



Erasmus+ project addressing the problem of spectator violence in European football through improved cooperation between club supporter liaison officers and the football and public authorities

Liaison-based Integrated Approach to Improving Supporter Engagement (LIAISE)

Action Plan: Portugal

The purpose of this Action Plan is to support the football and public authorities in Portugal through the provision of suggested actions, customised to meet national needs and circumstances, designed to enhance the role of Supporter Liaison Officers (SLOs) in developing effective communication and dialogue with supporters as part of a wider and comprehensive multi-agency approach to the planning and organisation of safety and security in connection with international and domestic professional football matches held in Portugal.

Project Aim: *"Tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of football and other sports (where appropriate) posed by spectator violence, other criminality and prohibited behaviour, and all kinds of intolerance and discrimination by:*

- *encouraging and supporting the football authorities and partner agencies to recognise the value of enhanced dialogue and communication between club supporter liaison officers (SLOs) and the football and public authorities through better understanding, awareness and implementation of established SLO good practices."*

Action Plan: The content within is based on discussions and observations undertaken during LIAISE project activities, in particular a programme of research exchange visits undertaken in 2019. It is recognised that there may be some misinterpretation in translation or explanation. It is also recognised that consideration of the recommended actions is the preserve of public and private entities in Portugal and that the suggestions are intended solely to aid discussion within and between the relevant agencies.

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For ease of reference, the seventeen recommendations are presented under five inter-related thematic headings:

- (i) developing the SLO concept in the Portugal;
- (ii) supporting the SLO role and network (as set out in the European Union Council Resolution Handbook on Police Liaison with Supporters¹);
- (iii) building trust and cooperation between SLOs and the police;
- (iv) facilitating the work of SLOs in the community; and
- (v) creating a managed, safe and secure environment in which SLOs can function effectively.

Each recommended action, or grouping of related recommendations, is accompanied by a summary explanation of its intended purpose.

¹ Adopted at the 3490th meeting of the Council of the European Union (JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS - HOME AFFAIRS ISSUES) held in Luxembourg on 13 October 2016. A copy can be obtained from the Council Register of publicly available documents (available in all the official languages of the EU) on <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/public-register/> by inserting the following document reference number 12792/16.

Theme 1. Developing the SLO Concept in Portugal

Recommendation One: the Portuguese Football Federation, Liga Portugal, Ministry of Culture (Youth and Sport), Ministry of Internal Administration, National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence, and other partner agencies to use their offices to promote and publicise the important role which SLOs can play in: helping to generate a positive spectator experience, preventing football related criminality and misbehaviour; facilitating more effective dialogue between the clubs, police and supporters; and promoting wider community interest in participating in the football experience.

Explanation: Under new legislation, professional football clubs in the top two leagues are required to have an SLO (or OLA as referred to in Portugal). The impact of this law is an influx of new SLOs, from a variety of backgrounds and mostly existing club employees, having to work and develop their role in isolation. In the circumstances, there is a clear need to maximise publicity and education of the role and develop an effective national network for training, experience exchange and peer support purposes. As the SLO concept is very much at an embryonic stage, it is equally important to set out a programme of actions designed to provide football clubs with a series of modest (in terms of cost) but essential aims and objectives designed to enable their SLOs to undertake all (or most) of their varied and demanding functions as effectively as possible.

However, the educational initiative proposed above should also be designed to raise awareness among public and private entities, football supporters, and the wider community, both at national and local level, regarding the important role which SLOs can play in respect of helping to generate a positive, safe and welcoming environment for all spectators and, importantly, in so doing, making the football experience more attractive to potential supporters in the community.

Theme 2 Supporting the SLO Role and Network

Recommendation Two: In circumstances where an SLO is appointed by a professional football club whilst also engaged in other club duties, the SLO to be allocated at least 50% of his or her time to SLO functions.

Recommendation Three: professional football clubs to provide their SLO with a comprehensive job description setting out their core functions based on those included in European guidance.

