

# The Role and Function of a Sports Event Organiser: Safety at Football Matches in Slovenia, Serbia, and Austria

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## **Purpose:**

The purpose of the paper is to examine the organisation of a sports event – more precisely, a football match, specifically from the point of view of safety. We compared the Slovenian practice of event organising with how sports events are organised in Serbia and Austria.

## **Design/Methods/Approach:**

First we conducted a literature and normative bases review. The research was conducted through interviews with spokespersons from the football clubs – NK Celje, FK Partizan and SK Sturm Graz. We conducted a telephone interview with the security manager of the European Football Association and also included our own observations from attending the Serbian championship match.

## **Findings:**

Our research shows that despite the existence of subnational legislation, there are differences in understanding of ensuring safety at sporting events in the analysed countries. As the most common factors that can affect safety and security at a sports event we identified the following: personnel, supporter groups, pyrotechnics and infrastructure.

## **Research Limitations/Implications:**

Our research is limited to three countries and to three football clubs that were willing to take part in our research.

## **Originality/Value:**

Research findings are based on the perspective and experience of football club security managers, presenting main risk factors and corresponding measures for ensuring safety and security at football matches.

**Keywords:** safety, sport event, security measures, security risks

**UDC:** 351.75:796.332

**Vloga in naloga organizatorja športne prireditve: varnost na nogometnih tekmah v Sloveniji, Srbiji in Avstriji**

**Namen**

Namen prispevka je prikazati organizacijo športne prireditve, natančneje nogometne tekme, predvsem z varnostnega vidika. Primerjali smo slovensko

prakso organizacije prireditve z načinom organizacije športne prireditve v Srbiji in Avstriji.

**Metode:**

Prispevek temelji na pregledu literature in normativnih podlag, raziskovalni del pa smo izvedli s pomočjo intervjujev s predstavniki nogometnih klubov – NK Celje, FK Partizan in SK Sturm Graz. Opravili smo tudi telefonski razgovor z varnostnim menedžerjem Evropske nogometne zveze in vključili lastna opažanja z udeležbe na tekmi srbskega nogometnega prvenstva.

**Ugotovitve:**

Naša raziskava kaže, da kljub obstoju subnacionalne zakonodaje obstajajo razlike v razumevanju zagotavljanja varnosti na športnih prireditvah v obravnavanih državah. Za najpogostejše dejavnike, ki lahko vplivajo na varnost na športnih prireditvah, so se izkazali naslednji: osebje, navijaške skupine, pirotehnika in infrastruktura.

**Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:**

Naša raziskava je omejena na tri države in tri nogometne klube, ki so bili pripravljeni sodelovati v naši raziskavi.

**Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:**

Ugotovitve raziskave temeljijo na perspektivi in izkušnjah varnostnih menedžerjev nogometnih klubov, ki so omogočili identifikacijo glavnih dejavnikov tveganja in ustreznih ukrepov za zagotavljanje varnosti in zaščite na nogometnih tekmah.

**Ključne besede:** varnost, športna prireditve, nogometna tekma, varnostni ukrepi, varnostna tveganja

**UDK:** 351.75:796.332

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Violence in its many forms represents an everyday occurrence across all social systems and an everyday threat to security. Despite the efforts of formal agencies of social control as well as informal agencies of social control, various manifestations of violence, hatred or intolerance continue to persevere in today's society and are reflected in various forms of expression. This is palpable in the words expressed through graffiti, posts on various websites, and face-to-face remarks directed towards individuals or groups, including the worst kind of violence – physical violence in all its facets (Slokan, 2017).

The European Union (hereinafter referred to as the EU) has always been heavily invested in the issue of security. The gradual creation of an area of freedom, security and justice was one of the objectives set by the EU with the Treaty of Amsterdam, particularly in the field of the general creation of freedom and justice by developing joint actions in the fields of police cooperation, judicial cooperation and in preventing and combating racism and xenophobia. More than

30 years ago, the main priorities for justice and home affairs were detailed, laying the foundations for a common European asylum system, a common immigration policy, the harmonisation of border controls, and closer police and judicial cooperation based on mutual trust and recognition with the Tampere Programme. Various new security events (terrorist attacks) have led to the development of a new programme – the Hague Programme: Strengthening Freedom, Security and Justice in the EU, which has substantially upgraded the policies and measures established by the previous programme. A third programme, known as the Stockholm Programme, was adopted in 2009, urging the Member States, agencies, authorities and EU institutions to develop coordinated activities to ensure the security of European citizens in order to successfully suppress national and transnational crime. In particular, it called on the Member States to enhance and improve crime prevention measures to combat crime and multidisciplinary cooperation (Resolucija o nacionalnem programu preprečevanja in zatiranja kriminalitete za obdobje 2019–2023, 2019).

In addition to all the mentioned programmes, measures aimed at preventing and suppressing various forms of violence at sports events were also prepared and adapted. It should be noted that researchers, both in the past and today, have disagreed on the main causes that lead to violence at sports events. It is evident, however, that this is a multifaceted and structured phenomenon that has sociological, psychological and security implications for a community. In light of that, lawmakers became increasingly aware of the importance of introducing specific sub-national acts that are targeted at ensuring safety at sports events, when writing various normative acts aimed at ensuring safety at the sub-national and national level (Slokan, 2018).

The purpose of the paper is to examine the organisation of a sports event – more precisely, a football match, specifically from the point of view of safety. We compared the Slovenian practice of event organising with how sports events are organised in Serbia and Austria. The paper provides a comprehensive insight into the differences in the organisation itself, the role of the event organiser and the challenges of managing security threats in each of the three countries. We touched upon the infrastructure of a sports facility, the parties who manage security at the events, i.e. the organisers, the police and private security companies, and the supporter groups that pose a potential security threat at sports events. In this context, we follow the methodology of ensuring integrated security, which also derives from the proposal of the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events<sup>1</sup> (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020), which was prepared for the Council of Europe by the expert group on ensuring safety at sports events, as the measures from the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches no longer corresponded to the current situation in this field.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Convention was opened for signature in 2016 and has entered into force on 1 November 2017. The Republic of Slovenia adopted the act on ratification of the Convention on 20 November 2020.*

## 2 OVERVIEW OF NORMATIVE BASES

The European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches from 1985 (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990) contributed to increased awareness of the importance of preventing and suppressing various forms of violence at sports events and implementing measures at the sub-national level. This sub-national act defined the first measures that needed to be implemented by subjects involved in organising sports-related events. Developments in the field of security ran parallel with the development of sports events and activities, and the diversification and multiplicity of sports disciplines, and in this regard, the European Council issued several different recommendations over the years, all with the aim of preventing and combating various forms of violence. With awareness of the importance of the issue and with a view to ensuring an expanded approach to solving the problem, the first convention was replaced by the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events from 2014, which is still in the process of being ratified in Slovenia. This document emphasizes the necessity of mutual cooperation and connectivity between various entities (integrated or multi-institutional approach) in charge of security at events (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020).

