



MEDIA RELEASE

FOOTBALL: UEFA EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS (GROUP I)

THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT (CAS) REJECTS THE APPEAL FILED BY THE SERBIAN FA, UPHOLDS IN PART THE APPEAL FILED BY THE ALBANIAN FA: THE MATCH SERBIA-ALBANIA IS DEEMED TO HAVE BEEN FORFEITED BY SERBIA (0-3)

Lausanne, 10 July 2015 – The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) issued its decisions today in two appeal arbitration procedures arising from the UEFA European Championship qualifying Group I match between Serbia and Albania in Belgrade on 14 October 2014 (the Match).

The Football Association of Albania (FAA) and the Football Association of Serbia (FAS) filed appeals at the CAS against decisions issued by UEFA Appeals Body in which both associations were disciplined further to incidents which occurred during the Match. The matter was heard at hearings which took place in Lausanne, Switzerland, on 16 and 17 April 2015. The parties, their legal counsel, experts and witnesses were heard by the Panel of CAS arbitrators in charge of each procedure.

The CAS has partially upheld the appeal filed by the FAA against the decision of the UEFA Appeals Body taken on 2 December 2014, in which the decision taken by the UEFA Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body (UEFA CEDB) on 23 October 2014 was confirmed.

Pursuant to the UEFA decisions, the awarding of a forfeit against the FAA was based on the purported refusal of the Albanian team to resume the match after it was stopped by the referee at the 41st minute when a number of flares were thrown on the pitch by Serbian fans. During this stoppage, several incidents occurred and in particular around 15 Serbian fans invaded the pitch and violently attacked the Albanian players.



However, the CAS Panel found that the evidence did not reveal that the FAA refused to play following an order issued by the referee. The CAS Panel was unable to ascertain to its comfortable satisfaction that the referee issued a clear, direct and unconditional order to the players to resume the match on the basis of a definite decision that safety had been assured.

The Panel found that the match stoppage and the eventual abandonment of the match were caused by security lapses of the organizers and acts of violence exerted on the Albanian players by the Serbian fans and at least one security steward. As such, the Panel holds that the Football Association of Serbia (FAS) and not the FAA must be considered as responsible for the match not being played in full, in violation of Article 27.01 of the Regulations of the UEFA European Football Championship 2014-2016. In light of this finding, the CAS Panel has decided that the UEFA European Championship qualifying Group I match between Serbia and Albania be deemed to have been forfeited by the FAS by the score of 0:3.

The CAS went on to find, in line with UEFA, that the FAA was responsible for the drone operated during the match, carrying a banner depicting Albanian nationalistic and patriotic symbols, and confirmed the fine of EUR 100,000 imposed on the FAA.

Furthermore, with respect to the appeal filed by the FAS, the CAS has dismissed the appeal and confirmed the decision taken by the UEFA Appeals Body on 2 December 2014. Accordingly, the sanctions ordered by the UEFA CEDB in its decision dated 23 October 2014 are confirmed, namely: (i) the FAS is deducted three points for the current UEFA European Championship qualifiers; (ii) the FAS is ordered to play its next two UEFA competition matches as host team behind closed doors; and (iii) the FAS is fined EUR 100,000.

The arbitral awards will be published on the CAS website in due course.