



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Employment & Social Governance  
**Social dialogue**

Brussels, 26 February 2019

## **Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Professional Football**

### **Minutes of the Working Group Meeting Labour Market Regulations**

**25 February 2019**

#### **1. Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was adopted. The point on the protection of minors was brought forward.

#### **2. Minutes from previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting (27 September 2018) were approved.

#### **3. Protection of Minors**

FIFPro had prepared two presentations.

In the first presentation Mr Bowyer explained the functioning of the English PFA (Professional Football Association) Independent Youth Advisory Service and the PFA Safety Net. For further info see ppt and also the annually updated booklet: <http://magazines.thepfa.com/magazine/youth-advisory/html5/index.html>

Social partners agreed that the PFA programme could be seen as a model which probably can not be transferred to many other leagues for a sheer lack of financial means. However, they also agreed, that this model shows good practice and could inspire other leagues, clubs and PFA's to go into the same direction.

All partners agreed that such efforts are a joint responsibility.

Mr Riihilahti raised the issue that there is not only the dimension of protecting the young athletes, but that the good players leave their club too early, meaning training clubs receive little support to maintain their efforts.

With the 2<sup>nd</sup> presentation FIFPro proposed to focus in the next step on the work of the elite academies and to collect information about existing programmes and charters aiming at the protection of minors in football. So to obtain an overview of the situation.

The partners showed interest but did not commit at that stage.

The precise scope still needs to be defined. On the side of ECA and European Leagues there was interest to not only look into the protection of individuals but also into the protection of the interest of training clubs. FIFPro was open to that.

UEFA saw an opportunity for that theme, considering the newly introduced obligations to protect minors in the licensing system.

Following the mapping social partners might approach the European Commission to take the topic further. One suggestion in that respect might be to ask for a more detailed review of standards.

**Next steps:**

- FIFPro will circulate the presentation and the cost calculation for a mapping project. European Leagues and ECA will discuss it internally.

#### **4. Health and safety of players**

Mr. Gouttebauge (FIFPro) gave a presentation on the risks of concussion in football and how to avoid negative consequences.

He stressed the need to educate the medical team but also to enforce the rules already in place, by pointing to several badly managed incidences. He called for managing this risk.

Social partners exchanged that a number of steps could be useful to reduce the risk of badly treated concussions. The ideas ventilated were:

- Proper check by independent medical staff on site
- Allowing for a fourth substitute in case a player has to leave the match because of concussion
- Sanctions in case the rules have been violated (i.e. player kept in match in spite of concussion)
- Clear rules on how players are declared ready to play again (minimum period of 6 days after suspicion of concussion)
- Neurological tests at the beginning of the season to have a benchmark against which a player can be tested in case an incident had occurred

The social partners showed a shared interest to make sure that concussions are adequately treated and a willingness to look at practices applied in other sport-disciplines.

**Next steps:**

- Social partners agreed to continue the discussion and to see whether they could develop a joint position.

**Participants 25/02/2019**

<p>Employers (4 ♂, 3 ♀)</p> <p><u>ECA</u> Mr Daan de Jong (NL) Mr. David Frommer Ms. Jelena Mikacic (HR) Mr. Aki Riihilahti (FL)</p> <p><u>EPFL</u> Ms Ornella Bellia Mr Mathieu Moreuil (Premier League - UK) Ms Laura Vilches (LaLiga – ES)</p>	<p>Workers (6 ♂)</p> <p><u>FIFPro</u> Mr. Jonas Baer-Hoffmann Mr. Alexander Bielefeld Mr. George Bowyer Mr. Vincent Gouttebarga Mr. Tomislav Kasalo (HR) Mr. Roy Vermeer (NL)</p>
<p><b>European Commission</b> (1 ♀) Ms Sigried Caspar (DG EMPL)</p>	<p><b>UEFA</b> (1 ♂) Mr Julien Zylberstein (FR) (via skype)</p>