### 2.1 Sub-national Legislation

In this chapter, we look into the two basic conventions that compel organisers of sports events to provide measures for the prevention of various forms of violence before, during and after sports events, within the European context.

#### 2.1.1 The European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches

The Convention entered into force on 1 November 1985 and has since been ratified by 42 States Parties. Slovenia, at the time still a member of the SFRY, ratified the convention on 26 July 1990, when the Law on the Ratification of said Convention was published in the Official Gazette of the SFRY, no. 9/1990 (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990). After gaining its independence, the Republic of Slovenia adopted the Convention within the framework of the Act Notifying Succession to Conventions of the Council of Europe, the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols on the Protection of War Victims, published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia no. 14/1992 (Nunič, 2017).

By ratifying the Convention (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990), the signatories agreed to take a number of measures necessary to prevent and

control violence, while committing to coordinate the policies and activities of their ministries and other public agencies in the field of countering violence and misbehaviour, mainly through setting up coordinating bodies. In particular, the measures envisaged the adoption of public policies for the employment of an adequate number of public safety workers to counter outbreaks of misbehaviour, both within the immediate vicinity of and inside stadiums and along the busiest transit routes. The measures are also designed to facilitate better and closer cooperation between the police forces involved at different locations before, during and after sports events. One of the key measures, however, is the adoption and implementation of legislation that would provide for the perpetrators of offences related to violence or misbehaviour at sports events to receive appropriate penalties.

The European Convention was adopted with the aim of preventing and suppressing violence and misbehaviour by spectators at football matches and other competitions and obliging the signatories to adopt appropriate legal provisions and measures to implement its provisions. The provisions of the European Convention apply not only to football matches but also to other sports and sports events in which violence or misbehaviour by spectators is to be feared, as appropriate to the specific requirements of such sports and sports events (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990).

Among other things, the Convention (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990) provides for domestic coordination between the Parties and, if necessary, the setting up of coordination bodies for the implementation of policies and actions of the competent ministries and other public services related to the prevention of violence and misconduct by spectators. By acceding to the European Convention, the Parties undertook in Article 3 to ensure the formulation and implementation of measures designed to prevent and control violence and misbehaviour by spectators, including in particular:

- to secure that adequate public order resources are employed to counter outbreaks of violence and misbehaviour, both within the immediate vicinity of and inside stadiums and along nearby roads and other routes intended for the spectators to access the event venue;
- to facilitate close cooperation and exchange of appropriate information between the police forces of the different localities;
- to adopt and apply the necessary regulations which provide for those found guilty of offences related to violence or misbehaviour to receive appropriate penalties or, as the case may be, appropriate administrative measures.

In addition, the Parties undertook to encourage the responsible organisation and good conduct of supporters' clubs and the appointment of stewards to assist the organisers in maintaining order and peace during matches and inform spectators and accompany parties of supporters travelling to away fixtures. The signatories undertook to encourage the coordination of the organisation of travel arrangements to the venue of a sports event, with the cooperation of travel

agencies, clubs, and organised supporters, so as to inhibit potential trouble-makers from attending matches, all within the framework of national and international regulations (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990).

The Convention (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990) provides that States Parties shall adopt appropriate national rules containing sanctions or other measures in cases where outbreaks of violence and misbehaviour by spectators or other participants are to be feared, and calls on sports organisations and clubs as well as owners of sports facilities to cooperate with public authorities and in accordance with national regulations, in taking practical measures necessary to prevent or suppress such violence and misbehaviour both at the event venue and in its vicinity, and in particular:

- to secure that the stadiums are properly and appropriately built and have the essential physical fabric to provide for the safety of spectators
- to ensure effective segregation of groups of rival supporters teams
- to prevent potential trouble-makers, or individuals who are under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances to gain access to or participate in a sports event
- to equip stadiums and other event venues with an effective public address system
- to prohibit the introduction of alcoholic drinks into stadiums and to restrict or ban the sale and any distribution of alcoholic drinks at event venues, and to ensure that all beverages available are kept in safe containers;
- to ensure controls over objects brought into stadiums and other venues by spectators, and in particular to prevent the introduction of objects that are likely to be used for acts of violence, such as fireworks and other similar devices; and
- to ensure mutual cooperation before a sports event between the coordinators and other authorities concerned regarding the implementation of measures necessary for crowd control and the enforcement of the relevant rules through concerted action.

The signatories are also expected to take appropriate social and educational measures, bearing in mind the potential importance of the mass media in popularizing sporting ideals and promoting the notion of *fair play* through various educational campaigns, with the aim of preventing violence in sport and encouraging mutual respect amongst spectators and increased active participation in sport (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990).

The Convention (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990) enables the Parties to ensure, in accordance with applicable international agreements, that spectators who have committed any act of violence or other criminal conduct are prosecuted in accordance with the relevant national regulations. Article 5 also allows the contracting Parties to transfer proceedings against spectators

apprehended abroad for violent or other criminal behaviour at a sports event to their country of residence, in accordance with the applicable international agreements. The signatories may also request the extradition of an individual suspected of violence or other criminal behaviour committed at sports events abroad and the transferring of such individuals who have been convicted of illicit conduct at sports events to serve their sentences in the relevant country.

The signatories undertake to cooperate closely with the competent sports organisations and other persons in charge of the planning and execution of alterations to the physical fabric of stadiums and other event venues, such as access to and egress from, which can contribute to improving the safety of participants in sports events and to the prevention of violence (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990).

### **2.1.2 The Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events**

The Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020) replaced the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990).

The Council of Europe Convention (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020) sets out the principles and measures that underpin established good practices, which are often seen as prerequisites for effectively reducing and preventing security risks related to football matches and other sports events. The Convention emphasises the preventive aspect of ensuring safety and at sports events. From a statistical point of view, European experience shows that security and service measures can influence the behaviour of crowds in general and in particular the possibility of major outbreaks of violence and deviant behaviour. Efforts aimed at establishing and maintaining safety and security and reducing violence at sports events, especially at football matches, have a long history marked by tragic events.

Observations and indicators from practice have shown that the content of the 1985 Convention (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990) is lagging behind modern needs or trends and is not in line with the approaches of the Member States and the positive practices that have become established over the past decades since its signing. At the 12th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport, which was held in Belgrade in 2012, an update of the 1985 Convention was proposed. A new draft convention text, which was based on an integrated safety, security and service approach was prepared and unanimously adopted by all delegations of the States Parties in December 2014.

