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T-RV (2009) 7

**European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events  
and in particular at Football Matches (T-RV)**

**Draft Recommendation Rec (2009)7 of the Standing Committee  
on Supporters' Charters**

### **Recommendation Rec (2009) 7 of the Standing Committee on Supporters' Charters**

The Standing Committee (T-RV) of the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches;

Having regard to the need to ensure the safety and security of spectators in relation to sports events and in particular football matches;

Stressing the need for enhancing hospitality and a festive nature of sports events for the largest possible number of spectators, so families with children can attend a game without fearing for their safety;

Recognising that solid agreements between fans and their club can help enormously to improve a festive atmosphere and in preventing violent incidents;

Also recognising that fans with good intentions must be taken into consideration in the overall policy of the club;

Stressing that a multi-agency approach does not only concern local and national authorities, police forces and clubs, but that fans are also essential partners in sport events, that some of them want to take their responsibility and that making agreements in a preventive way leads to a festive atmosphere;

Having regard to the successful Supporters' Charters that run in a number of countries;

Stressing that how a Supporters' Charter will be designed depends from the local situation and the culture of the particular club and their particular supporters;

Also stressing that a Supporters' Charter should be part of an integrated prevention policy;

Considering the principles as contained in the Handbook of the prevention in sport attached to Recommendation Rec (2003) 1 of the Standing Committee on the role of social and educational measures in the prevention of violence in sport.

#### ***Recommends to governments of parties to the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches that they:***

1. Encourage sport associations, clubs, (if present) fan clubs and associations and/or other appropriate bodies in football and other sports to compose together a Supporters' Charter, based upon the following principles:

- a Supporters' Charter is a mutually binding agreement between the club and the fans about what both parties can expect from each other,
- a Supporters' Charter does not impose only obligations on fans, but is a balance between the interests of all parties involved,
- the aim of a Supporters' Charter is threefold:
  - the promotion of the mutual bounding between the club and their employees on the one side and the fans on the other side;

- the improvement of the communication between the different sections of the club and the fans;
- the establishment of agreements of those two previous aims;
- the delegation of the club involved in a Supporters' Charter must have enough influence and decision-making power within their club,
- the delegation of the fans must be broad and agreed by all fans,
- avoid that fans, fan clubs or associations involved have to observe certain obligations, while individual fans not involved don't have to observe this obligations,
- the input of other parties, such as the police and/or the local authorities can be very useful concerning all safety and security matters,
- agreements made are enforceable for all parties involved,
- the Supporters' Charter is to be evaluated and renewed every (football) season,

2. Prescribe a strategy for a working group based on following principles:

- when the representatives of all parties are chosen, a working group can be installed. This working group:
  - formulates an agenda;
  - pursues a substantive discussion;
  - communicates the results internal (club and fans) and external (media).

3. Encourage sport associations, clubs, fans and/or other appropriate bodies in football and other sports to put the following minimum items in a Supporters' Charter:

- In general, a Supporters' Charter could cover membership, consultation and information, accessibility and use of stadiums, communication about the safety policy for spectators, ticketing prices, kick-off times, merchandise, community activity, loyalty rewards and combating racism and violence;
- A transparent, uniform, fair and social inclusive ticketing system;
- An arrangement about supporters actions to create a positive atmosphere in the stadium;
- An arrangement about the consumption of drinks and snacks in and around the stadium;
- Arrangements about disabled supporters.

**Commentary on individual recommendations.**

**1. A Supporters' Charter is a mutually binding agreement between the club and the fans about what both parties can expect from each other.**

Clubs are for a great deal responsible for the behaviour of their fans, and have at least a considerable influence on that behaviour. In that way, clubs can take the initiative for a Supporters' Charter.

During the negotiations of a Supporters' Charter, all parties have to make clear and binding statements regarding what they want and expect from the other party, as well as their reasons why, and what they would be ready to give in return.

In view of a relationship which is often difficult and may be charged with prejudice, it is advisable to determine principles and guidelines of negotiation, which could be set up in the context of a preliminary meeting, before discussing the concrete contents of a Supporters'

Charter. These principles/guidelines are binding both for the fans and for the club during negotiations.

