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

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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**The impact of COVID-19 pandemic
on policies and practices on safety, security
and service at sports events
Report**

For information

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this report are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Council of Europe.

It is clarified that this report is prepared on the basis of the data provided by the national delegations and observers and as such it should not be interpreted as an evaluation of the Party to the Convention but simply a summary of their responses to the survey on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic circulated between 10 June and 7 August 2020. Moreover, the answers describe the situation in each respective country or sport organisation in the mentioned period and not today's situation, which may have already changed.

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Figure 1: 28 States Parties responded to the survey (dark blue)

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on sports events safety and security policies in 2020 and assumingly beyond. The Bureau of the Committee of the Council of Europe Spectator Violence Convention (T-RV) distributed a questionnaire with the aim to examine the current and potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sport events safety and security policies and practices at national and international level. Were invited to respond to a government-oriented survey States Parties to the Spectator Violence and the Saint-Denis Conventions. Several States and sports Organisations holding observer status with the T-RV responded to another survey focusing on their specific role.

This report identifies in particular the main effects of the crisis on sport events and professional football leagues in 28 European countries. Its main objective is to facilitate the exchange of national and international good practices and experiences in response to this unprecedented situation. This includes measures taken by the authorities and organisations responsible for the development and implementation of sport events safety and security policies at national and international level.

The report provides an overview of the situation in Europe based on the feedback from 28 States Parties and 5 State and non-State Observers collected between the 10 June and the 7 August 2020 and therefore reflect the situation at that point in time. The list of Parties and Observers is presented in Appendix 3.

During the lockdown, a vast majority of the countries postponed or cancelled their indoor and outdoor competitions and closed all gyms and training centres. Most countries resumed their professional football seasons either open to a limited number of supporters or as closed-door matches. The consultation process to make a decision on resuming, or not resuming, the seasons incorporated various stakeholders. A vast majority of countries included football authorities, approximately half of them consulted the police and only one out of five consulted supporter organisations. 17 out of 28 responding State Parties indicated to have de-escalation strategies in place, as they were moving from lockdown to a “new normal”, most often limiting the number of participants during football matches. Regarding other sports, the survey reveals that collective sports were more likely to close the seasons, whilst individual sports seasons were resumed and completed.

Supporters reactions to the decision of holding closed-door matches were accepting in every second country and only one in eight reported on incidents. However, only few countries had measures in place to compensate supporters for holding closed-door matches. Furthermore, the report contains detailed information on when professional seasons ended and when the next season is expected to start in the respective countries. Good practices and lessons learned enable the exchange of

experience. Short and long term challenges vary between the management of the pandemic and the challenges that were known before the sanitary crisis.

The Observers reported on the impact on their activities, for example on the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on disabled supporters. The non-governmental organisations report that the pandemic has impacted their activities as well. Good practices that emerged centred around adaptation of activities and the will to build back better.

The data collected through the surveys were complemented by news, legislation and policy documents (safety and sanitary protocols and guidance) put in place by governments and sport organisations, both during the lockdown and preparing the return to stadia. This compilation is a precious source of information that has been made available to the States Parties and the Observers to the Spectator Violence and Saint-Denis Conventions.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to stop its spread have had a significant impact on the organisation of sport events. As more and more States are in transition to a “new normal”, new challenges arise, including how to guarantee sports events’ safety and security and how to face the social and economic impact of the lockdown.

To allow the Council of Europe T-RV Committee and the future T-S4 Committee to assess the current and future impact of the COVID-19 crisis on sport events’ safety, security and service (S4) national policies and practices, the Bureau of the T-RV invited all State Parties¹ to the Spectator Violence Convention and to the Saint-Denis Convention to respond to a short survey prepared by the Council of Europe Secretariat. 28 governmental authorities and NFIPs² responded on behalf of their respective State Parties (see figure 1). Furthermore, five Observers³ to the T-RV Committee replied to a tailored survey, namely Georgia, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), Football Supporters Europe (FSE), the Centre for Access to Football in Europe (CAFE) and Colour Blind Awareness, which makes a total of 33 replies treated in this report. The data collection period was from 10th June to 7 August 2020. The situation may have changed already since then due to a rapidly changing state of affairs.

The survey was circulated between 10 June and 7 August 2020. Only complete replies⁴ received within this timeframe⁵ are analysed in this report. It comprised a questionnaire with 17 questions, including several sub-questions, to States Parties and a separate tailored questionnaire addressed to Observer States and sport organisations, with 8 questions⁶. It was carried out using the online “EU Survey”

¹ ‘State Party’ to a treaty is a country that has ratified or acceded to that particular treaty, and is therefore legally bound by its provisions.

² ‘NFIP’ (National Football Information Point) is a police central contact point established in each State Party to act as the direct contact point for exchanging relevant information and for facilitating international police cooperation in connection with football matches with an international dimension.

³ ‘Observer status’: is a status granted by an international organisation to a non-member country, an international organisation or a non-governmental organisation to give them a limited ability to participate in the organisation’s activities, namely lacking the ability to vote or propose resolutions.

⁴ Andorra sent an incomplete reply to the questionnaire; therefore, it was not taken into consideration in this report.

⁵ The reply from Serbia was not considered in this report since it was received after the final deadline and when the draft report was already finished.

⁶ Questions 16 and 17 to States, as well as questions 7 and 8 to Observers and sport organisations, were used only for internal purposes and therefore are not analysed in this report.

application, from the EU Commission (available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/home/welcome>). This report was drafted by an external consultant of the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the T-RV/T-S4 Secretariat.

This report outlines the information provided in the survey and analyses it in comparison to other European countries. The report intends to facilitate the exchange of national and international good practices and experiences in response to this unprecedented situation. This includes measures taken by the authorities and organisations responsible for the development and implementation of sport events safety and security policies at national and international level. Furthermore, it will also attempt to assess the possible short- and long-term impact of such measures.

Part I - Impact on national S4 policies and practices

1.1 General measures and restrictions imposed in countries due to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has been spreading globally since the end of 2019 and has increasingly affected virtually all aspects of public and private life. As an integral part of social life, sports have been no exception. Beginning in mid-January 2020, sports events in Asia were postponed or cancelled. These pandemic-related postponements or cancellations later expanded and affected organised sports worldwide at all levels. By March 2020 this led to the International Olympic Committee deciding to postpone the Olympic Games to 2021 and the UEFA to postpone EURO 2020 by one year.

Before focusing on further effects on the sport sector, the T-RV/T-S4 Survey enquires about generic measures and restrictions imposed due to COVID-19. The first set of questions is dedicated to exploring the measures and restrictions imposed by governments in response to the pandemic. Most countries answered with the same restrictions. All State Parties implemented social distancing and restrictions during public gatherings, including sports events. Almost all State Parties (93 %) implemented border closures/restrictions, isolations and cancellations of flights. Not all actions were due to government guidelines, e.g. cancellations of flights in Belgium were not exclusively caused by government restrictions but mainly due to fewer passengers. Quarantine was implemented in 82 % of the states participating in this survey. Of course, further measures were introduced in all countries for example the mandatory use of face masks in public transport. Figure 2 shows further details on measures and restrictions imposed.

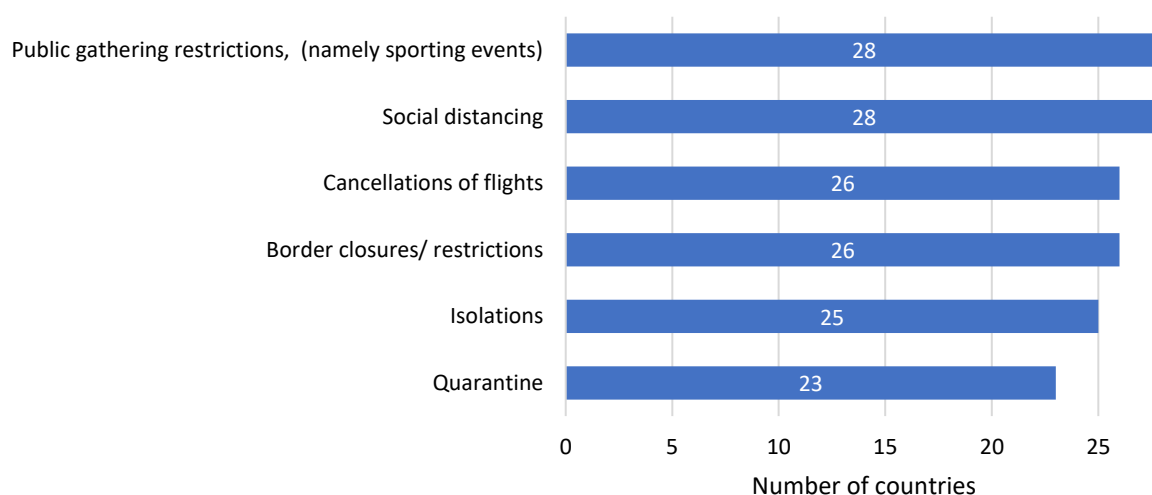


Figure 2: Measures and restrictions imposed in countries due to COVID-19
(blue: countries that imposed measures)

As all countries (except Liechtenstein) introduced isolations and/or quarantine, differentiating models of work had to be applied in public authorities and in NFIPs. Telework and duty staff are the most used models of work in public authorities and in NFIPs. NFIPs also assigned staff to other priority missions. The chosen models of work are specified in Figure 3.