The main purpose of the Council of Europe Convention (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020) is primarily to promote a spirit of partnership and a multi-institutional integrated approach to ensure safety, security and services among all stakeholders participating in sporting events, bearing in mind that the powers and roles of public and private institutions are clearly defined from the outset. Accordingly, there is a strong focus on effective communication between groups of supporters and local communities.

The Council of Europe Convention (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020) clearly defines its scope, which states unequivocally that its provisions must apply to all domestic and international professional football matches, leaving it up to each country to decide whether to apply these provisions to smaller-scale local football matches as well as other sporting events where it can be reasonably concluded that there is a high potential for comparable risks or challenges. A key fact is that the convention does not define violence as the only possible threat at sporting events. Particular attention is paid to security and service measures, which may be used by the relevant agencies to control the behaviour of crowds, which in turn can lead to the prevention of violent acts. Therefore, all three pillars – safety, security and services – need to be considered in a very integrated manner, as they overlap and cannot be considered in isolation if violence is to be completely prevented. It is also extremely important to establish a dialogue between the key stakeholders, as these groups, especially the supporters and local communities, play an important role in ensuring that security is handled appropriately at these events.

The aim of the Council of Europe Convention (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020) is to provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment at sports events. To that end, the Parties shall:

- adopt an integrated, multi-agency and balanced approach towards safety, security and service, based upon an ethos of effective local, national and international stakeholder participation and cooperation;
- ensure an integrated consideration of the three pillars (safety, security and service) by all key stakeholders;
- take account of good practices in developing an integrated approach to safety, security and service.

The Council of Europe Convention (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020) requires the Parties to license stadiums, ensure the application of safety regulations and certification, which is the responsibility of the competent national authorities and to ensure that stadium design and infrastructure comply with good practices and international standards. The Convention also requires the Parties to ensure that stadiums' operating arrangements are comprehensive, to provide liaison between the partner institutions (the police, emergency services ...) and to incorporate appropriate policies and procedures in matters that might impact on crowd management



and related security risks, including the use of pyrotechnics, violent behaviour by the spectators or other prohibited behaviour by the participants, as well as any racist behaviour and other forms of discrimination. The signatories are also required to urge the relevant institutions to encourage players, coaches and other representatives of the participating teams to act in accordance with key sporting principles, such as fair play, respect and tolerance, and to recognize the negative impact of violent, discriminatory and other provocative behaviour by spectators and other participants. The same Article also requires States Parties to promote joint action and cooperation between all stakeholders (municipal authorities, local communities, police, supporter representatives, sports clubs, national associations, businesses ...) involved in organising and executing sporting events to carry out a risk assessment and plan the appropriate preventative measures to minimise disruption and help to create a safe environment in public spaces that are designed for supporters to gather or in locations which supporters can be expected to frequent as transit routes, before, during and after the sports event.

Special emphasis is placed on the cooperation of all institutions with supporters and local communities, as they represent one of the essential elements for generating a partnership ethos and positive cooperation between key stakeholders, which through a proactive policy and regular communication enables the identification of suitable solutions to potential problems. Based on the promotion of dialogue between all public and private institutions and other stakeholders, the Convention encourages the Parties to initiate or participate in institutional, educational, crime-prevention, social and other projects aimed at promoting mutual respect and understanding, especially among sports clubs and associations, supporters and the institutions responsible for safety and security (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020).

One of the most important stakeholders in providing a safe and friendly environment before, during and after a sporting event is the police. The Council of Europe Convention (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020) prescribes an integrated approach to providing safety, security and service at sports events by ensuring that appropriate policing strategies and operations are developed, evaluated and adapted in light of national and international experience.

The Convention (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020) also focuses on the prevention and sanctioning of misbehaviour and calls on the signatories to take and implement various measures to reduce the risk of violent incidents or misbehaviour in stadiums or other venues. States Parties must provide for appropriate national regulations to deter and prevent violence or misbehaviour and to provide for appropriate measures to sanction offenders in accordance with the laws, regulations or administrative provisions of a Member State. The signatories are required to provide measures for the prevention of violent incidents or misbehaviour, in

accordance with domestic and international law. Cooperation between the Parties is extremely important in cases where individuals commit offences abroad, in order for such individuals to receive appropriate sanctions, either in the country where the offence is committed or in their country of residence or citizenship. The Convention also recommends that individuals who have caused or contributed to violent outbreaks or misbehaviour are banned from travelling in accordance with domestic and international law and judicial or administrative proceedings, in order to prevent them from committing offences at football events in other countries.

Article 10 of the Convention (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020) emphasizes the importance of effective international cooperation and urges the Parties to cooperate closely and to effectively implement the provisions of the Convention and other related matters concerning international events, exchange experience and cooperate in developing and maintaining good practices. The Article provides that the signatory states shall set up a so-called national football information point (NFIP), to act as a point for the exchange of data and information that is relevant for the police and facilitate international police cooperation in connection with football matches with an international dimension. Article 10 further requires that the signatories exchange personal data in accordance with applicable national and international rules and ensure that the NFIP provides a national source of expertise and experience regarding football policing operations, supporter dynamics and other associated safety and security risks related to sporting events.

Article 13 of the Council of Europe Convention (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020) sets out the various functions and activities to ensure monitoring over the application of the Convention, which are the responsibility of the Convention Committee. The Convention Committee is also responsible for monitoring the compliance of the Council of Europe Convention through a programme of visits to the States Parties at their request. However, if circumstances so require, the Committee may, on its own initiative, arrange for meetings of groups of experts.

### **2.1.3 UEFA Safety and Security Regulations**

This document is not directly related to sub-national legislation, but is nevertheless an important act that regulates the rules of conduct that ensure safety at and during sports events, especially at football matches. The European Football Organisation (UEFA) realized very early on the necessity to draw up rules that will properly regulate individual normative frameworks, which will prevent and suppress various forms of violence, with the internal rules of their international industry association. In this chapter, we examine the internal regulations of the UEFA, which must be complied with by the industry associations that play in UEFA tournaments, as well as clubs.

When a match is played under the auspices of the UEFA Football Association, each club, in conjunction with the security manager, is obliged to comply with the

regulations. These regulations govern the procedures and measures to maintain order and safety in and around a sports facility, before, during and after a sports event (UEFA, 2019).

