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## **The Europeanization of Austrian Football: History, Adaptation and Transnational Dynamics**

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### **Introduction**

In the past, studies on Europeanization have often focused on top-down processes of domestic change that were caused by European integration and induced by the institutions of the European Union. In the following we want to highlight the interdependent two-way character of Europeanization. For us, this term also encapsulates bottom-up or trans-national and societal processes that in turn impact on European governance, as can be exemplified with the case of football.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, this paper seeks to analyse the Europeanization of Austrian football *both* as a consequence of pressures stemming from the European integration process and changes in domestic football involving other transnational (non-EU) European bodies and phenomena.<sup>2</sup> As for the former, we will look at the impact of the 1995 Bosman ruling of the European Court of Justice (both in terms of the nationality regime and the transfer regime) and the European Commission's activities to induce decentralised marketing of broadcasting rights in the EU. In terms of the second dimension we will first investigate the impact of the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Cup (now Europa League) on Austrian football and look at Europeanising mechanisms that emanate from transnational groupings/club forums and second, look at anti-racism and fan-networks in football. In addition, we will analyse the relevance of a 'historically-determined' Europeanization process in Austrian football. Our hypothesis in this regard is that Austria – due to its heritage as a fairly multinational state (Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy) – has been more internationally-oriented right from the beginnings of the game. Thus, it had been Europeanised to some degree (as regards the multiethnic make-up of the teams and the almost 'natural' Central

European frame of reference for team competition etc.) long before European integration kicked in. On the other hand, some of the more recent Europeanising dynamics that can be observed in other European leagues, not least its biggest neighbour Germany, are substantially weaker in Austrian football.

Germany will serve as a case of comparison throughout the text, not least because of the special and precarious German-Austrian football relationship as neighbours sharing a language and to some degree a historical-cultural heritage,<sup>3</sup> the big vs. small country-difference, as well as the allegedly different styles of play frequently invoked especially by Austrian commentators. However, in some instances, Austrian football has, despite all gestures of dissociation, taken German policies as a point of reference.<sup>4</sup>

The paper is structured as follows: the first section will discuss Europeanization/internationalisation processes before the Bosman era. Section two looks at the nationality issue of the Bosman ruling. The third part deals with the transfer regime aspect of the Bosman ruling and the issue of broadcasting rights. Thereafter we consider more transnational Europeanization processes by discussing the influence of the Champions League and UEFA-Cup, and take up the issue of transnational club forums, fan- and anti-racist NGO-networks, before drawing some conclusions from our analysis.

### **Austrian Football before Bosman**

There is a quite well-researched cultural studies-oriented account of the historical trajectories of this sport in Austria.<sup>5</sup> Two interesting strands of arguments with regard to our concerns here are to be found: on the one hand, the 'Austrification' thesis (Horak), which basically highlights that Austrian football from its beginnings up until

the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for the most part meant football in its capital Vienna. On the other hand, the pivotal role of Austrian/Viennese clubs and figures in the creation of a distinctive Central European format and space of the game has received attention (Marschik's treatment of Central European football).

First, Austrification – the idea that a real *Austrian* football has only come into play in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through a combination of modern economic strategies of management, i.e. professionalization and commercialisation, with an explicit anti-metropolitan attitude<sup>6</sup> – at first glance seems to contradict the hypothesis of an internationally-oriented football. However, a closer look at the contours of Viennese football reveals our idea. Although the equation Austria = Vienna (expressed in the fact that up until the late 1940s the Viennese champion was considered to be the Austrian one) seems to indicate that the most dynamic development of Austrian football was restricted to a specific space, this very space – Vienna not only as former capital, but as the central city of the ancient multinational dual monarchy – and its characteristics as a melting pot of cultures, ethnics, refugees, migrants and inhabitants come into play.

The idea that Austrian/Viennese football was fairly internationalised, especially with regard to Europe, even before World War II is further confirmed by the fact that the most important frame of orientation for Viennese clubs has been the so-called 'Central European triangle', i.e. the tripartite competition between Vienna, Prague and Budapest. As Marschik and Sottopietra have elaborated in depth,<sup>7</sup> the very idea of a Central European football space – as a transboundary space of action, one could say for our purposes – and a distinctive style of football that developed out of frequent contacts, matches and peer-group orientation can be attributed to large degrees to Viennese clubs and charismatic figures at the national level (most

