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Lord Goldsmith
Chair
International Agreements Committee
House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW

6 November 2023

Dear Lord Goldsmith

**Government response to the International Agreements Committee 23rd
Report - Scrutiny of International Agreements: Council of Europe
Convention on Sports Event Safety and Security 2023**

Thank you for the International Agreements Committee's report, '*Scrutiny of International Agreements: Council of Europe Convention on Sports Event Safety and Security 2023*'. I am writing in response to the recommendations set out in this report.

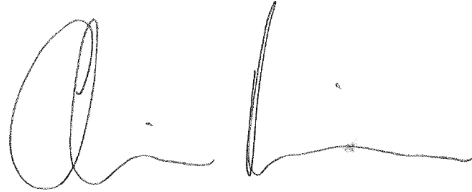
I am pleased that the Committee supports the ratification of the Council of Europe's Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events - known as the Saint-Denis Convention - which provides for an integrated multi-stakeholder approach to safety, security and service with a greater focus on prevention. As you are aware, this builds upon an earlier Council of Europe Convention, the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches, to which the UK was a signatory.

As flagged in your report, there has been a recent focus on the Saint-Denis Convention following the 2022 Champions League Final as well as the highly publicised UK and Republic of Ireland bid to host the 'Euro 2028' football tournament. We would like to draw to the Committee's attention to the fact that we are confident that England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland are already fully compliant with the requirements set out within the Convention. This Government is determined to ensure that law abiding fans are able to enjoy football matches in safety and we believe that ratification of this Convention will demonstrate our commitment to this.

I have attached an annex to this letter that addresses the substantive points made in the Committee's report.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the International Trade Select Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Philp', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire

**Annex: Government Response to the International Agreements
Committee 23rd Report - Scrutiny of International Agreements: Council
of Europe Convention on Sports Event Safety and Security 2023**

Paragraph 7: We regret the so far unexplained delay between signature of the Convention and its laying before Parliament. We encourage all Departments to lay treaties at the earliest opportunity after signature.

The Government understands the need to lay treaties at the earliest opportunity after signature. It has always been the Government's intention to ratify the Convention after signature however the Covid pandemic prevented this being taken forward as soon as we would have liked. As referenced in my letter, I also wish to emphasise that England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have all been fully compliant with the articles of the Convention since signature in 2019.

Paragraph 12: We welcome the Convention's provisions to ensure safety and security in sports events and to support increased international cooperation in this area. Where funding for security remains contested, we call on the Government to convene key stakeholders to resolve these issues and secure a settlement.

The Government and the police work closely with international partners in fora including the Council of Europe Committee on Safety and Security at Sport Events and relevant working groups in order to prepare for major international tournaments.

In the event that funding for the security of major sporting events is contested, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Home Office would convene key stakeholders, such as the relevant sport's governing body and policing, to resolve the issues and secure a settlement.

Paragraph 14: We call on the Government to lay out its plans for establishing a National Football Information Point (NFIP).

The UK has a long-established National Football Information Point operating within the UK Football Policing Unit (UKFPU). The UKFPU is a Home Office-funded police unit. It collates, assesses and distributes information and intelligence to all those that need it, ensuring that appropriate action can be taken within the UK and overseas to prevent football-related crime and disorder. UKFPU works closely with local forces within the UK and also liaises with overseas NFIPs to share vital intelligence relating to international football matches and tournaments as well as other relevant international sporting events.

Paragraph 16: We call on the Government urgently to devise plans to meet the Convention's requirements for proactive and regular communication with key stakeholders, especially supporter representatives and local communities. These plans should draw on existing good practice from the UK and internationally.

The Government agrees that regular engagement with key stakeholders is important in ensuring safety and security at football matches and already meets the Convention's requirements for proactive and regular communication with key stakeholders. In the lead up to all international tournaments and major footballing events, the Government (including the Home Office, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and FCDO) and other key footballing stakeholders (including the Football Association, Football Supporters Association and UKFPU) engage on a regular basis to discuss the safety of fans and put in place actions to mitigate risks. These plans take account of events and good practice in previous football tournaments that have been held both in the UK and internationally.

Paragraph 18: We regret that the Government's Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Convention lacks explanatory detail. We reiterate our call to the Government to ensure that each Explanatory Memorandum contains relevant contextual information, including on any pre-existing Conventions to which it relates, and identifies any substantial differences in the new Convention.