Article 3 provides the definitions of the relevant terms used in the regulations (UEFA, 2019):

- *Control Room*: a space reserved for all actors with responsibility for all match-related safety and security matters, namely the police commander for the match, the person responsible for club safety and the head of security of a private security company.
- *Private Security*: a company/individual trained to perform safety and security functions at the event. A security guard differs from a *steward* in that the security guard has some additional powers under the national law of the State.
- *Safety*: any measure designed to protect the rights and inviolability of life of individuals and groups who attend an event.
- *Security*: any measure designed to reduce/prevent the risk and respond to criminal activity or disorder committed during the event
- *Security Personnel*: police officers, security guards and *stewards*.
- *Steward*: a trained individual who is competent to undertake public order and safety functions in and around a sports facility during the event.

Article 4 of the regulations stipulates that each club must appoint a competent person who is in charge of safety and security to carry out the following functions (UEFA, 2019):

- develop and implement safety and security strategies, risk management and security plans,
- be the main contact person between representatives of the rival club, the police and other entities involved in security,
- manage safety and security in terms of resourcing, training, etc.,
- ensure that the infrastructure of the sports facility is fit for purpose.

UEFA stipulates in Article 6 of the regulations (UEFA, 2019) that the clubs must ensure the exchange of safety-related information with other clubs and stakeholders involved, with the aim of ensuring safety at the event. The security manager is responsible for liaison with local police and others to ensure the implementation of these regulations during the event. In conjunction with other security stakeholders involved, the club/security manager (club representative) is responsible for ensuring effective crowd control, reducing security risks at events and preventing the use of pyrotechnics, violence, racist behaviour and other discriminatory behaviour. For a match where spectators and supporters are segregated, a segregation strategy must be drawn up by the match organiser in conjunction with the police and/or the head of security. If necessary, this strategy will also include a parking strategy for the different groups of supporters/spectators.

The match organiser must ensure that the stadium where the match will take place has been thoroughly inspected and in full compliance with the safety guidelines for stadiums issued by the relevant national authority. The match organiser must seek the cooperation of the local police to ensure the safety of the

visiting team and officials at their hotel and when travelling to and from training and to and from the match. The match organiser must undertake an appropriate risk assessment in conjunction with the police (UEFA, 2019).

Security staff, emergency medical services, medical and fire service personnel and the announcer must be in their allotted positions in and around the stadium before the stadium opens to the public (UEFA, 2019).

Article 32 of the Rules (UEFA, 2019) stipulates that security personnel must be available at all approaches to the event venue, at the turnstiles, and throughout the interior of the venue, at certain locations that are determined in advance. Security personnel must be familiar with the infrastructure of the facility, and with its evacuation plan and fire regulations. Article 33 of the Rules (UEFA, 2019) stipulates the manner in which spectator screenings and searches are to be conducted. When an external perimeter is established at the venue, which is located far from the stadium, the initial screening of the person and the ticket is conducted there.

After being screened, the person may enter the perimeter and continue to the entrance to the facility, where a superficial screening is carried out by security personnel, who also checks whether the person has a valid ticket. Only then, the person may enter the sports facility. The superficial screening is meant to ensure that a person enters the correct part of the stadium, that no alcoholic beverages, pyrotechnics and dangerous objects are brought into the facility and that persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs are prevented from entering. The superficial screening must be carried out by a member of the security personnel of the same sex as the person being screened. The match organiser must also ensure that the players and officials of the match are protected from the intrusion of spectators into the playing area (UEFA, 2019).

The UEFA Regulations are an excellent set of rules that all Member States must comply with. The problem, however, is that these are merely guidelines and as such are not binding for the clubs, at least not in their entirety. It will take a long time for these areas to be regulated and at least partially implemented in national legislation, as it will require convincing the umbrella national federations, the politicians and all other relevant stakeholders.

## **2.2 National Legislation Aimed at Preventing Violence at Sports Events**

In this chapter, we will present the fundamental national legislation governing the duties of the organiser and those of the other stakeholders to ensure safety at sporting events. Slovenian, Austrian and Serbian national laws that address this issue will be covered. It should be emphasized that the two European conventions do not prescribe how the states must regulate the transfer of measures at the national level by any normative act, but merely determine the content. As a result, normative acts vary from state to state, and the entities implementing the measures can come from different departments or ministries (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education and Sports, national sports federations involved in a particular segment can be authorized to implement individual measures, etc.)

### 2.2.1 Slovenian Legislation

Slovenia has a large number of normative acts that directly and/or indirectly influence the provision of measures before, during and after sports events and that contribute to the reduction of various forms of violence. Due to its dispersed nature, Slovenian legislation can prove difficult to keep track of, which can create problems for match organisers and clubs.

Public Assembly Act (Zakon o javnih zbiranjih (ZJZ-UPB5), 2011) regulates the manner in which the constitutional right to peaceful assembly and public gathering at public meetings and public events shall be exercised. In this respect, the Public Assembly Act (ZJZ-UPB5, 2011) constitutes a *lex specialis* and prescribes all the activities of various stakeholders organising a public (sports) event. At the same time, it also sets out all the behaviours and activities that are prohibited at public events - in our case, sports events.

Article 1 of the Sports Act (Zakon o športu (ZŠpo-1), 2018) sets out the public interest in the field of sport, mechanisms for serving said public interest, responsible authorities and the conditions for carrying out professional work in sport, the rights of athletes, public sports facilities and outdoor natural sports grounds, sporting events, and databases and supervision in the field of sport. In Article 73, the Sports Act (ZŠpo-1, 2018) provides the definition of a sports facility: a sports facility during a sports competition shall be a sports facility in which a sporting event is taking place, including the sports facility entrance where the final checking of tickets is conducted or where measures on the part of the organiser are taken to prevent the entry of dangerous objects and substances into the sports facility.

In order to ensure safety at sports events Police Tasks and Powers Act (Zakon o nalogah in pooblastilih policije (ZNPPol), 2013) provides two powers that directly regulate measures against individuals and groups that carry out illegal actions related to sports events. Thus, Article 62 (ZNPPol, 2013) stipulates the measure *prohibition of participation in sports events*, which is ordered to a person who performs inappropriate actions specified in this article at a sports event or in connection with a sports event. The measure itself lasts 2 years, and the person to whom the measure is imposed is not allowed to attend individual sports events during this time. Article 63 (ZNPPol, 2013) stipulates the measure interruption of a trip to a sports event, whereby the measure is aimed at a group of three or more persons. The purpose of the measure is to prevent a group of persons from going to a sports event under legal conditions, because there is a real possibility of their inappropriate conduct. These powers are within the exclusive competence of the Police, and in addition to the ban on participation, the measure itself is also supervised by the organizer with the security service in cooperation with the police.

The Decree on General Measures Applied to Sports Facilities During Sports Events (Uredba o splošnih ukrepih v športnih objektih na športnih prireditvah, 2003) sets out the general measures for owners or persons managing sports facilities and organisers of sports events. The entities referred to above shall implement measures at sports facilities to ensure order, and the protection of event participants and other persons as well as of property at sports events.

