

EPFL International Workshop

SAFETY & SECURITY at Leagues' Competitions

Athens – 7 December 2010



CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

The **International Workshop on Safety and Security at Leagues' Competitions** was held on on **7 December 2010**, in Athens. This workshop brought together experts in the European football industry and the most experienced international specialists on prevention in the fight against violence associated with sport.

In compliance with the **EPFL Global Strategy and Action Plan 2010-11**, the EPFL organised this event in co-operation with the **Super League Greece**, which congregated, in Greece, with the representatives of the EPFL Member leagues and Associate members.

Experts from several European leagues, safety and security officers, public authorities, police forces and supporters' groups have actively participated in this high-level Workshop.

The most effective strategies and measures related to prevention and the combat of the manifestations of violence and spectators' disorders at Leagues' matches, national and international co-operation policies between sport organisations, political authorities and police forces, new forms of security management inside and outside sport venues, the key role of the Leagues and clubs on the organisation of competitions, the process relating to the organization of matches prior, during and after each football game and implementation of various practices, policies, initiatives and procedures, as well as the role of the fans to ensure a positive football atmosphere, were some of the relevant issues under discussion during this Workshop. The objectives of the Workshop were successfully achieved.

Firstly,

The Workshop recognized that violence is a current social phenomenon with wide repercussions and that football is often the victim of outbreaks of violence.

The Workshop acknowledged that violence within Professional Football may manifest itself in a number of ways, which include without limitation, physical acts of violence, intimidation, racism, xenophobic or otherwise offensive chanting, signs or actions, whether between rival spectators or towards players and/or officials. Such violence may take place on the field of play, the stands and/or around stadia.

The Workshop condemned all manifestations of violence and spectators' disorders, as they undermine the core principles and integrity of the game and threaten its long term future. The Workshop agreed that the negative consequences of violence generate physical harm and, ultimately, the endangering of the lives of all those who attend football matches, including spectators, stewards and the police.

The representatives of the EPFL Members and Associate Members share a common concern about the violence and misbehaviour of spectators at domestic football matches and consider

EPFL International Workshop

SAFETY & SECURITY at Leagues' Competitions

Athens – 7 December 2010



that both public authorities and football organisations have separate but complementary responsibilities to prevent and combat this social flagellum.

As a consequence,

The Workshop identified best practices in terms of the prevention and control of manifestations of violence at football matches. Best practices were also identified in terms of co-operation with relevant public authorities and other sports bodies with competence in the field.

The Workshop had an overview of enhanced systems currently implemented across Leagues' competitions with a view of safeguarding safety and security within the immediate vicinity of and inside stadia, before, during and after the matches, thus preserving football's image and positive values.

The Workshop suggested different rules and systems regulating the admittance of spectators to stadia including electronic counting systems that must be implemented in order to prevent known troublemakers and hooligans from accessing the stadium. Also for those spectators who are under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs or have committed previous acts of violence must be as a consequence precluded by law to attend football matches.

The Workshop emphasised the importance of stadia safety certificates in each Member and Associate Member League to introduce an effective instrument, which, among other objectives, verifies stadia safe design and capacity, the adequacy and safety of entrance and access points, barriers and fences, the separation of rival spectators, protecting the area around the field of play and preventing spectator access to the same, protecting participants and officials on the field of play, and preventing outbreaks of fire and other hazards.

The Workshop remarked the development of '*Supporter Charter*' in certain European countries, which sets out acceptable standards of behaviour within stadia, is an excellent tool which can be applied. In this respect, the Workshop wishes to promote the creation of such Charter with the intention of educating spectators on standards of acceptable behavior.

The Workshop drew the attention of the participants on the role of supporter groups legally constituted and their integration into the process of the collation and exchange of information with Clubs regarding trends and supporter experiences of safety and violence in professional football.

