

II

(Preparatory Acts pursuant to Title VI of the Treaty on European Union)

Initiative of the Kingdom of Belgium with a view to the adoption of a Council Decision concerning security in connection with football matches with an international dimension

(2001/C 258/06)

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 handling a footballing event efficiently 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 national football information centre of a police nature 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 national football information centre of a police nature 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 of the European Communities*.

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

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