

**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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 6 October 2025

Rec (2025) 1

Saint-Denis Convention (CETS No. 218)

Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events

**Recommendation Rec (2025)1
on the use of collective bans against
away football supporters**

**Adopted by the Saint-Denis Committee by written procedure
on 6 October 2025**

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 (T-S4)

Strasbourg, 6 October 2025

Recommendation Rec(2025)1 of the Saint-Denis Committee on the use of collective bans against away football supporters

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),

Having regard to the need for Parties to adopt a balanced multi-agency integrated approach to safety, security and service at football matches and other sports events, at national and local levels, both inside and outside venues, as enshrined in Article 2.a of the Convention;

Taking into account that whilst safety and security incidents at sporting events are a European-wide phenomenon, in particular at football matches, the character and degree of seriousness can and does vary across the world and, indeed, within States;

Recalling that all persons have the right to travel and attend football matches and other sports events, while respecting the laws and regulations, and to be treated in a safe, secure and welcoming manner;

Recognising that violence and disorder infringe on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of spectators and other participants, and that the States Parties to the Convention have the duty to prevent such acts from occurring;

Recalling that a banning order – or simply a ban –, in the context of sports events, refers to a legal or statutory mechanism used by a judicial, administrative or sports authority, where applicable, to restrict or prohibit an individual or a group of persons, irrespective of the individual behaviour of each member of the designated group, from travelling to a country, a city and/or a sports venue, to attend a single match or for a longer period of time (one or several seasons), The ban can either be applied at national or European competitions, following a conviction of a sport-related offence or based on evidence of potential risks to public order, aiming at preventing violence and disorder at sports events;

Acknowledging that bans have the potential to infringe human rights, in particular the right to freedom of movement, the right to respect for private life, and the right to liberty and security;

Considering the obligation for Parties to ensure that any restrictions on human rights and fundamental freedoms such as bans, have to be in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights and national law, necessary in a democratic society and proportionate to the legitimate aim to be achieved;

Acknowledging that all States Parties to the Convention have full authority to determine their legal frameworks and national policies but should do so with due regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms;

Recognising that a majority of European states do not legislate for collective bans, instead opting for individual sanctions, and that many stakeholders, including football associations, leagues, and players' organisations, oppose such bans in favour of alternative and more proportionate measures; and

Concerned that the decision-making processes regarding collective bans sometimes lack transparency and adequate stakeholder consultation;

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 collective bans for away supporters based on the following principles:

I. General principles and legal framework

1. National legislation on exclusion from sports events should prioritise individual accountability over collective restrictions, ensuring that sanctions are targeted at those responsible for disorderly conduct.
 2. Collective bans on away spectators should only be considered in exceptional circumstances where there is clear, recent, and objective evidence that such a measure is necessary to maintain public order and safety. They should not become routine but rather serve as a last-resort option.
 3. Using modern and advanced technologies, where applicable, in conformity with human rights standards, and provided that complementary and appropriate safeguards are enshrined in domestic law, such as e-ticketing and CCTV to identify individuals responsible for misconduct, could significantly reduce the need for collective bans.
 4. Any measures restricting the rights and freedoms of supporters should be in compliance with relevant international standards, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the Protocols thereto, be prescribed by law, have a legitimate aim, respect the principles of necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination, and individuals have the right to challenge them.
 5. States should establish transparent legal frameworks that define the criteria and procedures for imposing collective bans, ensuring due process and the right to appeal.
 6. Justifying collective sanctions on the grounds of a tiny number of troublemakers is counterproductive and disproportionate, as it breeds a sense of injustice and strains relationships between supporters and public and sports authorities.
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II. Stakeholders' consultation and involvement

1. Governments should establish multi-agency coordination structures, including representatives from national and local authorities, law enforcement, football associations, leagues, clubs, and supporters' organisations.
2. Best practices highlight the importance of early stakeholder engagement to ensure more balanced and widely accepted decisions.

3. Supporters and their representatives should be regularly consulted on matters concerning stadium safety and security, crowd management, and mobility restrictions.
 4. Countries where bans are often imposed without prior consultation, should adopt a more inclusive decision-making process to enhance legitimacy and public trust.
 5. Authorities should make stakeholder consultation a standard part of the decision-making process for high-risk matches, involving clubs, supporter organisations and public authorities early on. Early involvement can lead to better planning and coordination, encouraging voluntary compliance and reducing tensions.
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III. Restricting the use of collective bans to high-risk situations

1. Collective bans should only be imposed in high-risk situations where intelligence and dynamic risk assessment indicate a serious threat to public order that cannot be managed through other means.
 2. The decision-making process should be transparent, inclusive and foreseeable to ensure bans are proportionate and justified.
 3. Decisions on collective bans should be supported by documented evidence and communicated transparently to the supporters.
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IV. Timely communication and transparency

1. Authorities should communicate decisions on collective bans in due course, preferably right after match fixtures are announced—to allow affected supporters to make necessary travel adjustments and exercise their right to appeal.
 2. Information on bans should be disseminated through direct, accessible channels, such as direct announcements to clubs, their supporter liaison officers (SLOs) and supporter organisations, rather than indirect postings that may fail to reach the targeted audiences.
 3. Transparency in the decision-making process is essential to maintaining public trust. Authorities should provide clear documentation and justification for all collective bans to prevent perceptions of arbitrariness or unfair treatment.
 4. The monitoring mechanism established by the Saint-Denis Convention should evaluate the impact and effectiveness of collective bans, ensuring they are not used excessively or disproportionately.
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V. Implementation and evaluation

1. National strategies on safety, security and service at sports events should integrate guidelines on collective bans, ensuring their alignment with broader crowd management policies.
2. The effectiveness of such measures should be regularly reviewed through national and international evaluations, incorporating feedback from stakeholders.
3. The Saint-Denis Committee may monitor the implementation of this Recommendation at national level and provide guidance and technical assistance to Parties seeking to refine their policies in line with international best practices.
4. Governments should ensure adequate training for law enforcement and other relevant authorities on alternatives to collective bans, emphasising de-escalation strategies and focusing on targeted measures against individuals potentially threatening public order and security.