**2. A Supporters' Charter does not impose only obligations on fans, but is a balance between the interests of all parties involved.**

Supporters can be partners in solving problems at sports games and are part of a broad network. By concluding a Supporters' Charter, supporters get recognition for what they mean for the club. They can actively contribute to the decision-making of the club, which they see as very important.

Accept certain obligations on the side of supporters means that they want to have a structural and effective participation in the policy of the club: structural participation of supporters must be the key notion.

The club, obviously, can have a big benefit of this Supporters' Charter. The Charter helps to actively promote positive social behaviour. Positive social behaviour by fans crucially depends on how they are treated and perceived by the club and on the possibilities they are given to participate in their favourite sports event. A Supporters' Charter thereby can be seen as part of an integrated prevention policy, as a "preventive partnership".

**3. The aim of a Supporters' Charter is threefold.**

Setting up an overall concept, including target values and objectives, can help to rediscover common ground and trust, and to raise the awareness that it is necessary to work together. This overall concept can serve as a stable basis of co-operation and as an expression of mutual goodwill.

In order to guarantee the lasting success of the charter, it is necessary to make it as widely known and accepted within the club and the fan scene as possible. In addition, a jointly appointed working group should regularly evaluate and review the practical implementation of the Supporters' Charter and, if necessary, adapt it – in particular its chapters on tasks and obligations – to changing conditions.

In order to highlight the significance of the Supporters' Charter, it is recommended to have the charter signed by the club management and the representatives of the fans in a public way. By making the official signing part of a larger programme geared to the interests of fans, it is possible at the same time to create a positive atmosphere and give proof of a new beginning in the relationship between fans and club management.

**4. The delegation of the club involved in a Supporters' Charter must have enough influence and decision-making power within their club.**

It is crucial for the negotiations and the implementation of the Supporters' Charter that the club representatives involved in developing the charter have appropriate decision-making powers. Therefore it is necessary to involve at least one leading representative of the club's management board besides the executives of the various supporters-related sections of the club (ticketing, merchandise, security, fan issues, etc.).

**5. The delegation of the fans must be broad and agreed by all fans.**

For that reason it is recommended to make use of existing structures such as a supporters delegation at the board of the club, representatives of supporters federations, supporters clubs,...., because their views and actions are largely acknowledged by unorganised

supporters as well. It is important to make sure that no fan (groups) feel excluded. A good communication to all fans (through the website, a fan magazine, flyers...) is very important in every stage of the Supporters' Charter.

**6. Avoid that fans, fan clubs or associations involved have to observe certain obligations, while individual fans not involved don't have to observe these obligations.**

A Supporters' Charter can only be accepted by every fan if the content can affect him or her in a mainly positive way and if the communication about the Charter is open and transparent at every stage. If not, not many fans will be willing to be involved in the Charter. That doesn't mean that less positive items can't be part of the Charter. An open and effective communication with a good explanation why, is a key strategy for accepting less positive items.

**7. The input of other parties such as the local police and/or the local authorities can be very useful concerning all safety and security matters.**

Items involving safety and security belong for a great deal to the club's safety officer. He or she must be involved in the discussion concerning the Charter but can't decide on his/her own on issues where also the police or local authorities have a decision making power.

**8. Agreements made are enforceable for all parties involved.**

The obligations put down in a Supporters' Charter must be in the first place feasible for all parties and offer a surplus value. They must be written according to the SMART-principles. S(pecific): the obligations are clear and well defined.

M(easurable): are the goals obtainable and how far is the completion of the Charter?

A(chievable): there is an agreement with all stakeholders and the path to be achieved is realistic.

R(ealistic): within the availability of resources, knowledge and time.

T(imely): if there is a time limit, try to stay within this time limit.

