

## STANDING COMMITTEE (T-RV)

EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON SPECTATOR VIOLENCE  
AND MISBEHAVIOUR AT SPORTS EVENTS AND  
IN PARTICULAR AT FOOTBALL MATCHES



Strasbourg, 29 May 2010

Rec (2010) 1

### **Recommendation Rec (2010) 1 of the Standing Committee on supporters' charters**

adopted by the Standing committee on 28 May 2010

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

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

Stressing the need to improve hospitality and ensure the festive nature of sports events for the largest possible number of spectators, so that all groups of society can attend without fearing for their safety;

Recognising that sound agreements between supporters and their club can help enormously to ensure a festive atmosphere and prevent violent incidents;

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

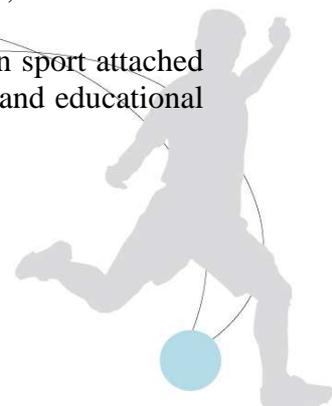
Stressing that a multi-agency approach does not only concern local and national authorities, police forces and clubs, but that supporters are also essential partners in sport events, that many of them want to take on responsibilities and that making preventive agreements helps ensure a festive atmosphere;

Having regard to the successful supporters' charters that run in a number of countries;

Stressing that how a supporters' charter is designed depends on the local situation and the culture of the particular club and its particular supporters;

Also stressing that a supporters' charter should be part of a general prevention policy;

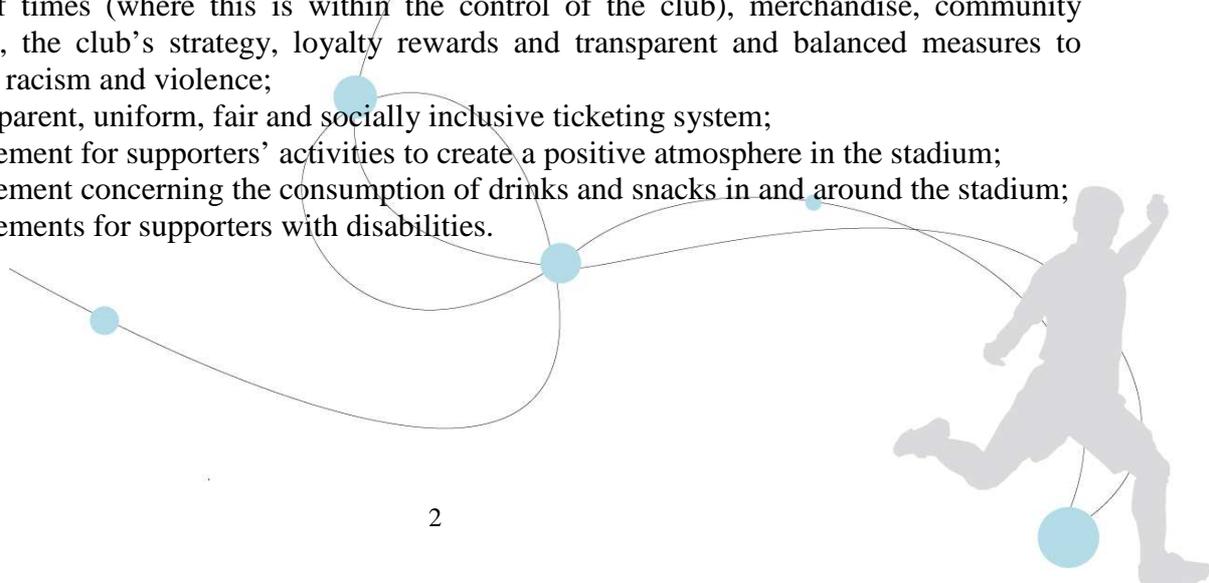
Considering the principles set out in the Handbook on the prevention of violence in sport attached to Recommendation Rec (2003) 1 of the Standing Committee on the role of social and educational measures in the prevention of violence in sport;



