



No. 04/2017

TO UEFA MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

For the attention of  
the President and the General Secretary

Your reference	Your correspondence of	Our reference	Date
		KPCLC/MAC/THT	20 January 2017

### **UEFA club competitions 2018–21**

Dear Sir or Madam,

Further to the initial decisions made on 25 August 2016, on 9 December 2016 the UEFA Executive Committee finalised the structure of the UEFA club competitions for the 2018–21 cycle. While the format of the UEFA Champions League (UCL) and the UEFA Europa League (UEL) remain the same as currently, the agreed modifications concern the access list, calendar, coefficient system and revenue distribution system of both competitions. These changes are expected to increase the competitive balance and commercial appeal of the UEFA Champions League and guarantee higher participation of domestic champions and broader representation of national associations in European club football throughout the season.

A summary of the changes is outlined below.

#### UEFA Champions League access list

- The composition of the group stage is as follows:
  - o 26 teams who qualify directly, comprising:
    - the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League title holders
    - 4 teams each from the associations ranked 1 to 4
    - 2 teams each from the associations ranked 5 to 6
    - 1 team each from the associations ranked 7 to 10
  - o 6 teams from the qualifying phase, comprising:
    - 4 teams from the champions path, which comprises the champions of the associations ranked 11 to 55 and consists of four rounds with staggered access plus a preliminary round. All domestic champions eliminated in the champions path between the preliminary round and Q3 are given a second chance to compete at European level by entering a dedicated champions path in the UEFA Europa League qualifying phase

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(currently the possibility to enter the UEFA Europa League qualifying phase is offered only from Q3).

- 2 teams from the league path, which comprises the third-ranked teams (N3) of the associations ranked 5 and 6 and the runners-up (RU) of the associations ranked 7 to 15 and consists of three rounds with staggered access.
- The maximum number of teams per association in the UEFA Champions League group stage remains unchanged, i.e. five in cases where the UEFA Champions League or UEFA Europa League title holders would not qualify for the UEFA Champions League via their domestic league.
- If the UEFA Champions League title-holder qualified for the UCL group stage via its domestic championship, the vacancy created would be filled, in line with the current principle, by the Champion of association 11 (champions path).
- If the UEFA Europa League title-holder qualified for the UCL group stage via its domestic championship, the vacancy created would be filled by the third-ranked team (N3) of association 5 (league path).

#### UEFA Europa League access list

- The composition of the group stage is as follows:
  - 17 teams who qualify directly via their domestic competitions. In addition to the current 16 teams (associations 1 to 4: cup winners (CW) plus the fifth-ranked team (N5); associations 5 to 12: CW), the new access list also qualifies a second team (N4) of association 5.
  - 31 teams from the qualifying phase, comprising:
    - 6 teams eliminated in the UCL league path Q3 and play-offs
    - 4 teams eliminated in the UCL champions path play-offs
    - 8 teams from the newly created UEL champions path, reserved for teams eliminated in the UCL champions path
    - 13 teams from the UEL league path, which consists of five rounds and includes teams from all 55 associations

Please note that all changes in the access list will enter into force in the 2018/19 season. The impact on domestic competitions will therefore begin in the 2017/18 season.

#### Calendar and kick-off times

- The overall structure of the UEFA club competitions calendar will not change.
- A new preliminary round will be added to the qualification of both competitions, and the first qualifying round will commence one week later, both for UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League.
- The UEFA Super Cup week in August will also be used for the qualifying rounds.

- Split kick-off times will be implemented in the UEFA Champions League group stage: two matches with an early kick-off time (19.00CET) and six with a late kick-off time (21.00CET). All matches in the knockout phase will kick off at 21.00CET.

### Coefficient system

- The association coefficient system, which determines the ranking and positions of the national associations in the access list, remains unchanged.
- There will be two independent rankings for individual club coefficients:
  - o Sporting coefficient ranking, to be used mainly for seeding at the draws
    - Based on the results of the last five years (same as currently)
    - The 20% contribution from the association coefficient will no longer be added. It will be attributed only to clubs without individual coefficient or will replace the individual coefficient in case it is lower than this 20%.
  - o Financial distribution coefficient ranking
    - Based on the results of the last ten years
    - In addition, points for each UEFA Champions League/European Champions Clubs' Cup, UEFA Europa League/UEFA Cup and Cup Winners' Cup title won will be allocated as follows:

	UEFA Champions League	UEFA Europa League	Cup Winners' Cup
Titles won in the last five years	12	3	n/a
Titles won since 1992/93 but before the last five years	8	2	2
Titles won before 1992/93	4	1	1

- 20% contribution from the association coefficient (based on ten years) will be attributed only to clubs without individual coefficient or will replace the individual coefficient in case it is lower than this 20%.

### Revenue distribution

- The allocations to solidarity, competition costs, UEFA and club shares are as follows:
  - o 3% of overall income (min. €84m–max. €96m) in solidarity for clubs knocked out in qualifying rounds
  - o 4% of overall income (min. €120m–max. €128m) in solidarity for non-participating clubs
  - o actual competition costs (~€280m), instead of a fixed percentage of gross revenue

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- UEFA share of net revenue (i.e. gross revenue minus solidarity and competition costs) down from the current 8% to 7% if overall income is between €2.5bn and €3.0bn, and to 6.5% if overall income is above €3.0bn
  - net club share to be distributed to UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League clubs at a ratio of 4:1.
  - It is to be noted that, after calculating all shares based on set percentages and ratios, an amount of €60m will be deducted yearly from the UEFA Champions League club share and allocated as follows: €50m to the UEFA Europa League club share and €10m to the solidarity share for clubs eliminated in the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League qualifying rounds.
  - The distribution to UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League clubs will be changed to a four-pillar system, as follows:
    - UEFA Champions League:
      - 25% starting fee (equal shares to all clubs in the group stage), 30% performance fee (based on results in the group stage and qualification for the different knockout rounds), 15% market pool and 30% club coefficient (based on the new coefficient system for the financial distribution).
    - UEFA Europa League:
      - 25% starting fee (equal shares to all clubs in the group stage), 30% performance fee (based on results in the group stage and qualification for the different knockout rounds), 30% market pool and 15% club coefficient (based on the new coefficient system for the financial distribution).

For more detailed and visual information, please refer to the enclosure and if you have any questions or need clarifications concerning the approved changes, please feel free to contact:

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Yours faithfully,

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Theodore Theodoridis  
General Secretary

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Enclosure

- Overview of changes for club competitions cycle 2018-21

cc (with enclosure)

- UEFA Executive Committee
- UEFA Club Competitions Committee
- European members of the FIFA Council
- FIFA, Zurich
- European Club Association
- European Professional Football Leagues