



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 19 July 2001 (23.07)
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NOTE

from: Presidency

to: Coreper

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Subject: Draft Council Decision concerning security in connection with football matches
with an international dimension

COUNCIL DECISION.../.../JHA

of

concerning security in connection with football matches with an international dimension

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 30(1)(a) and (b) and Article 34(2)(c) thereof,

Having regard to the initiative by the Kingdom of Belgium,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament,

Whereas:

- (1) As a result of various international and European competitions and large numbers of travelling supporters, football is becoming highly international in scale. That international scale makes it necessary to approach security in connection with football matches in a way extending beyond national borders.
- (2) Football should be regarded not just as a potential source of problems regarding breaches of law and order or security but as an event which, in spite of the possible risk, has to be handled efficiently.

- (3) For the purposes of efficiently handling a footballing event and in particular preventing and controlling football-related violence, it is crucially important to exchange information, so that the police and the authorities can make proper preparations and provide an appropriate response.
- (4) For exchange of information in relation to a footballing event and with a view to the necessary international police cooperation in connection with football matches with an international dimension, it is crucially important to establish a permanent police-run national football information centre in each Member State,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Establishment of a national football information centre

1. Each Member State shall set up or designate a police-run national football information centre empowered to perform the tasks assigned it under this Decision.
2. Details of the national football information centre designated and any subsequent amendments thereto shall be forwarded to the General Secretariat of the Council, which shall have them published in the Official Journal.
3. The national football information centre shall act as a single, central, direct contact point for exchanging relevant information and for implementing international police cooperation in connection with football matches with an international dimension.
4. National football information centres shall operate internationally on an equal footing.

Article 2

Staffing and equipment of national football information centres

Each Member State shall take all necessary steps to ensure that its national football information centre is equipped with the physical resources required for the prompt and efficient performance of the tasks assigned it under this Decision. The staffing of national football information centres shall ensure the necessary police expertise regarding problems in connection with footballing events.

Article 3

Tasks of national football information centres

1. National football information centres shall be responsible for coordinating police information exchange in connection with football matches with an international dimension. Such information exchange may also involve other law enforcement authorities contributing to security or law and order.
2. National football information centres shall be responsible, in accordance with the domestic and international rules applicable, for the control of information involving personal data on high-risk supporters.
3. National football information centres shall coordinate and/or organise the implementation of international police cooperation in connection with football matches with an international dimension.
4. National football information centres shall be responsible for providing assistance to the competent national authorities.

5. For matches with an international dimension, national football information centres shall have available, on a permanent basis, a risk assessment in respect of their own country's clubs and national team, for the benefit of national football information centres in other Member States.

Article 4

Police information exchange between national football information centres

1. Before, during and after a footballing event, national football information centres shall engage in mutual exchange of general information and, subject to the conditions laid down in paragraph 3, personal data.
2. The general information exchanged in connection with a football match with an international dimension shall comprise strategic, operational and tactical information. Such information shall be defined as follows:
 - strategic information: information specifying all aspects of the event, with particular reference to security risks involved in it;
 - operational information: information providing an accurate picture of proceedings in the course of the event;
 - tactical information: information enabling those in charge of operations to take appropriate action for the purposes of maintaining order and security in connection with the event.
3. Personal data shall be exchanged, in accordance with the domestic and international rules applicable, with a view to preparing and taking the appropriate measures to maintain law and order in connection with a footballing event; such data may in particular involve details of individuals actually or potentially posing a threat to law and order or security.

Article 5

Procedure for communication between national football information centres

1. Handling of information on matches with an international dimension shall be coordinated by way of national football information centres. After processing, information shall either be used by a national football information centre itself or be passed on to the relevant authorities and police forces. Contacts between police forces in different countries involved in a footballing event shall be coordinated and, where appropriate, arranged for by national football information centres.
2. The national football information centre in the Member State hosting a footballing event shall communicate, throughout the competition and/or match, with the national police force(s) in any countries concerned, where appropriate via the liaison officer(s) appointed and supplied by such countries. Liaison officers may be contacted in the subject areas of law and order, football-related violence, ordinary crime and terrorism.
3. National football information centres shall communicate in such a way as to preserve the confidentiality of data. Reports exchanged shall be kept on record and may subsequently be consulted by other interested national information centres, subject to the agreement of the national football information centre which supplied the information.

Article 6

Use of languages

National football information centres shall each communicate in their own language, with a translation in a working language common to both sides, save as otherwise arranged between the parties concerned.

