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Polish Football Teams in the Champions League - Does the Budget Decide Everything?

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Abstract: The research on the participation of Polish football teams in the Champions League presented a retrospective view of the competition in one of the most important and prestigious football tournaments in Europe and the world. The article attempts to answer the question about assessing the budget size of individual football federations for the level of national leagues. The quality of national competitions largely determines the chances of a high place in the UEFA cup and additionally translates into the number of teams that take part in the competition. Taking the above into account, it can be assumed that the budget size of the national leagues football teams is positively correlated with their high achievements in UEFA competitions. Unfortunately, the Polish football league, compared to other European leagues, has relatively modest financial resources, which, according to the authors, is reflected in both the number of Polish teams participating in the group stage and their results.

Keywords: football, UEFA, Champions League, budget, national league

Introduction

Football games have always enjoyed great interest not only from fans but also from a wide audience (Jarvie, 2006; Ilieş et al, 2014; Merkel, 2012; Dehoorne et al., 2019; Smith and Stewart, 2007). In a sense, football matches are a substitute for old knights' tournaments or even more modern wars - for national teams. Football plays as well important role in economy (Buhaş et al., 2017; Breitbarth and Harris, 2008; García-Sánchez, 2007; Herman et al., 2016). Which confirms both the scale of preparation and the amount of financial resources allocated for transfers of players

whose earnings in many clubs reach a cosmic level. An additional aspect of winning at a football stadium, in the case of national teams, is playing national anthems and the presence of national flags, not so much prepared by the organizers as visible in the stands (Ilieş et al., 2016; Chirazi, 2019). The most prestigious competitions of European teams - UEFA Cup - can count on the same scale of interest. In this case, instead of national emotions, we are dealing with equally great in psychological terms emotions associated with the known and described combination - our versus strangers (Scutti and Wendt, 2016). The local impact of football clubs has long ago turned into cross-border worship for the best football teams (James and Day, 2015), and supporter clubs for teams such as FC Barcelona and Real Madrid are found in many European countries and beyond (Shobe, 2008).

Methodology

To show the overall picture of the matches of Polish football club teams in the Champions League, a retrospective view of the games was used, in which Polish teams managed to be promoted only three times. On the one hand, this may indicate the weakness of Polish football, or on the other hand, the relatively small financial resources at the disposal of football clubs. In the era of player transfers (Mikołajczyk, 2011), the correct thesis about the decisive impact of finances on the purchase of players seems to be, which in most of the analyzed cases directly translates into success in UEFA competition. Taking the above assumption into account, the article attempts to answer the question about the assessment of the budget size of individual football federations at the level of national leagues.

The quality of national competitions largely determines the chances of a high place in the UEFA cup and additionally translates into the number of teams that take part in the competition. Taking the above into account, it can be assumed that the budget size of the national leagues football teams is positively correlated with their high achievements in UEFA competitions. Unfortunately, the Polish football league, compared to other European leagues, has relatively modest financial resources, which, according to the authors, is reflected in both the number of Polish teams participating in the group stage and their results. The analysis used a simple analysis of the facts and a comparison of the budgets of national football leagues.

Participation of Polish football teams in the UEFA Cup

In 1955, the Champions Cup began, which changed its name to the Champions League in 1992. The Polish team for 27 seasons of this elite league managed to advance to group competitions only three times. There are four qualifying rounds in the current system. The Polish Champion must start from the first elimination phase. Four strongest leagues, i.e. English, Spanish, German and Italian, have 4 places in groups. In the

1992/1993 season the games began in a changed form. Poland is represented by Lech Poznań, who won the championship and was the first representative from our country. The first round manages to beat Skonto Riga. In a two-leg game, it was enough to win in the capital of Greater Poland 2: 0 and draw in the capital of Latvia to advance. In the next stage, it turns out to be too strong Swedish champion from Goteborg, to whom the Poznan club succumbs after two matches, up to 0: 4.

