



**FIFPRO
EUROPE**

A COMPETITIVE EUROPEAN FOOTBALL INDUSTRY

EU INSTITUTIONAL TERM 2024 - 2029

ADVANCING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL
PARTNER RIGHTS TO SAFEGUARD
EUROPE'S LEADING CULTURAL &
ENTERTAINMENT SECTOR



Welcome to the new term



DAVID TERRIER
President,
FIFPRO Europe

Player unions act as the collective representation of professional players in the football economy. Together we have helped to shape a competitive industry that today is home to the world's leading national and international competitions.

Our sector is a cultural and industrial success story for Europe that touches people in every community of our continent and far beyond. Our players, men and women, bring excitement and hope to millions of fans.

When Europe leads the world, from renewable energy to life-saving medicine, we have the knowledge, talent, and skill of our workforce to thank. Football is no different. Today, as the European Union looks to strengthen both its competitiveness and social model, our player unions help to build a football economy that works for everyone, allowing every individual player and national market to reach their full potential.

We welcome the new Commission, Parliament, and Council. Together, let us find ways to strengthen, innovate and defend Europe's entertainment and cultural sectors.

We look forward to working with you.

Who we are



FIFPRO Europe is the continental organization that **safeguards the working rights and interests of football players across Europe.**



36 national player unions are members of FIFPRO Europe.



FIFPRO Europe is recognised as the players' representative in the European sectoral social dialogue committee for professional football.



FIFPRO Europe is affiliated to FIFPRO Global.

FIFPRO Europe Members



We believe that fair and healthy competition, in our industry and the wider economy, demands respect for our social market economy and social partner rights.

Therefore, we welcome the Commission's commitment to Europe's social model and our proud history of collective bargaining. A strong and healthy economy that works for everyone needs workers who are respected, included, and heard.



Our working principles for Europe

The rights and values that we, as FIFPRO Europe, believe in will inspire all parts of our work with the European institutions.

Players' rights to



**Collective bargaining
& Social Partner Rights**



Free movement



Healthy and safe workplace



Fair and independent arbitration



**Protection of intellectual
property and personal data**

Underpinning values



Sporting merit



Open competitions



European football pyramid



**Intolerance of violence,
abuse, and discrimination**



**Lifelong learning
and dual careers**



**Sporting competition
that is fair, clean, and safe**

Six priorities for a competitive workforce



Strengthening and safeguarding a sustainable industry in Europe

Our priorities for the new term are urgent and respond to the political and systemic trends of our time.

Working together with the Commission, Parliament, and Council, we want to achieve six objectives that are critical to the future competitiveness and sustainability of our sector:

01 Investing in social partners, investing in better governance

02 Advancing sustainable work and fundamental rights

03 Safeguarding health, safety, and wellbeing

04 Growing professional women's football

05 Protecting the integrity of sport

06 Managing technology at the workplace

Together, our objectives respond to the most urgent questions in European football:

- **how do we steer our industry through the transformative challenges and opportunities of our time?**
- **how do we ensure that European football markets continue to lead the global industry?**

We can only answer these questions by listening to the women and men at the heart of our industry – the ones who play on the pitch. Their knowledge and experience are invaluable to shape the future of the game.

**PRIORITY
01****INVESTING IN SOCIAL PARTNERS,
INVESTING IN BETTER GOVERNANCE
to safeguard a competitive European industry**

**Together we have
a say in the decisions
that affect our
careers.**

**Player unions are a fundamental part
of national football industries**

In any industrial sector of the European Union, strong social-partner relationships have helped to build vital and resilient industries that serve our communities. Professional football is no different.

Acting as the collective representation of football players as workers, our members have created a major economic and entertainment sector and a whole new branch of European culture. Player unions in Europe have a proud history of contributing to the management and sustainable development of professional football:

- **Social partner governance and national football markets:** across many member states of the European Union, player unions have negotiated collective agreements with national leagues and competition organisers, allowing the sport and its players to flourish.

- **Solidarity and innovation:** together with the players we have been at the heart of innovation in football, promoting more competitive league structures and revenue distribution systems, which safeguard solidarity and sporting merit.

**When international football
operates without collective agreements,
national football markets suffer**

Today, governing bodies threaten the sustainability of European football markets by taking decisions unilaterally – without even consulting key stakeholders. FIFA's unilateral decisions regarding the international match calendar seek to benefit its own competitions, with no regard for the health of players or the domestic competitions they play in.

- **Such decisions disregard European standards.** They disrespect national agreements – including collective bargaining agreements – and violate European law and fundamental rights.
- **This abuse of regulatory power** serves a global economic interest and causes economic and physical harm to national leagues and players in Europe.

**If European football is to reach its full potential,
through sustainable growth in all markets, we
need a new approach to governance at global
level in line with economic and social market
principles of the EU.**

- This demands a new framework that respects the rights of the social partners, the standards of their labour markets, the pyramid structure of European football, and the structures of national and European competitions.
- Player unions must participate fully in the governance structures and agree, collectively or bilaterally, the decisions that affect their members.
- Regulatory decisions at European and international level which affect the labour markets, working conditions, and welfare of professional players, require agreements with FIFPRO Europe and its national member unions.

