



Josef Smolík

Masarykova Univerzita, Czech Republic

Football hooliganism in the countries of the Visegrád Group: cooperation and confrontation

KEYWORDS

football hooliganism, violence, European Championship, security, cooperation.

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the description of football hooligans in the countries of Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary). Text describes history of this phenomenon in the central Europe in the context of European Football Championships of 2012 and 2016. Particular hooligans' groups, the basic characteristics, relations and manifestations of these groups are briefly presented. In the final part there are outlined particular actors participating in tackling with football hooligans, including legislative procedures stemming from European Convention. In the conclusion itself there is discussed also police' cooperation during big football championships.

Introduction

History shows, among other things, sports events not only as a significant part of entertainment in the free time of the citizens, but also as an important social phenomenon also influencing the social climate (Slepička et al. 2008: 138).

Top-level or national football matches constitute an interesting social phenomenon, one that often has a fundamental impact on other aspects of society. From a leisure time activity, football has developed into an important phenomenon, influencing other spheres of social life: politics, the economy, interpersonal and intimate relations. It even has consequences for the provision of security. Assisted by development of the media, the popularity of football is extraordinary; it is, without doubt, the most influential mass spectator sport. Television, the Internet and the radio allow millions, even billions, of fans worldwide to participate in the thrill of football matches (cf. Smolík 2006).

However, football matches also have a dark side. Football not only brings people together, but also divides them. In recent decades, issues of football hooliganism and other negative phenomena connected with football, such as racism, xenophobia, and links to various forms of organised crime, have become the subject of intense media, political, and academic scrutiny.

Violent and anti-social behaviour amongst football fans is referred to as “*football hooliganism*”, or sometimes as the “British disease” or “English disease”. These populist terms have been used by the media and by politicians to label the deviant behaviours which have become associated with (particular) English football form the 1960 onwards. (Frosdick, Marsh 2005: 3)

The designation ‘hooligan’, after the Irish immigrant family of Hooligan or Houlihan, notorious for its ‘asocial behaviour’, originated in nineteenth-century London. Later it was adopted as a general descriptor for any criminal or rowdy behaviour. Since about the 1960s, ‘football hooliganism’ has described asocial or antisocial activities of fans of various football clubs. The aggressive behaviour now known as football hooliganism began to appear primarily in England in the 1960s and escalated in the 1980s. Connected with spectatorship at the matches, it entailed such activities as: penetration of spectators onto the football field; throwing of items on the pitch and on the players; verbal and physical conflicts, issuing in violence, involving hooligans and the referee, hooligans and players, and hooligan groups themselves; manifestations of extremism, disorder, and vandalism (for example destruction of trains), and rowdiness generally (cf. Smolík 2008).

Apart from Britain, the nations who have experienced the most significant problems of football-related violence are Italy, Germany¹, the Netherlands and Belgium. The available data indicate that levels of football-related violence in these countries are roughly similar, with incidents occurring at around 10 per cent of matches (or around 10 per cent of supporters classifiable as “violent”). Austria, Sweden and Denmark also experience some problems with football-related violence, although these appear to be on a smaller scale. Sporadic violence has also been reported in Greece, the Czech Republic, Albania and Turkey. France, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland have also experienced episodes of violence. (Frosdick, Marsh 2005: 26)

In 2012, the UEFA European Championship was held in Poland and the Ukraine (the two countries bid was chosen at the 2007 meeting of the UEFA’s Ex-

¹ Most other commentary from social scientist in Germany has focused on the neo-Nazi image of many hooligan groups of football fans. The right-wing manifestations are most evident in the use of Nazi symbols, which could be a provocation, but also the expression of political opinion. (c. f. Frosdick, Marsh 2005, Mareš, Smolík, Suchánek 2004).

ecutive Committee in Cardiff). This explains why this paper focuses on defining football hooliganism and on describing this phenomenon within the Visegrád Group countries: Polish hooligans, in particular, are considered amongst the most dangerous. They also cooperate extensively with other hooligan groups from within the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. Furthermore, attention will be paid to the legal measures taken to suppress hooliganism, and to the various bodies of state involved in eliminating this socially pathological phenomenon.

Similar activities of hooligan groups can be expected at the 2016 European Championship. Besides hooligan clashes, security forces will focus on the terrorist threat, organized crime and socially pathological phenomena associated with the provision of major sporting events (prostitution, alcoholism etc.).

