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SAFER

(Support & Awareness for Female fans in European football
through Research, prevention, and remedy)

A Handbook on Project Outcomes and Good Practice Recommendations



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Research, prevention, and remedy) - A Handbook on Project Outcomes and
Good Practice Recommendations**

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Foreword

by Football Supporters Europe

Football is one of the most powerful cultural forces in Europe. It brings people together across borders, languages, and generations. But the same spaces that unite us can also reproduce – and even amplify – the inequalities, biases and violence that exist in society at large. For many supporters, and especially for women and LGBT+ fans, a stadium can be a space of risk, exposure, or exclusion – when it should be one of joy, community and belonging.

The real risks faced by fans

Throughout Europe, female fans continue to encounter multiple forms of gender-based violence:

- Physical violence, whether between supporters, from security personnel, or during excessive use of force by police.
- Psychological violence, including harassment, intimidation, or discrimination.
- Institutional violence, through invasive body searches, inconsistent enforcement of regulations, poor and/or missing infrastructure, or lack of accessible reporting mechanisms.
- Symbolic and structural violence, embedded in a culture that normalises sexist or homophobic behaviours.

No fan should ever have to choose between supporting their team and preserving their integrity. Yet too many do. Reports of sexual assaults, invasive and gender-insensitive body searches, or gender-based discrimination continue to surface across European competitions.

Learning from others: the human-rights approach

In responding to these challenges, we have drawn inspiration from the Sport & Rights Alliance (SRA), a coalition that has transformed the global conversation

about human rights in sport. By centring the experience of athletes, the SRA has demonstrated that safeguarding and remedy are not optional add-ons – they are fundamental responsibilities for any organisation and any competition organisers.

Football Supporters Europe has adopted this logic for the supporter community. Fans, like athletes, are stakeholders in sport – and must be treated as such. Just as the SRA's work has helped to establish prevention and remedy mechanisms for athletes, so too must we ensure that supporters have access to safe, trusted systems of protection and accountability.

The SAFER project embodies this belief. Through research, fieldwork, and cooperation between fans, clubs, federations, and expert organisations, we are building an evidence-based framework that recognises the complexity of fan experience and addresses it with compassion and expertise.

Three pillars of safeguarding

A comprehensive response must rest on three pillars:

- 1. Prevention** – anticipating risks before they escalate, through education, awareness and training. This means equipping stewards, club staff and security forces with gender-sensitive and human-rights-based approaches to good hosting principles and crowd management. It also means tackling the root causes of gender-based violence and discrimination within supporter culture itself.
- 2. Protection** – ensuring that when fans are in or around stadiums, they are treated with respect and fairness. Policies must make clear that safety cannot come at the cost of dignity. Searches and surveillance practices must be proportionate, transparent and respectful of personal integrity.
- 3. Remedy** – creating clear, confidential and independent pathways for fans to report abuse, harassment or violence. Remedy mechanisms should offer psychological support, ensure accountability, and communicate outcomes to restore trust. Too often, supporters who experience harm are left with no channel to seek justice. That must change.

A shared vision for safer football

The SAFER project offers a blueprint for transformation. Its recommendations are not abstract: they are built from the lived experiences of hundreds of supporters, researchers and practitioners across Europe. They recognise that every stakeholder – from supporters and clubs to law enforcement and governing bodies – holds a piece of the puzzle.

Change requires humility, persistence, and cooperation. It requires security services to view fans not as threats but as partners; for clubs and competition organisers to embed safeguarding in every policy, not only as a legal obligation but as a moral commitment; and for fans to ensure that our stands are inclusive, respectful, and free from discrimination.

Moving forward together

This handbook is not a conclusion but a beginning: an invitation to learn, to act, and to listen. Its purpose is to build understanding, inspire reform, and create the conditions for meaningful, lasting change.

On behalf of Football Supporters Europe, I thank all our SAFER partners, our research teams, and above all, the countless fans who shared their stories – you have made this work possible.

Let us continue to build a future in which football is not only the world's most popular sport, but also its most welcoming. Where every supporter – regardless of gender, origin, or identity – can enter a stadium feeling safe, respected, and free to celebrate.



Ronan Evain

Executive Director

Football Supporters Europe



Context

Attending live sporting events has been demonstrated to increase spectators' perceptions of life satisfaction,¹ happiness,² wellbeing, and the likelihood of taking part in sport as an athlete.³ This is due not only to the emotional and inspiring experiences of watching incredible athletes perform, but also to the social interaction and sense of community sport provides. However, attending sporting events, particularly in football stadiums, can also involve negative experiences such as abuse, harassment, racism, and other forms of violence and discrimination, which may have serious impacts on vulnerable groups, including children.

¹Inoue Y, Sato M, Filo K, Du J, Funk D. (2017). Sport Spectatorship and Life Satisfaction: A Multi-Country Investigation. *Journal of Sport Management*. 31. 1-40. 10.1123/jsm.2016-0295. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316614895_Sport_Spectatorship_and_Life_Satisfaction_A_Multi-Country_Investigation

²Guo J, Yang H, Zhang X. (2024). How watching sports events empowers people's sense of wellbeing? The role of chain mediation in social interaction and emotional experience. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 15. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1471658/full>

³Ramchandani G, Coleman R & Millar R. (2019). The Perceived Influence of Sport Event Spectatorship on Subjective Wellbeing. *Journal of Global Sport Management*. 7. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336167052_The_Perceived_Influence_of_Sport_Event_Spectatorship_on_Subjective_Wellbeing

Worldwide, up to one billion children between two and 17 years old are victims of physical, sexual, emotional or multiple types of Interpersonal Violence (IV).⁴ The 2024 IOC Consensus Statement on IV and Safeguarding in Sport, which aligns with the World Health Organization's typology of violence, defines IV as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation."⁵ Violence against children (which includes discrimination and online abuse) can be perpetrated by parents, caregivers, peers, partners, strangers or authority figures (such as coaches or police officers) and particularly affects minority groups, including LGBTI+, BIPOC, children with disabilities, child migrants and those with refugee backgrounds, and from diverse religious backgrounds. Experiencing violence in childhood, both inside and outside sports, causes severe harm to children, families and communities and can have negative lifelong impacts on a person's health and wellbeing.⁶⁷

The prevalence of IV in sports is alarming, with estimates ranging from 4% to 79% across different types of IV. One recent retrospective study across six European countries found around three quarters of adult respondents said they had at least one experience of IV inside sport before the age of 18.⁸ The world of football is not spared from this phenomenon. Football is an environment in which hypermasculinity prevails, often excluding women, BIPOC and LGBTI+ populations or hampering their participation and enjoyment in all aspects of the sport.⁹

⁴Hills S, Mercy J, Amobi A, Kress H. "Global prevalence of past-year violence against children: a systematic review and minimum estimates," *Pediatrics* 137, no. 3 (March 2016). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2015-4079>.

⁵Tuakli-Wosornu YA, Burrows K, Fasting K, et al "IOC consensus statement: interpersonal violence and safeguarding in sport" *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 2024; 58:1322-1344, p. 1326. <https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/58/22/1322>

⁶Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2019). Long-term consequences of child abuse and neglect. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.

⁷Vertommen T, Kampen J, Veldhoven NS, et al. "Long-term Consequences of Interpersonal Violence Against Children in Sport." *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 2017;51:405. <https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/51/4/405.1.citation-tools>

⁸Vertommen, T., Sølvsberg, N., Lang, M., & Kampen, J. K. (2024). "Are some sports riskier than others? An investigation into child athlete experiences of interpersonal violence in relation to sport type and gender." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902241290576>.

⁹Magrath, R. (2017). "Footballing masculinities: The changing nature of the football academy." In: D. Kilvington, & J. Price (Eds.), *Sport and discrimination* (pp. 109–121). London, New York: Routledge.

Within the context of European sport, a recent retrospective study, involving a convenience sample of 9,989 adults reporting their experiences as children across six European countries, found around three quarters of respondents reported having had at least one experience of IV inside sport before the age of 18.¹⁰ Psychological violence was the most reported type of IV (65%), followed by physical (44%), neglect (37%) and sexual (20%). Additionally, the research showed that the majority of respondents who experienced some type of IV did not disclose their most severe experience. With regards to the perpetrator profile, while peers are the most common perpetrators, children are also victimized by adults and they are often someone known by the child.

Recent projects from Football Supporters Europe (FSE) “Fan.Tastic Females – Football Her.Story” (since 2018) and the Erasmus+ funded “OUT! - Fighting Homophobia and Empowering LGBT+ Stakeholders in Football” (2019 – 2020) examined violence against women and LGBT+ fans and found that gender-based violence does not stop at the stadium gates and can be perpetrated both by other fans and match stewards such as police officers, private security and other staff members. According to FSE’s previous research on the matter, football matches represent a high-risk male-dominated environment, in which unwanted sexual advances and other forms of gender-based violence can occur.

A survey published in 2019 by a coalition of German supporters’ organisations (Unsere Kurve, F_in –Frauen im Fußball and Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Fanprojekte) showed that there was a demand from supporters’ groups for further activities in this field. With over 130 responses from supporters’ groups representing over 30 German clubs (from elite to regional football), it is to date one of the most important research projects into gender-based violence in football stadiums.

¹⁰ Vertommen, T., Sølberg, N., Lang, M., & Kampen, J. K. (2024). Are some sports riskier than others? An investigation into child athlete experiences of interpersonal violence in relation to sport type and gender. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902241290576>.

The study's key recommendations were centered around four pillars:

- Clubs and football associations have a responsibility in ensuring the safety of all spectators.
- Stewards and other staff deployed on match day must receive dedicated training on gender- based violence.
- Collective action is key to fighting sexism and gender-based violence.
- All stakeholders and affected parties must work together to develop action plans to address gender-based violence, at local and national levels.

