

The [European Children's Rights Unit](#), School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool.

## Did You Know...?

- If the UK was to leave the EU, current rules would prohibit highly sought after footballers such as David de Gea, Juan Mata, Simon Mignolet, Samir Nasri and Jesús Navas from playing football in the UK.
- Exiting the EU would leave a mere 332 players, from the top divisions of English and Scottish football, able to play football legally.
- Remaining in the EU would help better tackle the growing trend of childhood obesity. As UK children will continue to benefit from [EASO](#) initiatives such as [Spotlight](#), which collaborates with leading clinicians in researching the potential causes and treatments for tackling childhood obesity.

*Brexit would not only damage the UK's reputation as a highly successful brand in football; there would also be huge financial repercussions.*

## The Impact of Brexit on the Children's Leisure and Football



### Voting to exit the EU would deny foreign footballers of their right to work in the UK.

Many non-British people are employed as professional footballers in the UK. This is due to the rule which allows a person with an EU passport to work in the UK, without any restrictions.

### Exiting would jeopardise the future of UK football.

The UK's football leagues attract the best players from around the world. Henceforth, denying European footballers from playing in the UK may compromise the reputation of the Premier League and create a drop in talent.

### Brexit would require a change in the rules of football.

Experts have predicted that the rules would need to be adapted to prevent foreign players from leaving UK football. This would be costly.

### What will happen to football if the UK leaves the EU?

If the UK leaves the EU, the future of European players will be very uncertain. As many high profile players are likely to be denied permission to work in the UK.

### And if the UK stays?

The UK's football industry and leagues will continue to flourish. There will be no repercussions financially or to the UK's reputation as a highly successful global brand in football.

### Brexit would revoke EU initiatives, which promote children's access to leisure and sport.

Policies include: [Investing in Children](#), [EU Alliance for Investing in Children](#), [Plan for Sport \(2014-17\)](#) and the [\(2015/C 417/09\) \(Motor skills, physical and sport activities for children\)](#).

These policies promote child participation in sport and leisure, through EU funding and encouraging the implementation of domestic legislation. Brexit would mean a reliance on

governmental spending. In light of this, one should recall that in 2010 the UK government decided to withdraw the £162 million it had set aside to fund childhood sport (proving the UK government's disinterest in promoting child leisure and sport).

### What will happen if we leave the EU?

Current statistics show that 1/10 children, in England, starting primary school are obese. As the UK government's spending is under ever increasing pressure and scrutiny, it is highly unlikely that funding policies which encourage child leisure and sport will be treated as a priority. If Brexit is successful less children will be engaged in sport and consequently we may see a decline in the UK's pool of high calibre athletes.

### And if we stay?

Disadvantaged children in particular, will continue to reap the rewards of EU initiatives. Encouraging the next generation to be fit will promote healthier lifestyles and reduce pressure on the UK's National Health Service.

Check out ECRU's other [Brexit Briefing Papers](#):

- [EU Migrant Children](#)
- [Forced Migrant Children](#)
- [Child Protection](#)
- [Children's Education](#)
- [Children's Employment](#)
- [Children's Health](#)
- [Children's Family Life](#)