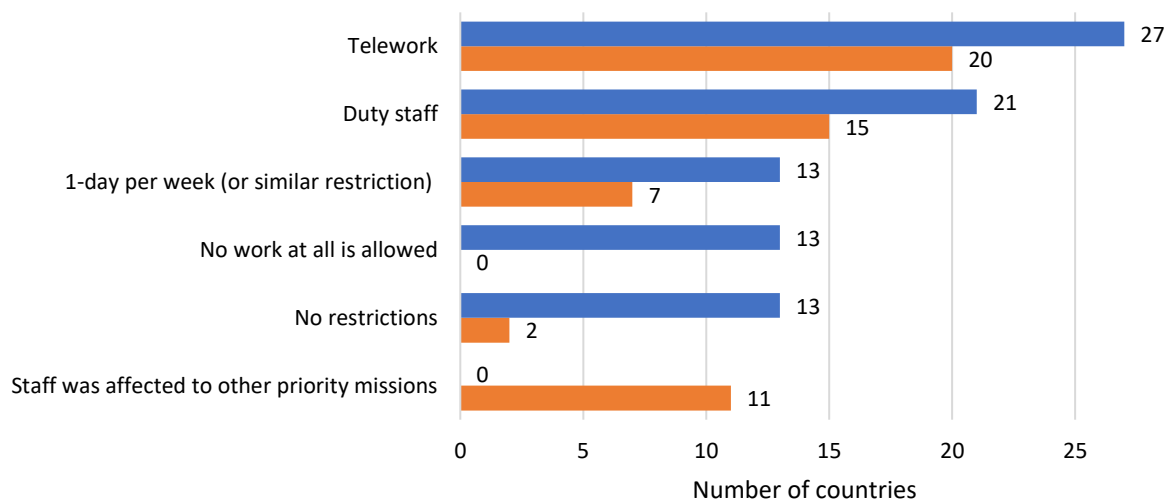


Figure 3: Models of work in public authorities (blue) and NFIPs (orange) during the COVID-19 pandemic

1.2 Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sport sector

Since its outbreak at the end of 2019 the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on regions across the globe including Europe. The pandemic resulted in manifold restrictions on everyday life in general but also more specifically on sport events. During lockdown, all indoor and a vast majority of outdoor competitions were postponed or cancelled. Training centres and gyms were closed and all training camps were cancelled. Only a limited number of training camps were allowed in Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Slovak Republic. Nevertheless, at the time data collection took place, from 10 June and 7 August 2020, the situation had already changed. After easing lockdown regulations most countries allowed at least a limited number of training camps and competitions. Half of the participating countries authorized outdoor competitions. Meanwhile, in 60 % of the countries indoor competitions were still impossible. However, a third of the countries indicated that they have not been able to ease sport restrictions since the lockdown. Further details on applied measures and restrictions during and after the lockdown can be found in Table 1 and Figure 4.

Table 1: How COVID-19 pandemic affected the sport activity in your country (at the time of data collection)? (multiple answer possible)

	During lockdown		Countries answering different to majority	At the time of writing		Countries answering different to majority
	Yes	no		yes	no	
Indoor competitions are postponed or cancelled	28	0		13		
Outdoor competitions are postponed or cancelled	27	1	Not in Romania	6		
Training centres and gyms are closed	26	2	Not in Hungary, Switzerland	2	26	Yes in Monaco and UK
All training camps are cancelled	25	3	Not in Hungary, Romania, Sweden	1	27	Yes in Monaco
Only a limited number of training camps is allowed	5	23	Only in Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovak Republic	11	17	Yes in Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and UK
No change				8		Yes in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Poland, Lithuania and Turkey

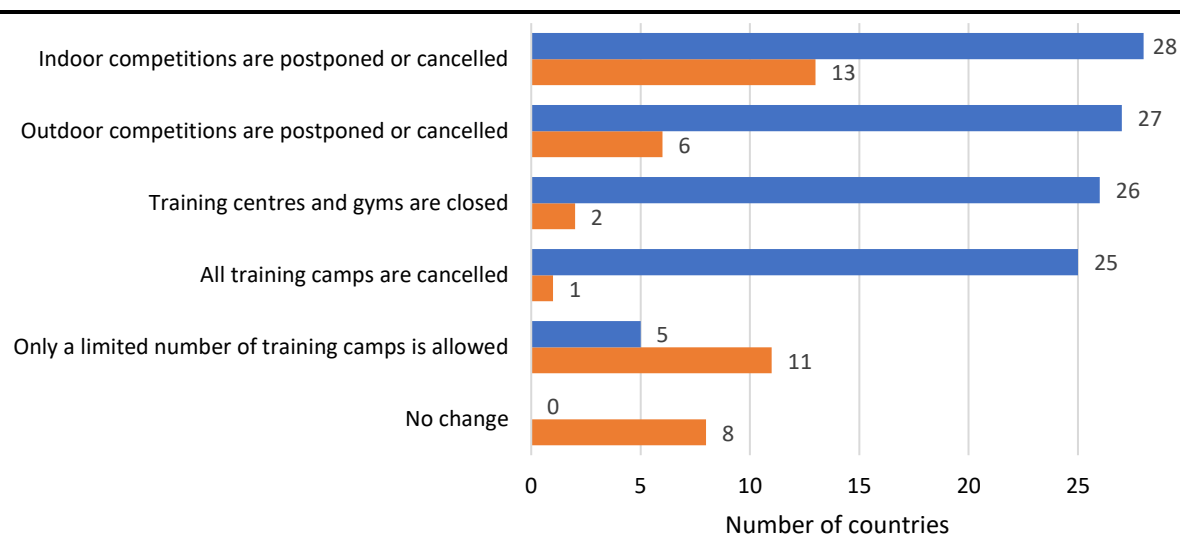


Figure 4: Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the sport activity during the lockdown (blue)

and at the time of data collection (orange)

1.3 Decisions on resuming or not the professional football season

The survey also examined the decisions and measures affecting the professional football leagues.

Considering that Liechtenstein plays in the Swiss league and Monaco plays in the French League, 26 leagues are considered in this paragraph.

France (including Monaco), the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg decided to close their professional football season. France only played the finals of two cups and Belgium played the final of their cup and a match for promotion to the first league.

From 22 leagues resuming their season, 13 decided to open matches to a limited number of supporters. Nine leagues decided to resume with closed-door matches. Additionally, Portugal's National Health authority inspected and certified all stadia to ensure that they were safe to host football matches. As a result, some Portuguese clubs had to change stadium for home matches. Figure 5 visualised how countries decided to resume or not their professional seasons.