In the Republic of Slovenia, this Decree contains the highest number of measures that arise from the implementation of the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990). The Decree also sets out the measures to be taken by the organiser or the owner of the sports facility for the duration of the event at the event venue.

This Decree is one of the operational documents relating to the Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events, emphasizing intolerant, discriminatory and violent behaviours that have no place at sports events and facilities.

As mentioned in the beginning, Slovenia has put in place several other measures to reduce violence in other legislation: for example, the Criminal Code applies to criminal offences and the Protection of Public Order Act applies to misdemeanours. However, when measures are taken against supporters, such as interrupting travel or prohibiting them from attending sports events, the Police Tasks and Powers Act applies. Other laws have an indirect impact, such as the Restrictions on the Use of Alcohol Act, the Weapons Act, the Explosive Substances and Pyrotechnic Products Act, the Private Security Act, etc.

### 2.2.2 Austrian Legislation

Austria does not have quite as many pieces of legislation as Slovenia, but it does have a set of specific guidelines in which various measures are set out, directly related to sports events.

The Safety guidelines for the top division of the Austrian Bundesliga (Sicherheitsrichtlinien für die höchste spielklasse der Österreichischen Fußball-Bundesliga (Österreichische Fußball-Bundesliga, 2016)) contain binding instructions for all Austrian Bundesliga (BL) competitions, which apply both to the hosting club and the visiting club. These instructions govern safety measures designed to protect the spectators, ensure safety at the stadium and prevent outbreaks of violence among the spectators. The instructions are issued by the governing board and supplement the relevant statutes and special provisions of the ÖFB and BL. They also supplement the legal requirements as well as the rules of conduct in force at the facility. These guidelines must be implemented during every match by the club organising the event. The instructions transferred all the responsibility for organising an event and ensuring safety in all segments to the clubs, and it should be noted that they implemented all the measures arising from the current convention (Österreichische Fußball-Bundesliga, 2016).

### 2.2.3 Serbian Legislation

Serbia has its own *lex specialis* to ensure safety at sports events, especially in relation to various forms of violence.

The national Law on Prevention of Violence and Misconduct at Sports Events (Zakon o sprečavanju nasilja i nedoličnog ponašanja na sportskim priredbama, 2018) defines a sports event as a sports competition or sports manifestation,

while the organiser of such an event is a sports union (sector association), sports association, sports organisation-club, or any other legal or natural person who occasionally or permanently organises sports events. The law defines the timing of the event, which starts two hours prior to the start of the sports event and ends up to two hours after the end of the event. For high-risk events, this time interval is doubled, i.e. four hours before the start and four hours after the end of the sports event.

A sports facility is defined as a facility intended for sports events, which in addition to the sports field also includes an area for the spectators, grandstands and other areas necessary (toilets, changing rooms ...) and areas that may only be accessed by officials with a valid ticket or permit (pass) issued by the organiser of the sports event (Zakon o sprečavanju nasilja i nedoličnog ponašanja na sportskim priredbama, 2018).

The organiser of a sports event, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, is required to ensure safety at the event and reduce safety risk – that is, to avoid misbehaviour and dangerous behaviour by the spectators (Zakon o sprečavanju nasilja i nedoličnog ponašanja na sportskim priredbama, 2018). At the same time, the law defines the various forms of violence, as well as the measures to be taken against individuals and/or groups that violate the provisions of the law. Much like Slovenia Serbia has a number of other laws that are applied when criminal offences are committed outside of sports facilities, with the aim of ensuring greater efficiency in prosecuting the worst perpetrators of misdemeanours or perpetrators of criminal offences.

When reviewing and comparing the different types of legislation adopted in Slovenia, Austria and Serbia with the goal of reducing various forms of violence, it can safely be said that the measures stem from the current European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches (Evropska konvencija o nasilju in nedostojnem obnašanju gledalcev na športnih prireditvah, zlasti na nogometnih tekmah, 1990). All the countries share the common goal of reducing the number of instances of inappropriate behaviour, as well as to prevent various forms of violence at events, especially sports events.

The Convention set out the basic normative framework that the states should follow to effectively combat inappropriate behaviour, and it is up to the states to decide on the type, manner and specific measures that they will use to reduce this type of behaviour, with the necessary adaptations to better suit their social and cultural environment. In fact, all the states have incorporated the provisions of the Convention into their acts, but of course, the realization and effectiveness, both on the part of the state and of the industry associations and clubs are contingent on various other factors.

A new approach and an important step towards an even more efficient fight against various forms of violence will be brought about by the new Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije Sveta Evrope o integriranem pristopu k varnosti, varovanju in storitvam na nogometnih tekmah in drugih športnih prireditvah, 2020), as it stipulates that countries with

an integrated (common) approach shared by different stakeholders, including education, social affairs, and health, must start with the said approach at an early stage - child development, cooperation with different actors in sport, and, depending on their role, help prevent and reduce different forms of violence in (sports) society.

### 3 METHOD

The research part of the paper was conducted using the method of conducting interviews with spokespersons from the football clubs. With the spokesperson from NK Celje<sup>2</sup>, we held interviews in person, while interviewees from FK Partizan<sup>3</sup> and SK Sturm Graz<sup>4</sup> sent us their answers via e-mail. All three were asked the same questions. In addition, we conducted a telephone interview with Mr Željko Pavlica<sup>5</sup>, security manager of the UEFA, the European Football Association. We also included our own observations, with one of the co-authors of the article attending the Serbian championship match in the Linglong Tire Super League between FK Partizan and FK Crvena zvezda at the Partizan stadium.

### 4 RESULTS

The research section of this paper presents the activities of clubs that play in three different national football leagues. Although there are differences in the national legislation of each country, they are very similar at a subnational level, which is also reflected in the measures implemented by the organisers.

#### 4.1 Security Risks

Security risk is a very broad concept as it covers many factors that can affect safety and security at a sports facility for the duration of an event. When we narrow down this spectrum, the most common factors are personnel, supporter groups, crowd management, pyrotechnics and infrastructure. All of these factors are connected to the human factor. In the next subsections we present the main findings of comparison between all three analysed clubs. Four main factors are also presented in Table 1.

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2 We conducted two in-person interviews with Mr Franci Klanjšek, on the 13 August 2018 and 24 April 2019.

3 Mr Živko Šljukić first answered our questions by e-mail, and then we completed the interview in person on 22 September 2019, on the day one of the co-authors watched the match live.

4 Mr Bruno Hütter completed our questionnaire by e-mail. Our communication with him (he also sent many useful documents in connection with safety at football matches) lasted for about a month, starting with 18 October 2019.

