

**INTERNATIONAL  
TRANSFER SNAPSHOT  
JUNE - AUGUST 2021**



**FIFA®**

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# Overview

For the second consecutive year, FIFA has published its International Transfer Snapshot just a few days after the closure of the mid-year transfer window across the majority of its member associations. This report covers all international transfers involving professional football players between 1 June and 31 August 2021, the period during which transfer activity is typically at its peak. It also offers an overview of the key statistics that reflect the current status of the professional ranks of men's and women's football.

This year, in which all leagues were completed as planned and we regained certainty in the course of the competitions for the 2021/22 season, saw clubs begin to assemble their squads early on in the transfer window as players made moves with a view to enhancing their chances of accomplishing their professional ambitions. Despite the ongoing pandemic, a repeat of the disruption caused to last year's mid-year transfer window was largely avoided in 2021 thanks to the close cooperation between FIFA and its member associations.

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a negative impact on football in 2021. One of the consequences was that the number of transfers in men's football remained low (at the same levels recorded last year) and transfer fees continued the downward trend registered in 2020.

In contrast, the dynamic developments in women's football continue to justify FIFA's dedication to and investment in the women's game. The number of clubs involved in international transfers continued to rise, as did the transfer fees paid and the number of professionals transferred for a fee.

In early January 2022, FIFA will publish its Global Transfer Report 2021, which will offer a more comprehensive analysis of the international transfer market in professional football, together with insights into international transfers involving amateur players.

# Men's professional football

## Transfers and transfer fees

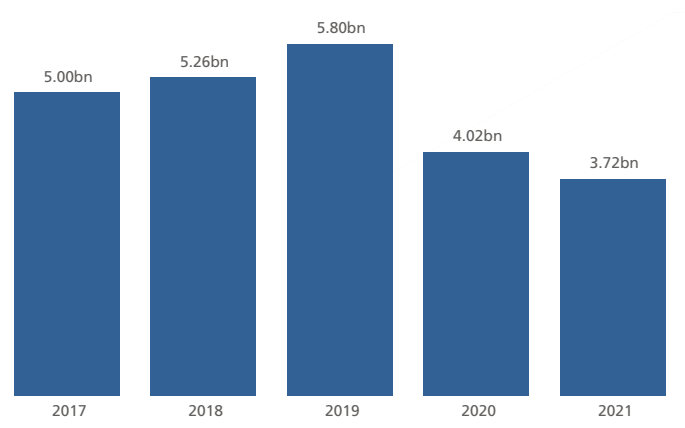
There were 7,748<sup>1</sup> international transfers involving professional players during the mid-year registration period – roughly the same as last year.

Figure 1: International transfers during the mid-year registration period



The total fees involved in the international transfers of professional players amounted to USD 3.72 billion, a 7.5% decrease compared to 2020 and just over 60% of the record-breaking figure of 2019.

Figure 2: Transfer fees (in USD) for international transfers during the mid-year registration period

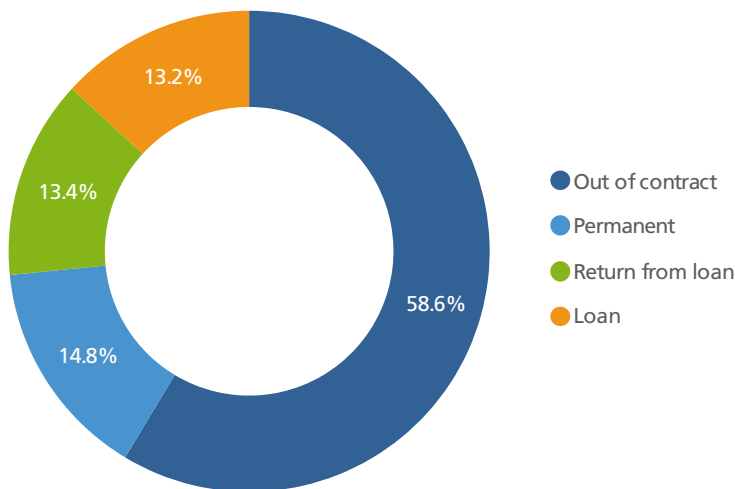


<sup>1</sup> At the time of publication, there were 773 pending transfers for which an International Transfer Certificate (ITC) had been requested by the engaging association between 1 June and 31 August 2021. If the releasing association issues the ITC in all or part of these transfers, the total for this period will actually show an increase compared to last year.

