



LaLiga Global Network lands in Brussels with the aim of expanding LaLiga's image at international level

Interview with **Javier Tebas**,
President of LaLiga de Fútbol Profesional

LaLiga is a sports association composed of the football clubs and public companies which compete in the professional categories of the Spanish football league (First and Second Division).

LaLiga is a responsible, modern and inclusive entity. It seeks to be avant-garde when it comes to quality and technology at all levels, offering its member clubs the best service and the best product for fans. LaLiga's aim is to offer the best experience possible, so that watching its matches feels like a unique experience.

By pursuing the future sustainability of professional football, LaLiga is firmly committed with fair play in a competition free of corruption which promotes a total denunciation of violence and the fight against piracy. LaLiga is also totally engaged with the promotion of other sports and federations through LaLiga4Sports project, which assists and advises more than 60 sports federations.

LaLiga also fosters women's football through its foundation and helps build the future's supporters from an inclusive and respectful standpoint.

LaLiga Global Network project was created to expand LaLiga's image at the international stage through younger generations. How has this project been developed and what does it aim to achieve?

The whole process, organized and developed by LaLiga with Banco Santander and Universia, began last November 7th with 12,500 applicants. The selection culminated on January 21st at the Vicente Calderón Stadium where 60 finalists were chosen and who then received a training of ten weeks before being sent to their current destinations.

The main objective of the delegates of LaLigaGlobalNetwork is to increase the brand value and the recognition of LaLiga acting as representatives of the institution in their respective countries.



LaLiga Global Network is a unique opportunity for those selected who, through their work, will create synergies with the local television media and operators, will find new business opportunities in the countries of destination and develop a comprehensive understanding of the form of consumption by the fans of LaLiga Santander and LaLiga 1|2|3 in those territories.

What does the current data reveal about LaLiga's standing in Belgium, its presence, projection or impact?

Belgians like LaLiga a lot. According to surveys conducted by our broadcaster in the country, Eleven Sports Network, the vast majority of Belgians consider that LaLiga is the best professional foot-



ball league in the world; both for being composed of the best teams in the world and these being integrated by the best players in the world. Several Belgian LaLiga players are local heroes, such as Carrasco (Atlético), Januzaj (Real Sociedad), Bakkali (Deportivo) or Vermaelen (Barça).

In addition, there are numerous “peñas” in both the dutch part as well as the french part that fervently support their respective teams (Barça, Real Madrid, Atletico Madrid, Zaragoza, Betis, Deportivo, Real Sociedad, etc.). We can not deny that, to this day, the great majority of the Diables Rouges are in the EPL and, therefore, the latter is the most followed international league in the country. Given these circumstances, LaLiga Global Network has assigned for the Benelux a delegate that reinforces the relations with leagues and clubs as well as with broadcasters and telecom operators and that promote LaLiga brand.

Which responsibilities and short-term objectives -both at the institutional and communications, among many other, levels- will be held by LaLiga Global Network’s representative in Benelux?

Their first function is to be in contact with the holders of audiovisual rights in the countries of destination. They must also be in contact with the other operators who do not have rights for LaLiga to be present in them. The third function is to be close to the media to promote the visibility of Spanish football. All delegates will also be in contact with local leagues and federations in those countries and will seek local sponsors to help LaLiga’s economic growth.

Javier Tebas Medrano (San Jose, Costa Rica, 1962), holds a degree in Law from the University of Zaragoza. His involvement in football began in 1993, when he was named president of Sociedad Deportiva Huesca. In 2001 Tebas was elected as vice-president of LaLiga. In 2003 he was named head of the so-called G-30. Since 26 April 2013 Tebas has acted as president of LaLiga.

Upon taking up LaLiga presidency, his main goal has always been to reduce club debts. In the space of just one year, the debts owed by its member clubs to the Tax Agency fell by 25%. The joint sale of audiovisual rights for the 2016/2017 season is set to see the LaLiga clubs experience a significant increase in their revenues. One of his main achievements as president has been securing the centralised sale of audiovisual rights for the 2016/17, which will allow LaLiga clubs to increase their revenues. Other pillars of his work are undoubtedly the fight against piracy and the fight against any kind of violence in football, as well as the transparency policy of the organisation itself.

Innovation, technological development and internationalisation also represent other essential parts of his strategy. During these years he has increased the presence of LaLiga with offices in the United Arab Emirates, the United States, China, South Africa, Nigeria, India and Singapore. As a result of this internationalisation, foreign interest in LaLiga broadcasting rights continues to grow, allowing people in more and more corners of the world to watch the Spanish league.

Finally, it is well known that Brussels is the European capital by excellence. That said, in addition to its Global Network project functions, the new delegate will support the existing and elaborated work of LaLiga in the institutional field: collaboration with Spanish authorities and European institutions in matters such as integrity and security, the fight against piracy, the regulatory framework that eSports are taking, the impact of BREXIT on the transfers of pla-

yers, CSR projects, and even the fight against gender inequality in the sports industry, among many others.

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Apart from LaLiga Global Network’s representative, LaLiga counts with another person in Brussels in charge of public affairs and European institutions liaison. How do European policies affect LaLiga’s activities?

The European Commission’s Strategy for a Digital Single Market in Europe is one of the files where LaLiga has been more active in its last two years of presence in Brussels. LaLiga wants its fans to have access to the competitions across the EU. However, this should be done respecting the principle of territorial exclusivity of audiovisual rights licensing which enables the access to the competitions at affordable prices and the quality that the different standards of audiovisual production guarantee. Such standards have been set by a Regulation for the audiovisual retransmission of LaLiga’s matches that has been put together by LaLiga and its clubs. The Commission’s Strategy foresees several initiatives

that put in jeopardy the principle of territorial exclusivity I have referred to. Additionally, they will bring no benefits to the consumers, operators or the sports competition. Hence LaLiga is working with the relevant stakeholders and participates in several coalitions with the cultural and creative industries in Brussels.

Besides the audiovisual-internal market area, LaLiga collaborates with the European institutions, in particular, the Commission and the Parliament in initiatives addressing football-related issues such as third-party investments, match fixing, dual careers of players, and good governance, among others.

What are your expectations regarding your accession to the Official Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Belgium and Luxembourg as a sponsor member?

LaLiga and the Chambers of Commerce, with their great international presence, form a perfect alliance to expand the brand “Spain” to the rest of the world. The idea is to work hand in hand with the Chambers of Commerce to introduce us to each of the countries in which we will be present. It will undoubtedly be a fundamental aid to open the way and consolidate LaLiga as the best football competition in the world.

CONTACT DETAILS

Liga Nacional de Fútbol Profesional
Calle Hernández de Tejada, 10, Madrid. Spain.
+34 912055000 | prensa@laliga.es
<http://laliga.es>



Official Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Belgium and Luxembourg
Belliard, 20 – 1040 Brussels | Bld. Emmanuel Servais 4 – 2535 Luxembourg
Tel. +32 (0)2 517 17 40 – Email: info@e-camara.com
www.e-camara.com

Cámara
Official Spanish Chamber of Commerce
in Belgium and Luxembourg