Sport Governing Bodies' Responses

Following sustained survivor-led campaigns and a growing body of evidence, sport governing bodies have finally begun to develop safeguarding policies and safe sport programs. In 2023 the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced a \$10million fund to strengthen safe sport and create a working group to coordinate the Olympic Movement safeguarding efforts.¹¹ At the UEFA 2024 EURO Championship in Germany, UEFA implemented a child and youth protection policy, which included dedicated safeguarding officers responsible for conducting a specific child risk assessment, as well as reporting and escalation processes.¹² Sport governing bodies have taken steps towards safeguarding in sports, but there is still much to be done to ensure policies are effectively implemented.

¹¹ See here (March 2023): <https://www.olympics.com/ioc/news/ioc-announces-usd-10-million-fund-to-strengthen-safe-sport>

¹² UEFA, Environmental, Social, Governance Report: Post-event assessment (November 2024): www.uefa.com/euro2024/media/news/0293-1c3aa0237fb8-cbccf668506c-1000-uefa-euro-2024-champions-sustainability-and-social-respon/

Safeguarding Principles

To create and sustain a proactive, trauma-informed approach to safeguarding based on human rights, anti-oppressive, anti-racist and feminist values, the interrelated safeguarding principles should be taken into account:

- **Context:** Safeguarding issues emerge in the context of historically reinforced systems of power, oppression and inequality, which are experienced by individuals and groups differently based on their intersectional identities.
- **Participatory:** People most affected by safeguarding, or the lack of it, should be central to defining, developing and measuring safeguarding practices and procedures.
- **Collective Responsibility:** Different actors share the responsibility for education, prevention and response related to safeguarding. We acknowledge that organisations, institutions and people in positions of power and with greater access to resources should be accountable for shouldering more responsibility.
- **Equitable Relationships:** Acknowledge the power dynamics and inequities that exist between individuals, organisations and other stakeholders.
- **Beyond Compliance:** Striving for compliance with safeguarding requirements is typically inadequate to truly create meaningful and sustainable change. While strengthening compliance mechanisms is important, safeguarding needs to be addressed more holistically, including through challenging complex issues related to power, organisational culture and mindset, and underlying social and gender norms.
- **Safeguarding Journey:** Safeguarding is a journey and all organisations are at various points in their journeys.
- **Safeguarding Spectrum:** Safeguarding should not only address the most explicit safety violations such as violence, exploitation and abuse, but also the daily experiences of discrimination, harassment, exclusion and other minor aggressions. A safeguarding mindset, together with appropriate systems and procedures, should be in place to deal with the whole spectrum of possible safeguarding concerns.
- **Holistic Wellbeing:** Recognise potential psychological hazards and prioritise a trauma-informed approach, harm reduction principles and ethics of care.

Summary of the SAFER Research Report

1. The first research into gender-based violence within European football fandom

Football fandom represents a significant socio-cultural sphere where collective identities are forged and expressed. However, this environment has historically been characterised by a pronounced hypermasculinity, which can marginalise women and LGBT+ individuals and foster a context where gender-based violence (GBV) is perpetuated. Prior to the SAFER project, a comprehensive, Europe-wide understanding of this phenomenon's scale and nature was absent.

This report delineates the findings of the SAFER project, the first systematic, mixed-methods investigation into GBV within European football fandom. The research integrates quantitative data from 884 survey respondents across nine countries with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews with fans and experts. The objective is to move beyond mere quantification to elucidate the mechanisms and experiences of violence, thereby providing an evidence base for the development of effective preventative and remedial interventions.

For the purpose of this research, GBV is conceptualised broadly, encompassing not only physical acts but also psychological harm, sexual assault, online abuse, and structural forms of violence such as exclusion and the non-acknowledgement of one's legitimacy as a fan.

What is Gender-Based Violence in this context?

- **Physical violence:** Hitting, shoving, or any act that causes pain.
- **Psychological violence:** Threats, intimidation, humiliation, stalking, and sexist remarks.
- **Sexual violence:** Unwanted touching, groping, and sexual assault.
- **Online violence:** Cyberstalking, online hate speech, and sharing intimate images without consent.
- **Exclusion and lack of acknowledgement:** Being ignored, having your contributions as a fan dismissed, or being left out of fan activities because of your gender or identity.

2. Key findings from the survey

The research involved a large survey with 884 fans. Here's a profile of who participated and what they perceived:

- **Who responded?** The survey intentionally reached out to those most affected, so 75% of respondents were women, with smaller groups of non-binary and LGBT+ fans. They were predominantly match-going fans and came from all age groups and educational backgrounds.
- **A widespread feeling of discrimination:** Fans clearly see a problem. A large majority believe that **LGBT+ fans and female fans face discrimination** within fan culture.
- **Rejecting abusive „traditions“:** There is a strong consensus among fans that homophobic and sexist chants are unacceptable. Over 85% of fans disagree that such chants should be protected as „fan tradition“ and should not be criticised. An overwhelming 90% reject the idea that it's acceptable to insult male rivals by comparing them to women or gay men.

The scale of violence: A gendered experience

The survey revealed alarming rates of violence, with clear differences in the experiences of men and women:

- **Physical Violence:** This is a common occurrence. Nearly 35% of female fans reported experiencing physical violence at least once.
- **Psychological Violence:** More than half of female fans have experienced this, making it the most common form of violence they face. This includes verbal abuse, threats, and intimidation.
- **Sexual Violence:** This is a major issue for women. **Over 22% of female fans reported** being a victim of sexual violence (like unwanted touching or groping) at least once. This means almost one in four women in the survey had this experience.
- **Sexual assault: 5.5% of female fans** (37 women) reported having been sexually assaulted in a context related to their fan activities.
- **Online hate speech:** One in five female fans (18.7%) has been a target of online hate speech because of her gender or sexual orientation.
- **Exclusion and dismissal:** Many women (23%) felt their efforts and passion as fans were not taken seriously or acknowledged by other fans.

Witnessing violence and a lack of response

The problem isn't just what happens to individuals; it's what others see and do about it.

- **Bystanders are common:** A third of all fans have witnessed physical violence, and nearly a quarter have witnessed psychological violence. Shockingly, 8.4% of respondents –about one in 12 – have witnessed a sexual assault.
- **A failure to act:** The response to violence is often inadequate. When asked what happened when they were victims, over a quarter of fans said that **no one reacted** or the reaction was **insignificant and unhelpful**. The same pattern was seen when people witnessed violence happening to others. This creates a culture of silence where perpetrators face no consequences.

3. Insights from fan and expert interviews

The numbers tell one story, but the in-depth interviews with fans and experts bring the problem to life. They help us understand the „why“ behind the statistics.

A masculine world

Fans and experts consistently described football culture as dominated by men. One Danish fan simply stated: „Among the ultras, the men are dominating.“ This masculinity is seen as historical and ingrained from childhood, where boys are more often encouraged to engage with football.

Who feels unwelcome?

The first group that came to mind for interviewees was LGBT+ fans. Many shared that they would not feel safe revealing their orientation at a stadium. One English fan said that after coming out, they „fell out of football; it didn't feel like a space that was welcoming to me.“ Women and people with left-wing political views were also mentioned as groups that can face hostility.

Experiences of violence

The interviews provided chilling examples:

- **Verbal and physical threats:** A Polish female fan described being threatened and having photos taken without consent by male fans at a women's match, forcing her to leave early because she felt so unsafe.
- **Sexual assault by security:** A Danish female fan described horrific „security checks“ at an away game in Europe, where stewards touched her inappropriately and a friend almost had a tampon ripped out.
- **Pressure to conform:** Fans described aggressive individuals in the stands who would force others to chant and behave in a certain way, creating an environment of intimidation.
- **Online harassment:** An expert who is a club president shared how she faced relentless online threats, vulgar banners at matches, and even required police protection.

4. What can be learned from our research

The SAFER research paints a clear picture: **gender-based violence is a serious and widespread problem in European football fandom.** Women and LGBT+ fans are disproportionately affected, facing everything from dismissive attitudes and exclusion to sexual assault and rape. A critical finding is the **culture of impunity.** Victims often do not report violence due to shame, fear, or a belief that nothing will be done. This is reinforced by the frequent lack of a strong, helpful reaction from bystanders and authorities.

The problem is deep-rooted, but the research also gives hope: the vast majority of fans reject homophobic and sexist behaviour and want a more inclusive environment.

Based on these findings, here are five key recommendations for action:

1. **Raise awareness and inform everyone.** Many people do not fully understand what constitutes gender-based violence. Clubs, federations, and fan groups should run regular training, workshops, and campaigns for everyone involved: players, club staff, fan leaders, and fans themselves. The goal is to make sure everyone can recognise different forms of violence and understand why they are unacceptable.
2. **Empower and support victims.** Since victims often feel helpless and unheard, it is crucial to create clear, safe, and trusted systems for reporting violence. This must be accompanied by robust support systems for those who come forward. Experts stressed that you cannot solve a problem without listening to the people who have lived through it.
3. **Train security and police.** The research identified that a broad range of people can be perpetrators of violence in football grounds. Fans of the home or the away team, friends/relatives/partners of the victim, but also security staff and police officers deployed. It is essential to provide specialised training for all stewards and law enforcement on what gender-based violence is, how to identify it, and how to respond to victims with sensitivity and support, rather than dismissal.

- **4. Challenge the „tradition“ excuse.** The research shows most fans are already on board with this and that at many stadia homophobic and sexist chants and language are not welcome anymore. Celebrate a positive, inclusive fan culture as the true tradition to be proud of.
- **5. Lead from the top.** Football clubs and governing bodies must take ownership of this issue. They need to move beyond having policies on paper to actively implementing them. This includes clear communication from club presidents that violence and discrimination will not be tolerated and holding perpetrators accountable. As one fan said, change requires „clear communication from the very top about what kind of club we are.“

5. Conclusion

Creating a safer football culture is not about reducing passion or silencing supporters. It is about ensuring that the joy, community, and identity that football provides are accessible to everyone, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, or identity.

The findings of the SAFER project are a call to action. They provide the evidence that this problem is real and widespread. But they also show that a majority of fans want change. By working together – clubs, authorities, fan groups, and organisations like yours – we can use this knowledge to build a football culture where everyone feels safe, respected, and welcome to support their team.