The Government recognises the importance of a detailed Explanatory Memorandum. The Saint-Denis Convention was preceded by another Council of Europe convention: the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches, to which the UK was a signatory. This was drafted following the tragedy at the Heysel stadium in Brussels and came into force on 1 November 1985. The 1985 Convention focused primarily on the prevention and control of spectator violence. The Saint-Denis Convention builds upon this with an emphasis on co-operation and formal structured engagement between police, organisers, local authorities, licensing authorities, local communities and supporters. It also recognises the need to engage supporters and local communities to generate positive co-operation, as well as identifying solutions to potential problems, developing and testing contingency and emergency plans, all of which are significant updates to the 1985 Convention. The Government is confident that England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland are already compliant with the new requirements set out in the Saint-Denis Convention.



HOUSE OF LORDS

International Agreements Committee

23rd Report of Session 2022–23

**Scrutiny of
International
Agreements: Council
of Europe Convention
on Sports Event Safety
and Security 2023**

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International Agreements Committee

The International Agreements Committee is appointed by the House of Lords in each session to consider matters relating to the negotiation, conclusion and implementation of international agreements, and to report on treaties laid before Parliament in accordance with Part 2 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

Membership

The Members of the International Agreements Committee are:

<u>Lord Fox</u>	<u>Lord Kerr of Kinlochard</u>
<u>Lord Geidt</u>	<u>Baroness Kingsmill</u>
<u>Lord Goldsmith (Chair)</u>	<u>Lord Marland</u>
<u>Lord Grimstone of Boscobel</u>	<u>Lord Razzall</u>
<u>Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town</u>	<u>Lord Udny-Lister</u>
<u>Lord Howell of Guildford</u>	<u>Lord Watts</u>

Declaration of interests

See Appendix 1.

A full list of Members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests:
<https://members.parliament.uk/members/lords/interests/register-of-lords-interests>

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Committee staff

The Committee staff are Simon Keal (Clerk), Andrea Ninomiya (Policy Analyst), Cathy Adams (Legal Adviser), Samuel Lomas (Committee Operations Officer)

The Committee is grateful for the ongoing support provided by David Stoker (Policy Analyst, Committees Scrutiny Unit)

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SUMMARY

This report addresses the following Convention, laid before Parliament in accordance with section 20 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010:

- Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events¹ (CP 864, 2023)

The purpose of this Convention is to address sports event spectator safety risks from a range of causes such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and infrastructure failures, as well as violence and misbehaviour. It provides for an integrated multi-stakeholder approach to “safety, security and service” with a greater focus on prevention.

We welcome the Convention’s provisions to ensure safety and security in sports events and increased international cooperation in this area. Where funding for security remains contested, we call on the Government to convene key stakeholders to resolve these issues and secure a settlement. We call on the Government to lay out its plans for establishing a National Football Information Point (NFIP).

We report the Convention for information, while regretting that the Government’s Explanatory Memorandum lacks detail. In line with previous reports, we reiterate our call to the Government to ensure that each Explanatory Memorandum contains relevant contextual information, including on any pre-existing Conventions to which it relates, and identifies any substantial differences in the new Convention.

We additionally regret the delay between signature of the Convention and its laying before Parliament. We encourage all Departments to lay treaties at the earliest opportunity after signature.

¹ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events*, CP 864, (June 2023) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-of-europe-convention-on-an-integrated-safety-security-and-service-approach-at-football-matches-and-other-sports-events-ms-no52023>

Scrutiny of International Agreements: Council of Europe Convention on Sports Event Safety and Security 2023

CONVENTION REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CP 864, MS No.5/2023) (“The Saint-Denis Convention”)

1. The 2016 Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (the Convention)² was signed by the UK Government in 2019 and laid before Parliament on 21 June 2023. The scrutiny period for this Convention is scheduled to end on 5 September 2023. The Convention was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 5 September 2023.

Background to the Convention

2. The Saint-Denis Convention is a convention on safety and security at sports events, adopted by the Council of Europe (CoE). The Council of Europe adopted a Convention on Violence at Football Matches in 1985 in the aftermath of the Heysel Stadium disaster in which thirty-nine people died and 600 were injured.³ That Convention was ratified by 42 states, including the UK, and included measures aimed at combating spectator violence. Following a review, the Council of Ministers decided to update the Convention.
3. The Saint Denis Convention expands the scope of the 1985 Convention to address spectator safety risks from a range of causes such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and infrastructure failures, as well as violence and misbehaviour. It was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in May 2016. The UK signed the Convention in May 2019. There are currently 26 other state parties.⁴

2 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events*, CP 864 (June 2023) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-of-europe-convention-on-an-integrated-safety-security-and-service-approach-at-football-matches-and-other-sports-events-ms-no52023>

3 BBC, ‘Heysel disaster: English football’s forgotten tragedy?’ (29 May 2015): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-32898612> [accessed 7 September 2023]. Fans were crushed against a wall that then collapsed during the European Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus, after crowd trouble culminated in a surge by Liverpool supporters towards the Italian team’s fans. It resulted in all English clubs being banned from Europe for five years and exacerbated English supporters’ increasingly thuggish reputation at the time.

