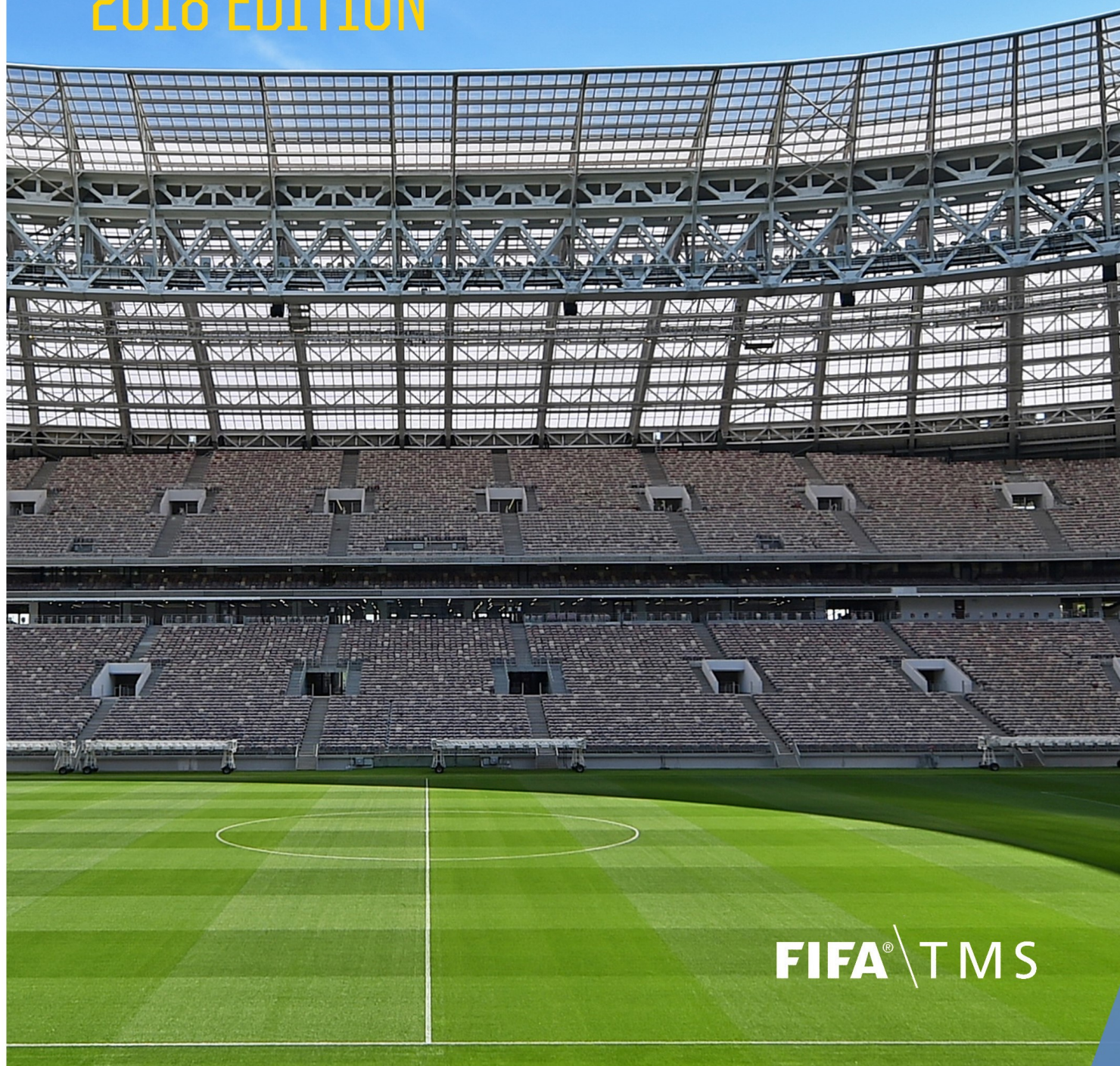


INTERMEDIARIES IN INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS

2018 EDITION



FIFA[®] TMS

INTRODUCTION

This report offers a summary of the **involvement of intermediaries in international¹ transfers** completed in FIFA's International Transfer Matching System (ITMS) **since 1 January 2013**.

