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**CODE OF BEST PRACTICE  
FOR  
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND  
PROTECTION  
ON THE PATHWAY TO  
PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL:  
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

**CODE OF BEST PRACTICE FOR  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION OF MINORS  
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This consultation document forms the basis of a collective initiative to develop a Code of Best Practices for Youth Development and Protection on the Pathway to Professional Football (the “Code”).

The Code is written for football training organisations, governing bodies and other relevant organisations (i.e. confederations, leagues, players unions, coach associations, etc.) and will ultimately be a means to promote the highest standards and principles in terms of the development and protection of minors on the pathway to professional football. While supervisory public authorities are not the primary recipients of the Code, they also have a significant role to play in this field.

The Code will focus specifically on football due to its status as the most universally practiced, institutionally developed and economically advanced sport worldwide. While football solutions are not always entirely exportable to other sports, due to differences of sports cultures, rules and resources, football can provide insightful lessons and be used as a pilot or a source of inspiration for other sports, notably team sports.

The Code will aim to address all critical issues surrounding the recruitment, training, education and protection of minors on the pathway to professional football.

The general objectives of the Code are to:

- promote best practices with regards to the recruitment, training and education of minors on the pathway to professional football;
- protect minors on the pathway to professional football from all forms of abuse, harm, exploitation (including trafficking) and discrimination of any nature, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, race, ability, beliefs, religious or political affiliation, and social or economic background; and
- promote high sports ethical standards throughout youth football and the organisations that train and engage minors on the pathway to the professional level.

The Code will achieve such objectives through an approach identifying successful experiences and tackling the recruitment, training, education and protection aspects of the development of young football players in an integrated manner. It is drafted with the involvement of organisations active in the field of youth development and protection, such as: international and national football governing bodies, confederations, leagues, clubs, youth academies, training centres, player

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unions, public authorities, intergovernmental institutions, non-governmental organisations, etc.

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**DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this Code, the terms set out below are defined as follows:

- **Alternative educational institutions/specialist schools:** any academic institution (e.g. school, college, university, etc.), which is run by a football training organisation itself in order to provide formal education to minors on their pathway to professional football.
- **Education:** action or process of teaching a young player the general knowledge, academic curriculum and ethical values necessary to prepare that child or young person to mature life and possibly the necessary skills to have a profession outside of professional football. Education especially takes place in a school, college or university (inside or outside the football training organisation) and is compulsory until a certain age in most parts of the world.
- **FIFA:** Fédération Internationale de Football Association. FIFA is the world football governing body.
- **Football confederation:** any association of national football associations assuming responsibilities for the organisation of national and club competitions at continental level. There are six confederations worldwide: CAF (Africa), AFC (Asia), UEFA (Europe), CONCACAF (North America, Central America and the Caribbean), OFC (Oceania) and CONMEBOL (South America).
- **Football training organisation:** any centre, programme, equipment or entity that is dedicated to the development of young football players through the teaching of the technical, tactical, physical, psychological and social skills necessary to become a professional football player and that has a duty of protection and care towards the young players under its responsibilities - such as a professional club or any academy, training centre, camp, football school, or elite multi-sport institute training (among others) young football players, etc. that is registered to a club or runs a club itself.
- **Governing body:** any football association assuming responsibilities for the strategic supervision and regulation, organisation and administration of youth football in a given jurisdiction. There are actually only two governing bodies in any country playing football – FIFA and the national football association.
- **League:** any football entity (mainly association or company) assuming responsibilities for the organisation of professional league football in a given jurisdiction.

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- **Minors on the pathway to professional football:** under 18 years old individual who is selected, recruited or trained by a football training organisation with the intention of becoming a professional football player.
- **Other relevant football organisations:** this generic term refers to all football organisations, which do not operate the training of minor players (like football training organisations), nor regulate or monitor this training (like governing bodies but also responsible public authorities) but still play a significant role in youth development and protection of minors on their pathway to professional football. Such organisations notably include competition organisers such as leagues or confederations, but also players unions, coaches, agents, etc.
- **Professional football:** the part of the football sector considered as professional in a particular jurisdiction as per domestic legislation, sports regulations, jurisprudence or the existence of contractual labour relationships between clubs (as employers) and players (as employees).
- **Protection:** in the framework of this Code, the activities aimed at ensuring that football training and governing bodies respect their duty of care towards minors on a pathway to professional football as well as these minors' rights in order to preserve their health, safety, integrity (both physical and psychological) as well as their dignity.
- **Recruitment:** the process of scouting, trialing, selecting and/or engaging a young player in a football training organisation in order to make that young player a professional football player through training.
- **Stakeholders:** all organisations involved in the drafting and consultation phase for the production of the Code and its related index for good governance and compliance - as listed in the Appendix 2 of this Code.
- **Training:** in the framework of this Code, the development through teaching of the specific technical, tactical, physical, psychological and footballing skills necessary for making a young player a professional football player.

