

FOOTBALL AND TOURISM, A MUTUAL INTEREST: BUCHAREST – PART OF THE HISTORY

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In September 2014, at Geneva, it was decided that Bucharest, along with 12 other cities (later cancelled for Brussels), will host the final European Championship tournament for 2020. The good news came two years after holding in Bucharest, on the newly built National Arena, of the Europa League Final for 2012, another notable premiere.

UEFA also gave Romania the honour to organize the draw for Euro 2020 groups. The event, held on November 30, 2019, brought together at Romexpo many officials and, especially, personalities from the football world and put Bucharest in the centre of European football, at least for one day. Moreover, given the approaching winter holidays, the authorities tried to take full advantage of the media interests on this particular event, and even the Christmas lights in Bucharest were related to Euro 2020.

Organizing the final tournament in several, different countries was the idea of UEFA officials for celebrating 60 years since the first final tournament. The event also represents an opportunity to show Europe's unity in cultural diversity, at a time when this is increasingly needed.

The final European championship tournament will take place in 12 cities in 12 countries. Without claiming a guide for fans and tourists, let's briefly present the host cities.

- London, the capital of the United Kingdom, will host both three group matches and one last-16 game (initially allocated to Brussels), as well as the semi-finals and finals, all on the new Wembley stadium, with a capacity of 90000 seats. Tourists could get acquainted, besides the atmosphere of the cosmopolitan city and the London pubs, with attractions such as: Buckingham Palace, Tower of London, The British Museum, Big Ben and Parliament, Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, Westminster Abbey Hyde Park, St. Paul's Cathedral, Covent Garden or The London Eye.

Munich, Rome, Baku and St. Petersburg will organize three group games and one quarter-final.

- The games in Munich, the capital of Bavaria, will take place on the stadium of the famous Bayern Munich team, Allianz Arena. In the city characterized by an original mix of old and new, it is recommended to tourists to visit at least Marienplatz, St. Peter's Church, Neuhauser Strasse, the medieval cathedral Frauenkirche, National theatre, Alter Hof Castle, Preysing, Holnstein and Porcia palaces, or the English Gardens.

- Rome came up with the Stadio Olimpico, "home" of Lazio Roma and AS Roma football teams. The opening match will be Italy versus Turkey, quite an interesting play to watch. From a selection of sightseeing that Eternal City could offer, tourists can not miss Vatican and its museums, Sant'Angelo Castle, The Colosseum, Palatine Hill and the Roman Forum, Piazza Navona and the Pantheon, Fontana di Trevi and the Spanish Steps, Villa Borghese, and the Trastevere District. Besides all these, one cannot come to Italy and not experience the traditional Italian cuisine, which is, as one well-known advertising says, priceless.

- Great football returns also to Baku, the Westernmost point of the final tournament. In 2019, the capital of Azerbaijan also hosted the final game for Europa League. "IcheriSheher" – Old city, UNESCO-heritage listed, QizQalasi ("The Maiden Tower"), Shirvanshahs Palace, IcheriSheher, or the Museum of Miniature Books are just some of the attractions for the most "exotic" host city of EURO 2020.

- After the perfect set-up of the 2018 World Football Championship, Russia came with the city of St. Petersburg for Euro 2020, with a stadium of almost 70,000 seats, Piter Arena. The second largest city in Russia, also called the "Northern Capital", Sankt Petersburg is rich in attractions for all tastes,

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ages and budgets. For a tour in this city, we would include Ermitaj Museum (Winter Palace), Summer Palace, Peterhof Palace and Gardens, Peter and Paul Fortress, Church of the Resurrection, Bronze Rider, Russian State Museum, St. Isaac's Cathedral, Nevsky Boulevard and Yusupov Palace.

Bucharest and six other cities will host three games in the group stage and one last-16 game: Amsterdam, Dublin, Bilbao, Budapest, Glasgow, and Copenhagen.

- Bucharest "Pair" (group C matches will be played in these two cities), Amsterdam is an important pole of culture, business and tourism. Its unmissable attractions include Dam Square, Anne Frank House, Van Gogh House, Rijksmuseum, Koninklijk Palace, Vondelpark Park, Flower Market, famous canals, the floating houses, or the controversial Red District.

- Dublin will definitely be one of the fan-favourite destinations - the atmosphere of the city, the passion of the Irish fans for football and the famous Guinness Storehouse, Old Jameson Factory or The Temple Bar complement an otherwise crowded city of attractions, including: Trinity College - most important and renowned University of Ireland, Dublin Castle, Saint Patrick Cathedral Dublin, The National WAX Museum, Dublin Georgian House Museum.

