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SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC AT FOOTBALL FACILITIES

The Police Service has a series of rules that govern its behavior towards football fans, with concern, tolerance, and suppressing violence being key overarching principles. A main priority during events should be to inform fans of which routes they should travel to guarantee safety, creating assurance of tolerance from both police and members of the public. This article examines the “Law on the safety of Mass Events” which was brought into force with the support of numerous stakeholders. While the Act arguably introduced the correct regulations, the issue of aggression on match days has not been entirely eliminated.

Keywords: fans, police, safety.

1. INTRODUCTION

The roots of negative behaviour of fans go back to ancient times. In 1300 BC, Egyptian fans as a result of the so-called “stadium war” led to the outbreak of a civil war, which resulted in the overthrow of the pharaoh Fikas. What we call cheering today has its roots in the Roman Empire. The crowd cheering for the chariot races fought fierce battles with each other. People identified with “their” players by taking on their colours. Today, however, football attracts the largest crowds of fans and the media, and it is at football facilities that the most fights take place (Dudała, 2004). The 1960s are considered to be the beginning of stadium hooliganism². It was at that time this phenomenon began to be pointed out as behaviours affecting safety and public order at the stadium and within it. Hooliganism originated in Great Britain, although at first it was not treated as a social problem. However, it is difficult to clearly define when the behaviour of fans began to bear traces of deliberate and planned creation of conflicts and violence in order to obtain satisfaction from participation in them, but practically from then on, stadium hooliganism is considered a social problem (Radwaniak, 2011). This results in the search for appropriate and better solutions to be able to provide the participants of mass events with protection and security at a high level to the greatest possible extent. The aim of the article is to present the problem of the

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² The very term “hooligan” probably comes from the surname of an Irish family living in southern London – Hooligan, headed by Edward Hooligan, who was famous for his turmoil during football matches. According to other sources, the origin of this term can also be found in the name of Hooley. He was the famous leader of juvenile criminals who headed the so-called Hooley Gang. The name “hooliganism” has been a synonym for derailed youth in England since 1880s.

safety of participants of mass events, with particular emphasis on football stadiums, as well as the resulting legal and organizational issues.

2. THE ISSUE OF SECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF STADIUM HOOLIGANISM

Security is fundamental to the existence of every individual and entire community (Koziej, 2011). It is defined as a state (achieving a sense of security of a given subject) and as a process (ensuring a sense of security) that is more practical because it shows how dynamic it is. The security of a given entity includes ensuring the possibility of survival (being, existence), ensuring the freedom to achieve one's own goals, reducing risk, preventing and opposing various threats to the entity and its interests (Koziej, 2011). The subject of security are all individuals with individual interests and expressing ambitions to implement them; starting from individuals, to social groups, nations, international communities, and ending with the whole of humanity (Koziej, 2011). Public order in doctrine and legal regulations is considered together with the concept of security. The definitions of public order and security cannot be unequivocally established once and for all as they depend on many changing factors. The meaning of these concepts is influenced by, among others, standards of behaviour prevailing in a specific social group, constantly changing living conditions, social views, legal regulations (Kotulski, 2000).

The fact that the safety of citizens is one of the most important values protected by the state is also stated in the first chapter of the Polish Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of Poland, 1997, art. 5). Security of a mass event is based on guaranteeing the safety of all participants of this event, obliging the organizer to meet many requirements in this regard. The legal definition of such an event requires it to be understood as a mass artistic and entertainment event or a mass sports event, including a football match³. It should be noted that the issue of security of mass events is related to the term public security and public order⁴.

The variety of people participating in a sporting event and the variety of motivations related to cheering rises many questions and makes us wonder how important it is to ensure the safety of participants in a sports event. Safety is of paramount importance for every human being, and in the opinion of the society, football stadiums have become places of increased risk and threat to health. Safety during mass events, sports events such as Championships and Games, but also during matches and other sports competitions qualified as mass events, is not only about fighting hooligans and their behaviour deviating from the norm. It is also a fight against terrorism, discrimination and taking care of cultural cheering.

³ Art. 3 point 1. The Act of March 20, 2009 on the safety of mass events (Journal of Laws of 2015, item 2139), hereinafter referred to as SMEA. The legal acts regulating the organization and securing of mass events also include other acts, e.g. the Act of May 24, 2013 on measures of direct coercion and firearms and the Act of May 21, 1999 on weapons and ammunition.

⁴ Public safety is defined as the actual situation inside the country, which allows a state organization to function freely and pursue its interests, preserve the life, health and property of particular individual individuals living in this organization, and allow these individuals to exercise their rights and freedoms. On the other hand, public order is a system of binding legal norms, customs and public relations, the respect and application of which determines the possibility of proper and normal development of coexistence in society and allows for harmonious operation of state institutions and offices.

