

## VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND CONTROL ON STADIUMS

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### Abstract:

*Sport, turned into a mass phenomenon of the modern social life starting with the 19<sup>th</sup> century gradually attracted a high number of adepts and an increasing number of supporters. A very important role in these changes and cultural meanings was held by the media. First, the written press, printings, cinema, radio, television and not the least important professionals working in these areas. The numerous participation of individuals to sports life was greatly stimulated by the media which, through the sports news or events, through the interventions of celebrities of sports life provided sport 'certain categories of cultural meaning.'*<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** violence, sociology of sport, cultural meaning, mass media.

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<sup>1</sup> Phil Andrews, *Jurnalismul sportiv. O introducere*, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2006, p. 31

Sport became today an area of the economic and financial zone, involving media which gets substantial income unconditionally. The sports phenomenon, affected in the last decades the breach of the regulations to carry out sports activities led to the manifestation of violence 'on the field' among involved sportsmen, but also to violence manifested outside sports fields (spectators and supporters).

A special effort to know the phenomenon of violence in sport goes to social sciences: sociology, social psychology and cultural anthropology. The concept of violence can be explained through the concept of deviance of will, causing feelings of frustration, affective liability and aggressive manifestations.

There are many countries, except Romania, which look for solutions to diminish the phenomenon of violence on stadiums. It is difficult, at present, to get conclusive data on violence at the level of federations or clubs or governmental organisms.<sup>2</sup>

Direct or indirect actions cause violence in sport at the level of people, groups or spectators, both during and after sports events take place.

Unfortunately, in Romania the phenomenon of violence is more and more frequent and highly present in sport, in football, respectively stadiums, reason for which I directed my attention to getting an answer to the question 'How can we control and prevent violence within stadiums?' I aimed at finding an answer to this question, thinking of my role of supporter as well, since it is painful to give up a civilised way of life, afraid that something bad might happen. One cannot go on the stadium and encourage the favourite team because of the fear that you can be a victim anytime.

In a democratic state, supporters often assist breathlessly at matches with unforeseen aspects, in which ambitions and pride make players turn into genuine gladiators in the football temple. The satisfaction of the show boils stormily in the veins of the lovers of the sports-king but when the results become unsatisfactory, violence is unleashed. We got used to borrow everything can be adopted from other states, but most often it does not result to be of benefit.

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<sup>2</sup> Dan Iancau Dascălu and others, *Violența în sport*, Editura Universității din Suceava, 2006, p.202-206

Violence on stadiums reached alarming levels in Romania in the last couple of years, resulting in a vulgar language, harmful for young generations, and primitive behaviour. Violence represents a social complex phenomenon more often met in contemporary societies. Members of international organisations, experts, governmental and nongovernmental organisations, as well as ordinary citizens express opinions in what concerns the increase of the number of violent acts and various forms of their manifestation, and automatically the raise of a feeling of insecurity of citizens being in various social and cultural spaces. Violence is a topic upon which experts channelled their efforts intensively in the last years, investigating the causes, the ways of manifestation and mostly the ways to prevent and combat this phenomenon.

#### **1. Major risk factors generating violence on stadiums**

The main factors creating a serious problem on stadium are the alcohol, supporters' attitude and behaviour, different from one gallery to the other. Terribleness is another dimension of supporters, the hooligan behaviour of certain members of galleries. There is no fun if there is not at least a small conflict between them and the order forces, this is one of the main answers of supporters.

Other major factors resulting after a survey completed within the Romanian Gendarmerie are: a) lack of education; b) challenges; c) insults of other fans; d) the weak game of the favourite team; and e) possible frauds of referees, so that supporters get the impression that they have the right to penalty kicks, which are not offered though. Security forces will have to bear with all their dissatisfaction.

The main risk factors are the following, from the perspective of gendarmes:

- 1. High consumption of alcohol and other forbidden substances**
- 2. Team game;**
- 3. The decisions of referees;**

4. Challenges of other spectators;
5. Lack of education and common sense;
6. Lack of drastic punishments of inconsistent application of those in place;
7. Lack of professionalism or superficiality of security staff is clearly noticed by galleries, the individuals in a group of isolated ones do not have the same force or dare;
8. Emergence of supporters inciting to violence;
9. Suspicions about the players' professionalism;
10. The correct dispute of some matches;
11. The insufficient cooperation between security forces and organizers;
12. The involvement of officials or players in applying certain measures for certain acts of an illegal nature;
13. Copying the hooligan behaviour by supporters
14. Aggravation of rivalry causing violence, between supporters of rival teams.

