

# LIAISE+

A unique two-year collaborative partnership



Football Supporters Europe



AN SD EUROPE PROJECT SPONSORED BY



RESPECT



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Inside the stadium at Jagiellonia Bialystok for exchange visit 2.

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## Executive Summary

From the SD Europe perspective, the LIAISE project has been an unquestionable success. We have seen a lot of action during these two years and there is no doubt that the SLO role is now firmly on the agenda of all the key stakeholders, not only in the six partner countries but also in the wider European football community.

A wealth of knowledge has been shared among the participants in this project, and while each country faces its own challenges, the project has offered abundant opportunities for mutual learnings. The twelve exchange visits, for example, have broadened the horizons of everyone involved. Independent project evaluation by the Manchester-based research company Substance also helped to ensure the project achieved specific learning objectives according to a custom-designed needs analysis.

Most important for SD Europe is that the project will continue to live on beyond its end date, and the dedicated action plans for the six countries, formulated in association with SD Europe by one of Europe's leading football safety and security experts, will ensure this is the case. The LIAISE project has laid the foundations on which the participants can build their future SLO development strategies as part of an integrated multi-agency approach involving the football and public authorities as well as clubs and fans.

This project will also submit a proposed amendment to the EU Council Resolution on Police Liaison with Supporters (12792/16). This is a landmark development as we believe it is the first time a supporter organisation is driving EU policy to this extent. We are sure this amendment will enhance the dialogue between supporters and the public authorities by offering match commanders and senior police officers a complete set of tools for delivering an enhanced



matchday experience through the medium of the SLO.

For SD Europe the involvement of supporters in decision-making and dialogue is key and this project has achieved much to improve the dialogue between fans, national associations, leagues and the police. With this and other EU funded projects SD Europe has distributed over €400.000 to project partners over the years.

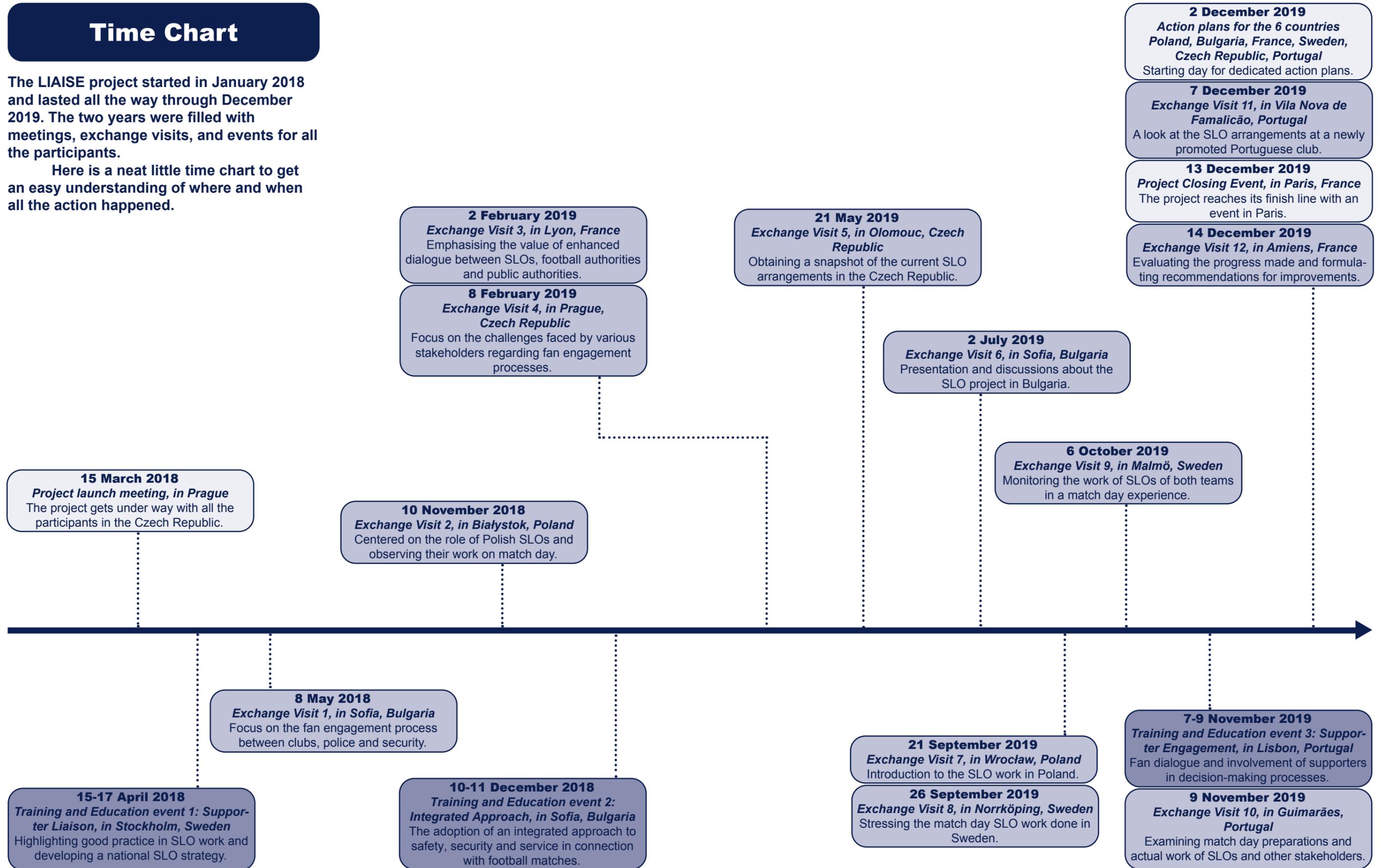
One final but important development is that the learnings from this project will also inform the new SLO education program run by SD Europe through the UEFA Academy, which is projected to launch 2020.

