand tactics, but more importantly – as the first trials with five referees have indicated – they strengthen the referee team in number, confidence and affinity. The International FA Board, which welcomed the positive results of last year's tests, has now given us the go-ahead to extend the trials to the professional game.

The best teams are often the ones which demonstrate the greatest cohesion, with players who complement one another and have a rapport. By strengthening the position of the main referee, by allowing the assistant referees to concentrate more on offsides and by offering an opportunity, for example, to referees who have reached the normal retirement age to continue their careers in a new position and, in doing so, contribute the wealth of their experience to help the main referee, we would be creating the ideal conditions for the referee team to also be one of the best.



**Michel Platini**  
UEFA President

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Bayern Munich (Zé Roberto, in white) caused a stir in the UEFA Champions League round of 16 by chalking up 12 goals in their two matches against Sporting Portugal.

Photo: Hassenstein/Bongarts/Getty Images

# A two-day conference in Poland

## U n i t e   A g a i n s t   R a c i s m



**IT'S INTERESTING TO WONDER HOW MANY OF THE 280 PARTICIPANTS ASKED THEMSELVES THE SAME SORT OF QUESTIONS AS THEY TRAVELLED TO WARSAW FOR UEFA'S THIRD UNITE AGAINST RACISM CONFERENCE, HELD FROM 3 TO 4 MARCH. WOULD IT BE A FURROWED-BROW EVENT WHERE A SMILE MIGHT SEEM OUT OF PLACE? AND, AS A CONFERENCE IS, BY DEFINITION, DISCUSSION-BASED, WOULD ANY TANGIBLE RESULTS EMERGE?**

Answers were quickly provided – and positive ones at that. Admittedly, the opening afternoon featured a visit to the Jewish Historical Institute where it was difficult to raise a smile. *"It's a reminder,"* reflected William Gaillard, adviser to the UEFA president, Michel Platini, as he opened the conference, *"that meetings such as this one are, unfortunately, still very useful."* But, from that moment until the final curtain the emphasis was on looking forward rather than back, and a smile was reinstated on

the face of the conference. The need for a balance between negative and positive was highlighted by various speakers, among them Emine Bozkurt, a member of the European Parliament, who talked of the importance of counterbalancing severe penalties with positive measures such as anti-racist clauses in players' contracts and incentives for good behaviour.

The Polish national association hosted the event with efficiency, warmth and enthusiasm. Former star striker Grzegorz Lato, who now heads the asso-

ciation, reiterated *"the global commitment to no tolerance of intolerance"* and referred to the Polish programme aimed at achieving a football *"free from racism and hate"*. Adam Giersz, secretary of state in Poland's ministry of sport, elaborated on plans currently being put in place. It is generally acknowledged that racist attitudes cannot be eliminated overnight but most anti-racism projects are medium-term.

### **Wide participation**

The event was organised by UEFA, the professional players' union FIFPro and the Football Against Racism in Europe network FARE, who were represented on stage by William Gaillard, Theo van Seggelen and Piara Powar respectively. The weave was further enriched by 70 envoys from NGOs, leagues, clubs and political spheres to



Piara Powar, representing the FARE network.



Visit to the Jewish Historical Institute.

create a magnificent opportunity for diverse flows of information and experience to be pooled.

For example, representatives from organisations which are not football-oriented were unaware of measures already put in place by UEFA. One of the proposals to emerge from the workshop sessions was that income from disciplinary sanctions be re-invested in anti-racism projects – and, of course, UEFA has, for many years, been dedicating these monies to social responsibility programmes.

But, asked whether the broad spectrum of the participants could be counter-productive, Piara Powar had no doubts. *“Not so. In Warsaw, people were eager to share what they were doing – and there was a competitive edge which should definitely not be discouraged. Let’s face it, the ‘real’ work in this area happens at national or regional level, so we have to make sure there’s dialogue between the NGOs and the national associations – which is where UEFA is performing very well.”*

### Symptoms of progress

UEFA’s role in the battle against racism and campaigns aimed at increasing respect for diversity was reviewed by the

general secretary, David Taylor, who signalled the magical atmosphere at EURO 2008 and the success of the Respect programme as symptoms of progress. *“But we maintain the message of zero tolerance for racism in our football stadiums,”* he added. *“UEFA President Michel Platini wrote to all match delegates at the beginning of this season urging them to recognise the gravity of any racist incidents and make sure that they are properly reported. At UEFA we try to be vigilant and on our guard, and we’re ready to take action where incidents occur. But sanctions are not the long-term answer. That lies in better education, awareness and cultural change. This requires time and effort and our social partnerships with FARE and FIFPro are very important to make changes occur. We need their expert advice and national networks to help us spread the message. We need the active involvement of players and former players to make the whole campaign credible and this conference is an opportunity to challenge conventional issues and thinking.”*

The platform for doing so was provided by five workshops during which fundamental topics were addressed and debated. How can football best be used in the fight against discrimination? What do we need to understand about fans if we are to strengthen them as a positive force against racism? How can minorities – such as the Roma and Sinti ethnic groups – best be integrated into football and into society? How can football break down barriers between communities? How can institutional discrimination be addressed? Where is the dividing line between healthy national identification and xenophobia or sectarianism?

### Lilian Thuram’s convictions

The reactions to these and many other crucial questions were presented during a session on the final afternoon when among the listeners was Lilian Thuram. The 142-time French international and spearhead of the anti-racism foundation which bears his name flew into Warsaw for barely a few hours to take a place on the podium, to deliver strong messages about the way racism should be tackled and to answer questions from a riveted audience.

He opened by expressing concern about the possibility of the current financial crisis promoting a resurgence of racist attitudes. But his core concerns go far beyond the vagaries of stock markets. *“To combat racism, we must understand it,”* he commented. *“We have to look at history, dismantle prejudices and then reconstruct. If you watch kids playing football, you’ll immediately see that they enjoy the game without any thoughts of religion or colour. We have to be careful not to make the mistake of talking only about racism in football because I firmly believe that there is less racism*



Lilian Thuram delivered a strong message.



Theo van Seggelen, the FIFPro general secretary.



One of the workshops.

in football and at football clubs than there is in society. But I think that there has been reluctance to see some things as they really are. You might get a club president who shrugs his shoulders and says that you can't control supporters. That's not good. It's up to each of us to ask 'what can I do to change things?' EURO was a good illustration that football is a great instrument to inform and guide, to transmit important messages."

The Fondation Lilian Thuram is conducting in-depth scientific, historical and sociological research on the roots of racism with a view to pinpointing the origins and working on preconceived ideas. "Some racist concepts are not especially offensive but they irritate me," he admitted. "I get fed up with black people being associated with physical strength or being associated only with sport and singing. You even

hear absurd stories like the coach who decided to change his training schedules because he'd been told black people get up later."

### The way of information and education

Lilian Thuram is convinced that information and education provide the most valid way forward. "We need to supply historical information to fans throughout Europe so that they can trace the origins of racism. For example, the first time that black people appear in most European history books is during the times of slavery. These are the prejudices that we have to dismantle, to deconstruct. It can be done. Think back to the 1950s in the United States when Rosa Parks wasn't able to take a seat on a bus. The fact that Barack Obama is now the country's president clearly changes concepts."

"A lot of it is purely psychological," he adds, "or in the imagination. And I believe that people are ready for change, if we can remove apprehension and add comprehension. For a start, we must encourage people to speak up. Not doing so is also a deep-rooted instinct that we have to change. I remember that the first person to tell me to keep quiet was my mother!"

"We also have to be careful how much we talk about 'minorities'. I don't accept that I'm one of a 'minority'. Do I have to accept what the 'majority' want because of the colour of my skin or my beliefs? Quite often the French Football Federation asks me to visit schools or other institutions and one of the messages I deliver very strongly to kids who regard themselves as 'social victims' is the importance of not nourishing

In different ways, all the sectors represented at the conference stressed their desire to eradicate racism.



Photos: UEFA/plwoods.ch



David Taylor,  
the UEFA  
general  
secretary.



Emine  
Bozkurt,  
representing  
the European  
Parliament,  
with  
Willi Lemke,  
UN special  
adviser.

Photos: UEFA/pjwoods.ch

## A platform for further progress

As first vice-president of UEFA, Senes Erzik took the stage in Warsaw to deliver one of the keynote speeches as the plenary sessions got under way. As he was attending his first Unite Against Racism conference as chairman of UEFA's Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee he had a special interest in the success of the event.

