



Strasbourg, 21 July 2003

T-RV (2003) 5

**European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events
and in particular at Football Matches (T-RV)**

Compliance with Commitments

**Follow-up report to the Advisory visit
in Azerbaijan in June 2001**

Note: The report of the Advisory visit is contained in document T-RV (2001) 15

Following the recommendations of the Advisory Group:

Suggests that the Government sets in place procedures for identifying and reporting any incidents; should the number of this increase, it should establish a formal monitoring system;

Last year there were no serious incidents observed in the area. Clubs and federations take urgent measures in cases of small indiscipline.

While the prognosis for the future is optimistic, violence in sport is an issue which needs to be kept under constant review. Analysis of trends and development of more sophisticated, far-reaching, and if necessary, tougher strategies will ensure that this issue will not get out of hand.

Sport in Azerbaijan is growing very rapidly. The interest for sports gathers many spectators to national and international sports events. We do not exclude that in future any incidents might take place and therefore we plan to draft strategies and implement preventative measures.

We consider the organisation of meetings (seminars, trainings, conferences) based on European practice, pooling work in the Academy of Physical Culture and Sport and collecting scientific research and enrich field practitioners' action potential, organising training for the field professionals, promoting communication and information exchange via website.

At the same time we encourage sports organisations and local authorities to develop pedagogical and educational youth programmes, and promote exchange of views of young spectators and volunteers within the framework of pedagogical or sports, cultural programmes against violence.

Recommends that the Government takes steps to ensure that the division of responsibilities is clearly recorded in writing and that, where possible, this is enshrined in legislation;

Division of responsibilities among corresponding bodies is conducted on the basis of an agreement. We had no need to adopt special regulative laws on division of responsibilities because of the absence of cases of spectator violence.

However, we work on amending the relevant provisions to current Azeri legislation to take useful measures in case of any future incidents and also to prevent violence in general. Existing national legislation gives us an opportunity to regulate work in this area. There are considered responsibilities for the violation of the rights and norms of providing public securities of the spectators and citizens in the "Law on Police", Criminal code and Administrative code. All this questions are regulated by articles 3 and 5 of the "Law on Police", article 296 of the Administrative Code, articles 120, 126, 127, 128, 132, 220, 233 and others of the Criminal Code.

Recommends that the government, having consulted FIFA and UEFA, identifies how to improve its relationship with the Azerbaijani Football Association and professional football clubs and to bring them within the remit of the national law without interfering with what are legitimately private matters;

Azerbaijani football has fallen into crisis recently. Football clubs refused to participate in national championship because of leaders of the Azerbaijan Football Federations Association (AFFA) whose manner of management violates provisions of the Charter. In order to improve the relationship between

AFFA and professional football clubs, a Commission of representatives of the FIFA, UEFA, AFFA, Ministry and clubs was established. However for the time being the Commission has made no progress in resolving the problem. Last year the national football championship did not take place as a result of suspension imposed by UEFA, FIFA on the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA). During the visit of the FIFA/UEFA delegation to Azerbaijan in May 2003, positive decisions were reached in collaboration with AFFA Executive Committee, the nation's first division clubs and the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism. Following these agreements the national football championship resumed on 17 May 2003 and the FIFA Emergency Committee lifted the suspension on the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan.

It is expected that during next couple of months new elections for AFFA will be held. We hope that after these elections mutual understanding and close cooperation will have a place between AFFA, clubs and State bodies will occur.

Suggest that the Government, in consultation with the police and other authorities, reviews whether, and, if so, to what extent, some of these tasks could in due course be performed by suitably trained stewards;

Following recommendations of the Standing Committee, the number of police present at sports events has been reduced. Now we enlist 500-1000 policemen (instead of the previous 1000-1500) at the national championship and 1000-1500 (instead of 1500-2000) at international matches.

It is proposed to reduce their number again in the future. Volunteers carry out a part of the work. Certain progress may be observed in using volunteers' assistance, especially in accompanying spectators, distributing brochures, leaflets, meals and refreshments, using a music during the breaks, etc.

Recommends that the Government considers recovering some of the cost of providing police inside stadia from the ticket or television receipts for the match.

The police have not been paid from the ticket sales and television receipts for the matches. The Ministry itself solves this problem together with police because considers it as a problem of state importance.

