



TAS / CAS

TRIBUNAL ARBITRAL DU SPORT
COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT
TRIBUNAL ARBITRAL DEL DEPORTE

CAS 2025/A/11995 A. & Panthessalonikeios Athlitikos Omilos Konstantinoupoliton – PAOK Football Societe Anonyme v. Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)

ARBITRAL AWARD

delivered by the

COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

sitting in the following composition:

President: Mr. Francesco Macrì, Attorney-at-Law in Piacenza, Italy
Arbitrators: Prof. Philippe Sands KC, Barrister, Professor of Law in London, United Kingdom
Mr. Rui Botica Santos, Attorney-at-Law in Lisbon, Portugal

in the arbitration between

A., [...], Greece

Panthessalonikeios Athlitikos Omilos Konstantinoupoliton-PAOK Football Societe Anonyme, Thessaloniki, Greece

Represented by Mr. Jorge Ibarrola and Ms. Monia Karmass, Libra Law, Lausanne, Switzerland

**First Appellant
Second Appellant**

and

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), Zurich, Switzerland

Represented by Mr. Miguel Liétard Fernandez-Palacios, Director of Litigation, and Mrs. Cristina Pérez González, Senior Legal Counsel at its FIFA Litigation Department, Coral Gables, Florida, United States of America

Respondent



I. THE PARTIES

1. A. (the “First Appellant” or the “Player” or the “Minor”) is a minor football player who holds Greek nationality.
2. Panthessalonikeios Athlitikos Omilos Konstantinoupoliton-PAOK Football Societe Anonyme (the “Second Appellant” or the “Club” or “PAOK”) is a professional football club with its registered office in Thessaloniki, Greece. The Club is registered with the Hellenic Football Federation (the “HFF”), which in turn is affiliated to the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (the “FIFA”).
3. FIFA (or the “Respondent”) is the international governing body of football with its registered office in Zurich, Switzerland. FIFA exercises regulatory, supervisory, and disciplinary functions over national associations, clubs, officials, and players worldwide.
4. In this appeal proceedings (the “Appeal”), the Player and the Club are jointly referred to as the “Appellants” and the Player, the Club, and FIFA are hereinafter jointly referred to as the “Parties”.

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

5. Below is a summary of the main relevant facts, as established on the basis of the written submissions of the Parties, the hearing, and the evidence examined in the course of the proceedings. This background information is given for the sole purpose of providing a synopsis of the matter in dispute. Additional facts may be set out where relevant, in connection with the legal discussion within this award (the “Award”).

A. Background facts

6. The Player was born on [...] 2010 in [...], Greece. He is the son of B. (the “Father”) and C. (the “Mother”), and he holds the Greek Passport No. [...]. He was born and raised in Greece until the Father, a Brazilian professional football player, retired in 2022, and the family decided to move to Brazil. The Player was then twelve years old. On 25 April 2023, he was registered with the Brazilian Football Club Palmeiras SE (“Palmeiras”) for the first time.
7. On 5 May 2025, the HFF invited the Player to join the Greek U-15 National Team for an international tournament to be held in Croatia. He participated in the tournament from 12 to 19 May 2025, accompanied by the Father and his uncle D., the Mother’s brother.



Furthermore, in November 2025, he also participated with the U-16 Greek National Team in international friendly matches in Dublin, Ireland, from 25-27 November 2025.

8. On 23 August 2025, after less than three years in Brazil, the family returned to Europe and, accordingly, Palmeiras deregistered the Player, who was now about to be fifteen years old. Upon their arrival in Greece, the Mother contacted PAOK to register the Player. He underwent the standard technical and physical assessments required by PAOK and passed them all.
9. On 12 September 2025, the HFF, on behalf of the Club, submitted an application in the Transfer Matching System (the “TMS”) for the approval before the Players’ Status Chamber of the Football Tribunal (the “FIFA PSC”) for the international transfer of the Player from Palmeiras. In particular, the HFF based its application on the exception outlined in Article 19 par. 2 a) of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (the “RSTP”): *“Move of the player’s parents for reasons not linked to football”*.
10. According to the regulations, the HFF filed various pieces of evidence in support of its request, such as the registry certificates of the Player and his parents, the Recruitment Notification Form, subscribed between the Greek Company “[...]” (the “Company”), and a certificate of permanent residence of the family of the Player in Thessaloniki.
11. On 22 September, the HFF provided, *inter alia*, a statement from the Club, dated 22 September 2025, affirming that the first contact with the Player took place at the end of August 2025, when the Mother contacted the Club. It was also communicated that the Player was a member of Greece’s U-15 National Team.
12. On 29 September 2025, the HFF submitted a statement, dated 26 September 2025, signed by the Father. The statement confirmed (i) that by early 2025, the Player was invited to join the Greek U-15 National Team, prompting the family to consider returning to Greece, (ii) that in spring 2025, the family decided to relocate, (iii) that in August 2025, they notified Palmeiras of their intention to move and de-registered the Player, (iv) that by the end of August, the family had moved to Greece, and (v) that, after relocating, the Player’s parents began searching for a school.
13. On 10 October 2025, the HFF submitted several documents, including: a letter dated 5 May 2025 requesting Palmeiras to release the Player for the Hellenic U-15 National Team from 13 to 18 May 2025; and a statement from D., the Player’s uncle, dated 8 October 2025. In his statement, D. confirms that the Player was invited by the HFF to join the U-15 Greek National Team in May 2025, the Player’s family relocated to Greece at the end of August 2025, the Mother began working for the Company in early



September 2025, and the family subsequently searched for housing and schools for the Player.

14. On 13 October 2025, the HFF facilitated, *inter alia*, an employment certificate, issued by [...] as Director of the Company, confirming that the Mother's employment with the Company as of 10 September 2025.
15. On 16 October 2025, upon request from FIFA, the Confederação Brasileira de Futebol (the "CBF") provided the Player's Electronic Player Passport (the "EPP").
16. On 17 October 2025, i.e., the CBF provided a statement from Palmeiras, dated 16 October 2025, according to which it declared that (i) *"around July 2025, the Player's parents informed the club's Youth Football Department of their intention to return to Greece"*, (ii) *but "there were no written agreements, formal negotiations, or commitments of any kind concerning the Player's departure"*, and that (iii) *"PAOK and Palmeiras held discussions solely concerning the terms of a potential waiver of training compensation that could be due to Palmeiras, in the event the Player eventually signs his first professional contract with PAOK, which, to Palmeiras' knowledge, has not occurred to date."*
17. On 29 October 2025, FIFA PSC rejected the request of the HFF based on Article 19 par. 2 a) RSTP (the "Appealed Decision") on behalf of PAOK for the approval prior to the request for the International Transfer Certificate (the "ITC") of the Player:

"The application of the Hellenic Football Federation (TMS reference D-0018908) on behalf of its affiliated club, FC Paok Thessaloniki, for the approval prior to the request for the International Transfer Certificate of a minor player, A. (Greece, Brazil), is REJECTED."
18. The grounds of the Appealed Decision were notified to the HFF on 14 November 2025 via the TMS. On 17 November 2025, the HFF forwarded the grounds of the decision to the Appellants.

