



# **SAHEL EMERGENCY** **TOGETHER WE CAN SAVE LIVES** **PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL AGAINST HUNGER**

## **Sahel emergency: saving lives together**

**“Professional football against hunger” sounds the alarm on Sahel food crisis**

**Urgent action is needed in the Sahel, where millions of people are facing hunger. This is the message of European professional football in support of efforts made by the European Union and FAO to help people hit by disaster feed themselves again.**

For the third time in seven years, the Sahel region of West Africa is facing the consequences of drought, poor harvests and soaring food prices. An immediate response is needed to avert a devastating food crisis, which is affecting millions of people, according to the European Commission's humanitarian aid department (ECHO).

European professional football leagues, represented by the Association for European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL), is throwing in its weight to sound the alarm – and avoid a repeat of last year's catastrophe caused by drought in the Horn of Africa.

Tens of thousands died of hunger there, says the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), adding that many of them could have been saved if early warnings would have prompted the necessary action on time.

### **Reaching out for support**

To garner timely public support for life saving humanitarian actions, communication is key. ECHO, EPFL and FAO have joined forces in 'Professional Football against Hunger', campaigning together to reach out to European audiences and get the message across that action is urgently required in the Sahel.

On top of the agenda this year is the third edition of the European Match Day Against Hunger, scheduled for 31 of March and 1 April, coinciding with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ECHO.

This year, this truly European event will bring together 20 European football leagues and 300 professional football clubs at 150 stadiums in 16 countries across Europe.





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### Return to farming

Emergencies have the most devastating consequences for rural communities, where people mainly depend on agriculture for survival. When disaster strikes, FAO and ECHO work together to help these communities return to farming so that they can feed themselves again. Moreover, they aim to address the underlying causes of vulnerability to increase people's resilience to future shocks.

Currently, FAO is operating 20 ECHO-funded emergency projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, for a total budget of €16 million (US\$ 21.3 million).

In the drought-stricken Sahelian country of Chad, nearly 50 000 of the most affected people, among them women-headed households or Chadians returned from war-torn Libya, receive the seeds and tools to raise their nutrition levels and make an income from their agricultural activities.

Refugees from Ivory Coast's post-election crisis both in the country and in neighbouring Liberia, as well the population hosting them, a total of some 130 000 people, receive assistance to produce staple crops, such as rice and cassava, as well as vegetables.

In eastern Sri Lanka, 50 000 people affected by floods get help in resuming cultivation of important crops, such as rice, maize, vegetables, ground nuts and chillies. And in the north of Colombia, more than 3 000 people displaced by violence are being assisted in improving their capacity to produce food for themselves.

### Background

The "Professional Football Against Hunger" campaign was launched in 2008 by EPFL, representing the 30 largest professional football leagues and almost 950 clubs across Europe, and FAO, the UN's agency leading international efforts to defeat hunger.

Last year, one of the world's biggest humanitarian donor, ECHO, joined in and the campaign's focus turned to the work of ECHO and FAO in restoring the self reliance of people struck by disaster.





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**ECHO:** The European Union (EU) is the world's largest humanitarian donor. Many millions of people are helped each year by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil protection department (ECHO), which implements aid through its 200 relief partner organizations: non-governmental organizations, the Red Cross family, and UN agencies like the UNHCR, FAO and the WFP. The EU constantly strives to improve its aid to third countries struck by natural disaster or conflict in order to make it more effective. ECHO reflects this objective. Its assistance is based on the humanitarian principals of neutrality, non-discrimination and impartiality. ECHO was established as humanitarian aid office in 1992. In 2010, the coordination of European Union civil protection assistance to crisis victims also became part of its responsibilities. [www.ec.europa.eu/echo](http://www.ec.europa.eu/echo)

**EPFL:** The Association of European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL) is a non-profit sporting organisation dedicated to constructively represent the common views of the major 30 leagues and almost 800 clubs across Europe – all clubs, regardless of the sporting or economic dimensions. It gives the leagues a forum and a platform to decide how best to deal with the questions facing the modern world of sport and business. The Association embodies the common voice of professional football leagues. By fostering co-operation, friendly relations and unity between all its member leagues and associate members, and exploring joint synergies with football authorities and relevant stakeholders, it aims to positively transform and add significant value to the football fabric of Europe. [www.epfl-europeanleagues.com](http://www.epfl-europeanleagues.com)

**FAO:** The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Serving both developed and developing countries, FAO acts as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy. FAO is also a source of knowledge and information. It helps developing countries and countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices and ensure good nutrition for all. Since its founding in 1945, FAO has focused special attention on developing rural areas, home to 70 percent of the world's poor and hungry people. [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)



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### **Involved Leagues**

- 1) **Osterreichische Fußball Bundesliga** (Austria)
- 2) **Pro League** (Belgium)
- 3) **Professional League** (Bulgaria)
- 4) **The Premier League** (England)
- 5) **The Football League** (England )
- 6) **DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga GmbH** (Germany)
- 7) **Super League** Greece)
- 8) **Serie A** (Italy)
- 9) **Serie B** (Italy)
- 10) **Lega Pro** (Italy)
- 11) **Eredivisie** (The Netherlands)
- 12) **Norway Football League** (Norway)
- 13) **Polish Professional Football League** (Poland)
- 14) **Liga Portuguesa de Futebol Profissional** (Portugal )
- 15) **Russian Football Premier League** (Russian Federation)
- 16) **Russia Football National League** (Russian Federation)
- 17) **Scottish Premier League** (Scotland )
- 18) **1 SNL** (Slovenia)
- 19) **Liga BBVA** (Spain)
- 20) **Ukrainian Premier League** (Ukraine)

### **Appointed ambassadors**

**Raúl González** (FAO Goodwill Ambassador)  
**Herbert Prohaska** (Österreichische Fußball Bundesliga)  
**Histro Stoichkov** (Bulgarian Professional Football League)  
**Steffen Freund and Felix Magath** (DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga GmbH)  
**Francesco Toldo** (Lega Nazionale Professionisti Serie A)  
**Vidar Riseth** (Norsk Toppfotball)  
**Jerzy Dudek** (Polish Professional Football League)  
**Alexey Medvedev** (Russian Football Premier League)  
**Roberto Soldado** (Liga Nacional de Futbol Profesional)







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