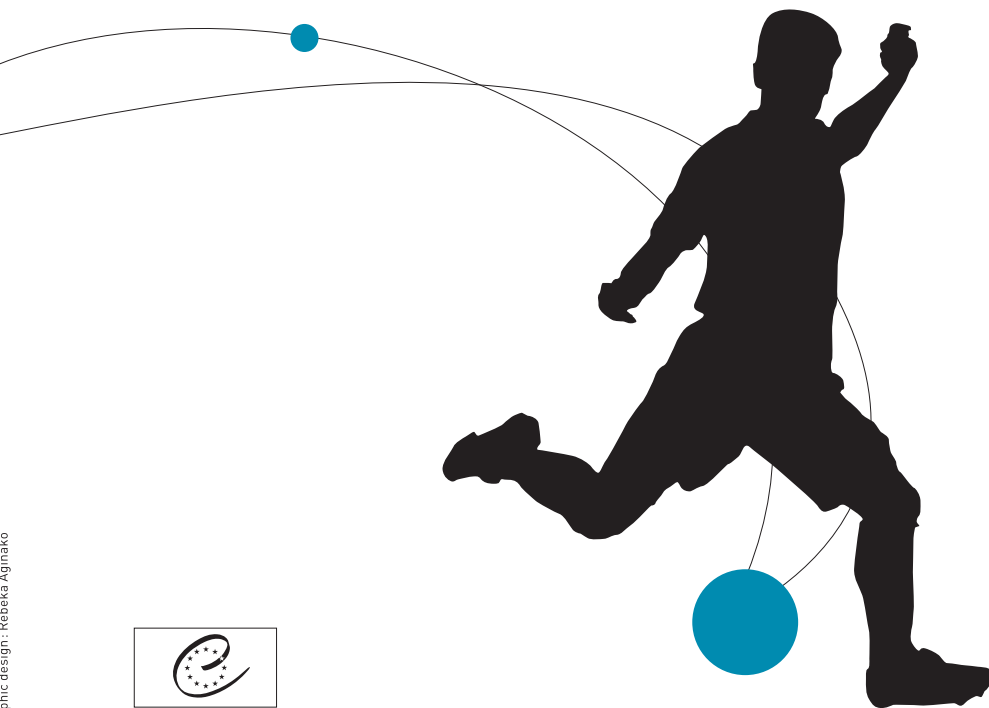


For a safe and tolerant sport  
**The European Convention**  
**on Spectator Violence**



COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



## Why a European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events under the umbrella of the Council of Europe?

For the Council of Europe, sport is a force for social integration, tolerance and understanding. As the single most popular activity in society today, sport plays a most distinctive role. It is open to all, regardless of age, language, religion, culture or ability. Sport provides the opportunity to learn to play by commonly agreed rules, to behave with fairness in victory and in defeat, and to develop not only the physical being, but also social competences and ethical values. Its positive role in education is also increasingly acknowledged.

Sport brings a key contribution to the promotion of the core values of the Council of Europe: democracy, human rights and the rule of law. For its part, the Council of Europe acts firmly against some of the negative aspects of sport - violence and doping - through two conventions: the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches (ETS No. 120) and the Anti-Doping Convention (ETS No. 135).

Violence is the most common form of violation of human rights affecting all human beings.

The fight against violence – whichever form it may take - and its prevention forms one of the cornerstones of the Council of Europe's priorities and subsequently its activities.

In 1983, the Council of Europe voiced its determination to combat violence in sport with an initial recommendation from its Parliamentary Assembly on the cultural and educational means of reducing violence. In response, the Committee of Ministers advocated a series of measures in 1984 to reduce spectator violence at sports events, particularly at football matches.

The Heysel disaster in May 1985 lent new urgency to this work. Many Europeans felt concerned by such violence and its repercussions. The tragedy provided the dramatic backdrop to the opening for signature, in Strasbourg on 19 August 1985, of the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches, which came into force extremely rapidly on 1 November 1985.

More than two decades after the launch of the convention, the progress is notable. National legislation and security regulations comply more and more with the recommendations made in the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events, supporters are better managed and this significantly reduces the risk of such disasters happening.

## What does the convention aim to do?

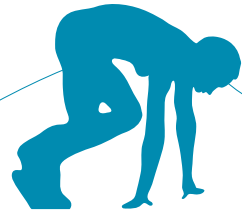
The principal aim of the convention is to prevent and control violence and misbehaviour by spectators at sports events. It not only provides practical measures on how to prevent and control such violence but also the requisite action to identify and deal with offenders.