B. The Decision of the Single Judge of the FIFA PSC

19. In the Appealed Decision, the FIFA PSC noted that the Player is a minor (born on [...] 2010). Under Article 19 par. 1 RSTP, international transfers of players are generally permitted only if the player is over 18. Certain exceptions to this rule are outlined in Article 19 par. 2 RSTP, and these exceptions are exhaustive



20. The Appealed Decision also found that the HFF's request was filed under Article 19 par. 2 a) RSTP, which states: *"The player's parents move to the country in which the new club is located for reasons not linked to football."*
21. In the FIFA PSC's view, *"the protection of minors is one of the fundamental principles of the RSTP. Therefore, only by strict and proper application of the appropriate provisions can it be guaranteed that the protection of minor players is not compromised"*. Therefore, *"the Single Judge emphasised that the sequence and the timing of events is a factual and objective criteria to establish whether the decision of the player's parent(s) to move to the new country was driven purely by the reasons invoked or whether it was to some extent motivated by the potential football activity of their child in this country"*.
22. The FIFA PSC acknowledged that the Player's parents decided to move to Greece in spring 2025 and relocated at the end of August 2025. Flight tickets confirm their move from Brazil to Greece on 24 August 2025.
23. Further, the FIFA PSC observed that the Player was contacted by the HFF in early 2025 to participate in the U-15 National Greek team at the 7th International U-15 Tournament "Vlatko Markovic" 2025, which would take place from 13 May to 18 May 2025. In this regard, the Single Judge took note of the declaration of the Player's parents from 26 September 2025, in which they stated that the call from the HFF *"led the family to consider returning to Greece"*.
24. The FIFA PSC also noted that neither parent was employed at the time of the move. The Mother contacted her new employer only after arriving in Greece. Additionally, the family arranged for schooling and housing only after 24 August 2025.
25. Based on these elements, the FIFA PSC first pointed out that under the circumstances at hand – namely that (i) the HFF contacted the Player as early as the beginning of 2025 with a view to including him in the U-15 National Team for a competition in May 2025; (ii) the Player's parents declared that this call-up *"led the family to consider returning to Greece"*; (iii) the Player's parents stated that they decided to move to Greece during the spring of 2025 and effectively relocated on 24 August 2025; (iv) only after the relocation did they start looking for accommodation and a school for the Player; (v) neither of the Player's parents was employed at the time of the relocation or when they decided to move to Greece; and (vi) the Club is a professional club – it cannot be thoroughly excluded that the Player's parent's move to Greece occurred for reasons linked, to some extent, to the Player's football career in said country.



26. Accordingly, the Single Judge decided that *“applying strictly the RSTP – that in the present matter, the requirements set out in art. 19 par. 2 a) of the RSTP are not met.”*
27. Consequently, the application filed by the HFF on behalf of the Club for approval prior to the request for the ITC of the Minor was rejected.

III. PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

28. On 9 December 2025, the Appellants filed a Statement of Appeal with the Court of Arbitration for Sport (the “CAS”) in accordance with Article 58 of the FIFA Statutes and Articles R47 and R48 of the Code of Sports-related Arbitration (2023 edition) (the “CAS Code”) against the Respondent with respect to the Appealed Decision. In its submissions, the Appellant nominated Prof. Philippe Sands KC as an arbitrator and chose English as the language of the proceedings.
29. On the same date, the Appellants informed the CAS Court Office that both parties had agreed to an expedited procedure. All procedural steps would be completed within the specified deadlines, and the operative part of the Award would be issued by 3 February 2026.
30. With separate communications on 9 and 10 December 2025, FIFA informed the CAS Court Office that they agreed to English as the language of the proceedings and appointed Mr. Rui Botica Santos as an arbitrator.
31. On 18 December 2025, the Appellants filed their Appeal Brief pursuant to Article R51 of the CAS Code within the agreed time limit.
32. On 7 January 2026, the CAS Court Office informed the Parties that, pursuant to Article R54 of the CAS Code and on behalf of the Deputy President of the CAS Appeals Arbitration Division, the Panel appointed to hear the Appeal was constituted as follows:

President: Mr. Francesco Macrì, Attorney-at-Law in Piacenza, Italy.

Arbitrators: Prof. Philippe Sands KC, Barrister in London, United Kingdom

Mr. Rui Botica Santos, Attorney-at-Law in Lisbon, Portugal
33. On 9 January 2026, the CAS Court Office communicated to the Parties that a hearing would be held on 27 January 2026 by video conference.



34. On 19 January 2026, within the agreed time limit, the Respondent filed its Answer to the Appeal Brief in accordance with Article R55 of the CAS Code.
35. On 20 and 26 January 2026, the Respondent and the Appellants returned duly signed copies of the Order of Procedure to the CAS Court Office.
36. On 26 January 2026, the CAS Court Office notified the Parties that the Panel, after reviewing the Parties' attendance lists and considering the Respondent's objection to the oral testimony of D., as indicated by the Appellants, had decided to admit this witness. Additionally, the Parties were informed that, since the Player is a minor, his testimony would be provided in the presence of his parents.
37. On 27 January 2026, a hearing was held by video-conference. At the outset of the hearing, the Parties confirmed that they had no objection to the constitution and composition of the Panel.
38. In addition to the members of the Panel and Ms Lia Yokomizo, Counsel to the CAS, the following persons attended the hearing by videoconference:
 - For the Appellants: Mr. Jorge Ibarrola, Ms. Monia Karmass, Mr. Luka Jankovic, Counsels; A., the Player and Mr. Evangelos Pourliotopoulos, the Club's General Manager; Ms. Kyriaki Papakonstantinou and Mr. Victor Vicente as interpreters.
 - For the Respondent: Mr. Miguel Liétard Fernández-Palacios, Director of Litigation, Mr. Roberto Najera, Head of Litigation and Ms. Cristina Pérez González, Senior Legal Counsel.
39. The Panel heard evidence from B. and C., the Player's parents, Mr. Dimitrios Papadopoulos and Ms. Magda Sdrolia, respectively Technical Director and Head of Registration of HFF, Mr. Eduardo Batista, Academy Manager of Palmeiras, and D., the Players' uncle, all witnesses called by the Appellants. The President of the Panel invited them to tell the truth, subject to the sanctions of perjury under Swiss Law. The Parties and the members of the Panel had a full opportunity to examine and cross-examine the expert and the witnesses.
40. The Parties were afforded a full opportunity to present their cases, submit arguments, and respond to questions posed by the Panel members.
41. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Parties confirmed that they did not have any objection to the procedure adopted by the Panel and that their right to be heard had been fully respected.



