

**COMMITTEE ON SAFETY AND SECURITY
AT SPORTS EVENTS (T-S4)**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON AN
INTEGRATED SAFETY, SECURITY AND SERVICE
APPROACH AT FOOTBALL MATCHES AND OTHER
SPORTS EVENTS



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Saint-Denis Convention (CETS No. 218)

Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events

**Advisory Group on International Cooperation
(T-S4 COOP)**

**Report on the Possession and Use of Pyrotechnics
in connection with Football
(and other sports) Events**

Executive summary

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This report provides a snapshot of the possession and use of pyrotechnics at football and other sports events during the 2022/23 season or year 2023. The data was collected through a questionnaire issued to the Parties to the Saint-Denis Convention and Observers (State and non-State) to its Committee.

Key Findings

- The national legal and regulatory frameworks governing the possession and use of pyrotechnics vary significantly across Europe and beyond, as does the extent to which key laws and regulations are implemented effectively. Some countries have strict laws with severe penalties, while others have more lenient regulations.
- The purchase, transport and supply of pyrotechnics is also subject to EU regulations and varying national legal frameworks. Some countries have laws specifically prohibiting the sale of pyrotechnics to individuals, while others regulate their sale through licensing systems.
- The use of pyrotechnics at sports events is a persistent problem across Europe and beyond. Incidents involving pyrotechnics have been reported in a wide range of sports, including football, basketball and handball.
- The impact of pyrotechnic incidents can be severe, including injuries to spectators, players, and other participants, damage to property and disruptions to matches.
- Preventative strategies adopted by sports authorities and law enforcement agencies vary across Europe and beyond. Some common strategies include increased safety and security measures, education campaigns, and the use of technology to detect and identify pyrotechnic users.

Recommendations

- **Harmonisation of Legal Frameworks:** State Parties to the Saint-Denis Convention and Observers to the Committee should work towards harmonising their legal frameworks governing the possession, use and sale of pyrotechnics to create a more consistent and effective approach to addressing this issue.
- **Enhanced Cooperation:** Increased cooperation between national (and European) law enforcement agencies, sports authorities, and pyrotechnic manufacturers is needed to share information, develop best practices, and coordinate efforts to prevent and combat the use of pyrotechnics at football matches and other sports events.
- **Targeted Education Campaigns:** Education campaigns should be developed and implemented to raise awareness of the dangers of pyrotechnics and to discourage their use at sports events.

- **Technological Innovation:** The use of technology, such as facial recognition¹ and chemical component detection, should be explored to identify and deter the possession and use of pyrotechnics in and around sports venues. Any of these innovations should be thoroughly vetted and assessed and should be in line with national legal frameworks.
- **Dialogue and Communication with Supporter Groups:** Sports authorities and law enforcement agencies should work with supporter groups to promote responsible fan behaviour, non-pyrotechnic orchestrations and to encourage them to play a role in preventing the use of pyrotechnics at sports events.

Conclusion

The use of pyrotechnics at sports events remains a major challenge across Europe and beyond. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach that involves collaboration between different public and private stakeholders, including governments, law enforcement agencies, local authorities, sports authorities, supporter groups, and pyrotechnic manufacturers. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, it is possible to reduce the incidence of pyrotechnic incidents at sports events and create a safer environment for all.

¹ As provided for by Article 6 of the modernised [Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data \(Convention 108+\)](#), the processing of special categories of data, such as biometric data uniquely identifying a person, shall only be authorised where such processing relies on an appropriate legal basis, and if complementary and appropriate safeguards are enshrined in domestic law. These safeguards shall be adapted to the risks involved and to the interests, rights and freedoms to be protected. See [Guidelines on Facial Recognition](#) (2021), adopted by the Consultative Committee of the Convention for the protection of individuals with regard to automatic processing of personal data (Convention 108), of the Council of Europe. Similar safeguards will be required where CCTV and other technologies process special categories of data.