

The FIFA logo is positioned in the top right corner of the image. It consists of the word "FIFA" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with a registered trademark symbol (®) to its upper right. The background of the entire image is a photograph of the FC Bayern Munich football team celebrating their victory in the FIFA Club World Cup. The players are wearing red home kits with white Adidas stripes on the sleeves and the T-Mobile logo on the chest. They are all wearing gold medals around their necks. The goalkeeper, Manuel Neuer, is in the center, wearing a grey and green kit, holding the FIFA Club World Cup trophy high above his head with both hands. Other players are also holding up their hands in celebration. The background shows a stadium with a red banner that reads "FIFA CLUB WORLD CUP QATAR 2020".

FIFA®

INTERNATIONAL TRANSFER MARKET SNAPSHOT JANUARY 2021

Overview

January is a special month. It is the first month of the year, which for some member associations signals the beginning of the sporting season, but for most it is the mid-season transfer window and an opportunity to replace injured players or address gaps in performance and changes to plans after the first half of the season. January 2021 was the first international transfer window of the year, and we have decided to continue publishing a Snapshot Report immediately after the closing of a transfer window in order to present a clear picture of the international transfer market at that moment.

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is continuing to take a heavy toll on the social and economic life of everyone all around the world, has not left football untouched either. This was reflected in the Global Transfer Market Report 2020 (which was published in early January 2021), but the impact seems to be even more severe when we look at the transfer market in January 2021.

It is truly impressive, however, that women's football is continuing to grow despite the adversity created by the pandemic.

FIFA's second snapshot of the global football transfer market covers the time period from 1 January to 1 February 2021¹.



¹ Throughout this report, for comparisons with previous years, we consider the period from 1 January to 31 January of each previous year.

Men's professional football

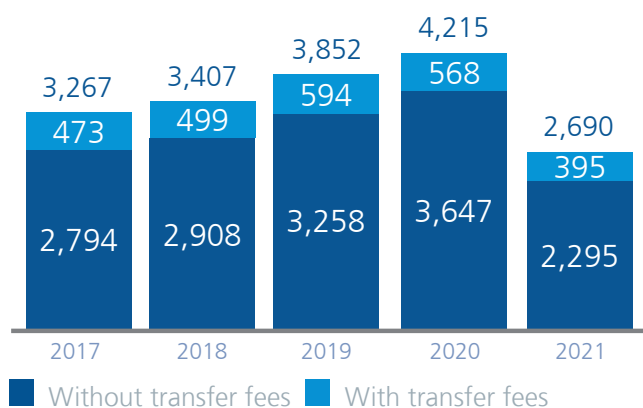
Number of transfers and transfer fees

Number of transfers and spending on transfer fees

In the January 2021 transfer period, the number of professional men's football transfers continued to show a considerable decline in comparison not only with the respective transfer period in January 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic had not yet impacted the global football market, but even when compared against the past five years.

With 2,690 international men's professional transfers registered in January 2021, the decline in comparison to January 2020 was 36.2%, and there was a 17.7% drop compared to 2017. Similarly, the number of transfers involving transfer fees fell by 30.5% in comparison to the same period in 2020, and by 16.5% in comparison to January 2017 (cf. Figure 1).

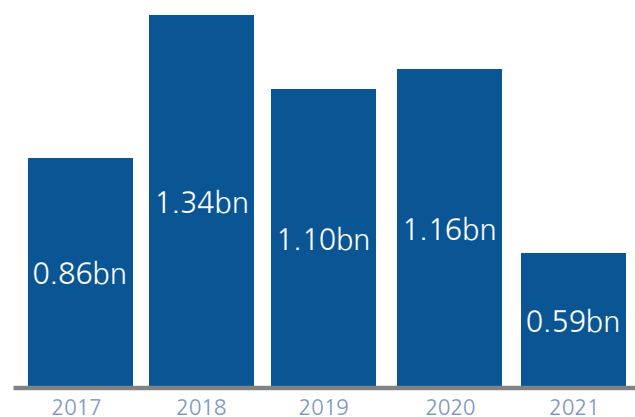
Figure 1: Number of international transfers worldwide



The decrease in the total sum of transfer fees in the month of January shows a similar trend, with a decline of 49.1% in comparison with the same month in 2020 and 31.4% in comparison with the same period in 2017. If we compare the January 2021 figure against the all-time highest sum paid for transfer fees in the equivalent period, namely January 2018, then the drop is an impressive 56.0% (cf. Figure 2).

The January 2021 figure is, in fact, the lowest sum of transfer fees to be registered in January since 2014.