importantly, Hugo Meisl, the General Secretary of the Austrian Football Association, ÖFB, in the interwar period<sup>8</sup>). This dense network also led to the establishment of the so-called Mitropa<sup>9</sup>-Cup (a club competition in the triangle mentioned above, with Italy and Yugoslavia also incorporated) and the International Cup (national team competition).<sup>10</sup> Both tournaments have obviously been forerunners of now well-established competitions at the European level. It is in this regard important to bear in mind that the ‘unofficial’ Central European Championships were initially only established on the basis of private arrangements worked out between the participating associations, which underscores the density and depth of the cross-border network of interactions. The reasons for establishing these international (albeit regionally bounded) contacts on a regular basis seem to be manifold: sport may have served as a means of the respective young states that had belonged to the former empire to normalise their relations; this common heritage in turn may also explain that the contact among these very actors evolved in the first place. In any case, business interests and the will to generate extra revenue by establishing an attractive tournament for the masses have been a primary incentive.<sup>11</sup> With the occupation of Austria through Nazi Germany in 1938, the Central European dimension of its football for a large part ceased to exist and never recovered even after 1945, although there have been attempts at revival in the years after World War II.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, it is not too far-fetched to state that the Europeanization of Austrian football has an important pre-Bosman dimension. While in other cases, such as the German, European impulses and orientations can be attributed in large parts to the workings of European institutions since the 1990s, Austrian football already brought an impressive historical-cultural record with a deep imprint of Central European orientation with it, when Austria became an EU member in 1995.

### **The Bosman Ruling I: The nationality issue**

Prior to the Bosman ruling, the migration of (professional) football players towards Austrian clubs had been significantly influenced by rules enacted by the Austrian football association (ÖFB), the professional league (partly induced by Austrian politics) as well as by UEFA and FIFA.<sup>13</sup> The few foreign players that came to play in Austria in the first years after the Second World War were mainly refugees. At the end of 1945 there were an estimated one million displaced persons in Austria: (former) forced laborers and prisoners of war, survivors of concentration camps and ethnic Germans fleeing from Eastern Europe. FIFA rules that were implemented in Austria hampered their participation in Austrian football: sportsmen who were members of foreign football associations required the clearance/approval of their home association. Foreigner and stateless persons also required the permission of the ÖFB in order to participate in official games. At the same time foreign players were regarded with suspicion by some Austrian football officials and in 1949 the newly formed pan-Austrian Football League (*Staatsliga*) adopted a rule limiting the number of foreign players used in a match to three. This rule survived until the mid-1960s.<sup>14</sup>

The league reform of 1964 led – after heated discussions in the media over ‘foreign legionaries’ in Austrian football – to a reduction of foreign players to two per team. This was changed back to three with the season 1970/71. While the proportion of foreign players decreased in the mid and late 1960s, it then rose to 15 percent in 1973. The oil crisis of the same year and the subsequent recession led to a general halt in the recruitment of foreign workers (through the social partners) in Austria, a step that was paralleled by the ÖFB, which ruled that the clubs of the two professional leagues could not contract any additional foreign players. In 1977 the Austrian

Football Association again liberalized the rules governing the use of foreign players to two. At the same time players that had already played for a respective club in the 1976/77 season were not counted towards the respective foreigner's contingents. This was largely in line with the rule enacted by UEFA in 1978 – after negotiations with the European Commission – in which it recommended allowing at least two foreign players, while excluding 'assimilated' players (that had been in residence for at least five years in the respective country) from this restriction. As result, the proportion of foreign players in Austria's first league rose again, from 6.7 percent in 1976/77 to 11.8 percent in 1978/79.<sup>15</sup>

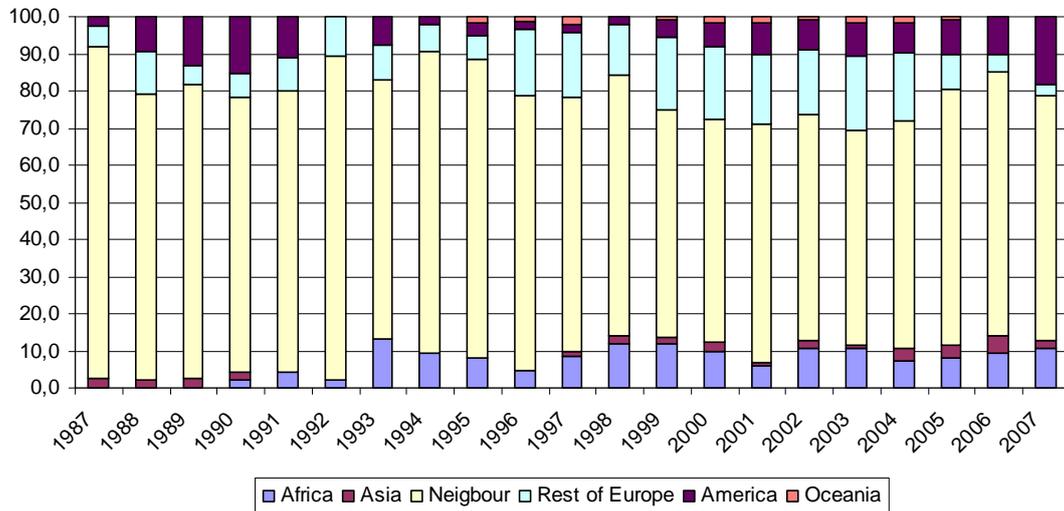
The fall of the iron curtain in the late 1980s turned Austria increasingly into a country of transit and immigration. The political changes also affected the football migration regime, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Transfer rule restrictions there were gradually abolished and players increasingly made use of their freedom of travel. This led to an increase especially of Hungarian and Czechoslovakian players in Austrian football,<sup>16</sup> however, mostly with regard to the lower leagues, amateur teams and 'commuters' (*Pendler*), who continued to live in their home countries, but played/worked for a certain time in Austria. Within professional football, this surge has not been felt that much, not least since Austria more and more lost its special appeal as a destination for Central and East European players. Before 1989, the geopolitical position of Austria as a neutral state in Central Europe gave the Austrian clubs a privileged position in their negotiations with communist sport authorities in Eastern and Central Europe to receive approval for contracting players or managers from these countries (mostly from Czechoslovakia or Hungary; even the first Soviet player in the West signed a contract in Austria with Rapid Vienna). After 1989, it increasingly became a transit country in this regard.

