



Media Release

Brussels: 31st October 2018 – Immediate Release

Men across Europe score hat-trick of health goals through EuroFIT football and health programme

Football clubs, fans, National Associations and key agencies such as the World Health Organisation, European Commission and UEFA will gather at the end of this month to celebrate the success of the revolutionary new European Fans in Training Programme (EuroFIT) that has increased physical activity, improved diets and enhanced the wellbeing of over 1,100 football fans across Europe.

EuroFIT is a groundbreaking health and wellbeing programme that harnesses the intense loyalty that many fans have for their club, attracting them to a lifestyle change programme delivered by football coaches at club facilities. The EuroFIT consortium of top European universities, technology providers and sports NGO Healthy Stadia has worked with over 20 top football clubs in the UK, Netherlands, Norway and Portugal – including Manchester City, PSV Eindhoven, BK Rosenborg and SL Benfica - to develop a 12 week training programme for inactive, overweight football fans.

Building on the experience of the Football Fans in Training programme developed in Scotland and delivered by the Scottish Professional Football league Trust, EuroFIT has now used cutting-edge behavioral science and technology in a bid to *prevent*, rather than treat, chronic illnesses associated with obesity and inactivity such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The project has been evaluated through a clinically-based, randomised control trial funded by the EU's FP7 Research Programme from 2013-2018.

The trial of EuroFIT has already been a *major success*, changing the lives of fans who have made long-term, sustainable, changes to physical activity and diet, plus reduced alcohol consumption, reduced blood pressure, reduced fasting insulin, and improved levels of wellbeing. A full set of clinical results will be published in the academic press late this year.

With the overwhelming success of the trial, new football clubs, associations and league operators are now looking to implement the programme owing to its strong evidence base. Indeed, EuroFIT has already been adopted by the Portuguese Football Federation as a key component of Portugal's national physical activity strategy, and is supporting new clubs within Portugal to deliver EuroFIT to men from the ages of 30-65 wanting to change their lives.

Reflecting on how EuroFIT has benefited his health a year after his participation in EuroFIT, one fan from the UK said:

"I am now more conscious of how many steps I take each day, more conscious of what I eat, and I even manage to stand up more rather than sitting at my desk! I have managed to lose 10 kilos and get down to my target weight of 95 kilos – I would recommend it to any fans!"

Commenting on training at their own football club, one participant from the Netherlands said:

"I had tried a number of way of losing weight and getting fitter before, but when I joined the EuroFIT programme this was a real game changer. Being part of a programme at my own club, training and



joking with other men just like me, was a real incentive to get involved. The club coaches and other men involved were great at supporting me to reach my personal goals and stick to them.”

At the event in Brussels, EuroFIT will be launched to the European football family as a quality-assured programme that is a cost-effective way of addressing inactivity and obesity amongst middle-aged men, and will be available under license from Healthy Stadia for football organisations to deliver from January 2019.

Speaking about the success of the EuroFIT programme, Prof Sally Wyke from University of Glasgow and the project’s Principle Investigator said:

“The EuroFIT trial has provided us with a ‘Gold Standard’ evidence base empowering us to roll out a model to football clubs and associations across Europe that we know will change the health of their fans for good. This is the only model using clinical data that has been systematically tested across different European countries, and has resulted in significant physical activity, weight loss and wellbeing gains for participants.

With the overwhelming popularity of football amongst men, EuroFIT offers football organisations and commissioning agencies a cost-effective and targeted solution to intervene on the rising health problems and costs associated with inactivity and obesity within this population group.”

A small number of delegate places are still available, and delegates can sign up for this free event at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/european-fans-in-training-eurofit-european-launch-event-tickets-50592984980>

~ ENDS ~

Notes to editors:

Event Details (Full speaker programme below):

Date: Wednesday 31st October 2018
Time: 13.00 lunch; 14.00 kick off
Venue: Scotland House, Rond-Point Schuman 6, 1040 Brussels, Belgium

The 21 participating clubs in the trial and pilot were:

England: Arsenal FC, Blackburn Rovers FC, Everton FC, Leicester City FC, Manchester City FC, Newcastle United FC, Stoke City FC

Netherlands: ADO den Haag, FC Groningen, SC Heerenveen, PSV Eindhoven, Vitesse

Norway: SK Brann, Rosenborg BK, Stromsgodset IF, Vålerenga Fotball

Portugal: SL Benfica, SC Braga, FC Porto, Rio Ave FC, Sporting Clube de Portugal

Further details at programme website: www.eurofitfp7.eu

Media enquiries and requests for interviews & photographs:

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EuroFIT Launch Event: Scotland House, Brussels Wednesday 31st October 2018, 13.00-16.45

13.00: Onwards: Lunch & refreshments provided

14.00: Welcome & Overview from Chair: Clive Needle, Senior Policy Advisor, Eurohealthnet

14.05 Session 1: The impact of EuroFIT

- The impact of practice-based health research:
Dr Cornelius Schmaltz, Head of Unit, Infectious diseases & advancing public health, DG Research & Innovation
- The EuroFIT story & key results:
Prof Sally Wyke, Principle Investigator for EuroFIT: Evidence-based public health interventions, origins of EuroFIT, main outcomes & learning from process evaluation
- EuroFIT's impact on participating fans:
Participant from clubs in the **Dutch Eredivisie**: Erwin Coolen, PSV
- EuroFIT's impact on participating clubs:
Clubs from the **English Premier League & Football League** (Arsenal FC, Blackburn Rovers FC, Leicester City FC, Newcastle United FC)

15.00 Break for Coffee

15.15 Session 2: Football, Physical Activity and Health

- The European governing body perspective:
Patrick Gasser, Head of Football and Responsibility, UEFA
- The National Association perspective:
Dr Joao Brito, Health Performance Unit, Portuguese Football Federation
- The physical activity, health and NCD perspective:
Dr Temo Waqanivalu, Population-based Prevention (Diet & Physical Activity), Prevention of Non-communicable Diseases Department, World Health Organisation
- The EU Sport perspective:
Yves Le Lostecque, Head of Sport, EU Sport Unit

16.30 Session 3: European roll out of EuroFIT

- **Dr Matthew Philpott**, Executive Director, Healthy Stadia &
Nicky Reid, Chief Executive, Scottish Professional Football League Trust

16.45: Questions, wrap up and thanks