*"I have to say," he said after the conference had been closed, "that I was really, really impressed. Soon after we opened the conference, we asked the participants to stand up and talk about their expectations for the event. Normally, there's a timid response. But not in Warsaw. Not only at that point*

*but right throughout the conference, everybody was more than ready to make their voices heard and to propose solutions to problems and ways to move forward. Frankly, I was delighted.*

*"The main purpose we had traced out before the conference was to review progress since the previous events in London and Barcelona and to find ways of establishing and implementing good practice right across the continent. This objective was most definitely achieved.*

*"We were especially keen for the participants to evaluate the efforts and involvement of UEFA and I was pleased to receive so many positive comments about progress so far, especially in the last two years. The activities implemented at EURO 2008 represented a climax to that period and I think we successfully used the platform to convey a lot of different messages under the Respect banner. It also showed that we don't just expect others to get on with the job but are more than prepared to get our hands on the work ourselves. It was important for us to receive the World Fair Play Award in Istanbul because it demonstrated that UEFA's work was being positively evaluated by outside bodies. It gives us confidence that we are on the right track.*

*"Warsaw then showed us that we have excellent partners in our battle against racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination. It strengthened my belief that football is a powerful force for integration and tolerance in a Europe caught by a mood of pessimism. We have a saying in Turkey that a tree can be bent when it is young – and I am convinced that education is a key factor for future progress.*

*"In my personal opinion – and this is something we will be debating within UEFA – I feel another positive step for the future would be to encourage participation by the supporters. One of the clear messages delivered in Warsaw was that, in terms of racist attitudes, we're not talking about players, coaches or referees but rather the public inside and outside the stadium. So maybe we need to broaden our horizons and to establish more direct relationships with supporters' organisations – as we did recently by inviting them to visit UEFA in Nyon – and to help to create pan-European groupings and to promote social projects. I think that the enthusiasm and dynamism that was transmitted during the conference in Warsaw gives us all an excellent platform for further progress in such a vital area of life in European societies."*

*long-standing prejudices by prolonging stereotypes. I recognise that, because of my record as a player, I can say things that others can't – or rather, people are readier to listen."*

This was one of the common denominators of the conference, from start to finish. FIFPro screened Show Racism the Red Card featuring a number of top players, with Theo van Seggelen reporting that, in one way or another, around one third of the FIFPro membership is using role-model status to deliver anti-racism messages. And the last word in Warsaw belonged to Willi Lemke, a man who became a familiar figure in European football during 18 years at Werder Bremen and is now a UN special adviser for sports and development. He agreed with Lilian Thuram (who jokingly described himself as "an apprentice politician") that political initiatives had a major role to play in the fight against discrimination but, in a passionate speech which had little to do with the text he'd previously prepared, was adamant that "if you think politicians can tell kids what to do and what not to do, you're totally wrong. They can help with legislation and guidelines but the kids won't listen to them. The people they will listen to are Lilian Thuram and the other top players who have become idols. They are the ones who can exploit football to deliver the really important social messages."

*"The agenda in Warsaw showed that Europe is moving forward," commented Piara Powar. "There were detailed and invaluable discussions about good practice, whereas before there were none. New agendas are emerging, emphasising that UEFA, FARE, FIFPro and all the other stakeholders need to come together to face up to challenges in fan culture and other areas and to make sure that they are tackled – and tackled in the right way."*



In 1984, Liverpool won the Champion Clubs' Cup in Rome, defeating AS Roma. Michael Robinson and Bruce Grobbelaar hold the trophy aloft.

Empics Sport/PA Photos



The Stadio Olimpico in Rome.

Empics Sport/PA Photos



Demetrio Albertini, pictured with Marios N. Lefkaritis, presents the card that will be more than just a ticket to see the match.

FIGC

# UEFA Champions League final in Rome

## An innovative project

**ROME, 16 FEBRUARY 2009: 100 DAYS UNTIL THE UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL, SCHEDULED TO BE PLAYED AT THE OLYMPIC STADIUM ON 27 MAY.**

At the press conference held to unveil the ticket reservation system, another important milestone was announced: at the historic headquarters of the ATAC (Rome's public transport company), the supporters' ticket reservation procedure was outlined and an innovative initiative of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), known as the card project, was launched.



UEFA was represented at the press conference by one of its vice-presidents, Marios N. Lefkaritis, and by the director of its Competitions Division, Giorgio Marchetti; the FIGC was represented by vice-president Demetrio Albertini, the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) by Emilio Di Toro and the Rome municipal authority by Pietro di Paolo.

### Card replaces ticket

The traditional paper ticket will be replaced by a card for the first time in UEFA Champions League history. Although a card was used for the 2004 final in Gelsenkirchen, it did not offer any additional services. Thanks to the cooperation of the Rome municipal authority and CONI, this new card will entitle the holder not only to enter the stadium, but also to use public transport free of charge from 26 to 28 May and to visit the Capitoline museums and the Ara Pacis.

As the FIGC vice-president pointed out, with the agreement of UEFA, which adopted the project and supported it financially, CONI, the services which made the access system compatible with the card, and the Rome municipal authority, which has granted access

to the public services and museums, this initiative has been fully implemented.

The card is meant to be a way of thwarting forgeries, accelerating entry into the stadium and providing greater security thanks to the checks that will be carried out on all holders before the cards are distributed.

Marios N. Lefkaritis said he was optimistic about working with the organising committee and sure that the final would be a success.

The press conference concluded with the symbolic presentation of a giant ticket, which the UEFA vice-president handed to Demetrio Albertini and final ambassador Bruno Conti, a member of the 1982 World Cup winning team.

### Distribution of 67,000 seats

Actual ticket sales (10,000 are available to the general public) began on

2 March via a special page on the official UEFA website. The public had until midday on 16 March to apply and then had to cross their fingers in the hope of receiving a positive response by the end of the month. If demand exceeds supply, a draw will take place. Individuals can only apply for two tickets each. Marios N. Lefkaritis also explained that each finalist will receive 20,000 tickets and that the remaining 17,000 will be reserved for the European football family, including the organising committee, national associations and commercial partners. The ticket prices are identical to those for last year's final in Moscow, another gesture in favour of the supporters who will descend on the Eternal City to enjoy a true football spectacle.

*Barbara Moschini*



Demetrio Albertini, Bruno Conti and Marios N. Lefkaritis present a symbolic giant ticket.

FIGC



The UEFA president addresses the European Parliament.

Lode Saidane

# News from Brussels

## A groundbreaking speech at the European Parliament

**AT THE INVITATION OF THE POLITICAL GROUPS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, UEFA PRESIDENT MICHEL PLATINI OUTLINED HIS VISION FOR FOOTBALL IN BRUSSELS ON 18 FEBRUARY. IT WAS A GROUNDBREAKING SPEECH THAT COVERED TOPICS INCLUDING THE SPECIFICITY OF SPORT, THE PROTECTION OF YOUNG PLAYERS, EXCESSES WITHIN THE GAME AND THE RESULTING NEED FOR REGULATION. HERE ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS.**

Never before had the UEFA president addressed the European Parliament, the only institution that embodies the democratic legitimacy of the European Union (EU). It was a major first, therefore, and a wonderful opportunity to defend the values represented by European football, some of which are, unfortunately, under greater threat than ever.

Michel Platini began by considering the social aspect of football. "Elite football represents less than 1%

*of people who play organised football... It is vital that the values represented by elite football are in unison with the social and educational objectives of grassroots football."* He praised the European Parliament's contribution in this respect because it had "been firmly committed to safeguarding these essential values of European football."

### Specificity of sport

Recognition of the specificity of sport is another principle defended by the

UEFA president and shared by the members of the European Parliament, as demonstrated by their resolutions on the future of professional football in Europe (cf. *uefadirect* No. 59) and on the White Paper on Sport (cf. *uefadirect* No. 75). On this occasion, Michel Platini was therefore able to speak in a forthright manner about his determination to combat "the false notion [that] unfortunately still exists in certain circles [according to which] competition law [is] the fundamental law of Europe. Let me be clear, unequivocal and perhaps even a little brutal: [the football family] refuse[s] categorically to be held in a straitjacket or tied to prefabricated models that are based on the false equation that professional sport = a purely economic activity."

The economic crisis, from which nobody is safe, gives a little more strength to the UEFA president's argument and heightens the need for better regulation of football in Europe. "For the past 15 or 20 years, we have grown tired of hearing that there is no need to regulate, that the market regulates itself perfectly, that excesses and imbalances will disappear of their own accord, and that the growth of income in football is an endless upward spiral. We now know that none of this is true: that in football as in the economy in general, the market is incapable of correcting its own excesses, and it was not the UEFA president who said so, it was Barack Obama!"

### Financial transparency

Nobody was in any doubt that Michel Platini had the United States in mind when he talked about the idea of a "European salary cap" as a way of giving football "greater financial transparency and better governance. We are currently looking at the idea of limiting, to a certain degree, a club's expenditure on staff – salary and transfer fees combined – to an as yet undecided percentage of its direct and indirect sporting revenue. (...) We are only at the begin-



Lode Saidane





Vogelzang/PA/Photos

Clubs which make an effort to train youth players should be encouraged.



Lode Saldane

Michel Platini with Hans-Gert Pöttering, president of the European Parliament.

ning of this discussion, but it will continue in the form of dialogue with the clubs about the future of our licensing system and any changes will be made on a consensual basis and with a view to strengthening this system." Michel Platini explained that "We will not impose any kind of *diktat*" on anyone, but that UEFA "should be able to decide independently under what conditions clubs may participate in the competitions that it organises." He therefore urged political decision-makers to ensure that "inappropriate legislation [does not stop us] from establishing financial fair play (...) and from putting in place mechanisms that foster the integrity of our competitions and more transparency in the management of our affairs." It is the morality of football that is at stake.

### Protection of children

The need to protect children, particularly young footballers, was also emphasised by the UEFA president. "Most youngsters who are brought to Europe from third-world countries do not become Ronaldinhos or Eto'os. Often enticed by a shady agent, they stagnate for a few years in a semi-professional club in eastern or southern Europe, usually ending up with no qualifications, no future in sport and no identity papers. (...) And when you pay a child or their parents to travel overseas, when you uproot them from their home environment, when you make them emotionally disorientated, I call that child trafficking (...). It is a "sort of procuring for the purposes of sport" that must be stamped out.

Child trafficking is not the only threat that needs to be curbed. Helping youngsters who fail to make it as professional footballers to find another career should also be given priority. "Experience shows that the failure rate is much higher when a young player's school education is disrupted by an untimely move abroad and, after being uprooted in such a way, very few have flourished in a sporting and psychological sense." For this reason, the UEFA president

argued, in conformity with the conclusions of the French presidency of the European Union, which were published in December (cf. *uefadirect* No. 82), in favour of a two-part project "that fully prepares the young person for a career in sport but which does not neglect the general education that will enable them to succeed in further education if their sporting career does not work out as well as they had hoped."

