

Report

on the manifests of racism,
anti-Semitism, nationalism,
neo-Nazism and other forms of
intolerance in football stadia

in the years 2008 and 2009.



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zo ŠTADIÓNOV **rasizmus**



fare

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1 Introduction

The report „The expressions of racism, neo-Nazism, anti-Semitism and nationalism inside football stadia“ is based on the reports of People against Racism, that were, collected, thanks to the support of the FARE network, inside football stadia, but also by monitoring racist ultras and hooligans via other media (TV, print, internet). Partial findings, outcomes of the monitoring procedures and other data, concerning intolerance were periodically published on the internet website futbal.rasizmus.sk, in the year 2009, with the support of the Open Society Foundation.

2 Expressions of Intolerance

Intolerant expressions are usually the work of ultras or hooligans that often include groups of neo-Nazi hooligans or racists. These expressions are either verbal (chats, slogans, cheers) or graphic (symbols, cryptograms, written slogans, flags). Most commonly they concern the color of the players skin, especially players from South America and Africa, the ethnic origin of the opponents fans (matches of DAC Dunajska Streda with most other clubs, whose fans come from majority population, often are nationalistic in context, DAC is club situated in southern part of Slovakia where Hungarian minority lives), or various vulgar and hateful nicknames or metaphors, which are aimed at the opposing team. The usual hateful expressions are: anti-Semitic (f.e. „Slovan Jew“, „Polish Jew“, „I stomped a Slovan guy /he was just a Slovan Jew“) homophobic (especially to opposing fans or targeted at specific players), sexist (discriminatory display of women in the opponent's colors) or other hateful background.

2.1 Racism

Racist expressions of a part of the fans inside football stadia are the most common type of intolerant expressions in today's Slovak football. They concern mostly opponents footballers of a different skin color, but cases of insulting own fans are not uncommon. Some of the perpetrators state that the so called monkey chants, or insults „monkey get back on your tree“, are aimed at distracting the opponent. The case is that they are the most common racist expression that compares African players to a monkey. While monkey chants are less common in Western Europe, especially due to the high number of immigrants, while in Eastern Europe and former USSR countries or Balkan countries, the smaller African communities are the targets of far-right groups. Such radical-right incidents often draw support from ordinary fans, which cannot be considered members of far-right groups.

2008

In March 2008 People against Racism together with the Slovak FA published a statement aimed at the expressions of racism, xenophobia, discrimination and neo-Nazis inside stadia. The Slovak FA encouraged clubs to take action against such expressions in their stadiums. The FA, on the suggestion by PaR, asked clubs to take an active stance towards racist and intolerant fans. This statement kicked off the campaign for the year 2008 called „Let's Kick Racism out of our Stadiums“. Its aim was to collect monitoring reports and inform the public via the website futbal.rasizmus.sk.

At the same time PaR was joined by former Central African international and the ex-player of Matador Puchov and Inter Bratislava, Alias Lembakoali. Mr. Lembakoali along with other football figures took part in various antiracist activities. But reality proved that without practical steps, statements cannot force neo-Nazis or racism from stadiums. Data collected by PaR during the

year 2008 was meant to spur on the FA and the Union of League Clubs (ULK) into investing in further activities in this field¹.

Most racist incidents in year 2008 were collected at matches of clubs with players from African or South American countries – such as Slovan Bratislava, Spartak Trnava, Artmedia Petržalka or Zilina²³⁴⁵. Verbal insults were most common, but cases of displaying the Confederate Flag (Flag of the Confederate forces of the US Civil War, representing the Slaver Confederate states) were also noted at several matches⁶.

2009

In 2009 PaR continued in its monitoring activities, as well as updating the futbal.rasizmus.sk website. There were more incidents to monitor as racist insults still occurred inside the stadia. The whole year was opened by insults, from a group of MFK Kosice fans, against MFK Zilina's Brazilian striker Aduato, in the opening round of the spring season. This case was picked up by the disciplinary committee of the Slovak FA, who imposed disciplinary measures on the club MFK Kosice. Unfortunately, this case remained the only one picked up by the disciplinary committee that year. Other cases of racist insults towards African and South American players were reported from different stadia around the country including – Slovan Bratislava⁷, MFK Košice⁸ or even as low as the 5th Division⁹.

