



Brussels, 30 September 2013

Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Professional Football

Minutes of the Working Group Meeting "Career Funds"

16 May 2013

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

The meeting in which a number of observers participated was chaired by Mr Phillips (UEFA). The agenda was adopted. The minutes of the 17 December working group meeting were adopted with amendments submitted by EPFL.

2. Information from the Steering Group meeting

UEFA 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 adopted. The overriding purpose of the Working Group was to examine the feasibility of the introduction of a Career Fund for professional footballers in EU countries generally.

3. Presentation of results of Ernst & Young study

Representatives of Ernst & Young presented the results of the study *"Tax and career facilities for professional football players in 2013. A comparison of 30 European countries"* which would be published on 21 May¹.

Key findings are:

- Western European countries are attractive for players despite their relatively high income tax rates thanks to a solid career or pension fund in combination with a beneficial expatriate regime for foreign football players.
- Eastern European countries with relatively low income tax rates in general lack other career facilities. Players in some of these countries do not have regular employment contracts. Short term goals (such as higher net income for the player) in these countries prevail over longer term goals (such as players' rights and financial security).

¹ http://www.fifpro.org/news/news_details/2264

- Turkey, Russia and Ukraine use their tax system to attract and retain the best players in the world.
- Offering education opportunities to (ex-)players in order to financially bridge the gap between the active and second career remains a challenge.

4. Discussion and next steps

FIFPro affirmed their wish to promote career funds. The players' main objective was to secure a financial bridge after their active career out of their own salary, which automatically means not to get an increase costs for clubs. FIFPro promotes online education during the active career of professional athletes. If this is not the case, FIFPro considered that a gap of more or less three years needed to be closed by studies or training after an active career in the first team.

ECA and EPFL supported the objective of education and referred to various examples of good practice. A lot of clubs and leagues already put themselves together to centralise education activities. However, EPFL was not convinced that an (obligatory) career fund was necessary on top of the provision of education. There were other non-financial mechanisms to ensure that the player could pursue a second career after his football career, such as educational and training programmes, which many clubs and leagues are currently having in place. ECA was also reluctant to the idea of extra costs for establishing such a fund. In the opinion of ECA, the problem was that most players preferred cash to long-term investment. FIFPro was convinced of the contrary, nowadays most of the professional players realised the importance of a career fund because of their short active sport career. The club association wondered how to convince players that career funds would lead to a win-win situation. Another question was if such funds would work without tax exemptions. EPFL considered that the implementation of such career funds was an exclusive competence and decision of the national social partners and that the establishment of career funds should not increase the salary costs paid by clubs.

FIFPro suggested proposing an action plan on what to do and why. UEFA proposed to look at countries with a career fund and to cross-check if these were the countries with sectoral collective bargaining. In this way, good practices could be identified. ECA and EPFL agreed to support the principle of assisting players to have a second career after football. Therefore, one should not only look at career funds but also look at best practices in further educational programmes.

It was agreed to review the study in detail before the next meeting. Secondly, FIFPro would present a draft action plan, looking mainly at the situation in Eastern European countries.

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>Employers (4 ♂, 1 ♀)</p> <p><u>ECA</u> Mr Fossen (NL) Mr Frommer</p> <p><u>EPFL</u> Mr Bertoni Mr Rossmeisl (NL) Ms Vaadal (NO)</p>	<p>Workers (7 ♂, 1 ♀)</p> <p><u>FIFPro</u> Mr Bär-Hoffmann Ms Bakker Mr Horváth (HU) Mr Kolster Mr Levovnik (SI) Mr Schwab (observer) Mr Stefanovic (SI) Mr van Seggelen</p>
<p>European Commission</p> <p>Ms Durst (DG EMPL)</p>	<p>Others</p> <p><u>UEFA</u> Mr Grafström Mr Phillips</p> <p><u>Ernst&Young</u> Mr Brink Ms Roubos Mr Visser</p>