With the Austrian accession to the EU in 1995, the Bosman ruling of the same year also became effective in Austria. Hence, players with an EU/EEA nationality were treated equally to Austrians from 1996/1997, as a result of which any restrictions limiting their numbers were now illegal. But Austria went even further than that. The competent Federal Ministry ruled in 1996 that up to five third country-nationals were allowed per club.<sup>17</sup> In 1998, the Ministry further liberalized by putting third country-nationals that had been in residence for a longer time (and those with a trainee player qualification) on par with Austrian players. In 2001, the Ministry extended the maximum number of third country-players to seven.

There seemed to be several explanations for this liberalization beyond what was strictly required through the Bosman ruling. First, Austrian professional clubs obviously expected to gain a certain advantage through this extensive liberalization. The two professional leagues attracted (and still attract), above all, players from Central and Eastern Europe, including former Yugoslavia. Clubs sought to continue to make use of these players, given that there were and still are relatively moderately-priced and thus affordable for the Austrian clubs. Second, it could be argued that the Europeanization pressures were accompanied and paralleled by more general trends towards globalization, liberalization and deregulation.<sup>18</sup> In this regard, professional football increasingly came to be seen as a distinct field of business, but nevertheless part of a neo-liberally restructured economic sphere.<sup>19</sup>

As a result of such liberalization the proportion of foreign players increased sharply in the post-Bosman era. While in 1995 19 percent of top league football players in Austria were foreigners, this percentage had doubled by 2000. This rise constituted the biggest change in terms of the composition of club teams in the last 40 years. In terms of regional tendencies there has also been a certain shift since 1995

with the reduction of the proportion of players from Eastern Europe and all neighboring countries in general, while the percentage of players from the rest of (EU/EEA) Europe temporarily more than doubled.<sup>20</sup>



**Table 1** Development of the respective shares of foreign-born players according to their country of origin (Africa, Asia, Neighboring country, rest of Europe, America, Oceania) in Austrian football, 1987/88-2007/08)

After several years of liberalization, further accelerated by a change of government to a center-right coalition that now included the right-wing-populist Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), voices were increasingly raised that advocated certain counter-measures to be taken against the continuous inflow of foreign-born players that had followed the Bosman ruling. In 2001, the sports minister Susanne Riess-Passer (FPÖ) only conditionally gave her consent to a further extension of third-country foreigners in Austrian professional football. The condition, around which the compromise was built, was the so-called ‘9+9-rule’, agreed upon at a ‘round table’-meeting comprising representatives of the League, the ÖFB, the Players’ Union, the Ministry of Economics, the leading FPÖ-politicians Jörg Haider and Peter Westenthaler, as well as the sports minister. The Clubs voluntarily committed themselves to a ‘Gentlemen’s agreement’ – at least nine players had to be

listed on the match sheet that could be selected for Austrian national teams.<sup>21</sup> This agreement was justified with the need to advance young talented national players (in order to enhance the performance the national teams). As EU/EEA-foreigners were not treated equally to nationals in this rule, the non-conformity to EU standards of the ‘9+9 rule’ was obvious from the beginning.<sup>22</sup> It was, however, never taken to the courts, not least since already after a few months, the Gentlemen’s agreement had been undermined by Sturm Graz, a club that did not want to forgo certain foreign players in a decisive league match.

The chiefs of the professional Football League (Bundesliga) clubs however agreed on another arrangement, which still holds today. While the number of seven third country-players remained constant until July 2003, a premium system (that was already part of the ‘9+9-rule’) was extended, which ‘rewards’ the use of Austrian players. With this compensatory measure, also referred to as the so-called ‘Österreicher-Topf’ (the Austrians pot), money earned from broadcasting rights are paid to clubs according to the minutes that players who can be selected for Austrian national teams were fielded. Legally, this arrangement seems to be somewhat dubious since it introduces at least an incentive to discriminate between Austrians and EU-foreigners (potentially to the latter’s disadvantage).<sup>23</sup> With the exception of internationally oriented clubs such as Red Bull Salzburg, most Austrian clubs seek to receive the relatively modest sums<sup>24</sup> and the overall percentage of foreign players in the Austrian Bundesliga has indeed decreased from 41 percent in 2003/04 to 37 in 2007/08.<sup>25</sup>

A number of actors have advocated the enactment of compensatory measures for the consequences of the liberalization since Bosman; at the forefront in this regard have certainly been prominent Austrian media outlets. They continuously deplored

the disadvantages for Austrian football of bringing (as most Austrian media presume: often mediocre<sup>26</sup>) foreign players into the Bundesliga, which was said to have increasingly prevented young national talents to play sufficiently in Austrian professional football, and to decrease the quality of the national team in the long run. The media discourse was flanked and in some cases also further fed by politicians; not least because the restrictions demanded fitted into the world view of the right-wing populist FPÖ and their spin-off BZÖ (Alliance for the Future of Austria).