Recommendation Four: the proposed job description should be supplemented by a work plan for each SLO setting out annual objectives and an appraisal of what was achieved in the previous year and the reasons why any objectives were not fulfilled.

Recommendation Five: professional football clubs to provide their SLO with additional support personnel on match days either in a paid or voluntary capacity.

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Recommendation Six: professional football clubs to highlight in SLO job descriptions and annual objectives that their core role is to liaise with, and act on behalf of, all supporters, not just organised groups

Recommendation Seven: professional football clubs to provide their SLO with a direct channel of communication with senior club management.

Recommendation Eight: the Portuguese Football Federation to employ and resource the national SLO coordinator to develop the network and provide a series of training events.

Recommendation Nine: the Portuguese Football Federation to appoint and resource a national team SLO to undertake effectively their core SLO duties in respect of international matches at home and abroad.

Recommendation Ten: the Portuguese Football Federation to take full advantage of the SLO Education Programme available through the UEFA Academy by hosting an event in Portugal.

Explanation: as indicated above, these recommendations are intended to aid the development of an emerging SLO network by providing SLOs with the status, support and resources necessary to undertake effectively their extensive range of challenging functions as set out in European guidance, namely:

- acting as an interface and communicating between fans, security officers, stewards and the police, etc. before, during and after matches;
- providing detailed information for fans attending matches to facilitate match day travel and logistics and removing the potential for misunderstandings;
- providing input at security meetings before home games and high-risk away games;
- explaining the actions of fans to police and stewards and vice-versa to break down barriers and misconceptions;
- attending "concourse meetings" inside the stadium with club security officers, stewards and the police an hour or so before kick-off to evaluate the situation;
- working to prevent disorder by exerting a calming and de-escalating influence on fans and other stakeholders, mediating in conflict situations, and encouraging a positive supporter culture;
- attending debriefing meetings after matches;
- contributing to police training;
- participating in local sport and security committees, etc.
- building an effective communication structure with fans, clubs, security staff, police, local and national government, other SLOs, transport companies, etc.

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This represents an extremely demanding menu of strategic and operational activities, especially if an SLO is working in isolation, or is employed on a voluntary or part-time basis, or in a dual or multi-capacity by the club. Indeed, the task becomes almost impossible if an SLO is not provided with sufficient time, along with human and other resources, to deliver their core functions effectively. In addition, given the impact which a wide range of club policies and procedures can have on supporters, all SLOs should be provided with opportunity to make this impact clear to senior decision makers within the club.

It is important for clubs to recognise that whilst the absence of sufficient SLO time and resources is especially noticeable on match days, when SLO activities range from strategic liaison and information exchange with club, police and other contacts (where in place) to operational interaction with organised groups and, importantly, other supporters, it can also restrict the potential for SLOs to:

- work on an ongoing basis with supporters in promoting positive behaviour;
- identifying potential solutions to existing or emerging safety and security challenges/problems; and
- participating/facilitating/supporting football related projects and initiatives in local communities.

It should be made clear to clubs that failure to support their SLO in the manner outlined above will represent a lost opportunity for SLOs to play a pivotal role in making the football experience safe, secure and welcoming for all current and potential spectators.

Theme 3. Building Trust and Cooperation between SLOs and the Police.

Recommendation Eleven: the Portuguese Football Federation, Liga Portugal, Ministry of Internal Administration, National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence, and other partner agencies to jointly consider at national level how best to encourage and facilitate effective communication between the police and SLOs in each locality hosting professional football matches and to raise awareness of the mutual benefits for both sides.

Explanation: SLOs met during the LIAISE project visits were all aware that their role as the central link between police and supporters was of the utmost importance. They also recognised that they had to dispel any perception that SLOs are little more than quasi representatives of risk groups and/or, in some cases, apologists for unacceptable manifestations of supporter behaviour. Such perceptions are almost inevitable at an early stage of an SLO networks development, so it is important for SLOs to develop an ongoing dialogue with the police: one which is not limited to risk or conflict scenarios on match days. The reality is that the extent to which SLOs and the local police can develop effective lines of communication and mutual trust in good time will vary considerably. The aim of the

recommendation, therefore, is to provide a nationwide impetus and action designed to facilitate the process.

