

UEFA Background Guide



Delegates,

As the committee chairs of the Union of European Football Associations, we are pleased to have you at the annual AMSI Model United Nations 2026. It is an honor to be your moderator and lead the discussions of this year in the Union of European Football Associations committee. Football is not only a sport in Europe, but it is also an influential institution that creates culture, opportunity, and identity. Nevertheless, as it is rapidly commercializing and gaining international impact, new issues have been raised, especially on the safety and protection of young gamers. Thus, we are very pleased to consider that you will be very active and committed to the task of resolving the matter under consideration and striving to come up with a holistic and significant solution.

The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) is the European football governing body and is responsible in that regard, with these duties in the 55 member associations: competitions, regulations, and development. UEFA is at the center of hosting some of the most renowned

footballing events, like the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA European Championship, and also the maintenance of regulatory structures that encourage fair play, honesty, and sustainability in the game. With the continued commercial drive of football, the need to ensure that minors are not exploited, abused, or subjected to unfair practices by the football industry has come into the limelight of the mandate of UEFA.

As your chairs, we would wish to underline the fact that this background guide is meant to be a guiding point in your research. Although it gives you a general description of the subject, it is not the only source of information that you should use. It is imperative that you do extensive independent research, know your team's position and relevancy to the problem, and be ready to make meaningful contributions to the discussion. This paper is to provide you with background information before you delve into the intricacies of safeguarding young football players in European football.

We are very happy to be put on this journey with you all, the delegates. This is what will kick off a fascinating and thought-provoking experience of cooperation, diplomacy, and critical thinking in the nature of this conference. As your chairs, we are determined to make sure that all the delegates will be given the right to speak, debate, and be heard all through the entire conference.

To sum it up, we would like to note that we can hardly wait to see you there in May, and we will be proud to be representing the UEFA committee in AMSI MUN 2026. It is important to note that you should send your position papers by Mawakeb Mail only, and you should not be afraid to contact us with questions or concerns.

Your chairs,

Omar Kassab & Bader Salloum

Topic: Preventing the Exploitation of Young Football Players: Strengthening UEFA Regulations to Protect Minors from Abuse, Unfair Transfers, and Commercial Exploitation in European Football:

Over a number of years, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) has been struggling with a number of issues in regulating European football without compromising on integrity, fairness, and the welfare of players. Since it is the organizing body in football on the European continent, the duties of UEFA include organizing continental competitions, enforcing rules and regulations, and propagating the growth of the sport in its 55 member associations.

European football has become a multi-billion-euro business, which has substantially raised the financial value that would be attached to the process of identifying and developing young talent. On one hand, clubs spend a lot of money buying and developing young players in their youth academies, as it is considered both an investment and a source of a team player. Though these academies may be able to offer systematic development, training, and careers, the commercialization of football has also brought the problem of minors under this system.

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Background / History of the Issue:

FIFA has regulations that limit international inclusivity of players below the age of 18. Such regulations exist to safeguard the minors against exploitation and so that the cross-border mobility will only take place under certain and controlled circumstances. Nevertheless, exceptions have occasionally permitted transfers that cast doubt on the idea of the best interests of the child being completely upheld, e.g., those of family relocation and those of movement within the European Union.

Some of the leading European clubs, such as FC Barcelona, Chelsea FC, and Real Madrid CF, have been imposed with FIFA sanctions concerning the international transfer and registration of minors. These incidents pointed out deficiencies in the regulation systems and proved the ability of the competition to cause a breach of the regulations.

Besides some of the issues confronting the transfer, the increased involvement of agents and intermediaries has fueled many questions regarding the representation of minors. Players and their families can sign contracts or agreements without realizing the financial, legal, and professional consequences of the matter when they are young. The imbalances of power between the minors and professional organizations may arise in the context of long-term agreements, image rights deals, and early commercial sponsorship.