Since 2004, the admission of third-country nationals to Bundesliga clubs is governed by the state's legislation for key professionals in certain segments of the market ('*Schlüsselarbeitskräfte*'), for whom a minimal wage is foreseen. A numerical restriction per club is thus no longer verified. This basically amounted to an almost/*de facto* full liberalization, at least for the (truly) professional Premier League.<sup>27</sup> In the first years after the introduction of this legislation the set quotas were not reached, while there were problems after 2006 as quotas were exhausted.

Overall, the nationality issue of the Bosman ruling set in motion, or at least substantially furthered, a very significant liberalization of the nationality regime in Austrian football. As in the case of Germany, the measures accompanying the ruling were varied: mainly progressive aspects, such as the gradual opening up of the players' market for third country-nationals (thus going beyond the legally demanded deregulation measures with regard to EU/EEA foreigners), were accompanied by more conservative steps and counter-tendencies, first through the more discussed than enacted '9+9' rule and then and nowadays through the 'Österreicher-Topf'. However, all in all this led to enormous changes in the make-up of Austrian professional football, which seem to be aptly captured by the notion of 'system transformation'.

### **The Bosman ruling II (transfer regime) and the Issue of Broadcasting Rights**

The second part of the Bosman ruling, which rendered the existing transfer regime illegal, and the marketing of broadcasting rights have in common that both initiated a complex and long policy process, in which several advocacy groups tried to get their interests heard and be taken care of in the context of EU institutions.<sup>28</sup> Austrian football had to adapt to both these changes, but the question then is: have Austrian clubs – as compared, for instance, to their most prominent German counterparts – or has the Austrian Football Association been involved in these struggles at the European level? As our research has not produced any substantial result, this would seem to suggest that there has not been much activism on the part of Austrian actors. But then, what accounts for this lack of activism?

Several arguments come to mind. First, Austria – as a relatively small member and a newcomer to the EU in the second half of the 1990s – has had other (more) important interests to pursue. Thus, sports policy was certainly not high on the agenda of Austrian politicians. It seems reasonable that a similar mechanism has prevented the ÖFB as the representative of Austrian football to act visibly on a European level beside the successful bid for the EURO 2008, together with Switzerland. The ÖFB is a relatively small association<sup>29</sup>, whose expertise, resources and personal contacts on the European level, especially with regard to political institutions, seem to have been limited. Beyond that, it is safe to assume that the smaller national associations took part in the struggle for a new transfer regime or regarding the collective selling of broadcasting rights merely as interested spectators, monitoring (if at all) what the larger associations and the representatives of bigger clubs were trying to negotiate vis-à-vis the European Commission.<sup>30</sup>

Two further explanations for the lack of agency on behalf of Austrian club representatives as well as the ÖFB seem promising. On the one hand, the relationship between the (big) clubs in Austria and the national association is more harmonious and not so much marked by opposition/dualism<sup>31</sup> as in other cases (think of Germany). Hence, the need to go to Brussels to engage EU institutions for specific interests (such as decentralised marketing) has arguably been lower. On the other hand, as will be shown below, the issue of broadcasting rights does not constitute such an enormous issue for the (bigger) Austrian clubs, not least since the rights are sold collectively by the League and at a relatively low rate (thus making the sum of money to be distributed relatively small). Currently (2010-2013) the Football League receives a total of 17 million Euro per year (paid by both public television ORF and Pay-TV to all 20 clubs of the Bundesliga),<sup>32</sup> a sum that is easily dwarfed by the approximately 1.4 billion EUR in the English market or the 440 million EUR in Germany.<sup>33</sup> It should be obvious from this account that broadcasting revenues make up a relatively small share of the average club's total annual earnings, as the average Bundesliga team spends about 10 million EUR per year.<sup>34</sup> This does not mean that the general question of the legal permissibility of collective selling schemes is not applicable to Austria as well, it rather indicates that the (big) clubs – main drivers of Europeanization in the German case, for instance – have shown little activism in pursuing any interest concerning (a decentralization of) broadcasting rights via (or *vis-à-vis*) Brussels.