### Transfer types

By far the largest proportion of the transfers completed during the mid-year registration period involved out-of-contract players (58.6%), while loans and returns from loans represented a combined 26.6% of all transfer activity. Permanent club-to-club transfers accounted for the remaining 14.8%.

Figure 3: Transfer types in international transfers (June – August 2021)

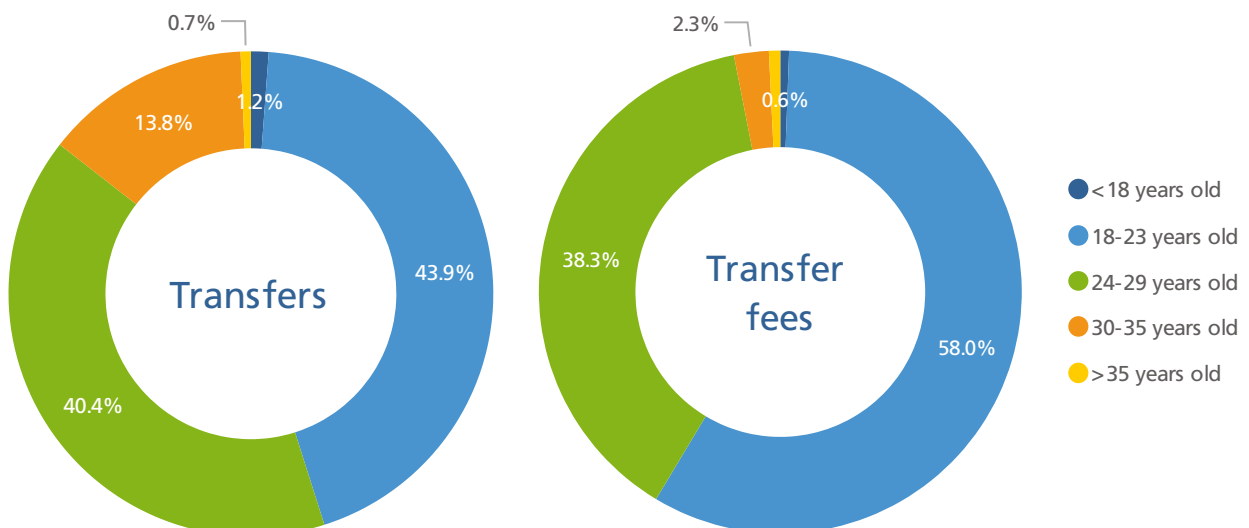


### Transfers by player age

Players in the 18-23 and 24-29 age groups represented a combined 84.3% of all international transfers, with these two groups accounting for almost equal shares. In contrast, transfers of over 35s and players aged under 18 constituted less than 1% and 2% respectively. The remaining 13.8% related to players in the 30-35 age bracket.

Similarly, more than 95% of all spending on transfer fees involved players between the ages of 18 and 29. The younger of the two age groups (18-23) accounted for 58.0% of all spending, while the outlay on players aged 24-29 represented 38.3%.