### Support for training clubs

Providing sports training and, at the same time, offering young athletes a suitable educational programme nevertheless represents a huge financial commitment for a training club because of the necessary investment in staff and infrastructures. It is therefore vital to ensure that training clubs are protected. "If such a club loses its best players at a very young age, it will find it extremely difficult to continue making a serious commitment to this kind of work."

The UEFA president has "thought about this problem a great deal and [is] now convinced that the international – and only interna-

tional – transfer of players under 18 should be prohibited, fully in accordance with the FIFA statutes. (...) We have already begun talking to the European Commission about this issue and I hope that, with your support (that of the members of the European Parliament), we will be able to assert football's point of view and the need to protect the interests of our young people."

Before leaving the podium, Michel Platini sent out a message of hope to the Euro-MPs. "The European Parliament is the largest democratically elected institution on our continent; UEFA organises and gives structure to something Europeans are extremely passionate about. Together we can restore confidence in the positive values that Europe has to offer. (...) If we want to prevent football from losing its soul and being eaten away from within, we need to take the initiative and radically change certain types of behaviour and, in particular, certain rules." How can this be achieved? "I will do all I can, but I urge you to do the rest", said the UEFA president. A message that was received loud and clear by an audience that had been completely won over...



Getty Images

Unlike Eto'o, very few young immigrants actually succeed in living out their dream.



Philippe Albert playing for Newcastle United.

Empics Sport/PA Photos



Hohenheim 1899 were not averse to doing some cycling to prepare for the new season.

Getty Images

# Footballers and

**EVEN THOUGH FOOTBALL IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE DEMANDING, SOME PLAYERS, EVEN AT PROFESSIONAL LEVEL, ALSO PLAY OTHER SPORTS.**

Footballers love playing card games, snooker and billiards, which help them pass the time when they are travelling or relaxing and which also represent a form of team building. They also tend to have a good eye for a ball and often excel at tennis and golf. These two sports are undoubtedly the most popular among footballers, although they sometimes play other, more surprising sports... as long as their schedule permits.

## Taking no risks

Those who play a variety of sports clearly have neither the time nor the energy to indulge in another physical activity during the season. *"It would be stupid to take unnecessary risks, since*

*a footballer's career is short,"* explains Philippe Albert, who discovered golf while playing for Newcastle United. The former international is superb at tennis, a sport that he has played assiduously since hanging up his boots. *"Before, I only played in the holidays because the English season is so intense that I had to save my energy during the season. I anticipate a lot in tennis and it's actually easy for us footballers to learn how to play ball games. I discovered golf in England. It's an institution over there! The English play it from a very young age. Even the youth teams play golf on their days off. They have excellent handicaps. Kevin Keegan is a brilliant golfer, almost as good as the professionals.*

*At Newcastle, just like other clubs, everyone played golf, and the foreigners were more or less obliged to join in. We used to organise golf days as a team. We would meet on the course at 10 a.m. and spend the day walking around in the fresh air. It relaxed our muscles and our minds. We had tremendous fun and it was great for team spirit. Once I had finished at the driving range, where I spent a certain amount of time learning how to strike the ball, I joined my team-mates. We would finish the day by having a drink together. It was an unforgettable time."*

There are two types of golf club in England: private and public, which are run more democratically. *"Football players go to the course nearest to where they live, regardless of whether it is public or private."*

Georges Grün, a former Belgian international who now comments for private channel RTL, is a keen angler. *"It has always helped me relax and recharge my batteries. I like the contact with nature and the healthy, pleasant environment. I always go fishing with friends. I often disappear for a few days to go fly-fishing. I discovered this sport in Italy. It is not a question of sitting down all day waiting for a fish to bite. I fish in the river and walk several kilometres in the water."* A type of aquajogging!

Belgian international Eric Deflandre (Dender) loves playing tennis. *"I play for two hours every Tuesday evening with some friends who want to stay fit. We have been playing doubles for the past year. It is more*



Golf is a popular sport among footballers.

Getty Images



Keystone/Laif Guenter Struedl/Laif

Cross-country skiing is a less dangerous form of skiing for footballers.



Getty Images

Footballers are generally at ease with a ball, whatever its size.

# other sports

tactical, a bit less serious... although I find it hard to keep my competitive instinct in check! Tennis is my favourite sport after football. When I was playing in the European Cup, it was obviously much harder to play because of the busy schedule, as well as the fact that I was away on Tuesdays." Eric Deflandre agrees that footballers are interested in all ball sports: "When we are away training, if there is a tennis or volleyball court, it is always very popular. Table tennis is the same. All of these sports require coordination similar to that required to play football."

## Mountaineering

Belgian player Filip Vandewalle loved to spend his holidays climbing mountains. His enthusiasm was such that he even built a mountain chalet in a forest near Bruges. Swiss international Christophe Bonvin used to go rock climbing, before taking up mountaineering at the end of his career. "I used to go with my friends on Sundays. They were much better than me. It helped me to keep my success on the football pitch in perspective."

Players are not the only ones who enjoy different sports. German national coach Joachim Löw is an experienced mountaineer, who has climbed Kilimanjaro and numerous Alpine peaks. It is a sport that enables him to escape and fits with his rigorousness. He also enjoys long-distance running and recently combined his two favourite sports when filming an advertisement for a major car manufacturer. The advert shows the German national team, led by their coach, wearing old mountaineering gear on the Zugspitze, Germany's highest peak. Joachim Löw often compares tournaments and qualifying campaigns to mountain expeditions. Merkus Merk, who was forced to retire from refereeing

after reaching the official age limit, has always been something of a fitness fanatic. As well as referee-specific training, he has always enjoyed long-distance running, sometimes running for up to two hours. "I have twice run the Jungfrau marathon at an altitude of 2,000 m, I have competed in triathlons and I am also a mountaineer. I enjoy combining sport, nature and adventure."

## What clubs think

Some clubs ban their players from practising so-called hazardous sports such as skiing, diving and motor sports. At Anderlecht, Georges Grün was not allowed to indulge in these sports. "Even horse-riding was banned. However, skiing was permitted in Italy. I even went skiing with the team. I just think that skiing is more deeply embedded in people's mentalities over there."

Eric Deflandre discovered Alpine skiing at Olympique Lyonnais: "We used to go skiing in Tignes. Like cycling, skiing added variety to our physical preparation, whether fitness training or muscular work. I went cross-country skiing a few times in Belgium with Standard and FC Liégeois. Georges Grün is right: bans on particular sports vary according to people's mentalities. Since Liège was near the Fagnes, cross-country skiing seemed a natural thing to do. That said, these bans are usually linked to insurance policies, which often prohibit the practice of sports other than football. Since I do a lot of other sports, I have taken out my own personal insurance." Insurance companies have a considerable influence on how much latitude is granted to footballers. Not surprisingly, they tend to reflect the mentality of the country concerned. Bayern Munich, for example, do not ban any sports at all.

Pascale Pierard



Getty Images

A lot of footballers enjoy playing tennis, but not many are as lucky as Real Madrid's Raul and have the opportunity to play with the world No 1, Rafael Nadal.



The draw on 28 February.



The Ekaterinburg sports palace.

# Futsal Cup: final four in Ekaterinburg

## Final test for Russia's Viz-kids

**2008 TURNED OUT TO BE A RED-LETTER YEAR FOR RUSSIA, WITH FC ZENIT ST. PETERSBURG ACHIEVING A UEFA CUP AND UEFA SUPER CUP DOUBLE, MOSCOW SUCCESSFULLY STAGING THE UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AND UEFA FUTSAL CUP FINALS, AND THE NATIONAL TEAM WINNING PLAUDITS FOR AN IMPRESSIVE EURO 2008. THAT WAS NOT ALL. A TEAM CALLED MFK VIZ-SINARA EKATERINBURG, MAKING ITS DEBUT IN THE UEFA FUTSAL CUP, BEAT SPAIN'S FS ELPOZO MURCIA ON PENALTIES TO TAKE THE EUROPEAN TITLE.**

Fans in less easterly areas of the continent might be forgiven for needing an atlas to find the city of 1.3 million inhabitants on the other side of the Ural mountains, some 1,700km east of Moscow in a time zone four hours ahead of central Europe. But, in April, Ekaterinburg is the venue for the final four of the UEFA Futsal Cup, where Viz will be aiming to put the city literally and figuratively on Europe's footballing map.

### Russian semi-final

Since the four-team final tournament was implanted in 2007, neither FS ElPozo Murcia nor MFK Dinamo Moskva

have successfully defended the title despite playing in front of their home fans. Breaking this tradition is the challenge for the team coached by Sergei Skorovich. As newly named Russian national team coach, he can, curiously, team up with Guus Hiddink to make history as a tandem who combine club and national team duties in the indoor and outdoor games.

Skorovich acknowledges the difficulty of Viz's title defence but focuses on the positives. *"The important thing,"* he insists, *"is that it's a great event which allows the spectators to watch the top*

*players in the world and for the youngsters to improve their skills. Playing at home is an extra responsibility for the players but also a chance to show our skills to a big audience."*

The philosophy is understandable at a club with an all-Russian squad and an academy where 500 players develop their futsal skills. Viz's daunting first hurdle is a semi-final against MFK Dinamo Moskva who, having strung together six Russian league titles, five UEFA Futsal Cup semi-finals and the European title in 2007, are now led by Brazilian coach Sérgio Aguiar Guimarães Filho, affectionately known by his nickname Sapó (frog) because, as a youngster, he was thought to have big eyes. This season's four domestic league meetings have yielded three wins for Viz and one draw and, barely three weeks before the UEFA showdown, the clubs will have met twice more, in the Russian Cup final.

