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# Supporter Liaison Officer

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## UEFA CL&FFP Regulations: Art. 35 - Supporter Liaison Officer

1. The license applicant must have appointed a liaison officer to act as a key contact point for supporters.
  2. The supporter liaison officer must regularly attend meetings with the club's management and must collaborate with the security officer on safety and security-related matters.
    - Large majority of national associations have not only adopted Article 35 in their domestic club licensing regulations but have also extended it to cover more clubs (FIGC - 111 clubs in top four tiers of Italian football).
    - SLO requirement extends to 1,000+ clubs across Europe.
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## Why introduce Article 35?

- The principal aims are:
    - Improve the dialogue between clubs and supporters.
    - Enhance the relationship between supporters and the other football stakeholders, such as the police, transport companies, etc.
    - Michel Platini: "At UEFA we try to incorporate the views of fans in everything we do."
  - The SLO concept was drawn up by UEFA with the help of Supporters Direct and approved first by the UEFA Club Licensing Committee and subsequently by the UEFA Executive Committee.
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## The history behind Article 35

- Germany introduced SLOs as part of its 1992 National Concept for Safety and Security in Sport (NKSS).
  - SLOs one of two elements in fan liaison in Germany alongside fan projects (social work with fans).
    - SLOs appointed by clubs.
    - Fan project workers independent of clubs and financed by national and local government and the national football bodies.
  - SLO complements other approaches such as supporter charters, fans forums, fan satisfaction surveys, fans embassies.
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# Supporter Liaison Officer

- Any questions or comments so far?



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# What is an SLO?

- A taxi driver is a taxi driver. But an SLO?
  - SLO is a skilled mediator who represents the interests of the club/football association/league AND the fans.
  - SLO is a communicator, not a fire-fighter!
  - Prevention and self-regulation (no violence, respect for other fans, no discrimination – code of conduct).
  - Ideally the SLO should come from the fan base.
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# Standard definition of an SLO's role and tasks

- Supporter Liaison Officers (SLOs) are a bridge between the fans and the club and help to improve the dialogue between the two sides.
  - Their work is dependent on the information they receive from both sides and the credibility they enjoy with both parties.
  - The SLO informs fans about relevant decisions made by the club management and, in the other direction, communicates the points of view of fans to the club management.
  - The SLO builds relationships not just with various fan groups and initiatives but also with the police and security officers.
  - The SLO engages with SLOs of other clubs before matches to contribute to supporters behaving in accordance with security guidelines.
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## Minimum key responsibilities of the SLO

- The SLO shall be available as the main point of contact at the club for supporters.
  - The SLO manages the information flow/dialogue between the fans and the club.
  - The SLO liaises and builds relationships with the various supporter groups, other liaison officers, the football association, the league association, the police, etc.
  - The SLO should preferably come from within the fan base but, if an internal appointment, at least have experience with and contacts to the networks in the fan base at the club.
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## Minimum key responsibilities of the club

- Ensure SLO is able to attend national association SLO training courses.
  - Provide adequate resources (e.g. office, equipment, accreditation, club email address, etc.).
  - Stage regular meetings between the club management and the SLO.
  - Make provision for regular meetings between the SLO and the various fan groups.
  - Consult the SLO on matters of relevance to fans.
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## Minimum key responsibilities of licensors (governing bodies)

- Governing bodies are responsible for developing, coordinating, promoting and monitoring the supporter liaison work undertaken by clubs.
  - The relevant governing body should issue club SLOs with an ID card (e.g. a pass with photo) that also serves as accreditation for all national club stadiums.
  - The governing body/bodies should stage SLO training events in order to:
    - Set out best practice with regard to supporter-related issues and the supporter liaison work conducted by clubs.
    - Formulate standard procedures and ensure common objectives.
    - Facilitate an exchange of information and experience.
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# Supporter Liaison Officer

- Any questions or comments on the theory before we move on to the role in practice?



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# Developing the SLO role at club level

- Three aspects of SLO work:
    - Communication: talking to and sharing information with main stakeholders.
    - Service: helping fans with requests and complaints and advising clubs on fan-related issues.
    - Prevention: cooperating with security officers and the police to prevent incidents from happening. But SLOs are not the extended arm of the security officer!
  - Important to recruit the right person!
  - SLOs should build a team as the workload increases.
  - Use the existing resources (handbook, toolkit, Facebook, etc.)
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## Developing the SLO role at club level

- First set of SLOs are pioneers – a challenge but a worthwhile one.
  - Little/no understanding of SLO role, so important everyone knows what the role involves and why it is being introduced. Tasks will vary from club to club.
    - Organise meeting at club level and explain your job to all the major players, e.g board, marketing, press, security, etc.
    - Establish contact to external stakeholders such as the police, transport companies, etc.
    - Organise a meeting with the main supporter group/s to explain role.
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## Developing the SLO role at club level

- Provide offerings for fans (match-going and stay-at-home).
    - Supporter travel (coaches/trains or lift-sharing at smaller clubs).
    - Supporter events with players, manager or officials.
    - Regular fans forum to discuss problems or exchange information.
  - Create lines of communication.
    - Organise supporters club/s.
    - Use communication channels such as club and fan websites, e-mail, newsletter, message boards, Facebook/Twitter, stadium announcements, match programme.
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# Developing the SLO role at club level

- Hosting away fans.
    - Close contact with visiting SLO/s.
    - Assisting away fans in all areas.
    - Next week you are the away fans!
  - Build the network at national and international level.
    - Exchange information with other SLOs.
    - Organise and elect spokespersons.
    - Work shadowing at other clubs at home and in other countries.
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## Supporter Liaison Officer

- Any questions or comments on what you have heard so far before we conclude with a summary of the benefits?



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## Summary of benefits

- Improved relationship between governing bodies/clubs and fans.
  - Improved insight into supporter points of view and structures, improved organisation among supporters.
  - Greater transparency in communicating decisions, reduction in misunderstandings.
  - Improved dialogue between fans of different clubs.
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## Summary of benefits

- Reduction in violence/improved conflict management.
  - Improved atmosphere.
  - Financial benefits through higher crowds, increased merchandise sales, closer identification of fans with the club/national team.
  - Proven concept (part of fan hosting/security concept at 2006 World Cup).
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Thank you

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