*Please note that terms referring to natural persons apply to both genders. Any term in the singular is applicable to the plural and vice-versa.*

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**PART I**

**INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this document is to serve as a basis for discussions in the framework of our consultation process for the establishment of a Code of Best Practice for Youth Development of Minors on the Pathway to Professional Football.

The Code is a “living document” and its content should be strengthened by the addition of further recommendations and examples of success experiences to be used as models or implementation guidelines.

**1. BACKGROUND**

All children have the fundamental right to participate, enjoy and develop through sport in a safe and inclusive environment. This right is enshrined in several international conventions and policy papers, including, but not limited to<sup>1</sup>:

- The Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (UNESCO, 2015)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- UNODC Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000)
- OECD Doing Better for Children (2009)
- European Sports Charter (1992)
- Council of European Conventions on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005) and on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2008)
- Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development Through Sport (2013)
- Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012)
- International Safeguards for Children in Sport (2014)
- 10th Resolution of the VII Conference of Ministers of Sport and Youth of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (2014)
- The European Commission’s White Paper on Sport (2007)
- Panathlon Charter (2010)
- MINEPS V declaration (2013)

This consultation document is a result of an inclusive multi-stakeholder effort which involved all the organisations (“the Stakeholders”) listed in Appendix 2.

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<sup>1</sup> Further conventions and policy papers specifically considered and referred to are listed in Appendix 1.

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The development of this document, which is initially based on practical experience and intimate knowledge of professional football leagues, benefited from a consultation process, which included:

- The establishment of a specifically-dedicated multi-stakeholder Task Force on Youth Sport Development and Protection;
- A review of literature - to be followed by a more comprehensive research as part of the consultation process;
- Bilateral and multi-lateral meetings with several football stakeholders and wider sport and non-sport organisations; and
- Conferences and workshops on the areas covered by the Code.

The Stakeholders believe that the recruitment, training, education and protection of minors on the pathway to professional football is essential to ensure the sport's long term credibility, as well as its social, educational and cultural role in sustainable development to the fullest.

Whether at amateur or professional level, football is a powerful tool for minors, and can contribute to achieving multi-purpose goals, including promoting health and well-being, physical activity, education, youth empowerment, gender equity, social cohesion, belonging to the community and inclusion, cultural integration and the development of values amongst the youngsters.

The Stakeholders consider that all minors on the pathway to professional football should train, play, be educated, grow and, more generally, live in a safe, secure and supportive environment.

The Stakeholders also believe in the principle that football training organisations (such as clubs and academies), governing bodies (i.e. FIFA and national football associations) together with supervisory public authorities (Ministries of Youth, Sports or the Interior) have a duty of care over the minor football players under their stewardship and a responsibility towards those minors' parents or legal guardians. As a consequence, in any situation, they should act with the minors' best interests at heart.

The Shareholders share the view that other relevant football organisations as well as supervisory public authorities have a role to play in supporting football training organisations and governing bodies' best practices in the recruitment, training, education and protection of minors on their pathway to professional football.

## **2. CORE AREAS**

The Code focuses on the following core areas:

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1. Recruitment;
2. Training;
3. Education; and
4. Protection.

**3. OBJECTIVES**

The Code's objectives are to:

- a) promote best practices with regards to the recruitment, training and education of minors on the pathway to professional football;
- b) protect minors on the pathway to professional football from all forms of abuse, harm, exploitation (including trafficking) and discrimination of any nature, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, race, ability, beliefs, religious or political affiliation, and social or economic background; and
- c) promote high sports ethical standards throughout youth football and the organisations that train and engage minors on the pathway to the professional level.