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

- 1- Encourage sports associations, clubs, fan clubs and associations and/or other appropriate bodies in football and other sports to draft a joint supporters' charter, based upon the following principles:
  - a. supporters' charter is an agreement between the sports club and the supporters about what each party can expect from the other;
  - b. a supporters' charter does not only impose obligations on supporters, it also sets out clubs' obligations towards supporters, intended to achieve a balance between the interests of all parties involved;
  - c. the aim of a supporters' charter is twofold:
    - to improve communication between the different sections of the club and the supporters;
    - to establish an agreement between the sports club and the supporters ;
  - d. the club representatives involved in producing a supporters' charter must have enough influence and decision-making power within their club;
  - e. the supporters' delegation must broadly represent, and be accepted by, all supporters;
  - f. it is necessary to avoid a situation in which the supporters, fan clubs or associations involved in the charter have to observe certain obligations, while individual supporters and also the club do not have to observe these obligations;
  - g. other parties, such as the police and/or the local authorities can provide valuable input regarding safety and security matters;
  - h. agreements offer added value and their objectives should follow the SMART-principle;
  - i. the supporters' charter must be re-appraised and renewed every (football) season.
- 2- Recommend to sports clubs that they adopt clear procedures for discussing and agreeing on supporters' charters. These procedures could include the establishment of a working group comprising representatives of all parties which would:
  - draw up an agenda;
  - conduct a substantive discussion;
  - communicate the results internally (club and supporters) and externally (media).
- 3- Encourage sport associations, clubs, supporters and/or other appropriate bodies in football and other sports to include the following minimum items in a supporters' charter:

- a. As a rule, a supporters' charter should cover membership, consultation and information, accessibility and use of stadiums, communication about the safety policy for spectators, kick-off times (where this is within the control of the club), merchandise, community activity, the club's strategy, loyalty rewards and transparent and balanced measures to combat racism and violence;
- b. A transparent, uniform, fair and socially inclusive ticketing system;
- c. Arrangement for supporters' activities to create a positive atmosphere in the stadium;
- d. Arrangement concerning the consumption of drinks and snacks in and around the stadium;
- e. Arrangements for supporters with disabilities.



### Commentary on individual recommendations.

#### 1. a **A supporters' charter is an agreement between the sports club and the supporters about what each party can expect from the other.**

Clubs are, to a great extent, responsible for the behaviour of their supporters, and have considerable influence on that behaviour. Clubs should therefore take the initiative of introducing a supporters' charter.

During the negotiations of a supporters' charter, all parties must make clear statements regarding what they want and expect from the other party, as well as their reasons and what they are prepared to give in return.

Given that the relationship between clubs and supporters is often difficult and may be coloured by prejudice on both sides, it is advisable to determine principles and guidelines of negotiation, which could be agreed upon in the context of a preliminary meeting, before discussing the concrete contents of a supporters' charter. These principles/guidelines should be binding on both the supporters and the club during negotiations.

#### 1. b **A supporters' charter does not only impose obligations on supporters, it also sets out clubs' obligations towards supporters, intended to achieve a balance between the interests of all parties involved.**

Supporters can be partners in solving problems at sports events and part of a broad network. By concluding a supporters' charter, supporters get recognition of their importance for the club. They can actively contribute to the decision-making of the club, which they consider to be very important.

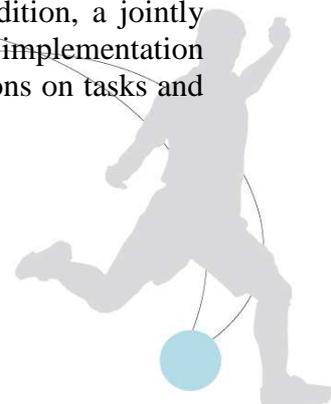
If supporters accept certain obligations, they should be entitled to structural and effective participation in the club policy: supporters' structural participation must be the key concept.

The club can obviously benefit greatly from the supporters' charter. The charter helps to promote positive social behaviour. Positive social behaviour by supporters depends mainly on how they are treated and perceived by the club and on the possibilities they are given to participate in their favourite sports event. A supporters' charter can therefore be seen as part of an overall prevention policy, as a "preventive partnership".

