

STANDING COMMITTEE (T-RV)

EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON SPECTATOR VIOLENCE AND
MISBEHAVIOUR AT SPORT EVENTS AND
IN PARTICULAR AT FOOTBALL MATCHES



Strasbourg, 8 December 2011

T-RV (2011) 38 FINAL

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

Project on Compliance with Commitments

Respect by Austria of the Convention

**Follow-Up Report by Austria
on the recommendations of the Standing Committee
following the Evaluation visit on 29-31 March 2005**

FINAL

Adopted at the 33rd meeting of the Standing Committee

1. Introduction

Austria was among the first countries to sign the convention when it was opened on 19th August 1985. Austria ratified the convention on 4 February 1988 and it brought it into force on 1st April 1988.

In comparison to other countries football related incidents in Austria have been reduced to a low level, most statistic figures in this field are falling the last three years.

Nonetheless especially for the organisation of the UEFA EURO 2008 – together with Switzerland – Austria has to enhance its strategies towards sports related incidents, which also includes the introduction of additional legal measures.

In Austria efforts are not solely concentrated on football, international sport federations know the high standards in safety and security, so Austria has the honour to host important major sports events on regular basis.

In the last years for instance the World Icehockey Championship (2005), the World Cycling Championship (2006), the European Championship in Men's Handball (2010), the American Football World Championship and the European Championship in Men's Volleyball (2011) were held in Austria. In 2012 Austria will also be host of the 1st Youth Olympic Winter games.

So Austria has developed a significant know-how on management of larger sport events and to ensure safety and security for spectators and participants.

2. Evaluation visit

In 2005 (29.3. to 31.3.2005) a team of the Standing Committee made an evaluation visit in Austria.

The visit was felt by the delegates very well organised and generously hosted by representatives of the Austrian government. The Evaluation Team felt warmly welcomed and provided with comprehensive information and documentation.

The Austrian authorities prepared a very clear and comprehensive national report (T-RV (2004) 21) which set out the coherent strategy and co-ordinated policy of the Austrian government departments and other agencies. This was an invaluable reference document which addressed most of the issues which the evaluation team wished to raise. This enabled the team to focus on specific issues and to validate the comments in the national report through its own observations.

During the visit, Austrian authorities provided the evaluation team with additional written information, which contained useful complementary data, and helped to complete the report.

The delegation had the opportunity to meet all the major parties engaged - political representatives, officials in charge of sport policy, security experts of the Austrian Ministry of the Interior - and therefore gain insight into all relevant aspects of the Austrian spectator violence policy.

Members of the evaluation team also attended an international footballmatch in Vienna in the "Ernst Happel-Stadium" (World Cup Qualifier: Austria vs. Wales). They were given the opportunity to

inspect all parts of the stadium both before and during the match. The crowd behaved well, but there were certain incidents which were a result of the clubs' procedures for dealing with ticket controls.

The report (T-RV (2006) 20) was adopted 10.November 2006 European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches (T-RV)

3. General conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation Team

The Evaluation Team stated in their report, that important work has been done on recent years in Austria to comply with all provisions of the Convention and in order to ensure a high level of safety and security at sport events.

The evaluation team concluded that Austria meets all the obligations of the Convention. Nonetheless there were some recommendations which could help to optimizing the Austrian system.

- To review the arrangements for controlling the admission of supporters, particularly at high risk matches (Art. 3.4.c)
- To establish the standards, training and quality insurance of stewards (Art. 3.2)
- To secure and monitor the effectiveness of stadium bans (3.4d)
- To consider the establishment of a clearer division of responsibility inside sport venues, in order to make the organiser responsible for maintaining order and to plan the involvement of police forces in light of the principle of subsidiary (Art. 3.1)
- To enhance the use of the expertise and experience of the National Information Point (Art. 4.1)

4. Euro 2008

On 12 December 2002 Austria and Switzerland were awarded the joint hosting of the European Football Championship 2008. Both countries began the preparation for this event very early.

The EURO 2008 in Austria and Switzerland ended on 29 June 2008, and has seen the largest police operation ever in Austria's history.

- 16 matches were played in Austria (including the Final) in Vienna
- 550,000 spectators in the four stadia in Austria
- Almost 2 million guests in Austria
- 155 million TV viewers watched each of the 31 matches live worldwide

According to the feedback received from organiser UEFA, national and international press, competing countries and many guests from Austria and abroad, this football event excelled in perfect organisation, highest professionalism, and a welcoming and hospitable atmosphere.

Comprehensive preparation and many helping hands were necessary to achieve this result. During the tournament, Austria at all times conveyed a positive safe and secure picture.