**Stuart Dykes**  
Head of SLO Development at SD Europe

# Time Chart

The LIAISE project started in January 2018 and lasted all the way through December 2019. The two years were filled with meetings, exchange visits, and events for all the participants.

Here is a neat little time chart to get an easy understanding of where and when all the action happened.



## Project Aim



At exchange visit 6 in Sofia, at Levski Sofia's stadium.

The **LIAISE project** ran for two years, a period when all the participating stakeholders took part in training events and exchange visits that focused on supporter liaison, the integrated safety, security and service approach at football matches, and supporter engagement. The project also resulted in the development of a collaborative partnership of national football bodies and supporter organisations in six European countries, a group that will continue to work together beyond the lifetime of this project.

The **project's aim** was high. SD Europe wanted to tackle the cross-border threat to the integrity of sport posed by spectator violence in football by encouraging the stakeholders to recognise the value of enhanced dialogue and communication between SLOs and the football and public authorities through better understanding, awareness and implementation of established SLO good practices.

The **approach was to** do this by providing training, education and practice-based learning exchanges to national football bodies and national and international supporter organisations, under the guidance of SD Europe, as recognised supporter liaison experts, UEFA, as co-funders, institutions such as the Pan-European Think Tank of Football Safety and Security Experts, and selected external facilitators and mentors.

**But this was not enough.** SD Europe wanted to see a project that lives on long after it has reached its official finishing line. Recommendations and future steps are crucial for the benefit of the sport. There will be action plans for each participating country, which will help all the stakeholders to promote the role of the SLO in the coming years.

## Project Participants



The **French Football Federation** was founded in 1919 and includes sports clubs whose main purpose or activity is to practise football. It is based in Paris and its duration is unlimited and the base can be transferred anywhere in Paris following a decision of the Executive Committee and to another city following a decision of the General Assembly.



The **Polish Football Association** is the national football association of Poland. It is a legal authority, the only legal representative of Polish football in Poland and abroad (as well as futsal and beach football), is based in Poland and operates according to its statute.



The **Portuguese Football Federation** is the governing body of football in Portugal. It was formed in 1914 and is based in the city of Oeiras. It oversees all aspects of the game of football in Portugal, both professional and amateur. It is also responsible for the management of the Portugal national football teams.



The **Swedish Football League** was founded in 1928 as a counterpart to the Swedish Football Association to represent the interests of the clubs. The Swedish Football League is an organisation that operates in the interests of all clubs in the top two divisions of Swedish football, Allsvenskan and Superettan.