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**PART II**

**BEST PRACTICE**

**1. RECRUITMENT**

**Selections**

*Football Training Organisations*

1.1 Football training organisations should agree to take measures aimed at assuring the safety, security, integrity, protection and overall well-being of minors entering in selections procedures, including but not limited to:

- a) Where necessary, ensuring that travel arrangements are made for the minor and his / her parent or legal guardian to attend the selection or where the selection takes place over a prolonged period that the minor is at least accompanied to and from the relevant location at which the selection is taking place;
- b) Ensuring adequate conditions, respectful of human dignity are offered to the minor on trial during the selection period (for example ensuring the minor is always under the care of an accompanying adult, that the minor receives nutritionist-approved, healthy and balanced meals free-of-charge during one's stay and that adequate arrangements are in place regarding accommodation where necessary if the trial or selection is taking place away from the minor's local area, as set out below in the limits on travel time to attend selections);
- c) Providing the minor's parents or legal guardians, governing bodies and other relevant football training organisations with all necessary and timely information regarding the selection procedure. In particular, arrangements should be in place so that the minor is not missing school;
- d) Ensuring the welfare of minors undergoing a selection period and notably that they enjoy at all times the protection of a parent, legal guardian or qualified appointed adult caregiver. This measure should be subject to the oversight of relevant governing bodies.

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- e) Having proper procedures in place to prevent injuries during selection – under the supervision of the medical doctor appointed by the football training organisation. In case of injury, the relevant football training organisation must ensure that the minor receives suitable medical care both during and after the selection period.
- f) Contracting appropriate insurances for minors undergoing selections and making the parents or legal guardians aware of this prior to the minors participating in the selection;
- g) Keeping accurate and up-to-date records of all minors who attend their selections (within the limits of national data protection and personal privacy laws). If law does not provide otherwise, these records should also be communicated to the relevant governing body for proper monitoring; and
- h) Taking a decision as to whether the minor is to be offered a training contract or place on a training programme at the end of the trial / selection period, and communicating it clearly to the minor and his/her parents or legal guardian together the conditions under which the minor and his/her parents or legal guardians will be taken to their point of origin.

*Governing Bodies*

- 1.2 In parallel, national governing bodies should regulate selection procedures, notably trials, involving minors, including but not limited to:
- a) Obtaining written parental consent from the minor's parents or legal guardians for the individual to undergo trials / selection and making sure the minor's participation to the trial is not done against his/her will;
  - b) Setting a minimum age for minors to undergo a selection;
  - c) Setting a maximum selection period and ensuring proper procedures and arrangements are in place if trial / selection periods are to be extended;
  - d) Introducing limits for minors on the duration of travel time in order to attend selections; and

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- e) Establishing rules forbidding football training organisations from making any form of inducement (either by a financial reward or a form of benefit-in-kind) to the parents or guardians or legal guardian of minors aimed at enticing them to enter into a training contract / development programme.

**Contracts and Registration**

*Football Training Organisations*

- 1.3 The relationship between football training organisations and minors should be governed by a written agreement, compliant with the applicable legislation and national and international football regulations which should guarantee the best standards of care for the minor.
- 1.4 Training contracts and selection agreements must describe all rights and duties between the minor and the relevant football training organisation. This includes the benefits and conditions that the football training organisation will provide free-of-charge to the minor, including but not limited to:
  - a) Accommodation (where applicable);
  - b) Travel arrangements (where applicable);
  - c) Level of training / supervision to be provided (i.e. by suitably qualified coaches);
  - d) Nutrition requirements / dietary advice;
  - e) Training material / kit and equipment;
  - f) Medical / physiotherapy support;
  - g) Notice periods;
  - h) Arrangements for repatriation (if applicable);
  - i) Time spent in education and level of education;
  - j) Insurance cover for the minor;
  - k) Protection;
  - l) Contact with parents or guardians;
  - m) Duty of care;
  - n) Standard of living;
  - o) Provision for children with special needs;
  - p) Staffing levels and staffing ratios; and
  - q) Use of image and personal details.
- 1.5 Where applicable, sporting training contracts (as well as apprentice contracts or any other kind of non-professional contract, such as youth development and scholarship contracts) with minors should be put in place to cover the

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period from registration until the signature of their first professional contract, or until the minor leaves the relevant football training organisation (club, child football training academy, national training centre, etc.), whichever occurs first and within the limits of FIFA regulations in that field.