Although it was the largest police operation in Austria (all 27,000 Austrian police officers were involved in the security precautions in one way or another), citizens and guests felt welcomed, safe and secure but by no means overprotected.

The Police's friendly and helpful conduct during the EURO 2008 had certainly greatly contributed to this enormous success.

Since nowadays no country can handle an event of this dimension alone, without the support of all countries involved, so international Cooperation was one of the main pillars of the Austrian security strategy for the EURO 2008, especially in the areas of data and personnel exchange but also in Border Control. So more than 1100 officers from all over Europe were deployed in Austria (850 officers from Germany had law enforcement power)

The guidelines Austria followed for this tournament were based on the inferences of the EURO 2004 in Portugal and the World Cup 2006 in Germany and are still valid for all sport events.

5. Legal Developments in Austria since the Evaluation visit:

For the EURO 2008 Austria introduced some legal measures regarding violence at major sport events on the legal basis of the Austrian Code of Police Practice.

Since 01.01.2006 the legal possibilities enable:

- to decree a security zone around a stadium (radius max. 500m) by the local security authorities in connection with risk matches,
- to hold so called “supporter interview” (“Gefährderansprachen”) with special risk supporters in connection with sport events,
- the setting-up of a risk supporter data base.

Since 01.01.2008 the legal possibilities enabled authorities:

- to commit special risk supporters in connection with sport events to visit a defined police station during a football match.

Since 01.01.2010 the fines for the (illegal) using of pyrotechnics were raised (especially in connection with sports events). But the law in general foresees two exceptions:

- for persons who have the permission to use pyrotechnics after the trade law
- an exception for non- or less dangerous objectives (like bengalos) provides for the possibility for fans to use pyrotechnics under the following conditions:
 - at least 16 years old
 - reliable (no previous convictions, not drunk, etc.)
 - guarantee that danger for life, health, property, public security or unacceptable nuisance is avoided

6. Reaction to the recommendations of the Evaluation Team

a) To review the arrangements for controlling the admission of supporters, particularly at high risk matches (Art. 3.4.c)

Since 2005 also the cooperation between organisers of sport events and the police developed further in a positive way. Also the numbers of Spotters in Austria were raised to 180, which also overview private measures for football games and can have a positive influence.

Furthermore some clubs introduced systems of personalised selling of tickets for some domestic and international games.

With all these measures, the situation in Austria regarding the controlling the admission of supporters, particularly at high risk matches generally can be described as satisfying.

b) To establish the standards, training and quality insurance of stewards (Art. 3.2)

Since the responsibility regarding private security in Austria lies in the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth at the moment, the legal framework is handled under the Commerce law.

An edict from 2011 shall regulate the preconditions and the necessary training hours for all employees in the field of private security. This edict is supposed to raise the overall situation regarding private stewarding in and around stadia.

But still a major problem is the high fluctuation of employees in this field, since the income in this area can be described as low.

Before the EURO 2008 the Austrian League together with the Football Federation (ÖFB) launched a training system, which unfortunately was not accepted very much by clubs.

Now a second attempt for an education program for stewards by the League is running. As a second step, a specialised training for executive personal is planned. Also the regulations for the use of stewards in Austria demands higher standards of the stewards employed.

c) To secure and monitor the effectiveness of stadium bans (3.4d)

Since Austria – apart form jurisdictional stadium bans - only knows private Stadium bans by league, clubs or the federation, the responsibility lies in the hands of the clubs.

After a pitch invasion that forced the game between local rivals Austria Vienna and Rapid Vienna to be abandoned in May 2011, a series of measures were introduced by the Federal Ministry of the Interior together with the Austrian Football Federation (ÖFB) and the Austrian League for the professional football games of the season 2011/12.

One of those measures is the support of private securities at entrance controls by the Austrian police, if necessary, but also enhanced operations by the spotters in and outside of the stadia, which also includes the support regarding fans with active stadium bans.

d) To consider the establishment of a clearer division of responsibility inside sport venues, in order to make the organiser responsible for maintaining order and to plan the involvement of police forces in light of the principle of subsidiary (Art. 3.1)

As mentioned before, since 2005 there were many significant changes in general. Until now a better cooperation between organisers and the police has been established. There is now a clearer job division between private organisers and the police.

In Austria the organising club has the obligation to provide safety and security in first place. Only when they are not able to secure the event anymore, than police steps in. As mentioned before, better prepared private security helps reducing the numbers of policemen, who has to be deployed in and around the stadium area.

Two cooperation contracts were signed in 2007 and 2009 between the Austrian League, the Austrian football federation and the Ministry of the Interior to guarantee a closer cooperation between these three entities in the light of a strict division of responsibility – as also foreseen in the Austrian law.