Security forces observe the creativity, inventiveness of the fans methods by which they introduce forbidden items on the stadium or build banners in the stands after they occupied their seats. Violent incidents in stands are due to a high degree of freedom, permissive laws, lack of education, entourage, frustrations, rivalries between galleries, alcohol consumption, and clubs chairs. Among the members of a gallery there are individuals who come only for the scandal on the stadium.

Other risk factors in what concerns the diversity and the degree of aggressive and violent manifestations on the stadiums especially are as follows:

- The consumption of substances diminishing one's hyperactivity;

- The lack of sufficiently firm measures at the control for the access on stadiums and warning supporters about the effects of violent actions;
- Insufficient commitment of clubs staff/competition spaces to ensure carrying out competition along the spirit of fair-play;
- The wish of certain supporters/players/other people to manifest their dissatisfaction about the results of a match and the quality of the game of their favourite team;
- Hostile attitudes regarding teams/players considered rivals, present on social media networks or within comments of a shocking nature on media channels.

## 2. Legal systems regarding the prevention and control of violence in sport

### 2.1. EU (European Union) Legislation

Violence on stadiums is a phenomenon often met, both internally, as well as internationally, difficult to control and respectively difficult to prevent and combat. Since it represents one of the problems manifested under various forms including member states in the European Union, international organisms invested with legal power have promulgated certain international legal instruments regarding the defence and development of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The aim of these legal initiatives is that to achieve a closer union between the members of the European Union regarding the prevention and combat of any kind of manifestation which might undermine man's fundamental rights and freedoms. Also, this legal initiative at European level represents a proof of the international recognition of these values as being essential to man's life, dignity and physical and moral integrity.

There are many legal instruments at international level which treat the prevention and combat of such disturbances of man's fundamental rights, but those which refer to violence and which we will analyse are the following ones:

1. **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Resolution 217A (III)/10 December 1948;**

2. **The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Council of Europe; 1953;**

3. **The White Book on Sport – European Commission.**

## **2.2. The Legislation in Romania**

Referring to the legislation in Romania, this meets the requirements/standards of European legislation, in what concerns the prevention and combat of violence in sport.

The legal act regarding the prevention and combat of violence on the occasion of sports competitions and sports games is Law no.4/2008, completed and changed by Law no.10/2012.

The main state institutions and of the civil society supporting the human rights and freedoms are:

- **Governmental and nongovernmental organisations in Romania with attributions in the area of the respect of human rights, of the prevention and combat of torture and inhuman and degrading treatments**

The respect of man's fundamental rights and freedoms is achieved with the support of state institutions and the civil society, and, externally, with international organisations with a role in the area. Among them, we list:

- **The Ombudsman**

The Ombudsman represents an independent institution with the aim of protection of citizens' rights and freedoms in their relation with public authorities. This institution cannot, however, offer to the justice appealers, or represent them in a court.

- **The Romanian Institute for Human Rights (RIHR)**

The Romanian Institute for Human Rights, set up through Law no.9/1991 aims to contribute, through various means, to better knowledge of the issues about human rights, as well as the promotion and their protection. Another purpose of the institute is to inform public opinion outside the country and international organisms about the practical ways of ensuring and respecting the human rights in Romania.

- **The Association for the Protection of Human Rights in Romania – Helsinki Committee**

The Association for the Protection of Human Rights in Romania – Helsinki Committee (APADOR-CH) represents a nongovernmental and non-profit institution set up in 1990 and affiliated to the Helsinki International Federation located in Vienna. APADOR-CH aims to represent, in the dialogue with the state, a basic element, influential and fundamental, and in its cooperation with the social society, a catalyst in changing the society and its institutions, with the aim of achieving a democratic culture, based on the respect of human rights.