4 A full list can be found on the Council of Europe’s website: Council of Europe, ‘Chart of signatures and ratifications of Treaty 218’ (7 September 2023): <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=signatures-by-treaty&treatyid=218> [accessed 7 September 2023]

4. Recent events, such as the issues encountered by Liverpool Football Club fans at the Champions League final in Paris in 2022,⁵ emphasise that the issues dealt with by the Convention remain of importance and that international cooperation is vital. Saint-Denis is the name of the nearest metro station to the Stade de France in Paris, site of the May 2022 Champions' League final. Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) data indicates that around 46% of matches played under their auspices experience safety and security incidents, of which around a quarter are designated as being "serious or worse."⁶
5. There have also been numerous incidences of poor treatment of British football fans at away games in other European countries. As well as reports of police brutality at the 2022 Paris Champions' League Final with bottlenecks of thousands of fans leading to police deploying pepper spray and tear gas,⁷ earlier this year Italian police hit English football fans with batons at a Lazio game in March 2023.⁸
6. We note that the Government has chosen to lay the Convention before Parliament more than three years after it was signed in 2019. Given that the EM states that no new legislation was required and the Government "always intended to ratify the Convention as a strong international leader in safety, security and service at football matches and other sports events", it is unclear why there was any reason not to lay this Convention for CRAG at an earlier date.
7. **We regret the so far unexplained delay between signature of the Convention and its laying before Parliament. We encourage all Departments to lay treaties at the earliest opportunity after signature.**

The Convention

8. The main change introduced by the new Convention is to expand the scope of the 1985 Convention beyond spectator violence so that it addresses spectator safety risks from a range of causes such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks, infrastructure failures, as well as violence and misbehaviour. It requires parties to adopt an integrated multi-stakeholder approach to "safety, security and service" with a greater focus on prevention. According to the Council of Europe, the "widespread European experience evidences that focusing only on security risks in isolation does not provide an appropriate or effective means for reducing risks or ensuring a safe, secure and welcoming atmosphere in stadiums".
9. The Convention includes provisions for international cooperation, in particular the requirement for a National Football Information Point (NFIP) "to act as the designated sole conduit for exchanging all information and

5 The Guardian, 'How the Champions League final descended into chaos—visual investigation' (21 September 2022): <https://www.theguardian.com/football/ng-interactive/2022/sep/21/liverpool-real-madrid-paris-stade-de-france-champions-league> [accessed 7 September 2023]

6 Council of Europe, *Explanatory Report—CETS 218—Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Sports Events* (3 July 2016): <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680666d0d> [accessed 7 September 2023], p3

7 The Guardian, 'Liverpool "hugely disappointed" by treatment of fans outside Paris final' (29 May 2022): <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/may/28/champions-league-final-kick-off-delay-liverpool-real-madrid-paris> [Accessed 6 September 2023]

8 The Mirror, 'England fans "attacked by Italian cops with batons"—one knocked unconscious' (23 March 2023): <https://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/football/news/breaking-england-fans-attacked-police-29536633> [accessed 6 September 2023]

intelligence regarding football matches with an international dimension.” The Convention additionally provides for the establishment of a new Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events, with representatives from the sport and security sectors, through which the parties will exchange good practices regarding safety measures and prevention. Bodies such as FIFA and UEFA are observers of the Council of Europe’s Committee’s work.⁹¹⁰ Recognising the international nature of sport, non-Council of Europe-member states are welcome to join if approved by a two-thirds majority.¹¹

10. The Convention establishes principles and thus “avoids being unduly prescriptive [reflecting] the need for States to adapt and apply these principles in the light of their national legislation and circumstances, and in particular the character and severity of the safety and security problems associated with sports events in their [territories].”¹² States must also ensure their domestic agencies adopt a multi-agency integrated approach to safety and security. It is suggested that a forum of senior stakeholders should be convened to monitor emerging trends and conduct dynamic risk assessments.¹³
11. The EM states that existing UK legislation satisfies the requirements of the Convention,¹⁴ and that there will be “no direct financial implications beyond those needed to cover the process of ratifying this Convention.” However, we note that funding of security, particularly at football matches, remains a cause of disagreement.
12. **We welcome the Convention’s provisions to ensure safety and security in sports events and to support increased international cooperation in this area. Where funding for security remains contested, we call on the Government to convene key stakeholders to resolve these issues and secure a settlement.**
13. We note that Paragraph 2 of Article 11 obliges the Parties to set up a National Football Information Point (NFIP) to act as the designated sole conduit for exchanging all information and intelligence regarding football matches with an international dimension and for arranging other matters of international

9 UEFA.com, ‘UEFA announces measures to enhance safeguards for supporters at UEFA finals’: <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/news/0281-17f0c1cdd39d-1ba3e64490b5-1000--uefa-announces-measures-to-enhance-safeguards-for-supporters/> [accessed 7 September]. “UEFA is also an observer in the Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events.”

