

## Beyond the strike: Italian football players as Cheaper Labour in “Serie A”

### They are significantly less paid than their international colleagues, reveals a study by IESEG School of Management

**August 2011.** This week has seen the very unusual stop of Italian Serie A with Totti, Del Piero, Ibrahimovich, Milito & Co. striking for industrial relations issues linked to the agreement on the collective contract. The main cause sounds marginal to the public audience. However, professional footballers in Italy could have other reasons for striking, above all those holding an Italian passport.

**According to a study from Antonio Giangreco and Johan Maes, researchers at IESEG School of Management, Italian players in the major “Serie A” league are significantly less paid than, alternatively, their European or non-European teammates.** In fact, starting from secondary data of the four last football seasons, it was found that by average that Italian players earned about 1.00 million euros per year, which is .68 million euros less than other European players and .42 million euros less than non-European players contracted by an Italian football club.

This gap is particularly relevant for defenders and midfielders. In fact, in the season 2007-08, for example, Italian defenders earned “only” 0.53 million euros against 1.3 million made by the other European players and the 1.01 million euros of the non-European players. The statistics for defenders show a similar trend up to the last season with, however, a general decrease of between 10% and 15% for the non-Italian category. Wages for Italian midfielders present, over the same period, the same tendency with a gap even larger at the advantage of European midfielders: for example, 0.96 million euros for 2009-10, and of 0.5 million euros for 2010-11.

The segmentation of footballers according to their performance in four categories (lowest, second lowest, second best, best performers) confirmed the same conclusion for the first season. In fact, Italian players appear to be the least paid within the same category of performers if compared to other European players and non-European players contracted by an Italian football club. The discriminating effect against Italian players becomes milder to the extent that for the last season examined 2010-11, it is true only for top performers. A “cannoniere” is worth less than an international star.

#### Press contact:

Nathalie Heredia, IESEG School of Management  
Tel: + 33 1 55 91 10 10 / Email: [n.heredia@ieseg.fr](mailto:n.heredia@ieseg.fr)  
[www.ieseg.fr](http://www.ieseg.fr)

#### About IESEG School of Management

Established in 1964, IESEG School of Management is now ranked as one of the top 10 business schools in France. With campuses in Lille and Paris, the school delivers select bachelor’s and master’s programmes entirely in English. IESEG enjoys a unique association with CNRS, the largest [basic science](#) agency in Europe, which contributes to the school’s interdisciplinary approach to modern business problems. IESEG is a truly international institution, with 72 % of tenured faculty coming from outside of France, and a strong network of 161 partner universities in 46 countries around the world.

IESEG School of Management is member of:

Nathalie Heredia