The role of APADOR-CH is to determine raising the awareness and respect of human rights and the principle of pre-emption.

- **Organisation for Human Rights Protection - OADO**

The organisation for Human Rights Protection represents a humanitarian kind of organisation, apolitical, non-lucrative, independent association, with no political, institutional, religious or another affiliation, based on the free initiative expressed by its founding members, and on their understanding and commitment of the purpose, objectives and the need to promote and protect human rights.

### **3. Proposals to prevent and control violence in sport**

The results obtained following various studies and research taking place in several countries, as well as Romania, highlight the fact that although the social control

interventions were intensified to prevent violence in sport within contemporary societies along the path of progress, the acts of violence and aggressiveness present a re-emergence and an increase, as number of illegal acts and as typologies of violent acts.

Violence facts on stadiums were intensified and are manifested as acts against life and the physical integrity of individuals, generating numerous human victims and material damage, producing feelings of fear and social insecurity among population.

Human violence represents an issue of contemporary societies, being met everywhere in the world, in all areas of social and individual areas, under various forms of manifestations. Violence in sport is noted before, during or after sports events, on stadiums or in public spaces, and it emerges from the moment it actions upon one individual or a human group, using brutal force or subtle forms of violence, such as: blackmail, intimidation, threat or corruption, or speculative language with derogatory connotations. Most often, violence in sport is manifested between human groups as: tension, clashes, force rapport, inequality or hierarchy. Therefore, in the environment of carrying out sports events, two kinds of violence can be observed: objective violence which are of a penal nature (crimes, infringements), upon which responsible institutions are to intervene, up to subjective violence which stand for subtler types of attitude violence (contempt), humiliation, insulting), which some authors call 'antisocial behaviours.'

Although the increase of violence acts in sport is a highly popular topic in written or audio-visual media, this topic turned into a daily one for the population, without a special observation about the toxicity of the phenomenon. The manifestations of violence in sport which are part of our daily life are: as oral violence between supporters and players, supporters and clubs leaders, supporters and security forces (insults, detractions, humiliations), damaging the goods inside or outside the place where sports competitions take place, the denial to obey regulations demanded by competition organisers and security forces (especially within football matches).

Violence in sport as a part of human violence is relative since it emerges from the interrelations assumed by social, legal, political, historical and cultural codes of the society it manifests in. Violence in sport in the contemporary society, as actually

human violence in general, refers to distinct social and cultural realities, since it underwent various transformations during time, as well as the elimination of certain forms of violence and the emergence of others, subtler and more difficult to notice.

In the Romanian contemporary society, the tendencies to raise acts of violence in sport represent a real phenomenon, whose mechanisms of emergence, social effects, and ways of solutioning are of interest to both the factors with a role in prevention and social control, as well as the public opinion, increasingly more concerned about the raise of the number of violence acts manifested before, during or after sports events take place, against a person or a human group and against the assets, the dignity and freedom of individuals.

We list below a series of measures which were already adopted to combat the phenomenon of violence in sport:

a) During the 13<sup>th</sup> informal reunion (Athens, 1-2 June 1988), the ministers of sports asked the standing committee to “elaborate a practical report on a comprehensive package of control measures” (MSL-GT13, rev., paragraph 30).

b) The first report draft, based on the observations and measures submitted to the attention of the standing committee, was examined during the 4<sup>th</sup> reunion, 19-20 July 1988;

c) A revised draft was submitted, for comments, including information after the European Football Championship took place (Federal Republic of Germany, June 1988).

The measures analysed by European decision-holders aimed at the following aspects:

- Permanent measures with the aim to prevent the violence of spectators during football sports events;
- Measures to be adopted before a sports event of a high risk.

The author of the research took into account, for the analysis of the prevention measures, activities and actions leading to combatting aggressiveness, violence, the diminution of the number of victims, but also that of aggressors, be it through the

stimulation of the correct and fair-play behaviour, or through the education of supporters who are to be aware of the coercive measures, penalties and sanctions which they may get in case of an criminal behaviour. When we refer to violence in sport, both individuals, as well as football clubs and security forces need to aim that sports events are relaxing, fun, avoiding the dangerous, negative and aggressive tendencies. The truly useful are the ways of “preventing, limiting and eliminating the deviations from current normality.”<sup>3</sup>

The attention given to the sportsmen behaviour is higher in sports newspapers than in general ones. Next come supporters and the interactions between supporters and security forces. The attitude of journalists to violence acts in sport is rather neutral, sometimes manifestations affecting the reputation of clubs and the image of supporters to the matches of European or international matches are commented upon.

