

Demographic study of football in Europe

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1. Introduction

The 19th Monthly Report presents the main findings of the annual census carried out since 2009 by the CIES Football Observatory on the profile of players active in 31 top division leagues of UEFA member associations.

The sample is made up of footballers present on the 1st October having played in domestic league matches during the current season or having taken part in adult championships during each of the two preceding ones. Second and third goalkeepers are taken into account even though they do not meet these criteria.

The study shows that the presence of club-trained players continues to decrease: from 23.0% in 2009 to 19.2% in 2016. This is the lowest value ever measured. In parallel, the level of expatriates has reached a new record in 2016: 38.7% (+3.9% since 2009).

The greater international mobility of players brings with it a growing instability in squads. The average number of players recruited during the year among those present on the 1st October has increased from 9.1 in 2009 (36.7% of squads) to 10.7 in 2016 (43.9%). This is also a new record.

Figure 1: leagues surveyed

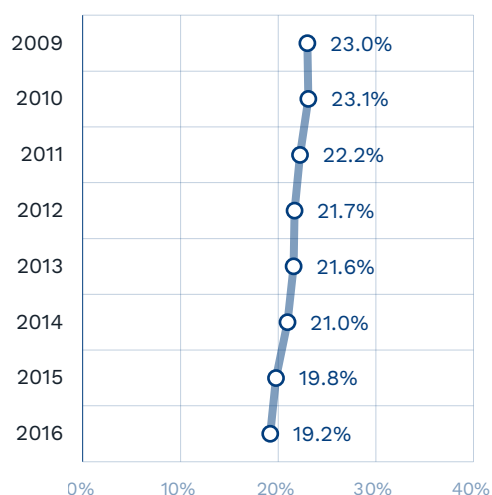
		Players	Clubs
AUT	Austrian Bundesliga	256	10
BEL	Pro League	406	16
BLR	Vysshaya Liga	363	16
BUL	Parva Liga	338	14
CRO	Prva HNL	272	10
CYP	Cyta Championship	332	14
CZE	Synot liga	381	16
DEN	Superliga	323	14
ENG	Premier League	511	20
ESP	Liga	497	20
FIN	Veikkausliiga	279	12
FRA	Ligue 1	515	20
GER	Bundesliga	455	18
GRE	Superleague	397	16
HUN	NB I	294	12
ISR	Ligat Ha'Al	321	14
ITA	Serie A	530	20
NED	Eredivisie	428	18
NOR	Tippeligaen	353	16
POL	Ekstraklasa	377	16
POR	Primeira Liga	471	18
ROM	Liga 1	365	14
RUS	Russian Premier League	408	16
SCO	Scottish Premiership	281	12
SRB	SuperLiga	378	16
SUI	Super League	242	10
SVK	Slovak Super Liga	276	12
SVN	PrvaLiga	250	10
SWE	Allsvenskan	358	16
TUR	Süper Lig	447	18
UKR	Ukrainian Premier League	291	12
Total		11,395	466

2. Training

According to UEFA's definition, a club-trained footballer is one having played at least three seasons between 15 and 21 years of age in his employer team. Depending on the instance, a player may have no training club, have one or even two.

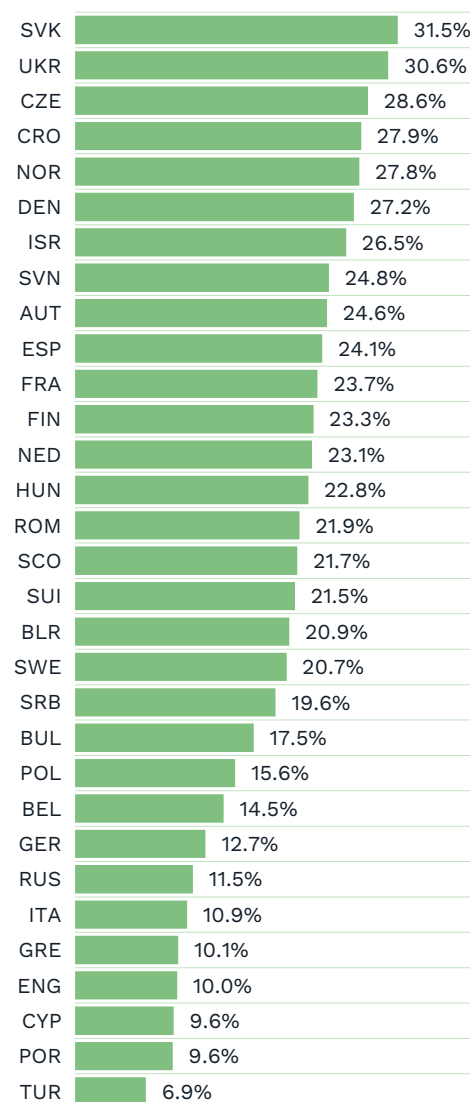
Since 2009, the presence of club-trained footballers has steadily decreased. This category of players now represents less than a fifth of squads. Insofar as transfer market speculation on young talents is on the increase, it seems most likely that the percentage of club-trained footballers will continue to drop over the next few years.

