



In the attention of

Prime Minister, Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis
Minister of State, Mr. George Gerapetritis
Deputy Minister for Civil Protection/ Crisis Management, Mr. Nikos
Hardalias
Deputy Minister for Sports, Mr. Lefteris Avgenakis
Secretary General of Sports, Mr. George Mavrotas

DATE

11 February 2021

CONTACT

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SUBJECT

**Request to start Third Division championship and Women football
championship, urgently**

Dear Sirs,

I am reaching out to you in my capacity as Secretary General of FIFPRO, world football player's union, regarding a matter that is extremely concerning to us, our member union and the players in Greece.

Our member, PSAP, Greek football players union, has made us aware of the difficult circumstances that players are facing in Greece, and in particular of the fact that the Championship of the 3rd Division, which is professional¹, and the Women football championship have not yet recommenced after their suspension in March 2020, due to Covid-19.

It has been brought to our attention, that despite Covid-19, the first Division has not stopped training, and the second Division, finally resumed training and playing in December 2020 and January 2021 respectively. However, despite the fact that the 3rd Division is also professional, and despite the commitment of the League to follow all Covid-19 related Protocols², it has not yet resumed.

Health and safety is a high priority for FIFPRO and for our member PSAP, and we consider that provided that the protocols are diligently followed (as in the first and second Divisions) the 3rd Division must urgently resume its activity. This in the light of the fact that these players need to work. They need to receive their salary and very importantly they need to keep on training and playing since their whole career is at stake. We are conscious of the fact that these players may be receiving a state supplement of EUR 500 due to Covid-19, but while we are certain this aid is appreciated, the amount may not be enough to maintain their families and it does not compensate for the huge loss that stopping playing has both physically and mentally.

And this has to be considered in its context: as you are surely well aware, Greek football has unfortunately been undergoing a deep crisis, which led, among others to the intervention of FIFA, and the joint efforts of FIFA and FIFPRO in order to solve major problems between the national stakeholders, caused by the breach by the HFF of the collective bargaining agreement in place, and the unilateral modification of the

¹ B) Confirmation that the 3rd League is professional
https://www.epo.gr/media/files/KATASTATIKO_KANONISMOI/2020_2021/KAP_2020.pdf

² Official confirmation from the League that they are going to implement the same Health & Safety protocols as the 1st and 2nd Division (<https://sl2fl.gr/toso-epikindyni-mpala-tis-football-league/>)

national Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP), which lay out many central conditions of employment for players. With the collaboration of FIFA and FIFPRO, several meetings took place during 2018 and 2019, which resulted in an agreement of the HFF with PSAP on some modifications of the RSTP in July 2020. Yet, in October 2020 UEFA and FIFA created a report for Greece called Study of Greek Football. FIFA and UEFA understood that a reform needed to be implemented in Greek football and made many recommendations, among which was the better and wider representation of players within the decision making of the HFF. There is a recognition of the players being hugely affected by this context.

With the outburst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation of players has been immensely impacted, both economically and mentally. On top of not being (fully) paid for a number of months, they were not able to reach out to the National Dispute Resolution Chamber (NDRC) in order to receive their due payments, since the HFF decided to close it for an extended period, despite FIFA's advice. On top of all this, there are currently a number of problems with the NDRC which make it non-compliant with the requirements stipulated by FIFA circulars 1010 and 1129, most notably its impartiality. This leaves players in a vulnerable situation where their employment conditions are not respected, and they have nowhere to turn to.

In what could be described as a discriminatory decision, which departs from the conditions imposed on the 1st and 3rd Divisions, 400 players are being left without the opportunity to work: and this is already for almost one full year! Needless to say, the players of the 3rd Division normally have a meagre salary, so this extremely extended suspension is affecting them immensely.

FIFPRO is deeply concerned as well with the suspension of the Women football championship, also for almost a year, especially considering that women football is in development, and preventing them from playing can only have negative effects on its evolution. Moreover, FIFPRO considers it discriminatory that the first league of Women football was suspended already in March and for a year, and the first league of male football never stopped. Unless there is scientific evidence that women spread more the virus than men, this does not seem to have any foundation, other than a lack of willingness to invest in the required health and safety protocols – an act of discrimination in itself. As we have been informed, women Volleyball, being an amateur sport as well, was allowed to train and play, so the different treatment of women football is difficult to understand.

Considering the above, **FIFPRO urgently requests that the Championship of the 3rd Division and the Women Football championship is recommenced, with the adequate Covid-19 Protocols implemented.** We would furthermore appreciate the government's support to ensure employment conditions for all professional players are fair, established in collective bargaining based on their human right and important ILO conventions and that they enjoy access to remedy and justice in employment dispute, to an impartial dispute resolution body compliant with all fair trial standards and FIFA circulars.



We trust that you will understand how important this is to more than 400 families, and for football in Greece in general.

We thank you very much in advance and remain at your disposal for anything that you may need.

Kind regards,

FIFPRO

Jonas Baer Hoffmann
Secretary General