42. The Panel confirms that it carefully heard and took into account in its decision all the submissions, evidence, and arguments presented by the Parties, even if they have not explicitly been summarised or referred to in the Award.

IV. SUBMISSIONS OF THE PARTIES

43. The following summary of the Parties' positions is illustrative only and does not necessarily comprise every contention put forward by the Parties. The Panel, however, has carefully considered all the submissions made by the Parties for the legal analysis that follows, even if there is no specific reference to those submissions in the following summary.

A. The Appellant

44. The Appellant challenged the Appealed Decision, submitting the following requests for relief:
- I. *"The appeal is upheld.*
 - II. *The decision issued on 29 October 2025 by the FIFA Players' Status Chamber is set aside.*
 - III. *FIFA is ordered to approve the application filed by HFF on behalf of PAOK FC (TMS ref. D-0018908) to register A. with the corresponding International Transfer Certificate ("ITC") being approved by FIFA.*
 - IV. *A. is permitted to be registered with PAOK FC.*
 - V. *FIFA shall bear all the arbitration costs and shall be ordered to pay PAOK FC and A. a contribution towards their legal costs and other costs incurred in the framework of these proceedings in an amount to be decided by the Panel".*
45. The Appellants submit that the Appeal concerns the refusal of the FIFA PSC to approve the international registration of the Player with PAOK pursuant to Article 19 RSTP.
46. According to the Appellants, the Appealed Decision is based on an incorrect reading of the factual circumstances and on an unduly restrictive interpretation of Article 19 par. 2 a) RSTP.
47. The Appellants contend that the Player's family moved from Brazil to Greece for genuine family, personal, and professional reasons unrelated to football. In particular, they submit that the relocation was driven by the lack of stable prospects in Brazil, the



possibility for the Mother to obtain employment in Greece, and the family's intention to resettle in a country with which they had always maintained strong ties.

48. The Appellants emphasise that the Player was born in Greece, holds Greek nationality, and was born and raised there until the age of twelve, before the family moved to Brazil in 2022. They therefore submit that the present case should not be seen as the export of a minor for sporting purposes, but rather as the return of a Greek child with his family to Greece, after less than three years abroad.
49. The move to Brazil in 2022 followed the Father's retirement from professional football and was not connected to any football project involving the Player.
50. According to the Appellants, while in Brazil, the family realised that their economic and professional situation had not stabilised as hoped. Consequently, they maintain that by 2025 both parents were reconsidering their situation and exploring the possibility of returning permanently to Greece.
51. The Appellants further rely on the close family links which the Mother maintained with Greece throughout the family's stay in Brazil. In this respect, they underline that the maternal grandmother and the maternal uncle lived in Greece and that the grandmother required assistance and family support.
52. The Appellants submit that these family circumstances formed part of the wider context in which the decision to return to Greece was made. They also stress that the children remained closely connected to Greece culturally and linguistically, and that Greece remained the family's main social point of reference.
53. According to the Appellants, the prospect of employment for the Mother in Thessaloniki was a decisive and concrete factor in the decision to relocate. The Appellants state that, through the intervention of the maternal uncle, the Mother was informed of a legitimate employment opportunity with the Company during the summer of 2025. Upon receiving verbal confirmation of this opportunity, the family finalized its arrangements in Brazil and proceeded with the relocation to Greece.
54. The Appellants emphasize that the Mother formally commenced employment shortly after the family's arrival in Greece. They contend that this subsequent employment supports the family's stated reason for relocation. The Appellants further assert that the FIFA PSC erred in discounting this employment factor solely because the administrative formalities were finalized after the family's arrival. In practice, it is common for formal



steps related to employment, housing, or schooling to be completed only after relocation.

55. The Appellants also rely on the chronology of the family's contact with PAOK. They maintain that no contact with PAOK triggered or influenced the decision to relocate to Greece.
56. Rather, according to the Appellants, the family reached out to PAOK only after they had already decided to move and, indeed, after they had already arrived in Thessaloniki. The Player merely sought to continue his football practice after the relocation.
57. They also noted that several of the Player's teammates from the Greek youth national teams were playing for PAOK and that it was therefore natural for the family to approach that club after settling in Thessaloniki.
58. The Appellants argue that this sequence of events clearly shows that football followed the relocation and did not cause it.
59. As to the legal framework, the Appellants rely on the purpose of Article 19 RSTP, which they describe as protective rather than punitive. Rather, the objective of Article 19 is to prevent trafficking, exploitation, disruption of education, and family separation, not to penalise legitimate family relocation.
60. In their submission, the present case does not involve any of the risks that Article 19 RSTP was designed to prevent. The Player moved with both parents, was part of a stable family environment, attended school, and remained under full parental care.
61. The Appellants contend that the protective rationale of Article 19 RSTP is fully observed. They further assert that, when multiple legitimate factors contribute to a family relocation, CAS jurisprudence obliges the Panel to determine whether football constituted the decisive or prevailing factor.
62. In this regard, they rely in particular on CAS 2015/A/4312 and CAS 2020/A/7503, which, according to them, show that the so-called 'football factor' must be weighed in light of the totality of the circumstances. They maintain that the mere existence of a football-related circumstance somewhere in the background is not enough, by itself, to exclude the application of Article 19(2)(a) RSTP. What matters is whether football actually caused the move.



63. On the facts of the present case, they submit that the move was caused by economic instability in Brazil, family support needs in Greece, and the Mother's employment opportunity in Thessaloniki.
64. The Appellants acknowledge that the Player had been invited to participate in the Greek U-15 National Team in May 2025. However, they strongly deny that such an invitation constituted the cause of the move. In their submission, the national team invitation merely existed in the broader factual background and cannot be transformed into the reason for the family's relocation.
65. The Appellants also criticise FIFA's reliance on isolated expressions in the parents' statements, arguing that those statements must be read as a whole and in context. In this regard, when read properly, the parents' statements consistently show that family and professional reasons were at the origin of the move, with football playing, at most, a secondary and subsequent role.
66. The primary considerations include the Player's nationality and the particular circumstances surrounding the move to Greece. This case involves the return of a child to his country of nationality and birth, and the regulatory framework should not be applied in an unduly formalistic manner in these circumstances.
67. The Appellants also refer to CAS 2023/A/10032 para. 242-243, arguing that CAS has recognised that Article 19 RSTP may not adequately capture situations in which a minor already has a close and intrinsic link with the country to which he moves. In this respect, while the factual setting of that award differs from the present case, its broader interpretative reasoning is relevant.
68. In particular, the Article 19 RSTP should not be applied mechanically where doing so would undermine its own protective purpose and produce an unfair result for a minor who is returning with his family to his country of nationality.
69. It is further argued that the refusal to register the Player has significant consequences for his sporting and personal development. Since the deregistration from Palmeiras, the Player has been effectively prevented from participating in regular club competitions in Greece. As a result, this extended inability to play with a club adversely affects the Player's development, integration, and continuity in sport.
70. The Appellants therefore argue that an unduly rigid interpretation of Article 19 RSTP would, in the present case, work against the best interests of the Player.