In the next season, Poznan's representative is Poland again. In the first stage this time he goes to the team from Israel. He wins at home 3: 0 and away 4: 2. In the next stage there is a much more demanding opponent, which is Spartak Moscow, who defeats our Champion in the 7: 2 aggregate and again the eliminations end for the Polish team in the second stage. This time in the season 1994/95 our country is represented by a new Champion, and thus Legia Warsaw. The preliminary round for the team from Warsaw is the first and the last, succumbing to the team from Croatia, Hajduk Split in the aggregate as much as 5: 0.¹

In the 1995/1996 season, 4 years after the creation of the Champions League, the Polish team, namely Legia Warsaw, was promoted to group competitions in the defeat by beating Goteborg 3: 1, in Warsaw 1: 0 and away 2: 1. It can be said that Legia avenged Lech, who succumbed to Swedes 3 years ago. It didn't end in promotion, as always. The Polish champion managed to place behind Spartak Moscow behind him and thus advanced to the best eight of these elite games. In the first match, the Polish Champion defeated Rosenborg Trondheim, two weeks later he succumbed to Spartak in Moscow 2: 1. In October, he plays a match against the English club Blackburn Rovers, with which he wins 1: 0 in Warsaw, in a rematch November 1 there is a goalless draw. The seven points Legia wins will prove sufficient to reach the quarter-finals. The last two matches are the defeats of the club from the capital of Mazovia, the first on November 22 in Trondheim lost 4: 0. The next two weeks later in Warsaw, lost to Spartak 1: 0. After leaving the group, Panathinaikos Athens was waiting for the Warsaw club. A goalless tie is scored in Warsaw on June 6, but in Athens Legia is losing 3: 0. Nobody suspects that this is the last such a great success of the Polish club in the games of this rank.

In the next season, 1996/97, the Champion changes again in Poland. This time it's Widzew Łódź, which on August 7 wins the away match against Danish team Brøndby 2: 1. After an amazing end to the match, Widzew scores a goal at 3: 2, which gives him promotion. There is a 4: 4 draw in the tie, but more goals scored away gives promotion to the group games to the club from the capital of the Lodz region. The first match for Widzew takes place in Dortmund, Borussia, who wins 2: 1, turns out to be better. Atletico Madrid came to Łódź on 25 September, defeating the Polish

¹ www.livescore.in; 2019

Champion 4: 1. Widzew went to Bucharest on October 16, where he lost to the local Steaua 0: 1. Romanian champion comes to Poland after 14 days, but Widzewa team wins 2: 0. The last 20 November in Lodz hosts a team from Germany, which exports one point after a draw with the Polish club 2: 2. At the end of the group games on December 4, Łódź Widzew went to the capital of Spain, where he lost to the local Atletico 0: 1. After six matches, the Polish champion had 4 points. They only managed to take third place thanks to the goal balance and had to say goodbye to the Champions League cup round. I guess no one thought at the time that we would have to wait 20 years for the Polish team in the group stage of the UEFA Champions League.

In the 1997/98 season, Łódź Widzew becomes the Polish champion again. In the first round, he goes to Azerbaijani Neftchi Baku, with whom he wins 10: 0, which gives him hope to repeat the feat from the previous season and advance to the group stage. The second round brings the Polish champion to earth, who goes to the Italian Parma and loses 7: 1 on a two-legged basis. In the next season the team from Lodz becomes the champion again, but this time it is ŁKS, who in the first preliminary round goes to Azerbaijani Kapaz Ganja, with whom he wins 7: 2. The next step is to beat Manchester United English. At the stadium of red devils ŁKS is 2-0, only draws at home and are eliminated from the games. In the 1998/99 season Widzew returns to the chair of the leader, starting the game from the second round, in which he will face the Bulgarian club Liteks Łowecz with whom he drew in a 5: 5 aggregate. Bulgarians won at home 4: 1, the same amount Widzew won in Poland. They needed punishments, which ended with the victory of the Łódź team 3: 2. In the third round, the Polish Champion goes to Italian Fiorentina, with whom he loses 5: 1 after two matches.

