



LALIGA



To Unify the Game, FIFA Must Reform

Joint statement by the Bundesliga, LALIGA, Lega Calcio Serie A and the Premier League

The World Cup may be the pinnacle of our sport, but the foundations of football are sustained week in and week out, in packed stadiums and local communities, by dedicated players, fans, clubs and leagues around the world.

Football's longstanding foundations have, in recent years, been threatened by a fundamental governance problem, whereby FIFA's president has actively promoted exploitative ideas rather than safeguarding against them. And while football's stakeholders ultimately forced the withdrawal of the FIFA Forward Enterprise scheme, the conditions that led to FFE remain.

The FIFA President has now acknowledged the need for reform, but it is not enough for surface-level, process changes to be explored in the aftermath of FFE – fundamental governance reform is essential to restore clear constitutional boundaries within FIFA, including confidence that individual disciplinary matters remain demonstrably insulated from political interference.

The future of FIFA matters to everyone who cares about football, because our sport cannot grow globally if its foundations are undermined.

FIFA's governance problem goes far beyond the role of one individual. The wider question is whether FIFA's president should simultaneously wield such regulatory, commercial and political power without effective checks and balances, including the agreement of affected stakeholders. More than a decade ago, following criminal proceedings involving senior football officials, FIFA's own reform process sought to address these issues – yet, once again, football has suffered one of the biggest abuses of power in FIFA's history.

We are speaking up together, as founding members of European Leagues and the World Leagues Association, because we understand how FIFA's relentless expansionism affects everyone. Each of us is a steward of a professional system that connects the grassroots of our sport with elite domestic and international competitions. By bringing millions of people together, domestic football leagues around the world have a major social and economic impact: supporting industries, creating jobs and investing in grassroots development, while also contributing significant tax revenues to our communities.

Around one per cent of the world's professional players take part in the FIFA World Cup, while the remaining players and their clubs stop competing when domestic leagues come to a halt. Yet when FIFA takes major unilateral decisions directly affecting us – for example, by expanding the International Match Calendar (IMC) and extending the periods in which domestic competitions must pause – the stakeholders most affected are not meaningfully involved in the decision-making process. A FIFA governance that concentrates unchecked regulatory, commercial and political power in a single office, while relegating affected stakeholders to mere advisory status, is not fit for purpose.

In recent years, international jurisprudence has consistently underscored the same point: sport's governing bodies may regulate our game, but their power is not infinite. Where FIFA seeks to organise competitions, it must also neutralise an inherent conflict of interest via rules and criteria that are transparent, objective, non-discriminatory and proportionate, adopted inclusively and subject to effective independent review.

The IMC complaint brought by leagues to the European Commission in October 2024 is a consequence of a flawed governance framework in which FIFA can use its regulatory authority to advance its own commercial objectives without accounting for the impact on the economic and social sustainability of national competitions that affect all stakeholders.

This must change now for the sake of football.

We therefore jointly call for a new governance structure for our sport's global governing body that is transparent, objective, proportionate and inclusive, built on three core commitments. We call on FIFA to:

1. Give affected stakeholders a real role in decision-making

FIFA must establish a permanent body representing key stakeholders, including national associations, leagues, clubs, and players from across men's and women's football. This new body must be fully informed about new initiatives and have a meaningful role in FIFA's decision-making process. The agreement of stakeholder groups directly affected by a decision must be required for decisions concerning, among other matters, the calendar, employment, competitions and football's core assets.

2. Ensure evidence-based decision-making

Any major FIFA proposal must begin with a clearly defined rationale, supporting evidence and an independent assessment, published in advance of any decision, covering players, clubs, leagues and supporters, and evaluating the impact on all stakeholders and the development of football. A range of options should be scrutinised and final decisions should be accompanied by published explanations.

3. Protect FIFA's regulatory role from its commercial function

FIFA's role as regulator and guardian of the game must be protected from its commercial function, as a global competition organiser, by robust institutional safeguards to preserve trust, legitimacy and accountability. The ethics, financial oversight and electoral bodies must have appointments, budgets and powers that are genuinely independent of the FIFA administration and of the presidency. These reforms will ensure that FIFA's core competition rights, including the World Cup, are held in trust for all of football.

Moving Forward

At this crucial time for our sport, we encourage candidates for the FIFA presidency to endorse these principles and, within the first 100 days of the next presidential mandate, to convene an independently chaired Governance Convention representing member associations and the wider football community, mandated to report publicly within six months.

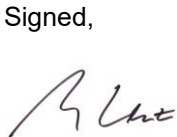
All candidates for the FIFA presidency should publish their own reform programme, debate its contents and adhere to fair election rules. FIFA's financial, legal, communications and marketing resources, as well as its football development funds, must remain strictly neutral and never create an electoral advantage for any candidate.

We invite confederations, national associations, leagues, clubs, player unions, supporter groups and public authorities from every continent to join this cause by supporting these principles.

Now is the moment to decide not only who will lead FIFA, but also how FIFA should be led. Leagues have a crucial role to play in this process, and we want to ensure that the voice of every league is heard.

Football needs FIFA to be a strong institution. But strength must be matched by accountability. FIFA's authority can only come from sharing responsibility, accepting scrutiny and earning trust.

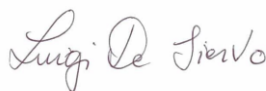
Signed,



Marc Lenz, CEO
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Javier Tebas, President
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Luigi De Siervo, CEO
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Richard Masters, Chief Executive
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