This summary is based on the SAFER project report, co-funded by the European Union. The views presented here are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



Awareness and protection concepts in German football

Origins in the fan scene

The development and establishment of *awareness*¹³ concepts in football in Germany is the result of a dynamic process spanning several years, characterised by social debate, civil society engagement and close cooperation between associations, clubs and committed fan networks. The aim of *awareness* concepts in football is to protect those affected by discrimination, violence and transgressions in the stadium, to have a preventive effect and to create a respectful, discrimination-free atmosphere.

Awareness concepts in football are characterised by a consistent focus on those affected. They go beyond a purely perpetrator-focused approach and focus on prevention, awareness-raising and low-threshold support services. These include safe spaces and contact points, mobile *awareness* teams that are visible and approachable on match days, and the use of code words that enable

¹³ Awareness is a term used in German-speaking countries to describe various safeguarding measures implemented by supporters, clubs, football associations and other relevant stakeholders.

discreet contact. Digital tools such as special apps make it easier to make contact and determine one's location in the stadium.

The emergence of *awareness* concepts in football is closely linked to the commitment and initiative of fan initiatives and civil society networks. Before football associations and clubs systematically addressed the issue, it was primarily committed fans and fan organisations who drew attention to the need to create safe spaces and contact points against discrimination, sexism and sexualised violence in the stadium environment. Experiences from the fan stands, numerous reports from those affected and the results of surveys and projects made it clear that structurally anchored protection concepts are needed in football, not only in the area of active sport, but also in the spectator area.

Development of standards

The *Network Against Sexism and Sexualised Violence in Football*, which is largely supported by fan initiatives, developed guidelines and minimum standards for awareness-raising work in football in 2020 and made this knowledge available nationwide. In the same year, talks between the *Network Against Sexism and Sexualised Violence in Football* and the DFB took place for the first time. At the Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Conference, the network presented its guidelines to a broad specialist audience and representatives of German professional football clubs, supporter liaison officers and regional association representatives.

Awareness work is understood here as a dynamic, victim-oriented process based on three pillars: basic attitude, prevention and intervention. The basic attitude is central to this. It is essential to believe victims of abusive, transgressive behaviour without prejudice, to take their perspectives seriously and to offer them low-threshold support. Prevention includes raising awareness, providing information and creating safe spaces in the stadium. Intervention provides for clear reporting channels, trained contact persons and structured procedures in case of emergency.¹⁴

¹⁴ https://www.fussball-gegen-sexismus.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Brosch%c3%bcre_Handlungskonzept_Auflage_3.pdf

Initial implementation in German professional stadiums

The first *awareness* concepts in the stadium context in Germany were thus developed on the initiative of fans who joined forces to establish their own contact points, mobile *awareness* teams and safe spaces. These structures were often run on a voluntary basis and set up in close cooperation with local fan projects, fan support services and other stakeholders. Multi-professionalism, for example the interaction of full-time and volunteer staff, fan projects, clubs and external specialist agencies, is a central feature of *awareness* work in football in Germany.

The concepts were further developed, professionalised and increasingly adopted by clubs and associations. This process was promoted by networking events that facilitated the exchange of best practices, further training and joint reflection on challenges and successes. The documentation of incidents, the evaluation of surveys and the continuous adaptation of the concepts to the needs of fans and those affected are central components of further development.

With the introduction of the first *awareness* and protection concepts in individual German professional stadiums, on the initiative of progressive fan groups, it quickly became apparent not only that such a service was beneficial at a local level, but also that there was a need for its widespread introduction. Only with the widespread availability of protection concepts can stadium visitors reliably make use of the service when needed, even at away games. However, at the outset, there were still a number of challenges to be overcome in implementing *awareness* and protection concepts in all German Bundesliga stadiums, at national team home games and in German DFB Cup competitions.

Structural challenges: diversity of venues and organisational structures

Unlike many other national associations, the DFB does not have a national stadium. German national team matches are played in different stadiums, each with its own infrastructure, personnel and organisational conditions. While

some clubs in the host stadiums already had established *awareness* structures in place at an early stage, others lack experience or resources. Uniform implementation therefore requires flexible concepts that can be adapted to local conditions without undermining minimum standards.

Institutional anchoring

Awareness work must be established as an integral part of event organisation, not as a voluntary additional service. This requires clear responsibilities, fixed budgets, integration into security and event planning, and recognition as a security-relevant component by associations, clubs and security authorities

Content challenges: standardisation while maintaining a focus on those affected

Awareness work thrives on a consistent focus on the needs of those affected by transgressive behaviour. At the same time, uniform minimum standards are needed to ensure quality and reliability. The challenge is to implement these standards nationwide without losing the necessary flexibility for local particularities.

Training and awareness raising

All persons involved, from stewards and catering staff to supporter liaison officers and security services, must therefore receive regular training. Awareness-raising work is only effective if everyone is on board. Developing and implementing these training courses poses a logistical and didactic challenge.

Coordination with professions and stakeholders

Security services and police

Awareness work must be coordinated with existing security concepts. This means clear communication channels, coordinated intervention strategies and the recognition of *awareness* teams as relevant actors in the security structure. This can lead to tensions, for example when police measures are not compatible with the victim-oriented approach of *awareness* work.

Fan projects and supporter liaison officers

These groups are key partners as they enjoy the trust of fans and already have experience with *awareness* work. Their involvement is essential, but at the same time their capacities must be strengthened to enable comprehensive implementation.

Logistical challenges

Awareness concepts also raise logistical questions. Where are safe spaces located or where can they be set up? How are *awareness* teams visible and accessible? How is the topic communicated? These questions must be integrated into event planning at an early stage.

Financing and resources

Many *awareness* structures have grown out of voluntary work. However, nationwide binding and standardised implementation requires professional structures, permanent positions, materials, technology and training, and therefore also suitable financing.

Strategic communication

Awareness work thrives on visibility and accessibility. In order for protection concepts to be used by those affected, they must be clearly communicated

before, during and after the game. This includes stadium announcements, information on tickets, posters, social media campaigns and the involvement of supporters clubs. Communication must be accessible and, if necessary, multilingual in order to reach all visitors.

Evaluation and further development

To ensure effectiveness, *awareness* concepts must be regularly evaluated and further developed. This requires feedback systems, documentation of incidents and exchange formats between locations.

Institutional steps taken by the DFB

The DFB has been working intensively on these challenges since 2020. In addition to exchanges with the *Network Against Sexualised Violence in Football*, the initial focus was on study visits to existing locations in order to gather experience from various concepts. In 2021, for example, the existing „Ankerplatz“ concept was implemented for the first time at a DFB match during the men's international match in Hamburg. It was set up as a safe space and place of refuge. This was followed by ongoing discussions with the organisers. These ideas were incorporated into the development of the DFB's own approaches.

At subsequent international matches, the DFB drew on the *awareness* concepts of the host professional clubs, where available, for example in Bremen or Gelsenkirchen. This allowed initial practical experience to be gained and the effectiveness of existing measures to be observed. In the summer of 2023, another visit was made to the *awareness* team in Bremen to gain deeper insights into the implementation on site.

At the same time, planning for the UEFA EURO 2024 men's tournament was in full swing. The tournament was intended to set new international standards for social and environmental sustainability at major sporting events. This provided an opportunity to pilot *awareness* and protection concepts with uniform standards in the stadiums of EURO 2024, or to build on existing concepts.

In 2022, the DFB, EURO GmbH and supporter representatives agreed to implement *awareness* and protection concepts at a EURO for the first time. Another milestone was the meeting in the summer of 2023 with EURO GmbH and representatives of the Bundesliga clubs from the EURO host cities. Here, existing *awareness* concepts were systematically recorded, advantages and disadvantages discussed, and criteria for a EURO-specific *awareness* concept developed. The international character of a UEFA EURO brought the additional challenge that an *awareness* and protection concept should be linguistically accessible to all fans involved.

Pilot projects and workshops

At the same time, the topic of *awareness* was also incorporated into supporter work through workshops, such as at the 2023 Supporter Liaison Officer Conference. As part of a DFB project called „Football United Against Racism“, *awareness* concepts were developed with four selected clubs, tested on site and the results documented.

At the beginning of 2024, the first *awareness* concept was implemented at a DFB conference, the Women's Bundesliga Fan Congress, and further developed in a workshop together with participants. The development of the *awareness* concept for EURO was also continuously accompanied by regular coordination, concept work and cooperation with the organisation saferspaces.

At the EURO

As part of UEFA EURO 2024, comprehensive *awareness* and protection measures were implemented at international level for the first time to ensure a safe and discrimination-free environment for all those involved. A central element was the **Grievance Mechanism**, an independent whistleblower service that was available from 1st June 2024 to anyone affected in any way by the tournament (including players, spectators, journalists, employees, volunteers and service providers). The mechanism was operated by the German law firm Rettenmaier and technically supported by Legaltegrity. Reports could be submitted via a secure online form in the languages of all participating

nations. Reports were processed confidentially by trained trauma specialists; anonymous use was possible. Access was free of charge and designed to be non-discriminatory.

In addition, a **Rapid Response Mechanism** was set up at all venues to respond immediately to situations of harassment, discrimination or threats. Trained teams were on standby on match days, supported by a technical system from the SAFER project. Posters with location-based QR codes were displayed in the stadiums, allowing those affected to contact *awareness* staff directly. The QR codes enabled rapid localisation and targeted assistance from German Red Cross staff on site. In addition, mobile *awareness* teams were visible and approachable in several fan zones. If necessary, those affected could also contact the information points in the fan zones.

The positive experiences from UEFA EURO 2024 led to the transfer of the Grievance Mechanism to the UEFA Women's EURO 2025 in Switzerland.

