

## SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

### PRESENTATION OF WORKING GROUP 2

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#### **The general context**

As a societal phenomenon, sport has come to occupy a place in society, in the media and in politics, and is subject to pressures that detract from its original purity and weaken its values.

While the virtues of sport have been known since antiquity, the excesses it engenders through the sometimes excessive passion associated with it, its commercialisation and the political instrumentalisation it is used for, require us to seek to develop an ethos for sport as defined in the European Sports Charter.

It therefore seemed to us that the creation of the Sport and Human Rights Committee was a response to a twofold need:

- To combat all forms of hatred, rejection, exclusion and disrespect, both on and off the pitch. This means focusing on the ethical practice of sport.
- Enabling everyone, whatever their situation, age, social condition, gender, origin or religion, to benefit from adapted and accessible sport.

While the first area focuses on the fight against all the excesses of unethical sport, the second is based on the recommendation on the European Sports Charter adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 October 2021, which reaffirms the principle of a right to sport that everyone should be able to enjoy, whatever their age, social condition, origin, gender or religion.

#### **Three areas for consideration**

1. The right to sport is first and foremost a health issue.

Numerous studies around the world show a general decline in physical ability among young people and, in the long term, a reduction in healthy life expectancy. The causes are well known, and there is no need to go back over them.

The aim of this first line of thinking is to seek out and promote all initiatives that encourage involvement in physical activities by the widest possible range of people, and in particular those who are furthest removed from them.

2. Another focus of the group's work will be gender discrimination.

It has been noted on numerous occasions that gender norms and stereotypes are very prevalent in certain parts of society. This has the effect of limiting the socialisation of boys and girls by confining them to activities with strong connotations (dance and gymnastics for girls, football and opposition sports for boys).

In the words of one researcher, it's a question of 'deconstructing prejudices to better construct otherness'.

3. Finally, a third area of work seems to be essential, specifically concerning young girls from immigrant backgrounds. Studies have shown in France (in schools) and in Europe that the number of girls from a migrant background taking part in sporting activities is very low compared with 'native' girls. This has a proven effect on the emancipation of these young girls and on their ability to integrate both professionally and socially.

To sum up, this working group has three objectives:

- **to promote continued sporting activity that is accessible to all, without any competitive spirit, in schools, extra-curricular activities and associations,**
- **to combat gender stereotypes,**
- **promote the social integration and emancipation of young girls from immigrant backgrounds.**

These three areas of work have been the subject of fact sheets containing initial proposals.

## THEME 1

The aim of this first area of work is to seek out and promote all initiatives that encourage the widest possible range of people to take part in physical activities, particularly those who are the furthest removed from them.

The practice of physical activities in a sporting environment often comes up against constraints that discourage many people. The reasons most often cited include :

- competitive forms of sport and the excesses they sometimes lead to,
- the complexity of certain practices, which are too technical and don't allow for immediate commitment,
- and also the cost of club membership and the sometimes onerous equipment.

The aim is therefore to find activities that are more recreational than competitive, accessible without a high level of physical or technical ability, and open to all regardless of age or gender.

Initiatives in this direction have already been taken by a number of sports federations or associations (the FFBB's PLAY project, USEP's cooperative football). The working group's aim will be to approach the various delegated or affinity sports federations to find out about the adaptive practices they offer and to suggest that they join in a discussion with the aim of using these forms to increase the number of people taking part.

**The group's task will be to :**

- **draw up a standard letter to the federations, translate it into English and make it available at European level via interested members of OIiNG,**
- **collect and summarise the responses,**
- **work with interested parties to consider adapted forms of practice,**
- **draw up a document listing the possibilities of existing or planned alternative practices and promote them.**

In addition, with the same aim of extending physical activity and sport to all, we will be looking for original initiatives such as the Association Sport et Partage run by swimming champion Marie Wattel (recovery of unused equipment for redistribution in disadvantaged neighbourhoods as part of local partnerships).

## THEME 2

The aim of this working group is to combat the gender discrimination that confines children and teenagers to highly standardised physical activities.

Building otherness and combating gender stereotypes must also be one of the sports world's primary missions.

The group's task will be to research and promote mixed-gender activities carried out in schools and associations in the various countries represented in the partner INGOs, and to draw on literature and research to highlight, from a very early age, the need for a well-constructed otherness through sport in order to develop a balanced adult.

This work will focus mainly on the school environment and the relatively abundant research work on the subject.

### **It will involve**

- **getting in touch with teachers, inspectorates and associations to draw up an inventory of existing mixed practices and promote them,**
- **draw on existing literature to demonstrate, in the recommendation that will be made, the benefits of mixed practices from the earliest age in building otherness (treating others as equal to oneself).**

### THEME 3

Numerous observations have been made both in France and abroad about the fact that young girls from immigrant backgrounds do less sport than their 'native' peers. This can affect their emancipation and socialisation and limit them to an environment that is less conducive to their development. The first point of contact for these young girls is in their immediate environment. Neighbourhood associations, municipal youth services and community centres are the partners we are looking for to develop this approach.

**The task will be to approach these structures and ask them about existing initiatives (specific projects run independently, partnerships with sports clubs, etc.) in order to study how they work and be able to propose a possible framework for generalisation in the form of recommendations.**

**At the same time, if the working group's resources allow, it would be interesting to be able to use parents' associations or associations to ask young girls about their motivations and what they would like to be able to do.**