Basic concepts and contexts

Important sports competitions are complex phenomena, and the political and economic interests of states, sports organisations, the mass media and transnational institutions are implicated. Whereas, in many respects these events express general trends in the dynamics of modern sport (e.g. national teams serve to reinforce the need for sociocultural identity and national singularity in the global world), signs of radicalism can also be represented at sports fixtures. This arises in the search for enemies, which tends to be connected with violence and vandalism (Charvát 2008: 77).

In connection with the great tournaments, such as the World Cup and the European Championship, football hooliganism has been foregrounded by the media, and by those authorities involved with the organisation, logistics and security of the games. This study seeks to describe football hooligans among the Visegrád Group of countries, i.e. the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary.² They constitute a geographically contiguous space in Central Europe, sharing not only many historical roots but also experience of football hooliganism, the customs and strategies they employ which will be described below.

Although historically football hooliganism has been primarily connected with the British Isles, where the phenomenon first appeared and was described, it was later 'exported' into other European countries through the efforts of English hoo-

² The Visegrád Group was founded in February 1991, when representatives of Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia signed a declaration of cooperation in Central Europe and undertook joint action in the subsequent processes of integration. Since the disintegration of Czechoslovakia, the group is sometimes referred to as The Visegrád Four, or V4 for short.

ligans; therefore, today the hooligans of Poland, Russia, Serbia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Croatia and possibly Germany are the most feared in Europe (cf. Sekot 2008: 128-130).³

Football hooliganism assumes many forms, some of which may be difficult to distinguish (Smolík 2008, Jusko 2009, Kasal 2013). At football matches, and elsewhere, the boundary between normal and abnormal behaviour is not always established, making certain excesses difficult to classify. (In the Czech Republic, this mostly sociological issue is dealt with in practical terms by various articles of the Criminal Code, act no. 40/2009 Coll. In particular, article 358 directly defines rowdiness in relation to sports matches.)

We can distinguish between forms of football hooliganism that occur in stadia from those that take place elsewhere (assault on a means of transport, pre-arranged clashes away from the football stadium, etc.). Now, it should be noted that skirmishes between hooligan groups in stadia are now rare. Football hooliganism is nevertheless used to describe excesses (brawls, acts of violence etc.) connected with football hooligans, irrespective of where the clashes occur (Mareš, Smolík and Suchánek 2004, Smolík 2008).

Such behaviour is a growing social problem, as public opinion in various countries demonstrates. Representatives of certain international and national institutions are also increasingly showing interest in this issue (Charvát 2008: 60).

Football hooliganism is centred on gangs of mostly young 'fans', who come to football stadia with the primary aim of provoking a conflict or brawl with similar groups 'supporting' the opposing team. Since the 1990s, a trend has been noticeable Europe-wide, in which hooligan groups comprising dozens or hundreds of individuals clash with each other away from the well-secured football stadia, on housing estates or in other previously chosen loci that are highly suitable for this purpose (for example nature sites, playgrounds, motorway rest areas etc.). These groups (gangs, packs or divisions) adopt names, which help them to differentiate themselves from their competitors as well as from non-organised groups.

Football hooligans display their identity through street violence, clothing themselves in streetwear items sold by their favourite brands, and accessorising with flags and scarfs, which are typical of certain hooligan groups, fanzines, websites, etc. (cf. Smolík 2008, Sekot 2008, Kasal 2013).

Hooligan groups, unlike regular fans, often do not even identify with a football club (or national team), but only with their group. The self-identification of hoo-

³ Outside Europe, football hooliganism is common in North Africa and Central and South America, but in the USA it is rare (cf. Wann D. L. et al. 2001: 148-151).

ligan groups leads to exclusivity (Mareš, Smolík, Suchánek, 2004). In some cases a kind of “superstructure” of football hooliganism is involvement with organized crime (after all, many hooligans are active in the underworld via individual criminal activity unrelated to the football environment). Typical expressions of the hooligan identity are the symbols of the individual hooligan gangs. These ubiquitous symbols (presented on banners, scarves, and clothing) reinforce the feeling of identification and cohesion among a club’s fans. The symbols make it possible to clearly distinguish between groups. Individual groups of football hooligans meet all the criteria for a small social group. These criteria may include stability, structuralization, integrity, cohesion, attractiveness, stability, exclusivity, interactivity among individual groups, intimacy, homogeneity, a specific value system, control of the value system, focus and group goals, satisfaction of individual members, and others. Over the course of time individuals in the group gain experience, relationships between individual members deepen, the motives for the group’s behavior change, etc. A certain group dynamic can be observed founded on like values and goals (aversion to police, trust in the hooligan group, striving to be the best hooligan group). Each group has its special norms and limits for interpersonal relations and behavior (for example support/lack of support for team, political stance) (Smolík 2008, cf. Slepíčka et al. 2010, Kasal 2013, Čeněk, Smolík 2015).