Standardised implementation through licensing

For the 2024/25 season, the DFB included sustainability criteria in the licensing procedure for the third division and the women's Bundesliga. Clubs are obliged to meet sustainability criteria through licensing. One of the requirements is a „reporting and complaints system (including a whistleblower system)“. Clubs must have a reporting and complaints system for allegations of discrimination, sexual assault, racism or similar misconduct. In addition to a whistleblower protection system for employees and external stakeholders and a reporting and complaints system in (youth) teams for players and participants, a reporting and complaints system in the stadium for fans is explicitly required.

The 2024/25 season served as a transition year for the introduction. Compliance with the guideline became mandatory for the 2025/26 season. The 1st and 2nd Bundesliga (men) started the licensing process in the 2023/24 season.

Outlook

Since the *Network Against Sexism and Sexualised Violence in Football* first developed minimum standards for *awareness* work in football in 2019, these have now been adopted and institutionalised by many clubs and associations. The standards include consistent focus on the needs of those affected, clear reporting channels, structured procedures in emergencies, and cooperation between full-time and volunteer staff, fan projects, clubs and external specialist agencies.

Awareness concepts are an important building block for a non-discriminatory and safe football culture. Experience gained in recent years with implementation in Germany clearly shows that networking and exchange between clubs, associations and civil society actors, especially progressive fans, are crucial to success. Regular training, evaluation and adaptation of the concepts, as well as sustainable institutional anchoring, ensure the effectiveness and further development of this work. The multitude of initiatives, networks and best practices shows that *awareness* work has arrived in football and is constantly evolving to protect those affected and promote a respectful stadium culture.



The Danish experience

FanNetværket for Kvinder (FNK) — The Danish Women's Fan Network

FanNetværket for Kvinder (FNK) is a national initiative advancing gender inclusion, safety and representation within football supporter culture in Denmark. Founded in February 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, FNK combines qualitative storytelling with annual quantitative surveys and dialogue with clubs and league bodies.

This evidence-based, collaboration-first model aligns with Erasmus priorities on social inclusion, civic participation, gender equality and peer learning. The approach is transferable across European football ecosystems (UEFA/FSE contexts), offering a practical pathway from awareness to policy influence via data, dialogue and community empowerment.

FNK was founded directly after participation in Football Supporters Europe's F+ Collective online meeting for female and non-binary supporters. Four Danish female fans attended and invited another supporter to a follow-up conversation. Sharing personal experiences made clear that the lack of safety, representation and visible community was not an individual experience, but a structural one.

Why now?

COVID-19 created space for reflection and organising in digital formats, while the global momentum following the MeToo movement opened broader conversations about gendered experiences. FNK did not position itself as a MeToo movement; rather, the cultural moment created legitimacy and urgency for women to speak and be heard.

From the outset, FNK received strong support from both women and men; for many male fans, hearing survey data and testimonies was a genuine eye-opener: “We had no idea this is what you were experiencing.” The five founders represented three of Denmark’s largest clubs, spanning multiple ages and supporter backgrounds (including ultras and volunteer structures). FNK is legally organised under Danske Fodboldfans (DFF), the national umbrella for officially recognised supporter groups.

1. Evidence and methodology — annual national survey and data insights (since 2021)

Purpose and origins

FNK conducts an annual nationwide survey among female football fans in Denmark to collect evidence-based insights on safety, boundary-crossing behaviour, sexism and barriers to full participation, at both home and away matches. At launch, no comparable national data existed; the steering group sought to test whether their own experiences were isolated or widely shared.

Iteration and scope

The survey runs every year to track developments over time. Questionnaires have expanded to cover stadium facilities, access to safe spaces, and inclusion/exclusion in online debates. The survey is now a central strategic tool: it opens institutional doors, informs recommendations, and enables FNK to speak based on evidence rather than anecdote.

Implications and use of data

- Start formal cooperation with the Danish League Association (Divisionsforeningen) and clubs.
- Inform concrete policy proposals (visitation procedures, discrimination reporting).
- Prioritise focus for seminars, podcast themes and advisory work.
- Raise awareness among media, officials and supporter organisations.
- Identify trends early for proactive action.

As a result, FNK is recognised as a legitimate knowledge partner in national supporter policy.

Survey Highlights 2023

Participation in games and behaviour

- 70% attend most/all home games;
- 19.2% attend most/all away games;
- Main barrier: lack of time (37.8%).



70%

watch most or all
games at home during
a season

19,2%

watch most or all
games away during
a season

Perceived Safety

- 18.5% felt unsafe at home matches;
- 19.8% at away matches;
- Main cause: violent/aggressive atmosphere (~60%).

18,5%

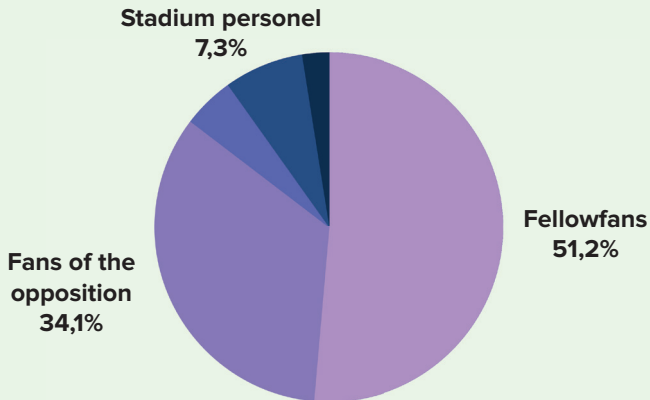
felt unsafe in connection
with a **game at home** during
the past year

19,8%

felt unsafe in connection
with a game **at awaygames**
during the past year

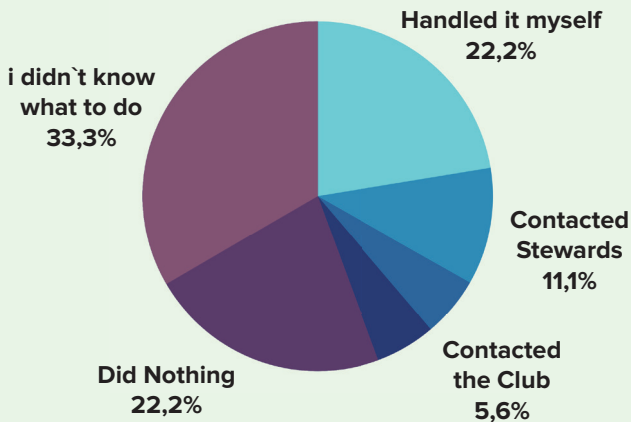
Experiences of Sexism

- 19.9% experienced sexism linked to football;
 - → 51.2% from fellow fans; 7.3% from stadium staff;
- 2.6% experienced direct physical boundary-crossing;



Response to Incidents

- 33.3% did not know what to do;
- 22.2% handled it themselves;
- 22.2% did nothing.



2. Methodology and activities — seminars and networking events

FNK has organised three national full-day seminars that function as knowledge-sharing forums and critical networking spaces across clubs. Recurring themes include stadium safety and body searches, discrimination and reporting, toilet/facility conditions, inclusion and representation, and women-oriented merchandise.

FNK also runs smaller online and in-person events as low-barrier entry points. During lockdowns, online formats proved valuable for private reflection, helping participants recognise and articulate previously internalised experiences.

Impact and outcomes

- Creation of Brøndby Damer (women's supporter group organising away buses and activities).
- Increased recognition and allyship among male supporters.
- Early-stage dialogue with SLOs, including exploration of female SLOs.
- Noticeable rise in confidence and visibility among previously “invisible supporters”.
- FNK evolving from community network to acknowledged developmental actor.

3. Communication and storytelling — podcast as strategic platform

The FNK podcast, “Stilletter på Tribunen” (High heels in the stands), provides long-form space for storytelling, reflection and debate, enabling nuanced conversations that short social media formats cannot hold. Seven episodes cover FNK's origins and aims, fan culture and sexist rhetoric (following a controversial banner incident), female groundhoppers, deep-dives on survey findings, smaller-club perspectives (eg, Næstved BK, a fourth tier club), national-team fandom, and a “newsletter in audio” format.

The fan culture episode was an intentional strategic intervention: calm dialogue and real stories fostered cultural self-reflection among fans, demonstrating that supporter culture can evolve from within. A guiding principle is to show women as ordinary supporters – neither exceptions nor tokens.

4. Campaigns and digital visibility

Targeted campaigns increase visibility, representation and participation:

- **#Tirsdagsportrættet (Tuesday portrait)** — weekly portraits showing the diversity of women supporters.
- **Visitationskampagnen (Bodysearch campaign)** — collecting positive/negative experiences with security checks.
- **#HendesKampdag / #Stadionkvinde (#HerGameday / #Stadiumfemale)** — Instagram visibility to claim matchday space.

These campaigns strengthen internal belonging: “You are not alone – and you are already many.”

Strategic communication approach (cross-cutting method)

FNK’s style is relational, not confrontational: build understanding before demanding reform; show lived experience rather than accuse intention. This trust-based method fosters cooperation with clubs, supporter groups and SLOs and is well-suited to EU contexts where multi-stakeholder collaboration is essential.

5. Impact on policy and practice — collaboration with the Danish leagues

Since its early days, FNK has been acknowledged as a credible knowledge partner in Danish supporter policy. After the first survey results, Divisionsforeningen (the Danish League Association) proactively invited FNK to advise on safety and inclusion from a female perspective.

Visitation practices and stadium communication

Survey/seminar data showed that 25% of women who reported boundary-crossing behaviour identified stadium staff/security as the source. FNK recommended and achieved the right to request female security staff for body searches (now a national requirement) and redesigned signage with clearer, respectful language on visitation.

Anti-discrimination policy and reporting structures

FNK helped define national terminology and best practice for handling discrimination (sexism, racism, homophobia) and advocated mandatory reporting to the league authority, aligned with violence and pyrotechnics reporting.

All Superliga clubs must now submit official discrimination reports; implementation is ongoing and uneven, but the policy shift is significant.