1 <http://www.profutbal.sk/spravy/?id=57905>

2 <http://www.denniksport.sk/article/69177/dva-roky-vazenia-a-kontumacia>

3 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2008/04/10/sfz-odsudil-rasizmus-na-adresu-nianga-a-guedeho/>

4 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2008/08/11/rasisticke-hukanie-na-hraca-zlatorych-moraviec/>

5 <http://www.profutbal.sk/spravy/index.php?clanok=63266>

6 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2008/04/20/na-zapase-artmedia-slovan-juzanska-vlajka/>

7 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/04/08/uz-aj-gueye-vie-ako-chuti-rasizmus-v-corgon-lige/tt>

8 <http://zilina.sme.sk/c/4968088/na-futbalistu-adauta-v-kosiciach-hucali-ako-na-opicu.html>

9 <http://sefcik.blog.sme.sk/c/201712/Hanbil-som-sa-jak-pes.html>

2.2 Anti-Semitism

The terms Jews, or Jew, are common terms used in chats or songs as pejoratives. This especially applies to the groups from Slovan Bratislava and Spartak Trnava, whose ultras often engage in anti-Semitic exchanges, yet both sides deny any anti-Semitic motivation.

Fans of Spartak Trnava often use the term Jewish to pejoratively describe the Slovan fans, referring to the alleged founding of Slovan Bratislava from the club Makkabi Bratislava. Therefore Slovan fans are referred to as „Slovan Jews“ and many chants refer to Bratislava as a „Jewish city“¹⁰.

Slovan Fans on the other hand, use the term „Jewish“ towards the Spartak fans, as a comeback, aimed at „demeaning them“ as well as pointing out their friendship with the ultras of Banik Ostrava, who are dubbed „Polish Jews“ based on their geographical proximity and ties to Polish ultra groups.

Therefore the derby matches between Slovan and Spartak are virtually always played in an anti-Semitic atmosphere¹¹.

10 <http://www.ultrasspartak.sk/main.php?page=chorale>

11 Monitoring reports of the matches between Slovan Bratislava and Spartak Trnava: <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/10/27/monitoring-derby-zapasu-slovan-trnava/>

2.3 Nationalism

Nationalist expressions are always linked to matches of DAC Dunajská Streda, or other clubs from cities with a Hungarian minority population, and many clubs from cities with a Slovak majority population. Southern Slovak clubs, where the Hungarian national population is largest, are the targets of anti-Hungarian slurs from Slovak nationalist fans of other clubs. Their slogans often incite to violence against Hungarians, insult their national background, or promote ultra nationalist groups.

On the other hand, there have been confirmed links between far-right hooligans from DAC Dunajská Streda and groups from Ferencváros Budapest, which add to increasing the ultra-nationalist sentiment on both sides.

At many matches in the years 2008 and 2009, there have been many noted incidents at the matches of DAC Dunajská Streda and Slovan Bratislava¹², Spartak Trnava¹³, FC Nitra, MFK Kosice or others, where nationalist slurs and insults from both sets of supporters took place.

On a positive note, the year 2009 saw an anti-nationalist initiative from groups of DAC Dunajská Streda supporters and fans of FK Senica a friendly match and common pre match activities, aimed at reducing the nationalist friction which so often dominates the matches of DAC Dunajská Streda with other top division clubs.



12 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/04/13/madarske-vlajky-takmer-zmizli-nacionalizmus-nie/>

13 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2008/10/29/dve-tvare-fare-action-weeku-v-corgon-lige/>

2.4 Other intolerant expressions

Sexism

Sexist expressions are most connected to some acts of Slovan Bratislava ultras, most significantly their banner „Fuck Trnava“ displaying a man in Slovan colors engaging in intercourse with a woman in Spartak colors. This incident was done in the full view of nearby observing security stewards who did not intervene during the whole match¹⁴.