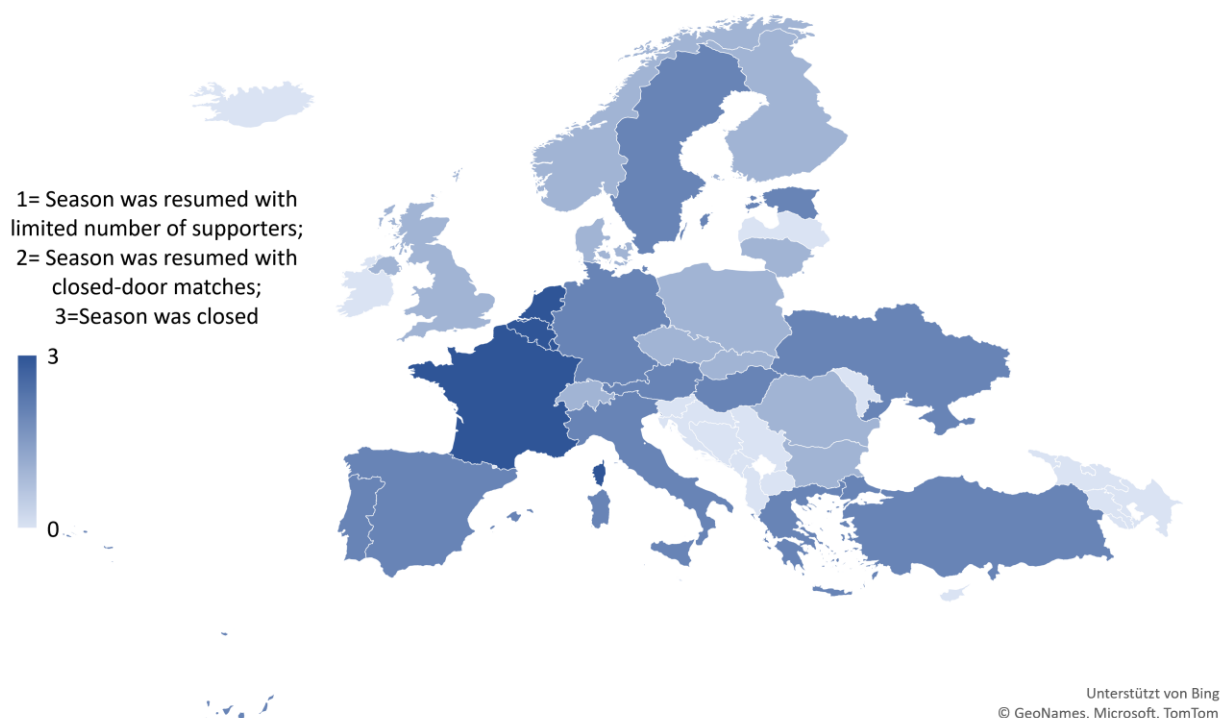


Figure 5: Map of countries participating in the survey that resumed their season with limited number of supporters (light blue), that resumed their season with closed-door matches (blue) and those that closed their season (dark blue)

Those countries that resumed and completed their seasons gave further information on the decision-making process. The evaluation of the survey shows that participating countries consulted different relevant stakeholders during the decision-making process. While football authorities were consulted in 92 % of cases, police were consulted in 57 % and supporter organisations were only consulted in 21 % of cases. Therefore, football authorities are perceived as the most important stakeholder. However, there is a potential to include supporter organisations into the decision-making process.

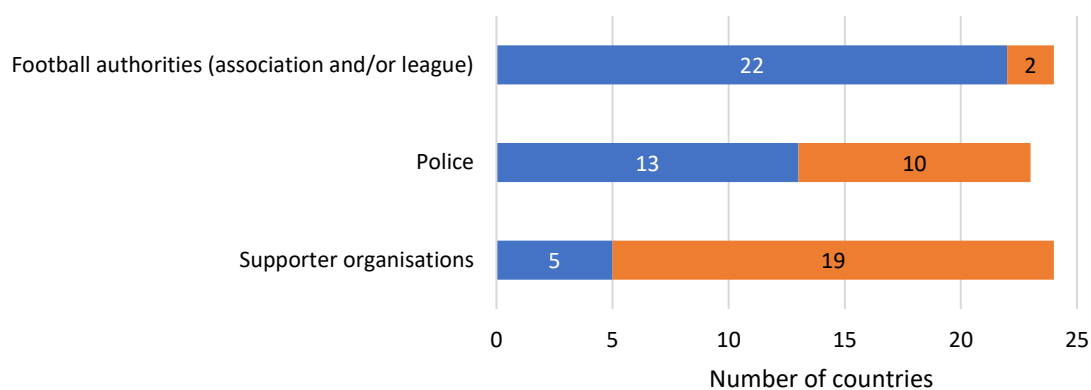


Figure 6: Stakeholders consulted in decision making process of resuming or not resuming the football league (blue: institution was consulted; orange: institution was not consulted)

The last question on resuming the professional league focuses on de-escalation strategies. Are de-escalation stages integrated in the implementation of sanitary/safety/security measures at sports venues as part of the return to “new normal” strategy?

A total of 17 countries had de-escalation strategies in place. Most of them authorised individual training first before allowing collective training. This was followed by competitions. The next step allows spectators to join with social distancing and additional sanitary arrangements in place, like separating them into different sectors. As last step the number of spectators rises over time. De-escalation stages often depend on the number of infected people and may vary within a country due to regional and local differences.

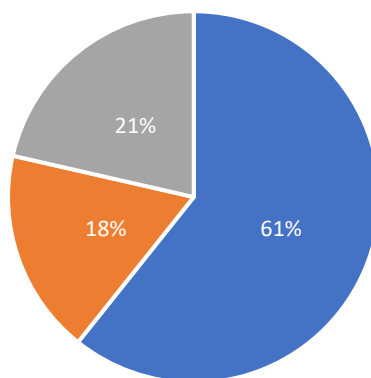


Figure 7: Countries with de-escalation strategies in the implementation of sanitary/safety/security measures at sports venues as part of the return to «new normal» strategy (blue), countries without a de-escalation strategy (orange) and countries that did not answer (grey)

1.4 Decisions regarding other sports

Notwithstanding the fact that football dominated national and international discussions, the survey also examined the decisions regarding other sport events. A good third of countries decided to close the season for collective sports. In 29 % of countries, the season was or will be resumed and in 21 %, the season was postponed until further notice.

In individual sports, the percentage of seasons being resumed and completed is remarkably higher than in collective sports. Every fourth country postponed the season until further notice and 14 % closed the season.

Clearly, collective sports were more likely to close the seasons, whilst individual sports seasons were resumed and completed.



Figure 8: Decisions on resuming or closing the season in individual and collective sports

1.5 Sanitary precautions in closed-door matches

Sanitary precautions are an important contribution to stop the spread of the virus. Also, during football matches, sanitary precautions can help to protect teams, referees, safety and security staff and press. A vast majority of 86 % of States Parties had sanitary precautions in place. Generic sanitary protocols and guidance for closed-door matches are shared as good practice among States Parties and Observers.

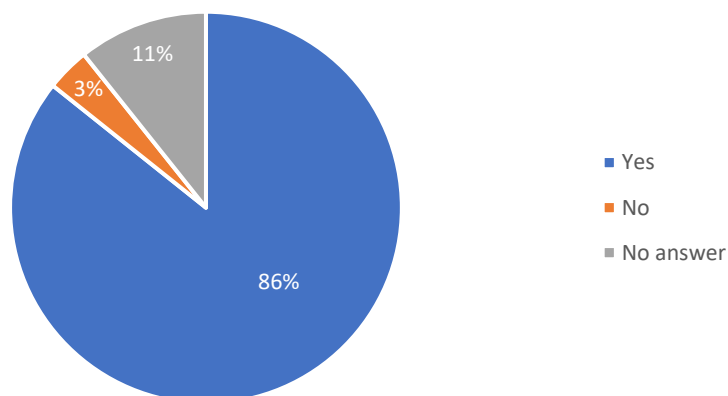


Figure 9: Existence of sanitary precautions in closed-door-matches

24 countries had sanitary measures in place for closed-door matches. Most of them limited the number of people in the stadium. Two out of three countries conducted pre-testing of all participants. Individual protection kits for safety and security personnel and the possibility to cancel the competition at a later stage are used by approximately 50 % of countries. Remarkably, less than every second country has a contingency plan in case any team cannot continue the competition for sanitary reasons. Other measures implied face masks and recommendations for the teams on how to behave when staying in a hotel. Further details are in Figure 10.

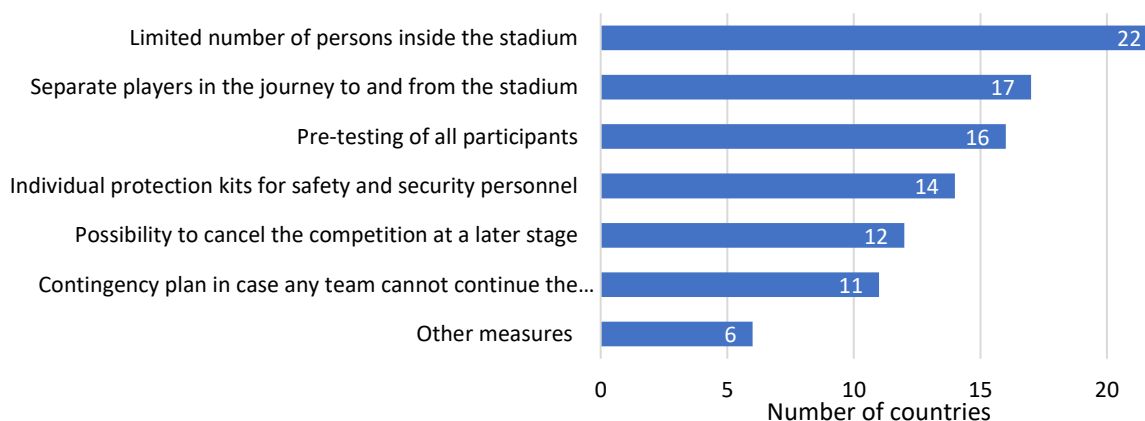


Figure 10: Sanitary measures used in closed-door matches

The responsibility for enforcing the sanitary protocol inside stadia is with different institutions and most often shared amongst more than one institution. In the vast majority of States the organiser and stadium owner were responsible for enforcing the sanitary protocol. Public health authorities played also an important role and the police played a less significant role, which is understandable.