6. Advisory role and knowledge transfer to clubs

FNK is a trusted advisory partner for clubs and supporter organisations seeking to improve inclusion and safety for women. FNK does not dictate solutions; it listens, co-creates and brings data and empathy to the table. Invitations have included FC København, Brøndby IF and BK Frem, covering survey insights, visitation practice, communication tone, female SLO pathways, whistleblower/reporting models, safe-space concepts (UEFA Rapid Response inspiration), and presentations at national SLO conferences.

7. Sustainability and future development

Long-term vision: gender inclusion becomes a permanent, self-sustaining part of football culture — not an exception activated only in crisis. The aim is to normalise women's presence and leadership at every level, from the stands to decision-making.

Future priorities.

- Expand local women's fan groups across more clubs.
- Deepen cooperation with clubs, SLOs and the Danish Leagues.
- Continue annual data production and trend analysis.
- Strengthen European exchange via UEFA/FSE platforms.
- Ensure new generations enter as equals.

Method unchanged: change through dialogue, data and visibility – not confrontation.

“We fight for you and with you — so that future generations of female football fans will never have to prove they belong.”



Tackling gender- based violence and discrimination in a grass-root team

Atletico San Lorenzo (ASL) is an amateur sports association founded in 2013 in the streets and squares of the district of the same name in Rome. The Association is inspired by the principles of popular sport, promoting the practice of sporting activities through a participatory model based on self-financing and self-organisation. It rejects the logic of those who see sport as a tool to make profit. The multi-sports club now has around 600 members, with over 200 athletes participating in federal competitions in the following disciplines'

- **men's football;**
- **men's junior football;**
- **women's five-a-side football;**
- **men's basketball;**
- **women's basketball;**
- **mixed volleyball.**

Over the past three years, the ASL has gradually evolved into a multi-sports organisation. In addition to its football academy and the activities of the first team (senior division), the women's division has expanded significantly,

encompassing football, basketball, and volleyball, alongside the development of basketball and volleyball programmes.

The mission of ASL is expanding with the opening of the social headquarters. This is not merely a meeting place for teams but, increasingly, a multifunctional centre within the neighbourhoods, hosting cultural activities and providing services. For instance, it offers a study space with free Wi-Fi, open to all students in the area, and hosts training internships for people with disabilities, as well as cultural activities such as book presentations and film screenings.

Alongside these activities, Atletico periodically organises summer camps and popular sports festivals, open to all grassroots sports organisations in Rome, where young participants engage in tournaments and games.

Atletico is also proud of its commitment to promoting gender equality in sports and combating gender-based violence and discrimination. Each year, in July, the club organises the *Finché vita ci separi* Tournament. The tournament is open to all sports organisations that promote an anti-discriminatory and anti-patriarchal sports culture.

Atletico's organisational structure is made up primarily of volunteers: managers and coaches who, on the basis of shared parameters, receive only reimbursement of expenses in recognition of the time they dedicate continuously to the association. Their expertise covers sporting, educational, fiscal, managerial, organisational, and interpersonal areas. This is a sustainable model because it is based on voluntarism and makes it possible to guarantee the right to sport through an affordable pricing policy, providing free participation for individuals and families in difficulty.

This rapid growth has significant organisational implications. Alignment with ASL's values – something that cannot be taken for granted, even among the core members – is a critical aspect that requires careful attention at all levels, both in sports and in management. Atletico San Lorenzo values are adherence to anti-fascism, anti-racism, anti-sexism, and commitment to the five core values of the project: respect, solidarity, loyalty, inclusivity, and transparency.

Atletico San Lorenzo and SAFER: objectives of the pilot and the methodological approach

Atletico has been selected as one of the pilot sites to highlight existing good practices and to develop recommendations for preventing gender-based violence.

SAFER's operational activities were based on a participatory process at every key stage: research, dissemination of results, and the reflection and design of safeguarding mechanisms, taking into account Atletico's organisational structure and the potential "settings" in which discriminatory phenomena may be observed.

The aim was to develop an ethnographic analysis, which involves in-depth observation, participation, and interpretation of people's behaviours, practices, and interactions within their natural context.

Within Atletico, the "observation points" for discriminatory phenomena were both physical – playing fields, stands where fans gather, meeting rooms at the headquarters, the wider sports facility, changing rooms or areas next to the pitches where parents meet, and other social spaces – and virtual, such as e-mails, chats, and social media. Atletico's goal was to use the research as an opportunity to look at ourselves, to understand whether and how we are able to recognise and tackle gender-based violence in its different forms. The research aimed to understand and analyse the causal mechanisms behind discriminatory events, to improve our ability to recognise and manage them within the ASL. This, in turn, made it possible to reflect on which prevention and safeguarding measures should be adopted.

Across every discipline and category, selected individuals took part in the participatory observation process. After receiving suitable training, they kept a diary, updating it only when significant events connected to discriminatory phenomena took place. The diary template included: what I saw/learnt as a phenomenon; what I did (optional); what reactions I noticed (from others); reflections.

Each type of discrimination has been investigated, not only focused on gender and on gender violence, but as an organisation which promote social inclusion, it was necessary to have a broader view of discriminatory patterns.

Results of the research process

About 40 episodes were reported over during the year of observation. The episodes related to six different types of settings:

- **on the pitch during matches with opposition teams (50%);**
- **in the stadium stands in relation to opposition teams' supporters (10%);**
- **in the stadium stands within the ASL fan sections (5%);**
- **in the locker room of ASL (5%);**
- **during ASL training sessions (20%);**
- **during internal meetings (management level) 10%.**

The most significant episodes were grouped into the following categories:

- 1. Performing differently:** connected to discrimination arising from a lower capacity to compete at the level of others.
- 2. Sexist language:** related to facing sexist and offensive language during training sessions and football matches (from opposing teams).
- 3. Reaction to provocations:** related to responding to provocations in a way that mirrors the violence experienced, which instead of breaking the cultural pattern, opposes it by using the same overpowering mechanisms.
- 4. Harassment and toxic behaviour:** flagged in fan areas on the stands, marked by harassing behaviour towards female fans or by macho, disrespectful attitudes towards women.
- 5. Cultural or gender stereotyping:** has to do with handling situations where harmful behaviours arise towards boys and girls in the youth section, particularly from parents anxious about signs that could call their children's sexuality into question.

Three possible areas for reflection were identified, relating to mechanisms that might enable rather than block discriminatory behaviours.

The first mechanism was identified as The competition trap. Over the time one of ASL's key points has been the need to demonstrate that grassroots sports can compete with others. Most people involved in the management sector state that losing every match pushes young people away from football more than not playing frequently. But this statement does not break from the cultural milieu in which we are immersed, and over time the competition has resulted in many drop-outs. At the same time, some young athletes suffered anxiety, burnout, or loss of motivation, and excessive stress.

Over time, another phenomenon has also arisen on the technical side: the drive to win at all costs. In teams where this is a factor, a reduction of collaboration and sense of community has been witnessed, along with an increase in selfishness and individualism. What was originally a source of joy, learning, or personal growth has been reduced to a mere performance comparison.

Conflicts and broken relationships among athletes were reported. From an educational perspective, during official matches a lack of exploration of what had been learned or tested in training sessions in favour of sticking to what was already known, reducing creativity and risk-taking, was also observed.

The second mechanism was identified as Locker room trap, based on the statement that "The locker room is the best place to address and resolve problems as a team". What may seem to be a culture of silence is actually a defensive mechanism commonly used in sport, designed to close ranks against external pressures and handle conflicts and difficulties within the team. Yet within an organisation like Atletico, every team ought to reflect the club as a whole, including its supporters and fans.

The size of the "locker room" matters. Some incidents reported had not gone beyond the locker room walls and were not shared across the different levels of the club. As a result, when a discriminatory event takes place – whether positive corrective measures exist or the solutions adopted amplify the original issue – the culture of the locker room may harm everyone at every level.

There is a lack of organisational growth, limiting opportunities for systemic improvement and collective learning, and missing opportunities for cultural change. This perpetuates a silo mentality, where teams operate independently without sharing knowledge or best practices. Those who demonstrate strong adherence to Atletico's values may not be involved in contributing beyond their immediate team.

Moreover, values and practices fostered within the locker room may differ from those promoted by the ASL, creating inconsistencies that confuse players and staff.

The third mechanism was marked as the Language trap. One of Atletico's key slogans — also featured in a line of the club's official anthem — is: "Victory is what we are", and is part of all those rituals that Atletico deploys, particularly during matches, to communicate its values. The risk is that such rituals, if performed automatically, may become mere fig leaves used to avoid engagement with different cultures and languages.

All the rituals that Atletico performs, before and after matches, and during training sessions, run the risk of becoming mere symbolic rituals — mechanical rites that fail to combat machismo and patriarchy because they are neither understood nor genuinely practiced.



Discussion and outlook

The research findings were discussed within the ASL management assembly, which chose to open the discussion to all members of the multi-sports club and to the athletes. Three plenary sessions of Atletico have been held. The reflection is still under way, and no consensus has yet been reached. It has nonetheless been decided that the matter should be tackled from an organisational and participatory angle, and that simply producing guidelines, checklists or “10-point plans” will not suffice.

Along the path we have mapped out, it is crucial that all the different parts of the ASL meet and work together to “square the circle”, listening and talking without prejudice. As was highlighted in the assembly, there are many existing practices, and reflecting on them is the best way to build our sporting model. Two “equations” have been put forward which metaphorically capture the routes we should develop and keep questioning as we go along.

First equation: **GAME SYSTEM = POLITICAL SYSTEM**

Imagining and building our own game system to be practised from the youth teams through to the first team. All youth and under-age teams should adopt it so that they are ready when they reach the senior level. This applies to football, basketball and volleyball alike.

Theoretical implications

To think through a game system that makes it possible for all athletes to participate in the team’s performance. This means fostering curiosity, working on limits, cooperation, spatial awareness, technique and discipline — understood as an evolving educational space where “we” comes before “I”. Following our values, for example, is an active and conscious way of giving meaning to our watchwords: respect, solidarity, fairness, togetherness, transparency, anti-fascism, anti-racism and anti-sexism.