### Interviú Madrid-Kairat Almaty

The surprise factor can therefore be expected to carry more weight in the other semi-final, between Interviú Madrid and Kairat Almaty though, even here, elements of the opposition have been under scrutiny, as Spain and Kazakhstan have been paired in the European Futsal Championship 2010 qualifiers. Inter, as they are known in Spain, are bidding to become the first to complete a hat-trick of UEFA Futsal Cups, having won twice under Jesús Candelas. The squad, who have already won Spain's Copa del Rey this season, now travel to Russia, led by Candelas's former assistant Juan Luís Alonso, alias Juanlu who, at 33, is the youngest of the finalist coaches and of the same generation as many of his players, Spain's futsal player of the year, goalkeeper Luís Amado, among them.

Their opponents, Kairat Almaty, currently coached by João Barbosa, are a fascinating blend of domestic and Brazilian talent and, having made an impact by reaching the 2006 semi-finals, the club from Kazakhstan is keen to consolidate its position among the European elite.

The draw for the semi-finals was held in Ekaterinburg on 28 February.

The semi-finals of the UEFA Futsal Cup will be played at the 5,500-capacity sports palace in Ekaterinburg on Friday 24 April, with the bronze-medal match and the final two days later.



In last year's final, Viz-Sinara Ekaterinburg (in white) came up against ElPozo Murcia.

Sportsfile



Meeting of the UEFA Club Competitions Committee.



Friedrich Stickler's last meeting.

# Meetings and other activities

## A resolution to protect minors

**AT ITS MEETING ON 9 MARCH AT UEFA HEADQUARTERS IN NYON, THE PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL STRATEGY COUNCIL ADOPTED A RESOLUTION ON THE PROTECTION OF FOOTBALLERS UNDER 18.**

With this resolution, the four constituents of the strategy council – UEFA, the leagues, the clubs and the players – have taken a joint stand against the potentially harmful consequences of the international transfer of minors (under-18s), uprooted prematurely from their home environments. The resolution calls for a revision of Article 19(2)(b) of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, which exceptionally allows transfers of players aged 16 to 18 within the EU or EEA. The strategy council believes that the same ban on underage trans-

fers should apply both inside and outside Europe.

The council also focussed on financial fair play in the UEFA club competitions. It discussed reinforcing the existing club licensing system and trying to make sure it was applied more consistently throughout Europe. It examined various concrete measures, such as the creation of a financial control body and stricter cost control measures.

The agenda for the strategy council's first meeting of the year was rounded off by items on European social dialogue and EU matters.

## UEFA meets supporter groups in Nyon

**On 23 February, UEFA held a meeting with fan groups from across Europe at the House of European Football.**

The aim of this type of meeting (the first was organised in December 2007) is to maintain regular dialogue between football's supporters and leaders, an idea championed by the UEFA president, Michel Platini. The latest meeting focussed primarily on how supporters can contribute to the modern-day game.

For UEFA, the meeting was also an opportunity to present its priorities for 2009 (protection of minors, financial fair play in the UEFA club competitions and preparations for EURO 2012) and explain how its disciplinary bodies work, in particular the procedure and penalties applied in cases linked to supporter conduct.

Other topics discussed at the meeting included the inaugural European football fans' congress held last year, the setting up of a European supporters' network and how fans can get involved in the running of their clubs.

## Four bids received for EURO 2016

**By the deadline of 9 March, the UEFA administration had received four bids to host EURO 2016.**

France, Italy and Turkey informed UEFA that they would submit single bids, with Norway and Sweden applying to host the tournament together. UEFA will now carry out a preliminary assessment of the different candidates.

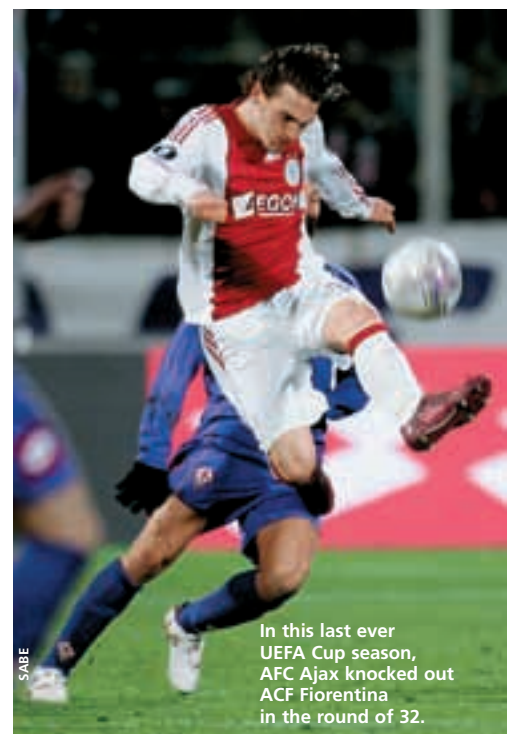
## Club Competitions Committee – examination of the regulations

**The UEFA Club Competitions Committee met in Nyon on 23 February, for the last meeting presided over by Austria's Friedrich Stickler, chairman of the committee since 2002.**

The examination of the regulations for the forthcoming UEFA club competition season traditionally takes up the bulk of the committee's first meeting of the year. This time it was even more important than normal, as the competitions are about to enter a new cycle, with changes to the access routes to the UEFA Champions League group stage and a whole new format for the UEFA Europa League, which takes the place of the UEFA Cup. The UEFA Intertoto Cup has also been discontinued, and the qualifiers for the Europa League start in June.

So there were lots of changes to consider and submit to the Executive Committee in March for its approval.

The committee was also given information about preparations for this year's finals and financial forecasts for the following editions.



In this last ever UEFA Cup season, AFC Ajax knocked out ACF Fiorentina in the round of 32.



The official inauguration ceremony for the new football academy of the AFFA.



# Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan

## The football academy opens its doors

day. I convey the regards of the FIFA and UEFA presidents. Mr Blatter and Mr Platini took part in the ceremony to lay the foundation stone of the AFFA's headquarters. Today we are witnesses to a greater event in the history of Azerbaijan football. I'm convinced that this football academy will play an important role in the development of football in Azerbaijan. We will also help

**THE OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE FIRST FOOTBALL ACADEMY IN AZERBAIJAN, CONSTRUCTED WITH THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF UEFA AND THE ASSOCIATION OF FOOTBALL FEDERATIONS OF AZERBAIJAN (AFFA), TOOK PLACE AT THE END OF FEBRUARY.**

The ceremony was attended by the president of the AFFA, Rovnag Abdullayev; FIFA Executive Committee member and UEFA vice-president Senes Erzik; FIFA technical director Jean-Michel Benezet; Ismayil Ismayilov, deputy minister for youth and sport; Chingiz Huseynzada, vice-president of the national Olympic committee; members of the AFFA Executive Committee; football veterans and other officials.

In his opening speech, Rovnag Abdullayev said:

*"The construction of the football academy is a great event in the history of Azerbaijan football. The academy, constructed with the financial support of UEFA and AFFA, will play a significant role in*

*the development of youth football in our country. We express our deep gratitude to UEFA for its support."*

### Well-equipped centre

The AFFA president also remarked that the facilities of the academy met all the standards. Able to accommodate a team of 27, the academy has 12 bedrooms, a conference hall fitted with modern equipment, computer rooms equipped with computers connected to high-speed internet, a doctor's consulting room, a massage room, a fitness hall, a swimming pool and a sauna. The fitness hall is equipped with the latest training apparatus for the physical preparation of pupils of the academy and members of the national teams when training at the academy.

In brief, the academy has everything necessary for the preparation of young footballers.

*"I am sure that pupils from the academy will represent Azerbaijan in international competitions with dignity and become worthy players of national teams and clubs in the future,"* Mr Abdullayev said.

### Historical day

UEFA vice-president Senes Erzik said that he was glad to be visiting Azerbaijan again. *"I was here four years ago and I'm glad to be here on such an important*



Senes Erzik (right) unveils the UEFA commemorative plaque with Rovnag Abdullayev, president of the AFFA.

*the AFFA further because the association has chosen the right policy and strategy for the development of football. I congratulate each member of the football family of Azerbaijan on this great day!"*

Ismayil Ismayilov, deputy minister for youth and sport, noted that all conditions for the development of all kinds of sport, including football, had been created in the country. The construction of the football academy was another striking demonstration of this fact.

After the speeches, the AFFA president and UEFA vice-president Senes Erzik unveiled a UEFA commemorative plaque on the wall and cut the ribbon on the new academy building.

The AFFA officials and visitors acquainted themselves with the football academy, after which the ceremony participants visited the mini-pitch with artificial turf built near the AFFA headquarters and watched youth players in training there.

A press conference took place at the end of the opening ceremony.

Elkhan Mammadov



The centre is fully equipped all round, including the fitness hall.



## ARMENIA

• GEORGI MATEVOSYAN •

### Licensing system seminar

The Football Federation of Armenia (FFA), which considers the club licensing system to be an important means of developing Armenian football, takes every possible opportunity to improve its system further. All related activities, including UEFA and SGS audits, are treated as a chance to discover any problems or failings within the national club licensing system. This is very important, since the FFA hopes to achieve ISO 9001:2000 certification by 2011.

A recent visit by a UEFA representative was therefore taken very seriously. The final results of the visit will be communicated by the FFA at a later date, but there is no doubt that it helped the licensor to understand all the intricacies of its work.

During the visit a one-day seminar was held in Yerevan, where club CEOs, accountants and licensing officers, as well as the FFA licensing department experts, obtained a great deal of information about club licensing development in other associations, benchmarking, matters related to financial criteria, etc.

In his opening speech, FFA General Secretary Armen Minasyan expressed his gratitude to UEFA for the assistance it had provided to national licensors with the launch and implementation of the club licensing system.

The meeting was valuable not only in terms of all the information that was given, but also because most of it was interactive. The participants were therefore able to express and share opinions on different aspects of the FFA club licensing system and its development. Armenian clubs clearly do not have the same level of financial resources as those in more developed countries, but they want to be as dynamic as their foreign colleagues.