Unlike ordinary fans, hooligan groups do not often identify only with a football club, but with a group or gang. In the process of self-definition, these groups also establish their exclusivity. In certain cases, football hooliganism also creates a kind of ‘superstructure’, consisting of links between hooligan groups and organised crime; many hooligans are also involved in the criminal underworld by virtue of additional criminal activities unrelated to football hooliganism (Mareš, Smolík and Suchánek 2004).

Roots and particularities of football hooliganism in the Visegrád group countries

In the last 20 years, serious incidents of football hooliganism happen in countries like the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. European championships can provide particularly interesting opportunities for football hooligans. In connection with the 2012 cup hosted by Poland and Ukraine, it is worth noting that some Polish hooligan groups established alliances with groups from neighbouring countries, while others had hostile relations with foreigners. The roots and particularities of football hooliganism in Central European countries are therefore worth describing.

In Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, the roots of football hooliganism can be dated to the early twentieth century. As an organised phenomenon, however, hooliganism began to constitute itself in the 1970s and 1980s, and it was at the end of the 1980s that the first groups could clearly be identified. The dynamics of the formation and disintegration of these groups were influenced by a number of political, economic, cultural, legal, and security factors (cf. Kasal 2013: 128-141).

In the Czech Republic, about 30 gangs are currently active, each comprising a few dozen individuals at most (see Mareš, Smolík and Suchánek 2004: 135–137). The most active groups support the following football clubs: AC Sparta Praha, SK Slavia Praha, FC Baník Ostrava, Zbrojovka Brno, SK Sigma Olomouc, and Bohemians Praha 1905. As in other countries, in the Czech Republic a hooligan subculture has developed that is homogeneous, and which is characterised by observance of substantially distinctive social norms. This then produces stable, structured, integrated and closed groups with specific value systems, focuses and aims (see Smolík 2008: 134). In the past, Czech hooligan groups have not acted peaceably among themselves when present at international matches; this has often led to an increase in random incidents among the various groups. Despite this, matches between national football teams have manifestly not been the primary focus of rowdies in the past.

Only a few hooligan groups are active in Slovakia today, mainly at matches between ŠK Slovan Bratislava, MŠK Žilina, FC Spartak Trnava and FC Košice. Manifestations of spectator violence have arisen especially in matches involving Slovan Bratislava against Spartak Trnava, Trnava against Nitra, Slovan against Košice, and Trnava against Košice. Isolated instances of spectator violence have also been recorded in Slovakia, in connection with matches that were part of the UEFA Cup or which involved Slovakia's national team (for example, opponents from Hungary⁴ and England were attacked). Manifestations of national chauvinism⁵, racism, xenophobia, in addition to various provocations have also been recorded at these matches (cf. Mareš, Smolík and Suchánek 2004: 103–105).

⁴ An incident at the match between Slovan Bratislava and Ferencvaros Budapest, which was part of the UEFA Champions League, met with a significant response. Thousands of Hungarian fans came to Bratislava to support their team. Many violent incidents involving fans of both teams have occurred on the day of the match. Most disputed was the intervention of the police clad in black balaclavas, who in the eightieth minute of the match ousted all the Ferencvaros fans from the stadium using truncheons and tear gas (see Mareš, Smolík and Suchánek 2004).

⁵ In the Czech language, the word for motherland (*vlast*) in itself gives rise to the impression of an emotional relationship to space and other people, which, in a way, we have adopted as our own (*vlastní*). Indeed, in one of its original meanings, *vlast* is connected with *vlastní* and it is this relationship that distinguishes *vlast* from all other countries (Holý 2010: 71)

Harsányi (2005) pointed out that most Slovak hooligan gangs establish coalitions and alliances with similar groups in the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary (in the past, such alliances involved supporters of the teams Spartak Trnava (SK)–Baník Ostrava (CZ)–GKS Katowice (PL), present-day examples include Slovan Bratislava (SK)–Zbrojovka Brno (CZ), and MŠK Žilina (SK)–ZKS Góral Żywiec (PL)).

The Slovak hooligan scene is presently undergoing generational change, so it is difficult to predict how it will behave in the future. It can be said, however, that in the past Slovak hooligan groups have not attacked each other at international matches.