Homophobia

Homophobic expressions most often target the fans of opposing teams, and aim to demean or „de-masculine“ them. This was best illustrated by a series of pictures published by the ultras of Spartak Trnava, which depicted Slovan players Branislav Obzera and Juraj Halenar, accompanied by homophobic statements¹⁵.

Homophobic slurs are also commonly used to target opposition clubs, by songs or chants.

Anti-Gypsism

As there are currently no Roma footballers in the Slovak first division, anti-Roma slurs are only used as pejoratives against opposition's players or against

14 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/10/27/monitoring-derby-zapasu-slovan-trnava/>

15 <http://www.ultrasspartak.sk/main.php?page=clanky&id=314>

opposition fans, especially by the Slovan Bratislava ultras against Spartak Trnava fans¹⁶.

The state of racism against Romas in Slovak football and Slovak society in general is best demonstrated by the base fact that there is not a single Roma footballer a very large under re-presentation of the Roma part of the population.

16 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/10/27/monitoring-derby-zapasu-slovan-trnava/>

3

Neo-Nazi activities inside Slovak stadiums

Hidden and open expressions of sympathies towards extreme right groups were a common thing at Slovak football matches, in the past. This unwanted phenomenon was, and partially still is, present inside most stadiums with an active far-right fan scene (with the exceptions of Trenčín and Bardejov), while the most active individuals came from an ultra or hooligan background.

The years 2008 and 2009 can be labeled as specific, while the number of direct far-right incidents decreased from the previous years – also thanks to the release of the monitoring report *Ultras 2007* by NGO's Enough and People against Racism, which increased public knowledge of this complex and acute problem.

3.1 Neo-Nazi presence and symbols

Expressions of sympathies towards far-right ideals, in the form of displaying flags and banners, became the focus of the interest of the Slovak Police Forces, especially after the release of the monitoring report *Ultras 2007*. Neo-Nazi hooligans reported on the site forum.hooligans.cz, that the monitoring report itself, was used as a pretense to repressively remove most of far-right flags in the year 2008. This was also reported by the ultras group from Rimavska Sobota, who were describing the confiscation of their flags by the Police, report that the monitoring report was used as the main source of criteria.

But the activities of the Police force, only resulted in changing the visual situation inside stadia, as it had little effect on the far-right ultras and hooligans scene itself – as far-right related incidents remained even after the removal of most visually offensive banners.

The symbols most commonly used by neo-Nazis inside football stadia still include the „Sig“ rune, Totenkopf emblem, Confederate flags and the numerical cryptogram 88. These symbols were mostly used by groups from Slovan Bratislava, MFK Kosice, FK Puchov or Rimavska Sobota¹⁷. In the year 2009 many cases revolved around members of ultra and hooligans groups from MFK Kosice, as two of their members were arrested on the account of publicly supporting far-right groups¹⁸.

The year 2008 also brought two „foreign“ incidents. The first took place at the mid-season friendly match between Artmedia Petržalka and Ferencvaros Budapest. Ferencvaros ultras came to the match in about 100 persons and displayed several far-right flags and slogans, such as the flag of Imperial Hungary (used by revisionist and ultra-nationalist groups in Hungary) or the slogan „Aryan Greens“.



The second incident took place at the FIFA World Cup Qualification Match between Slovakia and Poland, in Bratislava, which took place in Spring 2008. The leader of a major group of Polish flags was wearing a shirt displaying the

17 http://rs.ultras.sk/gal/RS_Trencin_03_08.jpg

18 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/05/20/dvaja-z-kosickyh-ultras-propagovali-fasizmus/>

88 symbol – a cryptogram for the Nazi greeting Heil Hitler – and several ultra-right and neo-Nazi flags were displayed in the away fans section.