- 1.6 Sporting training contracts should define the ending date of the contract as well as the equal rights of the football training organisations and minors to negotiate an extension and/or an early termination of the contract. In the latter case, the termination should be founded and a reasonable notice should be observed, as per FIFA regulations in that field. Football training organisations should include a “cooling-off period” within their respective training contracts / development agreements with a minor to enable the minor to leave the relevant football training organisation after a relatively short period of time if the minor does not wish to continue with the football training organisation for the duration of the training contract / development agreement. Moreover, the contract should also arrange the conditions under which the minor will be taken back to his/her parents or legal guardians at the end of the contract – in case the player is still classified as a minor by then.

*Governing Bodies*

- 1.7 In accordance with the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, as well as relevant national rules and laws, football training organisations should implement a formal registration system for all minors on the pathway to professional football.
- 1.8 International and national recommendations or regulations setting a minimum age for the practice of organised competitive youth football or training for professional football should be respected and applied so that intensive training or the practice of high-level competitive football does not negatively impact the health, the psychological and emotional balance or the education of minors.

**2. TRAINING**

**Training and Match Infrastructures**

*Football Training Organisations*

- 2.1 Football training organisations should establish and/ or maintain safe, secure, clean and fit-for-purpose training and match infrastructures, with the necessary personnel dedicated to the youth development sector (including qualified technical, medical, administrative employees, nutritionists,

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physiotherapists, etc.), in accordance with the criteria set forth by the competent national governing body/ sports authority.

- 2.2 Football training organisations should submit their training and match infrastructures for minors on the pathway to professional football to the competent body (governing body but also possibly public authority or competition organiser such as league or confederation, as appropriate) for approval.
- 2.3 In the event that the football training organisation, the minor and respective parents or legal guardians agree that the minor is to reside at the football training organisation's facilities, safe, secure, clean and fit-for-purpose accommodation, as well as healthy, balanced and nutritionist-approved diet, should be provided at no cost to the minor.
- 2.4 Football training organisations should provide full details of the minor's daily routine and the applicable rules to which the minor is to adhere to, so that the minor is fully aware of his/her schedule at all times and that the parents or guardians / legal guardian are confident that the minor is receiving suitable care and attention in the pursuit of his/her sport.

*Governing Bodies*

- 2.5 Minimum criteria for training and match facilities, safety and security, accommodation, technical and medical equipment should be established by the competent body (e.g. governing body but also potentially public authority or competition organiser, such as league or confederation, as appropriate) for the respective training and match infrastructures of the football training organisations under its stewardship. This could for instance be done through a book of specifications or a licensing system.

**Personnel**

*Football Training Organisations*

Football training organisations should provide the following in relation to their personnel:

- 2.6 Ensure that personnel and volunteers who work with minors are qualified and undertake continuous professional development training in the fields of youth development, safeguarding and child protection skills. Such training shall be provided by the respective football training organisation or suitable third party providers.

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- 2.7 Require that all practitioners dealing with minors on a pathway to professional football are made aware of and sign up to the football training organisations' child protection policy and procedures, internal rules, code of conduct as well as clear specifications establishing the recruited personnel's role and responsibilities.
- 2.8 Provide lifelong education for coaches, trainers, mentors, scouts, volunteers as well as technical, medical and administrative personnel. In accordance with the International Safeguards for Children in Sport (in particular Safeguards 3 and 6), such programmes should enable adequate information and training for personnel and volunteers so that they can offer help, advice and support to children as well as develop and maintain the necessary skills in their role as educators.

*Governing Bodies*

- 2.9 National governing bodies should have in place suitable safeguarding and vetting procedures, which must be in line with the International Safeguards for Children in Sport and must be followed by their affiliated football training organisations when engaging personnel responsible for the supervision, care and training of minors including, but not limited to, coaches, trainers, mentors, scouts, volunteers and technical, medical and administrative personnel.
- 2.10 Such procedures should ensure that all personnel must be carefully recruited and selected so as to assess their moral and psychological suitability and competency to work with minors, be suitably qualified, and must accept responsibility for ensuring the wellbeing of children and adolescents in their care. This includes carrying out at regular intervals all necessary safeguarding and vetting / background checks on personnel before they are permitted to interact with minors. Most notably, ensuring that when recruiting a person for professional or voluntary activities involving children, interviews of references, psychological, integrity and criminal records checks will be conducted if a criminal records database exists in the country where the football training organisations operate.
- 2.11 A qualification system specifically dedicated to the coaching of minors (whether in the context of minors participating in sport at a recreational or professional level) should be developed by the competent body (i.e. governing body but also possibly as an alternative public authority).

