

SPORTING EVENTS

THE SAINT-DENIS  
CONVENTION IN  
PORTUGAL

Portugal has reaffirmed its commitment to security, security and services at sporting events by implementing the Council of Europe's Saint-Denis Convention. The Authority for the Prevention and Combating of Violence Associated with Sport (APCVD) is leading these efforts and has played a central role. in the implementation of these best practices to make safer, more secure and more welcoming sporting events.



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international cooperation and harmonisation of standards in various fields. A significant example of this commitment is Portugal's participation in the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Approach to Security, Safety and Services at Football Matches and other Sports Events, also known as the "Saint Denis Convention". Adopted by the Council of Europe, the Convention is the only binding international legal framework for major sporting events, promoting cooperation between public and private stakeholders. This international treaty, open to all countries, aims to make these

safer, more secure and more welcoming events. The Convention was opened for signature at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, France, on 3 July 2016, on the occasion of UEFA Euro 2016. Portugal demonstrated support and commitment to the principles of the Convention from the outset, being one of the first countries, out of a total of 14 States, to sign it on that occasion. It deposited its instrument of ratification on 19 June 2018, and the Convention entered into force in the country on 1<sup>st</sup> August of the same year. The implementation of the Convention reflects the country's commitment to promoting international principles and good practice at sporting events, demonstrating its commitment to basing its policies on the provisions of the

of this text and the recommendations adopted by the Committee for Safety and Security at Sports Events (equal-

**L**ortugal has a long tradition of active participation in international treaties, reflecting its commitment to

## (THE ESSENTIAL

■ The APCVD adopts an approach preventive measures precautionary measures to prohibit access to stadiums by people identified for illegal acts in a sporting context.

■ ANEPC and the forces, in cooperation and the APCVD provide training for safety managers so that they can be a driving force in implementing the principles of the Convention.

known as the "Saint-Denis Committee"), decision-making body that oversees its implementation by the States Parties. Following on from this, and with a view to preventing and controlling violence and incidents associated with sporting events, as well as strengthening integrated and multi-institutional approach advocated by the Convention, one of the immediate measures resulting from the ratification of the Convention was the creation an entity dedicated exclusively exercising the powers of the State authority in the field of preventing and combating violence associated with sport<sup>1</sup>. The Portuguese government justified this measure by importance of "strengthening effectiveness, efficiency and speed of processes", recognising the urgent need to provide the public administration with adequate operating and specialisation conditions.

### THE CREATION OF THE APCVD

In 2019, the APCVD was created. It is a central service of the direct administration of the State, with administrative autonomy, placed under the direction of the member of the government responsible for sport. In collaboration with the security forces, it ensures compliance with the legal framework for combating violence, racism, xenophobia and intolerance at sporting events, investigating administrative offences and imposing fines and ancillary penalties, while investing in preventive measures. The APCVD promotes best practice through multi-institutional cooperation, becoming a benchmark for the prevention of sporting violence. Although the entry into force of the Convention in Portugal means that it has become part of the national legal order, its implementation still needs to be accompanied by legislative, regulatory, administrative and institutional changes. The legislative changes made following ratification reflect Portuguese legislator's commitment to aligning the national legal framework with the main objectives of the Convention. The main aim of this new legal regime, which focuses on safety and the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance at sporting events, is to ensure that sporting events take place in a better environment.

The changes include an extension of the scope of the law to include gatherings of supporters in public spaces before, during and after sporting events. The regulations on the prevention of violence, an essential instrument for transposing and adapting the requirements of the law to the reality of sports federations and to the Convention itself, have also been updated. This new version introduces the obligation for organisers to define minimum procedures for service measures. In addition, various obligations of sports event organisers have been clarified, including the possibility imposing sanctions prohibiting access to sports venues and the requirements relating to the roles of the security officer and fan liaison officer, thereby efficiency and responsibility in the management of sports events.

### BETTING ON THE EXCLUSION OF HIGH-RISK SUPPORTERS

Until mid-2019, there was a widespread feeling impunity for illegal behaviour associated with sporting events in Portugal. However, since the start of APCVD's activity, there has been an upward trend in convictions for acts of racism, intolerance and other forms of violence associated with sport, as well as in the number of complaints. This phenomenon is the result of the measures implemented by the authority, the work carried out raise awareness among citizens and sports officials, and the speed with which cases are dealt with. In 2018, there were around thirty administrative measures access to sports venues. Since then, in five years of activity, around 1,500 of the bans on access to sports venues applied by the APCVD have come into force. The authority wishes to adopt a rapid and effective preventive approach by applying precautionary measures prohibit access to sports venues for people identified for illegal acts in a sporting context. It should be noted in the event of proof and a consequent conviction, the ban on access to sports venues is then applied as a sanction ancillary to the main sanction, the latter being of a pecuniary nature.