Besides, cases of various European nations have highlighted psychological stress, high training requirements, insufficient educational provision, and, in certain cases, abuse cases in youth academy systems. The players being recruited across the borders who have economic vulnerability backgrounds might be some of the vulnerable players when recruited with the promise of professional success, which might not be fulfilled and which will create issues with regard to guardianship, stealing of their well-being, and continuation of education.

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Analysis:

The club licensing rules developed by UEFA demand that professional clubs should be at minimum standards in relation to infrastructure, youth development programs, and medical and administrative structures. These are supposed to enhance stability, transparency, and accountability in the European football systems, including among youths.

Collaboration between FIFA and UEFA has helped in the enforcing and policing of international transfer systems as far as minors are concerned. Monitoring mechanisms have been incorporated so as to bring more transparency in the registration of players and transfer across borders to minimize irregularities and have players observe the set rules.

Another aspect that UEFA has invested in is the development of grassroots and youth development programs within the member associations, where they offer financial and structural assistance to enhance the standard of academies. These efforts are to provide the youth players with a safer and more professional environment. Nevertheless, enforcement mechanisms have in

many cases been based on the investigation of reported violations instead of the prevention monitoring on a large scale and across all associations.

Punishments for the breach of minor transfer rules have comprised transfer bans and fines. Although these actions show regulatory power, they have not completely quashed the fear of discrepancy in the application of standards and varying degrees of protection by the member associations.

Commercialization and globalization of European football are ever growing as more and more clubs compete to get good talent at younger ages. Scouts do not respect national boundaries, and the networks of recruitment are far beyond national borders. Consequently, underagers can go overseas to seek training and development opportunities, in some cases, without having ended their formal education or having a secure base of support.

Meanwhile, the media publicity and the growth of broadcasting markets have turned young opportunities into the most public persons. This publicity can create business attention and economic prospects as well as put minors under pressure and publicity and under contractual agreements that they may not be well equipped to handle. This increased financial value of the emerging talent has added to the fears that commercial and competitive interests might be at the expense of child protection.

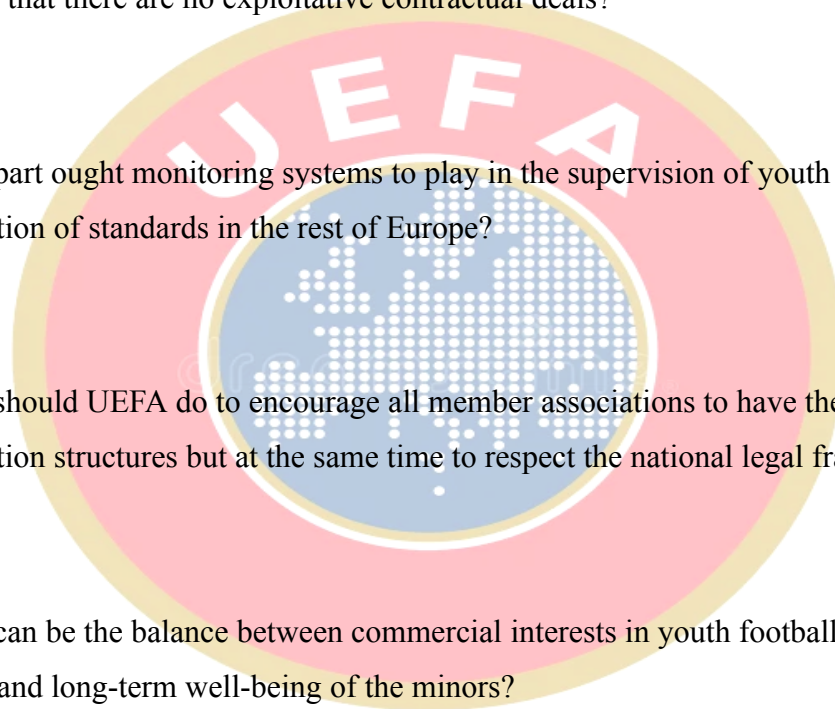
The problem of athlete welfare has become more discussed in the past years, and the necessity of comprehensive discussions in UEFA in the context of the sufficient nature of the current protective measures is becoming more apparent. Variance in national law systems and national child standards of protection in member associations causes disparities in the application and enforcement of regulations. In addition, the concepts of freedom of movement in Europe also make it difficult to enforce tighter restrictions on transfers without undermining the legal frameworks.