Article 7
Entry into force

This Decision shall enter into force on

Done at _____ ,

For the Council
The President

Decision concerning security in connection with football matches
with an international dimension
Explanatory memorandum
General presentation

The increasingly international scale of football and the large numbers of travelling supporters make it essential to adopt agreements and measures at European level. Footballing events require a common approach by all Member States and can thus no longer be handled at national level alone.

In order for the authorities to take effective action and for those responsible for maintaining order to make proper preparations, it is vital for information to be exchanged efficiently in connection with footballing events. The importance of effective circulation of information in fact goes beyond the issue of exchanging information on supporters (potentially) posing a problem. Circulation of information has to be viewed in broader terms, with a key role being played by the compilation, processing and assessment of information on the nature of all supporters, both for supporters generally and in particular for high-risk supporters. In order to have as full as possible a picture of up-to-date information at European level and thus be able to respond more rapidly to intelligence obtained, the establishment of a national football information centre in each Member State is a *sine qua non*. The United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium currently already operate such national information centres on a permanent basis.

The availability of up-to-date, accurate, hard information will enable a country having to cope with aspects of football matches to handle events effectively. As a result of such information, law enforcement authorities will be able to husband their resources and hence make sparing use of them, thereby reducing the at times exorbitant cost to the community of security at football matches.

A footballing event is to be construed as meaning a football match and all aspects of everything bound up with it. For present purposes, then, a football match has an international dimension if it is international by virtue of:

- its nature (a match between two teams from different countries);
- the circumstances surrounding it (a match between two teams from the same country, but with the presence of supporters from another country).

The Decision applies to matches between either national or club teams and to both competitive and friendly matches.

This Council Decision requires the establishment of a national football information centre in each Member State. The present system, involving a list of contacts in each Member State, has already proved ineffective on a number of occasions in the past. Units or individuals listed often turn out to be no longer engaged in that area of work or to be unable to supply the necessary information promptly and accurately. Since information exchange has to operate quickly and to a high standard, in order for a particular situation to be dealt with, it should be subject to certain requirements. Up to now, security in connection with football matches has been governed by non-binding recommendations, giving rise at times to somewhat unsatisfactory situations. The requirement for each Member State to have a national football information centre will ensure information exchange enabling all involved to play their part to the full in addressing security in connection with a footballing event.

In accordance with Article 30(a) and (b) of the Treaty on European Union, such a national football information centre will foster operational cooperation between competent authorities and best make for the collection, storage, processing, analysis and exchange of relevant information.

For the effective introduction of an information network, it is absolutely essential that each Member State should establish a football information centre. Such a centre is necessary for the efficient handling of events and commensurate with the potential incidence of problems stemming from football matches, in terms of both media coverage of such problems and the cost to society of handling a footballing event.

The adoption of agreements and measures to combat football-related violence comes within the European Commission's biannual update of the scoreboard to review progress on the creation of a area of freedom, security and justice in the European Union, more specifically section 4.3 in the document of 23 May 2001.

Presentation of the articles

Article 1

Each Member State is to set up or designate a police-run national football information centre. While some Member States already operate such a centre, in view of the increasingly international scale of football and the crucial importance of effective information exchange, all Member States will have to operate such a centre. Given the centre's purpose, as stated in Article 3 of the Decision, it needs to be a police-run information centre.

Particulars of the centre designated (contact details) are to be supplied to the General Secretariat of the Council, which will have them published in the Official Journal.

The national football information centre is to act as a single, central, direct contact point. This means that, in exchanging information on football matches with an international dimension, it is the national football information centre in the Member State concerned that must be contacted and not any other unit.

In order to maintain the necessary overall consistency and enable each national football information centre to form a clear, accurate picture of the current situation, all information supplied must be channelled through that centre or at least reported to it. The national football information centre will thus act as an initial contact, even where a local information centre has been set up in the host locality or for matters not usually dealt with by a national football information centre. If the national football information centre in country X puts a question to country Y concerning a terrorist threat in connection with a footballing event, its counterpart in country Y will apply to Y's terrorist threat analysis unit for the intelligence and then supply it to X's national football information centre.

There is no hierarchical relationship between individual Member States' national football information centres. Equality between them is unaffected by any factors such as staffing or expertise.

Article 2

It is for Member States to provide such staff and equipment as will ensure prompt, efficient handling of information. Staff will, of course, be required to have the requisite police expertise regarding security in connection with football matches. The staffing and equipment of national football information centres can be left to Member States' discretion; ideally, however, swift, efficient exchange of information should be ensured under all circumstances. No credibility would be enjoyed by a national football information centre unable to supply high-grade information at speed.