The visit and the seminar coincided with the addition of a club licensing section to the FFA website, a joint project implemented by the FFA's media and licensing departments. The aim is to make club licensing easier for the public to understand, since even after six years of practical implementation, it is a subject that many members of the Armenian football family know little about.

The licensing seminar was a good opportunity to share information and views.



The club licensing section will be very informative and interactive. It will contain Armenian, English and Russian versions of various UEFA and FFA documents, as well as numerous articles and interviews with local experts, the UEFA Club Licensing Unit and other national association licensing managers. All visitors will be able to express their comments on any of the material published.

Finally, at its meeting on 4 March, the FFA licensing committee (first instance body) took decisions on national licences, on the basis of which FC Pyunik, Ararat FC, FC Gandzasar, FC Mika, FC Banants, FC Ulisses, FC Shirak and FC Kilikia will participate in the top division of the Armenian championship, which commences on 21 March. ■



## BELGIUM

• PIERRE CORNEZ •

### Antoine Vanhove has passed away

Antoine Vanhove, an icon of Belgian football known for his expertise in the transfer market, died on 10 February, aged 71.

Antoine Vanhove was born in Bruges on 11 September 1937. He soon became a fan of Club Brugge KV, which he represented a few times at youth level, but his love for the club came mainly from his father, who played for the "Blauw en Zwart" first team for ten years.

Antoine Vanhove was appointed chairman of the technical committee of the Belgian Football Association (URBSFA) on 1 July 2006 and also held other posts within the URBSFA. He was a member of the sports committee, chairman of the first chamber of the sports committee and an executive committee member.

Apart from his duties with the national association, Antoine Vanhove was very much a one-club man, enjoying some great moments with Club Brugge KV. He became the club's administrator in 1973 before serving as its general director and official representative between 1975 and 2003. During that period, he enticed numerous great players of the future to the city known as the "Venice of the North", including Jan Ceulemans, Jean-Pierre Papin, Marc Degryse, Daniel Amokachi and Mario Stanic, to mention just a few. He had chaired the sports department of the "Blauw en Zwart" since 2003.

In recognition of his enormous contribution to Belgian football, he received several distinctions at federal level. For example, he was awarded the federal plaque in 1989, became an emeritus member in 1994, honorary member in 1999 and honorary chairman of the sports committee in 2005.

In addition to his great professional qualities, Antoine Vanhove impressed people with his simplicity, sympathy and



Antoine Vanhove (left) with the Belgian national team coach, René Vandereycken.

altruism. Everyone who knew him spoke extremely highly of him, such was his natural gift for giving priority to the human aspect in an environment where it is too often neglected. His death will leave a huge gap in the hearts of many football lovers, who will certainly not forget him in a hurry. ■



## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

• FUAD KRVAVAC •

### Investing in young people for a better future

For several years already, NK Siroki Brijeg has been one of the best organised clubs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Always and on time, they fulfil all the necessary licensing criteria for both domestic and international competitions. For such an attitude and serious management approach, the club has received much credit.

Of course, great credit for the success of the club at a sporting level, but also for its infrastructural development, goes to its president, Zlatan Mijo Jelic, who, like his club, has also received an award, as the most successful sports administrator. →



Siroki Brijeg (in blue) in a warm-up match.

"Our aim is to have our club participating in one of the UEFA competitions every year. We are working step by step, which allows us to achieve significant results in a short period of time. Our Pecara stadium is one of the most beautiful in the country," Jelic said.

One example that demonstrates the significance of the aims of the club's president is the rebuilt Musa-Karacic training centre in Mostarsko Blato, named in memory of two boys, Josip Musa and Ivo Karacic, who had been members of the club until their early deaths. This is being turned into a modern sports complex. Three pitches are ready, with one still to be made. Changing rooms for the first team and youth teams are finished, as is the fitness hall. The centre has already been in use for ten years. The plan is to add grandstands too in the near future. A lot has been invested, but for a good cause. The club has also bought 4,000m<sup>2</sup> to build more sports grounds.

"These are investments in the future, because our youth academy will have all the necessary conditions for continuous development. The interest of young people from in and around Siroki Brijeg in enrolling for a football academy has grown a lot, which shows that we're on the right track," Jelic added.

Siroki Brijeg is the only club in Bosnia-Herzegovina to have a centre of this kind. Considering all the club's other investments, especially those that go into the infrastructure of the Pecara stadium, it is no wonder that NK Siroki Brijeg is the only club in the country that takes part in UEFA competitions every year. ■



Lord Triesman and Issa Hayatou.



## ENGLAND

• JANE BATEMAN/STUART MAWHINNEY •

### New memorandum of understanding with CAF

The chairman of The FA, Lord Triesman, was in Lagos, Nigeria, in February as a guest of the African Football Confederation (CAF) at their annual general meeting. Ahead of the meeting, Lord Triesman met the CAF president, Issa Hayatou, to sign a new memorandum of understanding on football development assistance in Africa.

This MoU commits The FA to providing a further five years of assistance to CAF within The FA's International Development Programme, where much of the work to date has focused on the UEFA-CAF Meridian Project partner countries Botswana, Malawi and Lesotho. Under the new MoU, The FA proposes to organise two workshops/seminars a year, in countries nominated by CAF. Ideally, these will focus on specialised areas such as stadium safety and matchday management, complementing the technical assistance already offered by FIFA development programmes.

"We have a long-standing relationship with Africa, not least through our involvement in the decade-long commitment to the UEFA-CAF Meridian Project," said Lord Triesman. "We welcome this renewal of our formal cooperation with CAF. I have no doubt that it will be a mutually rewarding partnership."

■ UEFA's president, Michel Platini, was in London this month to visit The FA and Wembley Stadium, which was recently selected to stage the UEFA Champions League final in 2011.

After last season's all-English final between Manchester United and Chelsea, the Frenchman believes it is a fitting venue.

"It's very impressive," Platini said. "The boxes are beautiful, the pitch is very nice, the dressing rooms are beautiful. Wembley gives us the opportunity to do many things. It will be a very beautiful final in 2011." ■



## FAROE ISLANDS

• INGI SAMUELSEN •

### Premier league becomes Vodafone league

The premier league in the Faroe Islands has got a new name. After signing a three-year agreement with the local division of Vodafone, the president of the Faroese FA, Høgni í Stórustovu, announced on 26 February that the Faroese premiership for the 2009, 2010 and 2011 seasons would go under the name of the Vodafonedeidin.

For the last four years, the Faroese premiership has been sponsored by a local IT company, Formula.fo, and the league was known as the Formuladeid. As a result of a new company marketing strategy, Formula.fo did not want to continue to sponsor the football league.

Høgni í Stórustovu is happy about the new deal.

"Vodafone is an exciting partner for us. With their experience from other leagues, especially the UEFA Champions League, we can expect good cooperation."



The premier league has had a change of name and sponsor.

Vodafone's managing director in the Faroe Islands, Bjarni A. Bjarnason, is looking forward to being able to use the Faroese football league in the company's marketing.

"This agreement gives us a new scene for our marketing. It is a big benefit for Vodafone to be part of the biggest and most exciting sport in the country," he said.

There are two telecom companies in the Faroe Islands, Vodafone and state-owned Faroese Telecom (Føroya Tele). Vodafone's market share is about 25%. ■



## FRANCE

• YANN PERRIN •

### "Blue Culture" lessons launched

This season, the French Football Federation (FFF) decided to include a course on "Blue Culture" in the pre-season training it organises for young internationals.





Traditionally, the primary objectives of the August training sessions held at Clairefontaine for all the national youth teams have been to launch the new season, to carry out a broad review of the players involved and to remind the youngsters of the main tasks that lie ahead. The most recent gathering, held at the end of August, was no exception. The Under-16, Under-18 and Under-19 boys, along with the Under-17 and Under-19 girls were all involved. As well as participating in group training and specific workshops, they left their boots in the changing room to attend a special session in the amphitheatre of the national technical centre in Clairefontaine. The theme? "Blue Culture". The aim? To educate the young French internationals about the rights and obligations that go hand in hand with representing the French national team. For more than an hour, the stars of the future listened to various speakers, who had been asked to cover the main issues that affect the career of a current international player: the importance of marketing and sponsors, which represent the FFF's main source of income; the role of the press, who provide a genuine link with the general public; and the importance of image. This final theme was addressed by a very special guest: Lilian Thuram. In a hushed auditorium, the former world champion who won 142 caps for France poured out advice and described his personal experiences in order to raise the youngsters' awareness of their obligations: to give their best and to set a good example both on and off the pitch, by embracing values such as generosity, humility, commitment and friendliness. The message was heard by everyone in the audience, who realised that selection for the national team would immediately propel them into another world – the world of the elite and all its demands. ■



The French Under-16 team with their mentor, Lilian Thuram.



## GEORGIA

• LASHA GODUADZE •

### Changes in the national youth teams

At its meeting of 23 January, the executive committee of the Georgian Football Federation (GFF) approved the following changes to the national youth teams:

Kakha Tskhadadze, former captain of the the national A team, has been appointed head coach of the Under-21 team. Zaur Svanadze, former head coach of the Under-19 team, will be his assistant.

Gela Shekiladze becomes head coach of the Under-19 team. Under his leader-

ship, the Georgian Under-17 team has qualified for the elite round of the current European Under-17 Championship. Aslan Baladze and Levan Khomeriki remain his assistants.

Giorgi Devdariani, former head coach of the Under-16 team, is the new head coach of the Under-17 team.

The committee also made Alexander Chivadze, former captain of FC Dinamo Tbilisi and of the USSR A team, honourable vice-president of the Georgian Football Federation. Celebrations for the 110th anniversary of Georgian football will be organised under his responsibility.

