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Sport for all: a bridge to equality, integration and social inclusion

Report¹

Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media,

Rapporteur: Ms Carmen QUINTANILLA, Spain, Group of the European People's Party

Summary

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¹ Reference to Committee: Decision of the Bureau of 16 December 2013, Reference 13340 of 21 October 2013.

A. Draft resolution

1. Sport is one of the most popular activities in our societies and is by far the most prevalent in the voluntary sector. In addition to the improvement in physical and mental well-being brought about by engaging in physical activity, sport plays an important role for social cohesion by providing opportunities for meetings and exchanges between people of different gender, abilities and nationality or from different cultures, thereby strengthening the culture of “living together”.
2. The Assembly notes, however, that sport for all is not yet a reality and wishes to encourage the adoption of a more integrated and a more dynamic approach to promoting access to sport in the Council of Europe member states.
3. To this end, the Assembly recommends that member States:
 - 3.1. refocus the priorities of their sports policies to highlight the contribution of sport to achieving the objectives of other policies, including those on health, social cohesion, education, youth, non-discrimination, and the reception and integration of migrants;
 - 3.2. strengthen the collaboration of public institutions working in these areas, especially when they are in contact with young people and vulnerable groups, and increase the synergies between their activities and those of sports organisations so that the various stakeholders play an active role together in combating all forms of discrimination in sport.
4. In this context, public authorities should in particular:
 - 4.1. involve school and university sports to a greater extent in the promotion of “sport for all” in co-operation with sports organisations, especially in order to reach a younger population and reduce “dropping out of sport”;
 - 4.2. establish, in close co-operation with sports organisations, mechanisms for regular and systematic monitoring of discrimination in the field of sport, including incidents of discrimination based on a person’s disability, racial, cultural or ethnic identity, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual characteristics, in order to improve risk analysis in this area, study targeted prevention strategies, facilitate the lodging of individual complaints and ensure that they are properly investigated;
 - 4.3. involve equality bodies and national human rights institutions to a greater extent in combating discrimination in sport, promote their co-operation in running awareness-raising activities, and authorise these bodies to participate in legal actions brought against perpetrators of discrimination;
 - 4.4. initiate deliberations together with sports organisations on a better way of redistributing revenues generated by top-level professional sport – especially by the major sports events that attract large television audiences – in order to allocate a percentage of those revenues to projects aimed at improving access to sport for all;
 - 4.5. pay particular attention to the gender dimension; in this respect,
 - 4.5.1. recognise women athletes’ achievements and encourage young women to participate in sports; seek to reduce gender-based remuneration gap and award disparities;
 - 4.5.2. significantly increase media visibility of women in sport, notably by devoting more public service broadcasting air time on women’s sport and by promoting a non-sexist view of sport;
 - 4.5.3. ensure provision of “girls-friendly” sports facilities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods that would allow girls and young women to have access to sport without fear, free from violence or apprehension with regard to the way they are perceived in the neighbourhood;
 - 4.5.4. commit to eradicate all forms of discrimination and stigmatisation based on gender, gender expression or sexual orientation in all aspects of sport, including policies, practices, administration, funding, programming and training; in particular, hold individuals accountable for the use of sexist language in sports competitions;

- 4.6. intensify efforts towards the inclusion in sports activities of person with disabilities and support a wider media broadcasting of sport events involving them;
 - 4.7. seek practical solutions that enable irregular migrants to access sport, including by making sports facilitators available;
 - 4.8. broaden the scope of actions in all areas that have an impact on access to sport, making it more inclusive; in particular, encourage investment in accessible infrastructure;
 - 4.9. include sports associations and non-governmental organisations in the decision-making processes that affect urban planning in order to enhance access to sport for all;
 - 4.10. foster the establishment of sports clubs in rural and disadvantaged urban areas and take measures to provide accessible, affordable and youth-friendly public services in the field of sport, as requested by the Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2015) 3 on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights;
 - 4.11. encourage training of sports instructors to the principles and good practices of citizenship education, respect for diversity in a multicultural society, awareness of and ways of fighting all forms of gender bias and discrimination, and inclusion of persons with disabilities;
 - 4.12. promote the concept of “sport on prescription” at local level, in co-operation with the local and regional authorities;
 - 4.13. support wide-ranging research on sport and social inclusion, in order to promote evidence based policies and well-informed decisions in the field of sport.
5. The Assembly calls on member States to support the work of the Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) on access to sport for all and invites the countries that are not yet members of this Partial Agreement to consider joining it.
 6. The Assembly recognises the fundamental role of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in fostering equal access to sport for all and in changing cultures, as well as the roles of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and the International and European Federations of Adapted physical Activity (IFAPA and EFAPA) in coordinating research and information. Therefore, the Assembly calls on the IOC to develop a comprehensive programme for the promotion of sport for all and the fight against all forms of discrimination, in close co-operation with the National Olympic Committees, International Sports Federations, athletes and IOC-accredited organisations, also seeking the active involvement and support of media broadcasters and sports brands, through partnership agreements with them.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Quintanilla, rapporteur

1. Scope and aim of the report

1. Sport is recognised as the single most popular activity in modern society. This is an asset for our societies.

2. Official policies promote sport with a view to keeping the general population healthy and preventing certain diseases, cardiovascular especially. Scientists and government agencies alike are unanimous that physical and sporting activities improve the population's state of health.² A French institute adds that "the beneficial effects of physical and sporting activities on health have been known since ancient times and are confirmed by all the modern epidemiological studies. These show that the risk of early death is lower among physically active persons than others, a valid finding irrespective of age and cause of death, more conclusively for men than for women"³.

