

## **ECRI Declaration on the occasion of EURO 2008 “Unite against racism”**

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The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe:

- welcomes the holding of the UEFA European Football Championship EURO 2008, as an ideal opportunity for all of us in Europe to celebrate the values of fair play, mutual respect, fraternity and peace, which are those of sport
- stresses that the EURO 2008 championship will also be a showcase for the resolute commitment on the part of all concerned to combat manifestations of racism and racial discrimination in football
- deeply regrets and condemns phenomena of racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance which occur at national and international football matches, including: public incitement to violence, hatred or discrimination; public insults; dissemination of racist ideas and symbols
- categorically rejects any attempt to justify or trivialise such acts on the pretext that the events at which they occur are highly emotional
- forcefully stresses that racist acts are a serious violation of human dignity and can never be excused or justified.

Such acts are contrary to the standards formulated by ECRI and should be systematically punished in all Council of Europe member States. ECRI recalls that whatever is illegal outside the stadium is also illegal inside the stadium. It stresses that all the parties involved are responsible for taking action, at their level, to counter manifestations of racism and racial discrimination in football. ECRI stresses the importance of the following concrete measures:

- adopting legislation to criminalise racist acts, drawing on the guidelines set out in ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7 on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination
- effectively implementing criminal law provisions against racist offences, including those establishing racist motivation as an aggravating circumstance
- alerting police officers and stewards to the problem by informing them of the regulations and training them in identifying and dealing with racist acts

- ensuring the visible presence of and preventive action by police officers and stewards in the stadiums so as to make clear that racist acts will not go unpunished
- encouraging football clubs to include anti-racism clauses in their rules and regulations, to appoint a person responsible for dealing with racist incidents and to make regular stadium announcements against racism during football events
- encouraging players and coaches to abstain from racist gestures and remarks in all circumstances
- ensuring that referees react appropriately where the players and/or supporters exchange racist gestures or expressions by imposing adequate sanctions
- suspending matches where supporters or players engage in racist behaviour, such as racist chanting, shouting racist insults or displaying racist placards, banners or symbols
- organising anti-racist awareness-raising campaigns involving sports organisations, clubs, young people and children
- providing financial and other support to sports federations and clubs that launch anti-racist initiatives
- encouraging the media to refrain from reporting on player or crowd behaviour in a manner which fosters confrontation
- encouraging journalists to avoid stirring up xenophobic or racist sentiments in their on-the-spot sports commentaries.

ECRI welcomes the action taken by UEFA to combat racism in football, as well as the practical and effective activities of the Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE) network.

ECRI calls on governmental bodies and public authorities, national and international sports organisations and the population as a whole to intensify their efforts to fight racism and prioritise fair play in sports in order to fully reinstate football's educational role for promoting mutual respect.

**“Unite against racism” is our common message.**