

SECURITY MANAGEMENT OF MASS EVENTS ON THE EXAMPLE OF UEFA EURO 2012

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to analyze the solutions adopted by the Polish Police regarding safety management during mass events, using the UEFA EURO 2012 Final Tournament as a case study.

Design/methodology/approach: The article is of a cross-sectional nature. The achievement of the objective is based on a critical analysis of the literature.

Findings: The conducted analysis indicates that the actions taken by the Polish Police, based on the prepared operational philosophy, ensured the uninterrupted progress of the event that was the UEFA EURO 2012 Final Tournament. This also serves as an excellent example of the Polish Police's ability to manage the safety of mass events.

Practical implications: The solutions applied in organizing police actions to ensure safety and public order during the UEFA EURO 2012 Final Tournament can be implemented in measures ensuring the safety of lower-level mass sporting events.

Social implications: Proper preparation for organizing mass events by entities responsible for ensuring safety, including the Police, influences the increase in the sense of security among participants of such events.

Originality/value: The relevance of the topic in light of the rise of aggressive behavior during football matches and its significance for the development of theory in this area, as well as practical solutions applied in this field.

Keywords: safety management, Police, football match.

Category of article: literature review.

1. Introduction

In Poland, for several decades, ensuring safety at mass events, particularly football matches, has posed a challenge that has yet to find a satisfactory resolution. The level of safety during such events has fluctuated. This was dictated by various factors, notably the underestimation of the magnitude of the issue and even denying the existence of the problem. This was the case in the 1970s and 1980s when the phenomenon of stadium hooliganism was hidden from society (Socha, 2011).

The tragic events that occurred in Poland in the 1990s prompted an urgent enactment of the Act on the Safety of Mass Events (Journal of Laws 1997, No. 108, item 909). This was the first legal act that comprehensively regulated issues related to the safe conduct of so-called mass events. The evolution of the nature of threats during these events, as well as the new challenges posed to Poland due to the organization of the UEFA EURO 2012 Final Tournament, led the Polish Parliament to adopt a new law on the safety of mass events on March 20, 2009 (Journal of Laws 2009, No. 62, item 5004).

The UEFA EURO 2012 Final Tournament was the fourteenth tournament of the Men's European Football Championship, organized for the first time in history by two Central and Eastern European countries—Poland and Ukraine. The tournament took place from June 8 to July 1, 2012, in eight cities and eight stadiums—four in each country. Sixteen of the best national teams in Europe, selected through qualifiers, participated in the competition, with the host nations automatically included. Key organizational tasks included, among others, ensuring the safety of the mass event.

2. Safety Management in Theoretical Perspective

The presentation of the definition of safety management must begin with an explanation of the concepts of management and safety. As a result of a literature analysis aimed at clarifying the meanings of these terms, it is essential to note that finding universal definitions for both concepts is impossible, as many varied interpretations exist. A.K. Koźmiński defines management as a set of "actions or processes aimed at coordinating and integrating the use of resources to achieve organizational goals through people using techniques and information within organized structures" (Dictionary of National Security Terms, 2002). A similar stance is presented by R. Rutka, who believes that the essence of management, "like any other form of directing, is action aimed at achieving goals through people and with people" (Rutka, 1984). According to H. Koontz and C. O'Donnell, management is an art involving "the achievement of goals through people and with people in the form of organized groups and shaping an environment in which individuals can operate as units and simultaneously cooperate in achieving collective goals" (Koontz, O'Donnell, 1969). R. Griffin, on the other hand, perceives management as "an ongoing process of creating rules of order in a given system in the form of norms, plans, instructions, and other documents, along with a set of actions that include planning, decision-making, organizing, leading (i.e., directing people), and controlling, directed at the organization's resources (human, financial, material, and informational) and performed with the intent of achieving the organization's goals efficiently and effectively" (Griffin, 1997). In the context of these reflections, the definitions provided by T. Pszczołowski and J.A.F. Stoner, R.F. Freeman, and D.R. Gilbert deserve attention. According to T. Pszczołowski,

management is "the act of managing resources and tools according to the goals of the manager." He further defines the tasks of management as formulating action goals, planning, organizing structures (acquiring and deploying necessary human and material resources), and controlling the realization of established goals (Pszczółowski, 1978). Meanwhile, J.A.F. Stoner, R.F. Freeman, and D.R. Gilbert treat management as a process of "planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the work of organizational members and using all available resources of the organization to achieve its objectives" (Stoner et al., 1999). Thus, management is a process focused on efficiently and effectively achieving the organization's goals using all its resources, and it comprises four fundamental functions: planning, organizing, leading, and controlling, which constitute the canon of the management process.

The etymology of the term "safety" (from the French *sécurité*, Latin *securitas*, or Anglo-Saxon security) expresses "the primal feeling of threat in relation to the feeling of certainty of one's protection ("without care", meaning without adequate protection, and similarly "sine securā"). Considering the principles of the Polish language, "safety" is understood as a state of being unthreatened, calm, and certain (Socha, 2014).