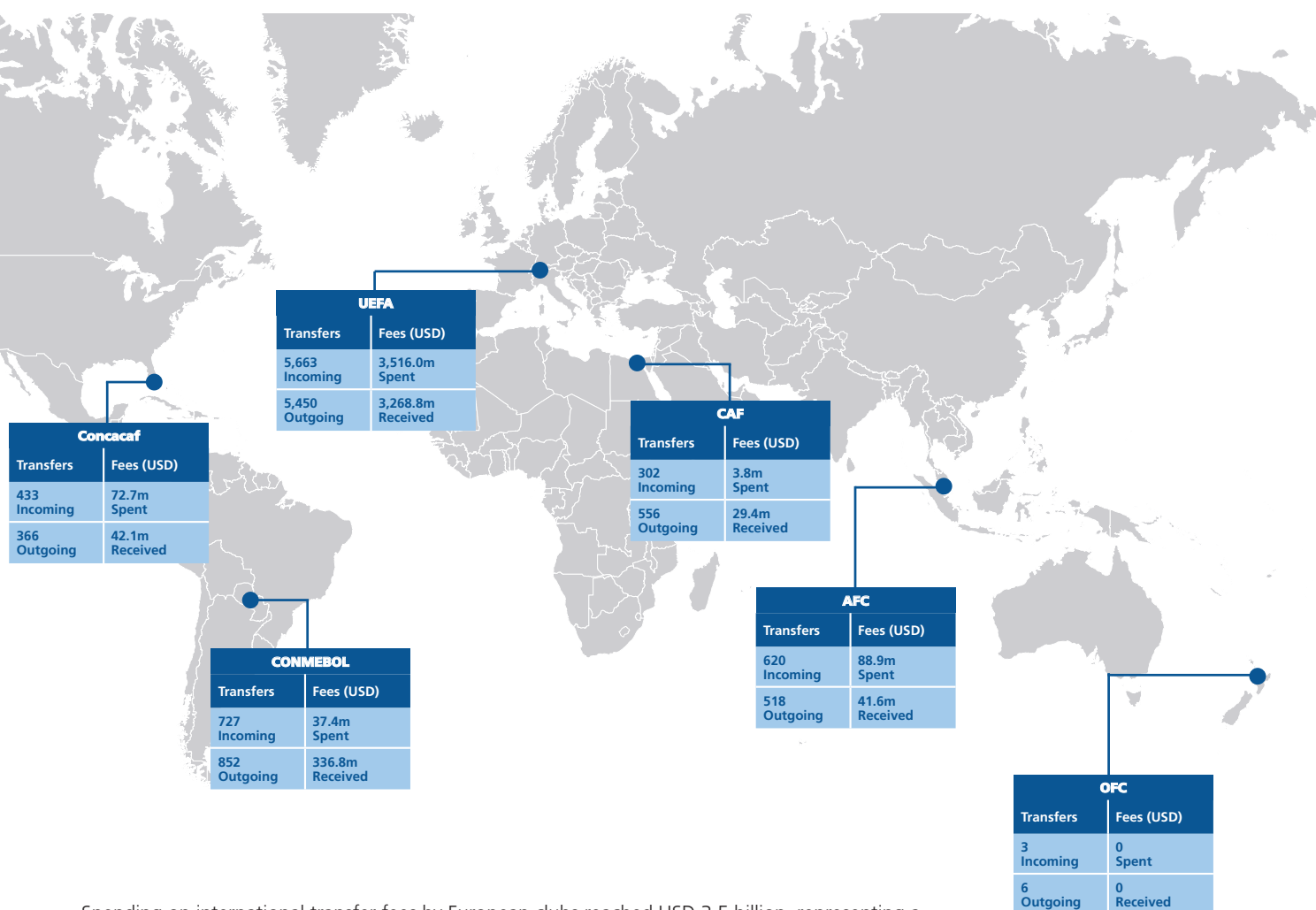
Figure 4: International transfers and spending on transfer fees by player age (June – August 2021)



### Transfers by confederation

Almost three quarters of all transfers completed during the reporting period involved players moving across borders to join a European club. Of the 7,748 international transfers, 5,663 entailed players moving to a club in Europe, followed in this particular ranking by South America, with 9.4% of international transfers featuring an engaging club from the CONMEBOL region.

Figure 5: International transfers and transfer fees by confederation (June – August 2021)



Spending on international transfer fees by European clubs reached USD 3.5 billion, representing a drop of 9.3% compared to the 2020 mid-year registration period. The outlay of AFC clubs remained relatively stable at USD 88.9 million (+2.3%), whilst the spending on transfer fees by Concacaf, CONMEBOL and CAF sides rose significantly (140.7%, 50.2% and 660% respectively).

