

Resolution 2276 (2019)¹

Stop hate speech and acts of hatred in sport

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Hatred and intolerance are rife in Europe today and the world of sport, which reflects society at large, is not immune to this reality. On the contrary, various forms of hatred and intolerance, including Afrophobia, antisemitism, homo- and transphobia, Islamophobia, racism, sexism and xenophobia, often find fertile ground in the world of sport, leading to verbal and physical violence. This interferes with the spirit of competition that is a natural element of sport, by polluting and perverting it.
2. Verbal abuse is widespread in the sports environment, in the form of insults and chants that may amount to hate speech and incitation to violence. Abuse may also be written, visual or allusive, with the use of symbolic objects, extremist iconography or vandalism of the opponents' symbols. These phenomena occur most often in collective ways, among supporters, but they also take place on the playing field, involving players, trainers or referees, either as perpetrators or victims of the abuse.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly condemns hatred and intolerance in any form and believes that the impact of hate speech should not be underestimated. While awareness of this issue and the need to address it has increased in recent years, much remains to be done to counter it effectively in the sports environment. In addition, the danger posed by populists and other ideologues attempting to manipulate sports supporters for electoral and political gain should be prevented and countered.
4. The Council of Europe has taken action against hate speech in the area of sport through various activities, in particular through the Youth Sector's No Hate Speech Movement campaign, in co-operation with the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS).
5. The Assembly welcomes the memorandums of understanding signed in 2018 between the Council of Europe, the European Union of Football Associations (UEFA) and the Fédération internationale de football association (FIFA) as an important basis for co-operation to promote human rights, integrity, good governance and non-discrimination in football, which is by far the most popular sport in Europe, and the fact that the first of these memorandums explicitly mentions hate speech among the manifestations of discrimination that member States are required to prevent and combat.
6. The Assembly is aware of the powerful potential that sport has to change mindsets. It is convinced that sport should be first and foremost an instrument for promoting and transmitting values such as fair play, mutual respect and tolerance, in addition to being a beneficial activity for personal development and health and a form of entertainment accessible to all. There should be no place in sport for prejudice and violence, nor for manipulation of supporters' sentiments.
7. The Assembly recalls its [Resolution 2131 \(2016\)](#) "Sport for all: a bridge to equality, integration and social inclusion", particularly as regards the need for mechanisms for regular and systematic monitoring of discrimination in the field of sport.
8. The Assembly believes that education is key in preventing hatred and intolerance, including in the sports environment, and special attention should be paid to the role of schools in transmitting the values of tolerance and respect for human dignity.

1. *Assembly debate* on 10 April 2019 (14th and 15th Sittings) (see [Doc. 14842](#), Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Mr Goran Beus Richembergh). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 10 April 2019 (15th Sitting).



9. The Assembly supports the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No. 218) and invites all member States which have not yet signed and ratified it to do so.
10. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on the Council of Europe member States to:
 - 10.1. promote research and data collection on hate speech and hate crime in the sports environment. Data should be comparable and disaggregated by geographic location, sport, victim and perpetrator – distinguishing between athletes (professional and amateur) and spectators – and the grounds of discrimination;
 - 10.2. integrate into their national plans or strategies against hate speech and hate crime specific measures to address these issues in the sports environment;
 - 10.3. strengthen co-operation with sports organisations in areas relevant to hatred and intolerance, including the monitoring and reporting of incidents, information and awareness-raising activities targeting athletes, staff and management of sports organisations, as well as the general public;
 - 10.4. ensure that reporting mechanisms are available for victims of hate speech and discrimination in the sports environment, both with a view to protecting victims and to regularly monitoring the phenomenon;
 - 10.5. combat impunity by ensuring consistent implementation of existing administrative and criminal sanctions for hate speech in the sports environment and making use of the technologies currently available on sports grounds to identify perpetrators;
 - 10.6. conduct awareness-raising campaigns targeting the general public on the dangers posed by hate speech, the reporting mechanisms available and the importance of countering impunity by reporting incidents;
 - 10.7. integrate sports ethics into school curricula, in the framework of citizenship education; provide physical education teachers and sports trainers with training on detecting and responding to discrimination and abuse targeting athletes, whether at amateur or professional level;
 - 10.8. encourage media to provide pluralistic, unbiased information on athletes, particularly those most exposed to hatred, and their performance, and to report accurately and without bias on hate speech incidents and hate crimes.
11. The Assembly calls on sports federations and other sports organisations to:
 - 11.1. integrate equality and non-discrimination into their activities and promote democratic values; prevent and combat hate speech and, to this end, strengthen co-operation with supporters' clubs, civil society organisations, the media and educational institutions;
 - 11.2. appoint outstanding athletes as "ambassadors for equality and non-discrimination";
 - 11.3. require all players to formally commit to refraining from hate speech and manifestations of hatred and intolerance;
 - 11.4. provide all players and staff members with training on how to identify, prevent and counter hate speech and intolerance;
 - 11.5. promote educational programmes for sports supporters and fan clubs in order to prevent hate speech in stadiums during matches.
12. The Assembly underlines that sport should not only be a matter of competition, but also an environment in which people of all origins and walks of life can find common ground and interact harmoniously in diversity.