71. The Player's personality rights should be respected; however, the Appealed Decision disproportionately interferes with his ability to pursue normal sporting development while residing lawfully with his family in Greece. According to this perspective, the refusal does not protect the Player from harm but instead places him in an artificial state of sporting inactivity, despite the presence of a stable family, educational, and residential environment.
72. The Respondent maintains that the Appellants have not established that the family's relocation occurred for reasons entirely independent from football. On the contrary, the evidence shows that football was among the factors considered by the family and that this is sufficient, under the applicable regulatory framework and CAS jurisprudence, to exclude the application of Article 19 par. 2 a) RSTP.
73. The Appellants therefore submit that the Appealed Decision should be set aside and request that the Panel approve the application submitted on behalf of PAOK and authorize the Player's registration in Greece.

B. The Respondent

74. On 19 January 2026, the Respondent filed its Answer to the Appeal Brief pursuant to Article R55 of the CAS Code. This document contained a statement of the facts and legal arguments. The Appellant sought for the dismissal of the appeal, submitting the following requests for relief:
 - a) *"Reject the Appellant's appeal in its entirety;*
 - b) *Confirm the Appealed Decision of 29 October 2025; and*
 - c) *Order the Appellant to bear all costs incurred with the present procedure".*
75. FIFA submits that the Appeal should be dismissed and that the Appealed Decision rendered by the FIFA PSC should be upheld in its entirety.
76. The Respondent emphasises that Article 19 RSTP establishes a clear and strict prohibition on the international transfer of minor players and that the rule serves an essential protective purpose. According to its position, the prohibition was introduced to combat trafficking, exploitation, and other harmful forms of cross-border movement of young players. For that reason, the limited exceptions contained in Article 19 par. 2 RSTP must be interpreted restrictively and applied cautiously.
77. FIFA recalls that CAS jurisprudence has repeatedly confirmed that the protection of minors requires strict and consistent application of Article 19 of the RSTP. In support of



this position, it relies on authorities such as CAS 2014/A/3793, CAS 2011/A/2354, CAS 2013/A/3140, CAS 2017/A/5244, CAS 2020/A/7503, and CAS 2021/A/7807.

78. Accordingly, those awards confirm two central principles: first, that the exceptions to Article 19 RSTP are exhaustive and cannot be broadened by interpretation; and second, that the burden of proof lies on the party claiming the benefit of an exception.
79. In the present case, the burden rested on the Appellants to demonstrate that the family's relocation to Greece was motivated by reasons wholly unrelated to football. FIFA maintains that the Appellants have not satisfied this burden of proof. The chronology of events and the available evidence instead indicate that football was a key factor in the decision-making process.
80. The Respondent places particular emphasis on the parents' own written statement of 29 September 2025. Such evidence expressly acknowledges that, by early 2025, the Player's invitation to the Greek U-15 National Team led the family to consider returning to Greece seriously.
81. In the Respondent's view, this admission is decisive. Once the parents themselves acknowledged that the Player's national-team invitation was taken into account when considering the move, the condition set out in Article 19 par. 2 a) RSTP was no longer met.
82. FIFA argues that, under the relevant CAS jurisprudence, the move must not be linked to football. In particular, on CAS 2013/A/3140 and CAS 2015/A/4312 for the proposition that the exception does not apply where football is one of the reasons for the relocation, even if it is not described as the principal one.
83. Moreover, CAS 2017/A/5244 and CAS 2020/A/7503 reinforce the position that the enquiry under Article 19 par. 2 a) RSTP is inherently challenging due to its focus on subjective intentions, necessitating a particularly cautious assessment of the available evidence.
84. The Respondent also submits that the parents' statement is corroborated by the maternal uncle's statement, who likewise indicated that the invitation to the Greek national team prompted the family to begin seriously considering a permanent move back. The consistency between those statements reinforces the conclusion that football was part of the family's reasoning.
85. The Respondent further contests the Appellants' reliance on the purported employment opportunity for the Mother. The Respondent contends that the Appellants have failed to



provide objective documentary evidence demonstrating that the relocation decision was genuinely motivated by this employment opportunity. Specifically, the Respondent notes the absence of any written job application, job offer, interview schedule, email correspondence, or similar documentation indicating that a formal hiring process occurred before the family departed from Brazil. The only evidence submitted indicates that the Mother began employment on 10 September 2025, after the family had already arrived in Greece.

86. Moreover, according to the parents' own third statement, the alleged employment arrangement was entirely informal and was conveyed verbally through the maternal uncle. Such a circumstance is inherently weak as proof of a genuine employment-based relocation, particularly where an entire family is said to have moved from another continent based essentially on an unrecorded verbal assurance transmitted by a relative.
87. The Respondent further notes that the Father was not employed in Greece at the time of the relocation, and no evidence was provided to demonstrate that he had obtained or was likely to obtain employment. Therefore, the Appellants' assertion that the move was motivated by significantly better professional opportunities in Greece is not supported by the available evidence.
88. If the family had truly decided in spring 2025 to relocate for professional reasons, one would reasonably expect more robust evidence of job searches, applications, employer contacts, and planning for the practical realities of relocation.
89. Furthermore, the circumstances concerning the Player's housing and schooling do not adequately support the Appellants' position. The evidence shows that, upon the family's arrival in Greece on 24 August 2025, neither housing arrangements nor school enrolment had been finalised.
90. The available record indicates that school confirmation occurred only in early September and that residence documentation was issued after the family's arrival. Consequently, this sequence of events is difficult to reconcile with the assertion that the family had planned and decided upon the relocation months in advance for family and professional reasons.
91. By contrast, the Respondent emphasises that the only matter which appears to have moved quickly and efficiently after arrival concerned the Player's football continuity. In this regard, the statement from PAOK according to which the Mother contacted the Club already at the end of August 2025 is contrary to the Appellants' submissions.



92. This timing conflicts with the Parents' assertion that PAOK was contacted only after housing and school arrangements were finalized. Such inconsistencies are significant, as they indicate that the Player's football continuation may have been considered immediately upon arrival or earlier.
93. Furthermore, the Appellants have not provided evidence clarifying the specific nature or timing of the initial contact with PAOK. No email, message, call record, or other contemporaneous documentation has been submitted to establish who initiated the contact, the timing of the interaction, the organization of subsequent trial sessions, or the process by which the Player was accepted to train with the Club.
94. In the Respondent's view, the lack of documentary corroboration on these points weakens the Appellants' version of events. It makes the overall chronology more difficult to reconcile with a purely non-football-related move.
95. The Respondent addresses the Appellants' argument that the present case falls outside the scope of Article 19 RSTP due to the Player's return to his country of nationality and firmly disputes this assertion. Article 19 RSTP is determined by movement between associations and territories, rather than by nationality. It contends that the relevant factor is the Player's transfer from one national association to another and his attempt to register with a club affiliated with a different association while still a minor. Consequently, the applicability of Article 19 RSTP cannot be excluded solely on the basis that the Player holds Greek nationality or was born in Greece.
96. Also the Appellants' reliance on CAS 2023/A/10032 is misplaced. That award concerned a different exception under Article 19 par. 2 b) RSTP, and arose in a highly specific territorial and regulatory context linked to the post-Brexit situation between associations in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Conversely, the factual and legal settings of that case are not comparable to those of the present dispute.
97. In any event, the Respondent submits that even if CAS jurisprudence may offer persuasive guidance, the Panel must ultimately apply the clear wording of Article 19 par. 2 a) RSTP as it stands, and that the present case remains governed by the requirement that the parents' move be for reasons not linked to football.
98. The Respondent also rejects the Appellants' submissions concerning the Player's personality rights, as Article 19 RSTP pursues a legitimate regulatory objective recognised by international sports law, namely the protection of minors.