1. Presidential regulatory decree n°10/2018 of 3 Oct. of the Council of Ministers.

### ●●● ANALYSIS REPORTS ON VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH SPORT (RAViD)

The APCVD and the National Football Information Point (PNIF), under the responsibility of the Public Security Police (PSP), jointly produce the Rapport d'analyse de la violence associée au sport (RAViD). These reports, drawn up each sporting season, enable regular monitoring of the qualitative and quantitative evolution of incidents recorded by the public authorities, as well as indicators of operational or procedural activity, as part of the prevention and fight against violence associated with sport. Analysis of the document in question shows that Portugal has seen an increase in the volume of incidents associated with sporting events. The response and reciprocity that the security forces have found in the work of the APCVD have contributed significantly to this increase in registrations, while at the same time warning of the consequences of non-compliance with the established rules. For example, failure to comply with prohibition measures imposed by the authorities currently constitutes a qualified offence of disobedience, which can result in offender being arrested by the authorities. The APCVD, in its commitment to following the objectives of the Saint-Denis Convention, has worked hard to continually educate and popularise best practice in the three pillars enshrined in the Convention: security, safety and services. The aim is to ensure that the professionals and agents involved in the security of sporting events have the tools need to carry out their tasks, and to promote a sporting environment in which people feel safer and more welcome. One example is the Portuguese translation of the S4 toolbox produced by the Council of , which includes 16 information and is available online. The Council of Europe's online course on the Saint-Denis Convention has also been translated into Portuguese by the APCVD in collaboration with the Council of Europe and the University of Liverpool, which is a direct response to the current needs of professionals involved in safety and security management at sporting events in Portugal. Free access means that training is flexible and adapted to the pace of each user, covering the whole of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and Portuguese-speaking countries.

### TRAINING COURSES FOR SAFETY MANAGERS SPORTS FACILITIES

Thanks to training that is now regulated and compulsory by law, safety officers acquire the knowledge they need to be a driving force in implementing the principles of the Convention. This training, available since February 2024, was developed and organised by the APCVD and delivered by the police forces and the National Emergency and Civil Protection Authority (ANEPC). It is structured in two levels of complexity - basic and advanced - depending on the degree of risk and the capacity of the sites where the sporting events are held; the basic training taking place online and the advanced training being given face-to-face. In order to promote qualification and the acquisition of the skills needed to carry out the duties of safety officer, topics relating to the legal framework, ethics in sport, sports event management and integrated multi-institutional support are covered. Theoretical and practical training for security managers covers security and service requirements, facilitating coordination with all the stakeholders involved in the event.

Preventing violence associated with sport and promoting high standards of hospitality and safety requires coordinated action between a variety of organisations, both public and private, which play an important role. These include the judicial authorities, the security forces, the APCVD, Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth (IPDJ), competition organisers, clubs, supporters, local communities and the media. The authority played a central role fostering synergies and promoting joint, integrated work with all the players involved. To achieve these objectives, the APCVD has implemented various awareness-raising and prevention initiatives, seeking to promote essential values such as tolerance, solidarity, *fair play*, respect and inclusion.

It also organises the "security, safety and services" working group, which brings together football, basketball, volleyball, handball and skating federations, as well as the Portuguese professional football league. The aim of this group is to harmonise procedures for entry and reception of supporters, to promote



training for security and fan liaison officers, and supporting the continuous improvement of sports facilities. In order adapt and improve conditions at sports venues and thus ensure a good environment for all fans, various initiatives have been implemented to strengthen security and safety measures and promote a culture of service (hospitality). In coordination with the above-mentioned sports federations and the police authorities, the APCVD organised visits to 79 sports venues in the first half of 2023 that could form part a national network of venues prepared to host major or high-risk sporting events. This project helped the venues to comply with the new legal requirements, strengthening Portugal's capacity to host major sporting events.

#### **"MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME": AN INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE HOSPITALITY AT SPORTING EVENTS IN PORTUGAL**

The "Make Yourself at Home" campaign is an initiative that aims to reinforce international principles and best practice in security at sporting events by highlighting the vital role of hospitality in reducing tension and hostilities. Developed with the support of the various organisations that

In the opinion of the working group, the campaign has been accompanied by a number of concrete actions aimed at creating a more welcoming and safer environment at sports venues. The "Make yourself at home" campaign encourages clubs to create a fan-friendly environment that promotes coexistence and safety.

In 2023, the APCVD organised the first edition of the S4 Congress, a pioneering event in Portugal to discuss best practice and innovation in safety at sporting events. This congress marked a turning point in training and the sharing experience and knowledge between professionals in the sector. The S4 Congress brought together national and international organisations such as FIFA, UEFA and Interpol. The event attracted more than 500 participants in person and around 480 online participants from 14 countries. With the second edition, which took place on 16 and 17 October 2024, the S4 Congress is consolidating its position as the leading international event on the subject. Comprising presentations, debates and workshops, the event aimed primarily at security managers, stewards, police forces, municipal sports technicians and professionals from federations and clubs. The aim is to enable those who wish to do so to play an active role in shaping the future of sporting events, by contributing to the creation safe, secure and welcoming environments for athletes, supporters and other participants■