Amongst the principal measures recommended by the convention, notably under Article 3, are:

- deploying public order resources in stadia and along the transit routes used by spectators;
- segregating rival groups of supporters;
- strictly controlling ticket sales;
- excluding trouble-makers from stadia and matches;
- prohibiting the introduction and restricting the sale of alcoholic drinks in stadia;
- conducting security checks, particularly for objects likely to be used for violence;
- clearly defining responsibilities between organisers and the public authorities;
- designing football stadia in such a way as to guarantee spectator safety.

In follow-up to the convention, numerous recommendations have been adopted and promoted covering the following aspects:

- ticket sales (for efficient management of ticket production, sale and distribution of tickets, key factors for overall football match safety) (1989 and 2002);
- identification and treatment of offenders (1990 and 1999);
- stewarding (reducing police numbers in football stadia) (1999);
- efficient crowd management inside the stadium, taking account of spectator safety and security (clear definition of responsibilities, appropriate stadium design, measures concerning the sale of alcoholic drinks, etc) (1987, 1991);
- action against racism and xenophobia (2001);
- police co-operation and information exchange (1987 and 2000);
- social and educational measures to prevent violence in sport (2003).



Since 2008, three new recommendations have been adopted:

- on the use of visiting stewards;
- on the use of pyrotechnical devices at sport events;
- and on the use of public viewing areas at large scale sports events.

Several others are in preparation:

- on hospitality principles when organising sports events;
- on supporters' charters;
- and on the training of safety officers and stewards.

Another topic currently being studied is the development of the "Ultra" movement in Europe. Good practices on how to deal with new developments in supporters' behaviour will be explored.



### **Increasing prevention: the key to success**

In January 2003, the Standing Committee adopted the recommendation Rec(2003)1 on the role of social and educational measures in preventing violence in sport. Drawing on the experience of recent major championship events, it recommends adopting measures to improve the welcoming and coaching of supporters.

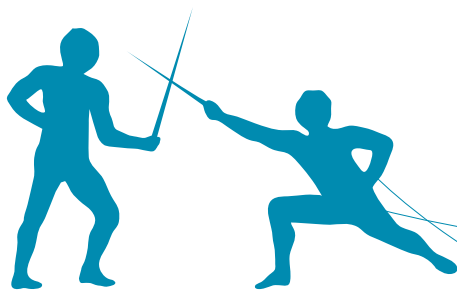
Fan coaching activities and projects, fan embassies, low-profile police and the development of supporters' charters are the cornerstones of the prevention policies.

### **Combating racism and xenophobia**

Major sports events are often marred by racist behaviour. Such behaviour must be firmly condemned; given the educational role sport has to play in promoting mutual respect, tolerance and fair play, and combating discrimination.

Recommendation Rec(2001)6 of the Committee of Ministers on the "prevention of racism, xenophobia and racial intolerance in sport" urges governments of member states to adopt effective policies and measures aimed at preventing and combating racist, xenophobic, discriminatory and intolerant behaviour in all sports, particularly in football.

In 2009, the Council of Europe launched a new campaign to fight discrimination and promote intercultural dialogue targeted at media professionals.





## How is compliance with the convention ensured?

Under the convention, the Standing Committee was set up to follow the implementation of the convention, to adopt recommendations and to reply to new challenges. The main mission of the Standing Committee is to make sure that the states parties respect the convention. A programme for monitoring compliance with commitments, launched in 1998, analyses how states parties are implementing the convention. Advisory and evaluation visits assist the countries concerned in their implementation of the convention. Following every visit, an evaluation report with recommendations to the host country is published.

Furthermore, each State Party submits an annual report to the Standing Committee on the steps it is taking to implement the provisions of the convention.

## International co-operation

The European Convention on Spectator Violence is open to all countries and encourages close international co-operation among states and the relevant national sports authorities.

The Standing Committee is the body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention. UEFA and FIFA are both associated with the Committee's work.

At major international tournaments – European Championships, World Cups, – an Ad hoc working group of the Standing Committee evaluates the security provisions and, after the event in question, outlines the lessons learnt and draws up conclusions and best practices. These meetings facilitate international co-operation, ensure the transfer of know-how between the organisers of the previous and future events.

The Standing Committee co-operates with the European Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), created in 2007, on several topics such as racism and particularly on the occasion of the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport every two years.

## How many states have ratified the convention?

The convention has been ratified by 41 Council of Europe member states - Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom.





## The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental political organisation which was founded on 5 May 1949 by 10 European countries and which today comprises 47 member states. Its headquarters are in Strasbourg (France).

The primary aim of the Council of Europe is to create a common democratic and legal area throughout the whole of the continent, ensuring respect for its fundamental values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

These values are the foundations of a tolerant society and indispensable for European stability, economic growth and social cohesion. On the basis of these fundamental values, the Council of Europe tries to find shared solutions to major problems such as terrorism, organised crime and corruption, cybercrime, bioethics and cloning, violence against children and women, and trafficking in human beings. Co-operation between all member states is the only way to solve the major problems facing society today.