At the beginning of the new century, Polonia Warsaw becomes the new champion of the country from the Vistula River, starts the game from the II preliminary ore and plays with Dinamo Bucharest. Away, the Polish team wins 4: 3, and 3: 1 at home, which gives them 7: 4 and promotion to the next round. In the third preliminary round, Polonia goes to the Greek champion Panathinaikos Athens, well known to Polish teams. In Płock, where our champion played his matches, on August 9, 2000 there is a 2: 2 draw, unfortunately fourteen days later at the stadium in Athens, Polonia successes 1: 2 in Warsaw and has to say goodbye to the group stage.

After another season, Wisla Krakow becomes the Polish champion, in the second qualifying round he has to face the Latvian champion, the first match takes place on July 25, 2001 in Liepaja, where Skonto Riga plays its matches and ends with the victory of the Polish team 2: 1. After a week, during a rematch in the capital of Lesser Poland, Wisla wins 1: 0, which gives two matches 3: 1 and promotion to the next stage of the competition. In the third preliminary round, the Polish champion has a very difficult task because he will play against FC Barcelona, with whom he will lose at home on August 8, 2001 3: 4 and away thirteen days later 0: 1.

After seven years break, Legia Warsaw returns to the seat of the leader, who goes to face the Macedonian champion FK Vardar Skopje in the capital of Macedonia on July 31, 2002 in the second preliminary round. The Polish champion wins 3: 1, and eight days later the team from the capital of the Mazowieckie voivodship draws 1: 1 at home and after two matches it is 4: 2, so the Polish team will advance to the next stage of the competition. In the next stage Legi comes to face the Spanish club FC Barcelona. The first match is played in the capital of Catalonia on August 14, 2002, where the hosts win 3: 0, after two weeks the match takes place in Warsaw, the guest wins again 1: 0. After two matches it is 4: 0 for the team from the Iberian Peninsula, and the Polish team is once again eliminated after the third preliminary round.

After a two-year break, Wisła Kraków is again a Polish champion. In the second round, he goes to the Cypriot team Omonia Nicosia. The first match takes place in Krakow on July 30, 2003 and Wisla 5: 2 wins. A week later, Nicosia on the island of the Mediterranean draws 2: 2, the team from the capital of the Lesser Poland voivodship wins 7: 4 after two matches, which means a promotion to the next stage for the Polish team. In the third round, the Polish champion has a very difficult task to defeat the Belgian league winner, Anderlecht Brussels. The first meeting takes place in the Belgian capital on August 13, 2003, where the hosts win 3: 1. Another clash takes place in Krakow on August 26, 2003. The guests win for the second time this time 1: 0 which results in a 4: 1 aggregate and the team from Brussels will advance to the next stage. In the 2003/04 season, she wins the Polish league for the second time in a row Krakowska Wisła and she will represent Poland in the qualifying rounds, and maybe later in the champions league itself.

In the 2004/05 season, for the preliminary phase, the champion from the capital of Lesser Poland is going to Georgia on July 27, 2004 for a match with Georgia Georgia Tbilisi, whom she defeated 8: 2, and after eight days in Krakow she won another victory this time 3: 0. After two matches it was 11: 2 and the Polish team's promotion to the third stage. In this round, the Spanish team of Real Madrid was waiting for Wisla, with which they lost twice at home on August 11, 2004 0: 2, then 1: 3 and had to say goodbye to the Champions League by losing after two matches 1: 5. The third season in a row wins the Polish league Wisla Krakow, the Polish team for the first time begins the struggle from the third qualifying round. He meets a team that Polish teams know better and better, namely the Greek Panathinaikos Athens. The first match takes place in Krakow on August 25, 2005, where the locals win 3: 1. Was it optimism? However, the final test must be taken away. In the Greek capital after regular time the game has the same result as in the capital of Lesser Poland, so the promotion will be decided by extra time, in which Panathinaikos scores a goal 4: 1 and is happy with the promotion by winning the

two goals in a single goal, i.e. 5: 4. Polish team again does not get into the group in the champions league.