Figure 2: Transfer fees (in USD) for international transfers worldwide (January)



Top transfers by transfer fees

Although the total sum of transfer fees in January 2021 resulted in an average fee of roughly USD 1.5 million per transfer with transfer fees, the reality is that the top 20 transfers (by transfer fee) alone represented 58.6% of this amount, with an average fee of USD 17.2 million, leaving the remaining 375 transfers with an average fee of USD 646,000 per transfer.

While the top ten transfers were dominated by clubs in Europe, it is interesting to note that two US professionals made it to the top 20 (Brenden Aaronson, Philadelphia Union FC to FC Red Bull Salzburg (Austria), and Mark McKenzie, also from Philadelphia Union FC to KRC Genk (Belgium)).

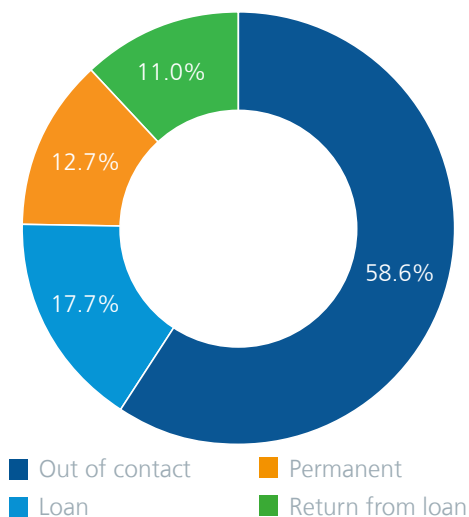
Figure 3: Top ten transfers by total transfer fee (January 2021)

	PLAYER	RELEASING CLUB	ENGAGING CLUB
	Amad DIALLO		
	Diego Gabriel SILVA ROSA		
	Sébastien HALLER		
	Krepin DIATTA		
	Dominik SZOBOSZLAI		
	Christopher Lloyd SMALLING		
	Joakim MAEHLE PEDERSEN		
	Dennis MAN		
	Jeremie Agyekum FRIMPONG		
	Arkadiusz MILIK		

Transfer types

Of the 2,690 transfers involving professionals, by far the largest part – 1,576 or 58.6% – involved players out of contract (cf. Figure 4). This is slightly lower than the figures of January 2020, when out-of-contract players represented a share of 62.0%. Permanent transfers represented 12.7% of the total (up from 10.2% in the previous year) while loans represented 17.7% (16.5% in January 2020) and returns from loans 11.0% (the same as in January 2020).

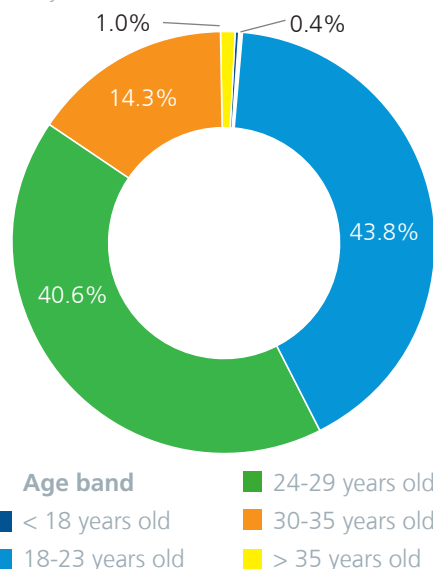
Figure 4: Distribution of transfer types, January 2021



Player age

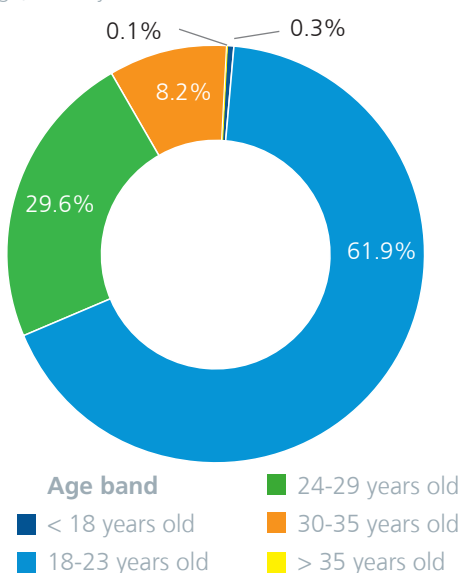
Not surprisingly, the vast majority of players transferred were between the ages of 18 and 29, representing a combined 84.4% (cf. Figure 5). Players aged 18 to 23 were transferred more frequently than in the previous year (43.8% compared to 39.6% in January 2020), while players between the ages of 24 and 29 as well as those between 30 and 35 were involved in fewer transfers (40.6% and 14.3%, respectively, compared to 43.1% and 15.9% in January 2020). The shares of transfers of players older than 35 and of those younger than 18 years remained relatively stable at 1.0% and 0.4% (compared to 0.9% and 0.5% in January 2020).