As has been hinted at, the revenue structure of most big clubs in Austria has been characterized throughout the last decade by a special feature, i.e. the financial backing by a large sponsor, which in turn means the establishment of structures of patronage. According to *Deloitte*, 60 percent of the football league members'

revenues derive from sponsoring (season 2007/08), which represents the highest number among ten researched Western European leagues.<sup>35</sup> Thus, to reach (inter)national competitiveness, big clubs such as Austria Vienna and Red Bull Salzburg have come to rely on personal sponsors: Frank Stronach and Dietrich Mateschitz, who for very different reasons and with only slightly different ambitions, have pumped large sums into ‘their’ respective clubs.<sup>36</sup> This alternative source of income helps to explain why some Austrian clubs do not have the issue of broadcasting rights (and plans to generate much more from them via a decentralized system) high on their priority list.

However, Red Bull has recently launched a terrestrial television channel (*Servus TV*) and gave an (unsuccessful) bid for the football broadcasting rights in 2010. In January 2010, Rudolf Edlinger, chairman of Austria’s most popular football club Rapid Vienna, opposed the new television contract negotiated between the Austrian Football League and Pay-TV-channel Sky, insisting among other things that a further reduction of games in free terrestrial TV would adversely affect the media presence of the club’s many corporate sponsors. He threatened to sell television rights for Rapid’s home-games individually<sup>37</sup>, which caused the League Conference of club chairmen to reject the initial tender and call for new bids. In the end, the Football League sold the rights for the next three years to the new conjoint contenders, public television ORF and Pay-TV-channel Sky.<sup>38</sup>

### **Champions League, UEFA-Cup and Transnational Club Forums**

Club competition at the European level, especially the Champions League, has been identified with regard to other leagues in Europe, such as the German Bundesliga, as a crucial dimension of Europeanization. That is because throughout the 1990s

participation and success in these competitions has proven financially very lucrative and has shown to have quite a considerable impact on the symbolic level (as regards image and reputation). Additionally, one can interpret the relatively dense networks that are established through regular competition across borders as a mechanism that may alter the general patterns of orientation not only of the club's representatives, but also of the supporters/spectators, arguably leading to more Europeanised mind sets, at least a stronger focus on the 'European dimension'.

With regard to Austrian football, one has to recognize that at least the Champions League is rather like the 'exception to the rule' (of non-participation). Only three Austrian clubs have played in the group stages of the Champions League so far,<sup>39</sup> and only once an Austrian team has made it to the former second group stage: Sturm Graz in the 2000-01-season. The Champions League for the most part remains a distant dream, a miracle panacea. To count on participation in the League's group stage can be a (very) risky undertaking for Austrian clubs, as the example of FC Tirol in 2001 indicates: the club, which was burdened with a mortal debt, banked on reaching this very group stage. Shortly after it failed to get the better of Lokomotiv Moscow in the last qualifying round it had to file for bankruptcy.<sup>40</sup>

Even though the structure of revenues/financing of clubs differs markedly from that of other European leagues, especially with regard to the very substantial reliance of some of the big clubs upon the patronage system described above, participation in European football (still) substantially enhances the competitiveness of Austrian clubs. This is only reinforced by the fact that relatively low revenues emanate from the broadcasting right deals.

Thus, although the European club competitions may not be so much part of clubs' budget calculations (since it cannot be taken for granted to reach the financially

lucrative stage of these competitions at all), participation in these tournaments is nevertheless what the more ambitious, competitive and/or traditional Austrian Bundesliga clubs, such as Red Bull Salzburg, Rapid Vienna and Austria Vienna are heading for. In this regard, as has been said, participation in the (group stage of the) Champions League would be like hitting the jack-pot; the revenue of 13 Million Euro generated by Sturm Graz through making it to the group stage of the Champions League in 2000-01 alone was bigger than the entire annual budgets of most Austrian professional clubs at that time.<sup>41</sup> This brings a clear competitive advantage for national competitions, although Sturm did not profit from it due to speculative and unsuccessful transfers and higher personnel costs.

But also the UEFA-Cup/Europa League can be very interesting (meaning: financially lucrative) to Austrian clubs, as the example of Austria Vienna that reached the quarter final of the UEFA-Cup in 2004-05 indicates.<sup>42</sup> But in the former UEFA-Cup the financial aspect, more than in the CL (where participation in the group stage is already rewarded with very significant revenues), has been much linked to how far one gets in the competition. With the new Europa League this is supposed to change quite a bit, since appearance in the group stage (for which one still needs to qualify however) would be more lucrative than for the old UEFA-Cup group stage, with higher guaranteed revenues. In the season 2008-09 four Austrian clubs entered the group stage of the Europa League, thus gaining a minimum of guaranteed 900,000 EUR from UEFA, with additional 120,000 EUR per victory and 60,000 EUR for a draw, and considerable revenues from ticket sales and television rights. Nevertheless, participation and success in the UEFA-Cup throughout the last seasons indicate that this is really an 'extra' for Austrian clubs, not a regular and normal undertaking to be relied upon, to be in the regular calculation even of the big clubs.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, and largely resembling the small visibility of Austrian clubs in European competition, there has not been a detectable Austrian contribution to transnational club forums. No Austrian club has been a member of the G-14, while now, because each European association is represented there, three Austrian clubs<sup>44</sup> belong to the European Club Association (ECA) that is officially recognized by the UEFA. It remains, however, an open question whether the ECA will be an effective instrument especially for 'smaller' countries/associations, let alone a venue characterized by frequent contact and at least partially converging expectations and mind-sets of its participants. It could be summarized then that due to the lesser involvement in European club tournaments and only marginal exposure of Austrian clubs at the transnational level, some of the Europeanization mechanisms detectable in other cases (such as the heavy involvement of big German clubs, like Bayern Munich, with the G-14, and nowadays, the ECA<sup>45</sup>) simply do not 'exist' in any meaningful sense in the Austrian case.

