



READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following text and choose the correct answer for the questions below.

STADIUMS SAFETY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Safety and security risks at football events, potential liabilities for organisers and the threat of terrorist attacks at matches were central topics that dominated the latest UEFA-EU Stadium and Security Conference in Bucharest on 8th September.

Liability and risks was the theme of the gathering, attended by over 300 delegates from UEFA, the EU, national associations, clubs, police forces and other partners. The conference heard that safety and security risks represent a significant challenge for UEFA, national associations, clubs, venue owners and other participants, and can concern stadium construction, violence inside or outside stadiums, the use of pyrotechnics or potential terrorist actions.

UEFA Executive Committee member and UEFA Stadium and Security Committee deputy chairman, František Laurinec, told the audience that safety risks at football events remained “an ever-present reality, and with risks comes liability”. Laurinec urged all stadium and safety stakeholders to heed European and national laws, stressing that all stadiums must conform to European safety standards. “Whether you are a police officer, a stadium safety officer or an event organiser,” he said, “failure to mitigate against foreseeable or preventable risks comes with a risk of liability for the responsible party.”

The conference heard that the threat of terrorist incidents at football matches was now a priority item on the security agenda. “We have all been reminded that football events are a target,” Laurinec reflected. “We must all pull together to counter the risk of terrorism. None of us can feel remotely complacent. People’s lives are at stake.” Delegates agreed that integrated cooperation involving governments, police, security forces, match organisers and the general public must be increased. Effective security controls by well-trained security staff around stadiums were crucial as a deterrent, and people should be encouraged to report or give information to the police on any suspicious people or incidents.

No excuse for disorder

In a message to the conference, European Commission first vice-president, Frans Timmermans, called for exclusion measures to deal with violence around football matches. “Every season, millions of football fans from all European countries travel all across Europe to support their teams,” he said. “The overwhelming majority of these



fans just want to enjoy the game.” “Unfortunately,” he added, “some see the games as an opportunity for crime, disturbance and hooliganism. There can never be an excuse for football violence and disorder. That means that the governments and the police must be at the forefront of its prevention. Keep these people away from football.”

Another important focal point in Bucharest was the health and safety risks associated with the use of pyrotechnics in stadiums, responsible for the highest number of incidents at UEFA matches last season. “UEFA has never accepted that an activity which puts at risk the lives and health of supporters should be tolerated,” said František Laurinec.

UEFA’s head of stadium and security, Marc Timmer, explained the body’s new stadium and security strategy, featuring a comprehensive support programme for national associations. The strategy includes reviews of current national and international strategies and arrangements, support in developing new strategies and legal frameworks, and ongoing training for stadium safety officers, stewards and police. The strategy is fully aligned with the Council of Europe’s new Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events. “The new convention represents a unique opportunity to make European football safer, secure and welcoming,” said Timmer

Questions

1. Concerning safety and security at stadiums, UEFA, national associations, clubs and venue owners...

- a. are currently trying to improve this issue
- b. already have this issue under control
- c. still need to enhance this issue
- d. A and C are correct.

2. According to František Laurinec, if an expected risk is not avoided at a stadium...

- a. the liable party will be blamed for it.
- b. the responsible party will be exempted from it.
- c. it will not be the stadium safety officer’s responsibility.
- d. the responsible party will be exonerated of all guilt.



3. The text states that integrated cooperation among governments, police, security forces, match organisers and the general public...

- a. is already adequate
- b. should be encouraged
- c. is enough
- d. should be lessened

4. The previous season most of the incidents at UEFA matches were caused by...

- a. different types of crimes
- b. terrorist attacks
- c. fireworks display
- d. hooliganism