Figure 5: Distribution of transfers by player age, January 2021



In the area of transfer fees by player age, there was a significantly higher deviation from the figure compared to the previous January transfer window. While transfers involving players in the 24-29 age category accounted for 47.4% of the total transfer fees in January 2020 and those between the ages of 18 and 23 accounted for 50.2%, this was completely overturned in January 2021, with players aged 18-23 representing 61.9% of the transfer fees. Interestingly, players between 30 and 35 years of age have almost quadrupled their share, from 2.1% in January 2020 to 8.2% this year (cf. Figure 6).

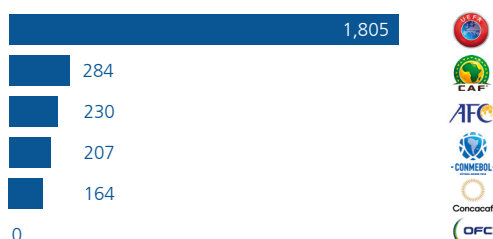
Figure 6: Distribution of transfer fees by player age, January 2021



Distribution by confederation

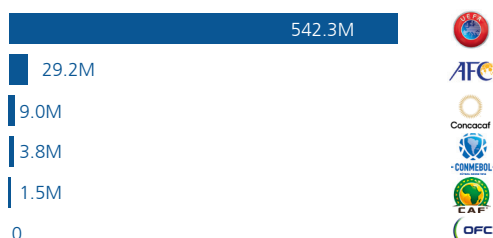
European clubs engaged 1,805 players of the 2,690 total. While this represents a slight decrease of 4.8% compared to January 2020 (1,896 transfers), the relative share of international transfers to clubs in UEFA increased substantially from 45.0% in January 2020 to 67.1% in 2021. This, in turn, is reflected by the massive decline in the number of transfers to other confederations in January (-35.7% for CAF, -57.9% for Concacaf, -59.1% for AFC and -77.6% for CONMEBOL).

Figure 7: Distribution of international transfers by confederation of the engaging club, January 2021



European clubs not only completed the largest number of international transfers but they also spent the highest amount on transfer fees. A total of USD 542.3 million was committed in transfer fees by European clubs, representing 92.6% of the total amount committed in fees in international transfers in January 2021. Clubs affiliated to AFC member associations came in second, but with a considerably lower amount of USD 29.2 million or 5.0% of the total (cf. Figure 8).

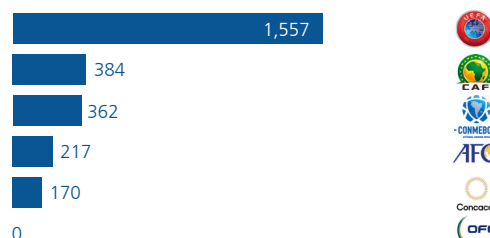
Figure 8: Distribution of transfer fees (in USD) by confederation of the engaging club, January 2021



On the releasing side, the largest share of international transfers of male professional players also came from European clubs (cf. Figure 9). Clubs from UEFA released 1,557 players in January 2021 (57.9% of the total number of transfers), a decrease of 18.4% compared to January 2020. Clubs from Africa were in second place, having released 384 (14.3% of the total transfers),

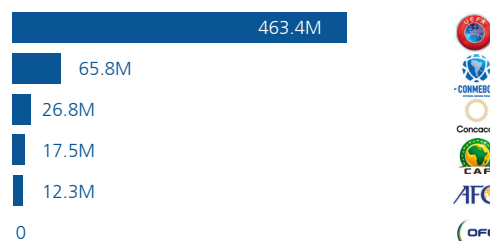
28.4% less than in January 2020. For AFC, Concacaf and CONMEBOL, the decline was even more pronounced with more than 55% fewer outgoing transfers than in January 2020. For the first time since the introduction of TMS, this put CAF in second place in terms of outgoing transfers.

Figure 9: Distribution of international transfers by confederation of the releasing club, January 2021



European clubs also received the largest share of the transfer fees paid in the January 2021 transfer window, with a total of USD 463.4 million. Even though African clubs released the second largest number of players, their receipts from transfer fees were little more than one quarter of the fees that went to clubs in CONMEBOL, and less than two thirds of the fees that went to clubs in Concacaf.