The term “stadium crime” is currently not legally defined in a footnote. It is often associated with mass sports events (Obronca24h.pl). Stadium crime is interchangeably used as stadium hooliganism. In the criminal code, the legislator has included a definition that defines a hooligan act. A hooligan offense consists in a public, intentional and unreasonable attack on health, freedom, honour, bodily inviolability, general safety, public order, activities of state institutions or local self-government, or the deliberate destruction, damage or rendering unfit for use of someone else’s property (The Act, 1997, art. 115 § 21). This phenomenon is still current and so willingly presented by the media, but it does not include only fights or vandalism, as we have been used to in the media, but it has a much larger dimension (Morgała, 2012).

Stadium hooliganism, and more specifically its behaviour, is subject to legal regulations. Stadium crime refers to statutory prohibited acts committed in connection with football matches. Such behaviour applies not only to offenses or crimes committed during the football matches themselves, but also takes part outside the stadium before or after sports games, thus posing a threat to the local community (Morgała, 2012).

The participation of many people at the same time and in one place at the events resulted in the emergence of the threat. Such behaviour causes the man (Le Bon, 1997); is unable to think logically, cannot properly assess the current situation in which he is, often acts in a random and irrational way, sometimes takes unpredictable activities that pose a threat to others, does not feel the need to respect the rules and all civil rules, and also civil norms, he decisively, and sometimes even ruthlessly fights for his life, fighting to save himself, he does not pay attention to the lives of other people and also targets his conflicting actions and aggressive reactions towards order units. Gustaw Le Bon (Le Bon, 1997) also characterized the crowd by features; lack of unity, changeability, lack of persistence in pursuing a goal, feeling exaggerated, extreme emotions, impulsiveness in action, which sometimes leads to destructive behaviour, no tolerance for views other than one’s own, lower intellectual level of the crowd than distinct individuals who create it, thinking with images and combining them through simple associations, susceptibility to suggestions and collective “hallucinations”, loss of separateness and individuality, “disappearance of self-awareness”, a sense of impunity and invincibility, being guided in behaviour by suggestion, not rational processes, predominance of unconscious processes over conscious ones, overwhelming desire to realize the idea that has overwhelmed the crowd.

T. Milcarz in his work “Knights in scarves” states (Milcarz, 2006); most of the aggressive behaviour of fans is “malicious”, the subcultural activity of scarf-makers is an example of the inability to realize the positive aspects of freedom, escape from the freedom of fanatics is conditioned by the regularities of adolescence (...) and macrosocial processes (...), the mechanism of escaping from freedom of scarf-makers is authoritarianism, authoritarian personality traits visible in football fanatics arise as a result of defective socialization (...), “the syndrome of chivalry” is characteristic of participants of authoritarian youth subcultures, scarves do not fall within the criteria of mental health in the sense of normative humanism (...).

During mass meetings, many dangers and situations that compromise security may appear. It is distinguished, among other things, by damage to property or a threat to life. The level of threats is also influenced by activities undertaken by units designed to participate in security, as well as the location of facilities where games are organized, or the weather conditions prevailing on a given day (Struniawski, 2014). Such situations put the state in a negative light, as there is a conviction that the government is ineffective and

operative in implementing security for citizens (Police Headquarters, 2000). Such situations put the state in a negative light, as there is a conviction that the government is ineffective and operative in implementing security for citizens. Dangerous situations may occur not only in the stadium. Events that threaten human life or public order may also arise before or immediately after the events. In particular, this applies to breaking the prohibitions, having narcotic drugs with you during the event and bringing harmful and dangerous tools or objects to the play area. Examples include knives, glass bottles, and even weapons or flares. Violations of the law also include various types of offenses and violations of the law, such as drug trafficking, counterfeiting of match tickets, or theft (Wysocka, Łazaj, Hausman, 2010).

3. SAFETY OF FANS IN PRACTICE

Pursuant to the Act on the Safety of Mass Events, the *Police Register of Mass Events* “PRIM” has been established in Poland. In particular, the inventory records data on: security of mass sports events, security of non-sports events, units delegated to prepare inquiries and data to the Register, security measures and actions by Police officers in connection with organized mass events. It is mainly the Police officers who undertake activities aimed at securing the course of all events⁵. This applies in particular to sports games⁶. The participants of this kind of meetings are supporters of the opposition and not very supportive clubs and sports teams, who show their reluctance between clubs in a very visible and intrusive way.

The act on safety of mass events specifies in detail the rules of organization and safety of a football match as well as the tasks and powers of the services responsible for securing the event, i.e. security and information services. These documents define the limits of the powers of the services that take part in securing mass events (Act, 1997, art. 41). The security threats of a mass event are associated with the fact that such events attract a large number of people, which causes crowds and densities and thus carries the risk of injury (Lipski 2012). Age and racial diversity, views and even differences in character or appearance are, among others, the reasons for starting fights, quarrels and committing acts of vandalism by hooligans present at events.

