

Introduction

■ The Council of Europe Convention on an integrated approach to safety, security and service at football matches and other sports events (CETS No. 218) was opened for signature on 3 July 2016 in Saint-Denis, France, on the occasion of a UEFA EURO 2016 quarter-final match.

■ The aim of the Saint-Denis Convention is to make football matches and other sporting events more welcoming, safe and secure.

■ This Convention is the only binding international legal instrument that establishes institutional co-operation between all stakeholders involved in the organisation of football matches and other sports events.

Why this Saint-Denis Convention?

■ The Convention advocates a multi-agency integrated approach,¹ based on three interdependent and overlapping pillars: Safety, Security and Service, to ensure a safe, secure and welcoming environment at sports events, both inside and outside stadiums.

■ It builds upon the knowledge and experience accumulated at international level since the adoption of the European Convention on Spectator Violence in 1985.

■ The aim of the Convention is to move from an approach focused on spectator violence to an integrated approach, including the promotion of co-operation between all stakeholders, public and private. Six key actors are identified in the text with equal importance: governments, municipal authorities, police, football authorities, supporters and local populations.

1. For more information on the multi-agency integrated approach, see Factsheet 2: *An Integrated Multi-Agency Approach: what is it about?*

■ It is a relatively short text (the Convention has 22 articles): each country decides on its implementation and base their policies on it. The Recommendation Rec (2021)1, adopted in April 2021 by the Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events, completes the text. This Recommendation includes three interconnected annexes on recommended good practices: Safety (Annex A), Security (Annex B) and Service (Annex C), as well as the respective checklists (Annex D).²

■ An online course on safety, security and service at sports events has been developed to promote the principles and standards of the Saint-Denis Convention. The course consists of eight modules, which cover all aspects necessary for the effective and efficient management of safety, security and service, with the ultimate aim of making football matches and other sports events more welcoming, safe and secure. Find out more at: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/security-safety-sport/home>³.



Ceremony of opening to signature of the Saint-Denis Convention
Stade de France, 3 July 2016

2. For more information on Recommendation T-S4 Rec (2021)1, adopted in 2021, see Factsheet 4: *Sharing recommended best practices in Europe*.
3. For more information on the Pros4+ project, please refer to the Factsheet number 15: *Discover the Saint-Denis Convention through an online course*.

Signatures, ratifications, entry into force

■ The Saint-Denis Convention entered into force on 1st November 2017, following three ratifications: by France, Monaco and Poland. In order to monitor its implementation, a Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events was established. This Committee held several informal preparatory meetings between December 2020 and February 2021. The first plenary meeting of the Committee took place online in April 2021.

■ The Committee brings together delegations from the States Parties, made up of representatives from the main public bodies, preferably those responsible for safety and security in sport, as well as representatives of the National Football Information Points and the sports authorities and supporter organisations. The Committee may also receive observer States, as well as observers representing other international public or sports organisations.

■ During the transitional period, through which countries will ratify the new Convention and denounce the old 1985 Convention, the States Parties to this Convention will be able to join the Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events as *ex officio* observers.

■ To follow the progress of signatures and ratifications of the Saint-Denis Convention, please consult the Council of Europe Treaty Office's webpage: [Status of signatures and ratifications](#).

Historical background (1985-2016): The European Convention on Spectator Violence (ETS No. 120)

■ The Saint-Denis Convention was preceded by another convention of the Council of Europe: the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches. The latter was drafted in record time, following the tragedy at the Heysel stadium in Brussels, and came into force on 1st November 1985. This disaster shook the whole world and revealed the urgent need to take measures to enhance safety and security at sporting events.

■ The 1985 Convention focused primarily on the prevention and control of spectator violence. It brought together up to 42 States Parties, including Morocco. Several participants and observers are also present, respectively the European Union and various non-state actors such as UEFA, FIFA and fan organisations, as well as international organisations such as INTERPOL.



European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches

■ A standing committee has been established to monitor compliance by the Parties. Regular consultative visits have been organised. Over the years, 26 recommendations have been adopted to complement the issues of security, safety and more recently service at sports events. These recommendations have been updated and consolidated in Recommendation Rec(2015)1, of the Standing Committee, as revised in 2019 and adopted in 2020. This Recommendation was later adopted in April 2021 by the Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events, of the Saint-Denis Convention (Recommendation Rec(2021)1).

■ In November 2021, the Standing Committee decided by majority to suspend its activities. National delegations preferred to participate exclusively in the activities of the Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events, where they have *ex officio* observer status.

Key conventions in the sport sector

At the Council of Europe, three conventions in the sports sector are proposed to the States:

- ▶ **1989:** Anti-Doping Convention (ETS No. 135).
- ▶ **2014:** Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (the "Macolin Convention") (CETS No. 215).
- ▶ **2016:** Council of Europe Convention on an integrated approach to safety, security and service at football matches and other sports events (the "Saint-Denis Convention") (CETS No. 218).



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

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Useful links

1. **Saint-Denis 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>