In the 2006/07 Champions League, our country will be represented by a new champion, Warsaw Legia. In the second round he has to face the Icelandic national champion FK Hafnarfjoerdur, the first match takes place on July 26, 2006 on this volcanic island in the city of Hafnarfjoerdur, where the Polish team wins 1: 0 against the capital. A week later in Warsaw Legia wins 2: 0 and after two matches wins 3: 0, thus advancing to the next stage. In the third phase, the Ukrainian champion is waiting for the Polish team, and it is Shakhtar Donetsk. The first start takes place on August 9, 2006 in Donetsk, a club from a country lying on the Vistula loses 1: 0, two weeks later the Warsaw team is losing 2: 3 to their team from Ukraine and Shakhtar will continue to play by winning Legia after two 4: 2 matches. The conclusion is that Polish fans have to wait another year for the team in this elite group.

For the first time in history, Zagłębie Lubin becomes the Polish champion and it will represent Poland in the League of the best teams in Europe in the 2007/08 season. The winner of the Polish league goes in the second round to Romanian champion Steau Bucharest. The first meeting takes place in Lubin on July 31, 2007, the team from Bucharest wins 1: 0, nine days later there is a rematch in which the team from Romania wins again 2: 1 this time. After two matches it is 3: 1 and the Polish club is once again losing in the qualifying rounds. After a period of three years, Wisła Krakow wins the Polish league, and their rival in the 2nd stage will be a team from distant Israel. The first match will be played on July 30, 2008 in Jerusalem. The Beitar 2: 1 team won. After a week, the next meeting takes place in Krakow, where Wisła turns out to be better, winning 5: 0, which gives the Polish team 6: 2 on a two-fold basis and promotion to phase III. In this round a much more difficult task awaits the team from the capital of Lesser Poland. He has to face FC Barcelona. First, the match will take place on August 13, 2008 in the capital of Catalonia, where the team from Spain wins with Wisła 4: 0. August 26 at the white star stadium there is a rematch, which unexpectedly the team from Krakow wins 1: 0, but this is not enough for promotion to the group. After two matches it is 4: 1 for Barcelona. ²

The team from Krakow defends the title and will represent Poland in the elite European competitions in the 2009/10 season. In the second round Wisła will play on the field with the Estonian club Levadia Talinn. Due to the renovation of the stadium in Krakow, the winner of the Polish league must play their match in Sosnowiec on July 15, 2009, in which there is a 1: 1 draw. A week later the duel takes place in the capital of Estonia, which Wisła loses 0: 1, after two matches it is 2: 1 for Levadia, so after the second phase the Polish team breaks with the eliminations.

² www.hppn.pl; 2019

After a seventeen-year break, Poznań Lech returns to the first place in the league, who will appear in the Champions League qualifying in the 2010/11 season. In the second stage he will face the Azerbaijani team Inter Baku. The first meeting takes place at the Azeris on July 13, 2010, the team from the capital of Wielkopolska wins 1: 0. Then on July 21, 2010 the rematch takes place in Poznan, Inter wins 1: 0 and in the match is 1: 1, so extra time is needed to decide, after which the same result is still maintained. To determine the winner you will need a penalty, in which Lech turns out to be better by winning them 9: 8 and securing a game in the third round. In it he will meet the Czech Sparta Prague. The first match will be played in Prague on July 27, 2010. Here the Czech team wins 1: 0. After a week another start is in Poznań, in which Sparta 1: 0 also wins. After two matches it is 2: 0 for our neighbors team and the Polish team will not once again play in groups with the best teams in Europe.

After a year of break, Wisła from Krakow returns to the chair of the leader. In the preliminary stage II it must measure Skonto Riga. In the first skirmish on July 13, 2011 in the capital of Latvia, the Polish team wins 1: 0, and on July 19 at the Krakow stadium two goals are scored for Wisła, after two matches it is 3: 0 and the team from the capital of Małopolska reports in the third stage of elimination hitting the Bulgarian Liteks Łowecz team, with whom they win twice. First, 2: 1 in Lovech, then 3: 1 at Reymonta Street, the double-ended match results 5: 1 for the Polish champion. For the first time the Polish team reaches the fourth qualifying round after the so-called Platini Reform from the 2009/2010 season. At this stage, the Wisła will take on the Cypriot APOEL master Nicosia. On August 17, 2011, they take home this island club by winning 1: 0, a rematch six days later takes place in Nicosia, APOEL wins 3: 1, so only one goal was missing from the White Star for the desired promotion to the Champions League group competition. After two matches it is 3: 2 and the Cypriot team will play with the best teams in Europe.³