We distinguish the following prohibited acts (Jurczewski 2013):

- Failure to carry out the order of the security services, the Police and the Military Police.
- Being in a place not intended for the public and in a sector other than that indicated on the ticket.
- Bringing or carrying alcoholic beverages at matches.

⁵ In 2005, the National Information Point for Mass Events was established. The point is subordinate to the Main Police Staff of the General Police Headquarters, and its purpose is to gather all pieces of information about mass events in one place.

⁶ The second place indicates also games of a musical nature, in which various subcultures take part, for example during hip-hop concerts, participants may fear the unfavourable behaviour of representatives of the punk community. As a rule, the lowest level of emerging situations that threaten public order is characteristic of artistic and entertainment games organized in the form of charity.

- The use of clothing or an object that makes identification impossible or significantly difficult.
- Bringing and having pyrotechnics, fire hazardous materials or explosives at the match.
- Breaking into the competition area or the mass event area.
- Throwing dangerous objects.
- Violation of the bodily integrity of a member of the law enforcement service, IT service or public official.
- Provoking fans to act in a way that threatens safety.
- Destruction of property.
- Promoting fascism or other totalitarian regimes and insulting a person or a group of people due to their origin or religion.
- Fight and beating.

According to the data provided by the GS KGP (Police Headquarters, 2020), in which the Police participated in carrying out defense and security activities, amounted to 7,812. Of all types of events, 226 were assigned to the category of higher risk events. The most frequently arranged type of mass events in Poland in the discussed year were artistic and entertainment events. Then, sports events were very popular. On the other hand, football matches were held least frequently, only 14%. However, the greatest strength was directed at football matches.

The costs borne by the Police in this respect amount to tens of millions of zlotys per year. The number of uniformed services directed to ensure order in connection with sports events would be enough to provide service in a large city or poviát headquarters. In 2017, the Police spent PLN 58,745.253 on the implementation of activities related to the conduct of mass events. The Police allocated PLN 16,308.706 for activities related to the organization of mass high-risk events. The highest costs were incurred by the Police in connection with securing football matches – PLN 37,341.945 (63.6% of the total). Securing the journeys of participants of mass events consumed PLN 8,884.146 in 2017. The Police allocated PLN 1,118.828 to secure the journeys of participants of mass events by rail transport, with the highest costs incurred in connection with the journeys of football fans – PLN 1,096.239, which constitutes 98% of the total (kpk.policja.gov.pl). This report shows that the protection and security of mass events is getting better organized and minimizes the crimes and offenses committed during the event.

Effective counteracting stadium hooliganism is based on the use of appropriate strategies and methods, which boil down to the appropriate preparation of the area and sports facility, as well as proper coordination of the activities of the match organizer's services and cooperating entities such as the Police. The essence of all actions is to prevent crimes, minimize the possibility of committing them and increase the chance of apprehending the perpetrator. The safety of participants in a mass event against attacks of aggression by fans is determined by three aspects (Chlebowicz, 2009). The first is to provide protection to those present against possible attacks by aggressive fans. The second is to protect fans of one team from possible attacks by fans of the opposing team. The third, however, is to ensure the safety of people participating in the event against possible attacks by people who have not been admitted to the event and are outside the facility.

Adequate infrastructure, a high level of training of services securing a mass event and cooperation with public law entities in the future result in a reduction of threats occurring

during mass events, not only those of a sports nature. It is worth emphasizing that all negative events taking place during mass events indicate what else needs to be done to increase the level of security and ensure better security for the participants of the event.

In turn, the reports of the Polish Football Association show behaviours that are driven by the aggression of fans and disrupt the order and security of the match:

- Uncontrolled intrusions of fans onto the facility, ramming the external fence of the facility.
- Incursions of fans into the field of the game or its zone, stands, sectors and other rooms on the site.
- Illegal consent of the organizer to bring and use pyrotechnics and combat tools, weapons, streamers and other items prohibited by the Act, the facility regulations, and resulting from the lack of proper control at the gates.
- Fights of fans with the police, security services, among themselves on the premises.
- The use and throwing of pyrotechnics, chemicals into the field of the game and its zone to sectors, causing a health hazard, reduced visibility or contamination of the area.
- Throwing objects (seats, bench strips, bottles, stones, snowballs, metal baskets, streamers, metal drain grates, etc.) at the referees, players, officials, law enforcement services, the police.
- Bringing and drinking alcohol at the stadium, presence of drunk spectators at the facility.
- Bringing and hanging banners, flags, expressing slogans with hostile, inflammatory, fascist symbols, anarchist signs and hooligan content etc.
- Setting fire, burning scarves, club-coloured flags, buffets, shops, toilets, creating fire hazards in the facility.
- Threats, intimidation, insults from fans, players, referees, coaches, officials, activists and against each other.
- Violation of personal inviolability, bodily injuries of judges, players, coaches, officials by fans at the sports facility.
- Damage to guest coaches, referees' vehicles, persons delegated to the competition.
- Breaks in the game due to disturbances in order and safety in the area of the field of play and in the stands.
- Interrupted competitions caused by hooligan disturbances of order and safety in the area of the game area of the playing field and in the stands.
- Manifestations of racist, anti-Semitic, provocative behaviour of the public towards themselves, players, judges, activists, officials.
- Police intervention – the use of direct coercion measures against aggressive behaviour of fans.
- Devastation of the facility, destruction of its devices by fans.