A national football information centre will be staffed and equipped partly in the light of the football-related problems in its Member State or the staging of a major footballing event there. Obviously, countries facing little or no football-related violence will require lower staffing levels than those which face a great deal of it or which have already been operating such a centre for years. This does not preclude the possibility of temporary extension of such a centre in the first group of countries in connection with a specific footballing event to be held in one (or more) of them (e.g. an international-scale competition or match posing a specific threat).

Article 3

The tasks in this article are not exhaustive but represent the minimum to be performed by a national football information centre.

The centre is firstly to coordinate information exchange between police forces in connection with football matches with an international dimension. As a single, central, direct contact point, the centre must serve as the channel for any information exchanged or at least be informed of it. Member States will themselves be responsible for the further distribution of information internally, in accordance with the domestic rules applicable.

In accordance with the domestic and international rules applicable, the information centre will have control of information involving personal data on high-risk supporters, such as stadium ban lists, video imaging or photographs.

The national football information centre is to coordinate and/or organise the implementation of international police cooperation (spotters and liaison officers) as laid down in the Council Resolution of 21 June 1999 concerning a handbook for international police cooperation and measures to prevent and control violence and disturbances in connection with international football matches. In the case of club matches, the information centre will tend to coordinate international police cooperation, whereas it will usually organise such cooperation for matches between national teams, although this may vary from one Member State to another.

In addition, the national football information centre is to provide assistance to national authorities. As the centre has all relevant information pass before its eyes, assesses and evaluates such information and possesses the necessary police expertise, it can put to the authorities well-argued proposals or reasoned opinions concerning the policy to be followed, without the authorities being bound by them as regards any decision-making process.

Lastly, the national football information centre is to have available, on a permanent basis, an up-to-date risk assessment concerning its own country's clubs and national team, for the benefit of other information centres. This includes information on the nature of supporters of a particular team, both ordinary supporters and high-risk supporters. Ongoing risk assessment means, in particular, having an idea of the composition of groups of supporters, hard-core elements, their behaviour, relations between them, relations with other hard-core elements, external relations, the general public (local population and non-indigenous population) etc.

Article 4

National football information centres are to exchange general information and personal data before, during and after an event. These three stages can be distinguished as follows:

- before the event: from the point at which it is known that a particular match is to be played or a particular competition held;

- during the event: from the start to the end of proceedings actually or potentially affecting law and order;
- after the event: a final, debriefing and evaluation stage.

These three stages will not always be clearly distinguishable.

Strategic information includes, for instance, details of applicable legislation and of the authorities' policy, organisational information about the event, identification of authorities and police officers in charge and ongoing risk assessment for clubs or for the national team.

Operational information includes, for instance, details of travel arrangements for ordinary and high-risk supporters and for the team playing and its entourage, or ticketing details. At operational level there may be a need for cooperation by police officers, such as spotters, and by stewards to accompany supporters, as well as possibly for information on terrorism and crime generally or on arrangements for maintaining order and in particular on how spotters are to be included in such local arrangements.

Tactical information includes, for instance, confirmation of existing information by means of observation on the ground, general information on the return of any supporters expelled and/or refused admission, to be supplied to the national football information centre(s) in their country of origin and in any countries of transit, and information on the return of supporters.

Personal data exchanged must serve a clearly defined purpose, i.e. contribute to the performance of a specific task. Information supplied is to be used for a limited time and within a limited area only.

It should serve the local and wider interests of the authorities responsible and of the police.

Information supplied must enable the authorities and police chiefs to shoulder their responsibilities in full knowledge of the circumstances at all levels.

Article 5

All information is received by the national football information centre, which in turn handles information internally within the Member State (distributing it to authorities, local police forces etc.). Information obtained cannot be used for any purposes other than those specified as a precondition for exchange of information and cannot be supplied to any individuals or units other than those agreed to by the national football information centre from which the information originated.

Should a liaison officer be posted in accordance with the Council Resolution of 21 June 1999 concerning a handbook for international police cooperation and measures to prevent and control violence and disturbances in connection with international football matches, information will be channelled through that liaison officer.

However information is exchanged, the confidentiality of data must be preserved. With the explicit agreement of the national football information centre from which the information originated, reports exchanged will be kept on record and may subsequently be consulted by other interested national football information centres. General information may be kept for ten years; for personal data, an assessment is to be made after three years, in order to ascertain whether retention still answers the purposes for which such data were supplied. If it no longer does so, they must be erased.

Article 6

Each Member State may supply information in its own language, with a translation in a working language used by the other side, save as otherwise agreed. For instance, Germany can communicate with Austria directly in German, while Belgium and the Netherlands can communicate using Dutch only.

Article 7

The Decision is to enter into force on