Recommendation Twelve: the Ministry of Internal Administration and National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence to encourage the police in all localities hosting professional football matches to proactively seek to engage with SLOs as a means for developing effective and trusted channels of communication.

Recommendation Thirteen: the Ministry of Internal Administration and the National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence to support the participation of SLOs in police operational planning and risk assessment processes.

Explanation: The Ministry of Internal Administration and the National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports should encourage or instruct the police in localities hosting professional football matches to designate a police contact with whom SLOs can liaise on a regular basis. In terms of pre-match planning, whilst some risk assessment and operational planning information will remain sensitive, and not for wider dissemination, police engagement with SLOs should help in assessing the mood, wishes and concerns of supporters and assist decision makers in developing and adopting operational strategies and tactics which are likely to be perceived by supporters as appropriate and proportionate.

Theme 4. Facilitating the Work of SLOs in the Community.

Recommendation Fourteen: SLOs, professional football clubs, police, and public and voluntary community groups to jointly explore the potential for providing funding to enable SLOs to work with local public and community agencies/groups in developing or expanding a range of social and fan projects designed to enhance community life and influence the behaviour of young supporters.

Recommendation Fifteen: SLOs, professional football clubs and public and voluntary community groups to jointly explore the scope for supporting the empowerment of disabled supporters through facilitating their active participation in the football experience.

Explanation: the two inter-related but distinctive recommendations above are based on LIAISE project discussions and observations which, amongst other things, highlighted some impressive local social/fan projects, involving football clubs and SLOs which appeared to be delivering successful results in demonstrating awareness of the importance of clubs and SLOs and supporters participating in social responsibility initiatives in order to:

- provide reassurance to local communities;
- build closer links between clubs, fans and local residents and businesses;
- counter any negative publicity regarding football and football fans in Portugal;

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- help dispel the potential allure among young supporters for participating in negative activity of risk and/or some ultra groups in Portugal;
- promote the role of SLOs in communities hosting professional football matches; and, importantly
- encourage passive and potential supporters to attend matches.

Theme 5. Creating a Safe and Secure Environment in which SLOs can Function Effectively

Recommendation Sixteen: the Ministry of Internal Administration, the National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence, the Portuguese Football Federation, and Liga Portugal to periodically review arrangements for ensuring that all spectator areas in all stadia hosting professional football matches in Portugal are managed effectively.

Explanation: in order to provide an operating climate in which SLOs can focus effectively on all of their wide ranging functions, the key governmental and football agencies should keep under review the current safety management arrangements in stadia hosting professional football matches to ensure that all spectator areas, including those areas where home and visiting risk groups gather, are managed effectively and consistently in all Portuguese football stadia. This is important as the intermediary role of SLOs is best and most safely undertaken in a managed environment. The role becomes almost impossible if lack of effective but proportionate crowd management has already exacerbated the potential for misunderstanding, conflict and unacceptable behaviour and, in some cases, conflict between supporters and clubs (and ultimately, in extremis, the police).

Recommendation Seventeen: the Ministry of Internal Administration, the National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence and police to periodically review whether the current exclusion arrangements are being uniformly implemented effectively, and in manner that will help transform behaviour and rehabilitate offenders.

Explanation: Whereas the criminal or administrative process is intended to penalise offenders, the principal aim of exclusion is to transform behaviour and rehabilitate the individuals concerned, in addition to deterring criminal and prohibited activity and preventing repeat offending. However, to be perceived by football supporters and the wider community as an appropriate and proportionate response to football related criminality, the exclusion process should be targeted and transparent. In reviewing the current exclusion options, consideration could also be given to providing incentives (such as early provisional removal of enforcement of the exclusion measure in exchange for continued positive behaviour) and/or participation in educational and social initiatives in the wider community.