The Council of Europe attaches great importance to the effective operation of the Sport Conventions, which are reference texts in international law. In line with the Committee of Ministers Recommendation (99)9 on the role of sport in furthering social cohesion, the Heads of State and Government of the member states of the Council of Europe, meeting in Warsaw on 16 and 17 May 2005, recommended the continuation of Council of Europe activities which serve as references in the domain of sport.





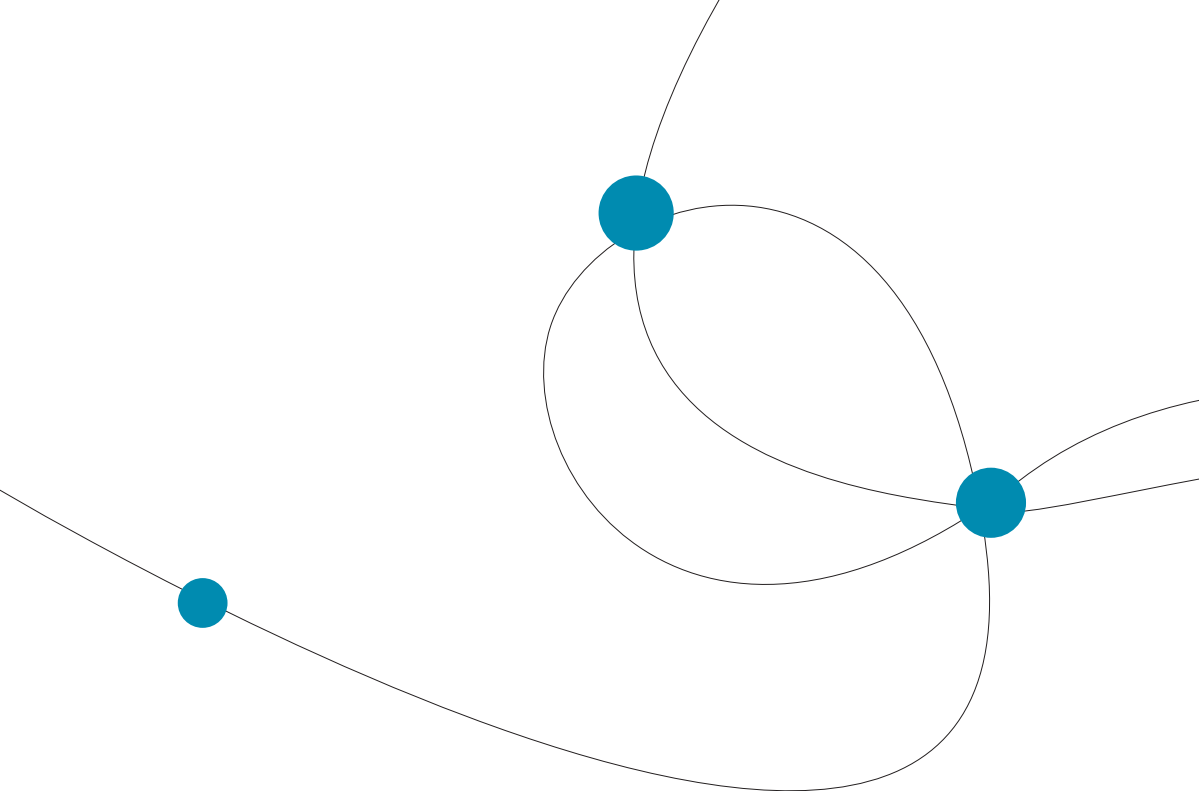
**A convention** is an international inter-state treaty governed by public international law. Its acceptance is optional, but becomes legally binding when a state signs and ratifies it.

**A recommendation** is an international decision adopted by specific bodies, intended for the governments of member states and inviting them to implement the guidelines contained in the recommendation. A recommendation is not legally binding, which means that the transposition of the principles set out in a recommendation into domestic legislation is optional for the individual member state.

**Stewards:** this job emerged in the late 1990s in the wake of the Council of Europe's activities and proposals in this field. Stewards are chiefly responsible for welcoming, checking and seating spectators, providing them with information and ensuring their safety in the stadium. They assist all spectators, respond to any complaints, react to incidents and emergencies and help the police and emergency services as required.

Several European countries have already introduced stewarding systems, which enable match organisers to meet many of the supporters' expectations, including providing them with a friendly welcome and making them feel safe and at ease. Intervention by the police is then only required in cases of serious criminal acts.





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