#### 1. c **The aim of a supporters' charter is twofold.**

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

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



In order to highlight the significance of the supporters' charter, it is recommended the charter be signed by the club management and the representatives of the supporters in public. By making the official signing part of a larger programme geared to the interests of supporters, it is also possible to create a positive atmosphere and give proof of a new beginning between fans and club management.

**1. d The club representatives involved in producing a supporters' charter must have enough influence and decision-making power within their club.**

It is crucial for the negotiations and the implementation of the supporters' charter that the club representatives involved in drawing up the charter have appropriate decision-making powers. It is therefore necessary to involve at least one leading representative of the club's management in addition to the executives of the other relevant sections of the club.

**1. e The supporters' delegation must broadly represent, and be accepted by, all supporters.**

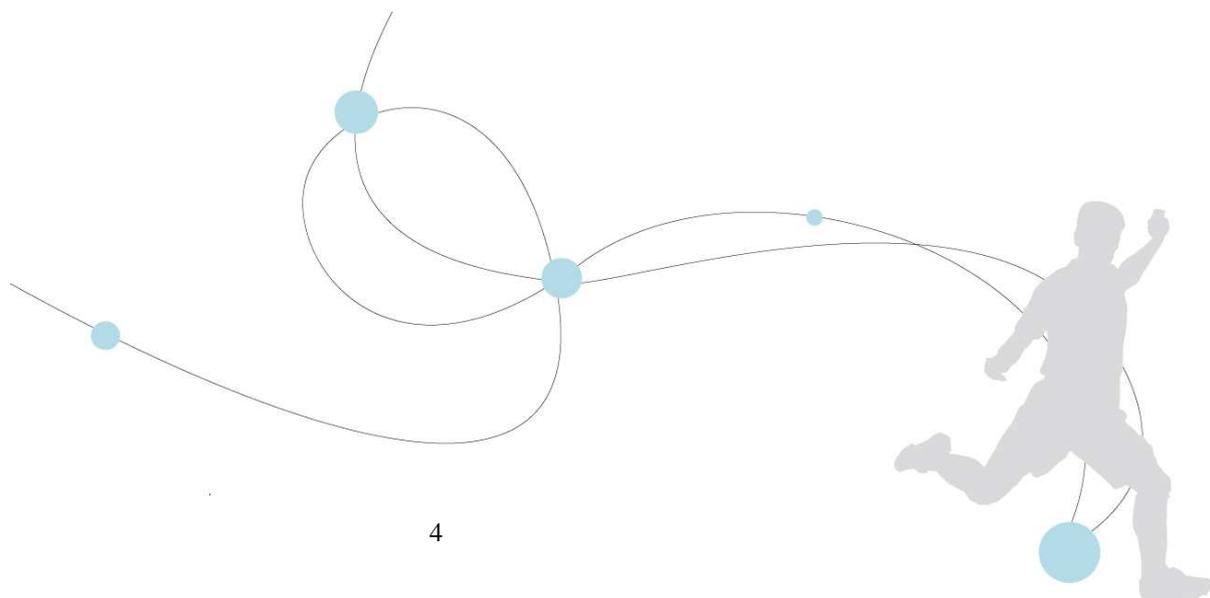
It is recommended that use be made of existing structures such as a supporters' delegation on the club board, representatives of supporters' federations, supporters' clubs,..., because their views and actions are also largely acknowledged by unorganised supporters. It is important to make sure that no fan (group) feel excluded. Good communication to all supporters (through the website, a fan magazine, flyers...) is very important in every stage of the supporters' charter.

**1. f It is necessary to avoid a situation in which the supporters, fan clubs and associations involved in the charter have to observe certain obligations, while individual supporters and also the club do not have to observe these obligations.**

A supporters' charter can only be accepted by every fan if the content affects him or her in a mainly positive way and if the communication about the charter is open and transparent at every stage. Otherwise, not many supporters will be willing to be involved in the charter. This does not mean that less positive items cannot be part of the charter. Open and effective communication with a good explanation is a key strategy for accepting less positive items.