The review should also recognise that targeted exclusion is widely perceived by supporters as being preferable to collective (indiscriminate) punishments which impact on supporters irrespective of whether or not they have engaged in any criminal or prohibited behaviour,

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particularly if accompanied by good communication with supporters and incentives designed to promote and facilitate positive behaviour.

In essence, maintaining a combination of effectively managed football stadia and an ethos of evidence-based targeted exclusion should:

- enhance the football experience generally for all supporters; and
- enable SLOs to undertake their varied tasks within a more positive and safer supporter environment.

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ANNEX

ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS: PORTUGAL			
Recommendation			
No	Recommendation	Accepted Yes or No	Action and Progress
Developing the SLO Concept in Portugal			
1	The Portuguese Football Federation, Liga Portugal, Ministry of Culture (Youth and Sport), Ministry of Internal Administration, National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence, and other partner agencies to use their offices to promote and publicise the important role which SLOs can play in helping to generate a positive spectator experience and help reduce football related criminality and misbehaviour, facilitating more effective dialogue between the clubs, police and supporters, and promoting wider community interest in participating in the football experience.		
Supporting the Delivery of SLO Functions			
2	In circumstances where an SLO is appointed by a professional football club whilst also engaged in other club duties, the SLO to be allocated at least 50% of his or her time to SLO functions.		
3	All professional football clubs to provide their SLO with a comprehensive job description setting out their core functions based on those included in European guidance		
4	The proposed job description should be supplemented by an annual work plan for each SLO setting out annual objectives and an appraisal of what was achieved in the previous year and the reasons why any objectives were not fulfilled.		
5	Professional football clubs to provide their SLO with additional support personnel on match days either in a paid or voluntary capacity.		
6	Professional football clubs to highlight in SLO job descriptions and annual objectives that their core role is to liaise with, and act on behalf of, all supporters, not just organised groups.		
7	Professional football clubs to provide their SLO with a direct channel of communication with senior club management.		
8	The Portuguese Football Federation to employ and resource the national SLO coordinator to develop the network and provide a series of training events.		
9	The Portuguese Football Federation to appoint and resource a national team SLO to undertake effectively their core SLO duties in respect of international matches at home and abroad.		

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10	The Portuguese Football Federation to take full advantage of the SLO Education Programme available through the UEFA Academy by hosting an event in Portugal.		
Building Trust and Cooperation between SLOs and the Police.			
11	The Portuguese Football Federation, Liga Portugal, Ministry of Internal Administration, National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence, and other partner agencies to jointly consider at national level how best to encourage and facilitate effective communication between the police and SLOs in each locality hosting professional football matches and to raise awareness of the mutual benefits for both sides.		
12	The Ministry of Internal Administration and National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence to encourage the police in all localities hosting professional football matches to proactively seek to engage with SLOs as a means for developing effective and trusted channels of communication.		
13	The Ministry of Internal Administration and the National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence to support the participation of SLOs in police operational planning and risk assessment processes.		
Facilitating the Work of SLOs in the Community.			
14	SLOs, professional football clubs, police, and public and voluntary community groups to jointly explore the potential for providing funding to enable SLOs to work with local public and community agencies/groups in developing or expanding a range of social and fan projects designed to enhance community life and influence the behaviour of young supporters.		
15	SLOs, professional football clubs and public and voluntary community groups to jointly explore the scope for supporting the empowerment of disabled supporters through facilitating their active participation in the football experience.		
Creating a Safe and Secure Environment in which SLOs can Function Effectively			
16	The Ministry of Internal Administration, the National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence, the Portuguese Football Federation, and Liga Portugal to periodically review arrangements for ensuring that all spectator areas in all stadia hosting professional football matches in Portugal are managed effectively.		

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17	The Ministry of Internal Administration, the National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sports Violence and police to periodically review whether the current exclusion arrangements are being uniformly implemented effectively, and in manner that will help transform behaviour and rehabilitate offenders.		