

09 October 2009

Dear Mr. Platini,

Re: complaint against racist displays at Apoel Nicosia v Chelsea Champions League match Wednesday 30 September 2009

We are writing to complain in the strongest possible terms about the racist messages that were permitted to be prominently displayed during the Champions League football match between Apoel Nicosia and Chelsea last Wednesday. The huge banners, written in six different languages and hung throughout the stadium, stated **"CYPRUS IS GREEK"** and were clearly visible during the entire match, which was broadcast live around the world. This whole scene was intimidating, insulting and racist to Turkish Cypriots living in Cyprus and around the world.

The sheer size of these banners and the places where they were displayed imply they were if not fully endorsed then at the very least tacitly approved by Apoel Nicosia officials. Given FIFA/UEFA's usually high standards and fundamental rules of conduct, we ask how it was possible for Greek Cypriot stadium officials to allow these racist messages, and why UEFA officials did not act on the night or since? Both UEFA and your global regulating body FIFA are bound by your own anti-discrimination statutes, while broadcast regulations also do not to permit such offensive communications. Your own Stadium Rules for UEFA Euro 2008 categorically state:

"Prohibited Conduct - racist, xenophobic, extreme right-wing, national-socialist, sexist or political propaganda material"

These blatantly xenophobic messages about an already troubled island have again increased tensions, further polarizing the two sides. This in turn hampers the efforts of the two Cypriot leaders who are currently in the middle of sensitive political negotiations.

UEFA/FIFA owe Turkish Cypriots and the world of football a duty of care to stamp out racism wherever it occurs. We are therefore keen to understand when an investigation will be launched and what action will be taken against the culprits, as well as what measures you intend to take to prevent a repeat of such an incident? There is no room for this level of intolerance in football and we ask UEFA/FIFA to be firm about the actions it takes.

As civil society organisations representing thousands of Turkish Cypriots worldwide, we wish to inform you that we will continue to pursue this issue until we achieve a satisfactory resolution.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,

Cetin Ramadan

ATCA (Association of Turkish Cypriots Abroad)
Fevzi Hussein

Chairperson, Embargoed!

Akmen Sitki

Chairperson, The Council of Turkish Cypriot Associations

Dourmouh Ibrahim Dourmouh

Chairperson, UK Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce

Servet Hassan

UK Turkish Federation

In addition the following groups are also endorsing this letter, all of whom are affiliates of the above mentioned groups:

Aksu Türk Birliđi
Ali Rıza Deđirmenciođlu Türk Okulu
Anatolian Cultural Centre
Association of Turkish People in UK
British CPTR.
Bafılilar Dayanıřma Derneđi
Birmingham Türk Cemiyeti
Çamlıköy Dayanıřma Derneđi
Dr. Fazıl Küçük Türk Okulu
Düzkiye Derneđi
Eltham Türk Okulu
Erenköy Mücahitler Derneđi
Ergazililer Cemiyeti

Güney Londra Türk Aile Birliđi
Güney Londra Türk Kültür Cemiyeti
Güney Londra Türk Yaşlılar Derneđi
Hornsey Atatürk Okulları
Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association UK
İkinci Bahar Derneđi
İngiltere Balkan Asya ve Kıbrıs Türkleri Cemiyeti
İngiltere Ortopedik Özürlüler Derneđi
İngiltere Türk Kadınları Yardım Derneđi
İngiltere Türk Öğretmenler Derneđi
İngiltere Türkleri Dayanışma ve Yardımlaşma Derneđi
Justice Euro
Kıbrıs Türk Kültür Derneđi
Kuzey Londra Türk İslam Vakfı
Limasollular Derneđi
Mehmetçik Yardımsevenler Derneđi
Midland Türk Cemiyeti
Mustafa Kemal Derneđi
Pekunlular Association UK
Southwark Türk Derneđi
Textile Industry Development Association
The Association of Turkish Women in Britain
The Ataturk Society
The European Turkish Sport Union
The Mustafa Kemal Association UK
The Union of Turkish Teachers in the UK
Türk Aile Birliđi
Türk Dayanışma Derneđi
Türk Fizikçiler Derneđi
Türk Gençlik ve Sanaat Kurumu
Türk Hukukçular Birliđi
Türk İş Adamları Derneđi
Türk Muhasebeciler Derneđi
Türk Mühendisler Derneđi
Türk-1
Turkish Bankers' Association in UK
Turkish British Chambers of Commerce and Industry
Turkish Cypriot Lobby Group
Turkish Cypriot Network (TCN)
Turkish Elder's Club
Turkish Forum UK
Turkish Religious Foundation UK
Turk Sultans Motorcular Birliđi
Ulusal Birlik Dayanışma Derneđi
UK Turkish Islamic Cultural Centre Trust
Yeşilirmaklılar Derneđi