Figure 2: % of club-trained players in squads (2009-2016)



Important disparities exist according to league. On the 1st October 2016, club-trained players represented 31.5% of footballers in the Slovakian top division. At the other extreme, they accounted for only 6.9% of players in Turkey. In two other countries, Cyprus and Portugal, was this figure under 10%.

Figure 3: % of club-trained players, by league (2016)

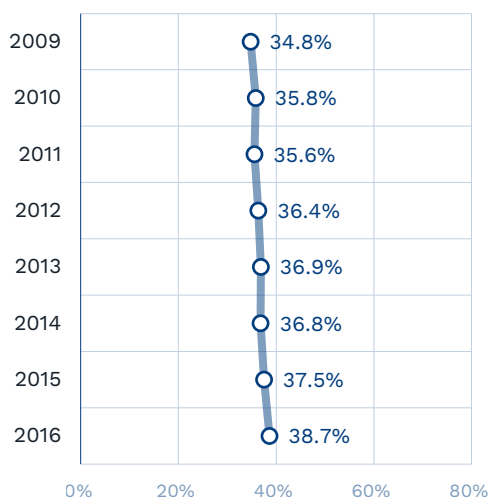


3. Migration

The notion of expatriate defines footballers playing outside of the country where they started playing and from where they departed following recruitment by a club overseas. This definition allows us to analyse migrations directly related to football.

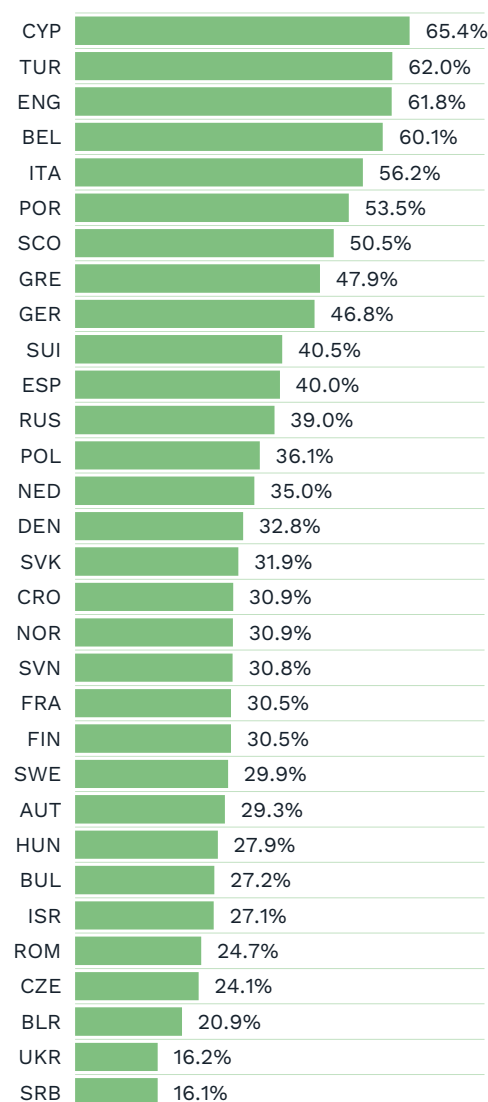
A historical analysis shows that the percentage of expatriates in clubs has been climbing steadily. In 2016, for the first time since our survey has been carried out, the percentage of expatriates is over twice that of club-trained players: 38.7% as opposed to 19.2%.