Typically, three parties are involved in the negotiation of a transfer: the player, the engaging club, and - if the transfer is not of a player out of contract - the releasing club. Each party can choose to employ one or more intermediaries. When completing a transfer in ITMS, clubs must provide information regarding the intermediaries involved, including commissions².

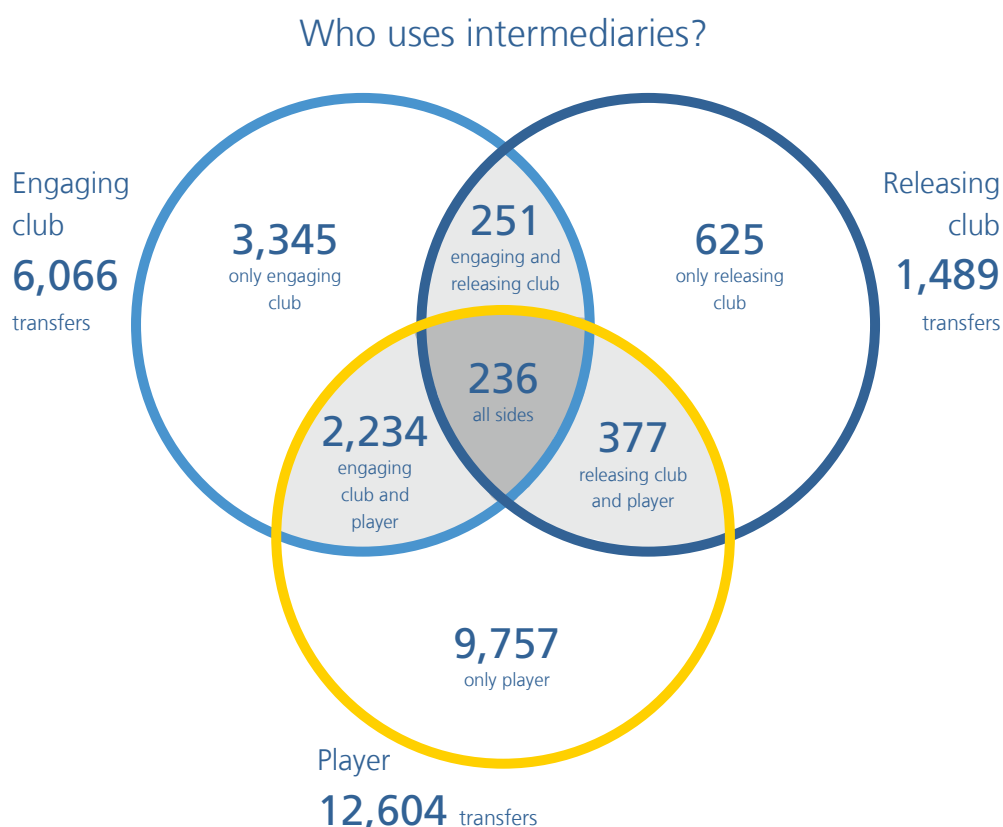
Since 2013, **16,825 of the total 86,212 international transfers (19.5%) involved at least one intermediary** and **USD 2.14 billion were paid as commissions to club intermediaries**.

Of the 7,457 clubs involved in international transfers over this six-year period, 1,060 used an intermediary at least once. Of the 44,913 players involved in these transfers, 9,652 were represented by an intermediary at least once.

As figure 1 shows, in transfers with intermediaries, the most common case is that of intermediaries representing the player (12,604 transfers since 2013), followed by those with intermediaries representing the engaging club (6,066) and the releasing club (1,489).

Note: in accordance with the [FIFA Regulations on Working with Intermediaries](#) and [FIFA Circular 1519](#), since March 2016, all FIFA member associations are required to publish a yearly summary of intermediaries' activity on their territory. The report hereafter is not a consolidation of such summaries, but an overview of the information declared by the clubs in ITMS in the context of international transfers.