### **European fan and NGO-networks**

It might be argued that in contrast to the level of clubs and sports governing bodies, a stronger and true bottom-up 'societal' or trans-national dimension of Europeanization in Austrian football can be found among spectators' orientations.<sup>46</sup> A number of scholars point to emerging transnational, post-traditional and de-territorialised fan cultures in Europe<sup>47</sup> and to a 'Euro-cosmopolitanisation' of football cultures.<sup>48</sup> For example, Levermore and Millward argue that in the field of sport consumer identities are generating 'more cosmopolitan forms of belonging' and 'the notion of a territorialized collective identity is (...) challenged by "transversal" interactions, resulting in a "sense of belonging" that can be shared by peoples across regions, thus

transgressing local, national and continental boundaries'.<sup>49</sup> To date, no systematic studies of Austrian fans' attitudes in this regard exist. But large interest in the televised and electronic European football market and the big European leagues is also evident in Austria. Manchester United, Bayern Munich or FC Barcelona will find their following in Vienna's sports bars as well. With regard to local club support, Anthony King has pointed to a developing European consciousness among football fans that is evolving out of a higher number of away games in European cup competitions, knowledge of transport systems and cities as well as contacts with other European fans.<sup>50</sup> This consciousness, however, is not based on a common European identity or history but rather on the desire of most fans to see their team recognised on a European level.<sup>51</sup> This can be viewed in the Austrian context, where local *Ultra* groups have established friendships and rivalries with other fan-groups across Europe. For example, Rapid Vienna's *Ultras* have built a reputation for their passionate support among other European *Ultra*-groups and are active in networking with European *Ultra* fan groups and campaigning for fan-interests (the campaign 'Against modern football' / 'Gegen den modernen Fußball').

On the other hand, the Austrian NGO FairPlay<sup>52</sup> played a considerable role in the establishment of a European anti-racism-network in football in the last decade.

In 1999, the seminar 'Networking Against Racism in European Football' gathered representatives of anti-racist football projects and fan organisations in Vienna to initiate 'a decentralised European network among anti-racist campaigns, football supporters, fan projects and football institutions across Europe with strong grass-roots orientation'.<sup>53</sup> This was the founding moment of the FARE Network (Football Against Racism in Europe).

An increasing number of groups and organisations participate in the FARE activities such as the annual FARE Action Week Against Racism, which is present in 40 countries. Since 2000-01, the FARE network has established a partnership with UEFA. FARE functions as consulting partner and organises and implements activities and initiatives financed by UEFA. This cooperation has led to the organisation of three 'Unite Against Racism' Conferences with the participation of UEFA, representatives of national federations and clubs, politicians and FARE organisations. Together with FARE, UEFA has developed a *Ten Point Plan of Action for Professional Football Clubs* as well as two handbooks for clubs and national associations.

Together with *Football Supporters International* (FSI, now *Football Supporters Europe*, FSE), the FARE network was also involved in the establishment of *Fan Embassies* at international football tournaments such as the World Cup 2006 and EURO 2008, as well as other UEFA sponsored anti-racism programs at the European Championships.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, if one is to speak of any Europeanization of Austrian football besides the level of NGO and grassroots-activities, such dynamics have been most visible in two dimensions: the Central European heritage of Viennese football that clearly predates Bosman, and the nationality issue in Austrian football which has become a focal point of debates and policies in the wake of the Bosman ruling. In some respects, Austrian football has thus been more internationally oriented; as regards the composition of the teams and the transboundary contacts and alignments of clubs and football associations, it has been (Central) 'Europeanised' since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century. The Bosman ruling thus altered a nationality system that was already fairly multi-national. With its mixture of progressive liberalisation and counter measures to advance national talents, advocated by media discourse and backed by right-wing populist politicians, Austrian football has nevertheless undergone a substantial transformation post-Bosman.

Its mid-1990-status as a ‘new player’ and a small country within the EU have contributed to the fact that Austrian actors have obviously had rather limited interest in and impact on sports policy-making at EU level. The absence of a marked dualism between the big Austrian clubs and the national association further hampered any activism of relevant actors to go to Brussels. Broadcasting rights never became a prominent issue of debate, not least given the small amount of money to be earned in the Austrian market. The evolvement of an alternative revenue structure for some of the big clubs – the patronage system – only indicates that to become internationally competitive, the issue of centralised vs. decentralised marketing of broadcasting rights is not of paramount importance.