10 See FIFA’s ongoing cooperation with the Council of Europe: FIFA.com, ‘FIFA welcomes Council of Europe Committee Report on football governance’ (2 December 2021): <https://www.fifa.com/legal/news/fifa-welcomes-council-of-europe-committee-report-on-football-governance> [accessed 7 September 2023]

11 Council of Europe, *Explanatory Report—CETS 218—Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Sports Events* (3 July 2016): <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680666d0d> [accessed 7 September 2023], para 127

12 Council of Europe, *Explanatory Report—CETS 218—Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Sports Events* (3 July 2016): <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680666d0d> [accessed 7 September 2023], para 21

13 Council of Europe, *Explanatory Report—CETS 218—Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Sports Events* (3 July 2016): <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680666d0d> [accessed 7 September 2023], para 67-8

14 *Explanatory memorandum: Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events*, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1172770/EM_MS_5.2023_CoE_Convention_Integrated_Safety_Security_Service_Approach_Football_Matches.odt, point 5.1

police co-operation, including the hosting and deployment of visiting police delegations.¹⁵

14. **We call on the Government to lay out its plans for establishing a National Football Information Point (NFIP).**
15. We further note from the Culture, Media and Sport (CMS) Committee inquiry evidence from the Financial Services Authority, highlighting the potential benefits of Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) to include a greater variety of voices on what safety measures are needed for events before they take place, including fan groups. SAGs are run by local authorities, and this could be useful in addressing the Convention's provisions for holding dialogue with local communities and seeking supporters' views.¹⁶
16. **We call on the Government urgently to devise plans to meet the Convention's requirements for proactive and regular communication with key stakeholders, especially supporter representatives and local communities. These plans should draw on existing good practice from the UK and internationally.**
17. The EM from the Home Office accompanying the convention is limited in its explanation of the policy background to the convention. The EM merely summarises the convention text and provides an exhaustive list of implementing legislation.
18. **We regret that the Government's Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Convention lacks explanatory detail. We reiterate our call to the Government to ensure that each Explanatory Memorandum contains relevant contextual information, including on any pre-existing Conventions to which it relates, and identifies any substantial differences in the new Convention.**

Other provisions

Entry into force and Amendment

19. The Convention will enter into force in the UK following the expiration of a period of one month after the date of the deposit of the instrument of ratification as set out in Article 17(2) of the Convention. Amendments adopted by the Council of Ministers will enter into force for once all parties have notified the completion of their internal requirements. The Committee expects that any such amendments would be laid under CRAG.

Territorial scope and consultation

20. The Convention applies to the UK. The EM notes that consultation has started with the Crown Dependencies and British Overseas Territories to establish whether these territories wish to have the Convention extended to them.

15 Council of Europe, *Explanatory Report—CETS 218—Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Sports Events* (3 July 2016): <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680666d0d> [accessed 7 September 2023], para 99

16 Council of Europe, *Explanatory Report—CETS 218—Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Sports Events* (3 July 2016): <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680666d0d> [accessed 7 September 2023], para 78

Conclusions

21. **We welcome the Convention's measures for improving safety and report the Convention to the House for information, highlighting our comments in paragraphs 7, 12, 14, 16 and 18.**

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF MEMBERS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members

Lord Fox
Lord Geidt
Lord Goldsmith (Chair)
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel
Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town
Lord Howell of Guildford
Lord Kerr of Kinlochard
Baroness Kingsmill
Lord Marland
Lord Razzall
Lord Udny-Lister
Lord Watts

Declarations of Interest

Lord Fox
No relevant interests
Lord Geidt
Chairman of Council, King's College London
President, Royal Overseas League
Lord Goldsmith
No relevant interests
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel
No relevant interests
Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town
Senior Non-Executive Director, Association of British Insurers
Lord Howell of Guildford
No relevant interests
Lord Kerr of Kinlochard
No relevant interests
Baroness Kingsmill
No relevant interests
Lord Marland
Director, Janspeed Technologies Ltd (manufacturer of motor parts)
Lord Razzall
Director, North Atlantic Mining Associates Limited
Director, ZeU Technologies Inc
Shareholdings, ZeU Technologies Inc
Shareholdings, St-Georges Eco-Mining Corporation
Shareholdings, Tintra plc
Lord Udny-Lister
No relevant interests
Lord Watts
No relevant interests