Figure 10: Distribution of transfer fees (in USD) by confederation of the releasing club, January 2021



Distribution by member association

Brazil, which was the only member association to figure in the top ten engaging associations of the mid-year transfer window in 2020, did not make the list in January 2021, although two other non-European associations did in the shape of Mexico and Colombia. For the first time since the introduction of TMS, Albania made it to the top ten with 61 incoming transfers (cf. Figure 11).

Figure 11: Top ten associations by number of incoming international transfers, January 2021

Engaging association	Incoming transfers
Spain 	145
Portugal 	143
England 	140
Turkey 	123
Mexico 	77
Germany 	70
Italy 	67
Colombia 	66
France 	63
Albania 	61

The picture is somewhat different when it comes to spending on international transfer fees. The top ten list is now exclusively European (cf. Figure 12). The clubs from the top five associations in the list paid a total of USD 399.6 million or 68.2%, and all ten combined paid USD 497.1 million or 84.8% of the total transfer fees committed in January 2021.

Figure 12: Top ten associations by spending on international transfer fees, January 2021

Engaging association	Transfer fees (USD)
England 	130.5m
Italy 	106.4m
Germany 	68.7m
France 	58.5m
Netherlands 	35.5m
Austria 	24.2m
Belgium 	23.5m
Spain 	19.3m
Portugal 	15.7m
Turkey 	14.8m

Clubs from England released by far the largest number of players (178) for international transfers. Moreover, the top-ten list (see Figure 13) is once again dominated by European associations, with the sole exceptions being Brazil, the USA and Argentina, who share tenth place with Belgium at 60 outgoing transfers.

Figure 13: Top ten associations by number of outgoing international transfers, January 2021

Releasing association	Outgoing transfers
England 	178
Brazil 	134
Spain 	80
France 	79
USA 	79
Italy 	75
Germany 	71
Portugal 	66
Netherlands 	63
Argentina 	60
Belgium 	60

Brazil (third) and the USA (seventh) are also the only non-European associations among the top ten in terms of receipts from international transfer fees (see Figure 14). Italian clubs head the list with USD 95.8 million (16.4% of the total transfer fees paid). The clubs from these ten associations alone received a total of USD 428.2 million or 73.1% of all money spent on fees.

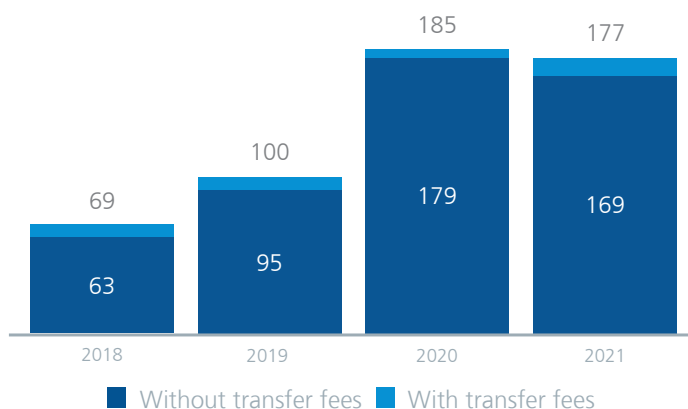
Figure 14: Top ten associations by receipts from international transfer fees, January 2021

Releasing association	Transfer fees (USD)
Italy 	95.8m
England 	86.4m
Brazil 	46.3m
Belgium 	45.3m
France 	43.0m
Austria 	26.2m
USA 	24.9m
Germany 	22.0m
Scotland 	20.2m
Spain 	18.1m



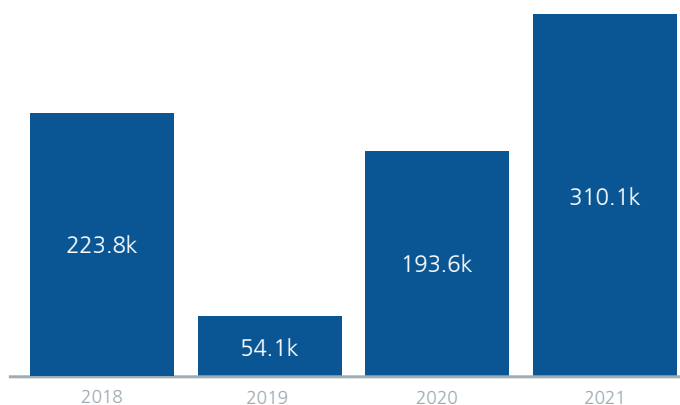
Women's professional football

Figure 15: Number of international transfers worldwide (January)



It is only since the change at the top of FIFA, with a new President elected in 2016, that special emphasis was given, and continues to be given, to women's football, which resulted not only in a spectacular Women's World Cup in France in 2019 but also in a considerable boost to the women's game as a whole, as can be seen in every single transfer period since the use of the FIFA Transfer Matching System (TMS) became mandatory for women's professional football in 2018. While the total number of transfers slightly decreased by 4.3% compared to January 2020, the number of transfers with fees in fact increased once again (see Figure 15).