**PRIORITY
02****ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE WORK
AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS**
to offer protection and fair participation

**Let us be clear -
professional footballers
are workers.**

Umberto Calcagno, President AIC
(Italian players' association)

Players are workers. They contribute to the Single Market. They enjoy the same human rights, social rights, and labour standards as any other employee. Such protection is only more vital when the typical sporting career is short, precarious, and unpredictable.

FIFPRO Europe works to secure the highest labour standards for all professional footballers to allow them to focus on their work and performance on the pitch.

We welcome the Commission's renewed commitment to the **European Pillar of Social Rights** – a set of principles that secure dignity for every worker, high standards of employment, and a safe and healthy workplace. We will support the Commission's new **Action Plan** for the Pillar, so that

- **collective bargaining** remains a vital part of Europe's social market economy and is fully implemented in the international football sector so that European standards apply;
- **fair revenue participation and equal pay for equal work** become a reality and no individual suffers discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnic identity, or religious beliefs.

Minimum protections

Today, in some EU member states, professional footballers still have to fight for their basic rights; many are considered self-employed, leaving them vulnerable to the shocks of a sporting career. This threatens the growth of domestic markets and undermines the development of European football. Therefore, we will aim to

- **tackle overdue payables** that are all too often a reality in European markets, due to unsustainable management practices;
- **remove unfair arbitration mechanisms** that violate European and national standards;
- **increase social-security protections** as players are often excluded from statutory provisions and suffer a lack of health insurance.

**PRIORITY
03****SAFEGUARDING HEALTH,
SAFETY, AND WELLBEING**
via Occupational Safety and Health in
the football industry

Playing 80 games is not possible. It's too much. The authorities have to do something.

Aurélien Tchouameni



Players perform at the highest levels of physical effort and psychological pressure, leaving them vulnerable to injury, fatigue, and stress.

The world of work of professional players exposes them to a growing range of risks that are specific to their professions and elite sport in the modern era.

There is a critical need for a holistic and coordinated approach to managing the health and well-being of professional football players. The existing workforce risks include:

- **Working time and rest:** as tournaments multiply and expand, players have less time for rest and recovery. Breaks between seasons become shorter and shorter. Long-distance travel only heightens the load. This has produced a physical and mental fatigue that is now dangerous and unsustainable.
- **Extreme weather conditions:** professional footballers belong to the most physically demanding occupations. They need protection, and they need it now. The danger begins with excess heat: rising air temperatures and, often, greater humidity. In today's European summer, footballers are playing in hotter conditions than ever before.

Occupational Safety and Health and the football sector

For the football industry, it is essential that strategies and standardised guidelines align with the principles and laws of Occupational Safety and Health. This is the only way to reduce the risk of injury and promote long-term well-being and performance.

Occupational Safety and Health is a fundamental right, guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (art. 31), the European Social Charter (art. 2, 3, 22) and the EU Framework Directive.

Therefore, we as FIFPRO Europe:

- **call on the Commission, Parliament, and Council** to ensure that professional players across the EU are fully protected by European laws on safety and health in the workplace;
- **Urge the international football confederations and competition organisers who regulate health and safety standards** to negotiate collective agreements with the players.



**PRIORITY
04****GROWING PROFESSIONAL
WOMEN'S FOOTBALL**
A gender-specific approach

Professional women's football has grown rapidly in recent years. Much of this growth has taken place in Europe, where the expansion of the UEFA Women's Champions League as well as national leagues has further professionalised the industry.

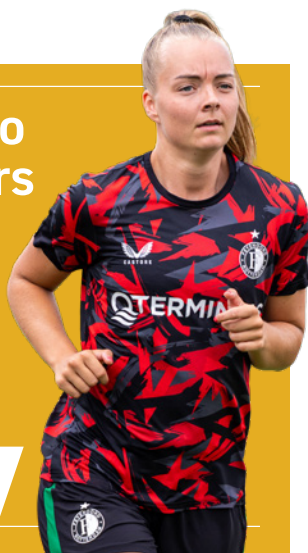
Yet, professional women footballers still suffer discrimination, economic injustice, and precarity in their career. A typical professional contract lasts only one year.

Our commitment to gender equality

Today, in too many EU member states, professional women footballers cannot sustain a living through football, despite it being their full-time occupation.

It's important to have the players voice, because we experience every day how the conditions are...

Amber Verspaget



Moreover, many players work in environments that are not only unequal to those of their male counterparts but also unsafe and insecure: women are denied the labour rights and workplace standards that are rightfully theirs.

At FIFPRO Europe, we strive not only for equality in pay and working conditions but also for respect and fair treatment when it comes to the many gender-specific conditions, such as pregnancy and postpartum return to play. We believe that professional football and parenthood go hand in hand, provided we respect everyone's rights.

Professional women footballers also face gender-specific injuries. They are two to six times more likely to suffer an Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injury than men. ACL keeps players off-pitch for a minimum of nine months, leaving them vulnerable in their careers both on and off the field.