Organisational implications

Consolidating this model at the technical-educational and managerial levels (training, continuous internal/external dialogue), envisaging various options: More technical staff within each team, striving increasingly for a gender balance that is fundamental to breaking self-referential, macho circuits which otherwise replicate and fail to move away from other sporting models. Within the technical staff it would be essential, especially in the youth and under-age teams, to have experts able to identify the difficulties faced by girls and boys and to help us build an inclusive sporting model.

More managerial staff within each team, who — beyond taking charge of purely organisational aspects — can cooperate and work on the technical side and, especially in the youth and under-age teams, work with and on the adult reference figures of the girls and boys (listening to and paying attention to the difficulties they face, involving them in the Atletico model and avoiding the “parking” mentality).

At ASL level, seek alliances with other organisations in the neighbourhood (for example in the reporting and support of those in difficulty); with other sporting organisations that share our values (building bridges, creating convergences, organising events and initiatives, etc.); and with other stakeholders and institutions that can help us remove the constraints mentioned below — for example in relation to space (hindering factors).

Second equation: **WORK = VALUES × FORCES × TIME**

Imagining and building our own way of working within the multi-sports club which, starting from organisational implications, from spaces of political agency, contradictions and conflicts, generates the synthesis that represents our sporting/political model.

Theoretical implications

To make this transition we must rework our history and our stories, first of all by clarifying where we stand now. We were born with the aim of creating an alternative sporting space to the mainstream, in which it would be possible to support and practise sport differently, without the “fan card”. Starting with the first team, we gradually built a youth sector in football and then extended ourselves to other disciplines. We are now a movement made up of many strands, with different sensitivities, cultures and sporting and political practices. Formally we are an amateur sports club, but as provided for in our statutes, we are not a simple multi-sports club but a driver of social transformation, a point of reference for the growth and development of the neighbourhood, with the intention of using sport as a vehicle to transmit social and ethical values, combat all forms of discrimination, and build a better future.

Having our own headquarters, managing with our own resources to make it attractive, carrying out activities and services in favour of the community, together with our participation in calls for proposals and in federated championships, is increasingly accrediting us with sporting and administrative institutions. The challenge is to find a synthesis between the “sport” social purpose and the “driver of transformation” social purpose within the neighbourhood and beyond. This synthesis obliges us to reflect on the concept of “work” within the ASL and on its possible expressions, taking into account the impact that our model might have on other sports clubs and sports workers (and those who derive an income from sporting activity), on those who carry out social work and earn an income from such work (the Third Sector), on the commercial sphere (impact on local businesses) and also on the important work of holding all the pieces together by working on relationships, organisation and management.

Organisational implications

Considering its various components, today Atletico is made up of activists, managers, and coaches who, on the basis of agreed parameters, receive reimbursement of expenses in return for time dedicated to the ASL. The ASL could also be a source of income for those carrying out activities that require technical (sporting, educational, fiscal, managerial, etc.), organisational and relational skills which, externally, have a cost. But our model is currently sustainable because it rests mainly on volunteer work of a politico-Christian nature (we take for granted that activism is present both in those who are paid and in those who are not). For some of us it is a residual activity, outside the time dedicated to work or study, while for others it could be a concrete opportunity for work and income.

One side of the “activism coin” is based on paid work: the kind of work carried out in a physical space (pitches and headquarters), on a continuous basis, fulfilling a sporting and social function (within the ASL’s premises, keeping it open, running the bar, etc.).

The other side of the coin consists of those who, within the ASL, hold positions and carry out activities on a voluntary basis, taking responsibility — through their skills and/or good will — for all the organisational aspects essential to the ASL’s sustainability and for the relational aspects linked to the local area, networks, etc.

This model of ours can work if there is broad participation, wide sharing of the work done, a high level of delegation, and if everyone is able to contribute in a reasonably even way to the ASL. But if broad participation is lacking, then there is a problem of concentration, of burdens, of all-consuming time which, instead of making the ASL stronger, limits it and makes it less effective in achieving its “social purposes”.

If participation decreases, the question arises of envisaging a different or hybrid organisational model, with remuneration also for those who perform other

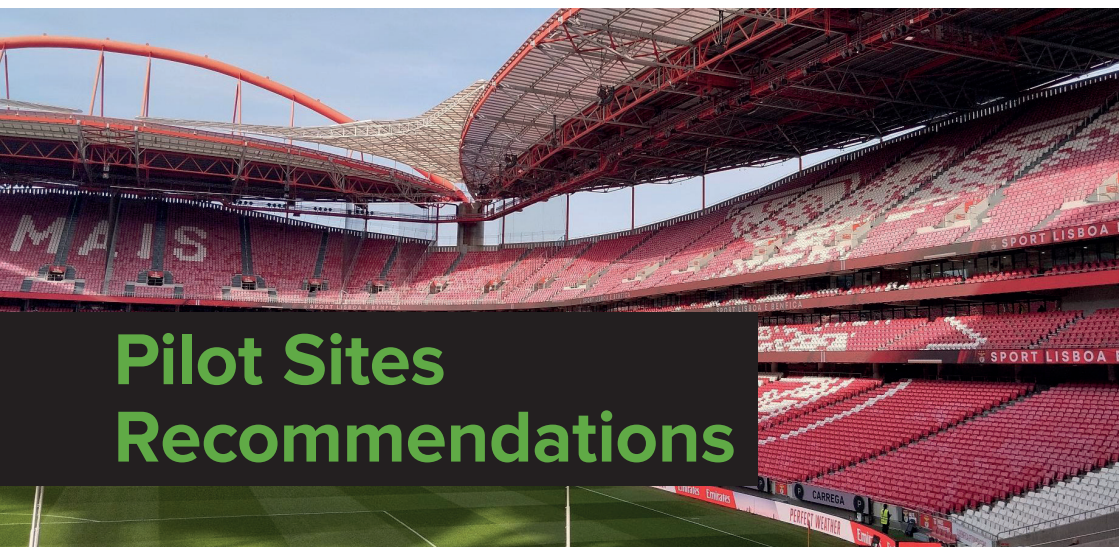
functions, so that those taking on heavy responsibilities receive recognition — including financial recognition — for their role and the time devoted.

In all cases, the guiding principle at the heart of every form of collaboration (voluntary or remunerated) must be adherence to Atletico's values and attention to attitudes and behaviours that may undermine them.

Outlook: focus on engaging athletes within the teams – starting with the youth squads (where involvement takes a different form) but especially in the senior teams. Revisit the organisational model to “solve” the equation above.

Barriers: the main one, in practical terms, is the overload and concentration of tasks on a few people who carry most of the organisational functions and who, unlike what was envisaged in the ASL's first re-organisation, have had to take on many other duties over time.

Constraint: the equation above is heavily limited by the forces at our disposal.



As part of the SAFER project, the project consortium identified, analysed and involved football clubs in Europe to implement a series of activities developed with the objective to tackle the issue of gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination during match-day and, in general, create a safer and more inclusive environment for female supporters.

The SAFER project worked on the implementation, at UEFA EURO 2024 in Germany, of a Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), a system designed to provide immediate assistance to spectators who felt overwhelmed, harassed or discriminated against, threatened or otherwise unsafe within stadiums.

Following the implementation of these activities, the project consortium, with the support of the pilot sites, analysed and evaluated the impact of the measures carried out with the objective of identifying a set of effective, transferable and adaptable good practices.

1. Establishing clear, accessible and well-promoted reporting mechanisms

Pilot sites examples

Royale Union Saint-Gilloise

In the course of the project implementation, the club created a dedicated phone number to report cases of gender-based violence and discrimination.

This number was promoted across the club's social media channels, on the stadium screens and through the stadium speaker systems to ensure fan awareness.

Sport Lisboa e Benfica

During the SAFER project, Benfica created communication channels for fans to report any incident, including gender-based violence and discrimination.

Phone numbers are available, mainly for reporting on match-day and during the match, and there is an email address mostly dedicated to post-match reports. Alongside the implementation of these communication channels, the club has expressed a commitment to answering any email reports within 72 hours.

The club has also laid down the structure for a dissemination campaign on these reporting channels as part of its communication plan for the 2025-2026 season.

Recommendation

The introduction of a reporting mechanism, by phone and email, and the commitment to promptly respond to requests and reports, is an important and necessary step as it addresses one of the main challenges of tackling the issue of gender-based violence and discrimination in any kind of context. The

underreporting of incidents leads to a lack or total absence of visibility for a problem that, as indicated by many studies and by the SAFER project research report, is widespread and takes many different forms, often hard to identify.

To combat underreporting, clubs must provide multiple, easy-to-use channels for fans to report incidents of gender-based violence and discrimination and actively communicate their existence.

Main points:

- creating a dedicated and exclusive communication channel to report gender-based violence and discrimination incidents;
- assigning a trained specific staff member in charge of reviewing and answering the incident reports and activating the club protocol;
- disseminating and communicating the applicable channels extensively through all club's communication channels.

2. Establishing and training a dedicated support team

Pilot sites examples

Royale Union Saint-Gilloise

In the course of the project implementation, USG created a Care Team to provide a clear and identifiable contact point for fans to get support and report incidents during match-day. The Care Team includes volunteers gathered from the supporter base and is coordinated by an employee of the club.

After gathering the first application from volunteers, the next step in creating the Care Team was to provide specific training. This was achieved through a collaboration between Union Saint-Gilloise and a Brussels- based network of health promotion professionals working in event environments.

Following this collaboration, training sessions were held for the volunteers that applied to be part of the Care Team.

The training sessions focused on: understanding the mechanisms at work behind gender-based violence in an event setting; strengthening skills in gender-based violence prevention, and learning how to respond in the event of a case of gender-based violence.

In addition to the training, a Care Team Protocol for the volunteers was developed by the club. The protocol covers all the pre-match, during-match and post-match operations for the team, their positioning in the stadium and provides information on how to address reports and cases of gender-based violence by also including the contacts of relevant stakeholders that may be involved based on the specific case (eg organisations that provide support to victims of gender-based violence).

