

ALBANIA STATE POLICE MEASURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOOTBALL MATCH "UEFA CONFERENCE LEAGUE"

The structures of the General Directorate of State Police are finalizing the planning of security measures for the development of the UEFA Conference League Finals, between the teams of Rome - Italy and Feyenoord – the Netherlands, which will take place in Tirana on 25 May 2022, at 21:00 at "Air Albania Stadium".

In this context, the State Police is in the final stage of planning measures for the progress of this international sports match as the newest European sports competition for clubs. In the assessment of the legal obligations that it has, but also by utilizing the positive experience for planning, organizing and managing the situation of public order and security during the development of international football matches, based on our legislation, as well as the conditions and infrastructure it offers " Air Albania Stadium ", in terms of security, the Police has taken measures for this match, but also for all activities that will take place in our country, starting from the Border Crossing Points, during the crossings of teams, their sports fans or also for guaranteeing public order for other citizens in Tirana, who have nothing to do with this sports activity.

Since February, several trainings of the leaders of the State Police have been conducted with representatives of UEFA, the Albanian Football Federation, the Ministry of Interior and other actors that have obligations to provide an integrated approach to security and services in the sports environment where this football match will take place, several meetings have been held, the fan history of the two finalist teams has been studied and it has been requested to increase the professional level of police leaders for service management, strategy and tactics of behaviour towards fans and how to interact with them.

In the assessment of the security measures for the preparation of this Final, as well as in the fulfilment of the obligations deriving from the directives of the Council of Europe, for the direct and fast exchange of information between the police structures with those of their counterparts of other countries, by Order of the General Director of the State Police in April 2022 in the General Directorate of the State Police, a national point for the exchange of information on international football matches (NFIP) was set up, which from the first day of its establishment is in communication and continuous exchange of information with the NFIP not only of Italy and the Netherlands, but also with other neighbouring and European countries, to obtain the best models of the practice of football match policing with an international dimension.

From the information so far, it results that there will be a significant participation of sports fans who will support their football teams for this final from Italy and the Netherlands, who will visit Tirana or other cities in our country.

These sports fans will travel to the International Airport "Mother Teresa", Rinas, but also to the airports of Podgorica and Pristina with regular flights and charter from departure airports some will travel by ferry from Bari to the port of Durres and further their journey will be done by transport vehicles to Tirana by land. Some of these fans have booked hotels in Durrës and are expected to stay there from 24 to 25 May 2022 to move by bus from Durrës to Tirana.

Special measures have been predicted by the State Police, to be present for the progress of the activities that will be held by the Municipality of Tirana, for the reception of the sports fans of the two teams in two "Fan Zones", at the promenade "Murat Toptani" for the sports fans of the team of Feyenoord and in the area of the Amphitheatre in the Hills of the Artificial Lake of Tirana for the sports fans of the Rome team, but also in the festive activity that will be organized in "Skënderbej" Square.

The movement of sports fans of the Feyenoord football team, towards the Stadium, will be grouped on foot from "Fan Zone" to the pedestrian street "Toptani", along the Boulevard "Deshmorët e Kombit", in the street "Gjergj Filipi", while that of sports fans of the football team of Rome, towards the Stadium, will be grouped on foot from "Fan Zone" to the Amphitheatre in the Hills of the Artificial Lake, "Chopin" Square, "Lek Dukagjini" street.

The measures planned by the State Police for this important activity consist of several plans, such as:

- Escorting the football teams of Rome and Feyenoord from Rinas Airport to the Hotel, Stadium and back to Rinas.
- Escorting UEFA Senior Personalities and other State Personalities from Rinas Airport to Hotel and back to Rinas.
- Escorting vehicles with sports fans of the two football teams from Rinas and Durres to Tirana and in return.

- Guaranteeing public order in the two "Fan Zones" where a good part of the sports fans of both teams will stay, during their movement from the "Fan Zone" to the Stadium and leaving at the end of the match.
- Organizing checkpoints for sports fans before entering the stadium in the street "Dervish Hima", "Lek Dukagjini", "Gjergj Filipi", "Pope John Paul II" and at the columns in the Square "Italy".
- Supporting stewards during the control of sports fans before entering the stadium.
- Organizing services to guarantee public order before, during and after the football match not only near the Stadium, but also the control of the territory throughout the city of Tirana.
- Providing routes for emergency services.
- Road traffic management in the city of Tirana, before, during and after the football match, etc.

In order to guarantee a safer environment for sports fans of both football teams, as well as to ensure their movement, the State Police in cooperation with the Municipality of Tirana will take measures to restrict the movement of vehicles on some roads, starting from the Stadium to "Skënderbej" Square, in the east to "Elbasan" Street and in the west to "Sami Frashëri" Street.

To facilitate the circulation of vehicles during 24 and 25 May 2022 in the city of Tirana, the State Police appeals and seeks the understanding and cooperation of all citizens in order to reduce to a maximum the use and circulation of vehicles during these two days.

Given the fact that the sports fans of the two teams to enter the Stadium, will follow the itinerary set out above, in order to avoid confusion at the checkpoints organized by the State Police, as well as at the entrances of the Stadium, we request to the citizens who have a ticket for this match, to move to the street "Papa John Paul II" and the street "Dervish Hima", to head to the Stadium. While other citizens who do not have a ticket to the Stadium, do not frequent this area.

It is an opportunity to remind Albanian and foreign citizens that according to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania, violent actions in sports activities, such as: entering the field of play, during the development of sports activity by unauthorized persons, constitute criminal offenses and is punished with a fine from 50 000 to 100 000 ALL. When from this offense derives the obstruction of the normal development of the sports activity it is punished with a fine or with imprisonment of up to three months. Throwing solid objects on the field of play or over the mass of people, possession or use of pyrotechnics, fireworks, flamethrowers, during the development of a sports activity, are punishable by imprisonment of six months to three years.

Albanian criminal legislation considers the criminal offense of hitting or any other act of violence of an athlete, coach, referee, sports mediator, due to sports activity, by persons outside this activity, a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment of one to three years. The same offense, when committed in sports facilities, more than once, or by leaders or members of sports clubs, is punishable by imprisonment of one to five years.

The structures of the State Police are evaluating and processing the latest information related to this important sports activity and in the coming days we will communicate other details from the Plan of Measures, such as the number of police officers that will be activated, how to manage the fans and communicate with them, as well as any other information that will be necessary for the citizens of Tirana and friends from the Netherlands and Italy, who come to support their teams.

The State Police requests the understanding of the community of the city of Tirana and the drivers, to avoid the area where the sports activity takes place, using axes and other directions of movement, as it would be considered a very valuable help in the progress and guarantee of security measures.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the media for their support and assure the citizens of the full readiness of the structures of the State Police, to accurately implement all measures planned in order to ensure public order before, during and after this match, as well as for an effective cooperation with all other actors in the sports environment where this football final will take place

Thank you