Important for the prevention and combat of violence in sport are the role of the Olympics movement and of the international document regulating the role of international organisms and of national Olympic committees. The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a better and peaceful world, educating youth through practising sports in agreement with the principle and the value of Olympic Games.

The three component parts of the Olympic Movement are the International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Federations (IF) and National Olympic Committees (NOC). The IOC mission is to encourage and support the promotion of ethics in sports, the education of youth through sports and the attachment to the values of fair-play, to cooperate with organisations and public authorities to place sports in the service of humanity and peace in the whole world. Moreover, the Olympic movement aims at consistent encouraging of the promotion of women in sport at all levels and structures, with the purpose of implementing equality and gender opportunities.

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<sup>3</sup> Zamfir, 1993, p. 138

The prevention programmes can be of a wide range: educational and social measures, the improvement of relationship between the club and supporters, the promotion of dialogue with rival clubs, the control of spectators through surveillance cameras, police interventions, investments in infrastructure, the enhancement of the social role of clubs, the organization of ticket offices, appropriate legislation and many others. When it is about a city to host a sports event, everything has to be based on a genuine policy of hospitality: specialized structures to receive and accompany supporters, ensuring transport, meals and accommodation for foreign supporters, taking measures so that the planned competition does not generate a feeling of exclusion in deprived neighbourhoods or for youngster having certain issues (not accepted or unable to find cheap tickets before a match). Before the game (days, hours), a pleasant atmosphere is set in the area where the sports field is located, there are appeals to calmness and fair-play addressed to the population. The engagement of celebrities in such actions is a positive element.

We list below some of the most noteworthy measures to combat the violence in sport which were recorded by media in our country:

No.	Type of action	Media source
1.	Anti-violence campaign carried out by Gendarmerie: "Say NO to violence in sport"  26 Jan.2014	<a href="http://www.sighet247.ro/s/campanie-anti-violenta-derulata-de-jandarmerie-spune-nu-violentei-in-sport/">http://www.sighet247.ro/s/campanie-anti-violenta-derulata-de-jandarmerie-spune-nu-violentei-in-sport/</a>
2.	"Violence is not your roommate"  30 Oct.2013	<a href="http://www.wowbiz.ro/e2809eviolenta-nu-este-colega-ta-de-camerae2809d_75501.html">http://www.wowbiz.ro/e2809eviolenta-nu-este-colega-ta-de-camerae2809d_75501.html</a>
3.	"NO HOOLIGANS ON STADIUMS: The Law to combat violence in sport,	<a href="http://www.mediafax.ro/sport/fara-huligani-pe-stadioane-legea-privind-combaterea-violentei-in-sport-promulgata-de-">http://www.mediafax.ro/sport/fara-huligani-pe-stadioane-legea-privind-combaterea-violentei-in-sport-promulgata-de-</a>

	promulgated by President Basescu”  Bucharest, 5 Jan.2012	presedintele-basescu-9129364
4.	Law concerning the combat of violence in sport was approved; hooligans are to see the football games in the police station  Bucharest, 15 Dec.2011	<a href="http://sport.hotnews.ro/stiri-sport-10948949-legea-privind-combatarea-violentei-sport-fost-aprobata-huliganii-trebuie-vada-meciurile-sectia-politie.htm">http://sport.hotnews.ro/stiri-sport-10948949-legea-privind-combatarea-violentei-sport-fost-aprobata-huliganii-trebuie-vada-meciurile-sectia-politie.htm</a>
5.	The “Racism damages the game. Violence damages lives” Campaign  21 Oct.2007	<a href="http://www.cncd.org.ro/agenda/Campanii-si-proiecte/RASISMUL-STRICA-JOCUL-VIOLENTA-DISTRUGE-VIETI-3/">http://www.cncd.org.ro/agenda/Campanii-si-proiecte/RASISMUL-STRICA-JOCUL-VIOLENTA-DISTRUGE-VIETI-3/</a>
6.	The prevention and combat of violence in sport  Bucharest, 8 Apr.2006	<a href="http://jurnalul.ro/vechiul-site/old-site/arhiva-jurnalul/arhiva-jurnalul/prevenirea-si-combaterea-violentei-in-sport-23846.html">http://jurnalul.ro/vechiul-site/old-site/arhiva-jurnalul/arhiva-jurnalul/prevenirea-si-combaterea-violentei-in-sport-23846.html</a>