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**Match Programme**

*Football Training Organisations*

2.12 Football training organisations should ensure that they provide minors with a detailed breakdown of their match/competition.

**3. EDUCATION**

**Compulsory, Post-compulsory Education and Vocational Support**

*Football Training Organisations*

- 3.1. Football training organisations who engage minors on a pathway to a career in professional sport should ensure that they receive compulsory education or remain in school, in accordance with the national legislation, and that they are encouraged to continue their education if they so wish. The provision of such education should always be delivered free-of-charge by certified and qualified individuals and organisations.
- 3.2. Where applicable, football training organisations should also provide a reasonable level of mentoring support to minors in their care, so that minors (particularly those who train/ reside away from home and their families) are provided with a holistic support structure to ensure their emotional and psychological well-being and development. Educational and vocational support for minors on their pathway to professional football may also take the form of tutor support and individual study plans.
- 3.3. Where a football training organisation considers that a minor is unlikely to be offered a professional contract at the end of their training contract/ development agreement, the football training organisation must ensure that the minor is given every opportunity to continue his/ her programme of education which he/she has commenced with the relevant football training organisation at no cost to the individual.

**Dual Career**

*Football Training Organisations and Governing Bodies*

3.4. Football training organisations and governing bodies should, in all circumstances, promote the development of 'dual career' programmes adequate for minors on the pathway to professional sport and provide them

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with appropriate educational and vocational support and incentives (such as conditional grants, scholarships and counselling on potential future careers outside professional football).

**Alternative educational institutions/specialist schools**

*Football Training Organisations*

- 3.5. Where applicable, in cases where minors are registered with a football training organisation and are educated in this football training organisation's own school/academy, training organisations should implement a fully comprehensive and certified education programme.
- 3.6. The above mentioned education programme must ensure that the minors in their care receive a formal education appropriate to their age and that the football training organisation takes appropriate measures to supervise the studies of the minors for which they have a duty of care at all times. In that framework it is also important to maintain some degree of support to minors through flexibility within education delivery.

**Sports Ethics and Integrity**

*Football Training Organisations*

- 3.7. Besides the technical training component, the education programmes provided by the child football training organisations to all minors on their pathway to professional football should include a sports ethics component, covering fundamental values set forth in the UNESCO Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, such as fair play, sportsmanship, integrity, honesty, commitment, courage, teamwork, respect for the rules, the referee, teammates and fellow competitors, as well as anti-doping, anti-match fixing and their rights as children and future professional football players.
- 3.8. Football training organisations should ensure that minors on a pathway to professional football are made aware that they should abstain from dangerous, unethical or unlawful conduct that are not compatible with sports ethics, such as under aged alcohol consumption or use of illegal drugs and illegal performance enhancing substances (doping), and match-fixing. Such organisations should ensure that minors are informed of the channels to get access to independent support (e.g. any ombudsman mechanisms, hotlines, independent public authority dealing with sports integrity).

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*All organisations involved in youth development and protection of minors on the pathway to professional football.*

- 3.9. Governing bodies, training organisations and other relevant football organisations should promote the development of programmes designed to raise awareness around areas, such as alcohol, doping, personal indebtedness, risks associated with social media, child delinquency, sports betting and match-fixing, and, in cooperation with their affiliated football training organisations and other relevant football organisations, implement effective prevention, protection and education programmes and campaigns.

**Relationships with Parents or Legal Guardians**

*Football Training Organisations*

- 3.10. Football training organisations should provide minors and their parents or legal guardians with information, advice, records and progress reports regarding the minors' technical, educational, academic and social welfare in an appropriate manner (such as through face-to-face meetings where necessary and regular communication via telephone and/or email).
- 3.11. Football training organisations should consider appointing a liaison officer/ contact point to manage the relationship with parents or guardians or legal guardians.
- 3.12. In all dealings with parents or guardians or legal guardians of minors in their charge, football training organisations should act in the best interests of the minor and treat their parents or guardians or legal guardians with respect.
- 3.13. Football training organisations should keep the parents or guardians or legal guardian of the minor aware at all times of the progress and performance of the minor and promptly inform them of any relevant information concerning the minor, such as illness, injury, accidents, absence, or about any other matter that may require their attention or action.
- 3.14. Football training organisations should obtain parental or guardian's consent where matters arise in connection with a minor such as when the minor requires medical attention or the minor is to be taken abroad for training or match purposes.