In Poland, football hooliganism had already appeared in the late 1970s, when fans of the football teams clashed at stadia and in the streets with members of the Citizens' Militia (*Milicją Obywatelską*). A period of dynamic development ensued in which hooligan and fan tendencies from the West were adopted (for instance the rise of the 'ultras'), but the Polish hooligan scene soon began to emancipate itself, and since the mid-1980s has been one of the toughest worldwide. In the national media, the subculture of football hooligans have been described as 'pseudo-fans' (*pseudokibice*) or 'szalikowcy', and the hooligans often call themselves 'kibole', 'chuligani', 'hoolsi' or 'hools' (cf. Kowalska 2007, Kubacka-Jasiecka 2007, Sahaj 2007).

Dóktor (2007) noted that the aggression of Polish football hooligans has deep roots, which are the product of years of experience gained from encounters between traditional Polish clubs such as Legia and Polonia (Warsaw), Wisła and Cracovia (Kraków), and LKS and Widzew (Łódź).

In Poland, football hooliganism is not only connected with the teams from the first and second league; almost every club down to the fourth league has 'radical supporters'. This is one of the reasons why football hooliganism has been experiencing a long-term increase; there are dozens, perhaps even hundreds of active hooligan groups. Alliances ('*zgod*') between hooligan groups, even those from geographically distant towns are typical in Poland, and hooligans also enter into international alliances. The main aim of these alliances is to offer mutual support in clashes with hostile hooligan gangs. The best known of these coalitions involves hooligans supporting the following clubs: Lech Poznań, Arka Gdynia and Cracovia Kraków; Legia Warsaw and Pogoń Szczecin; Wisła Kraków, Lechia Gdańsk and Śląsk Wrocław (Mareš, Smolík and Suchánek 2004).

An interesting process is occurring in Poland, whereby spectator violence is spreading to affect other kinds of sports, such as speedway racing, basketball and ice hockey; this is usually something more expected in South European countries.

The possibility of clashes is intensified by the catastrophic state of Polish stadia, where league matches are played, and also by Polish hooligans' boundless, fanatical loyalty to their club and groups, and conversely, their fervent hatred for those hooligan groups supporting their competitors. Having said that, as with other subcultures, there is a sense of common belonging, which stems from adherence to a similar way of life (cf. Kupka, Laryš and Smolík 2009).

Piotrowski (2002) conducted research on the Azory housing estate in Kraków and, using this and other evidence, argued that manifestations of football hooliganism in Poland are a response to the feelings of alienation experienced by young people, especially in large housing estates in cities. Piotrowski also emphasised the overlap between hooligans and the skinhead subculture, and noted the importance of the media presentation of football rowdiness. He agreed with the subcultural approach, according to which individuals who find it difficult to succeed in normal society might live out a so-called 'alternative career' in a hooligan gang (see Beyer 2004: 90-91, Čarnogurský 2009: 23 for more details).

The most common forms of Polish football hooliganism are as follow: attack on hostile group across the pitch or incident on the pitch; attack on antagonistic hooligans at the place they rally, or directly in front of their section of the stadium; attack on enemy hooligans on their way to the stadium. Many hooligan clashes are carefully premeditated: weapons might be hidden at stadia; security fences at stadia may be previously damaged using files; even spies may be sent into the enemy camp, to then convey information about the movements of the rival group. In recent years, the principle of prearranged fights solely involving hooligan groups has been applied in Poland (this is called 'ustawki' or 'grillowanie' – i.e. grilling; see Mareš, Smolík and Suchánek 2004, Kowalska 2007). This principle is also employed at the international level. Clashes are often arranged using mobile phones or websites. When the Polish national team competes, the country's hooligan groups do not maintain peace among themselves: for hooligans, a match involving their national team acts as just another opportunity to provoke violent incidents (see Mareš, Smolík and Suchánek 2004).

In Hungary, the first groups of football radicals began to appear in the 1960s, especially in Budapest. However, official organisations had only begun to establish themselves in the late 1980s. Under the influence of Western European (chiefly Italian) models, these eventually developed into the groups of so-called 'ultras', which can today be found attached to the overwhelming majority of Hungarian football clubs. These groups of ultras are officially registered, and as such constitute fan clubs. They usually enjoy close links with the management of the football clubs, from whom they often receive funding. However, membership fees remain

the major source of income, this is often spent on elaborate choreography and pyrotechnic effects. In Hungary, ultra groups are not limited to the sport of football, but also appear linked to basketball, handball and even water polo.