Therefore, we will continue working to secure:

- **gender parity in remuneration, prize money, and revenue sharing**
- **equal working conditions in domestic and international football**
- **gender-specific policies and research so that professional women players enjoy high labour standards and the best opportunities to succeed.**

We welcome the Commission's decision to launch a new **Gender Equality Strategy** from 2025. We will work with the Commission to strengthen women's rights across all parts of society and empower women in the labour market.

**PRIORITY
05****PROTECTING
THE INTEGRITY OF SPORT**
via player-centric safeguards

What players are exposed to in the stadium with the physical and the verbal abuse, the threshold seems to go lower and lower.

Leon Balogun

Integrity in football faces critical challenges, from match-fixing to fan violence, from harassment to abuse. We must urgently address these issues to protect the industry, its workforce and our communities.

FIFPRO Europe is committed to working with European football governing bodies and policymakers to develop player-centric policies that uphold the sport's integrity. Our goal is to ensure a safe, fair, and ethical environment that protects the sustainable development of the game and allows all professional players to reach their full potential.

To protect the integrity of the game, FIFPRO Europe works to:

- **Combat match-fixing** by establishing secure, anonymous reporting mechanisms, and deepening cooperation between public institutions, law enforcement, and the football industry so that together we combat organised crime and other threats to the sport. By improving working conditions, we reduce players' vulnerability to unethical approaches.
- **Ensure safe sport and safeguarding** by implementing robust safeguarding measures to protect players from abuse, harassment, and exploitation within the sport. Creating a safe and supportive environment is essential to the well-being and development of all athletes.
- **Combat racism and all forms of discrimination** by applying a zero-tolerance policy across our membership, calling for robust sanctions at all levels of our industry, and listening to the players who are targeted.
- **Address fan violence** by strengthening measures that protect players from violence and abuse by fans, both on and off the field. We must ensure that stadiums and sporting events are safe environments where players can perform without fear of harm.
- **Prevent doping** by enabling fair and transparent anti-doping procedures that respect players' rights, supported by comprehensive education programs. FIFPRO Europe works for improved governance and representation within anti-doping frameworks to ensure that players' fundamental rights are protected.

By addressing these critical workforce issues, FIFPRO Europe is committed to building a stronger, more resilient football industry that prioritizes the integrity of the game and the well-being of its players.

**PRIORITY
06**

MANAGING TECHNOLOGY AT THE WORKPLACE

building on trust, clear AI governance,
and a Single Market for football data

Thanks to non-invasive optical tracking technology, we can observe the exact biomechanical movement of players during matches and training.

New data-driven applications are benefiting players, clubs, competitions, fans, and businesses.

Players' data is valuable

New technologies support sustainable careers, better manage health and safety, improve in-game technology, enhance the match-day experience, and enrich the fans' engagement.

- For the football industry, data is an essential resource for economic growth, competitiveness, innovation, job creation, and the development of the sport.

Players' data is sensitive

Volumetric tracking technology and neurotechnology collect more targeted and sensitive player data than ever before. As the AI revolution transforms the players' workplace, offering powerful tools that help to analyse and improve performance, it brings new risks.

- **The use of player data calls for collectively agreed standards and guidelines that are tailored to the needs and risks in the football industry.** Therefore, all parts of our industry must recognise and respect the fundamental rights of players in relation to their personal data.

Shared interests across the industry

Players, clubs, leagues, international federations as well as interested third-parties benefit together from state-of-the-art science and cutting-edge technology that drives player performance and industry development.

FIFPRO Europe works with all football stakeholders and public authorities to design new standards that protect players' fundamental rights while allowing them and the industry to enjoy the benefits of new technologies. We will work with the European Commission on the new **European Data Union** so that innovation respects intellectual property and privacy.

Today we collect more
than 8 million data
points per player
per match.

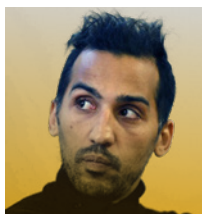


FIFPRO Europe and its members have concluded countless collective agreements between employers and employees and have successfully represented player interests on numerous occasions to build a leading entertainment and cultural sector across Europe.

FIFPRO Europe agrees with UEFA on introduction of Minimum Standards Framework for Women National Teams



FIFPRO Europe supports French player Zahir Belounis in human rights case against kafala system in Qatar



Creation of the European sectoral social dialogue committee for professional football

FIFPRO Europe defends Jean-Marc Bosman, ECJ ruling ensures free movement of players as workers



Creation of FIFPRO (Europe) in Paris



Collective action led by Jimmy Hill ends the salary cap in English football



2024



ECJ delivers landmark ruling for transfer system in Diarra case supported by FIFPRO Europe

2022



FIFPRO Europe supports Sara Bjork Gunnarsdottir in the enforcement of maternity regulations in professional women's football

2012

Agreement on Minimum requirements for standard player contracts

2023

2013

2008

1995

1965

1961

A PROUD TRADE UNION HISTORY

**Representing Male
and Female Players in
the Football Industry**



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