



**REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA  
THE PRIME MINISTER**

**Sofia, 17 November 2023**

**DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,**

The Bulgarian government is deeply concerned by the long-standing issues in Bulgarian football and the compromised governance of the Bulgarian Football Union, which resulted in last night's escalated tension before and during the Euro 2024 qualifier match between Bulgaria and Hungary (November 16<sup>th</sup> in Sofia). We kindly ask you to consider the matter very seriously and to act according to your rights and responsibilities drawn in FIFA statutes.

The match on November 16 was played in the context of long-amassed criticism and dissatisfaction of football clubs by the leadership of the BFU and unprecedented unification of rival fan clubs in their rage against it. Among the reasons for the accumulated discontent is the fact that more than 140 clubs (out of 550 in total) that have voted against the current management were subsequently expelled from the Union following its Congress in May 2022. Back in 2019, the President of the BFU Mr. Borislav Mihaylov resigned after a racist scandal (Bulgaria vs. England, 14.10.2019, UEFA EURO 2020 qualifier) and after almost two years he shocked the whole Bulgarian football society by withdrawing his resignation just before the Congress meeting, which was supposed to result in the election of a new President and new Executive Committee. Meanwhile, the BFU has been under several investigations by the authorities, while its management has remained unchanged for 18 years.

**TO:**

**GIANNI INFANTINO  
FIFA PRESIDENT**

**Cc:**

**Rolf Tanner**

Head of Member Association Governance

**Kenny Jean-Marie**

Chief Member Association Officer

**Elkhan Mammadov**

Director, Member Associations Europe

In this context, football clubs' fans countrywide publicly demanded the resignation of the President of the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) several days before the match. They announced their intention to do it again during the match and motivated their position with the series of dissatisfactory results of the Bulgarian national football team in all big championships since 2004. In response, the BFU, referring to an alleged recommendation from the police authorities and subsequent UEFA decisions, decided that the match would be played without an audience and changed its location three times. The Bulgarian police authorities afterward refuted having made such a recommendation.

The accumulated tension resulted in fierce protests against President Borislav Mihaylov, including bombing, arsoning, breaking of private property, and violence in Sofia before, during and after the match. Earlier, the Hungarian FA called the Bulgarian Football Union's (BFU) actions "unprecedented, totally unjustified and grossly unsportsmanlike" in a statement.

The Bulgarian government is deeply aggravated by these developments and by the damage inflicted on the citizens of Sofia during and after the match. We are also highly concerned by the damage caused by the decisions and actions of what appears currently as an illegitimate management body of the Bulgarian Football Union to the local football environment and to the country's international football reputation.

Understanding that FIFA plays a fundamental role in society, and therefore adherence to good governance principles is fundamental to FIFA's broader social mission, I kindly ask you to consider taking decisive actions in order to prevent the further escalation of tension and future crisis.

According to Art. 8(2) from the FIFA Statutes (Edition 2022), "Executive bodies of member associations may under exceptional circumstances be removed from office by the Council in consultation with the relevant confederation and replaced by a normalization committee for a specific period of time."

Based on the above-mentioned article of FIFA's Statutes, I would appreciate your involvement in possible solutions to this unprecedented situation.

I assure you that restoring a favorable environment for the development of Bulgarian football is of high interest to Bulgarian society.

Sincerely,

**Acad. NIKOLAI DENKOV**