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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 20 September 2017
To: Experts for major sports events (Law Enforcement Working Party)
Subject: Summary of discussions

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Group of Experts for major sports events adopted the agenda, as set out in CM 4023/17.

2. Presentation of the Presidency's Programme

In its presentation, the Presidency first introduced Estonia as a country, together with its values and most notable features. Concerning the priorities of the Presidency, the Chair of the meeting mentioned open and innovative European economy, digital Europe and the free movement of data, Inclusive and sustainable Europe and safe and secure Europe. Since the expert group acts in a specific area of law enforcement, the Presidency puts a particular focus on the safety and security aspects.

3. Priorities of the forthcoming Presidencies

The incoming Bulgarian Presidency presented its priorities for the first semester of 2018, which include preventing and countering the use of pyrotechnics in stadia and updating Council Decision 2002/348/JHA concerning security in connection with football matches with an international dimension.

The Bulgarian delegation emphasized that according to recent scientific research, no safe use of pyrotechnics in stadia is possible. On that basis, the upcoming Bulgarian Presidency intends to prepare the adoption of a Council Resolution addressing this phenomenon.

The incoming Bulgarian Presidency considers Council Decision 2002/348 it needs to be updated in order for it to

- provide a legal basis for those Member States opting to expand their NFIPs to cover other international sports events than football,
- become consistent with new Council of Europe Convention on an integrated safety, security and service approach at football matches and other sports events, and
- reflect current dynamics and established key safety and security principles from a policing football perspective.

Subsequently, the Austrian delegation briefly indicated that during the second half of 2018 it intends to build on the priorities set by the Bulgarian Presidency.

4. Safety arrangements in ensuring safety and security during major sports events in Estonia

A representative of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB), acting as a match commander in major sports events, made a presentation on the above topic. Following a general presentation of the administrative structure and missions of the PBGB, he focused on the main sporting events that the PBGB had to secure: qualification matches for the next FIFA World Cup (2018), ice hockey matches between Dynamo Riga and teams from the Kontinental Hockey League, and the Tallinn Marathon with 25 000 participants. Concerning future events, the PBGB is already actively preparing to secure the UEFA Supercup 2018, which will take place in the A. Le Coq Arena in Tallinn.

5. Overview of the activities of the Pan-European Think Tank of Football Safety and Security Experts

Based on document 12146/17, the Chair of the Think Tank presented the main achievements in the implementation of the 2017 Work Programme.

The Chair also sought clarifications from the GSC as to the status of two Council Resolutions from 2016 which, unlike the Council Resolution containing the updated EU Football Handbook, have not been published in the Official Journal of the EU:

- Council Resolution concerning the costs of hosting and deploying visiting police delegations in connection with football matches (and other sports events) with an international dimension, in which at least one Member State is involved (12791/16), and
- Council Resolution concerning a handbook with recommendations for preventing and managing violence and disturbances in connection with football matches with an international dimension, in which at least one Member State is involved, through the adoption of good practice in respect of police liaison with supporters.

The GSC explained that the publication of these documents in the "C" series of the Official Journal is not mandatory and has no impact on the validity of the documents, which have been formally adopted by the Council and are publicly available in the Council register.

6. Report on the joint annual UEFA-EU Stadium and Security Conference in Munich on 6-8 September 2017

In a summary presentation, the Chair of the Think Tank indicated the Conference could be described as a success and had been well organized.

7. Preparation for the FIFA World Cup 2018 in the Russian Federation and feedback on the safety and security arrangements at the Confederations Cup 2017

The German delegation indicated that it had received very positive feedback on the quality of arrangements at the Confederations Cup, despite not attending themselves.

The UK representative has attended the event personally and confirmed the above, while pointing out a number of relevant aspects to be addressed or taken into account for the FIFA World cup 2018:

- at the Confederations Cup, nearly all the spectators were Russian nationals - a different and probably more tense crowd dynamic is to be expected at the World Cup, as large groups of spectators from different countries will be present in stadia during matches of their teams;
- the use of English is still a challenge for some of the volunteers providing guidance to the visiting spectators;
- some of the host cities are very well equipped and have a lot of experience with large sports events (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Sochi), but for others such a large scale event might prove to be a challenge.

The Chair of the Think Tank mentioned that Russia has an active NFIP and consistently shows a lot of openness towards European experience with large scale sporting events.

8. UEFA EURO 2020 – international police cooperation

The Vice-chair of the Think Tank indicated that relevant representatives of the Council of Europe, UEFA and host countries were already undertaking study visits to the host cities of the event.

He welcomed the intention of the upcoming Bulgarian Presidency to revise the Council Decision 2002/348 and reminded that the 3rd meeting of the Working Group EURO 2020 would take place in Strasbourg on 4 December 2017.

9. Police training

9.1. Pan-European Football Policing Training Project (PE – FPTP)

The Chair of the Think Tank made a presentation on the Training 2017 organized by CEPOL in partnership with the Think Tank, which gathered 48 practitioners in Sofia from 11 to 15 September 2017.

He regretted that many participants did not take a very active part in the discussions and pointed out that for a number of them, English as the language of the course seemed to be a challenge. He added that on the other hand, others might have been chosen to participate mainly because of their knowledge of English, but were not necessarily their countries' main practitioners in the field of major sports events, which also hindered efficient exchange. He also indicated that more focus should be put on "train the trainers" programs in the future, as the practitioners to be trained in the Member States are often replaced by others.

The representative of CEPOL replied that the training had reached a very high satisfaction rate amongst its participants and was considered useful, which was immediately corroborated by the intervention of the UK representative.

CEPOL also indicated that an equivalent funding allocation (65 000 euros) is prepared for the same type of training next year and that candidate countries could submit ground applications to host it until 26 October 2017.

9.2. ProS4+ National Police Training events

The Chair of the Think Tank indicated that national training organized within this program has the advantage of being tailored to a specific national environment, which is very beneficial, since policing mass events does not allow for any harmonization across the EU.

Germany indicated it would like to consult previous organizers on the preparation of such training events, in order to gather useful advice for a potential event in Germany. The Vice-chair of the Think Tank intervened to reply that countries interested in organizing an event were encouraged to send observers to current organizers.

10. NFIP network

In his presentation, the Vice Chair of the Think Tank indicated that the new website should become operational in the first semester of 2018. He also mentioned that the issue of the Think Tank's secretariat and its legal personality was being addressed at this moment. The Chair of the Think Tank intervened to reply that the secretariat would be registered in Germany.

11. Council of Europe (CoE) instruments and relating matters

The main information under this point related to the Council of Europe's Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events. Since Poland had ratified the Convention recently as the third country to do so (after France and Monaco), the Convention will enter into force on the 1st of November 2017. The Vice Chair of the Think Tank reminded the delegations that until full ratification, every participating state maintains a status of simple observer to the Convention.

12. Pyrotechnics in stadia

The Chair of the Think Tank presented the findings of a Health and Safety Study, according to which no safe use of pyrotechnics was possible in stadia during sports events.

He mentioned that during its upcoming meeting in Cyprus, the Think Tank would strive to draft a new manual to a multi-agency approach to this issue.

It was also mentioned that any strategy involving restrictions for the spectators had to be considered reasonable and proportionate by them, at the risk of being ineffective otherwise.

13. Any other business

Under this point, the Vice-chair of the Think Tank reminded the delegations that the time-limit for registrations to the abovementioned upcoming meeting in Cyprus was 25 September 2017.