During the 2009/2010 UEFA Champions League qualifications match between Slovan Bratislava and Ajax Amsterdam, several incidents were noted. Due to the self-identification of a large part of the Ajax fans as „Jews“ (joden) and their antifascist stance, and the ultra-right mentality of the Slovan Ultras, incidents were expected. The most notable was a series of shirts printed by the Slovan ultras especially for this occasion, with the slogan „Fuck Ajax „where the letter U was replaced by a seven arm candlestick (a common Jewish symbol).



In general the number of visual neo-Nazi and ultra-right incidents is lower than in the years 2006-2007, but this has been rather the outcome of police repression, rather than a decrease of neo-Nazi's and ultra-right sympathizers, who still have a significant position in many ultra and hooligan groups.

3.2 Neo-Nazi hooligans

No major recent trends inside of the hooligan subculture were noted, but in general the number of neo-Nazi hooligans has been stagnant. This is due to

the diverse view of far-right organizations on football hooligans as such and also on the low level of political activities of hooligans, even though an ultra-right mind set is dominant between most hooligans. These two factors have contributed to the lower recruitment ability of football hooligans between members of far-right organizations.

In the context of the Slovak hooligan scene, it is possible to state that every active Slovak hooligan group (Slovan Bratislava, Spartak Trnava, MFK Kosice, Dukla Banská Bystrica) have their core group formed by neo-Nazis or far-right sympathizers.

The concrete number of neo-Nazi hooligans cannot be directly estimated as often, especially in connection politically motivated events, involve members from neo-Nazi groups, who are recruited just for the one specific action.

The most direct political incident of far-right hooligans in Slovakia was probably the attack of the hooligans of MFK Kosice on the ultras and fans of Partizan Bardejov and Lokomotiva Kosice, whose fans have an anti-fascist and antiracist stance. This incident was noted in the local media, as well as being promoted by the Kosice hooligans themselves¹⁹.

19 <http://korzar.sme.sk/c/5047353/partizan-si-na-lokomotive-nezgustol.html#ixzz0dG4DWLej>

4 Positive Initiatives

In the past years several positive initiatives aimed at confronting racism and intolerance in Slovak football were established. A major part of them took part during the past two FARE Action Weeks 2008 and 2009 or as independent initiatives.

A visible positive trend is that new groups started getting involved, bringing in new topics as well as new ideas. Therefore we can consider the years 2008 and 2009 to be successful in this matter.

4.1 FARE Action Weeks 2008 and 2009

Overall nine events took place in Slovakia during the FARE Action Week 2008. For the first time, Ultras of AS Trencin took part, which prepared an antiracist tifo at the match between AS Trencin and ASK Inter Bratislava. Another very positive topic was the involvement of LGBT groups aim at targeting the much taboo topic of Homophobia. An interesting initiative was arranged by the group Futbolizmus – Football against Racism, who organized a series of tournaments in Roma communities from the north-east of Slovakia. The winning teams joined together to form one team which took place at the I. Annual Antiracist Tournament of the Bratislava League of Small football.

The I. Annual Antiracist Tournament of the Bratislava League of Small football took place in Bratislava and joined teams from Czech Republic and Slovakia, including the Czech Small Football Champions, Champions of the Bratislava League of Small football, All Stars Team of Ali Lembakoali – con-

sisting of current and retired professional footballers, Roma team from the Initiative Futbalizmus as well as a team of the Slovak FA. All of the interested parties took part to join the common fight against racism in football²⁰.



The First Lesbian Organization – Museion organized an anti-homophobic event entitled Let’s Kick Homophobia, where people were encouraged to score a goal against the club FC Homophobia, which consisted of Slovak politician noted for their homophobic slurs and statements²¹.



The Slovak FA also dedicated a whole round of top division matches to the FARE Action week. Anti-racist banners were brought onto the pitch by player and anti-racist statements were read prior to the match²².



The FARE Action week 2009 again brought public attention to antiracist initiatives in football. Overall 10 events were held, including an action organized by Ultras Trencianska Tepla, who joined the Ultras from Trencin, in their Action Week activities.