Fig. 1: Number of international transfers with intermediaries (1 Jan 2013 - 12 Dec 2018)



¹Between clubs of two different FIFA member associations

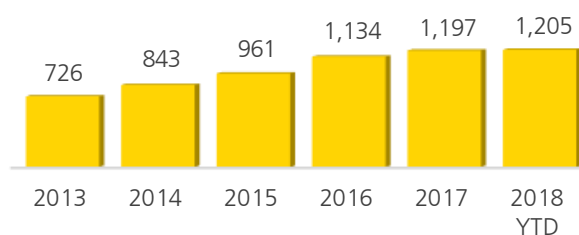
²Data on commissions is collected for club intermediaries, but not for player intermediaries (FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, Annexe 3, art. 4 par. 3)

CLUB INTERMEDIARIES

Intermediaries representing engaging clubs (2018)

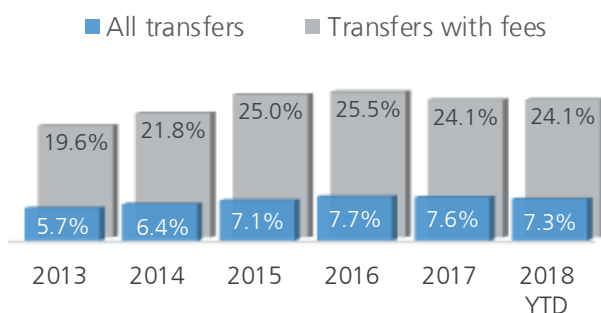
In 2018 so far, engaging clubs have employed intermediaries in 1,205 international transfers. With a few weeks still left before the end of the year, this already represents an increase (+0.7%) in comparison to the whole of 2017.

Fig. 2: Number of transfers with intermediaries representing the engaging club



In percentage terms however, transfers with intermediaries acting for the engaging club have decreased for the second year in a row, from 7.6% to 7.3%. As shown in figure 3, this percentage is significantly higher in international transfers that involve transfer fees³ where engaging clubs use intermediaries almost one quarter of the time.

Fig. 3: Percentage of transfers with intermediaries representing the engaging club



In 2018 Italian clubs engaging players internationally relied upon intermediaries the most: 175 of their 388 international incoming transfers had at least one intermediary representing the engaging club (45.1%, versus 40.6% in 2017). English clubs have the second highest percentage with 38.6% (37.8% in 2017), followed by Danish clubs with 25.9% (32.4% in 2017).

Fig. 4: Transfers with intermediaries representing the engaging club, by member association (1 Jan 2018 - 12 Dec 2018)

Engaging club intermediaries

	Transfers	As % of incoming transfers
Italy	175	45.1%
England	251	38.6%
Denmark	41	25.9%
Wales	33	25.6%
Japan	32	23.4%
Scotland	52	20.6%
Austria	27	19.7%
Germany	70	18.5%
Poland	35	16.7%
Sweden	33	14.5%

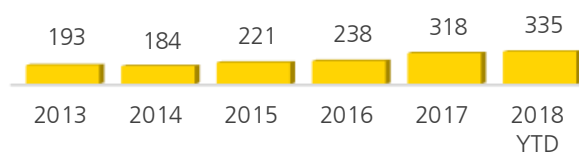
Minimum 20 transfers with intermediaries

³Transfer fees refer exclusively to club-to-club compensation and are not to be confused with intermediary commissions, which will be covered in a later section

Intermediaries representing releasing clubs (2018)

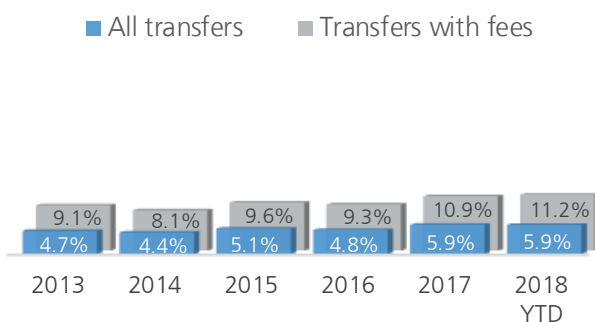
In 2018 there were only 335 international transfers worldwide where the releasing club used intermediaries. A simple explanation is that most transfers involve players out of contract (65.3% in 2018).