Last but not least, the GFF executive committee announced that Nodar Akhalkatsi, president of the GFF, would be standing as a candidate for election to the UEFA Executive Committee. ■



## ICELAND

• THORVALDUR INGIMUNDARSON •

### A milestone for referees

A milestone was reached at the end of January when the FA of Iceland signed the UEFA Convention on Referee Education and Organisation. The Icelandic FA began to work with UEFA in 2007 with the goal of meeting the criteria set for member associations to be part of the UEFA referee convention. This work paid dividends this January and an important step was taken with regard to referees in Iceland. Last year, the Icelandic association had referee seminars especially for female referees. This was a huge success and as a result Iceland now has its first female FIFA referee, Bryndis Sigurdardottir.

The UEFA Grassroots Charter is another matter that the FA of Iceland has been focusing on. In January last year, the association signed the charter and was awarded its first star. Now, the UEFA Executive Committee has awarded Iceland two additional stars for its grassroots work. Stars are awarded based on the number of registered regular players and the number of female participants within the UEFA Grassroots Charter star system. The percentage of female players is especially high here in Iceland, which reflects the success of the women's national team.

In August, an Icelandic national team will, for the first time, compete in the finals of a major senior football tournament when the Icelandic women's team travels to Finland to rub shoulders with the best nations in Europe at the UEFA Women's EURO 2009. Their preparations have already begun and in the first week in February, the coach, Sigurdur Ragnar Eyjolfsson, announced his training squad for the following weekend. In March, the squad is playing in the Algarve Cup, where it will compete with Norway, the USA and



The women's national team celebrate qualifying for the 2009 Women's EURO.

Denmark. In April, the Netherlands are playing a women's friendly in Iceland and in July Iceland's women's team plays England and Denmark as all three prepare for Finland. All Iceland's opponents are among the top ten in the latest FIFA rankings, except for the Netherlands who are ranked 17. ■



## ISRAEL

• NIMROD SUZIN •

### European Futsal Championship mini-tournament hosted by the IFA

In February, the Israel Football Association (IFA) hosted a mini-tournament in the preliminary round of the European Futsal Championship with the participation of the national teams of Israel, Finland, Montenegro and Turkey.

Finland and competition newcomers Montenegro, who achieved the best record of the four runners-up in the preliminary round groups, have qualified for the next stage.

Finland finished above Montenegro on the basis of the two teams' head-to-head record, despite losing 3–2 to hosts Israel. All six matches were held in Ramat-Gan.



The Israel FA has hosted another UEFA qualifying tournament, this time in the European Futsal Championship.

This tournament adds to the many official UEFA tournaments hosted by the IFA. Last year, the association hosted a European Under-17 Championship qualifying round mini-tournament as well as mini-tournaments in the first qualifying round of the European Women's Under-19 Championship and in the preliminary round of the UEFA Regions' Cup.

Last year the IFA also hosted an international winter tournament involving eight national teams.

In October of this year, it will host a mini-tournament in the qualifying round of the European Under-19 Championship. ■



## LATVIA

• MARTINS HARTMANIS •

### 2009 LMT Virsliga – nine clubs, four rounds

This year, the top Latvian championship, the LMT Virsliga, will be played in four rounds with nine clubs, as financial problems have struck many and the effects are also being felt in football. Last year's LMT Virsliga involved ten clubs in two rounds, after which the top six contested the medals and the clubs in seventh to last place fought to stay in the top division. However, the system did not satisfy, as the second group lost viewer interest and the decision was therefore taken not to divide the league any more.

The 2009 LMT Virsliga started with a great opening press conference on 10 March at the general sponsor's, Latvian Mobile Telephone, two matchdays prior to the FIFA international dates at the end of March. The matches on the first two domestic dates, 14/15 and 21/22 March, were played on the indoor pitches at the Olympic sports centre, where the Latvian Football Federation has its new headquarters. The nine clubs taking part this year are Ventspils, Liepajas Metalurgs, Skonto (Riga), Dinaburg (Daugavpils), Jurmala City, Blazma (Rezekne), Olimps (Riga), Daugava (Riga) and Transits (Ventspils).

The first league (second division) championship will start on 1 May. Two rounds will be played until November.

■ In other news, Latvian referees have been preparing for the season in Turkey.

Twenty-two of them met for their first training camp of the year. They improved their refereeing and physical skills in sunny Turkey, where the training conditions were excellent. At the camp, the referees worked on their physical and theoretical preparation, as well as refereeing some friendly pre-season games between teams from different countries who were also in Turkey. ■



## LIECHTENSTEIN

• ANTON BANZER •

### LFV celebrates 75th anniversary

The Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) is celebrating its 75th birthday in 2009. The LFV was founded in 1934 by representatives of the four football clubs that existed in Liechtenstein at the time. They were FC Vaduz, FC Balzers, FC Triesen and FC Schaan, which had been formed two years earlier.

Today, all seven clubs in the small principality belong to the LFV. The founding clubs have been joined by USV Eschen-Mauren, FC Ruggell and FC Triesenberg.

In 1974, the LFV became the 142nd member of FIFA and the 34th member of UEFA. However, its first official international match did not take place until eight years later, on 9 March 1982. Liechtenstein played Switzerland in a friendly match, suffering a narrow 1-0 defeat. The Liechtenstein Football Association is a member of the Liechtenstein Olympic Sports Federation (LOS) and a partner of the Football Association of Eastern Switzerland (OFV).

The Liechtenstein clubs have been playing in the Swiss league since 1933 because there are not enough of them to form their own championship.

During its jubilee year, the LFV will organise various sporting and social events in order to celebrate its anniversary with its friends and the Liechtenstein public in a fitting manner. The highlights of the events programme include a jubilee international match against Portugal, a gala evening serving as the official birthday party and the inaugural presentation of the LFV awards for the best player, best young player and best club coach of the year. In addition, however, the jubilee year will be particularly devoted to youth football, with regional tournaments to be held for the Under-16 and Under-13 categories, as well as an international Under-16 tournament.

Finally, a souvenir with lasting value will be produced in the form of a commemorative publication entitled *75 Jahre – 75 Köpfe – 75 Geschichten* (75 years – 75 people – 75 stories), in which 75 people will tell their own personal stories relating to football in Liechtenstein. ■



## LITHUANIA

• VAIVA ZIZAITAITE •

### A very popular tournament

The biggest nationwide football project in Lithuania gets under way soon. The Eziogolas football tournament has a very deep-rooted, big and popular tradition among secondary schools. The main characteristic of this tournament is that none of the participants are professional players, which means that none of them attend football or sports academies, nor have professional football training. Each team, made up of players in the 10-13 age bracket, must include two girls, one of whom must be on the pitch, with the second on the substitutes' bench.

Last year, the tournament attracted about 6,000 participants, amounting



Last year, the winners of the Eziogolas tournament received their trophy from the UEFA president.



## FYR MACEDONIA

• ZORAN NIKOLOVSKI •

### Seminar for doctors and physiotherapists

Organised by the sports medicine and anti-doping departments of the Football Federation of FYR Macedonia, the fifth seminar for approved doctors and physiotherapists has taken place in Skopje, attended by 60 participants.

The first such seminar was held in 2004 as a way of protecting the health of players and stopping unofficial people from sitting on the bench instead of doctors.

The discussion on doping controls in the domestic championship highlighted the need for education about doping in sport.

The seminar is an excellent opportunity to provide information based on the experiences of FIFA and UEFA, which is of great help to the clubs when handling problems connected with banned substances and other doping-related questions.

to more than 400 teams. This year, the Lithuanian Football Federation (LFF) expects 7,000 participants to enrol.

For the first time, all participants will be able to register individually online, via a special website.

The main sponsor of the tournament, prepaid mobile services provider EZYS, has supported this big event since 2004.

*"The Lithuanian Football Federation is very grateful to its faithful sponsor, EZYS. It has been with us since the project was in its infancy and together with it we can continue to grow each year. Every year since 2004 we have had more and more schools taking an interest in the Eziogolas football tournament,"* said the LFF president, Liutauras Varanavicius.

To start with, the matches will be organised on a regional basis, then the final will take place in Kaunas on 18 June. From April until June, all participants will be involved in the project – some on the football field, some in the classroom, drawing special pictures, some putting on special performances, etc. – thereby extending the scope of the project to encompass not only football, but the arts and culture as well.

In 2007, the final of the Eziogolas tournament was a particularly unforgettable occasion, as the UEFA president was on hand to present the trophy to the winners.

Special prizes will be awarded this year. The winning team will get the possibility to go to a football camp, while the other participating pupils can expect a lot of surprises too, to ensure that everyone who takes part is a winner. ■

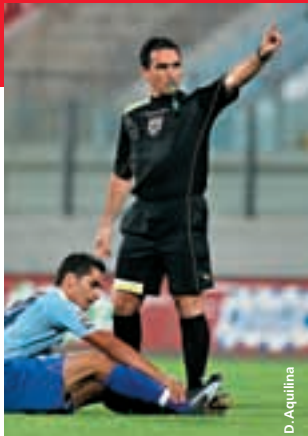
The following presentations were on the agenda:

- Diabetes and sport, by Dr Ilija Stoilov
- Sports injuries and their management, by Dr Viktor Kamiloski
- Diagnosis and rehabilitation of sports injuries, by Dr Zoran Handziski
- Doping in sport, by Dr Ilija Stoilov
- First-aid on the pitch: using an automatic defibrillator, by Dr Vesna Nedelkovska.

The seminar was also an opportunity for Dr Ilija Stoilov to present his new book, *Doping in Sport*. ■



A seminar for doctors and physiotherapists.



Clyton Pisanu has received his FIFA badge.



