



UKRAINIAN
ASSOCIATION
OF FOOTBALL

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№ 2623/25

To: UEFA

Attn.: Mr Theodore Theodoridis
General Secretary

Re: **Further integration of the clubs from occupied Ukrainian regions to russian domestic competitions**

Dear Mr Theodoridis,

On behalf of the Ukrainian Association of Football, let me express our high respect and address you with the following.

Despite the provisions of the international law, UEFA's core principles and direct instructions regarding Ukrainian clubs from the territories temporarily occupied by Russia, the Russian football union and Russian authorities keep integrating mentioned Ukrainian clubs into their internal competitions, as well as use the names and identity of the existing Ukrainian clubs, playing in Ukraine, to create the false ones, joining Russian domestic leagues.

In the opened sources is stated that from the year 2026 the club from the occupied Ukrainian city of Donetsk, called 'Shakhtar', is registered to participate in the Russian Second League, holding its home matches in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of the Crimea. According to mentioned sources, the false 'Shakhtar' has already been licensed and approved by the National Football League of Russia to participate in the next season (i.e., they have passed the initial check for admission to the Russian professional leagues). The team consists of players from the occupied territories of Ukraine and Crimea. This false 'Shakhtar' uses identity and name of the real Ukrainian club without any legitimate right to do so.

Also, in the media have recently been mentioned two more cases of violation: fake club, using the name of the genuine existing Ukrainian club and FC 'Zorya' (Luhansk), playing in Belgorod, Russia, and the club from the temporarily occupied Kherson region FC 'Fregat' are supposed to be engaged into Russian domestic competitions.

As UAF has previously highlighted in its numerous official communications to UEFA (see letters No.1312 dated June 10th, 2024; No. 1589 dated October 27th, 2023; No. 1487 dated October 6th, 2023; No. 741 dated June 22nd, 2023; and No. 1423 of November 1, 2022), Russia systematically pursues the illegal integration of clubs from temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories — Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, and parts of Kharkiv region — into its domestic football competitions and structures. Additionally, the appeal dated May 15th 2025 regarding the club named FC 'Zorya' Luhansk, based on the territory of the Russian Federation and is playing matches in the domestic league of Russia, illegally using the historical name and brand of the Ukrainian FC 'Zorya' Luhansk, which is part of the Ukrainian football system and has considered sporting, legal and identity heritage.

We would like to mention hereby, that the fact of the participation of a club registered in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine in competitions organized by the national association of another state without the consent of the UAF, is a direct violation of the territorial jurisdiction of the UAF, which, in accordance with Articles 10, 11 and 84 of the FIFA Statutes, is the only legal football (national) association authorized by the state to organize football activities throughout the territory of Ukraine, including the temporarily occupied regions.

Such actions are part of a coordinated political effort to legitimize the occupation and erase the identity of Ukrainian football. Allowing such developments to go unanswered endangers not only the Ukrainian football ecosystem but undermines UEFA's own regulations and the rule of law in football governance.

We therefore request UEFA to investigate the status and activities of the above-mentioned cases and clarify their eligibility, kindly providing the UAF with the official comment on the results.

The integrity of European football, the respect for internationally recognized borders, and the values of peace, solidarity and respect that UEFA upholds are at stake.

We trust in your commitment to justice and ask for the measures to be taken on the described matter.

**Sincerely,
UAF**



**Artem Stoianov
First Vice President**