Figure 4: % of expatriate players in squads (2009-2016)



At one extreme, expatriates represent 65.4% of players in the Cypriot top division. This category of footballers represents the majority of squad members in six other championships: Turkey, England, Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Scotland. At the other extreme, expatriates make up only 16.1% of players in Serbia.

Figure 5: % of expatriate players, by league (2016)



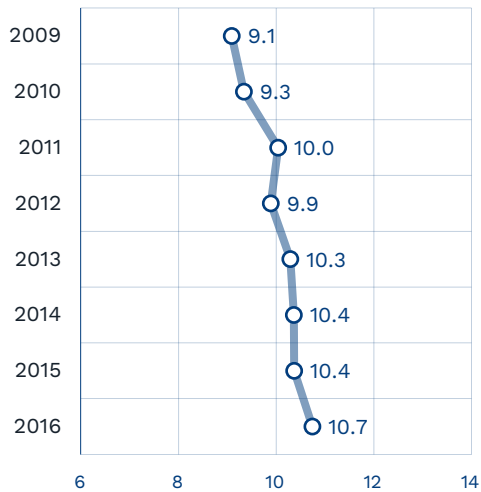
4. Mobility

To analyse player mobility, we took into account the number of players in the squads of teams recruited during the year of the census. Players promoted to the first team from youth academies were not considered as being part of the new recruits.

On the 1st October 2009, 9.1 players signed after the start of the year were on average present in the squads of teams from the 31 championships analysed. In 2016, this value increased to 10.7. The average length of stay of players in their employer club has never been as low as in 2016: 2.2 years.

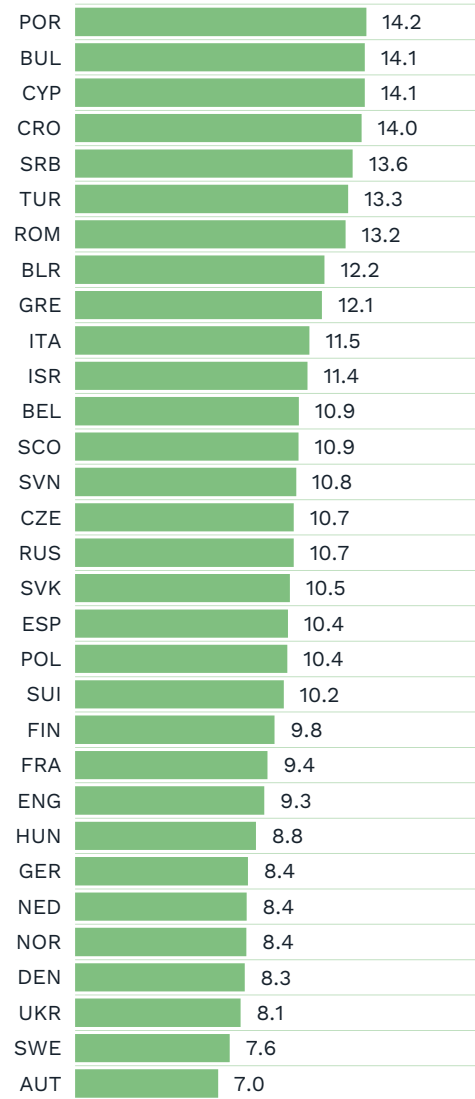
By adding to external recruits the footballers integrated into the first team squad from youth academies, the average percentage of new players in squads rose from 41.2% in 2009 to 48.1% in 2016. Henceforth, almost half of team members change from one year to another.

Figure 6: average number of players signed during the year (2009-2016)



The Southern and Eastern European leagues are over-represented among the teams having signed the most players. On the 1st October 2016, Portuguese clubs had, on average, 14.2 footballers recruited during the year in their squads. This figure is more than twice higher than that recorded for Austrian top division teams.

Figure 7: average number of players signed during the year, by league (2016)



5. Conclusion

This Monthly Report gives just a brief overview of the main trends that have characterised European football since 2009. Numerous further analyses are possible thanks to the data painstakingly collected by the CIES Football Observatory research team.

Despite its major relevance, the study carried out in 2015 comparing the **composition of Asian and European clubs** was not further developed ([download the report](#)). However, this could be done in the near future. While the economic heart of football remains in Europe, more and more competitive professional leagues are developing rapidly around the world.

In such a dynamic context, the CIES Football Observatory's mission to analyse in a neutral and objective manner the key trends occurring in the most popular game in the planet remains as pertinent as ever.