**1. g Other parties such as the local police and/or the local authorities can provide valuable input regarding safety and security matters.**

Items involving safety and security concern mainly the club's safety officer. He or she must be involved in the discussion concerning the charter but cannot decide on his/her own on issues where the police or local authorities have decision making powers.



## 1. h **Agreements offer added value and their objectives should follow the SMART-principles**

The obligations laid down in a supporters' charter must first place and foremost be feasible for all parties and offer added value. They must be written according to the SMART-principles.

S(pecific): the obligations are clear and well defined.

M(easurable): the goals are expressed in such a way that their achievement is measurable.

A(chievable): there is an agreement with all stakeholders and the way in which it is to be achieved is realistic.

R(ealistic): in keeping with the availability of resources, knowledge and time.

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

## 1. i **The supporters' charter must be reappraised and renewed every (football) season.**

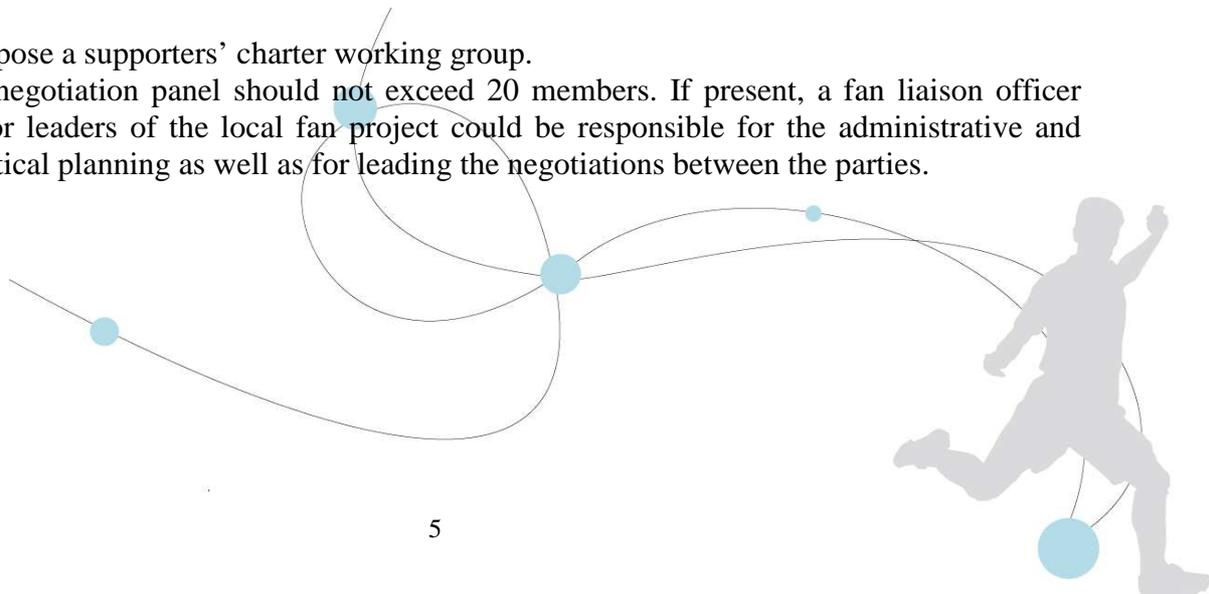
It is vital that once a supporters' charter has been finalised, it can be regarded as a long-term, positive achievement by all those involved. Moreover, the positive prevailing mood should be used as an incentive to act in the course of the adoption of the joint agreement. It is therefore advisable when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

It is therefore recommended that every club appoint a fan liaison officer or establish a specific "supporters' department". This officer or department is the go-between between the club and the supporters. There must be close communication between this officer or department and the club's safety officer.

## 2. a. **Clear procedures for discussing and agreeing on supporters' charters.**

When a working group is established, the following points may be considered:

- i. Composition of the delegation of the club:
  - Representatives with influence in the club;
  - Influential persons in the eyes of the supporters (for example (old) players) .
- ii. Composition of the supporters' delegation:
  - Broad representation;
  - Make use of existing structures: supporters' delegation on the club board, supporters' federations, fan clubs, and make sure no fan (group) is excluded and that no specific group dominates the delegation .
- iii. Compose a supporters' charter working group.  
 The negotiation panel should not exceed 20 members. If present, a fan liaison officer and/or leaders of the local fan project could be responsible for the administrative and logistical planning as well as for leading the negotiations between the parties.