Created in 2008, **Football Supporters Europe** is an independent, representative and democratically organised network of football fans in 48 countries. It acts upon issues such as ticketing, fan culture, discrimination and policing in football.



**L'Association Nationale des Supporters** represents over 15,000 French supporters, drawn from its membership of 38 different supporters clubs. It was formed in 2014 with the aim of bringing together as many active supporter groups as possible.



**Svenska Fotbollssupporterunionen** represents 42,000 Swedish supporters and club members, drawn from its membership of approximately 46 different supporters clubs. It was formed in 2008, and is a fully democratic, not-for-profit association.



**SD Europe** is a not-for-profit supporter organisation with national members from 16 countries across Europe. It works with member-run clubs and supporters groups across 40 countries, promoting supporter involvement in the running of their football clubs and national governing bodies and in the sustainable development of the game.



The **Bulgarian Football Union** is the national association of football clubs in Bulgaria. It was founded 1985 in Sofia, where it is still based today. It organises the Bulgarian football league system, which consists of 56 different divisions forming five levels of the Bulgarian football pyramid.



The **Czech Football League** is an organisation of professional clubs in the Czech Republic founded to raise the prestige of the Czech Republic's primary football competitions, the ePojisteni.cz League and the Fortuna National League. It represents the professional clubs of the Czech Republic. It was founded 2014 in Prague, where it is still based today.



The **French Football League** is the governing body that runs the major professional leagues in France. It was founded in 1944 and serves under the authority of the French Football Federation. It is headquartered in Paris. It is responsible for overseeing, organizing, and managing the top two leagues in France, Ligue 1, and Ligue 2.

## Project Activities

### Launch Meeting

**15 March 2018**

***Project launch meeting, in Prague***

The project got under way in the Czech Republic with all the participants taking part in discussions. Everything between budget, management, supporter involvement, legal framework and dissemination was debated. Before the launch meeting there had already been a flurry of activities: SD Europe had set up a website documenting the project, and, most importantly, a partner needs analysis had been fashioned.



*A tour round the stadium by the Bohemians Prague SLO, Martin Kurka, on exchange visit 4.*

### Training and Education Events

**15-17 April 2018**

***Training and Education event 1: Supporter Liaison, in Stockholm, Sweden***

The first training and education event was hosted by the Swedish Football League in Stockholm, with all the LIAISE partners participating, and comprised a mix of on-site match observation visits, discussion panels, presentations and workshops, all leading to the partners gaining a deeper understanding of the SLO role. There were discussions on good practice, role of the fan organisations, and how to develop a national strategy.

**10-11 December 2018**

***Training and Education event 2: Integrated Approach, in Sofia, Bulgaria***

In December 2018 the Bulgarian Football Union hosted the second workshop. Its aim was to promote the adoption of an integrated approach to safety, security and service in connection with football matches in the partner countries. This was done through the demonstration of the established good practices enshrined in the new Council of Europe Convention and the Standing Committee Recommendation (2015/1)

that accompanies the Convention. A particular focus was the interaction between the football and public authorities and SLOs as part of such an integrated approach.

**7-9 November 2019**

***Training and Education event 3: Supporter Engagement, in Lisbon, Portugal***

The third and final training and education event was arranged by the Portuguese Football Federation in November in Lisbon, and included sessions on involvement of supporters in decision-making processes, ways of increasing supporter participation, and discussions on the new UEFA/SLO Education Programme. There was also a lecture on new insights into football hooliganism by Dr Martha Newson, Centre for the Study of Social Cohesion, University of Oxford.

## Exchange Visits

*At the core of the LIAISE project lies the exchange visits. This really is learning hands-on, and absolutely vital to the experience. There were 12 exchange visits in all.*

**8 May 2018**

***Exchange Visit 1, in Sofia, Bulgaria***

The first exchange visit saw the Czech Football League visit the Bulgarian Football Union in Sofia. The visit was hosted by the Bulgarian Football Union's SLO coordinator and deputy general secretary, incorporated presentations about the SLO project in Bulgaria and attendance at the Bulgarian Cup final between Levski Sofia and Slavia Sofia, where there were participation in the pre-match organisation meeting and observation of matchday policing operations. It centred on the fan engagement process between clubs, police and security.



