

International Conference
ZERO TOLERANCE AGAINST VIOLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL
27/28 September 2007, Lisbon, Portugal

CONCLUSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

"ZERO TOLERANCE AGAINST VIOLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL" was the title of the **International Conference** which has gathered on **27 and 28 September**, in Lisbon, the European football industry and the most experienced international specialists on prevention and fight against violence associated with sport.

Integrated in the **EPFL Cycle of Conferences on the "The Future of Professional Football in Europe"**, and organised in co-operation with the **Portuguese Government** and the **Portuguese Professional Football League**, the initiative has congregated, in Portugal, the representatives of the EPFL member and associate member Leagues.

Distinguished members of diverse national Governments and representatives of the European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Europe and European police forces, as well as representatives of FIFA, UEFA, FIFPro and other key sport organisations, football clubs and fan associations have actively participated in this high-level Conference, the first ever organised on such pressing and worrying issue.

The most effective strategies and measures related to prevention and control of manifestations of violence at football 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, as well as the role of the fans to ensure a positive football atmosphere, were some of the relevant issues under discussion during this two-days Conference. The objectives of the Conference were successfully achieved.

The Conference stressed the importance of eradicating this global social phenomenon of violence at football matches, in order to preserve the game's positive image, values and credibility.

The Conference identified best practices on fan participation and highlighted the valuable contribution of fan groups, set up and operation in accordance with legal and regulatory criteria, in different countries where effective fan-projects are in place, in order to:

- engage supporters in the creation and implementation of behavior's rules;
- establish a fluent channel of communication to identify the needs and interests of supporters; and
- provide supporters with logistic assistance to attend football matches.

The Conference recognised the key role of supporters for the success of any football event and the importance of fostering good relations and appropriate communication channels between them and their clubs.

The Conference remarked the significance of reinforcing cooperation between sport and political organisations and their complementary responsibilities to combat violence in Professional Football.

The Conference drew the attention of the participants on the necessity of a strong commitment of national Governments and police forces to implement effective policies, in articulation with the relevant sports bodies, to effectively prevent supporters' disorders and violence across Europe.

The Conference paid particular consideration to the performance and functioning of the **Network of European experts** drawn from National Football Information Points (NFIPs), Police and Interior Ministries and the need of developing a partnership to include international and European football authorities in designing the strategy in each country. In this respect, the Conference welcomed the official announcement of the EPFL's inclusion in such Network as an active partner.

The Conference noted that such partnership will play an important role in bolstering dialogue, information exchange and implementation of articulated measures to deal with safety and security issues in and around football grounds, with an apposite and clear legal framework designating responsibilities among involving entities.

The Conference emphasised that full account must be taken of the important role played by national Leagues, as governing bodies and organisers of professional football at the national level, and their affiliated clubs.

The Conference encouraged productive discussions on measures and processes to be implemented at football matches in order to ensure safety and security of spectators, such as (inter alia):

- Identification of risk groups;
- Improvement of stadia infrastructure and comfort conditions
- Prohibition of material and behaviours able to cause or instigate acts of violence, racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination and intolerance
- Establishment of all seated and numbered places within stadia, with physical separation of rival fan groups;
- Implementation of surveillance systems inside the stadium;
- Enhancement of systems and procedures on issuance and selling of tickets
- Development of pedagogical actions to enhance fan culture, including the creation of an ethical Supporters' Charter.

The Conference suggested the creation of a worldwide manual, listing best practices, as guidance for safety and security in and around stadia.

The Conference noted the crucial function of players as role models in order to campaign against violence in football and the responsibility of key actors (players, coaches and referees) to display a correct conduct on the pitch.

Representatives of EU institutions acknowledged the vital part undertaken by Member States in the fight against violence in sports and the different legal instruments and other EU initiatives to prevent and control public disorder at sports events such as:

- Council of Europe Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehavior at Sports Events and in Particular at Football Matches
- European Parliament Resolution on 'The Future of Professional Football in Europe'
- European Commission White Paper on Sport
- Reform Treaty - Article on Sport
- EU handbook for national police forces
- Council decision on the establishment of national football information points
- Council resolution on the introduction of stadium bans
- Meetings of football experts in Police Cooperation Working Group

Representatives of EU institutions and national governments pointed out the main strategies to be developed by political organisations at national and European level to tackle violence in sport:

- Exchange of practical experiences among Member States
- Strengthen operational cooperation at EU level on disorder assessments and on football supporters
- Developing legal instruments where necessary
- Improving the structures for dialogue on sport at EU level (more efficient and more inclusive)

The EPFL presented a ten-point **Action Plan** aimed to prevent, control and eradicate violence at professional football matches, covering the following key areas and issues:

1. Institution of the EPFL Convention Against Violence in Professional Football
2. Enhancement of Conditions of Safety and Security in and around Stadiums
3. Enhancement of procedures and systems of issuance and selling of tickets
4. Conditions of spectators' permanence and access to football stadiums
5. Adoption of preventive and repressive measures
6. Valorization of sport events
7. Cooperation between Leagues, clubs, police forces and stewards
8. Supporters' Groups and relation between Clubs and Supporters
9. Creation of the 'EPFL Commission Against Violence in Professional Football'
10. Enhancement of cooperation between the EPFL, UEFA, FIFA, national governments, European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Europe, other sport organisations and public and private authorities.

The Participants complimented the EPFL for this valuable and constructive initiative and agreed that greater cooperation and commitment of all concerned sport organisations and public and private entities are crucial to achieve a Sport without violence, on and off the field of play.