Recommendation

A team of trained volunteers or staff, clearly identifiable on match days, is crucial for providing immediate support to victims, preventing incidents, and promoting a safer overall environment.

The presence of volunteers trained in recognising and addressing gender-based violence adds to the capabilities of clubs in providing a safer environment and providing support to victims when incidents occur.

This measure tackles many of the challenges that we were able to identify during the SAFER project research activity and in the coordination and communication we established with the project Pilot Sites. Female supporters often report the absence of trusted and trained professionals able to provide significant support and address sensitive incidents with the correct approach and preparation

Main points:

- creating a dedicated team in charge of providing support and information to victims of gender-based violence and discrimination on match-day;
- developing safeguarding training with the support of professionals;
- ensuring that the team members are visible and easily identifiable in the stadium;
- developing and implementing clear action and reporting protocols for the team members.



3. Active consultation process with supporters

Pilot sites examples

Unionistas de Salamanca CF

One of the first step Unionistas undertook in the implementation of the SAFER project activities was to consult female members and supporters by carrying out an online survey. This online survey had the objective of understanding the current perception of safety and inclusion from female members, and gathering feedback about some potential activity proposal that could be implemented and that would see the active engagement of volunteers.

Following this survey, the Social Area of Unionistas started to develop a plan of activities to address the needs and objectives shared by its female supporters and members.

Atletico San Lorenzo

Atletico San Lorenzo developed an operational work proposal. It aimed to grasp the objectives of the need assessment through a participative process that would consist of an initial internal research phase, the dissemination of research results among all the structures and members of the organisation, and the development of safeguard mechanisms based on the previous steps of this process.

The objective was to use this research as an opportunity to observe and understand the organisation's capabilities in recognising and addressing gender-based violence in its different forms. To take this step, it was deemed necessary to set up a type of research based on participant observation.

Research contact people were identified in each organisational area of the ASL that were involved in participatory observation.

Carrying out this research process gave Atletico San Lorenzo and the SAFER project consortium a better perspective on what kind of activities to further implement and where to focus to improve the capabilities of the organisation in tackling gender-based violence and discrimination, and how to create a safer environment for female supporters, members and athletes (which in the case of Atletico San Lorenzo, often overlap).

Recommendation

Developing and maintaining active communication channels between the club and the supporters is a fundamental step in identifying needs and intercepting issues that may be encountered by female fans on match-day.

It was observed how a trusted relationship between clubs and its supporters was able to foster and promote a general sense of safety (not only specific to the experience of female fans) and, more importantly, led the supporters to feel a bigger commitment to reporting incidents and raising issues with the club management.

Moreover, understanding the phenomena is a fundamental step in planning and delivering safeguarding measures that are effective and are welcomed by the supporters, ensuring their impact and sustainability.

Main points:

- establishing and maintaining communication channels between the club and the supporters;
- carrying out periodical consultation to identify supporters' needs and issues.

4. Building partnerships with local organizations

Pilot sites examples

Atletico San Lorenzo

During the SAFER project implementation, Atletico San Lorenzo built a partnership with the Municipality of Rome and a Rome-based organisation that offers support to victims of gender-based violence.

This partnership means that in the Atletico San Lorenzo headquarters, once a week, personnel from this organisation now offer counselling to women victims of GBV. Atletico San Lorenzo, together with the municipality of Rome, is actively working to improve the safety of public spaces in the San Lorenzo neighbourhood, where the club is based.

Unionistas de Salamanca CF

Unionistas developed a partnership with a Salamanca-based non-profit organisation that provides support to women victims of gender-based violence. This partnership was established to provide capacity building and the opportunity to consult experts in the fields of GBV, while developing and implementing safeguarding activities.

Following this partnership the club organised training for a group of volunteers to provide information and tools on detecting GBV and discrimination cases and provide support to the victims. This was done with the idea of building, in the future, a specific team that would be in charge of assisting female fan victims of GBV incidents.

Recommendation

Collaborating with established non-profits and service providers brings essential expertise, strengthens training, enhances support for victims, and deepens the club's roots in the community.

A constant expertise exchange allows clubs to improve their capabilities, identify effective practices implemented in other sectors and build a stronger relationship with their local environments, facilitating the implementation of activities such as dissemination and awareness raising campaigns, training and volunteer recruitment.

Main points:

- building partnership with local organisations expert on the topic of gender-based violence and discrimination;
- promoting peer learning and good practices exchange between the club and the partner organisations.



5. Implementation of a rapid response mechanism

Pilot site example – UEFA EURO 2024

The Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) for the UEFA EURO 2024 final tournament was led by the SAFER Project. The German Football Association (DFB) and Football Supporters Europe (FSE) were particularly involved in its coordination.

The mechanism was established in collaboration with UEFA and EURO 2024 GmbH, the tournament's organising entity. The mechanism's operational implementation involved the service provider SaferSpaces and the German Red Cross.

The RRM involved the deployment of dedicated personnel on match days. These teams consisted of medical volunteers, German Red Cross paramedics, and staff trained in psycho-social care. Their function was to provide immediate assistance to spectators. A dedicated facility, identified as a Safe Room, was available for this purpose.

Information regarding the mechanism was communicated to spectators via posters displayed throughout the stadiums. The service provider, SaferSpaces, supplied a technological solution for initiating contact with the response teams. This system utilized QR codes on the posters. When scanned, these geolocated codes enabled volunteers to be dispatched directly to the spectator's location to provide assistance and, if required, escort them to the Safe Room.

This system was designed to function as an alternative to direct verbal requests for help. In stadiums where pre-existing local code-words for reporting incidents were in use, the QR-code system operated concurrently as an additional, less visible reporting channel.

Recommendation

Implement systems, such as an RRM, at future major UEFA events to serve as an example for other mega sporting events such as the Olympics and FIFA World Cup tournaments.

Similar mechanism are already in usage, either through QR-codes, phone numbers or code-words, where members of staff can be alerted at several clubs across Europe.

Main points:

- implement safeguarding mechanism for immediate help across all competitions, based on local requirements and in consultation with all respective stakeholders and experts in the specific country / city;
- ensure proper training for all staff working around the stadia, so that they are aware of the mechanisms and their role in it;
- properly advertise the mechanism through posters / tannoy announcements / stadium magazine / game specific websites and apps.



Evaluation of the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) during EURO 2024 in Germany

1. Introduction, project framework, and executive assessment

1.1 Project overview and strategic aims

The SAFER Project was a three-year, multi-partner initiative funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union and led by Football Supporters Europe (FSE). The project's strategic aim was to create the foundational components required to ensure football is safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all individuals, both on the pitch and in the stands. This objective was conducted through three core work streams:

1. Conducting empirical research into the prevalence and nature of gender-based violence within football stadia and match-related activities.
2. Identifying, analysing, and promoting good practices while developing concrete recommendations for the prevention of gender-based violence.
3. Producing a comprehensive remedy policy and associated operational guidelines to support survivors of gender-based violence.

The pilot of the Rapid Response Mechanism during UEFA EURO 2024 represented one of the practical applications of the project's research and policy development.

1.2 Executive assessment and strategic importance

The external evaluation concludes that the SAFER Project's implementation during UEFA EURO 2024 has successfully paved the way for a new approach in developing long-lasting, rights-based legacies for global sporting events. The project advanced an innovative operational system to tackle harassment and abuse, demonstrating significant potential for safeguarding and promoting the right to health and leisure for women, girls, LGBT+, and other marginalised groups at football stadiums.

The project management and technical leadership executed by FSE and the partner responsible for the implementation, the German Football Association (DFB), were assessed as exemplary, creating an enabling environment for the consortium partners to successfully deliver all intended outcomes. The RRM is positioned as a tangible and impactful contribution to the event's overall human rights commitments.



2. The Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM): design, partnerships, and operation

2.1 Mechanism definition and conceptual foundation

The Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) was the main activity of the SAFER Project piloted during the tournament. It was conceived as a system to provide immediate, on-site assistance to spectators who felt harassed, discriminated against, threatened, or otherwise unsafe within the stadium.

The RRM was not developed in isolation; it was an integral component of UEFA's broader Human Rights strategy for UEFA EURO 2024, which included the adoption of a tournament-specific Human Rights Declaration, the establishment of a Human Rights Board with civil society representation, and a separate, independently operated Grievance Mechanism.

2.2 Scope of intervention and operational partners

The mechanism was designed to address a wide spectrum of incidents, ensuring a comprehensive safety net for attendees. Its mandate covered:

- **Discrimination:** Incidents based on gender, ethnicity, religion, or physical and mental disability.
- **Sexual assault:** Providing specialised, immediate, and trained support for those affected.
- **Abuse of power:** Addressing instances of power abuse or misuse of authority by public authorities, officials or others.
- **Escalation of violence:** Utilising location-based reporting to enable rapid de-escalation and assistance.
- **Medical and psychological emergencies:** Offering support for issues ranging from medical crises to panic attacks.

The RRM was deployed across all 10 UEFA EURO 2024 stadiums in Germany. It operated as part of a collaborative effort, led by FSE in partnership with the DFB, UEFA and the tournament organiser, EURO 2024 GmbH. The service provider

SaferSpaces was in charge of the technical execution, while the Psychological Emergency Unit of the German Red Cross supplied dedicated medical and psycho-social personnel, forming the response teams.

2.3 Operational modality and technological integration

The mechanism's accessibility was central to its design. It was publicised extensively via informational posters displayed throughout the stadiums. These posters featured geolocated QR codes that, when scanned, connected users directly to the RRM platform. This technology provided a dual function: it offered immediate access to help resources and enabled the RRM coordinators to dispatch assigned volunteers to the precise location of the individual in need, who could then be escorted to a designated Safe Room facility.

This system provided an anonymous, low-threshold, and technologically sophisticated solution, effectively overcoming the common barrier of having to verbally articulate a need for help in a public, crowded environment. For broader accessibility, the service was also available via a direct link within the official tournament mobile application.