For the reason of recent violation of state and governmental regulations by the AFFA, the Ministry and police were compelled to solve all problems concerning football matches. We hope that after elections to AFFA these matters will be discussed in fairly close co-operation.

Recommends that the Government reviews the design and management of the entrances to the National Stadium;

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the European experts, there were certain changes made during reconstruction of the National Stadium. Thus, previously the athletes went to cloak-rooms passing through the stands full of spectators, which did not meet safety requirements and exposed the athletes to danger. Now the location of cloakrooms has changed and all entrances and exits are completely safe.

With a view to managing spectators easily, new turnstiles were installed at the central entrance of the stadium.

Suggests that any proposals to increase the number of spectators attending matches and encouraging other groups to attend should include a review of ticket prices;

The questions of selling tickets at low prices and, in some cases, free entrance (by special invitation) are easily regulated with federations and football clubs. However in cases of international matches it has not yet been possible to solve this problem with AFFA.

Recently a lot of spectators have attended such sport events as volleyball, handball, basketball, boxing and wrestling.

Last May more than seven thousand spectators daily attended the European Senior Wrestling Championships held in Baku. However the matches of the national football championship gather no more than two thousand spectators.

Welcomes the upgrading already carried out at the National Stadium and the National Oil Company Stadium in Surakhani and the further improvements planned at these two stadia and at the Central Stadium in Sumgayit; in the latter case, the responsible authorities should identify priorities and draw up a detailed programme of work to be undertaken as resources permit;

Field grass coverage irrigation system was changed within the frameworks of reconstruction carried out in the National Stadium. For safety purposes the cloakrooms were constructed far from the stands. Installation of new seating was completed. With a view to managing spectators easily new turnstiles were installed at the central entrance of the stadium.

Reconstruction and renovations carried out at the National Oil Company Stadium in Surakhani and the Stadium in Bakihanov district, were also finished. It is planned to reconstruct the Central Stadium in Sumgait.

Recommends that, if the necessary powers do not already exist the Government should enact appropriate legislation to empower either the national or local authorities, in consultation with the police and fire service, to determine and enforce a safe maximum capacity for all stadia in Azerbaijan;

For this purpose, there is no need to establish additional national or local institutions because the police and fire service existing as individual state institutions are enlisted for providing maximum safety at all stadiums.

Commends the Government, National Olympic Committee and other bodies for their efforts in promoting sport at all levels;

It should be noted that the National Olympic Committee is doing a lot for promoting sport at all levels. There is a possibility to hold various competitions at international and national level at six new sports complexes constructed in different regions of Azerbaijan. The problem of comfortable entrance-exit and viewing of the game by spectators was taken into consideration during construction works. Governmental bodies have already renovated 50 sports objects. Private sports clubs have created 10 sport objects. Besides, the NOC has carried out measures towards restoration and development of many sport disciplines.

Welcomes the setting up of fans clubs and advocates the development of further initiatives, in particular in football, as part of integrated policy for promoting social inclusion, education, and the development of voluntary work; wherever possible this work should be promoted by the state and local authorities, the Football Association, the clubs and the schools in partnership.

Various sport organisations functioning in Azerbaijan have conducted very successful work with fan clubs. State bodies do a lot to promote and carry out social and preventive arrangements. Now four fan clubs are officially functioning and that is a result of the work conducted by sport clubs with fans. From 2002 Azerbaijani volleyball, handball, basketball teams at national and club level regularly participate in the events of the World and European qualification tournaments and European Champions' League. These matches have gathered from 2 - 7000 spectators. Special work is carried out for the organisation of such matches. A further volleyball fan club was set up last year.

We understand that one of the major ways of reducing violence in sport is through the education process, thereby changing community attitudes so that violent behaviour is perceived as being unacceptable. This involves promoting the view that sport is for participation, fun and enjoyment and that winning at all costs is not everything.

Therefore, as it was mentioned above, we encourage sports organisation and local authorities to develop pedagogical and educational youth programmes, and promote exchange of views of young spectators and volunteers within the framework of pedagogical or sports, cultural programmes against violence.

In the education process we also promote hospitality attitude towards opponent teams and spectators, by emphasizing the hospitality of the Azerbaijani nation.

Taking into account an extreme importance of this problem, we have constantly taken it under our control and have conducted measures for averting spectator violence and misbehavior at sports events.

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