## MALTA

• ALEX VELLA •

### Maltese referees on FIFA list

The Maltese referees and assistant referees who form part of the FIFA list for 2009 were presented with their FIFA badges by the Malta FA president, Joseph Mifsud, in what has now become an annual event and an occasion during which these match officials are reminded of their responsibilities to discharge their duties with honesty and to the best of their ability.

Joseph Mifsud urged these match officials to be vigilant and determined to do well without fear or favour, stressing that they should show firmness and efficiency when controlling matches.

The Maltese referees and assistant referees were again reminded that they should behave with integrity also in social circles so that their uprightness is always evident wherever they are.

Presently, the Malta FA is well represented on the FIFA panel, which also includes a woman referee and a futsal referee. When on international duty these match officials perform with utmost efficiency, as can be testified by the good ratings they regularly obtain.

Despite the smallness of the country and the attendant constraints of familiarity with teams, players and supporters, the standard of refereeing in Malta is comparable to the good levels reached by others in several countries. This is the result of a high level of work ethic which the referees board within the Malta FA invariably insists upon. ■



## MOLDOVA

• VICTOR DAGHI •

### Pavel Cebanu re-elected president of the FA of Moldova

On 6 February, Pavel Cebanu was re-elected as president of the Football Association of Moldova for another four years. Votes were cast in his favour by 170 of the 185 delegates eligible to vote. The other candidates were Alexandru Guzun (FIFA players' agent), Igor Oprea

(former national team player), Petru Efros (former coach of FC Besiktas Chisinau) and Vasile Vatamanu (former press officer of the FA of Moldova).

Mihai Anghel was elected first vice-president, with Gheorghe Cirlan, Radu Rebeja and Nicolae Sandu also becoming vice-presidents, and Nicolae Cebotari re-elected as general secretary.

Andrei Cecetov (president of FC Zimbru Chisinau), Serghei Chiseliov (vice-president of FC Olimpia Balti), Nicolae Ziuzin (director of FC Sheriff Tiraspol), Alexandru Burlacu (president of the national futsal association) and 15 other candidates from the FA of Moldova, Moldovan clubs and associations were elected to the executive committee.

UEFA was represented at this event by Joseph Mifsud, member of the UEFA Executive Committee and president of the Malta Football Association.

*"The delegates' choice proves that our association is on the right track. We'll continue our work for the benefit of Moldovan football,"* Pavel Cebanu said after his re-election.

Pavel Cebanu is 53 and has been president of the Football Association of Moldova since 1997. As part of UEFA's golden jubilee celebrations in 2004, he was named as Moldova's golden player for his long career as a midfielder with FC Nistru Chisinau. ■



A new term in office for Pavel Cebanu.



## NETHERLANDS

• ROB DE LEEDE •

### New set-up for futsal top division

The Dutch Football Association (KNVB) recently decided to set up a new top division in Dutch futsal from next season. The main reason for this innovative step was to increase the marketing value of the top division and to create new chances for individual club sponsors and potential media partners. The decision is fully endorsed by the corporation of top division futsal clubs (CEF) and the representatives of the 12 clubs that are currently represented in the top division.

The new set-up entails a number of radical changes compared with the current situation. First of all, the clubs have to comply with the strict licensing conditions that apply as from the 2009/10 season. The technical requirements are meant to improve the level of Dutch clubs and futsal in general, in order to eventually bridge the gap with the leading international countries. Clubs are required to practise four times a week, with an absolute minimum of three times.

The KNVB will pay the rent for the facilities where clubs will practise and also offer help to find appropriate facilities.

In order to allow clubs to practise as much as possible, national coach Vic Hermans will reduce the number of practice sessions of the national team. One licensing condition that is applauded all over the country is the compulsory measure for players to play either outdoor football or futsal. Many top players still play regular football and futsal on alternating days. Furthermore, clubs are obliged to field an Under-19 and Under-17 team and they must have a qualified coach.

The new top division will have a maximum of 14 clubs, as opposed to the current dozen playing in the top flight. No relegation is foreseen for the first two years, whereas clubs can be promoted to the top division. In this closed competition, clubs are free to choose either Friday or Saturday night for their home matches and can thus please local or regional media partners.

The KNVB has offered the clubs all possible help in setting up the required organisational structure and staging additional coaching courses for staff, if necessary. Finally, the name futsal will disappear, to be replaced by the better known Dutch equivalent "zaalvoetbal", which was still used by the majority of officials, players and fans. ■



## NORTHERN IRELAND

• CAROLINE MENARY •

### Irish FA on the look out for a star

The Irish FA is giving football fans in Northern Ireland the opportunity to star in its national advertising campaign. The campaign, an outdoor advertising initiative entitled No Egos, No Diving, No Prawn Sandwiches – Just Real Football, was launched at the beginning of February province-wide.



Joanne Quin with one of the directors of Newry City FC, Jim Feenan.

The association's promotional roadshow has been on tour to shopping centres across the province in an attempt to find local people to feature in the advertisement. The campaign aims to encourage the public to recognise home-grown talent and

take to the stands to support their local JJB Sports Premiership team.

The roadshow includes an interactive football challenge and allows members of the public to be photographed scoring in a virtual penalty shootout. All images taken are emailed to participants and the best shots are voted for by Cool FM listeners via the radio station's website. The photograph which receives the most votes will be selected to feature in the advertising campaign and the winner will see their image displayed on a billboard in their local area.

■ Newry City has become the first JJB Sports Premiership club to appoint a female Community Relations Officer. Joanne Quin was appointed in November and has embraced the values and ethos of football for all by tackling this role head on.

She has arranged for players to visit local schools to help create awareness of the club for future supporters and to promote healthy lifestyles. In addition, she has volunteered to swap her high heels for football boots and undertake the first steps on the coaching ladder.

The Irish FA community relations officer, Colleen McCauley, spoke of her delight in welcoming a new female presence in local football: "Joanne is a dedicated professional and her strong ability to tackle this role is a great testament to the valuable contribution women can make in our football environment. Full support and mentoring will continue to be offered to Joanne as well as to the other clubs' community relations officers." ■



## REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

• FRAN WHEARTY •

### 2009 League of Ireland season kicks off

The 2009 League of Ireland season was officially launched at the end of February, kicking off eight months of top-class football action in Ireland. The UEFA general secretary, David Taylor, was the guest of honour at the official launch of the new season.

The event took place in Tallaght, Dublin, overlooking the new Tallaght stadium, the new home of Shamrock Rovers, who ended two decades on the road when they played their first home match of the season in the new stadium against Sligo Rovers.

The Tallaght stadium is the latest in a long line of infrastructural developments that will benefit the League of Ireland. It follows on from the recent construction of new stands at Terryland Park in Galway and the RSC in Waterford, as well as the new St. Anne's Stand at Turner's Cross, home of Cork City, which was recently reopened.

With top tier sponsors eircom, Newstalk and the Irish Daily Star, together with official suppliers Umbro, Boylesports, Lucozade Sports and the National Dairy Council, the prize fund will once again rise for League

of Ireland clubs. For the 2009 season, it will stand at over EUR 1m, a 26% increase on last season. Subsidies for all clubs will also rise. The prize fund will be distributed in a more equal manner, in order to ensure greater stability. The new prize fund model ensures that increased funding will be made available for each league position in 2009. ■



The official kick-off of the 2009 League of Ireland season, attended by representatives of the ten clubs.



## SERBIA

• ALEKSANDAR BOSKOVIC •

### Memorandum signed

On 13 February, at a ceremony which was held in Belgrade, three parties – the Football Association of Serbia (FAS), the Serbian ministry of youth and sports, and high representatives of the Norwegian



Tomislav Karadzic, president of the FA of Serbia.

government – signed a memorandum of understanding for the construction of 60 mini-pitches throughout Serbia in the next few years. Each party will contribute EUR 500,000, making it one of the biggest football projects in the country.

The FAS will provide its share of the money in cooperation with UEFA and its development programmes. UEFA and the FAS are both very satisfied with this new step in their cooperation in this field.

In 2005 and 2006, UEFA and the FAS built 33 mini-pitches, with amazing results. All pitches are in use and local youngsters have a great place for playing and friendship.

For the 60 new mini-pitches, priority will be given to communities that have not already received mini-pitches. The idea

is to continue to spread them around the country and to extend grassroots football.

*"We are delighted with this project, which has been so successful that we are under pressure to build more mini-pitches. We are more than happy when we see our young people playing football on nice pitches. Also, it is our duty to invest in amateur football and to strengthen the grass roots. We know that football has a social mission and we really want to support that,"* said the president of the FAS, Tomislav Karadzic.

The ceremony was also attended by the Norwegian ambassador, Hakon Blankenborg, who said: *"In Norway, the construction of so many pitches like this has had a huge impact. It might not be possible to achieve the same result here, but what we want is to help football to develop and to let every youngster enjoy the game."* ■



## SLOVAKIA

• JANKA PERACKOVA •

### Workshop on security matters

The Slovak Football Association (SFA) has taken steps to improve security in stadiums. Firstly, the new position of event and security manager was created, and Peter Palencik, from the international department, who has more than five years' relevant experience, was appointed to this position. Then in mid-February, a workshop on security in football stadiums was organised in Bratislava, where UEFA experts gave presentations on a variety of topics. They highlighted the importance of UEFA stadium inspections and showed interesting videos of shocking, dangerous incidents. Michael Kuchenbecker of Borussia Dortmund demonstrated standard security measures and procedures at football stadiums in Germany, while the Scottish football environment and the development of safety and security processes over the years were illustrated in detail by William McDougall. The workshop was attended by more than 150 participants, representing different segments of the football family – police, clubs, match delegates, members of the disciplinary committee, media and representatives of the ministry of education.

This SFA initiative received a positive welcome, as a new law concerning the organisation of sports events was adopted by the Slovak parliament and came into force on 1 December 2008. ■

A seminar on stadium security.