Safety, as a highly valued good, currently touches all spheres of life: "starting from random physico-chemical factors (including climatic, tectonic, and fire hazards) through biological-existential threats that are essential for survival in the world of living organisms (ensuring food, technical energy, health), ending with factors arising from the mutual invasiveness of people in social life" (Raczkowski, 2012). Hence, various typologies of safety are employed in academia. Additionally, when indicating the area of safety, it is specified using terms such as national, international, regional, local, public, universal, as well as mass events or football matches. Safety refers to the objective state of being free from threats (Socha, 2011) or protection against threats, and it is used to describe the subjective state of freedom from anxiety resulting from threats. In everyday understanding, safety is viewed purely objectively, meaning as a state of being unthreatened, or purely subjectively, meaning as a sense of lack of fear or anxiety. However, safety combines subjective elements with objective ones, as there can be no safety without the feeling of lack of anxiety or fear, but it is also non-existent when that feeling is unjustified.

The concept of "security management" in literature also has many definitions and is understood as, for example, "the minimization or elimination of threats through intentional, regulatory human actions, organized according to a management cycle that includes identifying problems, planning, organizing resources, motivating, and controlling future-oriented activities" (Korzeniowski, 2012). In the public sector, it refers to "organized action utilizing human, financial, technical, and informational resources to reduce potential threats, ensure the uninterrupted flow of social life, and protect health, life, property, and the environment" (Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek, 2010). Thus, security management constitutes a complex, interdisciplinary concept that describes actions aimed at minimizing or eliminating threats through conscious and intentional human activities. It is perceived both as a state, i.e., a sense

of certainty and the absence of threats, as well as a process, i.e., a series of future-oriented activities aimed at anticipating changes. The key features of security management, from a scientific perspective, can be reduced to its process-oriented nature, the minimization or elimination of risks, future orientation and proactivity, as well as systematization and comprehensiveness.

3. Mass Events – Concept, Essence, Types

Addressing the issue of security management during mass events, it should be noted that current legal regulations do not clarify the meaning of the term "event". However, the Act of 2009 on the Safety of Mass Events categorizes mass events while simultaneously defining what should be understood by these terms.

According to the provisions of the law, a mass event is defined as an artistic and entertainment mass event or a mass sports event, including a football match, with the exception of certain types of events such as those organized in theaters, operas, operettas, Philharmonics, cinemas, museums, libraries, cultural centers, and art galleries or in other similar facilities (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 616). The law contains legal definitions of types of mass events such as artistic and entertainment mass events, mass sports events, high-risk mass events, and football matches.

It is important to note that each of the mentioned types of mass events was related to UEFA EURO 2012. For the purposes of achieving the goal of this article, it is necessary to explain the meaning of the term "football match", which should be understood as a mass sports event aimed at competition in the discipline of football, organized in a stadium or other sports facility where the number of places made available by the organizer for individuals, determined in accordance with building law and fire protection regulations, is no less than 1000 (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 616).

4. Security Management Based on the So-Called Philosophy of Police Operations

In preparation for the UEFA EURO 2012 final tournament, the police sought proven solutions to ensure safety. The achievement of this goal was based on three pillars encompassing the philosophy of police operations, referred to as the "three elements of integrated security," which stemmed from the recommendations of the UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) and collaboration with fans.

The police philosophy, referred to as "3xT", consisted of: Care, Tolerance, and Suppression. Care was understood as the supportive role of police officers towards fans, essentially involving "looking after the fans". Tolerance was interpreted as the officers' understanding of often loud and non-standard behaviors, as well as the ways fans express their emotions. Suppression, which was considered a last resort, involved quick and professional actions by police tactical units in cases of collective disturbances of public order (Socha et al., 2010), within the framework of the Police Preparation Concept for the European Championship, 2010. This introduced philosophy referenced the Austrian philosophy of actions during the UEFA EURO 2008 Final Tournament, termed "3xD": Dialogue, De-escalation, and Determination (UEFA EURO 2008 – Final Report, 2009).

The police's preparation for action during UEFA EURO 2012, which was carried out under the operational codename HAT TRICK 2012, also included three elements of integrated security: event security, service, and safety.

Event security consisted of actions that ensured the safety of both participants and local community residents. Service involved actions aimed at creating conditions for the efficient conduct of the event. Safety was understood as the feeling of an uninterrupted atmosphere of celebration and the assurance of peace and the elimination of incidents that threatened the tournament and its participants.

The third pillar of the Polish police operations philosophy was based on the so-called "spotter" institution, and the actions undertaken by them were crucial for the safe conduct of the event in terms of identifying and immediately eliminating threats posed by fans. In a broad sense, a "spotter" refers to a police officer involved in matters related to the football fan environment, who is responsible for communication with fans and cooperation with club authorities. In the Polish police, following the English model, the term "spotters" informally appeared in 2005 to designate officers who typically operated covertly while performing duties during the security of international football matches. Since the UEFA European Football Championship finals in 2008, Polish spotters began to operate openly (Socha, 2011).