99. The Appealed Decision does not prohibit the Player from engaging in football as such. Still, it merely regulates the conditions under which an international transfer and registration may be approved while he remains a minor.
100. Accordingly, any limitation on the Player's immediate registration with PAOK is therefore the consequence of a general and legitimate regulatory framework rather than an unlawful interference with personality rights. Therefore, the Appealed Decision is not disproportionate or incompatible with the Player's welfare.
101. In the Respondent's view, the Appellants have not established that the family's relocation occurred for reasons entirely independent from football. On the contrary, the evidence shows that football was among the factors considered by the family and that this is sufficient, under the applicable regulatory framework and CAS jurisprudence, to exclude the application of Article 19 par. 2 a) RSTP.

V. JURISDICTION

102. Article R47 of the CAS Code provides as follows:

“An appeal against the decision of a federation, association or sports-related body may be filed with CAS if the statutes or regulations of the said body so provide or if the parties have concluded a specific arbitration agreement and if the Appellant has exhausted the legal remedies available to it prior to the appeal, in accordance with the statutes or regulations of that body.”

103. Article 49(1) of the FIFA Statutes (2024 Edition) provides that:

“FIFA recognizes the independent Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) with headquarters in Lausanne (Switzerland) to resolve disputes between FIFA, members associations, confederations, leagues, clubs, players, officials, football agents and match agents.”

104. The jurisdiction of the CAS is further confirmed by the Order of Procedure duly signed by the Parties.
105. It follows that the CAS has jurisdiction to decide on the present dispute.

VI. APPLICABLE LAW

106. Article R58 of the CAS Code provides as follows:



“The Panel shall decide the dispute according to the applicable regulations and, subsidiarily, to the rules of law chosen by the parties or, in the absence of such a choice, according to the law of the country in which the federation, association or sports-related body which has issued the challenged decision is domiciled or according to the rules of law the Panel deems appropriate. In the latter case, the Panel shall give reasons for its decision.”

107. Article 49(2) of the FIFA Statutes reads as follows:

“The provisions of the CAS Code of Sports-related Arbitration shall apply to the proceedings. CAS shall primarily apply the various regulations of FIFA and, additionally, Swiss law”

108. In their submissions, the Parties submitted that FIFA Regulations and additionally Swiss Law apply pursuant to Article R58 of the CAS Code and the FIFA Statutes.

109. The Panel is satisfied that the FIFA Regulations, including the RSTP (March 2025 Edition) and the Procedural Rules Governing the Football Tribunal (the “Procedural Rules”) (January 2025 Edition), are applicable, with Swiss Law applying additionally to fill in any gaps or lacuna within those regulations.

VII. ADMISSIBILITY

110. Article R49 of the CAS Code provides as follows:

“In the absence of a time limit set in the statutes or regulations of the federation, association or sports-related body concerned, or in a previous agreement, the time limit for appeal shall be twenty-one days from the receipt of the decision appealed against. The Division President shall not initiate a procedure if the statement of appeal is, on its face, late and shall so notify the person who filed the document.”

111. Article 50(1) of the FIFA Statutes (2024 Edition) states that:

“Appeals against final decisions passed by FIFA’s legal bodies and against decisions passed by confederations, member associations or leagues shall be lodged with CAS within 21 days of receipt of the decision in question.”

112. The Appealed Decision was uploaded to the TMS on 14 November 2025 and forwarded to the Club by the HFF on 17 November 2025.

113. The Appellant filed its Statement of Appeal on 5 December 2025 and, therefore, within 21 days from the communication of the Appealed Decision. The Club completed its



appeal in accordance with Articles R48 and R51 of the CAS Code and within the deadline set by the CAS Court Office for its submission. The Appeal complied with all of the requirements of Article R47 et seq. of the CAS Code, including the payment of the CAS Court Office fee.

114. It follows, in the view of the Panel, that the Appeal is admissible.

VIII. MERITS

115. This Appeal addresses whether the Player may be registered with the Club under the exception in Article 19.2 a) of the RSTP: *“The player’s parents move to the country in which the new club is located for reasons not linked to football.”*
116. The Appellants state that the family left Greece for Brazil for economic reasons, remained there for less than three years, and then decided to return to Greece mainly for economic reasons. They state that the Player’s registration was a consequence of this return to the place that the parents considered their permanent home. The Respondent maintains that it has not been demonstrated that the move was unrelated to football. The Respondent argues that the invitation for the Player to join the Greek U-15 National Team was the primary reason for the family’s return to Greece, as they sought the most suitable club for his career. The Club was identified as the best option to support this objective.
117. In light of the foregoing, the central issue is whether the “football factor” constituted only one of several reasons for the family’s relocation to Greece, as asserted by the Appellants, or whether it was the primary or sole motivation for their move.
118. The Panel has carefully examined the facts and evidence in the record to determine whether the Appellant’s application for the transfer of the minor should be granted.

A. The legal framework introduced by Article 19 RSTP

119. According to the reasoning put forward by FIFA in its Commentary on Regulations on Status and Transfer of Players, 2023 Edition (the “Commentary”): *“The regulatory framework is based on a clear rule, i.e. a general prohibition on international transfers of minors. However, it codifies several exceptions”*. Notably this provision concerns the concept of “minor player”, clarifying that: *“international transfers of minors are, as a general rule, prohibited. The Regulations define a minor as a player who has not yet reached the age of 18. The term “minor” is thus exclusively linked to a specific age and does not incorporate any national legislation that may confer majority upon an individual at a younger age”*.