Fig. 5: Number of transfers with intermediaries representing the releasing club



The 335 transfers with intermediaries acting for the releasing club correspond to 5.9% of all transfers with a releasing club involved. In percentage terms, the difference with transfers with engaging club intermediaries (5.9% vs. 7.3%) is not extremely large but still relevant, especially when it comes to transfers with fees (11.2% vs. 24.1%). A possible explanation is that

Fig. 6: Percentage of transfers with intermediaries representing the releasing club



clubs may be more inclined to use intermediaries to facilitate the arrival of a player, rather than the departure of one.

Croatia tops the list of member associations whose clubs relied most frequently on intermediaries when releasing a player: 22.0% of the outgoing international transfers involving Croatian clubs had at least one intermediary representing the releasing club (vs. 23.2% in 2017). Second are Italy and Serbia, both with 16.9% (vs. 20.4% and 19.1% respectively in 2017).

Fig. 7: Transfers with intermediaries representing the releasing club, by member association (1 Jan 2018 - 12 Dec 2018)

Releasing club intermediaries

	Transfers	As % of outgoing transfers ⁴
Croatia	20	22.0%
Italy	42	16.9%
Serbia	11	16.9%
France	32	15.0%
Portugal	34	13.6%
Germany	22	12.6%
Denmark	9	11.5%
England	50	10.4%
Spain	27	9.6%
Sweden	6	7.4%

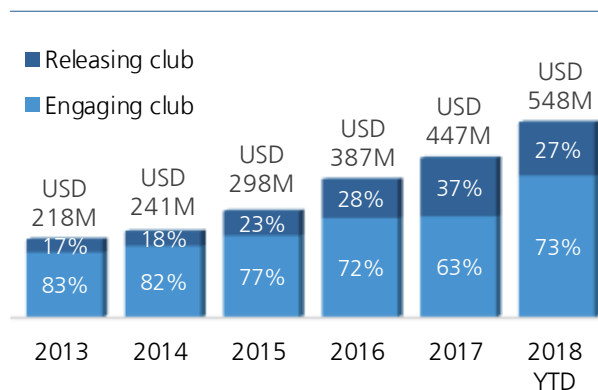
Minimum 5 transfers with intermediaries

⁴With a releasing club involved, thus not considering transfers of players out of contract

Total commissions to club intermediaries (2018)

As shown in figure 8, spending on commissions paid to intermediaries has increased steadily over the past six years, and reached USD 548 million to date in 2018. Of this amount, 73% (USD 397 million) was paid to intermediaries representing engaging clubs and 27% (USD 150 million) was paid to intermediaries representing releasing clubs.

Fig. 8: Spending on club intermediary commissions



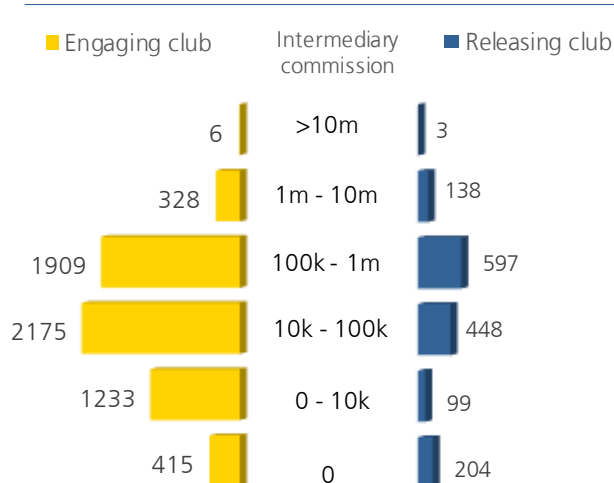
A large proportion of intermediaries' activity is in transfers involving European clubs. This connection is even more marked when it comes to intermediary commissions: to date in 2018, clubs affiliated to member associations of UEFA account for 96.0% of the USD 548 million spent on intermediary commissions. For the most part, spending on intermediary commissions comes from just six member associations. England, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Spain and France are responsible for 83.9% of the global spend on commissions paid to intermediaries this year.