Participation of Austrian clubs in European tournaments has become sporadic in the last years, arguably contributing to the invisibility of Austrian clubs and their representatives in European club forums. Given its heritage as a founder of Central European football as transboundary activity in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Austrian football has become more inward-oriented, less visible and only minimally involved in European-wide transboundary groupings. Thus, some of the Europeanising mechanisms observable in other countries (the impact of the Champions League on clubs’ strategies; activism of clubs’ representatives in transnational club forums) is hardly relevant for the Austrian case by now. Societal

Bottom-up processes of Europeanization can be found, however, on the level of fan-networks and NGOs with the Austrian participation in the FARE and FSE networks.

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<sup>1</sup> Brand/Niemann, 'Europeanisation in the societal/transnational realm'; Niemann/Garcia/Grant, *The Transformation of European Football*.

<sup>2</sup> The authors would like to thank David Ranc and Borja Garcia for their helpful comments on first drafts of this paper and Barbara Liegl (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights) for her expertise.

<sup>3</sup> Especially since the 1960s and the founding of the German *Bundesliga*, there is a strong inter-connection between the Austrian football market and the German market. 29.8 percent of foreign coaches and 15 percent of all foreign players in Austria's top league (1945-46 – 2007-08) came from Germany, thus ranking first and second in the respective categories. Austrian players and managers were already hired by German clubs since the interwar era. Liegl/Spitaler, 'Zwischen Transnationalität und Identitätspolitik', 245-6

<sup>4</sup> Adrian/Schächtele, *Immer Wieder*, 81-98

<sup>5</sup> See for instance Horak, 'Austrification as Modernization', 'Kaffeehaus und Vorstadt', Marschik, 'MITROPA: Representations of Central Europe', Marschik, 'Even the Parliament Interrupted its Session', Marschik/Sottopietra, *Erbfeinde und Hasslieben*.

<sup>6</sup> Horak, 'Austrification as Modernization', 65

<sup>7</sup> Marschik/Sottopietra, *Erbfeinde und Hasslieben*

<sup>8</sup> On Meisl, see also Hafer/Hafer, *Hugo Meisl*

<sup>9</sup> 'Mitropa' refers to the German word for Central Europe (*Mitteleuropa*).

<sup>10</sup> See on both the excellent description in Marschik, 'Even the Parliament Interrupted its Session'

<sup>11</sup> Marschik, 'Even the Parliament Interrupted its Session', 10

<sup>12</sup> Marschik/Sottopietra, *Erbfeinde und Hasslieben*, 297-371

<sup>13</sup> This paragraph and the following ones mainly draw on Liegl/Spitaler, 'Zwischen Transnationalität und Identitätspolitik'.

<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, there have been waves of foreign immigration to Austrian football, not least from the neighbouring Central European states, most notably the inflow of Hungarian players in the aftermath of the 1956 failed uprising in Hungary, and the continuous migratory movement of players from former Yugoslavia, especially since the early 1960s. See: Spitaler, 'Fluchtpunkt Wien', Radojev/Spitaler, 'From Novi Sad to Simmering'.

<sup>15</sup> Liegl/Spitaler, 'Zwischen Transnationalität und Identitätspolitik', 240

<sup>16</sup> Duke, 'The Flood from the East?', 159

<sup>17</sup> Since 1976 the employment of non-national football professionals (as of all other migrant workers) was subject to the Federal Act on the Employment of Foreigners ('Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz', BGBl. 218/1975). Due to the public interest work permits for football players were normally granted more easily by the public authorities than in some other sectors of employment.

<sup>18</sup> Giulianotti, *Football. A Sociology of the Global Game*, Giulianotti/Robertson, 'Recovering the Social', Lanfranchi/Taylor, *Moving with the ball*, 222

<sup>19</sup> Research has so far not produced any significant result as to whether there has been some forward thinking on behalf of Austrian actors in terms of preempting legal action taken by non-EU players on the grounds of discrimination via further liberalisation.

<sup>20</sup> Liegl/Spitaler, 'Zwischen Transnationalität und Identitätspolitik', 247

<sup>21</sup> Reisinger, *Die Neuregelung der Beschäftigung von Drittstaatsangehörigen*, 73

<sup>22</sup> Five EU-foreigners of Austria Lustenau took legal action against the (even more restrictive) new rules in the second professional league. In January 2001, the Federal Court of Justice ruled that promotion and cultivation of young talents does not justify an EU-adverse discrimination of EU-citizens. Karollus, 'Gemeinschaftsrechtliche Schranken', 67. The measures in the second league were installed in the wake of a re-launch of this league as 'a young, dynamic and Austrian First League' which was supposed to be the training ground for future Austrian national players.

<sup>23</sup> Skocek/Weisgram, *Das Spiel ist das Ernste*, 323

<sup>24</sup> The 'Österreichischer-Topf' is disbursed each quarter year in case 11 out of 18 players on the match sheets of a team have been Austrians or eligible for Austrian national teams, with an extra (amount of money is doubled) for the fielding of U21-players matching these criteria. The Bundesliga itself asserts that there has been a huge change due to this incentivisation, the increases shown in its business report, are however modest. Bundesliga, *Geschäftsbericht Österreichische Fußball-Bundesliga*, 18.