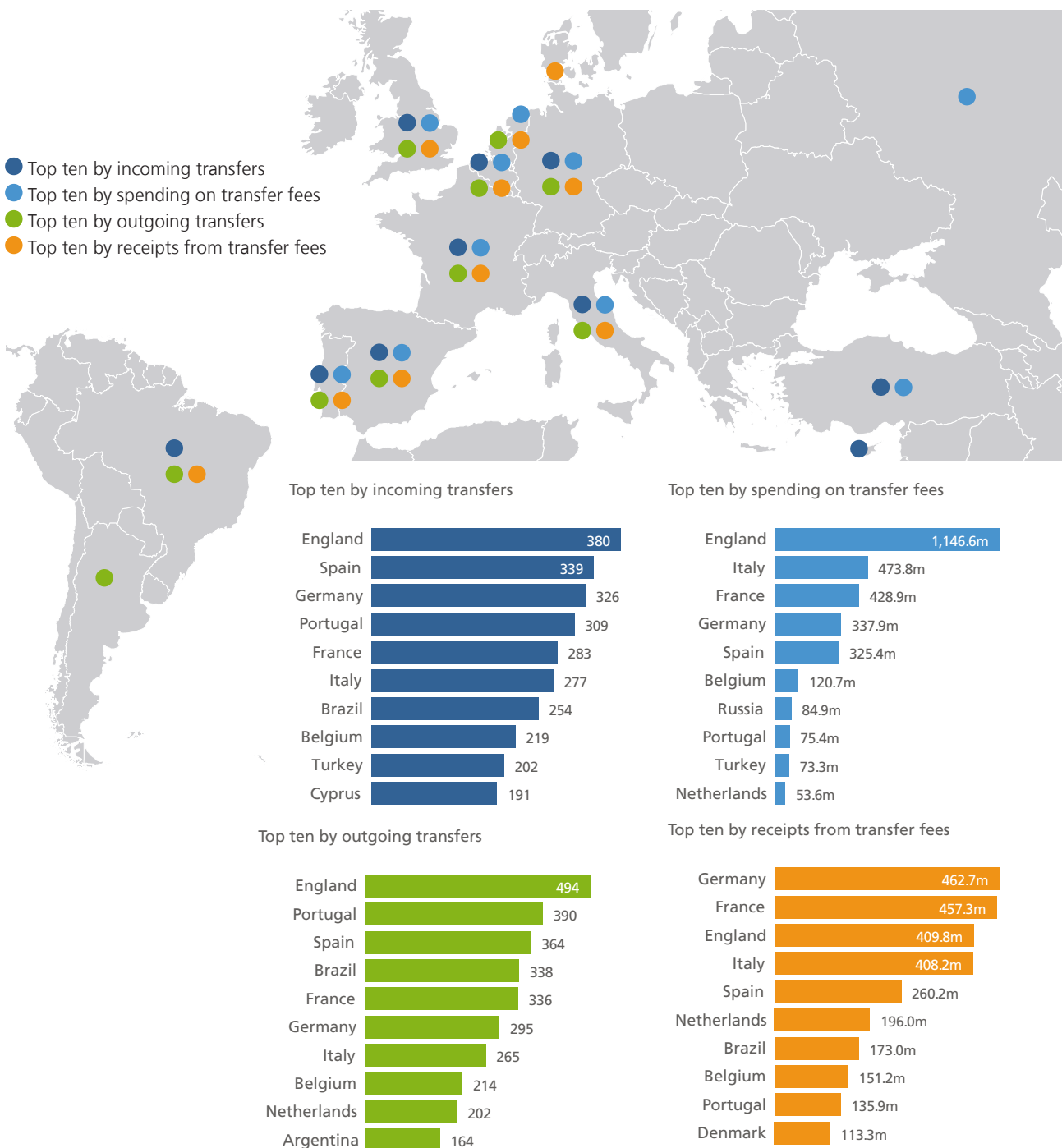
European clubs also lead the way in outgoing player transfers, both in terms of the number of transfers (a 70.3% share) and total receipts from transfer fees (87.9%). CONMEBOL occupied second spot in both of these rankings, with a total of 852 outgoing international transfers and total receipts of USD 333.8 million.

### Top ten FIFA member associations

European FIFA member associations were very much the dominant force in the top ten associations in terms of the number of incoming and outgoing transfers as well as transfer fee spending and receipts. Indeed, Brazil and Argentina were the only non-European associations to secure places amongst the top ten, with both countries featuring in the standings for releasing associations. The Brazilian FA (CBF) was also among the top ten associations for incoming transfers and total receipts from transfer fees.

England lead the way in all but one of the lists, with English clubs completing the most incoming and outgoing transfers and spending the most on transfer fees of all member associations worldwide. English clubs were also in third place in terms of receipts from international transfer fees, topped only by German and French clubs with total receipts of USD 462.7 million and USD 457.3 million respectively.

Figure 6: Top ten associations by incoming transfers, spending on transfer fees, outgoing transfers and receipts from transfer fees





# Women's professional football

Since 1 January 2018, the use of the Transfer Matching System (TMS) has been mandatory for international transfers involving female professional players. Since then, a total of 586 clubs affiliated to 72 different member associations have engaged 2,549 female professional players across international borders.