*Getting ready for the game in Bialystok.*

## 10 November 2018

### **Exchange Visit 2, in Białystok, Poland**

This visit was hosted by the Polish Football Association and saw representatives of the Bulgarian Football Union, the Czech Football League, the French Football Federation, the French National Supporters Association and Football Supporters Europe visit the city of Białystok in the northeast of the country. The exchange visit had two main focuses: to showcase the role of Polish supporter liaison officers and observe their work at the Ekstraklasa game between Jagiellonia Białystok and Lech Poznań, and to present the network of Polish fan projects under the Supporters United programme.

## 2 February 2019

### **Exchange Visit 3, in Lyon, France**

The French LIAISE project partners (the French Football League, the French Football Federation and L'Association Nationale des Supporters) received a Swedish delegation, composed of the Swedish Football League, Svenska Fotbollssupporterunionen and Swedish SLOs. This visit was held in Lyon in the French Ligue 1 game between Olympique Lyonnais and Paris Saint-Germain. The participants shadowed both SLOs in performing their functions, and a positive assessment was made about recent evolutions of French SLOs towards a more frequent and qualitative dialogue between all French stakeholders.

## 8 February 2019

### **Exchange Visit 4, in Prague, Czech Republic**

The Polish Football Association visited Czech Football League in early 2019. The delegation attended four different football fixtures over three days (among them the Prague derby between Sparta Prague and Bohemians Prague 1905), having the opportunity to observe police operations and activities performed by SLOs. The visit created the context for exchanging information, good practice and lessons learned among the delegation members.

## 21 May 2019

### **Exchange Visit 5, in Olomouc, Czech Republic**

The Bulgarian Football Union and Polish Football Association travelled to the Czech Republic



*The Slavia Prague fans arriving for the cup final at the Andruv Stadium in Olomouc.*

to watch the Czech Cup final between Banik Ostrava and Slavia Prague held at the Andruv Stadium in Olomouc. The primary aim of this visit was to obtain a snapshot of the current SLO arrangements in the Czech Republic, but also to share SLO experiences and good practices, and furthermore to identify any wider issues associated with pan-European application of the SLO concept.

## 2 July 2019

### **Exchange Visit 6, in Sofia, Bulgaria**

The Polish Football Association came to Bulgaria during the summer of 2019 for the Bulgarian Super Cup. The visit included meetings with competent representatives of the Bulgarian Football Union, SLO representatives of the football clubs Slavia Sofia, Lokomotiv Plovdiv and Ludogorets Razgrad, representatives of the football club Levski Sofia, as well as other stakeholders. A huge amount of information was gathered from the visited officials, and a lot of lessons were learned.



*The participants of the exchange visit in Guimarães listening intently at the pre-game meeting.*

## 21 September 2019

### **Exchange Visit 7, in Wrocław, Poland**

The Swedish Football League and Svenska Fotbollssupporterunionen came to Wrocław for an introduction to the SLO work in Poland. The participants took part in the match day organisational meeting (together with the match delegate, the security manager, the SLOs, the police, and other stakeholders). Before and during the game, Śląsk Wrocław versus Zagłębie Lubin, they shadowed the work of the SLOs and the security manager.

## 26 September 2019

### **Exchange Visit 8, in Norrköping, Sweden**

Late September saw the Czech Football League and the Portuguese Football Federation visit the Swedish Football League for a game in the Swedish Allsvenskan between IFK Norrköping and AFC Eskilstuna. There was a presentation about the SLO work in Sweden as well as meetings with delegates, security managers, police, and other stakeholders.

## 6 October 2019

### **Exchange Visit 9, in Malmö, Sweden**

The Polish Football Association together with the French project partners (the French Football League, the French Football Federation and L'Association Nationale des Supporters) came to the south of Sweden in October for the game between Malmö FF and IFK Göteborg. There was a full day of shadowing the SLOs work in connection with the travelling away fans, from their arrival by train until they left the city.

## 9 November 2019

### **Exchange Visit 10, in Guimarães, Portugal**

The Portuguese Football Federation welcomed the French Football League and the Bulgarian Football Union to the north of Portugal and the derby between Vitoria Guimarães and Sporting Braga. The participants took part in the pre-game meeting where all the different stakeholders (club representatives, SLOs, the police, etc) had a say. During the game it was also possible to visit the control room, and follow the police work up close.

