

Michel Platini's appeal over ban rejected by European court of human rights

● ECHR concludes 'complaint is manifestly ill-founded'

● Fifa says it will continue to seek money from Platini



📷 Michel Platini claimed his ban from football was an illegal restraint of trade. Photograph: Stefania D'Alessandro/Getty Images

Michel Platini's appeal against his ban from football has been thrown out by the European court of human rights. The ECHR said on Thursday morning that a seven-member panel of judges had dismissed the Frenchman's action against [Fifa's 2015 decision](#) and held that his human rights had not been violated.

As part of his action Platini had claimed his suspension had not been subject to a fair and independent hearing. He also claimed the ban was an illegal restraint of trade. In response the court offered a 9,000-word judgment that concluded with the words: "This complaint is manifestly ill-founded and must be rejected."

The decision to allow Fifa's decision to stand is a devastating blow to the former Uefa president's hopes of resurrecting his career in football. The ECHR decision is final and offers no chance of appeal.

Platini was found guilty by Fifa of taking an unexplained payment of [two million Swiss francs \(£1.35m\)](#) from Sepp Blatter in 2011. He claims the sum was a legitimate salary payment. Fifa maintains the transaction had no legitimate basis. The scandal derailed what had looked certain progress towards the top job at Fifa. The fallout also unseated Blatter and consigned the long-time president to his own exile from football, paving the way for the Gianni Infantino regime at Fifa.

Platini's eight-year ban was reduced on appeal to four. It expired last September. The case in the ECHR was an attempt to hold those proceedings unlawful, to establish Platini's innocence and beyond that to launch some kind of footballing comeback.

Its failure opens a path for [Fifa's own legal action](#) against Platini and Blatter. The governing body is attempting to reclaim the "[disloyal payment](#)", a sign of its continued hostility towards its former president and vice-president. "Fifa will continue to seek restitution of the 2m Swiss francs unduly paid by former Fifa president Joseph Blatter to Mr Platini back in February 2011," it said after the ECHR ruling.

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Jurij Toplak, an expert in ECHR law and a visiting professor at Fordham law school, said: "It's quite a blow for Platini. For five years he had maintained the process was unfair but he had not claimed the 'fair trial' violation in the process he had before the Swiss court. A person can claim a violation with the ECHR only when they have exhausted this argument at the national court. It seems Platini's lawyer had not done that.

"This ruling is also important because it crystallises the relationship between the court of arbitration for sport and the ECHR. When a party agrees to Cas arbitration voluntarily, and when the Swiss courts examine the appeal against Cas, it will be very hard to win a case at ECHR."