**9. The Supporters' Charter is to be evaluated and renewed every (football) season.**

It is vital that once a Supporters' Charter has been finalised it can be regarded as a long-term, positive achievement by all those involved. Moreover, the positive prevailing mood should be used as an incentive to act in the course of the adoption of the joint agreement. It is therefore advisable when adopting the charter as a document, also to jointly establish an appropriate strategy and responsibilities, particularly for the first few months of implementation.

For that reason, it is recommended that every club appoints a fan liaison officer or establish a specific "supporters' department". This officer or department is the go-between between the club and the supporters. The officer or the staff of this department is independent of the club management and is part of the security department and therefore equipped with a large scale of decision-making authority. There is a close communication between this officer or department and the safety officer of the club.

**10. When the representatives of all parties are chosen, a working group can be installed.**

1. Composition of a delegation of the club:
  - Representatives with influence in the club;
  - Influential persons in the eyes of the fans.
2. Composition of a delegation of the fans:
  - Broad delegation;

- If these are present, make use of existing structures: supporter's delegation at the board of the club, supporter's federations, fan clubs, and make sure no fan (groups) are excluded and no specific group dominates the delegation.
3. Compose a working group Supporters' Charter.  
The negotiation panel should not exceed 40 members. If present, a fan liaison officer and/or the local fan project could be responsible for the administrative and logistical planning as well as for leading the negotiations between the parties.
  4. Formulate an agenda:
    - Have a planning for the meetings and target a date to sign the first Supporters' Charter;
    - Have a substantive discussion: which executive agreements will be put on paper?
    - Make also clear the items which are not open to discussion (for example because these are stipulated by law);
    - Take care of the communication together with the supporters, internal at the club and outside to the media.
  5. Signing the Supporters' Charter by all partners:
    - The club and the supporters communicate together about the charter;
    - A communication framework for the future is on paper for deliberation between the club and the supporters and if necessary with other parties (police, local authority, fire department...);
    - The composition for a future deliberation between the club and the supporters is established.

Reaching an agreement on a well-balanced Supporters' Charter can take one year of preparation and negotiation.

**11. In general, a Supporters' Charter could cover membership, consultation and information, accessibility and use of stadiums, communication about the safety policy for spectators, ticketing prices, kick-off times, merchandise, community activity, loyalty rewards and combating racism and violence.**

A Supporters' Charter should be of general validity, but could also focus on a specific subject, e.g. measures against racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

When things don't go smoothly, representatives which are ideologically and structurally close to one or both parties could initiate the development and adoption of a charter as well as serve as neutral middlemen to help both partners to come to a mutual agreement, especially during difficult phases of the further procedures and negotiations.

For example, national supporters' umbrella organisations as well as national sports associations and the local municipality or even players can serve as advisers during the negotiations.

**12. A transparent, uniform, fair and social inclusive ticketing system.**

Generally, the clubs and the supporters should aim at finding solutions to allow most of the population to assist football matches.

Next to accessibility for everyone at home matches, the club can grant priority rights to purchase and reserve tickets for away matches for those supporters who signed the Supporters' Charter and create a positive atmosphere.

**13. An arrangement about supporter's actions for more atmosphere in the stadium.**

Supporters invest a considerable amount of their free time and money in supporting their club. The club should reward such positive initiatives by providing supporters with logistic and administrative assistance for their activities.

The club provides also hospitable conditions for home supporters and for visiting supporters.

Clubs who deal with racist, xenophobic and discriminatory supporters must take a well-defined position, and publicly discuss or/and sanction racist behavior. The Recommendation Rec (2001) 6 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on the prevention of racism, xenophobia and racial intolerance in sport recommends that governments adopt effective policies and measures aimed at preventing and combating racist, xenophobic, discriminatory and intolerant in all sports and in particular football.

**14. An arrangement about the consumption of drinks and snacks in and around the stadium.**

If this is open to discussion, agreements about (alcoholic) drinks and the places where drinks and snacks can be consumed, can be made in consultation with all partners.

**15. Arrangements about disabled supporters.**

The club provide sufficient sanitary facilities for disabled supporters, as well as accessible canteens. They provide parking places, an accessible entrance, adapted places and a warm welcome.