Figure 10 shows the distribution of intermediary commissions paid by clubs since 2013. In most cases, club intermediaries received commissions between USD 10,000 and 100,000. However, 54.9% of the total amount paid by clubs to intermediaries over the last six years came from only 6.3% of all instances of club payments to intermediaries (the 475 above USD 1 million).

Fig. 9: Spending on club intermediary commissions and number of transfers with club intermediaries (1 Jan 2018 - 12 Dec 2018)

Club intermediary commissions in USD million (Number of transfers with club intermediaries)			
Confederation	Engaging	Releasing	Total
UEFA	389.9 (1,093)	135.7 (291)	525.5
CONMEBOL	2.2 (19)	13.8 (28)	16.0
AFC	5.0 (77)	<0.1 (1)	5.0
CAF	0.1 (12)	0.6 (13)	0.7
CONCACAF	<0.1 (4)	0.4 (2)	0.4
OFC	0 (0)	0 (0)	0
Top 10 assoc.	Engaging	Releasing	Total
England	130.7 (251)	25.0 (50)	155.8
Italy	116.3 (175)	16.3 (42)	132.6
Germany	39.3 (70)	16.8 (22)	56.0
Portugal	28.2 (75)	15.4 (34)	43.5
Spain	29.4 (71)	8.9 (34)	38.3
France	8.0 (49)	25.1 (32)	33.1
Brazil	1.6 (13)	13.6 (23)	15.2
Croatia	1.7 (27)	10.2 (20)	11.9
Denmark	4.8 (41)	2.8 (9)	7.7
Russia	6.9 (7)	0.1 (1)	7.0

Fig. 10: Distribution of spending on club intermediary commissions (1 Jan 2013 - 12 Dec 2018)



Average commissions to club intermediaries (2013 - 2018)

Commissions paid by clubs to intermediaries can vary significantly from one transfer to another. Figures 11 and 12 show a breakdown of the average and median commission paid by clubs to intermediaries as a percentage of the transfer fee⁵.

Two takeaways emerge from the data: first, commissions paid by engaging clubs tend to be higher than those paid by releasing clubs. Second, when transfer fees are higher,

Note: average commissions must be looked at with slight scrutiny. In the presence of unusually high values, averages can be affected significantly. For example, a club might engage a player and pay a USD 10,000 transfer fee but reward the intermediary a USD 30,000 commission, which corresponds to 300% of the transfer fee. Because such transfers exist, the average of all commissions will take a very high value, but will not be a truthful depiction of the actual situation. For this reason, it is important to also look at median commissions. By definition, the median value is the one that lies at the midpoint of a range of values. For example, the median of 10, 20, 30, 40, 1000 is 30. The average of the same range is 220 (1100 divided by 5). In this case, the median is very close to most of the values in the range, while the average is inflated because of one extreme value.