<sup>25</sup> 'Zwischen Transnationalität und Identitätspolitik', 247

<sup>26</sup> See on that Liegl/Spitaler, *Legionäre am Ball*, 142-43

<sup>27</sup> The only counter-mechanism in professional football is the voluntary participation in the above described 'Österreichischer-Topf'. Stricter regulations have been enacted (and are still in use) in the second professional league and the amateur section of Austrian football.

<sup>28</sup> Parrish, *Sports Law and Policy in the EU*, Parrish/Miettinen, *The sporting exception*

<sup>29</sup> It has approximately 590.000 members, as compared to 6.5 million members of the German DFB. It is small not in relation to its membership/inhabitant quota, but as a structure of representation within the European system of governance.

<sup>30</sup> This is confirmed by the fact that Austria follows the German model in having established a system of collective selling of rights with some modifications (first and second-use rights, internet and mobile marketing decentralised).

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Peter Klinglmüller, Austrian Football Association (ÖFB), May 20, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> *Der Standard*, 31 March 2010

<sup>33</sup> The broadcasting rights issue in Austria throughout the last couple of years has become a 'back and forth' between public and private TV stations on a low level regarding the sum of money involved (Adrian/Schächtele, *Immer wieder*, 173). For the impact of Pay-TV on a changing landscape of Austrian football, see also Kraft, 'Kirch und die Nachkommen'.

<sup>34</sup> Reliable data is hard to compile. The Bundesliga is not allowed to compile data on the club's budgets (let alone make them public), while the clubs are cautious in making them transparent. Austria Vienna has a budget of about 15 million EUR annually nowadays. This seems to be the upper limit with regard to other Austrian clubs. A budget of 30 to 40 million EUR – as during the heights of the sponsoring episodes at Austria Vienna (Stronach) or Red Bull Salzburg (Mateschitz) – clearly is exceptional in Austria, while only modest in comparison to international standards. See: Adrian/Schächtele, *Immer wieder*, 43. In the case of Austria Vienna, television revenues represent 12 percent of the overall budget (season 2008/09), compared to 70 percent from sponsor revenues and 15 percent from ticket sales. For clubs with higher audience numbers – such as Rapid Vienna with a turnover of 18 million EUR in 2008/09 – the percentage of ticket sales and merchandising will be higher. *Kurier*, March 10, 2009, 29 and April 11, 2009, 25.

<sup>35</sup> Sinnreich, 'Fairplay und Folklore', 49

<sup>36</sup> For a good account, see Adrian/Schächtele, *Immer Wieder*, 135-60. The reasons might range from self-promotion to marketing efforts on behalf of a company, the ambitions were and are almost identical: not only to become the top Austrian team, but to be competitive at the European level (Champions League).

<sup>37</sup> *Der Standard*, 13 January 2010

<sup>38</sup> *Der Standard*, 31 March 2010

<sup>39</sup> These are Austria Salzburg, Sturm Graz (three times) and Rapid Vienna (twice).

<sup>40</sup> Adrian/Schächtele, *Immer Wieder*, 165-67

<sup>41</sup> *Kurier*, April 26, 2009, 32

<sup>42</sup> Club representatives gave estimates of four million EUR revenues for the UEFA-Cup-season 2004-05 (including television rights and ticket sales) before taxes. *Neue Kronen Zeitung*, April 9, 2005, 90.

<sup>43</sup> Throughout the last ten years (1999-2000-season until 2008-09), Austrian teams have qualified 31 times for the first round of UEFA-Cup. During the first five years, without the group stage as second round, only once a team made it to the third round (the qualification of Sturm Graz via the Champions League in 99-00 is not counted here). Since 2004, when the second round became a (financially at least potentially lucrative) group stage, this stage was only reached four times. The single and by this exceptional case where an Austrian team made it into the quarter finals during the last decade was Austria Vienna in the 2004-05-season.

<sup>44</sup> As of today, these are Austria and Rapid Vienna and the Grazer AK (after bankruptcy, the club is now relegated to League three).

<sup>45</sup> Brand/Niemann, *The Europeanisation of German Football*.

<sup>46</sup> One of the exceptions concerning researching fans in Austria *at all* is the comparative study of Waddington/Malcolm/Horak, 'The Social Composition of Football Crowds'.

<sup>47</sup> Mikos, 'Imaginierte Gemeinschaft', 102.

<sup>48</sup> Roche, 'Europe, "the Cosmopolitan Condition"', 2.

<sup>49</sup> Levermore/Millward, 'Official Policies and Informal Transversal Networks', 145.

<sup>50</sup> King, *The European Ritual*, 11, 28, 202-203, 247.

<sup>51</sup> King, *The European Ritual*, 203-205.

<sup>52</sup> *FairPlay. Different Colours. One Game*, based at the *Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation* (vidc).

<sup>53</sup> *FairPlay. Report Networking against Racism*, 3