120. Further, it is stated that *“Article 19 prohibits the international transfer of players under the age of 18, as well as the first registration of a non-national minor, unless one of the exceptions or the five-year rule applies. In all cases, the trigger is the (proposed) registration of the minor player with a member association for a club. This registration is required for a player to be able to play for a club and participate in organised football”*.
121. In sum, the FIFA position strictly prohibits enrolling minors unless one of the mentioned exceptions occurs. This position is largely explained in the Commentary: *“To achieve their intended objectives, the measures to protect minors and combat abuse require robust rules, which must be implemented in a consistent and strict manner. This essential requirement has been communicated consistently from their introduction. The jurisprudence of the SCM (and PSC) regarding compliance with article 19 follows this strict approach. Applying the relevant provisions in a strict, coherent and scrupulous manner is the only way to prevent measures designed to protect minor players being compromised. A narrow interpretation and stringent application are required to frustrate any attempt to circumvent the Regulations even if, in isolated cases, this may create a perception that rules are applied in an inflexible or overly rigid way. As a matter of fact, a strict application of rules is the only way to effectively provide protection to minor players, which is the ultimate purpose of article 19.”*
122. The exceptions to this general provision are listed in Article 19 par. 2 RSTP above mentioned, and it must be noted that the FIFA’s approach to their application is very strict since it is noted in the Commentary that *“allowing additional exceptions would reduce legal security. In particular, in an area as sensitive as the protection of minors, legal security is of paramount importance... Only clear rules, applied in a consistent manner, can prevent this kind of undesirable situation [...] In addition, the need for a strict application is widely acknowledged. The notion that the list of exceptions is exhaustive flows logically from this acknowledgement. Permitting any additional exceptions would go against the very principle that the relevant provisions must be applied strictly. Finally, one should also consider the risks inherent in a more flexible approach. Additional flexibility could open the proverbial floodgates, to the general detriment of minors”*.
123. In this regard, the FIFA Guide to Submitting a Minor Application (the “Guide”) clarifies the boundaries of Article 19 par. 2 a) RSTP other than work: *“Although work is recognised as the most common reason leading a family to move from one country to another, the PSC recognises other reasons as the basis for a move, including:*
- *better education of the player and/or their parents;*



- *better living conditions;*
- *return to the country of origin;*
- *family reunion/reunification;*
- *investment;*
- *medical reasons; and*
- *retirement.*

The above-mentioned list is obviously not exhaustive and serves merely as a guideline for the type of reasons that have been invoked in the context of minor applications submitted to the PSC in the past.”

124. The Guide provided the documentary evidence that should be filed with the request for registration and adds to the above: *“For the sake of completeness, it needs to be clarified that, regardless of the reason invoked, these applications were only accepted by the PSC in situations where it was clear that the player’s parents moved to the new country for the reason invoked and not for the player’s football career.”*
125. Concerning the exception at stake, the Respondent holds that: *“[g]iven the very nature of this kind of exception, at its core, Article 19(2)(a) RSTP essentially requires investigating subjective intentions. The applicant on behalf of its affiliated club and the minor player need to prove that there were no links whatsoever to football underpinning the decision of the family to move with the minor to a different country”.*
126. The Panel recognizes the need for clear and relevant rules to protect the wellbeing of minors, and for the strict application of those rules. However, it notes that Article 19 par.2 a) RSTP allows international registration of a minor with a new club in the country where the family relocated for reasons not linked to football. This exception should be interpreted strictly to uphold the rule’s protective purpose, but a strict interpretation should not be a justification for an excessive or mechanical approach having regard to the particular facts of any case. The regulation aims to prevent the trafficking of minors, economic exploitation, disruption of education, and separation from parental care. These are important objectives. It is not the purpose of the regulation to penalize a legitimate family relocation, in particular where it concerns a return to the country of origin, where the minor had spent the great majority of his life, after a relatively short period in another country.



127. The Panel addresses these issues as follows.

B. The applicable standard of proof

128. The Panel notes that, before analyzing the case and assessing the evidence in the file in connection with the Parties' mutual requests, it is worth clarifying the burden of proof and the applicable standard for the present dispute resolution.
129. The Appellants submit that "*CAS panels dealing with Article 19 RSTP have consistently applied a standard of "comfortable satisfaction" (higher than a mere balance of probabilities, but lower than beyond reasonable doubt)*" and "*Treating the presumption in Article 19(1) RSTP as if it could only be rebutted "beyond reasonable doubt" would, in practice, render the exception in Article 19(2)(a) RSTP almost meaningless. Family motives, personal reasons and mixed motivations are, by their nature, difficult to prove beyond reasonable doubt*". On this basis, it is assumed that family reasons for relocation should be carefully assessed, given that the nature of those motivations is difficult to prove and is inherently subjective.
130. In this regard, the Respondent asserts that "*given that the general principle prohibits the international transfer of players below the age of 18, in any case, the burden of proving the applicability of the exceptions listed in Article 19(2) RSTP – and in particular that the move to the new country was not linked to football – lies with the Player. Pursuant to CAS case law "[...] the burden of proof is placed on the shoulders of the party that claims to fall within the scope of an exception*". This approach is fundamentally needed to protect the minors worldwide and avoid any possible form of abuse against them.
131. In the Appealed Decision, the FIFA PSC stated that the exception provided for under Art. 19 par. 2 a) of the RSTP could be granted only if he was comfortably satisfied that the Player and his family moved to Greece for reasons "*not motivated by the football activity of their child*" (see para. 12).
132. Concerning this issue, the Panels finds that, while in the FAQs of the FIFA Guide to submitting a minor application, 2020 Edition, it was specified that "*the member association applying for the registration of a foreign minor player on the basis of one of the exceptions of art. 19 par. 2 of the RSTP must prove "beyond reasonable doubt"3 that the requirements of said exception are met*", it must be noted that in the recent 2026 Edition, the standard required by FIFA changes in "*the comfortable satisfaction of the Judge*".
133. In light of this new approach, which shares the recent CAS jurisprudence (see CAS 2020/A/7503, para. 95: *The standard for proving the exception shall be "comfortable*



satisfaction” and not “beyond a reasonable doubt” [...] In the Sole Arbitrator’s views there is no justification to require a higher standard of proof than the one established for doping and corruption matters), the Panel states that the burden of proof lies on the Appellants and a comfortable standard of proof in support of their request should be reached to uphold this Appeal.

C. The family’s decision to relocate to Greece

134. The Panel considers that the central issue in the present appeal concerns the proper assessment of the factual circumstances surrounding the Player’s relocation, and whether the requirements set out under Article 19 RSTP were correctly applied in the Appealed Decision.
135. In this respect, the Panel recalls that Article 19 RSTP establishes a general prohibition on the international transfer of minors, subject to narrowly defined exceptions, which must be interpreted strictly in order to ensure the protection of minor players.
136. The Panel further notes that the assessment of such exceptions requires a careful and comprehensive evaluation of the factual circumstances of each case, on its own merits, including the reasons underlying the family’s relocation and the extent to which such reasons may be connected to the Player’s football activity.
137. In CAS 2020/A/7503, para. 91 the Sole Arbitrator rightly emphasized that, when assessing the existence (or not) of the “football factor”: *“Life teaches us that the change of country is never, or very rarely, based on a single cause. Life teaches us that that all cases should be analysed according to the circumstances of the specific case and for this reason each situation shall be decided on a case by case basis. Only in this way the arbitrator will be able to give protection to the values and principles underlying the protection of minors. This flexibility in the interpretation and application of the rules in no way contradicts the strictness and care that the arbitrator must have in applying the envisaged exceptions. This was also the reasoning followed in CAS 2012/A/2839. In the Sole Arbitrator’s view this approach does not contradict the strict interpretation principle.”*
138. In this context, the Respondent contends that the “football factor” surely constituted one (of several) factors in the family’s decision-making process to relocate to Greece. This consideration is properly to be taken into account in the evaluation of whether to grant the application for international transfer: *“FIFA deems it worth underlining that with this Answer it does not intend to put into question the appropriateness of a family’s decisions to relocate abroad by any means. What FIFA is seeking to explain is that – when looking at the whole picture – it is undeniable that football played a role in the*



family's choice to move to Greece and for this reason the Player's registration with the Club while he remains a minor could not be permitted pursuant to the clear wording of Article 19(2)(a) RSTP".