Groups of football hooligans began to appear in the country during the 1980s. On stadia, the hooligans have their own designated sections, standing away from the ordinary fans and the ultras of the team they support. Easily identifiable stewards, often recruited from among senior and well-respected hooligans, keep order in these sections. Since 1994, the Hungarian hooligan and ultras scenes have been charted by the monthly *3 Földidő* [The third half-time]. The mutual enmity between the supporters of the two most popular clubs in Budapest, Ferencváros and Újpest, is responsible for many instances of spectator violence in the country. Although every match involving these clubs is subject to extensive security measures, clashes between the two camps seem inevitable.

The first hooligan gangs connected with Ferencváros Budapest appeared in the late 1980s. Hooligans congregated in Section 2 of the stadium, and were there for every match. Interestingly, a book was written based on the memoirs of these former hooligans, entitled *Section 2* (Mareš, Smolík and Suchánek 2004).

Similarly to the other countries referenced in this article, there are several dozen hooligan groups in Hungary, associated with teams such as Ferencváros Budapest, MTK Budapest, Debreceni VSC, Győr, Szeged etc. Some Hungarian hooligans with right-wing leanings have become politicised, as shown by their active participation in the anti-government protests in October 2006, which were aimed against the socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány. Bayer (2009: 299) indicates that about 200 to 300 football hooligans participated in mass riots in Budapest.

During matches involving Hungary's national team, the main hooligan groups remained peaceful, avoiding mutual attacks. The coordinated appearance of Hungarian hooligans occurred on 15 August 2001 in Budapest in connection at a match between Hungary and Germany. Before the match, a fight took place in the centre of the city between about a hundred Hungarian hooligans and a group of Germans numbering roughly the same. Although they were quickly dispersed, further violence was recorded at the stadium's entrances (Mareš, Smolík, Suchánek 2004: 102).

Although commentaries on football hooliganism differ across the Visegrád Group countries, it is possible to say that the assumption that a football hooligan is an asocial drunken young man is in most cases wrong. Above all, it must be stressed that only sober individuals become involved in genuine hooligan fighting. In many cases these are people for whom hooliganism is adrenaline-fuelled enter-

tainment, in which they can test their knowledge of martial arts such as boxing, Thai boxing, kickboxing, karate and ultimate fighting (cf. Cynarski 2007).

The priority for hooligan groups is violent conflict with rival gangs, whether premeditated (involving hooligans only) or not (which can also involve other persons).

Hooligan clashes have unwritten rules which are mostly adhered to. The goal is to beat up and defeat the rivals (to win as a group), but not to seriously injure or kill them. What matters primarily is the prestige of the group or camp, which must be proven continually. One often discussed – especially when violated – hooligan rule is the principle of not using weapons in clashes. This rule is usually broken only in surprise attacks on one group by another (Čarnogurský 2009: 90).

Contemporary international politics and historical reminiscences are also important, having an impact on the friendly or hostile behaviour of the individual hooligan groups at football tournaments.

Relations between hooligan groups in the Visegrád Group countries: alliances and hatred

In the countries of the Visegrád Group, relations between hooligan groups vary around a continuum ranging from hatred through respect to friendship (alliance or coalition). In Central Europe, football matches involving the various Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish teams might therefore occur in a friendly atmosphere, but often are decidedly tense.

The Czech and Slovak football gangs in particular tend to create alliances (in Czech called *družba*), whose purpose is to strengthen the hooligan camps concerned. A prime example of these international links is the alliance between the hooligans of 1. FC Brno and ŠK Slovan Bratislava, which dates back to 1996. The relationship between the football radicals supporting the teams of Košice in Slovakia and Sparta in Prague is also among the longest-lasting and solid: it dates back to the times of the Czechoslovak federation. Although friendly and respectful, it cannot be termed an alliance.

In the past, the international alliance of hooligan groups supporting the Czech Baník Ostrava and the Slovak Spartak Trnava was strong; this began in 1988. Later, in 1996, it became a tripartite alliance with GKS Katowice in Poland. Now only the links between supporters of Baník Ostrava and GKS Katowice are sustained. The links between fans of Prague-based teams Slavia, Bohemians 1905 and the Polish Górnik Wałbrzych are also strong; they date to 1999. In the past, supporters of

KSZO Ostrowiec (Poland) visited matches of Slovan Liberec (Czech Republic), and those of Cracovia Kraków (Poland) supported Viktoria Žižkov (Czech Republic); these were not fully developed alliances. Radical supporters of Sparta Prague visit matches played by Ferencvaros Budapest, but this is not an alliance in the true sense of the word (cf. Mareš, Smolík and Suchánek 2004).