The major tasks therefore are:

- the institution of responsible persons for safety and security,
- to find the best possible communication flows between the partners,
- the consequent usage of the “3D-philosophy”,
- close cooperation regarding the training and regularly evaluation of the stewards employed at football games,
- cooperation in the prevention of football-related crimes,
- cooperation in finding the best constructive, technical and organisational safety and security constraints,
- enhanced usage and consequent monitoring of Stadium bans.

e) To enhance the use of the expertise and experience of the National Information Point (Art. 4.1)

The National Information Point in Austria is a well known and respected partner both domestic and international. It cooperates regularly with the Austrian League and Football Federation, but also with all other Sport Federation in case of major sport events (Championships or international games).

Therefore the information restricts not only to Football but also to Icehockey, Ski events, Basketball, Handball and any other sports with an international dimension.

Austria is also a partner in the network of NFIP, but also represented in international forums like the Meeting of experts for major sports events as sub-group of the Law Enforcement Working Party and the Standing Committee.

Austria also contributed to the development of several recommendations of the Standing Committee as well as in the development of the EU-Handbook with recommendations for international police cooperation and measures to prevent and control violence and disturbances in connection with football matches with an international dimension, in which at least one Member State is involved (latest version: (2010/C 165/01)) and also the Council Resolution concerning recommendations for hosting major football and other sports events, in particular tournaments with more than one organising country.

7. Development of the recommendations since 2005

a) Recommendation Rec (2008) 1 of the Standing Committee on the checklist of measures to be taken by the organisers of professional sporting events and by the public authorities as adopted by the Standing Committee on 31 January 2008

The recommendation is taken into account whenever major sport events are prepared.

b) Recommendation Rec (2008) 2 of the Standing Committee on the use of visiting stewards (adopted by the Standing Committee on 30 April 2008)

For international games as well as for domestic games with a high amount of travelling fans, some clubs in Austria nowadays use the system of visiting stewards to accompany their fans with good experiences.

c) Recommendation Rec (2008) 3 of the Standing Committee on the use of pyrotechnical devices at sports events adopted by the Standing Committee on 6 June 2008

As mentioned before, the fines for the (illegal) using of pyrotechnics were raised (especially in connection with sports events) were raised drastically in 2010.

d) Recommendation Rec (2009) 1 of the Standing Committee on the use of public viewing areas at large scale sports events (adopted by the Standing committee on 30 March 2009)

For the World Cup 2006 and the EURO 2008 a lot of Public Viewing areas were available for fans throughout Austria. Based on the German experiences the Ministry of the Interior in Austria has set nation-wide identical standards for safe Public Viewing events, which were carefully prepared and coordinated with the provincial authorities responsible for event safety.

These recommendations are:

- enclosure (with fences) of the venue
- limiting the number of visitors, depending on the local circumstances
- determination of closing hours
- access control by qualified stewards
- use of "wave-breakers", if the number of visitors exceeds 10,000
- CC-TV systems if necessary
- adequate number of first aid/medical personnel
- prohibition of fireworks
- no alcohol sale, except light beer
- no sale of bottled drinks
- benches and tables firmly mounted to the ground
- loudspeaker systems
- substitute programmes
- avoiding construction work near the event
- information provided neighbourhood residents, catering industry, etc. in time
- providing car parks

These measures contributed to the recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Council of Europe in the sector of Public Viewing.

Since Austria was not participating in the World Cup 2010 in South Africa organisers decided not to offer Public Viewing-Areas due to the low interest of fans in opposite to the necessary costs for security, so “Public Viewing” was limited to local pubs (mostly with outdoor facilities) for this tournament. Further developments in this field depend on the success of an Austrian Team to qualify for an European Championship or a World Cup in the future.

e) Recommendation Rec (2011) 1 of the Standing Committee on safety officer, supervisor and safety steward training (+Manual on safety officer, supervisor and safety steward training) (adopted by the Standing Committee on 22 June 2011)

Since the Recommendation was adopted only a view month ago, it has currently not influenced the situation in Austria.

8. Conclusion

In 2005 the Evaluation Team of the Standing Committee stated in their report, that important work has been done in recent years in Austria to comply with all provisions of the Convention and in order to ensure a high level of safety and security at sport events.

They also provided Austria with valuable recommendations, which helped authorities to optimise the situation in Austria. These recommendations were important hints for the preparation for the EURO 2008, which were a big success for Austria. But it was even more important, to use the experiences of this major tournament also for all other sport events in Austria since than.

So the Austrian authorities were very delighted to pick up the suggestions of the Standing Committee Evaluation team to make sport events in Austria even safer and more secure in a continued process.