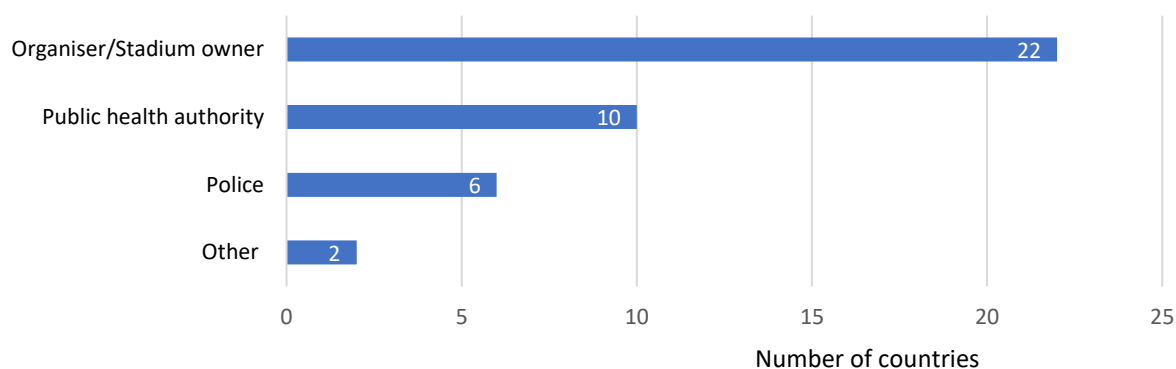


Figure 11: Responsibility for enforcing the sanitary protocol

Most of the States Parties limited the number of persons inside the stadium. It was further specified how the number of participants was limited. One third of the countries limited the number of participants in closed-door matches to 100. Great differences can be seen here as in Sweden, only 50 participants were allowed whilst in Denmark and Switzerland up to 500 participants attended closed-door matches.

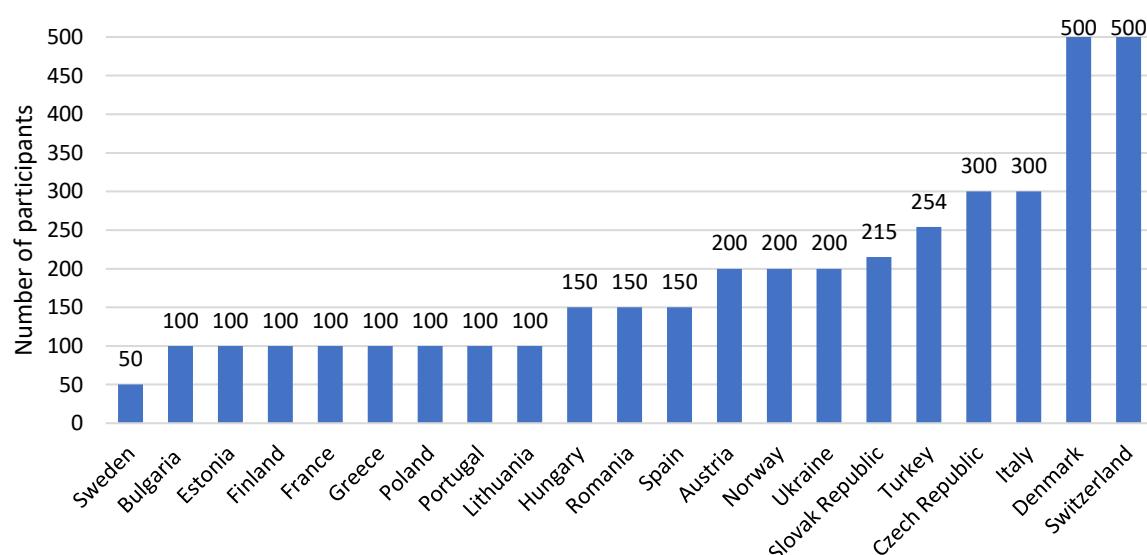


Figure 12: The number of participants is limited in closed-door matches

Even in case there are no supporters in closed-door matches, police officers and stewards/private security personnel still need to be present. A vast majority of countries limited the number of police officers between zero and 20 in closed-door matches. Outside the stadium more police officers were involved. A vast majority of countries used stewards/private security officers. It can also be noted that the number and affiliation of private security staff varies between countries.

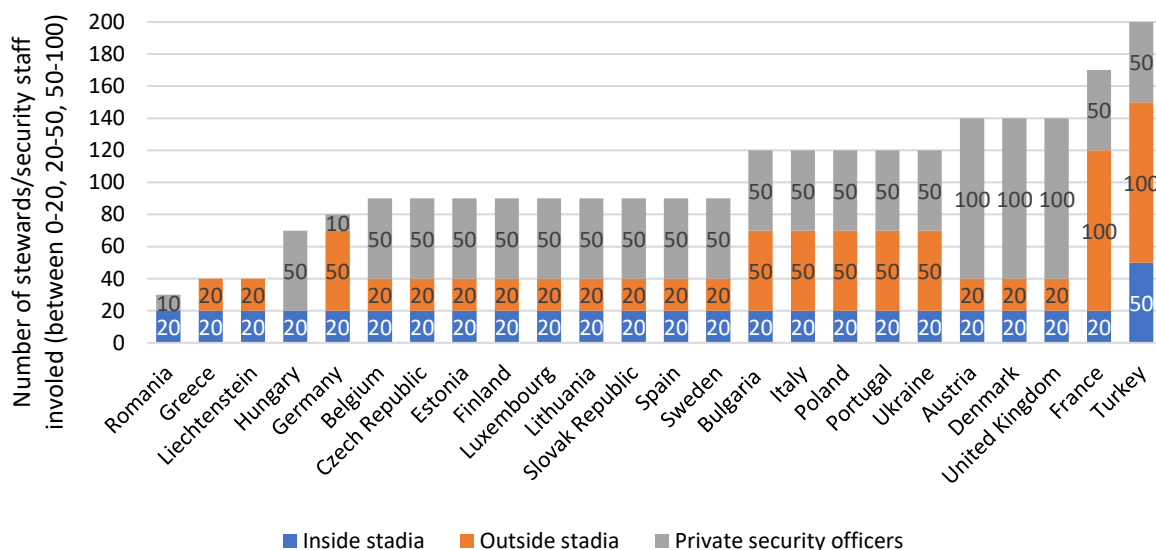


Figure 13: Average number of police officers inside stadia (blue), outside stadia (orange) and stewards/private security officers (grey) involved in closed-door matches

Historically, incidents usually occur inside, outside and in the vicinity of stadia. Therefore, the survey asked if security measures were foreseen for the vicinity of the stadium, during closed-door matches. Half of the responding States Parties indicated a prohibition of gatherings of supporters. However, in many countries public gatherings were forbidden in any way due to lockdown restrictions.

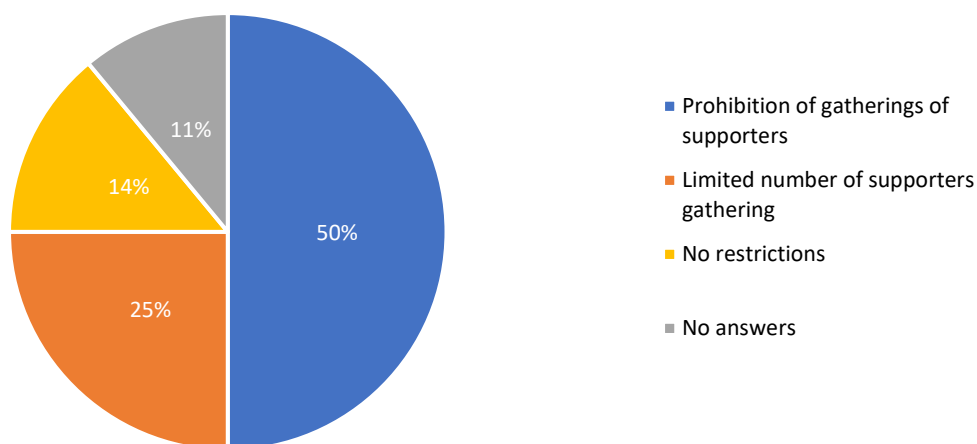


Figure 14: Security measures foreseen for the vicinity of the stadium during closed-door matches

The survey also queried, by an open question, how the supporter groups reacted to the decision of holding closed-door matches. Half of the respondents reported that supporters accepted the decisions with understanding and complied with the recommendations. One out of four respondents reported that fans were dissatisfied. Only one out of eight respondents reported on rare incidents. All in all, though the supporters were not satisfied about the situation they often accepted the decisions.