Fig. 11: Average commission as percentage of transfer fee for intermediaries representing the engaging club, by transfer fee (1 Jan 2013 - 12 Dec 2018)

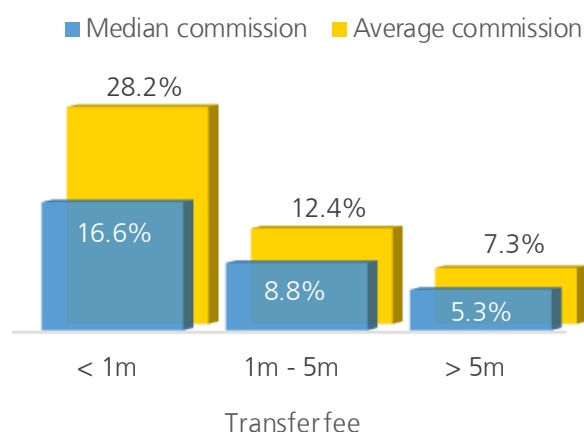
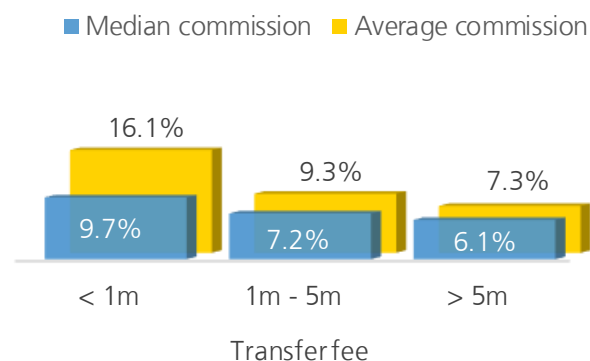


Fig. 12: Average commission as percentage of transfer fee for intermediaries representing the releasing club, by transfer fee (1 Jan 2013 - 12 Dec 2018)



commissions - in percent of the transfer fee - tend to be lower and have less variance.

Where a transfer fee is less than USD 1 million, the average commission paid by the engaging clubs to intermediaries is 28.2% and that paid by the releasing clubs 16.1%, with a large variance from transfer to transfer, as percentages sometimes largely exceed 100% of the transfer fee. Where a transfer fee is over USD 5 million, average commissions are 7.3% for both engaging and releasing club intermediaries, with the vast majority being below 10%, and only very few commissions exceeding 20% of the transfer fee.

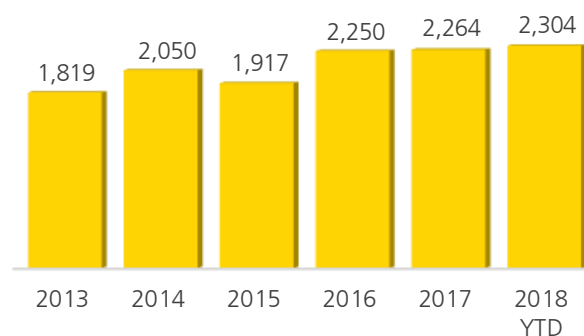
As seen in the previous pages, intermediary involvement is more common in international transfers with fees. Nonetheless, intermediaries involved in transfers without fees often still get a commission. Since 2013, there have been 3,256 free transfers with club intermediaries involved, and total spending on commissions in these transfers was USD 375 million.

⁵To limit the effect of extreme outliers, commissions above 100% were considered as equal to 100%

PLAYER INTERMEDIARIES

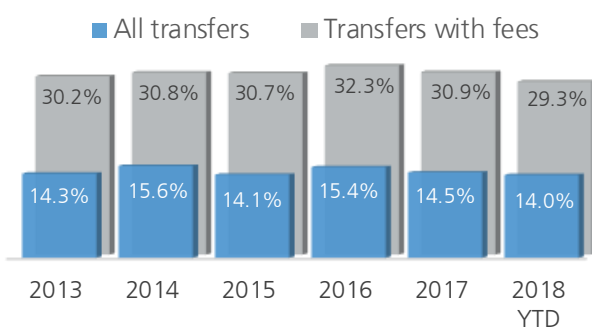
In 2018 so far, there have been 2,304 international transfers where the player was represented by one or more intermediaries.

Fig. 13: Number of transfers with intermediaries representing the player



In percentage terms, this means 14.0% of all international transfers in 2018 saw the involvement of player intermediaries.

Fig. 14: Percentage of transfers with intermediaries representing the player



As reported last year, players from Denmark are still those that use intermediaries the most. In 2018, 47.9% of Danish players were represented by an intermediary when involved in an international transfer. Players from Norway (40.0%) and the Netherlands (39.2%) complete the top 3.

