



Combating Racism and Racial Discrimination in the Field of Sport

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 12: Key Topics

” Sport can be a powerful tool for promoting social cohesion and important values, such as fair play, mutual respect and tolerance. But sometimes it is also an area in which racism and racial discrimination can thrive.

This General Policy Recommendation aims to help member States of the Council of Europe combat racism and racial discrimination in all types of sport, including professional and amateur sports, individual and team sports, as well as all activities related to sport in and outside sports grounds.

KEY MESSAGE

Member States should ensure and encourage equal opportunities in access to sport for all, and combat racism and racial discrimination within sport.

Member States should build and lead coalitions against racism in sport, inviting participation from local authorities, sports federation and clubs, athletes, coaches, referees, supporters' groups, minority representation groups, NGOs and the media.



SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enact and implement anti-discrimination legislation ensuring access to sport for all, and penalising racist acts.

- ▶ Conceive appropriate and effective legal and policy measures including the adoption of adequate anti-discrimination legislation to prevent discrimination in access to sport, and of integration programmes that promote access to sport for children from minority backgrounds.
- ▶ Hold sports clubs and federations responsible for racist acts committed during sports events.

2. Build coalitions against racism in sport.

- ▶ Adopt a national framework agreement, outlining the tasks and responsibilities of each actor.
- ▶ Invite local authorities to organise sport-related outreach activities bringing together people from different backgrounds.
- ▶ Invite sports federations and sports clubs to take measures to attract supporters of different minority backgrounds to sports events.
- ▶ Remind athletes and coaches to abstain from racist behaviour in all circumstances.
- ▶ Encourage supporters' organisations to adopt supporters' charters, containing anti-racism clauses.
- ▶ Encourage sponsors and the advertising industry to avoid giving a stereotyped picture of athletes from minority backgrounds.
- ▶ Promote exchanges of good practices through the creation of a good practice award for combating racism and racial discrimination in sport.

3. Train the police to identify and deal with racist incidents in sport.

- ▶ Request that local authorities provide the local police force with adequate training for dealing with racist incidents in and outside sports grounds.
- ▶ Request that the police adopt joint strategies with the security personnel of the organisers of sporting events for dealing with racist incidents.

4. Raise awareness of racism and racial discrimination in sport.

- ▶ Organise and finance large scale anti-racism awareness raising campaigns in sport at all levels, involving all relevant actors.
- ▶ Provide funding for social, educational and information activities for NGOs active in the field of combating racism and racial discrimination in sport.
- ▶ Encourage the media to report on racist incidents taking place during sports events and to give publicity to sanctions incurred by racist offenders.



ECRI – USEFUL LINKS

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 12: Combating racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport

<http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/eng?i=REC-12-2009-005-ENG>

ECRI revised General Policy Recommendation No. 2: Equality Bodies to combat racism and intolerance at national level

<http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/eng?i=REC-02rev-2018-006-ENG>

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 11: Combating racism and racial discrimination in policing

<http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/eng?i=REC-11-2007-039-ENG>

European Sports Charter

<https://rm.coe.int/16804c9dbb>

European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events

<https://rm.coe.int/168007a086>

FACTS AND FINDINGS

“There is persuasive evidence that racism and racial discrimination in sport goes beyond the individual or collective behaviour of fans or isolated cases of racist gestures and remarks made, for example, by athletes, coaches or club managers. In fact, institutional racism is also at work in the field of sport.”

“Initiatives for combating racism in sport have often mainly concentrated on fan behaviour and more in particular on hooliganism, even if not all hooligans or members of radical fan groups are necessarily racist. It is important to acknowledge that racist acts are also perpetrated by athletes, coaches and other sport staff, as well as ordinary fans.”

Explanatory Memorandum to ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 12