What was done in return in favour of supporters to compensate the decision to hold closed-door matches, if any? Half of the respondents reported that no measures were taken in favour of supporters. At least one out of four leagues provided free TV broadcasting of matches. Other measures included fan pictures placed in the stands of some stadia, e.g. in Bulgaria. In France, Poland and Spain some football clubs partially refunded supporters' season tickets. Drive-in public viewing arenas were organised in Czech Republic, Denmark and Lithuania. Further details can be seen in figure 15.

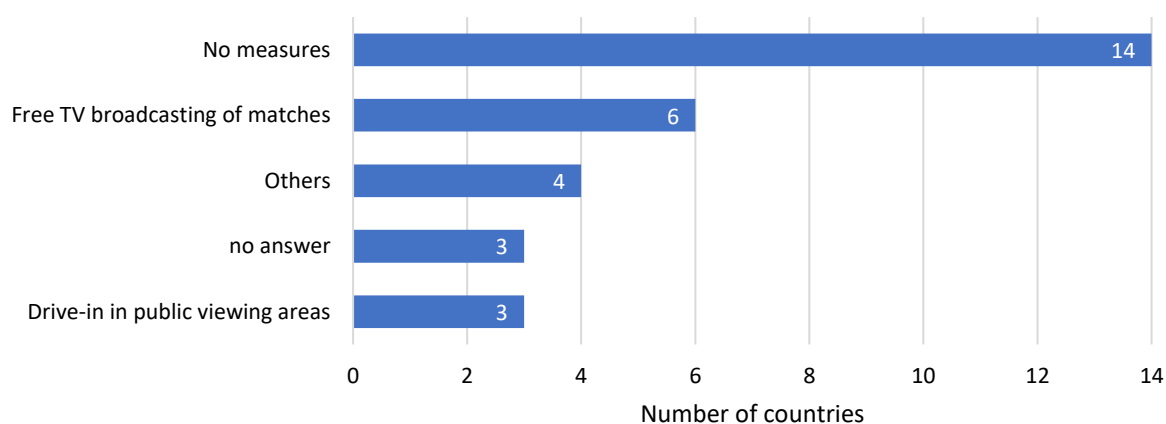


Figure 15: Measures, if any, that were taken in favour of supporters

1.6 Incidents during closed-door matches

Survey respondents were asked to report any incidents that occurred inside or outside stadia during closed-door matches. The vast majority reported that there were no relevant incidents in their countries. Illegal gatherings had been reported in Poland, Ukraine, Czech Republic and once in Spain. The sanitary protocol was violated in France and Poland as well as in Bulgaria during open-door matches, which resulted in the government's decision to play closed-door matches. Only Portugal reported demonstrations of supporters against decisions made by the government and football authorities. According to the answers given in this survey, no events of violence happened between groups of supporters outside the stadium.

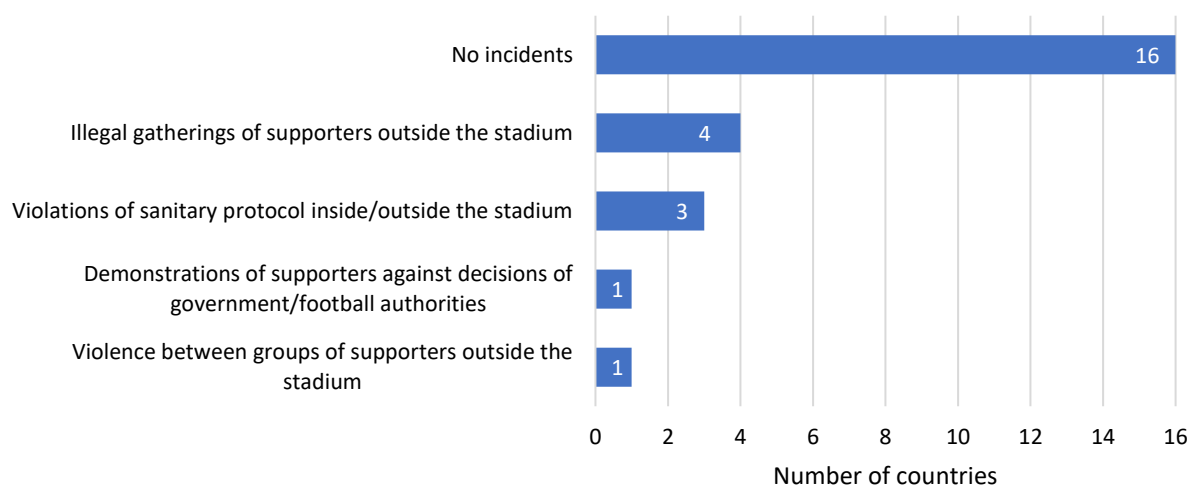


Figure 16: Relevant incidents reported during closed-door matches inside and outside stadia (multiple answers possible)

1.7 Ending the current football season and start of next season

The respondents were asked when the current season of the 1st football league competition is expected to end. Two of the respondents stated that their league would end in the first half of July, eight in the second half of July and four in the first half of August. Ten specified the dates of the start of the next season and four did not reply. Figure 16 provides further details by indicating the end of each countries' current football season with red diamonds.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked when the next season is expected to start. This was marked with a green diamond in the Figure. Further comments were added according to the answers in the survey.

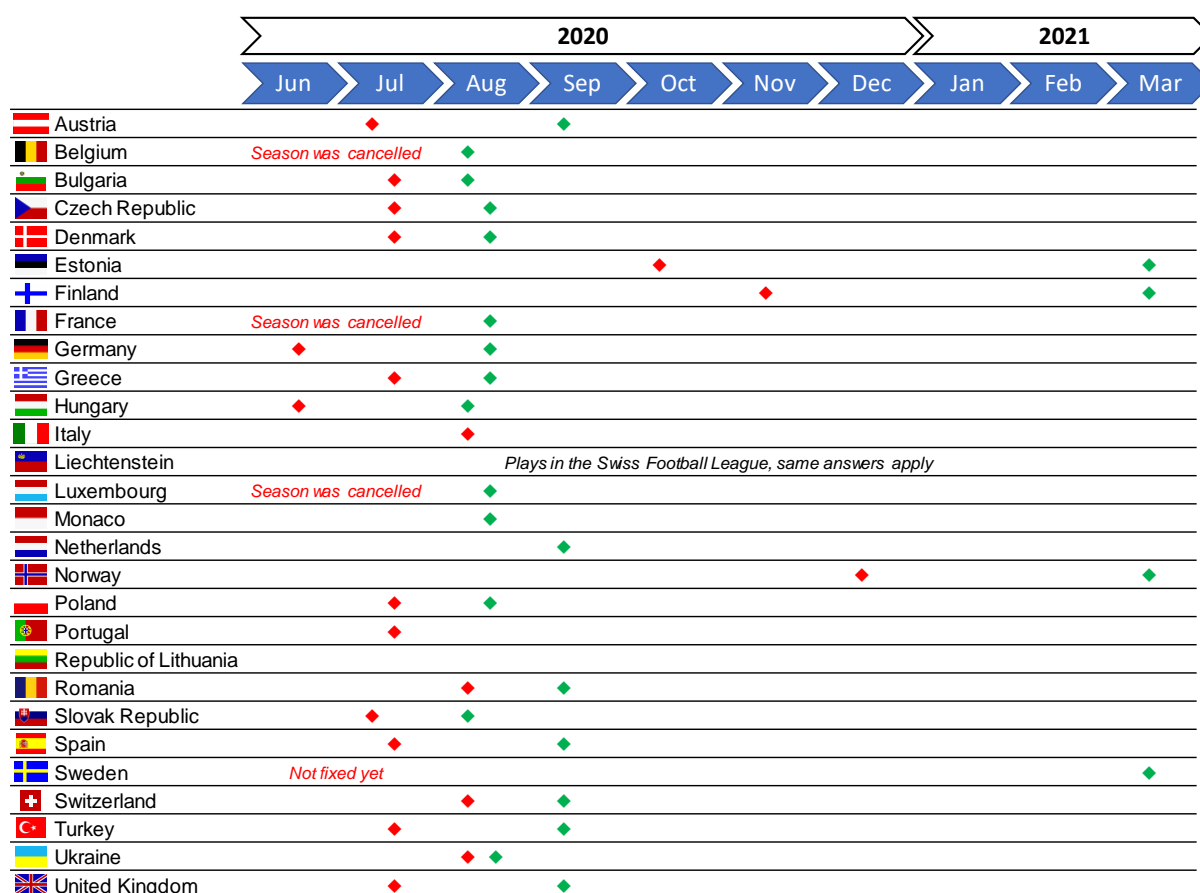



















Figure 17: Ending of football season 2019/2020 (red), beginning of new season 2020/2021 (green)




1.8 Good practices and lessons learned

The survey was not only intended to gather and analyse the *status quo* but also to enable the exchange of good practices and lessons learned among the States Parties. Each respondent was asked to briefly describe up to three good practices and lessons learned from the sanitary crisis. A summary of the response of each country is quoted in the table below.