In the 2012/13 season Poland will be represented in Silesia by Wrocław Silesia, who will face the Montenegrin champion Budućnost Podgorica in the second qualifying round. The first match takes place in the capital of the country from the Balkans July 18, 2012, the team from the capital of the Dolnośląskie voivodship wins 2: 0, the revenge takes place a week later, in this match Montenegrins are better and they win 1: 0. After two matches there is 2: 1 for Silesia, which gets a pass to the next round. In the third preliminary phase, the Polish champion will take the Swedish team Helsingborgs IF, this time the two match will start in Wrocław on August 1, 2012, in which the Lower Silesian team will lose 0: 3, and in the away match seven

³ www.transfermarkt.pl; 2019

days later 1: 3. He is worse by five goals in a two-leg breakdown and loses 1: 6. Polish team the next season must wait for promotion to the best league in the world.

Legia Warsaw becomes the Polish champion after the 2012/13 season and she will represent the country lying on the Vistula in the competition of the best teams of Europe in the 2013/14 season. In the second stage, the team from the capital of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship will face the Welsh team The New Saints FC, the team from Poland will play first away on July 17, 2013 in Wrexham, for which they will win 3: 1, a week later in Warsaw is 1: 0 for the capital, the result after two matches is 4: 1 for Legia and makes them in the third phase. At this level of competition, the Polish champion is given the chance to face the Norwegian team Molde FK, in the Norwegian town on July 31, 2013 there is a 1: 1 draw, and eight days later in Warsaw the teams are again draw, this time 0: 0, the goal scored on leaving gives promotion to the Polish team. Victory in the next phase gives rise to group competitions, for the second time we manage to get this level of elimination for the Polish team. The team from the Polish capital in the fourth round will face the Romanian Steaua Bucharest, on August 21, 2013 in the capital of the country lying on the Black Sea the match ends in a 1: 1 draw, in Warsaw there is also a 2: 2 draw this time. Despite a 3: 3 draw after two matches, Steaua will get a pass to the group matches because he scored more away goals. Polish supporters could have thought that so little was missing, and on the other hand the same thing again, i.e. no play in the Champions League. For the second time in a row, the Polish champion is the team from the capital of the country lying on the Baltic Sea, in the second round Legia will be taken by the Irish team of St. Patrick's Athletic F.C., the first match on July 16, 2014 takes place in Warsaw, the winner of the Polish league draws 1: 1 against the Irish team, in a match after seven days in Dublin the Warsaw club wins by winning 5: 0 and thus advancing to the next stage. In the third phase of Warsaw Legia, a meeting was held with Scottish Celtic Glasgow. On July 30, 2014, Łazienkowska scores a 4: 1 result, a week later despite the victory of the Polish team, Celtic got a bye, so he won 3: 0, in the aggregate it was 4: 4. The away goal gave the Scottish team a promotion to the fourth round. Due to the mistake of the Legi staff and the introduction of a player at the end of the match who was not reported for this competition, the Polish team will not have a chance to fight for elite competition.⁴

In the 2015/16 season, Poland will be represented in the qualifying rounds by Poznań Lech, who will face in the second preliminary round the champion of Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e. K Sarajevo. First, the meeting was played in Sarajevo on July 14, 2015, the Polish champion won 2: 0, after eight days in the capital of Greater Poland, Lech won 1: 0, after playing matches it was 3: 0 for the Polish champion who in this way went on to the next round. The third elimination phase is a confrontation with

⁴ www.hppn.pl; 2019

the Swiss FC Basel and a very difficult task for the Polish team, first the match took place at Bułgarska Street. On July 29, 2015, the Poznań team lost at home 1: 3, a week later in Basel, the team from the capital of the Wielkopolska Province failed, this time 0: 1. After the match in Poznań and Switzerland, it was 4: 1 for FC Basel, who was given a pass to the next round. The Polish champion has once again lost in the qualifying rounds; the saying "maybe next year" has already been adopted in the country from the Vistula.