The Workshop paid particular consideration to the major role played by the Supporters Liaison Officer of the football club and the tasks performed to ensure proper communication and exchange of information with fans, as well as the importance to incorporate this function within the structure of the clubs to represent the interests of the fans towards the chairman or secretary of the club. In this respect, it is noted that the selling of tickets for

EPFL International Workshop

SAFETY & SECURITY at Leagues' Competitions

Athens – 7 December 2010



away-games and the home-sections of the “hardcore-fans” and having influence on the distribution are major factors to have greater control over the fan-base.

Representatives of the fans at European level provided the audience of the Workshop with their views on manifestations of safety & security risks in football, like blocked entrances/exits/stairs, irresponsible usage of flares, insufficient number of entrance gates open, disproportionate policing & stewarding, unsafe/insufficient stadium infrastructure, and, consequently, suggested some basic principles best practice for long-term improvements such as:

- Good hosting and hospitality
- Safety and comfortable stadiums
- Multi-Agency approach, including need for fans' consultation
- Self-regulation amongst fans' groups
- Avoidance of collective punishment
- Proportionate stewarding and policing
- Implementation of fans' projects and supporters councils

The Workshop had the opportunity to evaluate the active involvement of professional football Leagues and the improvements made in several countries in this field, based on strict legislation to deter violence and spectators' misbehavior, ban of non-suitable stadia and persons who committed acts of violence at football matches. This can also include the application of dissuasive sanctions, cooperation with supporters' organisations, systematic ticket selling procedures and electronic cards to access stadiums, among other initiatives.

The Workshop acknowledged the progress made in certain European countries as a benchmark for the understanding of the different but complementary roles of the parties responsible for security and safety management.

The following set of safety and security methods and initiatives to take into account and be applied before; during and after football matches were highlighted:

Safety

- Structural safety of the building and installations
- Inspections and tests
- Pre-match stadium checks
- Management structure
- Role of Safety Officer
- Role of Supervisors
- Trained stewards
- Contingency plans
- Evacuation exercises

EPFL International Workshop

SAFETY & SECURITY at Leagues' Competitions

Athens – 7 December 2010



Security

- Measures to prevent disorder
- Segregation of supporters
- Role of police officers
- Barriers and cordons
- Searching of spectators

The Workshop addressed the role of the Stadium Safety Officer in order to ensure the safety of spectators, the recruitment of well trained stewards and liaison with the police and local authorities.

The Workshop considered the implications of implementing CCTV cameras, with monitors and recording equipment in the stadium control room. This is seen as an effective instrument against violence inside the stadium since in certain countries, like England, the images recorded can be also used as evidence in a court of law.

The Workshop put strong emphasis on the partnership to be developed between football clubs, in charge for safety in the stadium, and the police, responsible for maintaining public order, mainly outside the stadium.

Within this context, the Workshop also addressed the roles of both police forces and private security and stressed the need to ensure efficient cooperation between them.

When addressing current legal frameworks existing across Europe to deal with football hooliganism, in addition to the creation and implementation of ground regulations standard to all stadia, the Workshop agreed on the need to enact proper legislation, whereby any person convicted for practicing a serious football related offence must be sentenced by the Courts with a football banning order.

The Workshop concurred that in order to have high levels of attendance home clubs must offer to visitors a welcoming and friendly environment. This includes modern and safe stadia, no fences or cages, as well as more stewards and less police.

The Workshop had the possibility to evaluate the new initiative called "Event Pass". This initiative is aimed at developing an integrated fan pass concept, whereby identified high-risk fans can be systematically excluded from matches so that security can be improved, security costs reduced and profitability per match increased.

The Workshop emphasized the effectiveness of stewarding and the need to improve steward training, as a way to reduce police numbers and overall costs. In this regard, an overview of the education and training of stewards applied by certain national associations and Leagues were shared during the Workshop, specifying the type of know-how to be acquired by them

EPFL International Workshop

SAFETY & SECURITY at Leagues' Competitions

Athens – 7 December 2010



and the positive consequences produced by the inclusion of this character, in particular, the impact on the decrease of people arrested for manifestation of violence at football stadia.