Table 2: Short descriptions of good practices and lessons learned at national level

 Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is very important that spotters are present even at closed-door matches. Just a reduced number of police officers is enough in these matches. • Even in a context of closed-door matches, the permanent and regular contact between NFIP and the National League and the FA is essential.
 Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing was directly related to policing football as no official match was played until now. • In general, it is very difficult to write down rules which apply in all situations and for everyone. • The rules are regularly adapted to the evolution of the crisis and people do not always know how to behave at that moment. When the crisis persists, people are less inclined to still follow the restrictive rules. • Our institutions did big steps forward in the NWOW (new way of working) with distance access to data and using tools for virtual meetings.
 Bulgaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporters relations with police and stewards were strengthened. • During the open-door matches, stewards were doing their job better than usual. • Service approach has significantly changed for better during the crisis.
 Estonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always go step by step with easing the restrictions. • Do not differentiate between sports. • Cooperation between all stakeholders is extremely necessary.
 Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good decision was to stop all sport events with spectators.
 France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French Government and Football Association have decided, as soon as possible, to organise sports competitions behind closed doors in order to avoid the spread of the pandemic. • To preserve the safety of football workers and supporters, the decision to end all professionals seasons was taken, despite the sports and economic consequences.
 Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast decision-making process. • Disciplined citizens. • Governmental aid where needed.
 Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better cooperation of States in matters of health interest. • Full control of the participants in the sports events.

 Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coronavirus situation is changing constantly and misinformation can spread quickly. This makes it vital that sport departments and organisations communicate clearly and often using official channels or channels that can be easily updated. • Direct communication with ultra groups is a must. • Communication and social platforms must be used for spreading the sanitary rules. • Safety distance shall be provided by physical obstacles, e.g.: card board figures.
 Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online meetings and telework. • Supplemented standard on personal protective equipment for the police officers. • Police response algorithms were changed according to the COVID-19 situation.
 Luxembourg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of sports federations were not prepared for such crisis situations (especially with regard to internal administrative procedures) and have since adapted. • The strong respect of sanitary measures by federations and clubs.
 Monaco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing. • Wearing a mask. • Regular tests.
 Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated approach and cooperation are essential
 Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent cooperation between the Government and football authorities. • Financial support from the Football Association for professional football clubs (app. 26 million Euros). • Sanitary guidelines for clubs. Lessons learned: financial policy of professional clubs must take into consideration the possibility that league competition can be suspended; keep social distance by fans at the stadium and measuring temperature at the entrance of the stadium.
 Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing as much as possible, to get a better picture of reality. • Take different measures and restrictions according to the local situation, which also leads people to feel a more direct impact over their own behaviour towards the preventative measures and progress of the sanitary situation. • Public services should be as much prepared as possible to work from home, especially as regards using cloud-based software, virtual private networks (VPN's) and collaborative tools to enhance teamwork at distance, whenever possible. It allows the continuity of many tasks, keeping the productivity losses at a minimum level.
 Slovak Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As all public events were postponed until mid-June, no relevant feedback concerning used practices were obtained in fact.
 Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination. • Health above all. • Value prevention more.

 Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring that social distance, mask use and personal hygiene are recognised by everyone.• Avoiding the infection risk through closing sports venues and training fields in the starting period of pandemic.• Carrying out filtration works for athletes and workers.• Positive effects of the games played behind closed doors.• Extending the flexible working method and increasing the quality in online service providing.
 Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping a safe distance indoors.• Ventilation of closed premises.• High attention has been paid to the new rules for the movement of football clubs in Ukraine (a separate plane, train car, bus or two buses to maintain social distance).
 United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnership.• Consultation.• Social Distancing.

1.9 Short to long-term challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic has and will create new challenges impacting football and other sport events. In the short term (2020/2021 season), multiple challenges remain in order to preserve safety, security and service at sport events.

A majority of the States perceives the biggest challenges related to the spread of the virus. Denmark, Luxembourg, Monaco, Portugal, Lithuania perceive the uncertain development of the pandemic as challenging. In this regard, the compliance and management of the health authority's regulations concerns the decision makers in different public and private organisations. Accordingly, the implementation of measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic is perceived as challenging. Concretely, they mention the compliance with the health authorities' recommendations, the management of the limitation of the number of spectators and the respect of the sanitary protocols as major challenges. Additionally, major events as the celebration of championships are threats to the safety and security of football matches. Furthermore, the transition process from closed-door matches to full stadia and the respect of the sanitary measures is perceived a major short-term challenge.

Some countries note that the biggest challenge is to return as quickly as possible to a situation where there are no more restrictions in relation to the number of supporters. If not, some countries expect and fear violent reactions of supporters if the health situation continuous to make matches with spectators impossible.

Countries also mentioned that clubs would struggle financially if the restrictions remain for a longer period. From another point of view, the biggest challenge is the positive communication towards all the stakeholders involved in the sports event in order to give the right message to respect the protocol. Generally, the uncertainty is perceived as challenging.

For some countries, the biggest challenges do not necessarily relate to the pandemic, but to systemic problems. For example, the division of roles between the different agencies responsible for the application of a multi-agency integrated approach. A number of countries had not yet identified particular challenges.

Beyond 2021, two medium-long term challenges were mentioned by most states.

Firstly, the fear of new contagion waves and the return of important restrictions to contain its spread. Denmark, Estonia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Lithuania and Romania highlighted this as their main challenge. In this regard, playing competitions with spectators, partially or completely and the compliance with the health authorities' recommendations is commonly perceived as the biggest challenge. As the virus is expected to remain, common standards concerning distances and face masks are desirable for some respondents. Some countries worry about how to get fans back safely into the stadiums. Clubs financial problems also were signalled as a concern,

although the importance of the problems remains obviously connected to the evolution of the pandemic.

Secondly, and putting aside the COVID-related issues, countries mentioned challenges that they had already identified as important to address before the sanitary crisis. France, Germany, Greece and Monaco are more concerned by well-known challenges such as the use of pyrotechnic devices and their prohibition. The effective control of supporters' violence inside and outside the stadia concerns several countries.

Further remaining challenges are the ongoing legislative procedures to comply with the Saint-Denis Convention and reducing the number of police officers in the stadia. Generally, some countries strive to reduce the number of police officers in the stadiums. Preserving the enthusiasm and maintaining the connection with and between supporters was also mentioned as an important objective.

Part II - Impact on Observer States and sport organisations

The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the policies and practices of the Observers to the Spectator Violence Convention (T-RV). The responses from an open-ended survey received from one Observer State (the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia) and four non-governmental Observer sport organisations (UEFA, Football Supporters Europe, CAFE and Colour Blind Awareness) provide an insight into the impact of the pandemic on these stakeholders. The Georgian Government reported on the impacts and improvements of their working processes as well as cross-sectoral cooperation between ministries for dealing with the sanitary crisis in the area of sports. Generally, non-governmental sports observers raised issues surrounding safe and equal access of all spectators to closed-doors events as well as football stadiums under COVID-19 conditions.

2.1 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Observers' activities

For all observers, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on their working process and required increased flexibility with regards to staff, travels and scheduled events or trainings. In particular, the postponement of the UEFA Finals and the UEFA EURO 2020 affected planned activities of the non-governmental observer sports organisations.

Football Supporters Europe (FSE) report that the pandemic has impacted their activities in three significant ways, all of which have proved manageable. Firstly, since all events have been cancelled and travel curtailed, they moved all work and events of note online, using popular conferencing applications to encourage maximum participation. Second, the partial closure of nurseries and schools reduced the availability of some staff members. They then resorted to State subsidy schemes and internal savings to ensure minimal loss of earnings for those affected. Thirdly, the postponement of UEFA EURO 2020 disrupted FSE's schedule, budget, and staffing arrangements, which led to a redistribution of existing staff and resources, while making sure that they are still prepared for the tournament when it takes place.

CAFE and Colour Blind Awareness state that the COVID-19 pandemic has a disproportionate impact on their target groups (disabled or colour-blind persons). Colour Blind Awareness also could not undertake a survey among colour-blind football fans aiming to enquire about the accessibility of the EURO 2020 host venues. Yet, the organisation reviewed some 'COVID-safe' protocols used for closed-doors football games.

CAFE cancelled or postponed its in-person trainings to National Football Associations and Clubs. However, the organisation provides online training and webinars, as well as guidance notes for improving access to football during the pandemic.

UEFA reports on the impacts of the competitions' postponement on their staff. UEFA states that most contracts, including temporary project staff, could be honoured even if many activities of the organisation stopped.

