



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue  
**Social dialogue, Industrial Relations**

Brussels, 19 September 2013

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

### **Minutes of the Working Group Meeting "Implementation of the Autonomous Agreement"**

**16 May 2013**

#### **1. Adoption of the agenda and of the minutes of last meeting**

The meeting was chaired by Mr Grafström (UEFA). The agenda was adopted. The minutes of the 21 March working group meeting were adopted with minor changes (footnote on the situation in Belgium).

#### **2. Information from the Steering Group meeting**

Mr Grafström gave a brief overview over the Steering Group meeting of 24 April 2013 (see minutes there) during which the terms of reference of the working group (mandate, role, objective and expected deliverables) had been approved by all parties.

#### **3. Update on EU funds application for round tables and task force**

FIFPro presented the general project outline of the planned project application on the implementation of the autonomous agreement. The social partners strived for full compliance of all national industries with the minimum requirements at the end of the project period. Each target country would be, if needed, visited twice. Up to four regional roundtables were planned. In addition, FIFPro proposed to organise a thematic seminar on national dispute resolution mechanisms in the second quarter of 2014. ECA and EPFL requested to evaluate the content of such a seminar before agreeing to organise it. The results of the project should be presented at the sectoral dialogue committee's plenary meeting 2014.

It was agreed that FIFPro would draft the application for EU funds and circulate the document among the social partners for feedback (before 20 June). The following contact persons were designated for the finalisation of the project applications: Mr Øland (FIFPro), Mr Dewaele (ECA) and Mr Bertoni (EPFL).

#### **4. Next steps of implementation**

The letter to football associations (see last meeting) was not yet ready but would be finalised by UEFA as soon as possible. Each letter would address country-specific issues identified during the kick-off meetings and afterwards, and be undersigned by the European social partners. The following contact persons were designated: Mr Øland

(FIFPro), Mr Dewaele (ECA) and Mr Bertoni (EPFL). In addition, UEFA shall present a schedule of meetings for the visits to the alluded group of countries.

The following changes were observed since the kick-off meetings:

**SI:** The FA is currently drafting its proposal for standard contracts, a meeting will take place on Monday. The process of selecting arbitrators has started. Civil contracts should be transformed into labour contracts. The parties agreed that EPFL would participate in the country visit although they had not (yet) any affiliate there.

**Serbia:** Negotiations on standard player contracts have started. 99% of the rules on independent arbitration have already been agreed.

**Croatia:** Still no dialogue so far, the letter is considered as crucial to make things move.

**Ukraine:** Things look okay on paper.

**Russia:** According to FIFPro, most cases go directly to CAS, which is a problem. The new FA leadership may be more inclined to dialogue.

**CZ:** The Supreme Administration Court has ruled in a recent judgment that a professional football player may perform his duties to the club under an employment contract or a business contract. FIFPro stressed that establishing employment contracts in professional football was not forbidden in any country in Europe.

In general terms, the parties agreed that they should exchange information on any new developments and agree beforehand on the message to be delivered. Therefore, each organisation should talk to their members before the visits. The content of the field visits should be validated by the social partners and UEFA beforehand. For the preparation of these field visits, the parties shall contemplate the current regulatory framework (FIFPro would share with the other social partners and UEFA relevant documentation, such as collective bargaining agreements, in English), the existing football political environment, and the concerns, challenges and possible improvements to be proposed by the national social partners. The approach should be to share knowledge, not impose it. The visits should be held with interpretation (local language/English). In order to avoid any conflict of interests, ECA considered that those appointed to the Contact Committee (Article 18 of the agreement) should not be the same people than those participating in the country visits. FIFPro did not exclude any overlap but understood the concern and committed to try to avoid it.

The club association also mentioned the fact that some sanctions or procedures applied in some countries were not valid and referred to the provisions on player discipline in the agreement. This issue could be addressed in the seminar on dispute resolution (if decided).

Given the deadline of implementation of the agreement, the following tentative schedule for the country visits was envisaged: August/September for the first five countries; October-December for the seven others (or for six without Turkey). EPFL expressed some concerns about the quantity of representatives to be mobilised in order to fulfil with the total number of visits in such a short period of 6 months. Consequently, concerning the 7 additional countries to be visited during the period October-December 2013, EPFL requested certain flexibility in the accomplishment of such specific number of meetings before the end of the year, mentioning that some may need to be scheduled for 2014.

**5. Any other business**

No points were raised.

**6. Next meeting**

The next meeting of this working group will be held on 19 September 2013 in Brussels.

**Participants**

<p><b>Employers (6 ♂, 0 ♀)</b></p> <p><u>ECA</u> Mr Dewaele Mr Lambrecht Mr Roka (HU)</p> <p><u>EPFL</u> Mr Animucki (PL) Mr Bertoni Mr Blair (UK)</p>	<p><b>Workers (6 ♂, 0 ♀)</b></p> <p><u>FIFPro</u> Mr Bär-Hoffmann Mr Diaz Peramos (ES) Mr Higgins (UK) Mr Øland (DK) Mr Stefanovic (SI) Mr van Megen (NL)</p>
<p><b>European Commission</b></p> <p>Ms Durst (DG EMPL)</p>	<p><b>UEFA</b></p> <p>Mr Grafström</p>