

Uefa to launch RFP to clamp down on piracy

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Uefa, football's European governing body, has announced plans to launch a request for proposals (RFP) process to appoint companies that can provide assistance on internet piracy and intellectual property protection.

The RFP will seek to appoint one or more service providers to provide monitoring and enforcement services in respect of all common forms of piracy across the internet, including on social media platforms.

Uefa is also seeking a service provider that can specifically assist on matters relating to so-called 'blocking orders' obtained by the governing body. Proposals are also being sought in respect of the provision of other expertise and services which are ancillary to the core internet piracy services.

Uefa plans on launching the RFP process on or around 12:00 CET on April 3. Organisations wishing to participate in the process have been asked to register their interest as soon as possible by sending an email with their full company and contact details to antipiracy@uefa.ch.

In a statement, Uefa said: "Intellectual property rights sit at the heart of Uefa's commercial activities (including its media rights arrangements) around the world. As such, it is of critical importance to Uefa that such rights are, to the extent possible, defended and protected against known threats."

Uefa said that the unlawful capture and redistribution of footage from its competitions and matches by "pirates without authorisation" is a "critical issue" for the governing body.

The piracy of football content has been a particular issue in Italy, with Luigi De Siervo, the chief executive of Serie A, stating in a recent interview with [SportBusiness](#) that he hopes the government's proposed new anti-piracy law inspires confidence in the country's broadcasters.

De Siervo believes that the decree, which is expected to be ratified before the end of the 2022-23 season, could increase the value of Serie A's domestic media rights by €150m (\$163m) per season in the next cycle from 2024-25 onwards.

In January last year, Lega Serie A agreed a [three-season extension](#) to its anti-piracy agreement with content protection firm Friend MTS. The latest contract with the UK-

headquartered company marks a decade-long tenure for Friend MTS as a provider of anti-piracy services for the Lega.

As part of the Lega's 'Piracy Kills Football' initiative to address content theft and video piracy, Friend MTS' global monitoring services provide real-time identification of illegal streams of live Serie A content, and are said to have helped to detect, deter and disable a significant number of pirate operations in Europe and around the world.

[Earlier this month](#), European broadcasters welcomed a continued commitment from member states of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to finalise a treaty that would harmonise anti-piracy protections for broadcasters around the world.

It came after major sports rights-holders and broadcasters in October [signed a letter](#) urging the European Commission to take a tougher stance on the illegal piracy of sports content. The letter was signed by Uefa, Fifa, the 'big five' European football leagues, the German Football Association (DFB), the English Football Association (FA), and golf's European Tour, PGA Tour and Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, among others.

Pirate signals of the recent Fifa World Cup in Qatar were rampant in East Asian markets, sources told [SportBusiness Media](#) following the conclusion of the tournament.

The piracy problems around the World Cup took various forms, with the most prevalent and concerning for the broadcasters being illegal live streams.