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Combating Hate Speech in Sport

LAUNCH CONFERENCE

Factsheet and draft programme

Tuesday, 31 May 2022
2.30pm – 6.15pm
Room 2, Palais de l'Europe

Followed by a reception and an exhibition opening
6.15pm – 7.00pm

Hybrid format

Council of Europe
Strasbourg

Factsheet

Background information

Sport brings people together. It contributes to health and well-being, breaking down barriers and building trust and community spirit. However, it can also exacerbate tensions or rivalries and foster discrimination against certain categories of the population, contrary to international standards, obligations and principles on fighting racism and discrimination.

Sport occupies a significant place in society and has a substantial impact on a large sector of the population: athletes, spectators, security forces or volunteers, among others. The strong popularity of sport means that sports organisations and clubs are required to ensure safe and empowering sport environments. For over four decades, the Council of Europe has promoted fair play and respect in sport, helping to make sport safer, more ethical and accessible to all. This vision of sport can be achieved by promoting human rights values in sport and preventing and countering discrimination and hate speech.

Despite an increased awareness about the seriousness of the problem, public authorities and sports organisations face major challenges when trying to address this phenomenon. The situation ranges from a complete absence of measures in some countries to fragmented responses in others. The effectiveness of the measures is hampered by gaps in the regulatory framework, the lack of clear prevention strategies including training and education, the absence of protocols for action and the failure to punish unacceptable behaviour.

Key stakeholders (such as supporters' organisations) are rarely involved in devising these measures and too often there is not enough co-operation between public authorities, the various competent bodies in this area and sports organisations. Although both the European Union and the Council of Europe have developed regulatory frameworks in this field, sports events are still far too often the theatre of ominous scenes of racism, homophobia, sexism and other manifestations of hate speech. On some occasions, such incidents also degenerate into physical violence involving supporters and result in the event itself being disrupted. The risk of incidents of this kind also forces some organisers to limit the access of supporters to sports events, or to deny access altogether. Every instance of hate speech is unacceptable behaviour which must be prevented and addressed. The Combating Hate Speech in Sport project enables the various national initiatives to be scaled up through holistic national strategies involving all of the key stakeholders.

This conference is the first event of the project and is designed to offer an overview of the situation as regards hate speech in sport in Europe, examine innovative ways in which it is addressed in various countries, and raise awareness of the joint project funded by the European Commission and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe. We hope this conference will increase the visibility of the ways in which countries address this important issue and that it will lead to the creation of a network of expertise and co-operation for the project's implementation.

The joint project

This project aims to explore innovative approaches to address hate speech in sport. It is co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe's Sport Division until December 2023.

The project aims to combat hate speech in sport by providing technical assistance to public authorities in member states and other sport stakeholders to develop comprehensive strategies within a human rights framework. The areas of action to address hate speech entail:

- Presenting the state of play of hate speech in sport, including the online dimension. After a stakeholder mapping exercise, public authorities, sport organisations and other key players will be involved in collecting data, identifying gaps and opportunities, sharing examples of good practice, assessing needs and proposing ways to collectively and individually prevent and respond to hate speech.
- Providing guidance leading to the adoption of national strategies in the partner countries to combat hate speech in sport involving all key stakeholders.
- Setting up an online resource centre providing relevant information on existing tools to combat hate speech in sport, and identifying measures to prevent, counter, report and remedy hate speech, notably through the No Hate Speech Movement campaign, the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy, the programme of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport and other relevant instruments.
- Designing, implementing and evaluating a “no hate speech in sport” campaign, including training and tools to strengthen the stakeholders’ capacity to play their part in preventing and combating hate speech in sport.

Target audience

1. **Public authorities responsible for law enforcement/justice, sport and education** – by providing and maintaining a general framework and making available a platform for dialogue and the exchange of information and know-how.
2. **Safety, security and service staff, police, stadium safety officers, stewards, medical and ambulance staff and firefighters** – by providing expert input to the project and receiving training on identifying, preventing and countering hate speech.
3. **Sport organisations** – by providing specific guidelines for stakeholders and receiving training on identifying, preventing and countering hate speech.
4. **Supporters, athletes, coaches and technical staff, referees and parents** – by being involved in strategy development and relevant information campaigns.

Specific instruments in sport

The project's aims are embedded in a number of treaty provisions of the Treaty on European Union and of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the general principles of non-discrimination and equality are established in the [Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) of the EU¹.