5. Coordination of Police Actions

The main center responsible for coordinating police activities during UEFA EURO 2012 was the Police Command Center located at the Police Training Center in Legionowo. The Police Command Center operated 24/7 with 95 officers, supported by 23 liaison officers who exchanged information with Polish police officers. The Command Center was responsible for coordinating police actions within the framework of the police operation. In this regard, it cooperated with the Capital Police Headquarters and the provincial police headquarters. The commander of the police operation, holding the rank of deputy chief of police,

was responsible for managing safety in the context of police operations (Socha, 2011). His duties included, in particular:

- Coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the action plan of the police operation commander and the action plans of the sub-operation commanders in Gdańsk, Kraków, Lublin, Poznań, Rzeszów, Warsaw, and Wrocław.
- Overseeing the information circulation system.
- Cooperating with all entities participating in the operations.
- Making the decision to terminate the police operation.

The Police Command Center consisted of the Operation Command Center and the Information Exchange Center. Among the main tasks of the Operation Command Center are:

- Managing actions within the nationwide police operation.
- Processing information regarding planned and ongoing actions.
- Determining the forces and resources necessary to eliminate emerging threats.
- Communicating decisions from the operation commander to subordinate forces.
- Supervising the execution of tasks by subordinate forces.
- Ensuring full readiness of subordinate forces for action.
- Exchanging information with other services and entities responsible for security during the tournament.
- Collecting documentation from the conducted activities, informational reports, and other planning documentation.

The tasks of the Information Exchange Center include, among others:

- Monitoring and identifying potential threats that could disrupt the course of the tournament.
- Ongoing cooperation with the operation and sub-operation command, including sharing information about identified threats.
- Cooperation and information exchange with the operation command, sub-operation commands, provincial police headquarters (Capital Police), organizational units of the Chief Police Headquarters, and law enforcement agencies from other countries regarding incidents that may disrupt the course of the tournament.
- Collecting and processing information about events that may disrupt the tournament.
- Cooperating with other services, entities, and other non-police institutions.

International information exchange.

6. Participation of Police Forces in Ensuring Safety and Public Order

In order to ensure safety and public order during the UEFA EURO 2012 Final Tournament, officers from all provincial police headquarters were engaged. On average, about 6000 police officers were on duty each day in the host cities. However, in connection with the matches between the national teams of Poland and Russia and between Russia and Greece, the number of forces deployed in Warsaw increased to 14,000 and 16,000 officers, respectively.

The police also provided escorts for both football teams, referees, UEFA delegates, and observers. A total of 3376 officers were involved in this task, conducting 771 escorts and covering almost 40,000 kilometers. The police also had access to aircraft, including 17 helicopters and a CASA transport plane, which conducted 223 flights.

The activities of the Polish police were supported by officers from other countries as well. In total, 174 foreign officers were deployed to assist the Polish police. It is worth emphasizing that the involvement of police officers from other countries during significant sporting events serves as an excellent example of international police cooperation. The exchange of information, as well as the visible presence of officers, contributes to building trust between citizens and the national police on one hand, and between foreign fans and "their" police on the other (www: <http://www.finance.wp.pl/kat>, 2012).

During the championships, due to public order disturbances, 652 individuals were arrested, including 473 Poles and 179 foreigners. Among the foreigners, Russian fans (100), Croatian fans (21), and Irish fans (19) were the most represented. The most common reasons for arrests were acts of hooliganism. The majority of individuals faced charges related to participation in an unlawful assembly, violating provisions of the mass event safety law, and assaulting police officers.

Assessing the level of safety in Poland during the tournament, compared to the same period in 2011, the number of thefts during the championships decreased from 3597 to 2946, and burglaries dropped from 1288 to 852. At the same time, there was a 22% reduction in robberies and approximately a 27% decrease in bodily injuries. Furthermore, despite the increase in road traffic participants, the number of traffic incidents decreased by 870 accidents, resulting in 125 fewer fatalities and 1,020 fewer injuries compared to the same period in 2011 (www: <http://www.finance.wp.pl/kat>, 2012).

7. Summary

Organizing mass events requires the organizer to meet many requirements specified in applicable legal acts, primarily the Act of March 20, 2009, on the Safety of Mass Events. One of the key responsibilities for ensuring the safety of mass events lies with the organizer, and as specified in the aforementioned act and other regulations, it also falls on (Socha, 2013): the village mayor, town mayor, city president, voivode, police, State Fire Service, and other organizational units of fire protection, services responsible for safety and public order in railway areas, healthcare services, and, if necessary, also other relevant services and authorities (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 616). In this context, the police play a crucial role in the mass event security system as an armed and uniformed formation dedicated to serving the community and ensuring the safety of people, as well as maintaining security and public order (Journal of Laws of 2025, item 636). Detailed principles of organizing police actions during the security of mass events are regulated by internal regulations of the police force.

In conclusion, the actions taken by the Polish police, based on the presented operational philosophy, ensured the uninterrupted course of the event which was the UEFA EURO 2012 Final Tournament. This also serves as an excellent example of the Polish police's ability to manage the safety of mass events. Additionally, the police fulfilled their mission, which stated: "The highest standards of service and security will guarantee the safety of the tournament and its participants" (<https://srem.policja.gov.pl/>, 2025).

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