Figure 7: Associations whose clubs have engaged professional players internationally since 2018



**576**  
TRANSFERS OF  
PROFESSIONAL  
FEMALE PLAYERS



**51%**  
INCREASE IN  
TRANSFER FEES  
IN WOMEN'S  
FOOTBALL

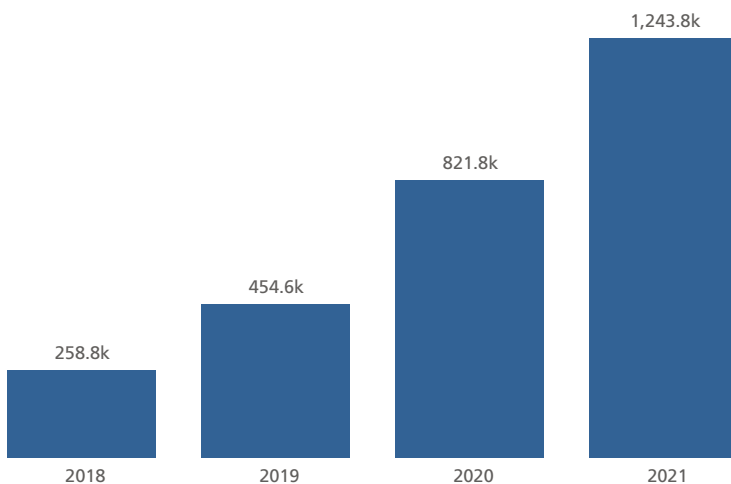
The total number of international transfers completed during this reporting period (576) increased by 8.7% compared to the 2020 mid-year registration period. Indeed, the number of transfers involving a fee continued to rise at an even higher rate (+72.2%), with a total of 31 such transfers completed during this period.

Figure 8: International transfers during the mid-year registration period



This growth is also reflected in the total spending on transfer fees. For the first time ever, the total outlay for international transfers of professional female players during the mid-year registration period exceeded USD 1 million. This represents a growth rate of 51.4% and clearly reflects the rapid development of the women's game.

Figure 9: Transfer fees (in USD) for international transfers during the mid-year registration period



# Methodology

All transfer data in this report relates exclusively to international transfers of professional football players within the scope of 11-a-side football. Transfer data has been analysed for all transfers completed between 1 June 2021 and 31 August 2021. The data was extracted from TMS on 1 September 2021. When making comparisons with previous years, we used the interval from 1 June to the last day of the official registration period of most European associations, i.e. 5 October for 2020, 2 September for 2019 and 1 September for both 2017 and 2018.

All references to transfer fees in this report are to the fixed, conditional and release (buyout) fees as declared in TMS. Fees are treated as upfront payments for calculation purposes, notwithstanding any instalment plans that may be agreed by clubs. All amounts are automatically converted to USD based on the date when the transfer was entered in TMS.

The numbers that feature in this report have been rounded.

We distinguish between four types of international transfers:

- Out of contract: when players who are no longer contractually bound to any former club sign an employment contract with a new club in a different association and no transfer agreement between clubs has been signed.
- Loan: when players are temporarily engaged by a new club: a) on the basis of a loan agreement between the club with which they have an employment contract and a club of another association, during the term of their employment contract with their parent club; or b) when the loan is extended by the new club with the agreement of the parent club.
- Return from loan: when players return to their parent club after a loan spell at another club.
- Permanent: when players are permanently engaged by a new club and a transfer agreement is signed between the new club and the former club, or when a club permanently engages players it has had on loan, with the agreement of the former club.



# Disclaimer

The information in this report is based on individual transaction data provided directly by football clubs in TMS. FIFA assumes no responsibility for the accuracy, completeness and reliability of the information provided by the clubs. With regard to any technical references included in this report, please be advised that in the event of any contradiction between the contents of this report and the actual text of the relevant regulations, the latter shall always prevail. Equally, the contents of this report may not alter existing jurisprudence of the competent decision-making bodies and are without prejudice to any decision which the said bodies might be called upon to pass in the future.

Due to the nature of the TMS database, the presence of pending transfers, the potential cancellation of transfers, and data corrections, numbers may differ from one report to another. In the event of any contradiction between the contents of this report and other publications by FIFA, the most recent shall always prevail.

Any views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of FIFA.

## **Source of data and preparation of report**

The source of all data and information (unless explicitly stated otherwise) is:

FIFA

Legal & Compliance Division

Legal Strategic Projects Subdivision

Zurich, Switzerland

## **Data protection**

The data contained in TMS and in this review is covered by Swiss data protection law.

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