## 7 December 2019

### **Exchange Visit 11, in Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal**

In December there was a look at the SLO arrangements at the newly promoted Portuguese club Famalicão. The Portuguese Football Federation welcomed Swedish participants for the game between Famalicão and Tondela, and meetings with SLOs, security forces and the police.

## 14 December 2019

### **Exchange Visit 12, in Amiens, France**

The last exchange visit, moved by the intensive strikes in France, took part in Amiens in the north of France in December. The Polish Football Association visited the French partners for the game between Amiens and Dijon, and for an evaluation of the progress made and formulating recommendations for improvements.

## Closing Event

## 13 December 2019

### **Project Closing Event, in Paris, France**

All the participating countries came to Paris in December to close the book on the LIAISE project. The final report was presented and policy recommendations based on the findings from the training program and the exchange visits were given. This public roundtable event showcased the partner activities and was attended by like-minded organisations from the participating countries and beyond.

*The LIAISE project has created lots of learnings and outcomes for its participants. The way it has built greater awareness of the SLO role amongst all stakeholders is one of the key results, as well as the professionalisation of the SLO work in Europe. But there's more. Here are seven important outcomes that have highlighted the importance of the SLO role within the European football scene.*

## 1. Raised awareness

The LIAISE project has helped to address the problem of spectator violence in sport through improved cooperation between club supporter liaison officers and the football and public authorities. LIAISE has given everyone a much better insight into the situation in each of the six partner countries, and that is already informing the work across the rest of Europe. The relationships developed during the project will continue to bear fruit long after it ends. The project has also fostered a better appreciation among participants of the need for all stakeholders to work together in an integrated approach.

## 2. Cultural exchange

Each country faces its own challenges but there are also many similarities, and this realisation has allowed the project's partners to learn from each other's situation and the solutions they are developing to plug the gaps in the work. The LIAISE project has built connections across Europe in ways that are unprecedented. It has also produced concrete developments that can

be implemented in and around the stadiums that could improve the fan experience.

## 3. Consolidation of the SLO role

One key outcome of the LIAISE project has been the consolidation of the SLO role all over Europe. It is beyond doubt that all the participating stakeholders are committed. We are also certain that the partners will continue to develop the project learnings as part of their overall supporter engagement strategies in the future. The project has contributed to the creation of a solid SLO network in Europe.

## 4. New projects

Following the discussions at the workshops and the training and education events, we hope to see follow-up projects in individual partner countries under the guidance of SD Europe. The experience has highlighted potential for a second LIAISE-style project in a related area of work that will tie into the main intellectual output, the proposed amendment to the EU Council Handbook on Police Liaison with Supporters.



The Banik Ostrava fans before the Czech Cup final against Slavia Prague at exchange visit 4.

## 5. Action plans

It is essential that the project has an impact beyond the partner organisations and the life of the project. The dedicated action plans for each country will guarantee that every partner gets an end product that matches the situation and the needs of the country concerned. They were prepared by David Bohannon of the EU Think Tank of Football Safety and Security Experts, with the support of SD Europe, and will formulate a strategy for developing the SLO work within the different countries.

## 6. EU Handbook

The project will also produce an SLO-specific amendment to the EU Handbook on Police Liaison with Supporters (12792/16), that will deliver long-term, meaningful impact beyond the life of the LIAISE project. It will expand upon the exis-

ting handbook content relating to the role SLOs can play in the dialogue between supporters and the football and public authorities and in contributing to a reduction in spectator-related disorder.

## 7. Dissemination

Thousands of social media posts from all the participating partners, lots of stuff on SD Europe's own dedicated website, plus a stream of feedback and thoughts from stakeholders close to the project's football agencies. A big point has been made to disseminate all the learnings and outcomes from the events over the two years throughout SD Europe's growing network of clubs and supporter organisations, national football bodies, member state governments and other interested stakeholders in 40+ countries.