139. According to the Respondent, the sequence of events preceding the relocation is not entirely justifiable in itself. On its account, these events appear to be connected to PAOK's interest in registering the Player, and such an association with football activities is therefore deemed unacceptable.
140. However, upon evaluating the Respondent's contention, the Panel finds that even a well-intentioned position may inadvertently hinder families from relocating to another country in circumstances that offer economic stability, the maintenance of family connections, and the possibility of improved prospects for both parents and children, as evidenced in the present case. This is all the more so where the 'relocation' is in fact a return to the country of origin, where the Player had spent the first twelve years of his life.
141. This approach was recognized in CAS 2013/A/3140, where that panel found several factors mitigated against approving the international transfer:
- The period between the player's arrival in the new country and him joining the club was very short.
 - There was evidence that the player had "played football quite seriously and participated in numerous football matches, as a player of a team" before moving to the new country.
 - The player had participated in football matches in a league in his country of origin, playing for a club that had a partnership agreement with the proposed new club.
 - A statement appeared on the player's school's website stating that he had moved to the new country: *"I got accepted to the football club called Atlético de Madrid."*
142. In this context, certain specified elements were considered by that panel to mitigate these findings and support the approval of the minor's application:
- The player's family was multicultural and multilingual, so that panel could *"easily understand"* why the family wanted to move to the new country.



- The wealth and privilege enjoyed by the player's family excluded the possibility that they would "*depend on the professional evolution of the Player*" to support themselves.
 - The player's family undertook substantial preparations for relocation to the new country, including initiating visa applications, approximately one year before any association with the proposed new club was established.
 - There was no evidence that the proposed new club had shown any particular interest in the minor. In fact, there had never been any invitation from the club to the family and the player to relocate.
 - The matches the player had played against the proposed new club's partner club in his home country were held after the family received their visas for the new country.
143. In light of these considerations, the Panel observes that several factors, which are distinct from, and which outweigh, the football-related aspects, are predominant and decisive in evaluating the evidence and facts of the case regarding the Player's decision to relocate to Greece.
144. The Player is a Greek national. He was born and raised in Greece, and lived there until the age of twelve. During the hearing, the Panel confirmed that, even while living in Brazil, he maintained a strong and explicit connection to Greece. He remained fluent in the native language and explained that, despite the distance, he stayed in contact with childhood friends, including through online video games, which is typical for someone of his age.
145. Furthermore, when B., the Father who is too fluent in Greek, decided to retire from professional football, the family relocated to Brazil due to his origins and citizenship. In Brazil, the Father managed a commercial enterprise but was unable to secure a stable income for his family. This ongoing financial uncertainty, which had affected the Player's parents prior to their decision to relocate, coincided in early 2025 with an invitation from the Greek U-15 National Team for the Player to participate in matches in Europe. These factors prompted the family to return to Greece, which they regarded as their home country.
146. The Panel finds that the Greek national team's invitation was not the decisive factor in the family's decision. Rather, it was a circumstance that prompted the parents and the Player to consider whether relocating to Greece would enable them to achieve both



economic and personal objectives, such as providing the Mother with a stable employment opportunity and enabling the Player's legitimate aspiration to play football. This does not constitute the predominant "football factor" (which could preclude the admissibility of the invoked exception), but instead reflects the practical considerations families assess when making significant decisions about their future.

147. In summary, the family was not departing Brazil for an uncertain future, after a relatively short period there. Rather, they were assessing which of the countries with which they maintained significant ties, namely Greece and Brazil, would best fulfill their objective as a family of achieving a better life.
148. The Mother testified that several factors influenced the family's decision to return to Greece. These included a new employment opportunity, uncertainty about establishing a stable professional life in Brazil, the need to care for her elderly mother in Greece, close family ties with her brother D., and an invitation for the Minor to join the Greek U-15 National Team. Together, these factors led the family to proceed with their return.
149. The Panel finds that the period between the family's decision to return in spring 2025 and their actual relocation on 24 August 2025 is consistent with the timeline of a typical family move. The family's decisions and actions during this period were reasonable, considering their prior experience with Greece's social, educational, and economic systems, having resided there until three years earlier. This context is crucial for understanding the family's decision to return to Greece, despite some arrangements remaining incomplete at the time of relocation. School enrollment was finalized on 5 September 2025, the house lease was signed on 3 September 2025, and the Mother's employment commenced on 12 September 2025. The family's effective organization and established local connections facilitated the completion of these remaining steps.
150. The Respondent objects that this lack of evidence only proves that the family's movement was bound only to the Player's call from the Club ("*[t]he foregoing demonstrates that, at the end of August 2025, the family had arranged only one thing: communicating with the Club in order to ensure that the Player could continue playing for PAOK*"), and concluded that that was not genuinely unrelated to the "football factor", the Appellants hold that: "*refusing the application of the exception set out at article 19(2)(a) RSTP in such circumstances results in a paradoxical outcome, whereby a minor who is fully protected, integrated, and supported by his family is nevertheless prevented from being registered, thereby undermining his sporting development and legal certainty without serving any legitimate protective objective*".