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**4. PROTECTION**

**International Safeguards for Children in Sport**

*Football Training Organisations*

- 4.1. As a general rule, football training organisations should ensure that when dealing with minors in football, all personnel should act in accordance with the dispositions set forth in the 2014 International Safeguards for Children in Sport.

**Medical Care**

*Football Training Organisations*

- 4.2. Football training organisations should provide minors engaged on a pathway to professional football with appropriate medical and psychological support where needed.
- 4.3. The above mentioned medical support should include regular (at least annual) preventative medical checks to verify their capacity to properly train and play/compete in sport. In that framework each football training organisation should appoint at least one medical doctor to provide support to the minors under the care of the training organisations. This doctor should hold a qualification that is recognised by the competent national health authorities.
- 4.4. Adequate nutrition programme and advice should be provided by the football training organisations taking into account the minor's age, stage of physical development and the intensity of their training schedule.
- 4.5. Football training organisations should engage with relevant national football bodies to ensure that they establish illness and injury prevention and monitoring programmes in order to regulate and verify the volume and intensity of training and competition regimes, so as to ensure that minors are not over-training and/or competing in sport at an intensity level which is not appropriate for the minor's stage of development.

*Governing Bodies*

- 4.6. Governing bodies should establish and implement procedures and guidelines, at a minimum, to include, but not limited to, the level of first aid

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and medical equipment (e.g. defibrillators) football training organisations are required to have 'on-site' at locations where minors are coached, trained or compete.

**Injuries and Insurance Schemes**

*Football Training Organisations*

4.7. Football training organisations must ensure that they hold suitable and adequate insurance policies at all times, including in respect of injuries, accidents and other risks which may be sustained by a minor in the course of a training/ selection period, training contract/ development agreement, match / competition and/or practice sessions. Moreover, the existence and details of such policies and schemes should be communicated to the minors' parents or guardians/legal guardians.

**International Transfers**

*Football Training Organisations*

4.8. The rules that govern the international scouting, recruitment and transfers of minors, as well as the activities of youth football academies should be reviewed from time to time and, where necessary, enforced more effectively in order to strengthen the prevention, combat and sanction of trafficking, smuggling, abuse and other malpractices.

4.9. Football training organisations should ensure that all minors from foreign countries undertaking trials with the football training organisations or that are registered with the football training organisation have all the necessary documentation in place with regards to their immigration status, and in compliance with the other provisions as set out in this Code and FIFA regulations. In that framework, it is also indispensable that protective measures for minors in domestic immigration laws are applied rigorously.

4.10. Football training organisations should acknowledge that the international mobility of young players can pose risks in terms of trafficking. They should take all practicable steps to ensure young players are only transferred and registered in conformity with the relevant FIFA Regulations so as to protect them against exploitative practices, including slavery and trafficking. This should also extend to the operations of their academies and any trials that require young players to cross borders.

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- 4.11. Football training organisations should adopt internal risk management and control processes to identify and mitigate trafficking risks in their player recruitment operations. This should begin with a risk assessment, policy development, and a strategy for monitoring of these processes and all the involved personnel.
- 4.12. Football training organisations with operations outside of the jurisdiction of their national governing body should be actively engaged in education programmes and awareness campaigns on the risks of football migration for young players. This should be an embedded part of their academy operations through a committed CSR and local community strategy. Such activities should envisage not only the protection of vulnerable minors, but also the strengthening of the football training organisations' relationship with local communities by building trust and confidence that these football bodies are concerned with player welfare. Such programmes could be conducted within schools, local football teams, towards parents and legal guardians as well as in public spaces.
- 4.13. As a relevant part of the training and education programme for young foreign players, football training organisations should use their best efforts to ensure that all young players coming from a different national governing body adjust to the local / national culture, by providing where necessary language courses as part of an education programme, and other relevant social activities.