Throughout the debate at UEFA, there is the challenge of enhancing regulatory control in a manner that protects the minors and maintains the lawful migration of players and integrity of European football. The success of the further interventions will be determined by the ability to

coordinate between the member associations, the clarity of the regulations, and the ability to prioritize the welfare of young players on a regular basis.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

- 1) What can UEFA do to enhance the implementation of the current laws related to the registration and transfer of minors in its member associations?
- 2) How can there be proper education, guardianship, and welfare support of young players when they are training either at home or in foreign countries?
- 3) What can UEFA do to control agents and intermediaries acting on behalf of a minor to ensure that there are no exploitative contractual deals?
- 4) What part ought monitoring systems to play in the supervision of youth academies and protection of standards in the rest of Europe?
- 5) What should UEFA do to encourage all member associations to have the same child protection structures but at the same time to respect the national legal frameworks?
- 6) What can be the balance between commercial interests in youth football and the primary rights and long-term well-being of the minors?



Starter Resources

1. <https://inside.fifa.com/human-rights/fifa-guardians>
2. <https://www.uefa.com/sustainability/child-and-youth-protection/our-approach/>
3. <https://www.uefa.com/sustainability/child-and-youth-protection/our-toolkit/>
4. <https://uefa-safeguarding.eu/child-safeguarding-toolkit-uefa-member-associations-english>
5. <https://inside.fifa.com/en/news/fifa-publishes-its-guide-to-submitting-a-minor-application>
6. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29765/html>
7. <https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/029e-1ef2b0ed2b01-90887bb1f2e0-1000--discover-our-child-youth-protection-platform/>
8. <https://www.humanium.org/en/recruitment-of-minors-in-football-the-regulation-of-young-players/>

Club Matrix

FC Barcelona - Ajax - Benfica - Sporting CP - FC Porto - Borussia Dortmund - Bayern Munich - RB Leipzig - RB Salzburg - Chelsea - Manchester City - Arsenal - Paris Saint-Germain, AS Monaco - Olympique Lyonnais, Atalanta, Juventus, and Inter Milan. - AC Milan - Atlético Madrid - Al Ahly - Real Madrid - Celtic - Rangers

References:

1. Fédération Internationale de Football Association. (2023) *FIFA Guardians—Safeguarding and Child Protection in Football*. FIFA. <https://inside.fifa.com/human-rights/fifa-guardians>
2. Union of European Football Associations. (2023) *Child and Youth Protection—Our Approach*. UEFA.

<https://www.uefa.com/sustainability/child-and-youth-protection/our-approach/>

3. Union of European Football Associations. (2023). *UEFA Child and Youth Protection Toolkit*. UEFA.

<https://www.uefa.com/sustainability/child-and-youth-protection/our-toolkit/>

4. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. (2021 *Resolution 2420 (2021) – Protection of Minors and Transfers in Football*. Council of Europe.

<https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29765/html>

5. Talking Rights. (2025, January 30). *Exploiting Talent: The Challenges of Protecting Minor Players in the Football Industry*. Talking Rights.

<https://talkingrights.org/2025/01/30/exploiting-talent-the-challenges-of-protecting-minor-players-in-football-industry/>

6. The Guardian. (2020, December 11). *Football transfers are rife with illegality and exploitation, a report warns*. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2020/dec/11/football-transfers-rife-with-illegality-and-exploitation-report-money-laundering-third-party-ownership-uefa>