*The LIAISE project ran for two years, but a key objective the whole time was to build a legacy that will last much longer. Starting in December 2019 there are now action plans for each of the six participating countries, taking the training events and exchange visits into account. These future steps are crucial, as SD Europe wants to strengthen the improve co-operation between club supporter liaison officers and the football and public authorities.*



Participants at third workshop hosted by the Portuguese Football Federation at Soccer City in Lisbon.

### SWEDEN

Sweden is looking for the outside perspective. The action plan will include external experts' thoughts on how to proceed to empower the SLO role. There will also be a pledge to create an even stronger bond with the supporters and find ways to collaborate more in the daily work. Kaveh Sarvari, B2C & Events and SLO Coordinator at the Swedish League, concludes: "We gained a greater understanding why the role is important for fan dialogue and the atmosphere in and around our stadiums".

### FRANCE

France is looking to confirm all the positive actions and also to tackle the areas where they have to improve and move forward in priority. "The obvious overall outcome from the LIAISE project is that it helped us to develop the SLO role throughout our 40 clubs. It gave us examples on how to prove its decisive position in clubs, on how to train and help them on a daily basis", notes Maël Garde Provansal, Supporterism Project Manager at the French Football League.

### POLAND

In Poland they will use the action plan to convince everyone that further work is needed to bring positive effects for all stakeholders involved in match organisation. The Polish FA would like to develop the cooperation with all entities to improve the current situation. Jakub Nowakowski, Event Organisation, Safety and Infrastructure Department at the Polish Football Association, wants "a document that allows us to indicate paths of action for the association authorities, football clubs and SLOs".

### PORTUGAL

For Portugal the consolidation of the SLO role has been the most important outcome. In the dedicated action plan there will be pressure on that and on the development of the SLO role and how to overcome its obstacles. Jorge Silveiro, SLO Coordinator for Portuguese Football, points out the exchange visits as particularly essential to the learning experience: "To see how other Football Associations solved the problems and how the SLO worked was the key".

### BULGARIA

In Bulgaria there will be talks about recommendations for improving the liaison between all the stakeholders, and especially with the supporters. Implementation of the good practices learned is also on the table. And one shouldn't underestimate the role of the exchange visits as a way to expand the field of partners: "I got useful personal contacts with experienced colleagues in other countries", says Dimitar Christov, SLO Coordinator at the Bulgarian Football Union.

### CZECH REPUBLIC

For the Czech Republic the coordination, training and evaluation on the national level will be very important for improving the work of the SLOs. The LIAISE project was an important and inspiring experience helping to lay the necessary foundation for the improvement of the SLO work. Tomáš Čarnogurský, SLO coordinator at the Czech Football League, sums it up: "The action plan should help us introduce, explain, prepare, implement and later also evaluate the specific steps to be taken in the next years in order to improve the status quo".

## Thank you!

So many people have played a part in LIAISE over the last two years, it would be impossible for reasons of space to name them all here. Nothing would have been possible without the project partners and their staff, of course. Or the dozens of club and association officials, SLOs, fans, police officers and other experts, who patiently answered all our questions during the 12 exchange visits or presented at our workshops. Or the SD Europe team and board members, who backed us all the way. SD Europe would like to thank UEFA, of course, for co-funding another of our Erasmus+ projects. Many thanks go to Adam Brown of Substance for the valuable project evaluation.

We would also like to thank all our external experts, who produced superb visit reports for us free of charge: JP Taylor (Celtic FC), Anton Cernat (NFIP Romania), David Lerch (NFIP Switzerland), Martin Schlosser (NFIP Austria), Niamh O'Mahony (Irish Supporters Network) and Thomas Kirschner (FC Schalke 04). Tony Ernst and Ola Nilsson did a great job producing this report, many thanks for that. And last but not least, special thanks go to David Bohannon of the European Think Tank of Football Safety and Security Experts, who not only produced visit reports for us but also the dedicated action plans for each country and the draft amendment to the EU Council Resolution on Police Liaison with Supporters.

**LIAISE** is a unique two-year collaborative partnership that brings together supporters, football associations, football leagues and stakeholders including Uefa and the EU Think Tank of Football Safety and Security Experts for the first time.

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More information on the LIAISE project can be found on:  
[www.sdeurope.eu/liaise](http://www.sdeurope.eu/liaise)

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