

**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
(CETS No. 218)**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Rec (2025) 2

Saint-Denis Convention (CETS No. 218)

Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events

Recommendation Rec (2025)2

on the Possession and Use of Pyrotechnics at Football Matches and other Sports Events

**Adopted by the Saint-Denis Committee by written procedure
on 25 November 2025**

RECOMMENDATION REC (2025) 2

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

Strasbourg, 25 November 2025

T-S4 Recommendation Rec(2025)2 on the Possession and Use of Use of Pyrotechnics at Football Matches and other Sports Events

Preamble

The Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events (T-S4 or Saint-Denis Committee) of the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No. 218),

Pursuing the ethos of the Saint-Denis Convention, which calls Parties to promote safer, more secure and welcoming sports events, through a balanced and integrated multi-agency cooperation between all relevant stakeholders ;

Reminding that the Saint-Denis Convention (CETS No. 218) in its Article 5.5 calls Parties to incorporate clear policies and procedures on matters that might impact on crowd management and associated safety and security risks, in particular the use of pyrotechnics,

Recalling the existing guidance provided by:

- The T-S4 Recommendation Rec (2021)1, Annex A – Safety, Appendix 28, which sets recommended good practices on pyrotechnics;
- The T-S4 Recommendation Rec (2022) 1, on a model national S4 strategy, which calls for dedicated national strategies on pyrotechnics;
- The relevant EU Council Conclusions; and
- The outcome of international research on the risks and dangers of the use of pyrotechnics;

Considering the main findings of the report of the T-S4 questionnaire on the possession and use of pyrotechnics in connection with football and other sports events (Ref. T-S4 (2025 07), which observe that:

- 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;
- The purchase, transport and supply of pyrotechnics is also subject to European regulations and varying national legal frameworks;

- The use of pyrotechnics at sports events is a persistent problem across Europe and beyond, occurring in a wide range of sports, including football, basketball, and handball;
- The impact of pyrotechnic incidents can be severe, including injuries to spectators, players, media workers and other participants, damage to property, and disruptions to matches; and
- Preventative strategies adopted by sports authorities and law enforcement agencies vary across Europe and beyond, including increased safety and security measures, education campaigns, and the use of technology to detect and identify pyrotechnic users;

Acknowledging that Parties to the Convention have full authority to determine their legal frameworks and national policies regarding the possession and use of pyrotechnics in and around sports venues, with due regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms of all participants;

Considering the recommendations of the above-mentioned report on the T-S4 questionnaire,

Recommends that Governments of Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No. 218) adopt or refine their legislation and policies on the possession and use of pyrotechnics in connection with football matches and other sports events, based on the following principles:

I. Scope and Priorities

Parties should prioritise measures, research, preventative and counter policies, strategies and tactics on spectators' possession and use of pyrotechnics in football and other sports venues, where risks to large numbers of spectators and staff are most acute.

II. Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

Parties should work towards harmonising their legal frameworks governing the possession, use, and sale of pyrotechnics, in order to achieve a more consistent and effective approach across Europe and beyond.

Parties should review their legal frameworks in order to enhance their potential impact and effectiveness, namely by ensuring that:

- a. The possession, use, facilitation, or organisation of pyrotechnics in spectator areas is prohibited; and
- b. Meaningful penalties and sanctions, including banning orders, apply to individuals and organisations involved, irrespective of status or role, including complicity by club

officials, stadium staff, and third parties in smuggling, storing or distributing pyrotechnics on match days.

III. International-Level Coordination and Co-operation

1. National and European law enforcement agencies, sports authorities, and pyrotechnic manufacturers should strengthen cooperation to exchange information, develop best practices, and coordinate efforts in preventing and countering the use of pyrotechnics at sports events.
 2. International agreements should be considered to regulate and limit cross-border sales of pyrotechnics, ensuring that differences in national permissiveness do not create loopholes that undermine safety efforts.
 3. The NFIP network should review existing European guidance on pyrotechnics, identify gaps, and assess which measures warrant obligatory status across Parties.
 4. The Saint-Denis Committee and NFIP network should liaise with EU institutions, UEFA, FIFA, and other European and international stakeholders to align policy frameworks and enforcement tools.
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IV. National Integrated Strategies

1. Parties should adopt as a high priority a government-led national strategy on pyrotechnics, incorporating the measures set in T-S4 Recommendations Rec(2021)1 and Rec(2022)1, as well as EU Council Conclusions.
 2. The European NFIP network should liaise with partner agencies to identify any potential barriers to making this strategy mandatory.
 3. Local police deployments should be guided by legal frameworks and local risk assessments for each operation, with operational decisions taken by local and on-duty commanders.
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V. Detection and Intelligence

1. The use of innovative technologies, where applicable, in conformity with human rights standards, and provided that complementary and appropriate safeguards are enshrined in domestic law, such as facial recognition systems and chemical component detection tools, should be further explored to deter and detect the possession and use of pyrotechnics in and around sports venues, subject to strict compliance with legal and human rights safeguards.
2. The European Group of Policing Football and NFIP Experts should:
 - a. Consider establishing a working group to obtain scientific advice on available pyrotechnics detection technologies for use at entry points and in pre-match inspections of sports venues; and to liaise with bodies who initiated research reviews of available technologies for detecting pyrotechnics contained in parcels and packages entering the country.

- b. Seek scientific advice on the ability of pyrotechnic-specific sniffer dogs to detect pyrotechnics during stadium entry searches and pre-match inspections.
 3. Parties' police authorities should investigate potential collusion by stadium personnel or third parties with supporters in bringing pyrotechnics into a sports venue and storing them in discrete locations.
 4. Parties should encourage police strategists to investigate illegal online purchase and supply of pyrotechnics by supporter groups for use at sports venues, with Europol coordination where cross-border elements exist.
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VI. Supporter Dialogue and Public Awareness

1. Targeted education campaigns should be designed to raise awareness of the dangers of pyrotechnics and to discourage their use at sports events. These should include social media initiatives, stadium workshops (particularly for younger audiences), and cooperation with Supporter Liaison Officers.
 2. Parties should ensure that policing bodies, clubs, and associations engage in structured and opportunistic dialogue with supporters during policing operations to promote safe fan culture and reduce pyrotechnics misuse.
 3. The European Group of Policing Football and NFIP Experts, and partner sports bodies should develop and disseminate impactful, professionally produced public awareness campaigns highlighting the risks posed by the use of pyrotechnics at sports venues.
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VII. Health and Safety Research

1. Stewards, police, and other stadium personnel should receive enhanced training in pyrotechnics-related risks, detection practices, and emergency procedures to strengthen operational preparedness.
 2. The Saint-Denis Committee should consider liaising with medical experts and assess the need for, and the merits of, commissioning additional research into the short- and long-term health effects of pyrotechnics exposure in stadia, comparing results to EU and World Health Organisation air quality thresholds.
 3. Parties should organise the collection of injury-related data specifically for the use of pyrotechnics at sports events to permit evidence-driven policy development and safety and awareness-raising campaigns
 4. Research findings should inform public-awareness materials, national strategies, and possible employer "duty of care" requirements under the Revised European Social Charter.
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VIII. Implementation and Reporting

1. Parties should:
 - a. Incorporate these recommendations into national legislation, strategies, and operational planning.

- b. Report, through the monitoring tools, to the Saint-Denis Committee on progress, enforcement outcomes, and incident trends.
 2. The Saint-Denis Committee should review implementation at regular intervals and update guidance accordingly.
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