5 We had two live telephone interviews with Mr Željko Pavlica on 2 December 2019.



**Table 1:**  
Comparison of security risks in all three clubs

	NK Celje	FK Partizan	SK Sturm Graz
<b>Workforce</b>	Security is provided by private security company; no perceived need for introducing stewards to the system	Security is provided by private security company and stewards	Security is provided by stewards, who come from the population of fans or supporters of the club
<b>Supporter groups</b>	Due to its members' aggressive behaviour club denounced the supporter group (Celjski grofje 92); currently no officially organised supporter group	Supporter groups are organised as paramilitary formations; tensions and clashes between the supporters are often and serious	Supporters are focused solely on the sport and on supporting their club; incidents during matches are very rare
<b>Pyrotechnics</b>	Occasional use of pyrotechnics; most often used during major and important matches by visiting supporters	Use of pyrotechnics is regular, especially at the derbies with their main rival club	Pyrotechnics are used occasionally; there have been a few instances of misuse of pyrotechnics
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Suitable infrastructure, built relatively recently	Suitable infrastructure; built in 1951, but high-quality construction	Suitable infrastructure, built relatively recently

#### 4.1.1 Workforce

In all three clubs, security is provided by private security companies, while in Serbia and Austria, the clubs also employ stewards. The Celje football club does not use stewards, as they would have to be drafted from a population that includes the club's supporters, which casts doubts over whether these individuals can be entrusted with the job. In addition, the club does not see the need for stewards, for the time being. According to the responsible people at the club, the security staff of a private security company is insufficiently and poorly trained. They usually undergo training and obtain a license that enables them to work at public events, especially sports events, which have their specificities. The biggest issue is that security guards lack experience, especially in working with people. The problems start at the very beginning when a security guard does not know how to perform a basic surface screening of an individual, an inspection of their bag or of a vehicle entering the sports facility or its surroundings. The situation becomes even more critical when dealing with an aggressive person or group of people because unprofessional and inappropriate reactions by security guards can cause the situation to escalate further instead of calming down, and result in minor or even serious injuries. At SK Sturm Graz in Austria, the duty of ensuring safety at the facility is entrusted solely to stewards, who come from the population of fans or supporters of the club. These individuals are required to undergo regular training and education to be able to do their job. The online training for these individuals is provided by the ÖFB, meaning that the stewards receive central training directly by the Austrian Football Association, instead of being trained by each club or company, which has proven to be a very well-thought-out practice by the Austrian Football Association. The interviewer encourages this continuous training, because the personnel needs to be retrained over and over again and because humans are still the weakest link in the chain of organising sporting events. The stewards and the club work very closely together, always making

sure that they go over some of the most important safety measures, such as the evacuation routes, how to act in specific situations, etc. before each match. The club (Sturm) is satisfied with the system, as it has served them very well so far. The FK Partizan also uses stewards, but their doubts about whether they can be trusted remain, as they also come from the supporter population. In light of the overall situation in Serbia, this can pose a certain risk at times. In this case, the stewards underwent short training/education (80 hours), which does not suffice, given the situation in the Balkans. It is worth mentioning that a steward is not allowed to conduct a surface screening of the spectators before they enter the facility, as only the police are authorised to do so in Serbia. Stewards receive payment for performing their work tasks and responsibilities, which is very modest, raising the question of whether a steward would be willing to get involved in situations that could endanger their safety or the safety of others.

In Slovenia, this work is performed by security guards who are licensed to work in the private security sector. However, they often lack the knowledge necessary to properly inspect a person or their belongings, as well as to manage crowds.

#### **4.1.2 Supporter Groups**

Supporter groups are an essential part of every sport. With football being the most popular and watched sport in the world, this phenomenon is even more pronounced here than in any other sport. There are different categories of people attending football matches: spectators, supporters and the most extreme group of all – ultras. There are also differences between supporter groups in Austria, Slovenia and Serbia. In Slovenia, the Celje football club used to have a supporter group known as the Celjski Grofje 92, but due to its members' aggressive behaviour towards the rival groups during matches and, ultimately, towards its own club, the group proved to be damaging to the club's reputation. After careful consideration, the Celje football club denounced the group and played without a supporter group for several years. Due to the club's good performance during the current season, the supporter group was revived in a different, less aggressive light. After the Celjski Grofje group was disbanded, there was a fear that individuals who once belonged to the group would infiltrate the general spectator population and cause disturbances and verbal or physical violence. At Partizan, the situation is completely different, as supporters and supporter groups have always been and will always be part of this culture. Being a member of a supporter group means to belong to a population of like-minded people, but the sport element often takes a back seat to other things. These groups are linked to various criminal enterprises – from drug trafficking and arms dealing (cold weapons and firearms) to murder. The structure of such groups is based on the chain of command, which is why supporter groups in Serbia and in the entire Balkans operate as paramilitary formations. The concepts of reputation and respect are also very important for these groups. It is about gaining prestige within the group and also among other supporter groups in a public arena. Problems also arise when tensions between groups of supporters who support the same club become high, and shows of strength and prestige take precedence

over all else. Tensions tend to become especially high during the national derby when Partizan plays against Crvena zvezda. This results in clashes between the supporters. These clashes can either be spontaneous or organised, but in both cases, the results are bodily injury and property damage, due to the use of cold weapons and firearms, chains, sticks, brass knuckles and any other objects that can be turned into a weapon. In Austria, the situation is completely different, as supporters are focused solely on the sport and on supporting their club and do not engage in any criminal acts within the group. Incidents during matches are very rare and there are no physical confrontations. There have been instances of misuse of pyrotechnics, but these are the exception rather than the rule.

Ensuring good communication with the groups of supporters is essential. In Slovenia, the most notorious conflict was the one between the Celje football club and its supporters, which ultimately culminated in a rift between the two parties. Partizan and Sturm are an excellent example of good relations and communication between the club and the supporters. The Sturm football club has monthly meetings with members of the supporter group to discuss areas of improvement and plans for the future. The Partizan club, on the other hand, has a designated person who acts as a liaison between the club and the supporter group. Despite all the noise and commotion happening in the background of some supporter groups, the relationships are very good and the groups, for the most part, adhere to the agreements, which is not a fact to be taken for granted, especially not in this part of the world.

As far as supporter groups are concerned, they can represent a security risk, but the level of risk differs widely between the countries. The issue of supporter groups in Serbia and their connections with the criminal underworld goes beyond the competences of the club.