- The capital of the Basque Country, Bilbao, and its famous stadium, San Mamés, is Spain's proposal for the final tournament. Besides the Basque cuisine, which will delight even the most pretentious tourists, among the attractions that should not be missed, we would include: Guggenheim Museum, Puppy - a huge dog made of flowers, Bridge Zubizuri, Funicular de Artxanda, Old Center (Casco Viejo), Cathedral of Santiago, Plaza Nueva, Teatro Arriaga.

- The Romanian supporters, especially those from the West of the country, will be very close to the new 68,000 seats Ferenc Puskás Stadium, in Budapest. The capital of Hungary offers a lot of attractions that should not be missed, such as the Parliament Palace, the Budapest Bridges, St. Stephen's Basilica and the Great Synagogue, Buda Castle Hill, Fishermen's Bastion, Covered Market (Központi Vásárcsarnok), Thermal Baths or Margareta Island.

- Glasgow is the third city in the UK to host matches for the final tournament, at the national football team's stadium, Hampden Park and the lesser known Queen's Park FC, away from the Old Firm rivalry, Celtic-Rangers. Also known as the Music Capital of Scotland, Glasgow offers, among others, attractions such as St. Mungo and the Necropolis, City Chambers - Glasgow City Hall, Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, Glasgow Botanical Garden and Kibble Palace, Riverside Museum, Ashton Lane.

- Denmark will play its three group matches at home, in Copenhagen. Also called the Capital of Happiness (some studies show that the Danish are the happiest nation in the world), it calls itself an eco-destination and accommodates some of the best Michelin-starred restaurants. Hamlet Castle from Helsingør, Christiania - the free city, Nyhavn - the new port, Frilandsmuseet - the village museum, or the Strøget shopping street, could be the perfect additions to a short vacation in the Danish city.

- Last but not least, Bucharest, will organize the matches on the National Arena, a stadium of 55600 seats, built on the site of the former National Stadium - Lia Manoliu, and inaugurated in August 2011. There are two teams that will play in Group C in Bucharest and whose supporters will dim the city - Ukraine and Austria. The Netherlands, the third team in the group C, will play their games home, in Amsterdam, and a fourth team will only be known after the play-offs, in spring - either Romania, if it qualifies, or the winner of the play-off D: Georgia, Belarus, North Macedonia or Kosovo. The fourth match organized in Bucharest could have the best financial and media impact, one of France - the world champions, Portugal - the European champion or Germany, the most successful European football representative, going to play in Bucharest. Tourists who will visit the capital of Romania those days are invited to discover more than the well-known attractions from the tops of international guides, as Victory Avenue, along which are a lot of historical monuments (as old houses, museums, palaces, the first hotels in Bucharest), ending with Historical Old City Center, The Palace of Parliament, the Arch of Triumph, the Romanian Athenaeum, the Museum of the Romanian Peasant, the National Museum of Natural History "Grigore Antipa", the King Michael I Park, etc.

The anniversary edition of EURO 2020 marks a 60-year history for the competition. A brief look into the story of the final 15 tournaments shows that football has united Europe all this time, and the development of this phenomenon has led us today to be on the threshold of the most ambitious sport event organizational plan.

- The first edition of the European Football Championship was organized by France, between July 6 and 10, 1960, the 4 matches taking place in Paris (Parc de Princes) and Marseille (Stade Vélodrome). It is interesting that, apart from the hosts, the other three participating countries are no longer known today under the same name or state form (Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia). In the final, the Soviet Union won against Yugoslavia with a goal in overtime (2-1).

- The second edition took place in Spain, between the 17th and the 21st of June, 1964, on the famous stadiums of the two pennant cities of the Iberian football, Santiago Bernabéu (Real Madrid) and Camp Nou (FC Barcelona). It was the first edition won by the host country, which played the final against the trophy holder, in front of a record attendance, for that time, of almost 80,000 fans. Spain, Denmark and Hungary were debutants in the competition.

- The 1968 tournament (June 5-10) was named European Championship for the first time (The European Nations' Cup - was the official name of the first two tournaments). At the first participation, Italy hosted and won the trophy. As the first match of the final ending in a draw (there were no extra-time rule), a replay was required. In the second game, Italy won against Yugoslavia with 2-0. The games were held in three well-known cities for football, history and their tourist potential: Rome (Stadio Olimpico), Naples (Stadio Sao Paolo) and Florence (Stadio Comunale).