An example of an important clash involving international alliances occurred during the match between SFC Opava and FC Baník Ostrava on 16 September 2009, which was a Czech FA Cup match. Radicals of Opava (CZ) and Wrocław (PL) attacked supporters of Baník Ostrava (CZ) and GKS Katowice (PL). After the Czech police intervened, the interrupted match was played on to the end, but skirmishes continued in the streets. This illustrates that hooligan clashes need not involve two groups only; in many cases, alliances or coalitions take part in the fighting.

Another example of football violence, in which the nationals of two countries participated, occurred on 1 November 2008 during a match between DAC Dunajská Streda and Slovan Bratislava, which was part of Slovakia's premier league. Following this high-risk game, a discussion developed, concerning not only football hooliganism, but also political extremism and ethnic intolerance. Among the security measures taken, 31 people were brought to the police station; of these 16 were Hungarian and 15 Slovak citizens. During the match, paramedics provided assistance to approximately 50 people, and in the region of a thousand policemen were involved in the operations. Police action against fans chiefly affected the Hungarians. Hungary's Prime Minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány, described the action taken as disproportionate, a claim rejected by the Slovak side (cf. Pražák 2010: 404).

The football match and what happened subsequently became a matter of political dispute. Spurred on by police action against the fans of DAC Dunajská Streda, a rally was organised in front of the Slovak Embassy in Budapest, in which several hundred protesters participated. The Hungarian Guard (Magyar Gárda Mozgalom) and Jobbik were also involved in the provocations. As the incident became politicised, the following figures made pronouncements about the football match: Hungary's Consul Géza Farkas, Slovak Deputy Prime Minister Dušan Čaplovič, SMK Deputy Chairman József Berényi, SMK Chairman Pál Csáky, Slovak Minister of the Interior Robert Kaliňák, as well as the Prime Ministers of the two countries, who met a few days later in Komárno. In response to the match, incidents occurred in the Slovak border regions: Slovak signs were painted over in certain municipalities, the Hungarian Guard appeared in the uniforms of the National Guard (Nemzeti Őrsereg), and border crossings were blocked, etc. (see Kupka, Laryš and Smolík 2009, Pražák 2010).

This incident reveals how a game such as football can be used for purely political and populist purposes. Indeed, numerous examples of such politicisation can be drawn from past matches, involving the national teams of Argentina and England; Turkey and Greece; France and Algeria; and others.

State authorities involved in policies against football hooliganism

In describing the state authorities charged with implementing anti-hooliganism policies, two main levels must be distinguished in the countries of the Visegrád group. The first level is national and the second international, the latter entailing, police cooperation between countries. The temporal horizon is also important; i.e. are we discussing continuous cooperation and exchange of information, experiences and knowledge, or activities related to a specific tournament or international match?

The basic constituents at the national level are the authorities tasked with providing internal security in the states, which are engaged in their security apparatuses: these include the state police, municipal police, ministry of the interior, etc. All of the countries of the Visegrád group deal with the issue of football hooliganism primarily at the police tactical and operational levels. Secret services in the states are also involved, especially when instances of political extremism occur. However, bodies of the state are not the only entities concerned with policies targeting football hooliganism. Non-state actors, such as the football unions of the countries themselves and international organisations such as FIFA and UEFA, also pursue anti-hooligan policies. The EU also provides an overarching international legal framework for the prevention of and treatment of football hooliganism (c. f. Smolík 2008, Jusko 2009).

This framework is articulated in the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in Particular at Football Matches (hereafter “The European Convention”), adopted in Strasbourg in 1985 as part of the fundamental treaties prepared by the Council of Europe. The Czech Republic acceded to the European Convention in 1995.⁶ The signatories of the European Convention committed themselves to close cooperation in controlling violence

⁶ The Czech Republic acceded to the Convention in April 1995 on the basis of Czech government resolution no. 27 dated 11 January 1995. Poland acceded to the Convention on 8 December 1994 (Smolík 2008, Cynarski 2007).

and providing security to spectators. They must also ensure compliance with the recommendations formulated, which concern keeping fans from rival sides separate; control of the sale of tickets; ban on the sale of alcohol; security checks; arrest and strict punishment of troublemakers (see Bedřich 2006: 193).