2.2 Good practices and lessons learned from COVID-19

The COVID-19 sanitary crisis has called for measures to ensure safety at sports events. The surveys circulated by the Council of Europe have allowed to understand how sports organisations in Europe have adapted to this unprecedented situation, their experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

UEFA established special safety protocols for sports events and sites and established a COVID Task Force involving the top management to address the initial impact of and response to the crisis. UEFA expresses its commitment to account for the health and safety of all target groups in its "Return to Football Protocol". In the eyes of UEFA, the protocol enabled the resumption of UEFA club competitions in August 2020.

Georgia established specific safety protocols for sports events.

FSE endeavoured to make sure that all physical events and/or projects have an online component to improve accessibility. As regards lessons learned, they realised that many of the procedures and much of the infrastructure already in place made it easier for them to transit to a socially distanced world. They have also learned that staff are highly adaptable, even more so than they had imagined.

CAFE and Colour Blind Awareness report difficulties arising from safety measures, which are inaccessible for their target groups. For example, Colour Blind Awareness claims that closed-doors matches took no account of people with colour blindness during the game and as part of safe operating planning, e.g. ensuring correct interpretation of colour zones in stadiums. As good practices, these NGOs raise the importance of accessible features for preventing a spread of the pandemic surrounding football events, e.g., accessible design of automatic taps, sufficient colour contrasting and accessible fonts of information, signs or tactile floor markings. These two organisations also emphasise the need for consulting and including disabled and colour-blind people in the planning process for COVID-19 safety measures.

2.3 Future challenges to preserve Safety, Security and Service at Sports Events

Georgia reports that spectators were allowed to attend sports events since 31st July 2020. It highlights the lack of understanding of sanitary norms and safety protocols as a major medium-long term challenge to prevent a spread of COVID-19 through sports events.

For UEFA, the short- and medium-long term challenges (beyond 2021) for preserving safety, security and service at sports events depend on the spread of the virus across Europe and possibilities of a vaccine. The uncertainties around the spread of COVID-19 obviously constitutes a major obstacle to the planning of football games with spectators in the near future, with plans having to integrate possible postponements or cancellations due to regional outbreaks.

FSE identified two main challenges in the short-term: 1) the divergent and regularly changing safety protocols devised and implemented by different nations will make it difficult to host international fixtures; and 2) there may be a temptation for some stakeholders to apply forego meaningful dialogue with fans while the crisis is ongoing. Further to these two, FSE adds a third challenge for the medium-long term, which is the possibility that the levels of compliance with safety protocols decrease over time.

Colour Blind Awareness expects that a fast reopening of stadiums paired with a lack of resources can pose a short-term risk as certain subjects of safety, security and service surrounding football games may be overlooked.

Similarly, CAFE considers giving stakeholders the confidence to return to live sport events as a major challenge. They urge that minority groups should not be discriminated against during the safe operating planning of future sports events to ensure improvements in equality and inclusion (“We need to build back better.”). The NGOs urge for focussing on social responsibility over quick profits to preserve safety, security and service at sports events on the short and medium-long term. Finally, a lack of funding for the organisations’ activities could constitute a major challenge beyond 2021 if further waves of the COVID-19 pandemic occur.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has had, and is still having, a very serious impact in the social, economic, and cultural life of persons, organisations and nations across the world. Sports activities, in particular professional football and other major competitions, were particularly impacted by this unprecedented crisis. Due to the sanitary restrictions imposed in the vast majority of European countries, most individual and collective sports competitions were cancelled during the lockdown period and many of them resumed during the return to “new normal” but with serious restrictions, namely in terms of public attendance.

Public authorities, sports authorities and supporters organisations, tried to control damage while complying with the serious but necessary sanitary restrictions. They had to redeploy their resources and adapt their working methods and routines first to the lockdown and then to a constantly evolving situation integrating uncertainty as a risk factor.

As usual in all crises, many important good practices and lessons learned can be taken away. Persons, organisations and public authorities arise more resilient and better prepared for such contingencies. There may still be a long way to go until the situation returns to “normal”, but there is an important commitment to cooperate across organisations and governments to overcome the identified challenges. The best receipt to overcome such a global and important crisis is indeed by addressing it through a globally coordinated integrated and multi-agency approach, supporting each other and sharing lessons learned and recommended good practices.

In the context of this crisis, the Council of Europe must play an even more important role in monitoring developments, assisting its Member States and cooperating with its partners to help them successfully address the many challenges identified. Its key role and unique added value remain to ensure that human rights of European citizens, enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights and its many other Conventions, are respected and protected in a period where some of these rights are being derogated, for emergency reasons, by most of its Member States. As Secretary-General stated, “The major social, political and legal challenge facing our member States will be their ability to respond to this crisis effectively, whilst ensuring that the measures they take do not undermine our genuine long-term interest in safeguarding Europe’s founding values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law”.

One of the main challenges that States face today is indeed to **achieve the right balance** between the collective interest (such as ensuring public health and public order) and the protection of individual human rights and freedoms (such as the rights to liberty and security, to respect for private life and the freedom of assembly). This balance has to be maintained as the situation evolves, including by **regularly reviewing and adapting** policies and measures to the concrete circumstances at

local, national and international level. While engaging in this effort, it is crucial to maintain the **dialogue amongst all key stakeholders** and avoid falling in the trap of working in isolation and taking decisions without carefully weighting their implications in the medium and long term. Through the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) and the Committees monitoring the four sports Conventions, the Council of Europe provides **a platform for governments and organisations to share experiences and concerns, finding solutions to problems and agreeing on joint actions.**

The COVID-19 sanitary crisis has provoked a major disruption in the way sport is organised, practiced and enjoyed, but it should also be used as an opportunity to learn, improve and show the important role that sport can play in strengthening the resilience of people, governments and organisations to this and any future crises.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire to States Parties

Strasbourg, 10 June 2020

T-RV(2020)12

T-S4(2020)08

Survey on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on national and international sports events safety and security policies and practices

Contributions by States Parties to the T-RV and T-S4 Committees

The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to stop its spread are having a significant impact on the organisation of sport events. As more and more States are in transition to a “new normality”, new challenges arise, including how to guarantee sports events safety and security and how to face the social and economic impact of the confinement.

To allow the T-RV Committee and the future T-S4 Committee to assess the current and future impact of the COVID-19 crisis on sports events safety, security and service (S4) national policies and practices, the Bureau of the T-RV invites all States Parties to the Spectator Violence Convention and to the Saint-Denis Convention to respond to this short survey prepared by the Council of Europe Secretariat.

This questionnaire is also intended to facilitate the exchange of national and international good practices and experiences regarding the measures taken to respond to this unprecedented situation by the authorities and organisations responsible for the development and implementation of the sports events safety and security policies at national and international level. It will also attempt to assess the possible short and long term impact of such measures.

The analysis of the answers will also help both the T-RV and the T-S4 Committees to set the priorities for their work.

The answers will be collected and analysed by the Secretariat. A draft report will be prepared and shared by the Secretariat with all delegations and observers of both Committees ahead of their next meetings.

Please reply before 20 July 2020 to: sport.t-rv@coe.int

**Council of Europe's T-RV/T-S4 Survey
on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on national sports events
safety and security policies and practices**

* ⁷Name of the State (Party or signatory to the T-RV or T-S4 Convention)

* Name and position of respondent

* 1. What measures and restrictions have been imposed in your country due to COVID-19 pandemic? (choose all that apply)

- a) Border closures/ restrictions c) Quarantine e) Cancellations of flights
- b) Social distancing d) Isolations f) Public gathering restrictions (namely sporting events)

g) Other important measures

1a. Only if you chose c) or d) above:

What models of work are being used by the public authorities in your country? Modes of work (choose all that apply)

- Telework
- Duty staff
- 1-day per week (or similar restriction)
- No restrictions
- No work at all is allowed

* 1b. What models of work are being used for the NFIPs? Modes of work (choose all that apply)

- Telework
- Duty staff
- 1-day per week (or similar restriction)
- No restrictions
- No work at all is allowed
- Staff was affected to other priority missions

* 2. How COVID-19 pandemic impacted the sporting activity in your country? (choose all that apply)

2a. During the lockdown:

- Training centres and gyms are closed
- All training camps are cancelled
- Only a limited number of training camps is allowed
- Indoor competitions are postponed or cancelled
- Outdoor competitions are postponed or cancelled

⁷ Fields marked with * are mandatory.

No change

* 2b. Currently:

- Training centres and gyms are closed
- All training camps are cancelled
- Only a limited number of training camps is allowed
- Indoor competitions are postponed or cancelled
- Outdoor competitions are postponed or cancelled
- No change

* 3. As part of the outbreak strategy, what did your country decide regarding the current professional football season?

between 1 and 1 choices

- a) The season is closed
- b) The season is suspended until further notice
- c) The season was/will be resumed and completed
- d) Other important measures taken (please specify*):

*Please specify:

3a. Only if you chose c) above, please reply to questions 3a. to 11.

