

TO THE MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS OF FIFA

Circular no. 1732

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Amendments to the FIFA Statutes, the Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes and the Standing Orders of the Congress. FIFA Legal Handbook

Dear Sir or Madam,

At the 70th FIFA Congress on 18 September 2020, the member associations approved amendments to the FIFA Statutes, the Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes (**Regulations**), and the Standing Orders of the Congress (**Standing Orders**), all of which entered into force **immediately** following the Congress.

FIFA Statutes and the Standing Orders of the Congress

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the way all international organisations conduct their affairs, in particular on the way they hold physical meetings. With regard to the 70th FIFA Congress, FIFA relied on a special Swiss law adopted earlier this year which allows all Switzerland-based organisations to hold their annual general meetings as online events.

Due to the fact that the special law is time-limited and as it is not clear how the situation will evolve regarding the possibility of holding physical meetings, the approved amendments to the FIFA Statutes and the Standing Orders allow for a FIFA Congress, whether ordinary or extraordinary, to be convened in person, by teleconference, by videoconference or by another means of communication. Furthermore, voting by correspondence and/or online is expressly permitted when holding an online FIFA Congress.

These amendments allow for maximum flexibility in order to be able to communicate effectively and take vital decisions for the football community.

Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes

In September 2019, the Football Stakeholders Committee (**FSC**) established a technical working group (**TWG**) to examine the Regulations, which govern eligibility to participate for representative teams. The establishment of the TWG followed requests by several member associations to amend and modernise these Regulations, which have remained unchanged since 2008.

Following the completion of the TWG process, the principles agreed upon were endorsed, first by the FSC and, subsequently, by the FIFA Council, which recommended the submission of the proposed amendments to the FIFA Congress for approval.

The new Regulations are anchored on the following key principles:

- (i) *"no nationality, no eligibility"*: the eligibility of players to play for a specific member association must be based on objective measurements (i.e. their national citizenship);
- (ii) equal treatment of all member associations;
- (iii) the existence of a genuine link between the player and the member association they (intend to) represent;
- (iv) avoidance of cases of excessive severity or hardship;
- (v) prevention of abuse (e.g. of so-called "nationality shopping"); and
- (vi) the protection of the sporting integrity of international competitions.

The amendments to the Regulations can be summarised as follows:

- (i) define vague phrases which associations have consistently inquired about, such as *"holding a nationality"* or *"lived on the territory of the relevant association"*;
- (ii) reflect and codify the jurisprudence made, without regulatory basis, by the Players' Status Committee, to provide regulatory certainty for decisions;
- (iii) regulate the situation of stateless individuals;
- (iv) create three (3) additional exceptions to the general prohibition on changing association team to avoid situations of excessive hardship, based on proposals from member associations; and
- (v) permit a player, under very specific and limited circumstances, to request a reversal of a change of association decision.

A commentary on the Regulations will be published soon on [legal.fifa.com](https://www.fifa.com/legal) together with a comprehensive guide outlining the relevant documents to be submitted when requesting a decision of the Players' Status Committee with regard to any matter pertaining to the Regulations.

FIFA Legal Handbook

For the first time ever, FIFA has decided not to print physical versions of its various rules and regulations. In this context, FIFA has decided to launch the **FIFA Legal Handbook**, which aims to provide stakeholders with a single electronic resource containing all relevant regulatory and technical documents regarding the FIFA football regulatory framework.

The **FIFA Legal Handbook** is divided into three different chapters: (i) FIFA regulations; (ii) key FIFA circular letters; and (iii) standard documents. **The FIFA Legal Handbook** is available electronically for free (either as a PDF or in ePUB format) on [legal.fifa.com](https://www.fifa.com/legal) and contains the September 2020 updates.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding the above matters.

Yours faithfully,

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



Fatma Samoura
Secretary General

cc: FIFA Council
Confederations
Football Stakeholders Committee
Players' Status Committee
FIFPRO
European Club Association
World Leagues Forum