In 1999, signatories to the European Convention were recommended to consider the following:

- Adoption of preventive measures that would impede fans who are known to be violent from leaving their country and entering the country organising the championship;
- Adoption of legislative measures allowing preventive or temporary detention of suspect individuals so that suspect persons could be isolated early enough;
- Setting of effective penalties to individuals found guilty of crimes connected with football violence; such penalties might include denial of entry onto the territory of the state where the championship is held, or to stadia on specified dates and at specified times.
- Recognition and observation of bans on entering stadia issued in other countries, and of orders issued by courts abroad (Rada Evropy 2005).

In the organising of the European football championships, the most important actors are the UEFA, the football unions of the hosting countries, the stewarding services (the main organiser, medical staff, stewards, announcer at the football stadium), the media, and the security corps involved in providing security. Effective communication, coordination, and the ability to find suitable solutions among the various components of the whole system are also important.

Should police intervention be necessary, the course of police action is decided upon by the commanding officer whose orders the intervening policemen must follow. It is essential that the commanding officer be in constant communication with the main organiser of events. For security measures to be effective, certain model situations and specific procedures need to be clearly established in advance. Such measures are dependent on how risky the match between national teams is perceived to be. A team comprised of both the representatives of the organiser and police specialists (for instance so-called spotters who work with the football fans) ascertains the degree of risk.⁷ Czech special-

⁷ These are policemen who have appropriate experience undertaking operational activities at sporting events and have personal experience with the environment of high-risk fans and their expressions. The publicly visible activity of spotters is mainly focused on prevention, reducing the available space for potential violent manifestations of football supporters. Spotters usually communicate actively and directly with the fans of the national teams, looking for and contacting high-risk fans in order to prevent inappro-

ists are usually drawn from the Bureau of Criminal Police and Investigation Service (ÚSKPV), who have long-term experience with the issue (they are employees of the Czech Sport Intelligence Service, CZ-SIS). These specialists are involved with matches for which international cooperation is essential, and coordination of high-risk games involving the Czech national team is one of their basic activities. They also contribute to cooperation surrounding the international championships, focusing on gathering, analysis and deployment of all relevant security information. Moreover, they also participate in the preparation of daily situation reports and cooperate with foreign liaison officers (cf. Suchánek 2007). This concept is referred to as 'visiting police'. The objectives of the international police cooperation at the great championships have been defined as follows:

- Promote good behaviour and peaceful enjoyment at the sporting event;
- Be considerate of differences in culture and respect the traditions of the visiting fans and encourage them to behave acceptably in host and transit countries;
- Vehemently deal with troublemakers;
- Use police resources appropriately (Rada Evropy 2005).

At international tournaments, stewards are fundamental, and their duties include the following:

- Monitoring the stadium before and throughout the match;
- Welcoming visitors and seating them;
- Ensuring visitor satisfaction and solving potential complaints;
- Watching over safety procedures at the stadium (minding in particular safe arrival and departure of visitors), and making sure that stadium rules are complied with;
- Resolving incidents and unexpected situations as they arise;
- Cooperating with the police or emergency services when necessary;
- Ensuring that no forbidden item is brought into the stadium. In a separate recommendation, all parties involved are asked to ensure sufficient and efficient checks of all spectators are carried out at the entrance (Rada Evropy 2005).

Local government and the media also play important roles in the organising of large-scale football tournaments. Thus, all of these actors are important in the im-

priate behaviour or violations of public order and law. At the location of the match, spotters support the commanding officer, relaying information obtained and providing the local police with comments and recommendations (see Suchánek 2007).

plementation of anti-hooligan policies. Only the cooperation of all of the constituent bodies described above can secure a trouble-free course for the major football championships.

Conclusion

Football hooliganism is a worldwide phenomenon, which also manifests in the countries of the Visegrád Group. This article has briefly described the hooligan presence in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. It also introduced relations between certain hooligan groups or coalitions thereof, which are not based solely on personal encounters; such relations are sometimes established through media and the internet. Specialised media – zines – describe the various hooligan and fan activities, and websites do likewise.

The relationships between hooligan groups in the countries of the Visegrád group diverge around a continuum ranging from hatred through respect to friendship (alliance). I would argue that especially dangerous are situations where purely hooligan activities, i.e. violent clashes among the supporters of various football clubs, develop into nationalist passions.

The last section of the article presented the various actors involved in anti-hooligan policies and some relevant legislation. Police cooperation connected with important football championships was also briefly described.

In terms of security practices, it is important that those police officers involved in security measures in connection with football matches consider the sometimes complex structure of the hooligan gangs, and remain aware of the typical manifestations of football hooliganism and the relations between the individual radical groups. The present study hopes to contribute to such awareness.

