

Summary of stakeholder press conference on so-called 'super league' case

21 December 2023

- Firstly – and crucially – European football remains united, as evidenced by the fact that all the stakeholders spoke together at a joint press conference earlier today: UEFA President, European Club Association Chairman, European Leagues President, FIFPRO Europe President, Football Supporters Europe President
- We have national governments and EU institutions behind us
- The press release issued by the ECJ (and the subsequent media it has generated) does not fully reflect the Court's findings. In fact, there is stark contrast between the press release and the judgment. In particular, the ECJ did not find that UEFA abused its dominant position.
- . The judgment is actually positive as it embraces the key features of the European football pyramid (open competitions, equal opportunities, sporting merit, solidarity)
- ECJ decision is based on old facts (which formed basis of questions referred by Madrid Court (ex parte)), the old so-called 'super league' project and under old authorisation system, i.e. what existed in April 2021.
- The ECJ certainly has not given the green light nor approved projects like the so-called 'super league'
- We welcome the clarity that the ECJ have delivered today, including the endorsement of a pre-authorisation system and UEFA's dual role as organiser and authorising body. ESL's central attack on this dual status was therefore rejected, along with its claims that UEFA needed to be broken up.
- The fact is ESL has never requested authorisation for its project (despite what they might say)
- We were aware our authorisation system was imperfect and so we started review exercise in November 2019, i.e. well before ESL was launched in April 2021
- These new (codified) Authorisation Rules were shared with the European Commission (who were fine with them) and agreed with ECA and EL (as we govern by consensus) before being approved by EXCO in June 2022. Accordingly, any new competition needs UEFA authorisation and will be treated fairly under objective, transparent pre-existing (i.e. June 2022) criteria and procedures.
- We are confident that these new Rules are fully in line with the ECJ's judgment
- That said, we remain open to reviewing and adapting them as necessary
- It is important to stress once again that the ECJ has endorsed the European Sports Model based on sporting merit which can be guaranteed only if all teams enjoy a certain level of equal opportunity
- It is also important to note that clubs from many countries (e.g. England, Italy, France) are prevented from joining a project which is outside the system
- And, UEFA is still free to organise its own competitions and to exclusively sell the commercial rights
- So, any new competition must comply with our new Authorisation Rules which (amongst other things) require any new competition to respect sporting merit, international match calendar, solidarity, etc
- Those Rules also protect 'UEFA Champion Club Competitions' (i.e. UCL) by requiring participation in the UCL by domestic league champions and clubs qualified through domestic leagues via UEFA's coefficient ranking, as well as UCL and UEL titleholders
- In conclusion, whilst UEFA is always open to improvement, football remains united and well-protected from breakaway projects which ignore sporting merit, equal opportunities, and solidarity