

Vienna, 4 December 2025

VdF – The Players' Association supports the "Justice for Players" class action lawsuit

European football is currently experiencing a legal development of far-reaching significance that will affect approximately 10,000 Austrian players. The Justice for Players (JfP) initiative is a Europe-wide movement that aims to strengthen players' rights and secure fair compensation for financial losses suffered.

Following the French, Dutch and Belgian players' unions in joining this initiative, the VdF – Die Spielervereinigung (as the only internationally representative players' union in Austria) is now also supporting the class action lawsuit against FIFA in official partnership and cooperation with JfP. Acting as advisor to JfP and contact person for the VdF is none other than Jean-Louis Dupont, Bosman's lawyer and legal architect of the revolutionary Bosman ruling. The aim is to provide players in Austria with comprehensive information and give them easy access to the proceedings.

But what exactly is this about? In October 2024, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) handed down a landmark ruling in the *Lassana Diarra* case. Certain FIFA transfer regulations were declared unlawful because they restricted players' professional freedom and salary development. This affects all professional and semi-professional players who were under contract in an EU member state or the United Kingdom between 2002 and today, regardless of their gender or nationality.

According to an economic analysis by Compass Lexecon, these regulations led to systematic income deflation averaging eight per cent of total salaries, plus interest on arrears. If the class action is successful, participating players may receive compensation for the financial damage incurred. Participation for players is anonymous and free of charge.

In addition, the class action aims to persuade FIFA to adopt the reforms to the transfer system required by EU law and to involve the players' unions in this process.

VdF Chairman Gernot Baumgartner: "We recommend that all affected players contact us and join the class action lawsuit. As a national partner and supporter of JfP, we provide all players with easy access to the proceedings."

Lucia Melcherts, Chair of Justice for Players: "The VdF's decision to support Justice for Players' class action lawsuit is another important step towards ensuring that the rights of professional footballers are protected under European law. As confirmed by the European Court of Justice, players' salaries in Austria, as in the rest of the EU and the United Kingdom, are affected by FIFA's unlawful transfer rules. With our lawsuit, we not only want to secure financial compensation for players for their loss of income, but also achieve a lasting reform of the rules."

For JfP, the VdF was the obvious partner for Austria due to its long history and high representativeness, as well as the fact that the VdF is the Austrian member of FIFPRO Europe, the European players' organisation recognised by the European Commission that represents professional players in European social dialogue.

With the support of the VdF, following the UNFP, the VVCS and United Athletes, the movement for a transparent, fair and lawful framework that is more equitable for players continues to gain momentum across Europe.

We encourage all players who have played for a club in the EU or the United Kingdom since 2002 to visit www.justiceforplayers.com to join the lawsuit and do their part to help develop a fairer system that benefits the sport as a whole.

About Justice for Players

Justice for Players was founded to represent the interests of professional footballers across Europe. The board consists of three members: Lucia Melcherts, Dolf Segaar and Franco Baldini. Lucia Melcherts has been chair of Stichting Massaschade & Consument (Foundation for Mass Damage and Consumers) since 2021. She also works as a coordinating expert advisor at the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. Dolf Segaar founded his own law firm, Segaar Law, in July 2021, which specialises in governance and litigation with a focus on sports law. Franco Baldini is a former professional footballer and agent who has held various management positions at top international clubs and organisations for over 20 years, including AS Roma, Real Madrid, Tottenham Hotspur and the English national team. He currently runs his own consulting firm, IC20 Ltd.

www.justiceforplayers.com

About Finch

Finch Dispute Resolution is an independent Dutch boutique litigation law firm established in 2022. With a team of approximately 18 specialist litigators and 5 partners based in Utrecht, the firm handles corporate, commercial, financial and class action litigation in the Netherlands and abroad. Finch is involved in several high-profile class actions, including against Booking.com, AbbVie, Tata Steel, Royal Dutch Philips and the ING Group.

<https://finch.nl>

About Dupont-Hissel

Jean-Louis Dupont and Martin Hissel are specialists in European law, particularly in the field of sport. Together, they have defended hundreds of cases and represented all stakeholders in the professional sports sector before the ECJ, the European Commission, the European Court of Human Rights, national competition authorities, national courts, international (including CAS) and national arbitration tribunals, and the internal judicial bodies of national and international sports federations. In particular, they have led and co-managed cases that have resulted in landmark

judgments by the ECJ regarding sports governance in the EU and beyond: Bosman (1995), Meca-Medina (2006), Royal Antwerp FC (2023), European Super League (2023), Lassana Diarra (2024) and RFC Seraing (2025).

www.Dupont-Hissel.com