This project builds on the [European Convention on Human Rights](#), the [European Social Charter](#) the [European Sports Charter](#), the Council of Europe expertise in the fight against hate speech

¹ Articles [2](#) and [3](#) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), and Articles [10](#), [19](#) and [67\(3\)](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The principles of non-discrimination and equality in the [Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) of the EU, Article 20 “everyone is equal before the law”. Article 21(1) prohibits “any discrimination based on any ground[s] such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation”.

and in the development of sport policies and norms². The project will take into account the findings of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) country monitoring reports, the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, existing Council of Europe texts and studies of the Directorate of Anti-Discrimination and the legacy of the No Hate Speech Movement Youth Campaign.

Objectives of the conference

The conference will:

- consider the current situation concerning hate speech in sport in Europe via an overview, examine innovative ways in which it is addressed in different countries, tendencies and directions of development;
- present some of the existing practices and projects addressing hate speech in sport in selected countries;
- provide visibility and raise awareness of the joint project funded by the European Commission and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe; and
- develop a network of expertise and co-operation for the project's implementation.

Speakers and target audience

The conference brings together authorities from a wide range of sectors:

- Council of Europe and European Commission representatives from relevant departments;
- representatives of the Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events (T-S4) and of the EPAS Governing Board and Consultative Committee;
- public authorities - representatives from sports ministries;
- international and national sport organisations;
- athletes, coaches and supporters exposed to hate speech in their sport environments; and
- experts and researchers who have carried out case studies on the subject of hate speech in sport.

Experts and representatives of partner organisations from the Sports Movement will be welcome to attend the conference remotely.

² The [Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events \(CETS No. 218\)](#), also known as Saint-Denis Convention.
[Recommendation on the prevention of racism, xenophobia and racial intolerance in sport \(2001/6\)](#)
[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2010\)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity](#)
[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on preventing and combating sexism](#)
[Recommendation \(2021\)1 of the Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events](#)
[ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 12 on Combating racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport](#)
[ECRI's GPR No. 15 on Combating Hate Speech](#)

Draft programme

2.30pm-2.40pm **Opening of the conference**

Jeroen Schokkenbroek - Director, Directorate of Anti-Discrimination, Council of Europe

Tamas Szuc - Director Culture, Creativity and Sport, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission

Conference moderator:

Irena Guidikova - Head of Children's Rights and Sport Values Department, Directorate General of Democracy, Council of Europe

2.40pm-3.40pm **Session 1 - State of play in project partner countries**

France - Gilles Queneherve, Sport Director, Ministry of Sport and Olympic and Paralympic Games

Germany - Christoph Lipp, Deputy Chief Constable, Deputy of the Commander-in-Chief of Public Order Support Forces of the Länder, German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community

Greece - George Mavrotas, Secretary General of Sport, Ministry of Culture and Sport

Italy – Antonio Parrilla, Expert in security, Department for Sport - International Affairs, Presidency of the Council of Ministers

Montenegro – Milos Lalevic, International cooperation unit, Ministry of Sports and Youth

Spain – Raúl Rodríguez Porras, Deputy Assistant Director, Legal Regime of Sport, High Council for Sports, Ministry of Culture and Sport, member of the State Commission against violence, racism, xenophobia and intolerance in sport

3.40pm-4.30pm **Session 2 – Addressing hate speech in sport: current policies**

Triantafillos Loukarelis - Chair of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), Director, Italy National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR)

Maria Daniella Marouda - Chair of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

Rodrigo Cavaleiro - President, National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Sport-Related Violence, Vice-Chair, Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events (T-S4), Portugal

Lena Gustafson Wiberg - Head of SLO Training, Supporters Direct Europe

Questions and Answers

4.30pm-4.40pm **Coffee break**

4.40pm – 6.10pm **Session 3 – Inspiring initiatives to combat hate speech**

Moderator:

Francine Hetherington Raveney - EPAS Deputy Executive Secretary

Bibiana Steinhaus-Webb - Professional Football Referee, UEFA Ambassador

Edouard Choquet - Professional basketball player

Nicolas Picquet - Producer, Director, SEIYA Production

Nagin Ravand - Sports and Social inclusion activist, Diversity and Female Football Advocate, Coach, Denmark

Filippo Veglio - Senior Expert, Football and Social Responsibility Division, UEFA, member of EPAS Consultative Committee

Bàlint Jóna - Board member, Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE) Network, member of EPAS Consultative Committee

Rosario Coco - Project Manager Outsport Network, trainer for Gaynet and activist in the field SOGIESC issues

Questions and Answers

6.10pm – 6.15pm **Conclusions and Next Steps**

Sophie Kwasny - Head of the Sport Division, EPAS Executive Secretary, Council of Europe

Followed by the opening of the **Sport and Anti-discrimination exhibition** and a **networking reception**