- Euro 1972 took place between the 14th and the 18th of June in three cities and 4 stadiums in Belgium: Brussels (Heysel Stadium, Stade Émile Versé), Liège (Stade Maurice Dufrasne), Antwerp (Bosuilstadion). Belgium and West Germany made their first appearances, West Germany won against the USSR 3-0 in the final and the goal scorer of the tournament was the legendary Gerd Müller, with four goals in two games.

- Held between 6 and 20 June, the 1976 tournament was for the first time organized by an Eastern country from the communist bloc, Yugoslavia. The matches were played in Belgrade (Red Star Stadium) and Zagreb (Maksimir Stadium). It was the last tournament played in the four teams format, but also the first and the only one when all four matches needed overtime. The tournament was won for the first time by Czechoslovakia, after a final with West Germany (5-3, after penalties), the decisive penalty being transformed by the Czech footballer, Antonin Panenka, that became famous for the execution.

- The first edition with 8 teams at the start, was hosted June 11-22, 1980, by Italy, for the second time. The matches were played in Rome (Stadio Olimpico), Milan (Giuseppe Meazza), Naples (San Paolo) and Torino (Stadio Comunale). The tournament marked the debut of Greece, but is still remembered by the fans due to the longest EURO penalty shoot-out (18 kicks) in the 3rd place final (Czechoslovakia – Italy: 9-8). The referee for the final, Belgium - West Germany 1-2, was the Romanian Nicolae Răneș.

- Euro 1984, held June 12-27 in France, confirmed the advantage of the host country, winner in premiere, after a 2-0 final with Spain. The goal scorer of the competition, with a record of 9 goals, was the famous French player, Michael Platini. The matches were played in 7 cities: Paris (Parc des Princes), Marseille (Stade Vélodrome), Lyon (Stade de Gerland), Saint-Étienne (Stade Geoffroy-Guichard), Lens (Stade Félix-Bollaert), Nantes (Stade de la Beaujoire), Strasbourg (Stade de la Meinau). It was the first participation for the Romanian national football team, which stood out with a draw, 1-1 against the future finalist, Spain.

- West Germany organized the final tournament of 1988, June 10-25, in 8 cities: Munich (Olympiastadion), Gelsenkirchen (Parkstadion), Hamburg (Volksparkstadion), Frankfurt (Waldstadion), Düsseldorf (Rheinstadion), Hanover (Niedersachsenstadion), Stuttgart (Neckarstadion), Cologne (Müngersdorfer Stadion). The Netherlands won the final with USSR, 2-0, Marco van Basten being the goal scorer of the tournament, with 5 goals. There were a series of firsts: no goalless draws, all matches ended in 90 minutes, no send-offs. Also, it was the last appearance of West Germany, USSR and Yugoslavia, in the final tournament (with the name and state form at that time). It should be mentioned that the Romanian Ioan Igna was the referee of one semi-final, Germany - Netherlands (1-2).

- The final tournament of 1992 took place June 10-26 in Sweden, and the matches were played on only 4 stadiums in 4 cities: Gothenburg (Ullevi), Stockholm (Råsunda Stadium), Malmö (Malmö Stadion), Norrköping (Idrottsparken). For the first time, the reunified Germany national football team (who took over the RFG records) and the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), representing

the newly dissolved USSR, participated. But the most important aspect was the triumph of the national team of Denmark, "called from the beach", to replace Yugoslavia, which was sanctioned by the UN and disqualified.

- The 10th edition was organized from the 8th of June to the 30th in 1996, in England ("Football Comes Home" motto), in 8 cities-host stadiums: London (Wembley Stadium), Manchester (Old Trafford), Liverpool (Anfield), Birmingham (Villa Park), Leeds (Elland Road), Sheffield (Hillsborough), Nottingham (City Ground), Newcastle (St James' Park). It was the first tournament attended by 16 teams. This favoured another 4 debuts (Switzerland, Croatia, Bulgaria, and Turkey). It should be noted the return of Romania in the tournament, but without any success, despite a "gold generation" that had surprised the world two years earlier, at the USA 1994 World Cup. The final was practically a reissue of the last act of 1976, with the Czech Republic, the official owner of the former Czechoslovakia's track record, and Germany, being decided, for the first time, in extra time, by the golden goal rule. This time, wins the tournament.