Another kind of measures to contribute to the prevention of violence in sport is based on the non-violence concept of the great Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>4</sup>

*“I coined the word Satyagraha in South Africa in order to give a name to the power with which the Indians there fought for a full 8 years (1906 - 1914). I spoke of Satyagraha in order to force a wedge between this power and the movement which was referred to in Great Britain and South Africa as passive resistance.*

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dadalos.org/rom/Vorbilder/gandhi/gandhi.htm>, accessed 10 November 2013

*Satyagraha is as far away from passive resistance as the North Pole is from the South Pole. Passive resistance is the weapon of the weak and, therefore, the application of physical pressure or violence are not ruled out in the efforts to reach its aims. In contrast, Satyagraha is the weapon of the strongest. The use of force of any kind is ruled out. (...) This law of love is nothing other than the love of truth. Without truth there is no love. (...)*

*Satyagraha is also referred to as the power of the soul, because the certainty of an inherent soul is necessary, if the Satyagraha is to believe that death does not mean the end but the summit of the fight. (...) And in the knowledge that the soul outlives the body, does he not wait impatiently to experience the victory of truth within his present body. (...) And despite this, it has been said that the Satyagraha - as we understand it - could only be practiced by a chosen minority. In my experience, the opposite is true. When its basic principles are understood - hold on to the truth and stand up for it through one's own suffering - then everyone can practice Satyagraha. (...)*

*At a political level, however, battle in the name of the people is primarily aimed at taking action against unjust laws. When petitions and all other attempts at persuading a legislator to recognize the injustice of a law have failed, then the only means left open to those protesters, not prepared to obey the law, is to force the legislator to abolish the law. This is done by breaking the law and bringing punishment and suffering upon oneself. Therefore, Satyagraha still appears to the public as civil disobedience or civil resistance. "Civil" should be taken as non-criminal action."*

To respond the demands of preventing the phenomenon of violence in sport, the concept initiated by Mahatma Gandhi can be followed in the succession of the ideas exposed below:

- We reject the concept of violence, because the good resulted from it does not last; instead, the harm caused by violence is a long one;
- Violence is the weapon of the weak people; non-violence is the weapon of the strong ones;

- The principle of non-violence is subject to proof when it confronts violence;
- Non-violence, in its dynamic form, means conscious suffering. Not to assume that we bow the heads in front of violence from those who exploit us, but to measure, with all our being, the will of the tyrant;
- A Satyagrahi (adept of non-violence) says good bye to fear. He dares to trust an enemy. Even if the enemy fails him twenty times, a Satyagrahi is ready to trust him for the twenty first time again;
- My belief in non-violence obliges me to be very determined. There is no room for cowardice or weakness;
- In case of those making use of violence; there is hope that they will find one day the path to non-violence, which is not valid in the case of cowards;
- Perseverance consists in imposing voluntarily in order to accept with good will by other people of our vision.

#### 4. Conclusions

Considering the whole range of elements presented, it appears that the phenomenon of violence in sport remains an area upon which researchers and specialists need to concentrate their attention in the coming years, when media channels will continue to publish news and articles, presenting especially what is sensational and shocking, while authorities and the civil society will try to action on the combat and prevention of activities of an aggressive nature; we hope, at the same time, that the supporters in Romania will start and mange, gradually, to have a more controlled behaviour, more moderate and closer to the European standards in place. For these reasons, the education to combat violence represents a must, and school and extra-curricular activities have a key role in shaping future supporters interested to participate in and be a civilized fan, no matter the kind of sports competition which is supported.

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