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21 Jul 2022 | Insight
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Europe's governing body for football will again have to defend its rules on authorizing new competitions after a Luxembourg club announced court action today, alleging anticompetitive statutes are limiting its growth prospects. FC Swift Hesperange claims UEFA and Luxembourg's football association are unfairly blocking the emergence of cross-border leagues and the market for player transfers.

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The Luxembourg football club, which won the national cup competition in 1990, filed a claim at Tribunal d'arrondissement in Luxembourg, asking judges to seek guidance from the EU courts on whether UEFA and the Fédération Luxembourgeoise de Football, or FLF, are breaking competition rules as well as EU rules that ensure the free movement of capital and workers.

The action is backed by lawyers Jean-Louis Dupont and Martin Hissel, who have brought numerous cases against UEFA and FIFA rules on behalf of clubs, players and rival competitions. Most recently, they are representing the attempted breakaway Super League and appeared before the EU's top court earlier this month to attack UEFA's allegedly restrictive rules.

The latest action in Luxembourg claims that UEFA and the FLF have "rules prohibiting clubs from creating and running transnational competitions," which could stop the establishment of a regional Benelux league, for example.

It also targets UEFA and FLF rules imposing quotas for "locally trained players." Further complaints focus on the Luxembourg rules on transfers, which contradict a landmark ruling on player freedom, FC Swift Hesperange claims.

A final allegation states that the Luxembourgish association's statutes unfairly stop clubs incorporating as private companies. Together, these restrictions are harming the prospects for growth and increased revenue, it claims.

FC Swift Hesperange is joined by Leopard, a club sponsor, in its litigation. Their lawsuit also wants fans to be classified as "consumers" under EU law, potentially opening the door to a damage claim at a later date.

The club believes the network of alleged restrictions mean it is "structurally condemned to remain a micro-enterprise," while Luxembourg and its surroundings deserve a greater opportunity to develop a larger football club.

It depicts UEFA's authorization rules for cross-border competitions as a "territorial lock-in," which harms smaller clubs in smaller countries. It "reflects UEFA's unwavering desire to maintain a total monopoly on transnational and pan-European competitions," the club said in a statement via its lawyers.

Last year, a Madrid court faced with similar litigation over UEFA's statutes, sent its case directly to the EU's Court of Justice, seeking urgent clarification on the scope of European competition law.

FC Swift Hesperange is aiming for the same outcome here, asking the Luxembourg court to refer nine separate questions to EU judges.