151. After carefully reviewing the case exhibits and the witness statements and their testimony to the Panel, the Panel finds the family's decision to move to Greece was rational and reasonable. Their actions demonstrate a clear understanding of Greece's social and economic environment. The Club's selection supported the Player's football aspirations, but this was driven by the family's pursuit of stable residency, which also included the minor's sports activities, rather than being their primary motivation.
152. In this regard, the Panel confirms it is comfortably satisfied with the presented evidence.
153. The Player's uncle, D., played a pivotal role in the family's relocation. His detailed and credible testimony confirmed the substantial support he provided, emphasizing that this case is unique and primarily influenced by the family's strong ties to Greece, which facilitated both their relocation and decision-making.
154. D., who operates his own business in Greece, confirmed that before 2025, his sister frequently expressed her intention to return to Greece. At his sister's request, he began searching for job opportunities for her. He secured employment for her at the Company and used his connections to find suitable housing for the entire family, including the Player's younger sister. He also clarified that he continues to provide financial support to his sister until the family's economic situation stabilizes.
155. Further, the family's decision to contact the Club to support the Player's football development and allow him to continue his sports activities was confirmed by statements from Mr. Porlioutopolos, the Club's General Manager, and Ms. Sdrolia, HFF's Head of Registration.
156. The Player expressed a strong passion for football and noted that many of his national teammates played for the Club's youth teams. Because the Club's premises are located less than four kilometers from [...], where the family chose to reside, it was a natural first choice in his search for a suitable team.
157. Ms. Sdrolia, HFF's Head of registration, reported that the Federation invited the Player to join the U-15 National Team based on scouting reports and his nationality. The Club submitted the application request on 12 September 2025, which marked the first time the HFF and the Club discussed the Player.
158. Mr. Porlioutopoulos, the Club's General Manager, testified that the Mother first contacted the Club in August 2025. She informed the Club that the family had returned to Greece, that the Player had trained with Palmeiras, held Greek nationality, and was a member of Greece's U-15 National Team. She requested trial sessions at PAOK to



assess the Player's suitability for amateur registration. The witness confirmed there had been no prior contact with the Player or his family. Following the September trials, the Club decided to enroll the Minor.

159. With the above in mind, it is clear to the Panel that the rules under review were formulated to protect minor players who may need to travel to a foreign country for the reasons detailed in the regulations (family relocation, humanitarian reasons, etc.). However, these regulations do not mention transfers of minors who already have an intrinsic, close, and explicit link with the country to which they are to move. It does not deal with the situation in which a minor leaves his country of birth and origin, resides in another country for a relatively short period, and then returns to the country of origin.
160. The Panel notes that the Appealed Decision gave limited weight to other evidence, interpreting the National Team's call as prompting the Club's call and, ultimately, the family's relocation. While the details of the relocation were viewed as uncertain or implausible, the Panel considers that a proper interpretation of the regulations requires evaluating all oral and factual evidence, not just the sequence of dates in the exhibits.
161. The family began planning their relocation from Brazil to Greece after May 2025 and initiated the process shortly thereafter. In July, they informed the Academy Palmeiras Manager of their decision and promptly began preparations, including seeking assistance from relatives and acquaintances in Greece, such as C.'s brother. The process required time to close their business in Brazil, secure employment in Greece, and arrange schooling for the siblings. Their actions were transparent and based on personal ties, with involvement in football only after establishing stability for the entire family.
162. Although the football factor appears to have played a role, viewing the call to join the U-15 National Team as an isolated event—merely because it was the earliest available date in the family's history—oversimplifies the situation. The scenario becomes fully justifiable and understandable only when considering that the primary needs were addressed within a brief period, specifically between late August and mid-September 2025. This timeline aligns with the strong connections maintained in Greece, which facilitated the relocation:
 - (i) On 24 August, the Player and his family arrived in Greece;
 - (ii) On 29 August, the Player's former Club, Palmeiras deregistered the Appellant;



- (iii) On 5 September, [...] confirmed that both minors were enrolled for the 2025-2026 school year. According to the information available on the website, the school year in Greece began on 11 September;
 - (iv) On 10 September 2025, the Company permanently employed the Mother; and
 - (v) On 11 September 2025, the Municipality of [...] issued a certificate of permanent residence for the family, based on the rental contract signed by the Father on 4 September 2025.
163. The Panel has taken into consideration the Respondent's legitimate concerns, and reflected on them with a view to the primary need to protect minors, as provided for in the current regulations.
164. The Respondent outlines that *"it is clear that the housing and school arrangements had not been finalized by the end of August 2025"* and *"at the end of August 2025, the family had arranged only one thing: communicating with the Club in order to ensure that the Player could continue playing for PAOK"*, and therefore: *"In light of the lack of proof, and following the Player's participation with the Greek U-15 national team in May 2025, it appears more likely that the Player attracted PAOK's attention through his performances in those matches, and that the Club subsequently contacted the Parents after those games."*
165. From a temporal perspective, the family's prompt arrangements after arriving in Greece indicate that they carefully planned the relocation and intended to settle in the new country. Rather, the Panel finds that evidence from the case files and witness testimony confirmed the family's decision to move to Greece, where they had lived for a significant period and had strong ties, was principally motivated by a desire to reunite with relatives and pursue economic opportunities unavailable in Brazil.
166. The Panel considers the family's previous move was temporary and limited in time, and ultimately not successful for the family as a whole. In light of these circumstances, the decision to return to Greece resulted from a broader life choice, following a reassessment of their personal and economic situation. Within this context, the family's contact with the Club is to be understood as a consequence of that decision, allowing the Player to pursue his interest in football, rather than as the result of any prior contractual offer from the Club.
167. In other words, the family's relocation and return to Greece was not merely an attempt to seek opportunities abroad, but rather a genuine effort to re-establish stable and



improved living conditions in their home country, for the family as a whole. This approach is fully consistent with the purpose of Article 19 RSTP, which seeks to safeguard the well-being of minors, and does not substantiate the Respondent's concerns regarding uncertainty in football or the risk of exploitation. On the evidence before it, the Panel does not consider that the move could be said to give rise to any of the dangers which the regulation seeks to protect against. Quite the contrary.

168. The Panel's primary assessment is based on factual evidence showing that the family returned to Greece. As a result, in light of this finding and the fact that the Appeal is upheld on this basis, the Panel considers it unnecessary to examine any further arguments advanced by the Appellants, including those related to a potential infringement of the Minor's individual rights, including those that are said to arise under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ("UNCRC") and the European Convention on Human Rights ("ECHR").

D. Conclusions

169. Based on the foregoing, and after reviewing the case's specific circumstances, the evidence presented, and the arguments of both Parties, the Panel finds that the transfer of the Player's family was not related to football reasons. Therefore, the Appeal is upheld, and the application by the HFF on behalf of PAOK to register the Player as an amateur player is approved.

IX. COSTS

(...)



ON THESE GROUNDS

The Court of Arbitration for Sport rules that:

1. The appeal filed by A. & Panthessalonikeios Athlitikos Omilos Konstantinoupoliton – PAOK Football Societe Anonyme against the decision rendered by the Single Judge of the FIFA Players’ Status Chamber on 5 December 2025 is upheld.
2. The decision rendered by the Single Judge of the FIFA Players’ Status Committee on 29 October 2025 is set aside.
3. The application filed by the Hellenic Football Federation on request of PAOK Football Societe Anonyme to register A. as amateur player is admitted.
4. (...).
5. (...).
6. All other motions or prayers for relief are dismissed.

Seat of arbitration: Lausanne, Switzerland

Operative part of the Award notified on 3 February 2026

Award with grounds: 15 September 2026

THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

Mr. Francesco Macri
President of the Panel

Prof. Philippe Sands KC
Arbitrator

Mr. Rui Botica Santos
Arbitrator