

Warsaw/Kyiv, 23 January 2023

Aleksander ČEGERIN
President of the Union of European Football Associations
(UEFA)

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to express our strongest opposition to the idea of allowing Russian clubs and the national team to return to international competition.

The war is ongoing. It is almost one year since Russia's unprovoked and barbaric attack on Ukraine. Everyday Russia shocks the international community with more horrendous attacks on civilians embarking on a campaign of destruction and death in an attempt to seize control of Ukraine.

The international sporting community has shown solidarity and support for Ukraine since the beginning of the war expelling Russian and Belarusian teams, clubs and athletes from competing in international sporting events. Now, more than ever before, the sporting community needs to stand together with the nation that has been brutally attacked.

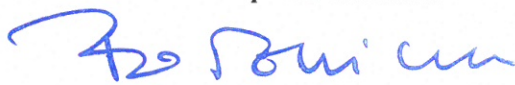
In Ukraine, many sports facilities, including football stadiums built for UEFA EURO 2012 hosted by Ukraine and Poland, have been reduced to rubble. Many players and coaches have joined the military or the territorial defence forces to fight for their country's freedom. Football clubs have been forced to perform humanitarian work and some stadiums were turned into refugee shelters. Some clubs have had to relocate to the west of the country while others have even left the country - such as Shakhtar - largely based in Warsaw or Dynamo Kyiv - based mostly in Łódź.

Under these circumstances, it is impossible for us to imagine that athletes representing the aggressor could be allowed to compete internationally again when Ukrainian sportspeople cannot freely take part in sporting activities in their own country because their sport infrastructure has been destroyed by Russian attacks and the ongoing war has changed their lives in every aspect.

Russia has given no indication it plans to withdraw its military forces from Ukraine and that remains the fundamental condition for any discussion about reinstating Russian and Belarusian athletes to the international sporting arena.

Yours sincerely,

Minister of Sport and Tourism
of the Republic of Poland



Kamil BORTNICZUK

Minister for Youth and Sports of Ukraine
President of NOC of Ukraine



Vadym GUTSAIT