Figure 16: Transfer fees (in USD) for international transfers worldwide (January)



Spending on transfer fees increased, when compared to the same period in 2020, by more than 60% for international transfers of professional female players (see Figure 16), reaching a new all-time high. This continues to reflect the positive trend in the development of women's professional football.

Definitions

Association

See member association.

Average transfer fee

Total transfer fees divided by number of transfers with fees.

Club

A member of an association (that is a member association of FIFA) or a member of a league recognised by a member association that enters at least one team in a competition.

Conditional transfer fee

The amount payable by the new club to the former club if certain conditions are fulfilled, e.g. if the player scores ten goals or makes 20 first-team appearances.

Confederation

A group of associations recognised by FIFA that belong to the same continent (or assimilable geographical region). Confederations are the umbrella organisations of the member associations in each continent:

- AFC – Asian Football Confederation
- CAF – Confédération Africaine de Football
- Concacaf – Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football
- CONMEBOL – Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol
- OFC – Oceania Football Confederation
- UEFA – Union des Associations Européennes de Football.

Fixed transfer fee

The unconditional payment amount for the transfer of the player.

Loan

The type of transfer conducted when a professional player is temporarily engaged by a new club on the basis of an agreement during the term of his/her employment contract with the former club. For the purposes of this report, this category also includes loan extensions which is the instruction type entered when the loan is being extended by the new club (where the player is currently on loan) for an additional period of time, with the agreement of the former club and the player.

Member association

A football association recognised as such by FIFA. A total of 211 member associations are currently affiliated to FIFA.

Out of contract (transfer)

The type of transfer conducted when a player signs for a new club when he/she is not contractually bound to any former club and no transfer agreement exists. There are four possible reasons for the player's previous contract termination: the contract with the former club has expired; the contract with the former club was terminated unilaterally; the player mutually agreed an early termination with his/her former club; the player was not under contract with his/her former club, i.e. he/she was an amateur.

Permanent transfer (with transfer agreement)

The type of transfer conducted when a player is permanently engaged by a new club and a transfer agreement is signed by the new club and the former club. For the purposes of this report, this category also includes loan-to-permanent transfers which is the instruction type entered when the new club (where the player is currently on loan) wishes to engage the player permanently, with the agreement of the former club.

Professional player

A player who has a written contract with a club and is paid more for his/her football activity than the expenses he/she effectively incurs (cf. RSTP art. 2 par. 2).

Receipts

Sum of the value of transfer fees of outgoing transfers. The expression "receipts by association" refers to receipts by clubs belonging to a specific member association.

Release (buyout) fee

Any fee paid in execution of a clause in the player's contract with his/her former club providing for compensation for termination of the relevant contract.

Return from loan

The instruction type entered when a player who was loaned to another club returns to his/her club of origin after termination of the loan.

Spending

Sum of the value of transfer fees of incoming transfers. The expression "spending by association" refers to spending by clubs belonging to a specific member association.

Transfer fee

Financial compensation agreed to be paid between clubs in the course of a player transfer. In this report, transfer fees include fixed transfer fees, conditional transfer fees, and release (buyout) fees.

Transfer with fees

Transfer where at least one of fixed transfer fees, conditional transfer fees, release (buyout) fees is greater than zero.

Methodological notes

All transfer data provided in the report only concern international transfers of professional football players within the scope of 11-a-side football.

Transfer data has been analysed for all completed transfers between 1 January 2021 and 1 February 2021. The data was extracted from TMS on 9 February 2021.

All information on transfer fees is automatically converted into US dollars on the basis of conversion rates as of the day when the transfer instruction is created in TMS.
Numbers in the report are rounded.

Disclaimer

General disclaimer

The information contained 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 the present 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.

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Source of data and preparation of report

The source of all data and information (unless explicitly indicated differently) is:

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Legal & Compliance Division

Legal Strategic Projects Subdivision

Zurich, Switzerland

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