References

- Bayer, J. (2009): Country Report Hungary. In Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.): *Strategies for Combatting Right-Wing Extremism in Europe*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009, s. 285-326.
- Bedřich, L. (2006): *Fotbal – rituální hra moderní doby*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita.
- Beyer, D. (2002): *Fotbalové násilí: subkultura hooligans*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita (bakalářská práce).
- Cynarski, W. J.: *Brutalizacja sportu na przykładzie popularnych widowiskowych gier sportowych*. In Dziubiński, Z. (ed., 2007): *Sport a agresja*. Warszawa: Salezjańska Organizacja Sportowa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, s. 166-172.

- Čarnogurský, T. (2009): Divácké násilí v České republice: veřejně politický problém. Praha: FSV UK (diplomová práce).
- Čeněk, J., Smolík, J. (2015): Nationalism and Its Manifestations in Sport: the Case of Football Hooliganism in the Czech Republic. In Cordell, K., Jajecznik, K. (eds.): The Transformation of Nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe. Ideas and Structures. Warsaw: university of Warsaw, s. 137-153.
- Dóktor, K.: Agresja w sporcie w socjologicznej perspektywie. In Dziubiński, Z. (ed., 2007): Sport a agresja. Warszawa: Salezjańska Organizacja Sportowa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, s. 128-135.
- Frosdick, S., Marsh, P. (2005): Football hooliganism. Devon: Willan Publishing.
- Harsányi, L. (2005): Chuligáni. Správa o stave chuliganizmu, rasizmu, antisemitizmu a intolerancie v slovensko futbale. Bratislava: LPR.
- Holý, L. (2010): Malý český člověk a skvělý český národ: Národní identita a postkomunistická transformace společnosti. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství.
- Charvát, M. (2008): Hostilita ve sportovním prostředí. Brno: BMS Creative.
- Jusko, P. (2009): Sociální práce s mládeží a sociálněpatologické javy. Banská Bystrica: Pedagogická fakulta UMB.
- Kasal, J. (2013): Násilí na stadionech jako odraz kultury. Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus.
- Kowalska, J. E.: (2007): „Caly nasz chuligański trud wkładamy w nasz kochany klub“. In Dziubiński, Z. (ed.): Sport a agresja. Warszawa: Salezjańska Organizacja Sportowa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, s. 240 – 247. In Dziubiński, Z. (ed.): Sport a agresja. Warszawa: Salezjańska Organizacja Sportowa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, s. 67-79.
- Kubacka-Jasiecka, D. (2007): Pseudokibice i szalikowcy. O psychologicznych mechanizmach przemocy stadionowej.
- Kupka, P., Laryš, M., Smolík, J. (2009): Krajní pravice ve vybraných zemích střední a východní Evropy. Brno: Mezinárodní politologický ústav Masarykovy univerzity.
- Mareš, M., Smolík, J., Suchánek, M. (2004): Fotbalové chuligáni. Brno: Barrister&Principal.
- Piotrowski, P. (2000): Szalikowcy. O zachowaniach dewiacyjnych kibiców sportowych. Toruń: A. Marszałek.
- Pražák, R. (2010): Dějiny Uher a Maďarska v datech. Praha: Nakladatelství Libri.
- Rada Evropy (2005): Prevence diváckého násilí při sportovních utkáních. Role místních a regionálních orgánů veřejné správy v prevenci násilí při sportovních utkáních. Praha: MV ČR.
- Sahaj, T. (2007): Psychospolečné aspekty agresyvných zachování chuliganův fotbalových. In Dziubiński, Z. (ed.): Sport a agresja. Warszawa: Salezjańska Organizacja Sportowa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, s. 109-118.
- Sekot, A. (2008): Sociologické problémy sportu. Praha: Grada.
- Slepička, P. et al. (2008): Sport and Lifestyle. Praha: Karolinum.
- Slepička, P. et al. (2010): Divácká reflexe sportu. Praha: Karolinum.
- Smolík, J. (2006): Fenomén jménem fotbalové fandovství. Psychologie dnes, XII, 10, s. 19 – 21.
- Smolík, J. (2008): Fotbalové chuligánství. Historie, teorie a politizace fenoménu. Karlovy Vary: VNP.
- Suchánek, M. (2007): Zajištění bezpečnosti při masových sportovních akcích. Případová studie k Mistrovství světa 2006. Rexter, VI, 1, s. 41-45.
- Wann D. L. a kol. (2001): Sport fans. The psychology and social impact of spectators. London, New York: Routledge.