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DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

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

Brussels, 6 March 2014

Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Professional Football

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

19 September 2013

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

The meeting was chaired by Mr Zylberstein (UEFA). The agenda was adopted after taking note of the fact that ECA considered it too early to discuss the organisation of the seminar on national dispute resolution mechanisms (item 4.c. of the agenda). The minutes of the 16 May working group meeting were adopted with changes proposed by FIFPro, ECA and EPFL.

2. Update on EU funds application for round tables and task force

FIFPro reported that it had introduced the funding request by the deadline, without failing to mention the fact that the procedure had been quite cumbersome. If accepted, the project "Implementation of the Autonomous Agreement regarding the minimum requirements for standard player contracts in the professional football sector in the European Union and the rest of the UEFA territory - Raising contract standards in European football" would start on 20 October. FIFPro suggested that the task force could potentially meet at the occasion of the EU expert group on governance on 7 November, given that confirmation on the project acceptance was received by this date.

All parties agreed that it would be necessary to prepare the visits (and the information to be gathered beforehand, for instance by means of a simple questionnaire) as soon as possible. FIFPro committed to share the findings already gathered from FIFPro members with the other parties. EPFL proposed to submit, within a week's time, a template on potential questions. Before each meeting, a joint file on facts should be prepared. It was said that the situation was partly assessed during the kick-off meetings held in Nyon. FIFPro agreed to develop a template questionnaire for national stakeholders as well as a file for each meeting.

UEFA announced the dates for the first five visits as fixed with the football associations: Serbia 16 October, SI 18 October (not yet confirmed), HR 29 October, Russia 1 November, Ukraine 8 November (not yet confirmed). The visits for the remaining seven countries would take place between November and January/February 2014.

EPFL insisted on maintaining certain flexibility on the period chosen for the visits considering the restrictions in terms of man power and necessary time to host the extensive number of programmed meetings. FIFPro stated its understanding for these

concerns but reminded the parties about the pressing implementation timeline set out in the autonomous agreement.

It was agreed to request the national associations to inform the respective national social partners about the date of the meetings. In addition, the future letters to be sent to the national associations shall be sent also to the relevant national social partners (leagues, clubs and players' unions) for practical reasons and effective communication.

The parties agreed that National Associations, with the support of UEFA, should chair the meetings. Third parties, who are relevant should be invited to the meetings, for instance government representatives or the chairperson of the national arbitration system.

Subsequently, the social partners discussed their understanding of "employment contracts" and "civil law contracts"¹. Any disagreement on terms and definitions should be solved before the meetings. However, the employers' representatives stressed that the role of the EU social partners was to use their best endeavours to implement the Autonomous Agreement and, therefore, not to impose but instead to motivate the discussion among the national social partners to find the best solution to their precise needs and the specificities of their local sporting environment and existing national law. FIFPro responded that the signature of the autonomous agreement demanded from the social partners and UEFA a commitment to implement the minimum requirements and that this obligation must be mirrored in a pro-active implementation process.

Regarding the organisation of the seminar on national dispute resolution mechanisms, FIFPro suggested to foresee this seminar for May 2014. After discussion, it was agreed to assess the situation after the field visits in February 2014 and to decide whether the organisation of a seminar would be beneficial.

3. Any other business

No points were raised.

4. Next meeting

The plenary meeting will be held on 2 December 2013 in Brussels.

5. Calendar of meetings 2014

The plenary meeting is planned for 20 November 2014 in Brussels. The three dates for the 2014 working group meetings (to be held in Brussels) shall be fixed at the 2 December 2013 plenary meeting at the latest.

¹ The Agreement uses the term "contract" with the following definition: "the employment contract between a Player and a Club"

Participants 19/9/2013

<p>Employers (4 ♂, 0 ♀)</p> <p><u>ECA</u> Mr Dewaele Mr Lambrecht</p> <p><u>EPFL</u> Mr Bertoni</p>	<p>Workers (7 ♂, 0 ♀)</p> <p><u>FIFPro</u> Mr Bär-Hoffmann Mr Boeykens (BE) Mr Diaz Peramos (ES) Mr Higgins (UK) Mr Øland (DK) Mr Stefanovic (SI) Mr van Megen (NL)</p>
<p>European Commission</p> <p>Ms Durst (DG EMPL)</p>	<p>UEFA</p> <p>Mr Zylberstein</p>