Fig. 15: Transfers with intermediaries representing the player, by player nationality (1 Jan 2018 - 12 Dec 2018)

Player intermediaries		
Player nationality	Transfers	As % of all transfers
Danish	67	47.9%
Norwegian	40	40.0%
Dutch	102	39.2%
Czech	34	34.3%
Australian	38	34.2%
USA	65	33.2%
Belgian	70	32.4%
Polish	31	32.0%
Austrian	30	31.3%
British	208	30.0%

Minimum 30 transfers with intermediaries

A player's age is another factor that appears to affect whether a player intermediary is involved in a transfer: in 2018, players under the age of 18 used intermediaries in 18.3% of their international transfers. Between 18 and 25 years of age, this percentage decreases to 14.6%, followed by a further decrease to 13.4% for players between 26 and 32. Finally, players over the age of 33 only use intermediaries in 11.1% of transfers.

Another interesting observation comes from transfer types. In 2018, players used intermediaries more than three times as often in permanent transfers⁶ (31.4%) than when they moved out of contract (10.0%). Players returning from a loan used intermediaries in 19.4% of these transfers and players going out on a loan in 13.9%.

⁶An international permanent transfer with a transfer agreement between the two clubs

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Intermediaries representing clubs

FIFA started collecting information on international transfers of female professional football players from 1 January 2018⁷. Since then, a total of 695 international transfers have been completed in ITMS. Of these transfers, 24 saw the involvement of intermediaries representing the engaging club (3.5% vs. 7.3% for men's transfers), and none of intermediaries representing the releasing club (vs. 5.9%).

These 24 transfers involved engaging clubs of six different FIFA member associations: Germany (8 transfers with engaging club intermediaries), Portugal (7), England (4), Norway (3), France (1) and Sweden (1).

Commissions to intermediaries representing clubs

Engaging clubs paid a total of USD 79,993 in intermediary commissions. Interestingly, only one of the 24 transfers with club intermediaries was a transfer with fees⁸.

Intermediaries representing players

Intermediaries representing players were involved in 167 of the total 695 international transfers. This corresponds to 24.0%, a percentage ten points higher than that of men's football. When looking at only transfers with fees, despite the limited sample size, this percentage is even higher: players used intermediaries in 10 of 22 transfers with fees (45.5% vs. 29.3% for men's transfers).

⁷See FIFA Circular letter no. 1601

⁸Transfer fees refer exclusively to club-to-club compensation and are not to be confused with intermediary commissions

DISCLAIMER

General disclaimer

The information contained in this report is based on individual transaction data provided directly by football clubs in ITMS. FIFA assumes no responsibility for the accuracy, completeness and reliability of the information provided by the clubs.

With regards to technical references possibly 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 is without prejudice to any decision which the said bodies might be called upon to pass in the future.

“Spending/receipts by association” refers to spending or receipts on transfer fees by clubs belonging to a specific association.

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

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Source of data

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

FIFA TMS Global Transfers and Compliance
Zurich, Switzerland

Methodological approach

Data and analyses provided only concern international transfers of professional male/female football players within the scope of 11-a-side football.

Transfer data has been analysed for transfers completed between 1 October 2010 and 12 December 2018. All data has been extracted from ITMS on 12 December 2018.

Transfers are allocated to a certain date according to the date when they reach the status of “ITC request” in ITMS, irrespective of the date of their first entry.

All information on transfer fees is automatically converted into US dollars on the basis of conversion rates as of the day of the transfer’s first registration in ITMS.

Tables with rankings may present multiple entries with the same values. In some cases (e.g. two associations ranked 10th), entries may be left out based on sorting in alphabetical order.

Numbers in the report are rounded.

Data protection

The data contained in ITMS and in this report are covered by Swiss data protection law. Those associations and clubs whose names appear in this report have expressly authorised FIFA to disclose information concerning their transfers for reporting purposes.