*Cooperation between Football Training Organisations, Governing Bodies and Other Relevant Football Organisations*

- 4.14. Football training organisations, governing bodies and other relevant football organisations should encourage close dialogue and enhanced co-operation with law enforcement agencies, immigration authorities, players' unions and intermediaries to counter trafficking of minors.

**Intermediaries**

*Governing Bodies and Public Authorities*

Governing bodies and public authorities shall carry out the following:

- 4.15. Ensure that as part of their regulatory framework, all intermediaries with responsibilities for minors are registered and subject to safeguarding and vetting checks, including but not limited to a verification of their criminal record.

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- 4.16. Guarantee that all intermediaries act in accordance with the interests of all minors in their pathway to professional football – for instance with the signature of a code of conduct as well as the attendance of child protection courses as part of their qualification.

**PART III**

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**5. YOUTH FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION PROGRAMME**

*Football Training Organisations*

- 5.1. Football training organisations should have a written Youth Football Development and Protection Programme, establishing best practice principles in the following key areas:
- Recruitment;
  - Training;
  - Education; and
  - Child/ youth protection.
- 5.2. The Youth Football Development and Protection Programme should be submitted by the football training organisation for approval to the competent body (football confederation, national federation, league, public authority, as appropriate).

*Governing Bodies*

- 5.3. Governing bodies should appoint a national Child Football Directorship. Among other responsibilities, this body should oversee the implementation of best practice in the area of child/ child development and protection by their affiliated football training organisations.

**6. IMPLEMENTATION**

- 6.1. The Signatories of the Code agree to promote, adopt and work together towards the implementation of the best practice principles contained herein on minimum standards to be achieved with regards to recruitment, training, education and protection of minors in sport.

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- 6.2. This Code is designed as a “living document”. It shall be reviewed from time to time and updated, as appropriate in order to effectively respond to the critical challenges of the ever changing youth football landscape.
- 6.3. When implementing and/ or reviewing the Code, the Stakeholders wish to develop constructive consultation and cooperation with all relevant public authorities and sports bodies, as well as with all football training organisations, such as clubs and youth academies, both at national and international level, as appropriate.
- 6.4. Due to the diversity of financial, economic resources, as well as the diversified social, cultural, legal, institutional frameworks and other relevant circumstances in which the different organisations carry out their youth development activities, a certain degree of flexibility should be recognised. The actual manner, timing and extent in which the Code is to be implemented should be tailored where necessary. In that framework, flexibility should be achieved through the development by the Stakeholders of a tiered approach to best practice recommendations as well as bespoke timelines for these organisations that aim at achieving the highest level of compliance with the Code.
- 6.5. Separate guidelines will be communicated as to the manner the Stakeholders will monitor the progress made in the core areas of the Code.

**7. INDEX**

- 7.1. The Stakeholders will develop an Index on Youth Football Development and Protection.
- 7.2. The Index will to provide a publicly available annual report on the level of implementation being achieved by the football training organisations.

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**Appendix 1**

**List of policy, regulation and legislation**

- Amara, M., Aquilina, D., Henry, I., & PMP Consultant, Study on the Education of Elite Young Sportspersons in Europe, Brussels: European Commission: (2004)
- The Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development Through Sport (2013)
- Council of Europe, European Sports Charter (1992)
- Council of Europe, Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005)
- Council of Europe, Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2008)
- CPLP, 10th Resolution of the VII Conference of Ministers of Sport and Youth of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (2014)
- ECA, Report on Youth Academies (2012)
- EPFL, General Recommendations on the Recruitment, Training, Education and Protection of young Players (2009)
- European Commission, White Paper on Sport (2007)
- European Parliament Directorate-General for Research, Combining sports and education: Support for athletes in the Member States (2003).
- FIFA, Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (2016 edition)
- INEUM Consulting & TAJ, Study on the training of young sportsmen and sports women in Europe, Brussels: European Commission (2008)
- International Safeguarding Children in Sport Working Group, International Safeguards for Children in Sport (2014)
- OECD, Doing Better for Children (2009)
- Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012)
- UEFA, UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations (2015 edition)
- UNESCO, The Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (2015)
- UNESCO, MINEPS V – Berlin Declaration (2013)
- United Nations, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- UNODC, UNODC Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000)
- Panathlon International, Panathlon Charter (2010)

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**Appendix 2**

**List of Stakeholders (in alphabetical order)**