Council of Europe Convention on an integrated safety, security, and service approach at football matches and other sports events (CETS No 218): authorising Member States to become party

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The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted the report by Sylvia-Yvonne KAUFMANN (S&D, DE) on the draft Council decision authorising Member States to become parties, in the interest of the European Union, to the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security, and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No 218).

The committee recommended that the European Parliament give its consent to the draft Council decision.

The Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and other Sports Events of the Council of Europe was opened for signature in July 2016. The Convention is the only internationally binding instrument establishing an institutional cooperation between all public and private stakeholders involved in organising football and other sports events.

As stated in the explanatory memorandum accompanying the recommendation, individuals attending football matches and other sports events should always enjoy a safe, secure and welcoming environment around and at matches.

The aim of the Convention is to provide this environment via a balanced approach between the three interdependent pillars: safety, security and service.

A committee of experts will monitor the application of the Convention. The Rapporteur expresses her support that not only FIFA, UEFA, Association of European Professional Football Leagues, the EU and Interpol are involved in this Committee, but also organisations like “Football Supporters Europe” and “Supporters Direct Europe" which represent the football supporters throughout Europe.

As a study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights indicates, "sport continues to face a number of challenges related to racism and ethnic discrimination". It is therefore important to improve diversity in sports and support initiatives by athletes themselves or their clubs to fight against any discriminations (racist or discriminatory behaviour, including frequent sexist and/or homophobic and/or transphobic insults etc.).

The Rapporteur welcomes the approach in the Convention to promote tolerance, respect and fair play and encourages the Member States to pay high attention on the implementation of this important aspect.