

### The notion of security in the Saint-Denis Convention

■ The concept of security includes all measures designed to prevent, deter and punish violence and disorder at football matches,<sup>1</sup> both inside and outside sports venues. The main objective of security measures is to prevent and reduce the risk of violence and criminal activity. The core principles of the security component include policing strategies, the involvement of competition organisers, dialogue and exclusion policies, and international police co-operation.

■ Article 3 of the Saint-Denis Convention provides a precise definition of the concept of security,<sup>2</sup> a definition which is supplemented by Annex B of Recommendation Rec(2021)1. Annex B sets out good practices for police-fan contact at international football events, and also contains recommendations on security management in public places.

■ At the heart of the security package is the emphasis on co-operation between the police and other stakeholders in the organisation of a sports event, as well as the application of sanctions to individuals who have committed offences or breached public order. The security measures also emphasise the need for co-ordination mechanisms between national football authorities, the police and governments.

1. The text of this factsheet refers specifically to football matches but may, where appropriate, also be applied in relation to other sports events where the national authorities consider it necessary or appropriate.
2. In a broader sense, "security" includes any deliberate malicious act motivated by an intention to harm people and property.

### Security in stadiums

■ The operational arrangements in stadiums should be comprehensive.

■ There must be effective liaison between the organiser, the police, the emergency services and partner organisations. (Article 5 of the Convention).

■ It is essential to have clear policies and procedures in place on issues that may affect crowd management and the associated safety and security risks, including:

- ▶ the use of pyrotechnics;
- ▶ violent and prohibited behaviour (against people and property); and
- ▶ racist or other discriminatory behaviour.

” Security measures aim to prevent and reduce the risk of violence and criminal activity



Dialogue between police and supporters helps gathering information about potential risks, as well as about supporters' expectations

## Police strategies and operations

Police strategies and operations in relation to football matches are defined in Article 9 of the Convention. The signatory Parties must ensure that the policing strategies are regularly evaluated and that they are in line with the overall integrated safety, security and service approach.

Policing strategies should take into account the following good practices:

- ▶ intelligence gathering;
- ▶ continuous risk assessment;
- ▶ risk-based police deployment;
- ▶ proportionate intervention, to prevent the escalation of risk or disorder;
- ▶ effective dialogue with supporters and the wider community; and
- ▶ evidence gathering of criminal activity and sharing such evidence with the competent prosecuting authorities.

The development and refinement of any effective football policing strategy must be based on a good understanding of fan behaviour, crowd dynamics, and the character and threats posed by individuals or groups who have engaged in football-related misconduct in the past.

## Police co-operation with all stakeholders

” The emphasis is on co-ordination and co-operation between the police and other stakeholders, as well as on law enforcement measures

It is important that the police work in partnership with the organisers of the sporting event, the supporters, the local communities and authorities, and any other stakeholders involved in the event.

### Police philosophy and partnership



Policing strategies should be proportionate, to prevent the escalation of risk or disorder

Football-related police policies cannot be seen in isolation, they must be an essential part of the integrated multi-agency approach to safety, security and service.

## Sharing essential information

Based on a dynamic risk assessment, the police have a crucial role to play in providing partner agencies with advice on crowd management issues and issues that may impact on the security dynamics of stadia, such as segregation (or separation) of opposing supporters. Clubs, with their knowledge of fan behaviour, can also advise the police and other partners.

It is also crucial that all partners share information and evidence of any criminal or anti-social behaviour with the police, to facilitate evidence gathering for prosecution and exclusion.

## Need for dialogue between police and supporters

Proactive communication with supporters is essential. The key objective is to create a welcoming environment and avoid any source of conflict. Dialogue can help to gather high quality information about potential risks, as well as about supporters' intentions, perspectives, concerns and sensitivities. It also allows the police to raise concerns about the behaviour of some supporters with the supporter liaison officer (SLO), and to offer co-operative solutions, where appropriate, to avoid further difficulties.

” Dialogue and proactive communication with supporters is essential



Dialogue and proactive communication with supporters are essential for effective policing



The venue control room is at the heart of co-ordination and co-operation between the police and other stakeholders

### Proportioning and adapting exclusion measures

■ Safety and security strategies for football events are most effective when they are perceived as reasonable and proportionate by the majority of supporters. Spectators expect to be treated on the basis of their behaviour and not on the basis of their reputation or the behaviour of other supporters.

” Security strategies must be perceived as reasonable and proportionate by the majority of supporters

■ Experience in Europe provides ample evidence that effective and comprehensive exclusion measures can be very useful in: preventing misbehaviour and repeat offences; reducing the influence and “prestige” of potential troublemakers; and reducing the scale of violence and changing the behaviour of excluded offenders. By reducing the potential for major violent or disorderly incidents, it is possible to reduce the scale of police deployment and, therefore, the associated costs.

### International police co-operation: NFIPs

■ At the heart of international police co-operation in relation to football matches are the “National Football Information Points” (NFIPs). Parties to the Saint-Denis Convention are now obliged to set up a NFIP.

” National Football Information Points (NFIPs) are at the heart of international police co-operation

■ The role of the NFIP, as defined in Article 11 of the Saint-Denis Convention, is as follows:

- ▶ The NFIP acts as a direct and single point of contact for the exchange of general information in connection with football matches with an international dimension. It may exchange personal data in accordance with applicable national and international rules.
- ▶ The NFIP facilitates, co-ordinates and organises the implementation of international police co-operation at major sporting events. It shall be a national source of expertise on football policing operations, supporter dynamics and associated safety and security risks.
- ▶ In particular, it is recommended that States ensure that the staff of each NFIP are trained to enable them to be consulted as national experts on football policing and associated safety and security measures and to fulfil their tasks efficiently and promptly.



Effective crowd management by the police and partner agencies is key to prevent the associated safety and security risks



” The Saint-Denis Convention is the only legally-binding international instrument on safety, security and service at sports events

## The Saint-Denis Convention

The Council of Europe Convention on an integrated approach to safety, security and service at football matches and other sports events was opened for signature on 3 July 2016 in Saint-Denis (France), on the occasion of the UEFA EURO 2016 championship. It entered into force on 1st November 2017 after 3 ratifications – France, Monaco and Poland – and now has a large number of [States Parties](#).

It promotes an integrated multi-agency approach, covering three complementary and interdependent pillars: safety, security and service. It is the only legally-binding international instrument establishing institutional co-operation between all relevant stakeholders to make football matches and other sports events safer, more secure and more welcoming.

## Useful links

1. [Saint-Denis Convention](https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/safety-security-and-service-approach-convention)  
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/safety-security-and-service-approach-convention>
2. Recommendations T-S4:
  - i. Rec(2021)1: Recommended good practices on safety, security and service
  - ii. Rec(2022)1: Model structure of a national strategy on safety, security and service
  - iii. Rec(2022)2: Model national legislative and regulatory framework on safety, security and service<https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/t-s4-recommendations>
3. To learn more about the Convention and Recommendation Rec(2021)1, you can register for the following open online courses:
  - i. MOOC on Human Rights in Sport (available in English, Russian, Slovak and Spanish)  
<http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/course/index.php?categoryid=590>
  - ii. MOOC on Safety, Security and Service at Sports Events (available in English, Polish and Portuguese)  
<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/security-safety-sport/pros4-e-learning-enrolment-form>