The organization and security of football matches of the PZPN central level are improving. In the 2019/2020⁷ season, during 23 events, sports competitions were

⁷ The document prepared by the Department of Event Organization, Safety and Infrastructure of the Polish Football Association was based on the reports of the PZPN Match Delegates, information from the organizers of the competition (604 matches carried out in the normal mode) and the assessment of the condition of the pitch made by the referees (all matches of the season).

interrupted/suspended (3.3% of all matches – mainly due to the use of pyrotechnics and throwing objects towards the pitch), and the command/management of a mass event was delegated to the Police once (0.2% of all matches). The most common incidents at matches were shouting hostile/vulgar shouts (53% of matches), use of pyrotechnics (14% of matches) and late arrival of fans at the stadium (12% of matches). In the 208 matches analysed in the premier league, throwing objects or at other sectors took place during 18 matches. Vandalism related activities took place at the facility during 15 matches.

Other incidents at the level of Ekstraklasa:

- Intrusion onto the playing field (1).
- Disturbance of order in the stadium (2).
- Attack on a player, referee, other player (3).
- Protests, demonstrations (10).
- Racist and anti-Semitic behaviour (2).
- Problems with tickets, accreditation, identifiers (1)
- Problems with crowding, overcrowding, panic, queues (1).
- Incorrectly organized segregation of fans (2).
- Technical infrastructure problems (4).
- Problems related to detaining fans after the match (8).

However, there was no disturbance of order around the stadium and the use of laser pointers.

It is also worth noting that in terms of safety during the games organized by the Polish Football Association and Ekstraklasa SA: “clubs must support and develop good relations with their official and registered fan associations” (Janus, 2014). The safety regulations include cooperation with fans (www.pzpn.pl): 1. Clubs must foster and develop good relations with their official and registered fan associations. 2. Clubs must require associations to insist on standards of good behaviour for their members and to exclude the membership of those involved in any form of hooliganism or anti-social behaviour. 3. Clubs must insist that fan associations make effective efforts to ensure that alcohol is not picked up or consumed during organized tours.

Securing mass events and involving the police in it are also dealt with by the Council of the European Union, which in its resolution of June 3, 2010 on the updated manual with recommendations on international police cooperation and on preventive and control actions related to acts of violence and disruptions order during international football matches⁸.

⁸ List of documents previously adopted by the Council of the EU 1. Council Recommendation of November 30, 1993 concerning the liability of organizers of sporting events. 2. Council Recommendation of December 1, 1994 on direct, informal information exchange with Central and Eastern European countries in the field of international sporting events (network of contact persons). 3. Council Recommendation of December 1, 1994 on the exchange of information relating to international sporting events and meetings (network of contact persons). 4. Council Recommendation of April 22, 1996 on guidelines for the prevention and reduction of disorder related to football matches, with an attached standard format for the exchange of police information on football hooligans. 5. Joint action of May 26, 1997 on cooperation in the field of law, order and security. 6. Resolution of the Council of June 9, 1997 on preventing and reducing football hooliganism through the exchange of experiences, the ban on admission to stadiums and through media policy. 7. Council Resolution of June 21, 1999 on a handbook on international police cooperation and measures to prevent and control acts of violence and disorder in connection with

4. SUMMARY

During the outbreaks of aggression in the stadiums, groups began to form that began competing outside the stadium, arranging the so-called “Acts”, and in this case the “Act on safety of mass events” does not apply. Effective counteracting stadium hooliganism is based on the use of appropriate strategies and methods, which boil down to the appropriate preparation of the area and sports facility as well as proper coordination of the activities of the match organizer’s services and cooperating entities such as the Police. The essence of all activities is to prevent crimes, minimize the possibility of committing them and increase the chance of apprehending the perpetrator. Security at stadiums is not only about securing guests and locals by the supporters’ services or the proper transport of fans. These include the efficient and safe introduction of fans to the visiting sectors, counteracting inappropriate acts, or ensuring the comfort of watching the match for fans. More and more modern stadiums, increased security, fewer and fewer incidents – these are just some of the few issues that have improved in recent years.

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