### 4.1.3 Pyrotechnics

Pyrotechnics have always been and will always be part of the supporter culture, as it is a way for the club's most ardent supporters to show their support and sense of belonging. Many people struggle to understand why pyrotechnics have become a part of supporter culture. Like many other factors, this one is connected to the area where the club is located, since the mentality of the supporters varies depending on the location. Of the three clubs compared, FK Partizan stands out the most, since the use of pyrotechnics is a completely normal factor virtually at every match, especially at the derbies with Crvena Zvezda. The security manager always expresses reservations about pyrotechnics, highlighting the danger of terrorist acts at sports events, because pyrotechnics may be used to hide various objects and for purposes other than intended, such as to injure other people who happen to be at the sports facility. Things are completely different in terms of pyrotechnics at the Graz football club, where pyrotechnics are used occasionally, but not to the same extent as in the Balkans. There is more supervision over the use of pyrotechnics to prevent minor or serious injuries. The club is also considering using the so-called "cold pyrotechnics" technology that is being developed in northern Europe. At the Celje club, pyrotechnics are most often used during major and important matches by visiting supporters. Thanks to the club's good

performance this year, they have brought back the supporter group, which uses pyrotechnics on a smaller scale. The club's security manager has a zero-tolerance policy for the use of pyrotechnics because it is an active agent that is difficult to control and can have serious consequences.

#### **4.1.4 Infrastructure**

Infrastructure is an important element of security, but it largely depends on the club's available funds and budget. Security managers are often aware of any weak points, but eliminating or fixing them poses a problem, especially for smaller clubs that do not have the available budget to cover all the costs for one season. All the clubs examined in this paper have the right infrastructure, as this gives them a financial background, and they all compete at a higher European level and must therefore adhere to certain standards to be able to host football matches at their facilities. Another thing that all three clubs have in common is that they are able to separate the rival supporter groups at their facilities, to avoid any direct contact between them. The Sturm Stadium (Merkur Arena) and the Celje Stadium (Z'ležele Stadium) were built relatively recently, which cannot be said for the Partizan Stadium, as it was built in 1951. Nevertheless, thanks to its high-quality construction, it stood the test of time and is still up to par with its younger counterparts. It is one of the few facilities in the region that have turnstile gates equipped with a ticket scanning system at every entrance. In addition, the stadium has 107 security cameras, which record the interior and the surroundings of the facility 24 hours a day, every day. This shows that there have been continuous investments in infrastructure modernization and safety. The stadiums in Celje and Graz are also equipped with a security and monitoring system that monitors events inside and around the facility – as already mentioned, these two stadiums are relatively new but will require urgent investments in infrastructure in the future. Smaller clubs, especially in Serbia and Slovenia, are particularly problematic, as they lack the resources to ensure and provide the necessary infrastructure.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 The Parties Involved in Security**

Regardless of where a sporting event takes place, the organisers work in conjunction with the following four parties: the police, the rescue service, the fire department and the private security company. There are some differences between how each country handles security, which is evident in the case presented. In Slovenia, the police, a private security company, the fire department and a rescue unit work together in conjunction with the club. Since Celje does not employ stewards, they hire a private security company to ensure safety and security at the facility. The police must always be present for maintaining peace and public order. In Slovenia, police officers are paid to do this work. In Serbia, the situation is significantly different, as the special police units (gendarmerie) play a role in maintaining order. In certain cases, such as when military delegations are present at the match,

the army is also called to provide security, since FK Partizan is a club with army connections. In addition to that, the club also employs stewards to maintain order at the stadium. Without the presence of the police and the gendarmerie, holding a football match in Serbia would be an impossible task. This is especially true for derby matches, which are the most high-risk, making the presence of the police and the gendarmerie indispensable. A single derby match requires between 5,000 and 6,000 police and army officers. Unlike in Slovenia, neither the police nor the gendarmerie receive compensation for their work during a match, despite the elevated risk involved, and the high number of police officers and members of the gendarmerie that need to be present at the match. In principle, the Austrian system is very similar to the Slovenian system, as all the parties involved are the same, with the only difference being that the Sturm football club uses stewards who work at the facility. The police are tasked with maintaining order and peace in the area around the facility, for which they are not compensated. However, the police are compensated for their work inside the sports facility itself, when the stewards are unable to maintain peace and order.

Holding a safe and successful match/event requires coordination and adequate training of all involved. A crucial role is played by the person in charge of organising and planning – the club's security manager. All the clubs who took part in the research employ highly experienced and professional individuals in this position, which is reflected in their work. Celje and Partizan hold an advantage over the other clubs, as they both employ security managers who are former police officers and thus enjoy a higher degree of trust and respect, especially from the police.

### 5.2 Measures Before the Match

Pre-match measures start long before the day of the match, as they cover the entire phase of planning the event until the beginning of the match. Communication between all parties involved is crucial in this phase. Based on our comparison, we can conclude that these measures are more or less the same, regardless of the country where a club is located, with very minor differences.

The first step is always to register the sporting event at the local administrative unit. The only difference between the clubs is the time frame of the registration, which is from 14 to 10 days before the match. The organiser then contacts the previously mentioned parties involved in security (the police, the rescue service, the fire department, the private security company) and the visiting club. This is an essential step, as it gives the organiser an idea of the approximate number of visiting supporters and spectators who will be attending the match. The next important piece of information is whether the supporters plan to attend the event as an organised group or individually. Once the organiser has collected all this information, a security plan can be drawn up, which is a key document to have when organising an event. Just before the match starts, a meeting is held of all the parties involved in security and all outstanding issues are resolved.

Before every match, the police must escort both teams as they arrive at the stadium. This is an obligatory step, as also specified in the regulations and

guidelines that the clubs must adhere to. The purpose of a police escort is to reduce the risk of incidents upon arrival at the sports facility. If necessary, a police escort is also provided for the match referee. The police are the only party that can provide an escort.

Before the start of the match, the sports facility must be inspected to ensure that no explosives or other prohibited devices are inside the facility. In case of a high-risk match in Serbia (such as the derby between Partizan and Crvena zvezda), the stadium is under constant surveillance for the 24 hours that precede the match. Before and after surveillance, the stadium is inspected by anti-bomb police units. It is a well-established practice and also a law requirement to segregate the supporters of both teams in such a way as to ensure that there is no direct contact between them or by separating them from each other with technical obstacles. Efforts must be made to separate the groups of supporters in the areas surrounding the stadium before they even enter the facility. In Celje, they not only separate the two groups of supporters inside the facility but the other spectators as well, thereby reducing the risk of someone in the spectator population expressing anger and hatred or behaving in a violent manner. In Slovenia, Celje is the only club that has implemented this practice (due to the large size of the facility), while Sturm and Partizan have not. The only issue with this practice is that there are no laws requiring the segregation of the spectators, which results in many people ignoring these instructions. The spectators have reacted very positively to the practice.