Concerning the responsibilities of National Football Information Points, emphasis was given to the needed preparation at the actual match and risk assessment in order to implement measures to oppose football hooliganism and serious nuisances. In addition, it is important to establish concrete cooperation between the chain partners, namely national and local governmental authorities, the national football federation, the league and clubs, as well as police forces and to ensure proper access to the relevant database by all parties.

The Workshop was enlightened about the initiatives taken by European countries, in line with the European Convention on Spectator Violence at sporting events, particularly at football matches and the accountability of the Member States to adopt appropriate legislation. As an example, in Portugal, it became incumbent upon the State to prevent violence in sport and to take proper action to control organized groups of supporters, among diverse policies and procedures applied to enhance security surrounding football matches.

The Workshop also reviewed the need for active involvement by national and European political authorities to eradicate acts of vandalism in sport and guarantee a pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere for all participants and spectators, bearing in mind the main priorities and requirements to achieve this objective, such as safety stadiums, high quality-intelligence, clear division of responsibilities among the parties involved, always looking at the balance of public and private effort, the development of a concept of hospitality at all levels, a changed mentality at supporters level ("support your team, not acting against supporters of the other team: respect, fairplay, tolerance"), and the necessary funding of police forces by the pertinent city to support clubs and League on their pre and post-match activities.

The Workshop acknowledged that the existence of these worrying phenomena requires greater cooperation between public authorities and the sport movement, as the sport movement alone is unable to resolve them.

In this respect, the Workshop also gave a clear sign that the Leagues and clubs alone, without the proper legislation in place and support from the local governments, are not able to fight efficiently against violence surrounding football matches. In this respect, the issuing of safety certificates and the financing of police inside and around football grounds and in public areas during a match should be properly addressed and contemplated by national regulations and shall be a responsibility of local authorities.

The Workshop highlighted the vital co-operation between all organisations responsible for security at football matches within the domestic competitions, in particular the Leagues, Clubs and Police Forces- including Stadium owners - to create a homogenous approach to the prevention and eradication of violence at professional football matches with the focus of

EPFL International Workshop

SAFETY & SECURITY at Leagues' Competitions

Athens – 7 December 2010



working towards a coherent and co-ordinated approach and the exchange of information through regular meetings to identify potential trouble spots.

In Summary,

The Workshop encouraged the development of appropriate infrastructural and security criteria applicable in each EPFL Member and Associate Member Leagues' competitions and the implementation of suitable regulations and measures to efficiently prevent and eradicate violence and spectators' disorders in Professional Football.

The Workshop praised the efforts made by the EPFL in this field, in particular the creation and implementation of the EPFL Convention Against Violence in Professional Football, and the responsibility undertaken by facilitating the consultation and information collation processes, identifying best practices and fostering co-ordination amongst the Member and Associate Member Leagues to implement agreed measures whilst taking into account the national law.

The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members have agreed to take further measures to prevent, control and eradicate violence at football matches (both on and off the pitch), by implementing the guidelines, measures and recommendations contained in the EPFL Convention Against Violence in Professional Football.

The EPFL and its Members shall assess the achievements made through the EPFL Convention and the work of the Leagues to ensure the best implementation of the measures and initiatives identified to control, prevent and eradicate violence in professional football competitions at the national level.

The EPFL and the Leagues reaffirmed their willingness to continue working with other football bodies, including UEFA and FIFA, and other relevant political and regulatory bodies, such as national Governments and Parliaments, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and other sport organisations and public and police authorities to tackle effectively the problem of violence surrounding Professional Football competitions across Europe.

The audience commended the EPFL for this positive and constructive initiative and agreed that greater cooperation and commitment of all concerned sport organisations and public and private entities is crucial to achieve a sport without violence, on and off the field of play.

Athens, 07 December 2010