

The Basque Football Federation (EFF-FVF) submits an application to FIFA and UEFA for a full-fledged membership

- *Representatives of the EFF-FVF and the Basque Government have registered this application at the headquarters of FIFA, in Zurich, and UEFA, in Nyon.*
- *The request highlights the “legal viability and effective possibility” of this claim, as well as the will to materialize an integration agreed with all parties.*
- *The EFF-FVF complies the decision adopted by its General Assembly and has notified the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) its willingness to “open a negotiation period to reach an agreement.”*

Vitoria-Gasteiz, December 15th, 2020

The Basque Football Federation (EFF-FVF) has presented today the formal application to FIFA and UEFA for a full-fledged membership as an official federation. Representatives of the EFF-FVF, accompanied by representatives of the Basque Government, travelled toward FIFA and UEFA headquarters in Zurich and Nyon respectively, where they have registered the application, accompanied by the relevant legal and administrative documentation that is based on. Thus, the EFF-FVF fulfils the mandate approved by the practical unanimity of its General Assembly (44 votes cast, 43 in favor and 1 abstention), held in Durango on December 12, 2018.

Representing the EFF-FVF, its president, Juan Mari Elustondo, and its vice president, Nerea Xalabarria, have attended the FIFA and UEFA headquarters; representing the Basque Government, have attended the director of Physical Activity and Sports, Jon Redondo, as well as the lawyer David Salinas-Armendariz. After the formal registration of the request, they have claimed the "legal viability and effective possibility" of the Basque Football Federation international representation.

“Through this formal request for integration, we comply not only with what is demanded by the General Assembly of the EFF-FVF, but also with the majority desire of the Basque society. It is a legitimate and absolutely viable objective from a legal point of view, as demonstrated by the integration of other European territories that are not independent states and the historical journey of their national teams (with or without their own league). Likewise, we have expressed our intention to undertake an integration agreed between the parties and we have notified the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) of our willingness to open a negotiation period to negotiate the terms of the same”, indicated the lawyer.

Formal request

Among the documentation delivered by the Basque Football Federation is a copy of its Statutes, an informative report that includes the historical journey of the EFF-FVF and the Basque National Team since 1915, a legal report issued by the Basque Government where the representative capacity of the EFF-FVF is motivated and fundamental, a copy of the agreement approved by the General Assembly of the Durango as well as the official notification delivered to the RFEF in order to open a negotiation period to reach an agreement on that issue.

In all this documentation, the Basque Football Federation states the "legal viability and effective possibility" to exercise the international representation by this Federation, "both for

individual athletes and for the Basque National Teams", while stresses that, for this purpose, the historical desire of Basque football "must materialize at this time with the integration of the EFF-FVF into the corresponding international associations, mainly FIFA, the world governing authority for the sport of football."

Besides, in accordance with Article 11 of the FIFA Statutes, the Basque Football Federation has informed FIFA that, in addition to having submitted its application for membership in UEFA, it has notified the RFEF its willingness to "open a negotiation period to reach an agreement that includes a formal authorization by the RFEF", as FIFA's statutes include the necessary authorization from the FIFA member federation of the State (in this case, Spain; section 6 of the aforementioned article 11).

Taking into account these circumstances, the application of the Basque Football Federation is based on three points:

1. Formal application by the Basque Football Federation for direct integration as a full-fledged member. To this end, the Basque Football Federation has requested the instruction of a common and joint file between FIFA and UEFA in which all the formal statutory requirements that the EFF-FVF must observe for effective integration in both bodies are fulfilled and can also materialize an agreement between all parties. In this agreement, the entry conditions of the EFF-FVF would be specified with the acquiescence of the RFEF, allowing a period of 1 year to close the aforementioned agreement. The agreement with the RFEF would include the agreed terms for integration.
2. Related to this point, the EFF-FVF has requested a reasoned report to be issued by FIFA and UEFA where it specifies the conditions and requirements for the concrete case of the EFF-FVF that it is necessary to be completed for its definitive admission to both bodies (in the event that today there is any condition that is not met).
3. The EFF-FVF has expressed its firm commitment, total disposition and good faith with the aim to work in order to "remove the existing obstacles and comply with all the requirements that are presented for an integration agreed between all the parties". As they have underlined, the objective is to materialize the historical desire of Basque football, legally represented by the Federation and clearly expressed in the associative agreement adopted at the December 2018 General Assembly in Durango.

New dynamic

This application for an official recognition by FIFA and UEFA meets the demands of the General Assembly of the EFF-FVF and includes the new dynamic that the Basque Football Federation and the Basque Government have been aiming to drive the Basque National Team. Since the beginning of the year, these two institutions have been energizing a working group to sort a new context around the Basque National Team and relaunching this project. In addition to the two institutions, clubs, players and agents favorable to promoting the Basque national teams participate in this working group.

The short-term objective is to relaunch the Basque National Team project and, once the health situation allows it, reconnect it with the Basque fans as it has been doing throughout its long history.