



CONIFA 2017 EURO CUP : DETAILS ANNOUNCED

Following the CONIFA Annual General Meeting held in Geneva, details were revealed for the upcoming 2017 CONIFA European Football Cup.

The tournament is due to be held in **Northern Cyprus** during the dates of the **4th – 11th June**. It will be an eight team tournament with familiar sides returning to compete in the second installment of CONIFA'S European competition.

2017 CONIFA European Football Cup Participants

The teams to compete at the 2017 CONIFA European Football Cup will be: hosts Northern Cyprus, Abkhazia, County of Nice, Ellan Vannin, Karpatalya, Padania, Sapmi, Székely Land.

There is strong pedigree in this lineup with Northern Cyprus previously winning the 2006 FIFI Wild Cup and 2006 ELF Cup (ran in opposition to the NF-Board organised VIVA world cup that year). Both County of Nice and just last year Abkhazia have won the CONIFA Football World Cup, whilst Sápmi and, on multiple occasions, Padania have won the VIVA World Cup. Padania are also reigning European champions following their victory in 2015 edition. Ellan Vannin finish 3rd in that same competition, which was host by Székely Land, who will be both returning for this edition along with a debuting Karpatalya (Hungarians in Ukraine) creating a very competitive lineup of teams, which is sure to produce an exciting, open tournament. Speaking on the official announcement of the tournament lineup, General Secretary Per-Anders Blind said,

"The 2017 European Football Cup will bring together some of our best teams for what promises to be an exciting week of competition,...The CONIFA family is looking forward to our visit in June!"

The exact details are yet to be confirmed, the venues for these matches are likely to mirror those used during the 2006 ELF cup with the Atatürk Stadium in North Nicosia being the premier stadium in the region with a capacity of up to 28,000. Also likely venues are the 20 Temmuz Stadium, Dr. Fazıl Küçük Stadium in Famagusta, home of the 15/16 league champions Mağusa Türk Gücü S.K and Zafer Stadium in Morphou (Güzelyurt/Omorfo). Speaking on hosting the tournament, Northern Cyprus KTFF representative Orcun Kamali said,



Ataturk Stadium

“Northern Cyprus has a proud football history. We have a strong semi-professional league on the island, and our national team finished third in the last CONIFA tournament. The decision to host the 2017 European Football Cup was an easy one.”

Western Armenia Team Withdraw

A notable absentee will be the side from Western Armenia who recorded a record 12-0 versus the Chagos Islands in the 2016 World Football Cup en route to 6th place finish. **According to Asbarez**, ConIFA Vice-President Dimitri Pagava, Western Armenia would not compete due to a lack of guarantees in relation to their security during any potential participation. There are historical tensions between Armenia and Turkey in relation to the area of Western Armenia, located in modern day Western Turkey. With issues around the ethnic Turkish majority in Northern Cyprus following the fallout of a 1974 Turkish invasion of the island of Cyprus, Western Armenia chose not to be involved in this tournament citing the aforementioned security concerns.

Skåneland Join CONIFA

Also announced at the General Meeting was the introduction of the newest member to CONIFA, Skåneland, a region in southern Sweden. It previously played one game whilst a member of the NF-Board, a 0-0 draw against Southern Schleswig. Hopes for Skåneland's admission seem to be not separate by any means but rather for regional recognition, particularly for the Scanian dialect with calls to see it accepted as a minority language rather than a dialect.

More details will follow as CONIFA makes official announcements from their General Meeting, but for now the details for the 2017 European Football Cup make 2017 an exciting year for the Non-FIFA Football community.