3. Implementation analysis: quantitative outcomes and qualitative findings

3.1 Quantitative performance data

The RRM's pilot phase generated valuable quantitative data, establishing a critical baseline for future implementations. Throughout the tournament, the system recorded a total of 214 interactions via its QR code system. The dedicated Safe Room facilities were utilised on 56 separate occasions across

the 10 venues. An analysis of the Safe Room usage reveals the diverse nature of incidents addressed:

- Berlin: 9 uses (sexual harassment, racist behaviour, domestic violence, medical).
- Dortmund: 11 uses (primarily medical).
- Stuttgart: 13 uses (misuse of women's toilets, medical).
- Other venues reported cases of discriminatory behaviour, harassment, and overwhelming anxiety.

It is important to contextualize these figures; as a pioneering initiative, they represent a proof of concept rather than a definitive measure of incident prevalence. They successfully established a benchmark against which the impact of future enhancements to training and awareness can be measured.

3.2 Qualitative observations from independent field evaluation

The independent evaluation employed a mixed-methodology approach, including five site visits during match days in five different venues, and over 80 structured interviews with a wide range of stakeholders. The key findings from this qualitative assessment are as follows:

- **Training and awareness disparities:** A central finding was the inconsistent level of awareness regarding the RRM across different stakeholder groups. While a majority of specially designated „Human Rights Volunteers“ were well-informed, the evaluation frequently found that general volunteers, stewards, and information point staff demonstrated limited or no knowledge of the system. This gap was identified as a critical vulnerability, as these individuals are often the first point of contact for distressed spectators.



- Variable system visibility:** The visibility and clarity of RRM promotional materials were inconsistent across stadiums. Some venues, such as Dortmund and Cologne, had prominent poster placement at both outer (OSP) and inner security perimeters (ISP). Others, like Dusseldorf, had very limited signage in outer areas. A significant oversight was noted in VIP areas across visited stadiums, which largely lacked any information about the mechanism. Furthermore, in venues with pre-existing local safeguarding systems (eg, the „Wo ist Elli?“ code-word), the coexistence of the two systems caused confusion among both volunteers and spectators, indicating a need for better integration and messaging.
- Heterogeneity of safe room facilities:** The quality, privacy, and operational readiness of the Safe Rooms varied significantly. For example, the Safe Room in Dortmund was praised for having separate, private spaces, while the facility in Cologne was a single, open room lacking privacy. This inconsistency affected the mechanism’s ability to provide a uniformly safe and comforting environment for all types of incidents, particularly those of a sensitive nature.
- Overwhelmingly positive stakeholder consensus:** Despite the operational challenges, the consensus among all interviewed stakeholders – from UEFA staff to Red Cross personnel – was that the RRM is an impressive, groundbreaking, and essential initiative. There was unanimous agreement on its importance and a strong recommendation for its replication and enhancement at future UEFA events and other mega sporting events.

4. Recommendations for systemic enhancement and future application

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the RRM's pilot implementation, the following recommendations are proposed to solidify, standardise, and enhance its efficacy for future applications.

4.1 Institutionalisation of enhanced training and capacity building

Future implementations must move beyond ad-hoc training to a standardised and mandatory training for all personnel interacting with the public, including stewards, all categories of volunteers, and medical staff. This training should be integrated early in the event planning cycle and incorporate scenario-based exercises tailored to specific Human Rights risks.

Furthermore, daily pre-match briefings and structured mid-tournament refresher sessions are essential to maintain a high level of awareness and operational readiness across the entire tournament lifecycle.

4.2 Implementation of a strategic communication and visibility plan

Awareness of the RRM must be treated as a core component of the event's communication strategy. A multi-channel approach is recommended, encompassing dedicated social media campaigns, a clear informational presence on the official event website, and the strategic distribution of multi-lingual flyers in high-traffic areas such as information centres, food stalls, and entry gates.

To facilitate easy identification, RRM personnel should be provided with distinctive visual identifiers, such as uniquely coloured bibs or hats. Proactive awareness raising should also be extended to ancillary event spaces, including Fan Zones and public transport networks, to ensure attendees are informed of the available support before entering the stadium.

4.3 Standardisation and resourcing of safe room facilities

To ensure a consistent and effective response, minimum standards for Safe Room facilities must be established and enforced across all venues. These standards should mandate provisions for visual and acoustic privacy, such as room dividers or separate enclosures, and ensure a calming environment with appropriate furnishings (eg, sofas), water, and essential supplies.

A checklist of required equipment and resources should be developed and included in venue preparation guidelines.

4.4 Development of a robust monitoring, evaluation, and data collection framework

To enable evidence-based improvements, an independent monitoring framework with live reporting capabilities should be instituted. This would allow for real-time, evidence-based adjustments during the event itself.

Concurrently, data collection systems must be refined to capture consistent and detailed key performance indicators (KPIs). This will allow for a more nuanced analysis of usage patterns, incident types, and response effectiveness, providing invaluable data for future planning.

4.5 Fostering sustained stakeholder engagement and collaborative learning

The RRM's success was rooted in its co-creative approach. This should be strengthened by fostering meaningful, ongoing collaboration with potentially affected groups – including supporter associations, local NGOs, and Human Rights experts – throughout the entire event lifecycle.

Establishing formal channels for sharing learnings and best practices between different event organisers, both within UEFA and across other sporting bodies, will be instrumental in cementing the RRM as a global best practice.

5. Conclusion, endorsement, and legacy

The pilot implementation of the Rapid Response Mechanism during UEFA EURO 2024 represents a transformative advancement in the development of Human Rights and safety protocols at sporting events. It provides a concrete, field-tested model for proactively addressing gender-based violence, discrimination, and harassment, moving beyond policy statements to tangible intervention.

The mechanism's significance has been recognised at the highest levels of the tournament's governance structure. The UEFA EURO 2024 Human Rights Board, in its post-event insights report, explicitly highlighted the RRM as a „positive example of an initiative co-created by various expert agencies that built on established good practices.“ The Board further recommended the „further roll-out and implementation of the Rapid Response Mechanism at other UEFA events,“ framing it as a key legacy contribution of UEFA EURO 2024 towards safer and more inclusive future events.

In conclusion, the SAFER Project and its operational component, the RRM, have successfully established a new and elevated benchmark for Human Rights legacy in mega-sporting events. The project demonstrates conclusively that through strategic partnerships, appropriate technological integration, and unwavering institutional commitment, it is feasible to create a substantively safer and more inclusive environment for all attendees.

The RRM stands not merely as a successful pilot, but as a significant and enduring legacy of UEFA EURO 2024, offering a scalable, replicable, and highly relevant model for future tournaments within the football ecosystem and across the broader global sporting landscape.



PROPOSALS FOR NEW RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES TO BE INCLUDED IN ANNEXES A, B AND C OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SAFETY, SECURITY AND SERVICE AT FOOTBALL MATCHES AND OTHER SPORTS EVENTS, CONSIDERING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SAFER PROJECT

The Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (or the Saint-Denis Convention for short) was opened for signature on 3 July 2016 in Saint-Denis, France, at a UEFA EURO 2016 quarter-final match. To date, 32 member states have ratified the convention and another seven have signed it.

This convention builds upon the work done internationally since the adoption of the European Convention on Spectator Violence in 1985. It is the only internationally binding instrument to establish an integrated approach based on three interdependent pillars: safety, security, and service.

Its aim is to go from a violence-focused approach to safety, security, and service towards an integrated approach based on cooperation between all public and private stakeholders, including supporters, in order to provide a safe, secure, and welcoming environment at football matches and other sports events.

The Saint-Denis Convention is accompanied by a Recommendation (2021)¹ explaining to member states how it can be implemented. This Recommendation consolidates more than three decades of established good practices in the field of safety, security, and service across Europe. As a collection of recommended good practices and lessons learned in the field, the Recommendation is a living document that should be updated on a regular basis.

One key workstream of the SAFER project, therefore, was to develop proposals for amendments to the Recommendation and its four annexes derived from best practices and learnings for tackling gender-based violence that were identified during the project lifetime.

Amendments have been drafted for Annex A (Safety) on inclusivity (equitable ratios of male to female toilets and family-friendly infrastructure; safeguarding (e.g. safe spaces); gender equality, diversity, and inclusion training; rapid response mechanisms, and steward training in respectful and safe body search practices.

Turning to Annex B (Security), amendments are proposed for training police, safety officers, and stewards on gender equality, diversity and respectful communication; involving SLOs and other intermediaries in communicating and identifying emerging risks; integrating designated personnel trained in gender equality and diversity matters in police-SLO-supporter communication structures, and inclusion of gender-sensitive communication and safeguarding modules in police and steward training.

For Annex C (Service), the proposed amendments relate to inclusive dialogue processes to promote safeguarding measures and support services; inclusive supporters charters, and the tailoring of reporting, training, and awareness promotion measures to tackle harassment and gender-based violence.

Finally, a comprehensive package of proposals for additional good practices under Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 has been compiled covering topics such as:

- gender-sensitive and inclusive dialogue processes;
- clear and accessible reporting mechanisms;
- gender equality, diversity, and safeguarding training for SLOs, DAOs, and supporter representatives;
- integration of rapid response protocols into dialogue mechanisms;
- raising awareness of sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and safeguarding obligations within dialogue structures;
- updating supporters charters to:
 - promote safeguarding, gender equality and anti-harassment measures
 - improve reporting and response
- reflect the specific needs of women, minors and other vulnerable groups
- promote the appointment of trained safeguarding stewards and liaison officers
- integrate awareness and educational initiatives to tackle discrimination and gender-based violence
- creation of safeguarding support points within stadiums and fan zones;
- training of all staff deployed on matchday to permit victim-centred response to discrimination, harassment, and other rights violations;
- ensuring visibility of safeguarding mechanisms on matchday;
- integration of gender equality, safeguarding, and prevention of gender-based violence in football club community programmes;
- incorporation of awareness-raising and educational modules on gender equality, diversity, safeguarding, and prevention of gender-based violence in preventive community projects;
- provision of safeguarding support services by fans embassies;





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