Budgets of selected European football leagues in the 2019/2020 season

Legia Warsaw is coming back to the first place in the league, it will represent Poland in the 2016/17 qualifying rounds, yet nobody knows that fans will remember this season for a long time. In the second round, the Polish champion gets on the best team from Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely HSK Zrinjski Mostar. The first meeting takes place on July 12, 2016 in Mostar, the teams draw 1: 1 with each other, in the rematch match on July 19, 2016 at the stadium at Łazienkowska Street, the locals win 2: 0, they are 3: 1 on the promotion and the Polish team is promoted. The third phase is a duel with the Slovak AS Trencin, in the town of Zilina at the southern neighbors of Poland, the team from the capital of the Mazowieckie voivodship wins 1: 0. A week later in Warsaw the result is 0: 0, thanks to the goal in Slovakia, Legia gets the next fourth stage of the elimination, here he goes to the Irish Dundalk FC. On August 17, 2016 in Dublin, the Polish champion wins 2: 0, after six days in the Polish capital, the teams draw 1: 1 with each other, and this means 3: 1 after two matches for the Polish champion and the third promotion of the Polish team in the history of the Champions League. In the group stage, in Group F Legia will face Borussia Dortmund, Real Madrid and Sporting Lisbon. The opening for the Polish team takes place in Warsaw on September 14, 2016 with the German club Borussia Dortmund, with which they lose 0: 6. Thirteen days later, i.e. on September 27, 2016, the Warsaw club goes to Lisbon and loses 0: 2 to the locals there. The next clash takes place on October 18, 2016 in Madrid, where Legia loses 0: 5 to the capital. The revenge takes place after two weeks and to the surprise of the Warsaw team they manage to draw 3: 3 with the mighty Real. When we look at the players and the budget of these two teams, this result is a big surprise (table 1).

The next confrontation of the Polish team takes place on November 22, 2016 in Dortmund, in this match there were as many as 12 goals, but the Polish champion lost 4: 8. At the end of group competitions, the last match will be played on December 7, 2016 at Łazienkowska Street, to take third place, which guarantees the game in the 1/16 league of Europe, Legia must win. She managed to do this by beating 1: 0 team from the capital of Portugal. The Polish team took the third place behind the back of German Borussia and Spanish Real, and ahead of Portuguese

Sporting, who accumulated three points with four points and goal statistics 9:24 will play in the knockout zone of lower competitions.⁵

Table 1. Budgets and balance of expenses and revenues in the 2019/20 leagues which have occurred at least once in the Champions League (in euros)

Source: own elaboration based on www.transfermarkt.pl (access: 12.10.2019).

League	Country of origin	Total market value (mln)	Average value Market (thous.)	Transfer charges	Revenue from transfer fees	Total balance
Premier League	England	9330,0	18430	1.551.465.000	826.570.000	-724.895.000
Serie A	Italy	5310,0	9690	1.172.976.000	856.760.000	-316.216.000
LALIGA	Spain	6180,0	12590	1.322.320.000	1.027.720.000	-294.600.000
1.Bundesliga	Germany	4710,0	8860	738.600.000	564.545.000	-174.055.000
Premier Liga	Russia	1100,0	2670	236.806.000	83.565.000	-153.241.000
Ligue 1	France	3590,0	6590	697.150.000	846.055.000	148.905.000
Super Lig	Turkey	665,3	1280	67.429.500	82.805.000	15.375.500
Premier Liga	Ukraine	326,1	100	9.900.000	3.450.000	-6.450.000
SuperLiga	Portugal	1130,0	2370	137.400.000	382.125.000	244.725.000
Eredivisie	Holland	1010,0	2090	115.900.000	36.030.000	249.130.000
Jupiler Pro League	Belgium	848,8	1750	145.540.000	225.680.000	80.140.000
Liga 1	Romania	211,6	489	6.785.000	13.475.000	6.690.000
Super League 1	Greece	314,7	735	25.720.000	16.700.000	-9.020.000
Premier League	Scotland	232,0	753	25.447.585	27.278.000	1.830.415
Ekstraklasa	Poland	195,0	400	7.124.500	18.623.500	11.499.000
Bundesliga	Austria	261,5	800	26.750.000	94.543.585	67.793.585
Superligaen	Denmark	204,2	579	27.279.666	55.302.666	28.023.000
Super League	Swiss	284,4	1030	12.836.000	42.200.000	29.364.000
Fortuna Liga	Czech	224,8	530	12.535.000	37.200.000	24.665.000
T-Com 1. HNL	Croatia	231,8	797	9.900.000	24.900.000	15.000.000
Nemzeti Bajnoksag	Hungary	105,4	330	4.825.000	4.550.000	-275.000
EFBET LIGA	Bulgaria	150,6	438	4.410.000	1.560.000	-2.850.000
Allsvenskan	Sweden	158,8	392	4.000.000	34.265.000	30.265.000
Division A	Cyprus	115,0	356	659.000	1.459.000	800.000
Tippeligaen	Norway	132,4	332	6.995.000	16.185.000	9.190.000
Corgon liga	Slovakia	62,7	191	1.150.000	2.350.000	1.200.000
SuperLiga SRBIJE	Serbia	231,6	541	8.040.000	21.800.000	13.760.000
Prva Liga	Slovenia	59,3	222	600.000	5.000.000	4.400.000
Ligat ha'Al	Israel	127,8	355	9.737.000	16.572.000	6.835.000
Premyer Liqasi	Azerbaijan	72,9	386	490.000	327.000	-163.000
Premier Liga	Kazakhstan	137,1	463	4.670.000	4.325.000	-435.000
Wyszejszaja	Belarus	90,8	255	725.500	1.484.300	758.800