- In 2000 (June 10-July 2), the final tournament was organized, for the first time, by two countries – Netherlands and Belgium, in four host-cities from each country: Brussels (King Baudouin Stadium), Bruges (Jan Breydel Stadium), Liège (Stade Maurice Dufrasne), Charleroi (Stade du Pays de Charleroi), Rotterdam (Feijenoord Stadion), Amsterdam (Amsterdam Arena), Eindhoven (Philips Stadion), Arnhem (GelreDome). The tournament marked the most important performance of the Romanian national football team at EURO competitions, reaching the quarterfinals, while Norway and Slovenia made their debut. For the second time in a row, the champion was decided by a golden goal, France defeating Italy in overtime (2-1).

- Between June 12 and July 4, 2004, Portugal organized for the first time the final tournament, in 8 cities on 10 stadiums: Lisbon (Estádio da Luz, Estádio José Alvalade), Porto (Estádio do Dragão, Estádio do Bessa), Aveiro (Estádio Municipal de Aveiro), Braga (Estádio Municipal de Braga), Coimbra (Estádio Cidade de Coimbra), Guimarães (Estádio D. Afonso Henriques), Faro/Loulé (Estádio Algarve), Leiria (Estádio Dr. Magalhães Pessoa). Latvia was the only debutant, and the tournament marked a surprise even greater than that one of 1992, being won by Greece, after a final played against the host country (1-0).

- Austria and Switzerland were co-host of Euro 2008 between June 7 and 29, in eight cities and stadiums, four in each country: Vienna (Ernst-Happel-Stadion), Klagenfurt (Wörthersee Stadion), Salzburg (Stadion Wals-Siezenheim), Innsbruck (Tivoli-Neu), Geneva (Stade de Genève), Basel (St. Jakob-Park), Bern (Stade de Suisse), Zürich (Letzigrund). The tournament marked the return of Romania, after the absence of 2004, and the debut of the host country, Austria, and Poland. Neither Austria nor Switzerland benefited from the support of the fans on their own grounds, being eliminated from the group stage. Spain won the tournament, for the second time in history, after a final with Germany (1-0) that marked the start of a period with Iberian domination in world's football.

- The habit of co-organizing transited to the East of the continent, Poland and Ukraine being the hosts of Euro 2012, held between June 8th and July 1st, in four cities in each country: Warsaw (National Stadium), Gdańsk (PGE Arena), Wrocław (Stadion Miejski), Poznań (Stadion Miejski), Kiev (Olympic Stadium), Donetsk (Donbass Arena), Kharkiv (Metalist Stadium), Lviv (Arena Lviv). Neither this time the hosts took advantage of playing at home, being eliminated in the group stage. Euro 2012 in a nutshell: Ukraine made its debut, Germany reached ten participation in a row, and Spain defended the trophy (in the final they won 4-0 against of Italy), reaching three final European championship tournaments won up to that time.

- The last final tournament was hosted for the third time (1960, 1984) by France, June 10 – July 10, 2016, the games being played in ten cities: Bordeaux (Nouveau Stade de Bordeaux), Lens (Stade Bollaert-Delelis), Lille Métropole (Stade Pierre-Mauroy), Décines-Charpieu (Parc Olympique Lyonnais), Marseille (Stade Vélodrome), Nice (Stade de Nice), Paris (Parc des Princes), Saint-Denis (Stade de France), Saint-Étienne (Stade Geoffroy-Guichard), Toulouse (Stadium Municipal). It was for the first time when 24 countries participated, and the knock-out phase started with the last-16. The increase in the number of participants favoured the first appearance of Iceland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Albania, and Slovakia. Noteworthy is also that four teams from the United Kingdom qualified in the knockout phase: England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. The final was decided by an

extra-time goal, which brought the first international trophy to Portugal, after a final with the host country (1-0).

The sports competitions far exceeded the specific importance of events addressed exclusively to fans. Hosting mega-sports events have important effects on the economies of the host countries, both through the investments in infrastructure and in the revenues generated by tourism, as well as through the multiplier effect or, for the long term, through the social impact and the promotion of the country image.

The organization of the Euro 2020 anniversary edition in 12 cities in 12 countries is a challenging initiative, and the fact that Bucharest is among them is a great opportunity the capital of Romania must take advantage of. Beyond the organizational aspects and the increase in tourist flows around the match-day, it is yet to be seen to what extent the event will provide a memorable experience for the supporters who will visit Bucharest. Because, in the end, it is all about the experience, both in football and in tourism.