## SWEDEN

• ANDREAS NILSSON •

### New sponsorship deal

The Swedish FA has announced a profit of 56 million Swedish kronor (about EUR 5 million) for 2008. Of that profit, SEK 38 million stems from income related to Sweden's participation in EURO 2008.

*"As usual we will divert our earnings into various projects to improve Swedish football. But as a small security in these economically uncertain times, we are going to keep SEK 20*

*million in the bank,"* said the association's president, Lars-Åke Lagrell.

The Swedish FA has also signed a new, record-breaking deal with the main sponsor of Swedish football, gaming operator Svenska Spel. The five-year contract (2009–13) is worth SEK 119 million annually, to be shared by the FA (the national teams) and the clubs playing in the men's Allsvenskan and Superettan and the women's Damallsvenskan leagues.

*"We're very happy about this deal, and especially Svenska Spel's focus on women's football. This will make it possible for us to strengthen our position as one of the best nations in women's football,"* said the Swedish FA's vice-president, Susanne Erlandsson. ■



## SWITZERLAND

• PIERRE BENOIT •

### Successful launch for SFV fan club

The new SFV fan club was launched in December. Fans of the Swiss national team can register free via the SFV website [www.football.ch](http://www.football.ch) and will be able to participate in regular events and benefit from exclusive offers. More than 3,000 members have already registered and the number is growing daily. The fan club was set up by the SFV and national team sponsors Credit Suisse, Swiss Life, Kinder Nutella, Ochsner Sport and Puma. A members' draw was held to give away 500 tickets for the World Cup qualifying match against Moldova. Sitting in their own sector of the stadium, the lucky winners provided valuable additional

support for the national team. There will also be tickets to be won for the forthcoming World Cup qualifiers against Greece and Israel. The website also contains stories and articles about the different national teams and fans. Former international players such as Stéphane Chapuisat, Jörg Stiel, Kubilay Türkyilmaz and Alexandre Comisetti are ambassadors of the SFV fan club and describe their experiences of playing for the national team. Players and coaches also regularly participate in live chats, with Ottmar Hitzfeld and Tranquillo Barnetta among those who have already taken part. ■

Membership of the Swiss national team's fan club is growing daily.



## UKRAINE

• IVAN DYVAK •

### Donbass prepares for Under-19 elite

Ukraine is preparing to host the 2008/09 European Under-19 Championship final tournament from 21 July to 2 August. The eighth edition of this final tournament is being staged in Donbass, one of the most powerful industrial regions of the country, with two centres, one in Donetsk and one in Mariupol. In Ukraine this tournament is also regarded a kind of a rehearsal for UEFA EURO 2012.

Four renovated venues are being provided for the best youth teams in Europe: the RSC Olimpiyskiy and Metalurh stadiums in Donetsk, and the Illichivets and Zakhidny stadiums in Mariupol. These venues were, in fact, recently visited by TV channel Eurosport, which is broadcasting nine of the tournament matches live.

Also recently, the regional authorities presented the list of hotels where competition participants, delegations, referees, official

representatives and UEFA guests of honour will be staying. According to UEFA, the players should not be spread around the city – they are to live in the same place. So, they are staying at the Atlas hotel in Donetsk and the Spartak hotel in Mariupol. The Spartak has also been selected as the organising committee's headquarters. Other groups are being accommodated in Donetsk at hotels such as the Liverpool, Eva, Victoria and Donbass Palace.

To stage the tournament one more important element is required – training pitches. The teams will be holding their training sessions at FC Olympic, FC Tytan and FC Metalurh's stadiums in Donetsk, and in Mariupol the Azovets stadium and two FC Illichivets pitches will be available. It is worth noting that UEFA will reimburse a considerable part of the expenses, including the pitch rental, accommodation and transport for the participants.

Meanwhile, the preliminary date for the tournament draw is 12 June. The official ceremony will feature big names in football from the Donbass region such as Anatoliy Konkov, Mykhaylo Sokolovskiy, Viktor Zviagintsev and Oleksandr Zavarov. ■



# Committee

# week in Nyon

16-20 February 2009



Photos: UEFA-plivoods.ch

# Communications

## Birthdays – Calendar

### Many happy returns

Jan Peeters (Belgium), a member of the Amicale des anciens, celebrates his 75th birthday on 2 April, while referee observer Gudmundur Ingi Jónsson (Iceland) will be 60 on 29 April.

Birthdays greetings also go out this month to:

- Carlo De Gaudio (Italy, 1.4)
- Lale Orta (Turkey, 1.4)
- Kaj Østergaard (Denmark, 3.4)
- Dennis Cruise (Republic of Ireland, 3.4)
- Yoav Strauss (Israel, 3.4)
- Christian Kofoed (Denmark, 4.4)
- William Attley (Republic of Ireland, 5.4)
- Jan Ekstrand (Sweden, 5.4)
- Lennart Wangel (Finland, 5.4)
- Momir Djurdjevac (Montenegro, 5.4)
- Aleksandra Nikolovska (FYR Macedonia, 5.4)
- Isak Mikladal (Faroe Islands, 7.4)
- Pavol Peracek (Slovakia, 7.4)
- Jacques Devismes (France, 8.4)
- James Fleeting (Scotland, 8.4)
- Márton Esterházy (Hungary, 9.4)
- Ladislav Svoboda (Czech Republic, 9.4)
- Zoran Petrovic (Serbia, 10.4)
- Panagiotis Tsarouchas (Greece, 10.4)
- Vlastibor Minarovec jr (Slovakia, 10.4)
- Umberto Gandini (Italy, 11.4)
- Eduard Dervishaj (Spain, 11.4)
- Rodger Gifford (Wales, 12.4)
- François De Keersmaecker (Belgium, 12.4)
- Paolo Piani (Italy, 13.4)
- Anja van Ginhoven (Netherlands, 14.4)
- Olí Holm (Faroe Islands, 15.4)
- Georgios Bikas (Greece, 15.4)
- Manuel Enrique Mejuto Gonzalez (Spain, 16.4)
- Charles Schaack (Luxembourg, 17.4)
- Ernst Ravnaas (Norway, 18.4)
- Michael Kuchenbecker (Germany, 19.4)
- Jean-Louis Valentin (France, 19.4)
- Jean Appietto (France, 20.3)
- Jean-Luc Veuthey (Switzerland, 20.4)
- Ronnie Lundqvist (Sweden, 20.4)
- Vitor Manuel Melo Pereira (Portugal, 21.4)
- Alexandru Burlac (Moldova, 21.4)
- Patrick Fenech (Malta, 22.4)
- Jan Damgaard (Denmark, 22.4)
- Morgan Norman (Sweden, 22.4)
- Martin Bodenham (England, 23.4)
- Roland Tis (Belgium, 23.4)
- Gheorghe Constantin (Romania, 23.4)
- Mehmet S. Binnet (Turkey, 23.4)
- Jacques Lambert (France, 24.4)
- Nebojsa Ivkovic (Serbia, 24.4)
- Avraham Luzon (Israel, 24.4)
- Sandor Piller (Hungary, 24.4)

- Roy Millar (Northern Ireland, 25.4)
- Ole Myhrvold (Norway, 25.4)
- Philippe Verbiest (Belgium, 25.4)
- Daniel Ryser (Switzerland, 25.4)
- Philip Gartside (England, 27.4)
- Jan Carlsen (Denmark, 27.4)
- Henk van de Wetering (Netherlands, 27.4)
- George Frank (Israel, 29.4)
- Emanuel Macedo de Medeiros (Portugal, 30.4)

### Forthcoming events

#### Meetings

##### 3.4.2009, Leipzig

Draw for the final round of the European Under-17 Championship

##### 12–16.4.2009, Florence

UEFA coach educators' course

##### 20.4.2009, Nyon

Jira Panel  
Medical Committee

##### 21.4.2009, Nyon

Stadium and Security Committee

##### 22.4.2009, Nyon

Legal Committee

##### 23.4.2009, Nyon

HatTrick Committee

##### 24.4.2009, Nyon

National Associations Committee  
Development and Technical Assistance Committee

##### 27.4–1.5.2009, Nyon

Mentors' and talents' seminar

#### Competitions

##### 7/8.4.2009

UEFA Champions League: quarter-finals (first legs)

##### 9.4.2009

UEFA Cup: quarter-finals (first legs)

##### 14/15.4.2009

UEFA Champions League: quarter-finals (return legs)

##### 16.4.2009

UEFA Cup: quarter-finals (return legs)

##### 24–26.4.2009, Ekaterinburg

UEFA Futsal Cup: final round

##### 28/29.4.2009

UEFA Champions League: semi-finals (first legs)

##### 30.4.2009

UEFA Cup: semi-finals (first legs)

### Notices

■ In January, Sofoklis Pilavios was elected president of the Hellenic Football Federation.

■ At the end of January, the Bulgarian Football Union re-elected Borislav Mihailov as its president.

■ In February, Pavel Cebanu was re-elected president of the Football Association of Moldova.

■ On 14 February, the annual general meeting of the Icelandic Football Association re-elected Geir Thorsteinsson as its president.

■ On 20 February, the Football Association of Slovenia elected Ivan Simic as its new president.

■ On 28 February, an extraordinary general meeting of the Austrian Football Association elected Leo Windtner as its new president.

■ The 59th Ordinary FIFA Congress takes place in Nassau in the Bahamas on 2 and 3 June.

■ The FIFA Confederations Cup takes place in South Africa from 14 to 28 June. Europe will be represented by world champions Italy and European champions Spain.

### Match agent

Kikis Treppides (Cyprus) has surrendered his UEFA match agent licence.

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UEFA  
Route de Genève 46  
CH-1260 Nyon  
Switzerland  
Phone +41 848 00 27 27  
Fax +41 848 01 27 27  
uefa.com

Union des associations  
européennes de football