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

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

iv. Draw up an agenda:

- Have a timetable for the meetings and target a date to sign the first supporters' charter;
- Have a substantive discussion: which executive agreements will be put on paper?;
- Also make clear which items are not open to discussion (for example items which are governed by specific legislation);
- Agree a communication and media strategy, including existing channels of communication by fans for fans, e.g. national and local fanzines, fans' websites, fans' forums etc.

v. Get the supporters' charter signed by all partners:

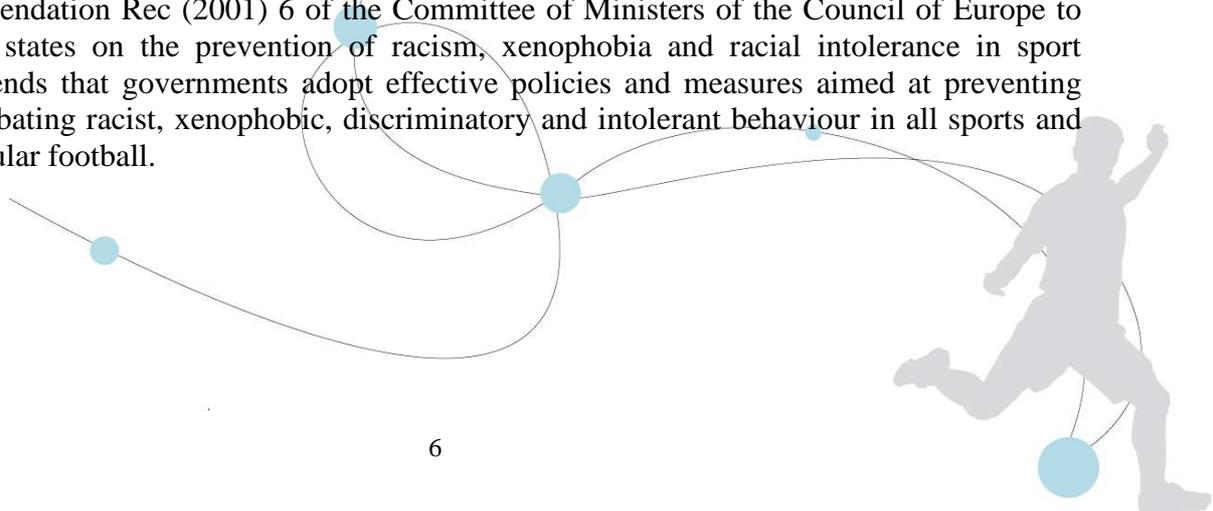
- The club and the supporters discuss the charter together;
- A plan for future communication should be set out in writing for discussion between the club and the supporters and if necessary with other parties (police, local authority, fire department, etc.);
- A group should be set up for future discussion between the club and the supporters.

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

**3. a. As a rule, a supporters' charter should cover membership, consultation and information, accessibility and use of stadiums, communication about the safety policy for spectators, kick-off times (where this is within the control of the club), merchandising, community activity, the club's strategy, loyalty rewards and transparent and balanced measures to combat racism and violence.**

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

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



**3. b. A transparent, uniform, fair and socially inclusive ticketing system.**

Generally, the clubs and the supporters should aim at finding socially inclusive solutions to allow all parts of society to attend football matches.

In addition to accessibility for everyone to home matches, the club can grant priority rights to purchase and reserve tickets for away matches to those long-standing supporters who travel to most games and create a positive atmosphere.

**3. c. Arrangements for supporters' activities to create a positive atmosphere in the stadium.**

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

It is also vital that the club provides hospitable conditions for home supporters as well as for visiting supporters.

**3. d. Arrangements concerning the consumption of drinks and snacks in and around the stadium.**

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

**3. e. Arrangements for supporters with disabilities.**

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

The European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular Football Matches was developed by the Council of Europe and entered into force on 1 November 1985.

A Standing Committee was set up to follow the implementation of the Convention, to adopt recommendations and to reply to new challenges.

For more information <http://www.coe.int/sport>