Spectator screening at the gates is also of key importance, as it is a lengthy process and requires professionally trained staff. Before entering the sports facility, superficial screening is required. In Celje, screenings are done by security guards who are authorised to ban a person from the facility or deny them entry to the facility, if they are deemed a risk. In Serbia and Austria, these screenings are performed by safety personnel/stewards. In principle, stewards do not have the authority to conduct this procedure, which is why in Serbia inspections are performed under the supervision of the police, as well as to prevent non-performance. Problems arise when the personnel (the stewards) are poorly trained.

### **5.3 Measures During the Match**

The measures that have to be implemented during the match are difficult or impossible to define, as it is impossible to predict with certainty what might happen during a match. The most important thing is to monitor the events during the match and try to prevent certain situations from happening or react appropriately to a given situation. These measures are mainly related to the use of pyrotechnics during the match and monitoring the stands, as whatever happens there is often a result of the outcome of the match. If necessary, the match can also be suspended indefinitely, such as when banners are used expressing racial, ethnic or other types of intolerance, or in cases of verbal violence. This happened in Serbia when the president of the Serbian Football Association became the target of insults. In this phase, the experience and professionalism of the security managers are very important. They must also know as much as possible about the people/clubs/supporters in their national leagues.

## 5.4 Measures After the Match

After the referee blows his/her whistle, the match ends for the spectators, but not for the organiser and other security stakeholders. Events after the match may be affected by the final result or by other events during the match. At this stage, there must be no direct contact between the opposing supporter groups, as this could lead to a massive brawl or a similar incident. In Serbia, a few minutes before the end of the match, the police and members of the gendarmerie are joined by their colleagues around the football field to prevent possible intrusions on the field or other violent outbreaks. All the clubs allow the visiting supporters to exit the facility first, followed by the home club supporters, which makes direct contact in the vicinity of the stadium nearly impossible. Again, the infrastructure of the facility and its surroundings is very important here. Are the sectors sufficiently separated, what about the entrances, where are the paths that lead to the stadium located and is the stadium is located in an urban environment, in a suburban area or on the outskirts – are some of the questions that need to be answered. In our case, all the stadiums are located more or less within the city or in a suburban area. For example, the Partizan and Celje stadiums border on residential areas. If necessary or at the discretion of the police and the organiser, a particular group may be detained in the stadium under while tensions run high. After that, the procedure is the same as the one before the match – the teams are provided with a police escort as they leave the stadium. Police escorts can also be provided for the referees if the police and the organiser determine that they may be in danger. Once everyone has left the facility, the event can be concluded. The last step is to make a record of everything that took place during the match, including areas that need improvement and various security incidents.

## 6 CONCLUSION

In the discussion, we will first highlight the topic of the infrastructure of the sports facility itself. Our conversations with the interviewees revealed that they do not detect any issues with the infrastructure, which is something that we were able to confirm. Clubs that have a smaller budget are more likely to report infrastructure issues. These differences are more pronounced in Slovenia and in Serbia. The infrastructure of a sports facility should not lag behind modern development. The modern and postmodern development of a stadium must be in line both with the socio-economic conditions of the capitalist mode of production as well as with the relevant sports-related factors of a historical period (Paramio et al., 2008). Any new potential security threats that can be brought about by poor infrastructure, the segregation of the supporters and, above all, easier crowd management must be taken into account. The concept of crowd control goes hand in hand with infrastructure, as its procedures involve planning an event, training employees, forming scenarios, and collecting data – all of which are tasks to be performed before the match (Abbott & Geddie, 2001). This definition also mentions employee training, which represents the biggest challenge for the organiser. The problem, however, is that the organiser has no direct influence over this, as the security

staff is provided by a private security company. Abbott and Geddie (2001) wrote that security personnel must be prepared for any possible situation that may arise during an event, and that every crowd of people is different, which is why it is important to have well-trained personnel. Effective crowd management can significantly reduce security risks. A good example of crowd management are the multi-zone safety parameters around the sports facility, which are prescribed by UEFA guidelines and should be followed by all the clubs whose national federations fall under the European Football Association. These parameters are designed to remove individuals who pose a security risk from the sports facility as far away from the facility as possible. One thing to keep in mind is that threats evolve over time and become more and more sophisticated, which is why terrorism is also a factor to be taken into account. Event organisers have acted to achieve a balance between effective risk management while not unduly deterring from spectators' enjoyment of the event (Taylor & Toohey, 2006). A good example of this is NK Celje, which has not experienced any major security risks after parting ways with its supporter group *Celjski grofje*. As a result, more and more families with children are able to attend the matches, as they feel safe in this environment. Of all the above, however, it is the human factor that has the biggest impact and while it cannot be eliminated altogether, it can be reduced to a minimum. Security personnel, such as security guards or stewards, must attend professional training before starting any type of assignment (Trstenjak, 2017). The duration of training is a controversial topic, not only in Slovenia but also in Serbia and Austria, as it tends to be too brief and the knowledge covered is not comprehensive enough. This means that anyone can obtain a professional qualification to work as a security guard in about a month. Having good knowledge of the measures and the work of each party involved in security at a sports event is crucial in order to do a better job. Currently, this does not seem to be the case, as disagreements and errors often occur during procedures (Trstenjak, 2017). Each of the clubs examined has some good practices that should be shared with others in the interest of crowd control and security. In NK Celje, it is not only the supporter groups that are separated at the sports facility – the visiting spectators are also separated from the home spectators to prevent potential incidents between them. Austrian football club Sturm requires its stewards to undergo regular on-line training to keep their licenses, which is a noteworthy example of good practice. This practice should be implemented by other countries as well, as there are clear benefits from ensuring regular training and professional development for stewards. The last crucial factor to highlight is the relationship between the club and the supporters. This is where Partizan stands out.

Emery (2010) states that we are as safe as the most stupid/ignorant person with responsibility. Sports event security relies on increased planning and coordination, which contributes to the strict coalescence of different spatial, temporal and functional logics of surveillance within a carefully orchestrated and comprehensive security system (Klauser, 2013). Organisers must therefore be aware of the consequences that may arise at the event and the fact that security should not be viewed from a financial perspective (Slokan, 2017).



Awareness of the importance of ensuring the safety of all stakeholders involved in sporting events is the foundation for improving the situation in this area. As can be seen in the discussion, there are differences in understanding of ensuring safety at sporting events and approaches to reducing or eliminating the consequences, despite the existence of subnational legislation (various European conventions). Of course, the activities are related to various risk factors, which relate to the number and type of fans, sports infrastructure, the training of organizational staff, the financial framework of the organizers, etc. Despite all the mentioned risks and taking into account the integrated approach to ensuring safety at sports events, we believe that a number of steps still need to be taken in order to unify practices within the European Union and the European region.

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