What sanitary/safety/security conditions were/are imposed by your Government for the professional football league season to resume? (choose all that apply)

- Closed-door matches
- Closed-door matches in neutral stadia
- Matches open to a limited number of supporters
- No restrictions
- Other measures (please specify*)

*Please specify:

3aa. Was the police consulted in this decision-making process?

- Yes
- No

3ab. Were the football authorities (association and/or league) consulted in this decision-making process?

- Yes
- No

3ac. Were supporter organisations consulted in this decision-making process?

- Yes
- No

3ad. As part of the outbreak strategy, are there several de-escalation stages in the implementation of sanitary/safety/security measures at sports venues (from full quarantine to minimum restrictions)?

If Yes, please specify.

- Yes
 No

If Yes, please specify.

4. As part of the outbreak strategy, what did your country decide regarding the other sports?

4a. Collective sports:

between 1 and 1 choices

- The season is closed
 The season is postponed until further notice
 The season was/will be resumed and completed

4b. Individual sports

between 1 and 1 choices

- The season is closed
 The season is postponed until further notice
 The season was/will be resumed and completed

5. Were sanitary precautions taken to protect participants (teams, referees, safety and security staff, press, etc.) in the closed-door matches ?

- Yes
 No

5a. Please add a link to any useful national documents to be shared as good practice, like a general sanitary protocol or code of conduct for closed-door matches. Alternatively, you can send us the documents by mail to: sport.t-rv@coe.int

5b. Only if you replied Yes (Question 5.) above:

Which sanitary measures were taken? (choose all that apply)

- Pre-testing of all participants
 Individual protection kits for safety and security personnel
 Separate players in the journey to and from the stadium
 Limited number of persons inside the stadium
 Contingency plan in case any team cannot continue the competition for sanitary reasons
 Possibility to cancel the competition at a later stage
 Other measures (please specify*)

*Please specify:

5c. Who is responsible for enforcing the sanitary protocol inside stadia? (choose all that apply)

- Police
- Organiser/Stadium owner
- Public health authority
- Other (please specify*)

* Please specify:

6. What is the limit number of participants in the closed-door matches?

between 1 and 1 choices

- Less than 100
- Between 100 and 150
- Other (please specify)*

* Please specify:

6aa. What is the average number of police officers involved in the closed-door matches (**inside** stadia)?

between 1 and 1 choices

- Less than 20
- Less than 50
- More than 50

6ab. What is the average number of police officers involved in the closed-door matches (**outside** stadia)?

between 1 and 1 choices

- Less than 20
- Less than 50
- More than 50

6b. Will stewards/private security officers be engaged?

- Yes
- No

6c. Only if you replied Yes (Question 6b.) above:

What is the average number of stewards/private officers per match?

between 1 and 1 choices

- Less than 50
- Between 50 and 100
- More than 100

7. Were security measures foreseen for the vicinity of the stadium, during closed-door matches? (choose all that apply)

- Prohibition of gatherings of supporters
- Limited number of supporters gathering
- No restrictions

Others (please specify*)

*Please specify:

8. How did the supporter groups in general react to the decision of holding closed-door matches?

9. Which measures, if any, were taken in favour of supporters to compensate the decision to hold closed-door matches, like for instance? (choose all that apply)

- No measures
- Drive-in in public viewing areas
- Free TV broadcasting of matches
- Others (please specify*)

*Please specify:

10. What kind of relevant events/incidents were reported during closed-door matches, inside and outside stadia? (choose all that apply)

- No incidents
- Illegal gatherings of supporters outside the stadium
- Violence between groups of supporters outside the stadium
- Demonstrations of supporters against decisions of government/football authorities
- Violations of sanitary protocol inside/outside the stadium
- Others (please specify*)

*Please specify:

11. When is it expected to end the current season of the 1st League of football competition, if applicable?

between 1 and 1 choices

- 1st half of July
- 2nd half of July
- 1st half of August
- Other (please specify*)

*Please specify:

* 12. When is it expected to start the next season of the 1st League of football competition?

between 1 and 1 choices

- 1st half of August
- 2nd half of August
- 1st half of September
- 2nd half of September
- Other (please specify*)

*Please specify:

13. Please briefly describe up to three good practices and/or lessons learned from this sanitary crisis?

* 14. In the short term (2020/2021 season), what would you expect to be the main challenges to preserve safety, security and service at sports events?

* 15. In the medium-long term (beyond 2021), what would you expect to be the main challenges to preserve safety, security and service at sports events?

* 16. Does your Government allow you to travel abroad in official mission this Autumn and Winter?

Yes

No

Other (please specify)*

*Please specify:

17. Which video conferencing apps are you authorised by your national authorities to use on duty (ex: Skype Business, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, BlueJeans, KUDO)?

Many thanks for your collaboration!

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire to Observers (States and sports organisations)

Strasbourg, 9 June 2020

T-RV(2020)10

Survey on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on national and international sports events safety and security policies and practices

Contributions by Observers to the T-RV Committee

The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to stop its spread are having a significant impact on the organisation of sport events. As more and more States are in transition to a “new normality”, new challenges arise, including how to guarantee sports events safety and security and how to face the social and economic impact of the confinement.

To allow the T-RV Committee and the future T-S4 Committee to assess the current and future impact of the COVID-19 crisis on sports events safety, security and service (S4) policies and practices, the Bureau of the T-RV invites all Observers to the Spectator Violence Convention to respond to this short survey prepared by the Council of Europe Secretariat.

This questionnaire is also intended to facilitate the exchange of national and international good practices and experiences regarding the measures taken to respond to this unprecedented situation by the authorities and organisations responsible for the development and implementation of the sports events safety and security policies at national and international level. It will also attempt to assess the possible short and long term impact of such measures.

The analysis of the answers will also help both the T-RV and the T-S4 Committees to set the priorities for their work.

The answers will be collected and analysed by the Secretariat. A draft report will be prepared and shared by the Secretariat with all delegations and observers of both Committees ahead of their next meetings.

Please reply before 20 July 2020 to: [**sport.t-rv@coe.int**](mailto:sport.t-rv@coe.int)

Survey

Name of the State/Organisation

Name and position of respondent

1. How was your activity impacted by the pandemic and how did you adapt your work processes in order to cope with this challenge?

2. Please briefly describe up to three good practices and/or lessons learned by your State/Organisation from this sanitary crisis.

3. Please add links to any useful documents enacted by your State/Organisation, to be shared as good practice, like a general sanitary protocol or code of conduct for organising football and other sports events during the pandemic. Alternatively, you can send us these documents by mail to: sport.t-rv@coe.int

4. In the short term (2020/2021 season), what would you expect to be the main challenges to preserve safety, security and service at sports events?

5. In the medium-long term (beyond 2021), what would you expect to be the main challenges to preserve safety, security and service at sports events?

6. In the scenario that your State/Organisation will be Observer to the T-S4 Committee, what are your expectations towards this new monitoring body, and will you be able to offer related specific services or valuable information to it?

7. Does your State/Organisation allow you to travel abroad in official mission this Autumn and Winter?

8. Which video conferencing apps are you authorised by your State/Organisation to use on duty (ex: Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, BlueJeans, KUDO)?

Many thanks for your collaboration!




Please reply before 20 July 2020 to: **sport.t-rv@coe.int**

Appendix 3 – List of State and Observer respondents

Table 3: List of State respondents

	Austria	NFIP
	Belgium	NFIP
	Bulgaria	Ministry of Youth and Sports
	Czech Republic	NFIP
	Denmark	NFIP
	Estonia	Sports Department, Ministry of Culture
	Finland	National Police Board
	France	NFIP
	Germany	Federal Ministry of the Interior
	Greece	Permanent Committee Against Violence in Sports, Ministry of Sports
	Hungary	Deputy State Secretariat for Sport Administration and Sports Development, Ministry of Human Capacities
	Italy	NFIP
	Liechtenstein	National Police
	Lithuania	NFIP
	Luxembourg	International and EU Affairs, Ministry of Sport
	Monaco	Public Security Police
	Netherlands	NFIP
	Norway	NFIP
	Poland	Ministry of Sport
	Portugal	National Authority on Prevention and Fight against Sport-related Violence, State Secretary of Youth and Sport
	Romania	NFIP
	Slovak Republic	NFIP
	Spain	NFIP
	Sweden	National Police
	Switzerland	NFIP
	Turkey	Ministry of Youth and Sports
	Ukraine	Unit of International Cooperation and European Integration, Ministry of Youth and Sports
	United Kingdom	NFIP

Table 4: List of Observer respondents

	Georgia	Development Division, Sport Development Department, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
	UEFA	Safety and Security Operations Department
	Football Supporters Europe (FSE)	Executive Director
	Centre for Access to Football in Europe (CAFE)	Managing Director
	Colour Blind Awareness	CEO

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