20 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2008/10/28/turnaj-blmf-proti-rasizmu-vrchol-%E2%80%9Cfare-action-weeku%E2%80%9D-na-slovensku/>

21 <http://www.sme.sk/c/4143107/aktivisti-vytiahli-do-boja-proti-nenavisti-k-homosexualom.html>

22 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2008/10/29/dve-tvare-fare-action-weeku-v-corgon-lige/>

Bratislava saw the II. Annual Antiracist Tournament of the Bratislava League of Small football, which again included teams such as the All Stars Team of Ali Lemba-koali, a team from the Engerau Street Soccer League or the team of People against Racism – FC Different Colors United which currently plays in the Bratislava League of Small Football²³.



The club FK Inter Bratislava, organized antiracist displays at their matches, following in their trend of active club participation in the FARE Action Week, as more or less the only football club in Slovakia, acting on their own initiative.

KVO Roma Vychod, a long term FARE Action Week participant, continued in their work, organizing matches in the Roma communities along with screening of antiracist movies and distributing antiracist materials.

On a whole the years 2008 and 2009 were successful in targeting new initiatives to join the FARE Action Week. Among others – Museion, Bratislava League of Small Football, Ultras from Trencin and Trencianska Tepla or the Engerau Street Soccer league, who were joined by already active participants from all around Slovakia²⁴.

23 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/10/18/na-turnaji-proti-intolerancii-osobnosti-sklonovali-aj-ms-v-afrike/>

24 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/11/23/prehľad-aktivit-v-ramci-fare-action-week-2009-na-slovensku/>

4.2 Other Activities

Apart from the Activities during FARE Action Weeks 2008 and 2009 other initiatives took place. Some came from football fans themselves others from organizations around the country.

A notable action was the dedication of the Slovak FA Cup finals to the fight against Racism. At both of the final matches antiracist captain statements were joined by antiracist banners and displays ^{25 26}.

Other activities were organized by the private school Harmonia, who have been regularly hosting the antiracist kids' tournament – Give Peace a chance, in cooperation with the Slovak Olympic committee and People against Racism²⁷.

Several initiatives came from various football fans. The first was the before mentioned friendly matches and common activities by the fans of FK Senica and DAC Dunajska Streda who started a tradition of friendly fan matches and get together prior to the confrontation of their clubs. This activity was aimed at decreasing nationalist tendencies, which unfortunately accompany the matches of DAC Dunajska Streda²⁸.

Apart from the Ultras of Trencin and Trencianska Tepla, antiracist fans from MFK Topolcany joined the ranks of openly active Slovak antiracist supporters, by displaying an antiracist choreography at their matches, the first one at the match between Topolcany and AFC Nove Mesto.

25 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2008/05/01/finale-sp-v-duchu-motta-vykopnime-rasizmus-zo-stadionov/>

26 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/05/22/futbalisti-artmedie-a-mfk-kosice-proti-rasizmu/>

27 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/03/22/futbal-vzdy-vitazi-stop/>

28 <http://futbal.rasizmus.sk/2009/11/22/mozny-liek-na-nacionalizmus-ukazali-fankluby-senice-a-dac/>

The years 2008 and 2009 can be considered fruitful and positive when it came to new anti-racist initiatives. The most positive trend to be seen was the involvement of new groups, such as Museion or fan initiatives.

5 Conclusion

The data collected by People against Racism in the years 2008 and 2009, as well as positive initiatives that took place during these years, can be considered a stepping stone for further project, initiatives and activities in this field.

Unfortunately the phenomenon of racist insults against players of a different skin color, as well as nationalist chants, anti-Roma and anti-Semitic insults and pejoratives are still a common thing inside many stadia.

The decreased number of neo-Nazi displays at matches cannot be seen as an actual decrease of neo-Nazi's and far-right sympathizers at football matches.

What can be concluded is that racist, nationalist and intolerant expressions are still a common issue at many stadiums, but on the other hand the years 2008 and 2009 saw many positive signals that can be used for systematic work in this field.