⁵ www.transfermarkt.pl; 2019

In the 2017/18 season, the team from the capital will continue to represent Poland in the qualifying rounds of the best teams in Europe, because they defended the title. In the second round of the match Legia will play with the Finnish IFK Mariehamn on July 12, 2017. The first match takes place in the Finnish town of Mariehamn, where the Warsaw team wins 3: 0, a week later in the capital of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, the locals win 6: 0, after two matches it is 9: 0 and the Polish champion advances to the third stage of elimination, in which with the Kazakh team FC Astana on July 26, 2017 on their field, the capital players win 3: 1. After seven days, a rematch match takes place, in which Legia wins 1: 0, but unfortunately after matches played in the capital of Kazakhstan and Poland, they lose 3: 2 and this results in the promotion of the opposing team to the next phase. The Warsaw club becomes the national champion for the third time, the Polish team after changing the places allocated to a given country (wikipedia.org) must start the eliminations from the first round. The first match is played against the Irish Cork City FC on July 10, 2018. Legia wins 1: 0 away, and a week later 3: 0 at home, after two matches for the Polish team is 4: 0, which causes the game to continue in the competition. In the second stage, the champion from the Polish capital will play with the Slovak team Spartak Trnava, on July 24, 2018 at Łazienkowska St. the visiting team wins 2: 0, away the team from the Mazowieckie voivodship wins 1: 0, but it is not enough because they lost 1 after two matches : 2 and will not advance to the next round. Unexpectedly, Piast Gliwice becomes the Polish Champion, who in the 2019/20 season will represent Poland in elite competitions. In the first round at the Belarussian BATE Borisov, with which they draw 1: 1 away and lose 1: 2 at home, after two matches there is a 3: 2 result for the team from Belarus and the Polish team is eliminated as soon as possible. The question is how long will the crisis of Polish teams last.

Conclusions

Countries with a high budget also have a group stage. The total market value of the English Premier League, which ranks first in this matter, is over EUR 9 billion, and the Polish Ekstraklasa is far behind this country with a value of EUR 194 million. 26 places are allocated in advance in the group stage: four for England, Spain, Italy and Germany, three for France, two for Russia, one for Portugal, Ukraine, Belgium, Turkey and the Czech Republic. There are 6 places left for the remaining teams who have to go through a very difficult four-step elimination path (wikipedia.org). Countries that are guaranteed to play in the Champions League have a huge budget, while the other teams that are not immediately qualified cannot boast such money. Entering the competition is extremely difficult in this case for these teams. The Polish team has advanced to the group stage of the Champions League only three times - in the 1994/95, 1995/96 season and after a long break in 2016/17.

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