3. Various governmental and non-governmental organisations have already highlighted the worrying trends of physical activity levels – or rather lack of it – in Europe and their associated costs for public health.⁴ According to the report by the International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) and the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR), "inactivity imposes economic costs of €80.4 billion per year to the EU-28" only. The latest Eurobarometer on physical activity, while limited to EU countries, has shown that physical inactivity is increasing overall.⁵

4. This being said, the beneficial impact of engaging in sports is much broader than just the public health aspect: sport is an excellent means of socialisation between people of different gender, ability, culture or nationality. It opens up possibilities for meeting and exchange, it helps immigrants to bond with other members of society and it facilitates positive relations with people who suffer from discrimination. Sport has a role in promoting gender equality, social ties and a culture of "living together".

5. Accordingly, it is important to promote an inclusive approach to sport. Nonetheless, access to sport for all is far from being a reality. And yet, improving equality in sport has been a key objective of the Council of Europe from the very outset of its intergovernmental co-operation in the field of sport. The European Sport for All Charter,⁶ adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 1975, along with a number of recommendations, has since provided a reference for governmental policies in sport.

6. In 2001, Ministers from the Council of Europe member States committed themselves to act to prevent racism, xenophobia and racial intolerance in sport. This gave national sports organisations, clubs, and anti-racist associations the principal task of implementing awareness-raising, educational and information programmes on racism. A whole range of initiatives was launched both in individual countries, like Kick Racism out of Sport in the UK, and more international campaigns, like the Football against Racism Network (FARE). Today Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE) works as an umbrella organisation that fights against racism and discrimination in sport throughout Europe.

7. The question of sport for all is also monitored by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)⁷, which provides the public authorities of member states of the Agreement with a platform for intergovernmental sports co-operation. In this context, a range of activities (policy debates and training and awareness campaigns specifically focusing on discrimination) have taken place, and partnerships with the sports movement and certain NGOs have been developed.

8. Other international organisations are committed to foster access to sport for all, such as UNESCO, and also the International Olympic Committee⁸, and, in particular, its "Sport for All" Commission.⁹ The IOC held a series of world conferences on sport for all, the last of which took place in Lima, Peru, in 2013.

² P-H. Bréchat et al., "Activités physiques et sportives et santé publique", adsp, n°39, June 2002

³ Website of the Institut français de la santé et de la recherche médicale (INSERM), available at this address: <http://www.inserm.fr/thematiques/sante-publique/dossiers-d-information/activite-physique2>

⁴ The contribution of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), prepared in February 2016 by Valentin Dupouey, Erasmus Student Network (ESN), and Mina Tolu, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO) refers, in particular, to the report on "The Economic Costs of Physical Inactivity in Europe": <http://www.friendsofeurope.org/media/uploads/2015/06/The-Economic-Costs-of-Physical-Inactivity-in-Europe-June-2015.pdf>

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/ebs_412_en.pdf

⁶ [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec\(92\)13&Sector=secCM&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=rev&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec(92)13&Sector=secCM&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=rev&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75)

⁷ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/PartialAgr/Html/Resol20078.htm>

⁸ <http://www.olympic.org/news/sport-for-all>

9. Our Parliamentary Assembly adopted an active role in the promotion of the principles of equality, non-discrimination and equal access to sport for all, in its Recommendation 1701 (2005) “Discrimination against women and girls in sport”, Recommendation 1635 (2003) “Lesbians and gays in sport” and Resolution 1204 (1999) “Europe and professional sport”.

10. The aim of my report, which is entirely in line with the Assembly’s previous work, is to identify and analyse the factors that impede access to sport and propose concrete measures to reduce their negative impact, because I am convinced that this can make a major contribution to combating discrimination and help bring about social cohesion and integration. The emphasis is on amateur sport (although some questions – and some measures – can also apply to the practice of professional sport).

11. First of all, I identified three areas where significant problems of equal access to sport are, unfortunately, evident: gender *de facto* discrimination; discrimination because of the origin; barriers resulting from social vulnerability, including disabilities, and cultural background. Ms Virginie Rozière, Vice-President of the Sport Intergroup of the European Parliament, concurred with this analysis.¹⁰

12. In this context, it is important to verify whether and how different stakeholders are working together, because I am convinced that we need to encourage joint efforts and partnerships both at international and country level. I am referring here both to the synergies possible in the action taken by the authorities at the different levels of government and to the possible – and highly desirable – co-operation between the authorities and the world of sport.

13. Here, it is necessary to stress the expediency of considering the sports movement’s autonomy and its own role in promoting access to sport, but also to stress the legitimacy of public authorities’ intervention where major questions linked with sports participation are concerned. In that respect, sport for all is a field where public authorities’ intervention is very widely accepted, as witness the “federal law on encouragement of sport and physical activity”¹¹ in Switzerland.

14. Cooperation with sport movement organisations should take into account the need to ensure access to sport for all. In this respect, member States may encourage sports governing bodies to follow the Good Governance in Grassroots Sports guidelines developed by the International Sport and Culture Association.¹²

2. Improve gender equality in sport

15. It should be recalled that the gap between male and female sports participation observed even today substantially arises from a stereotyped “masculine” perception of certain sports, sometimes attended by false information. On that score, suffice it to recall that only a short time ago certain sports were not recommended “medically¹³” for women. For example, it was said by medical experts that football caused a predisposition to *genu valgum*, was dangerous for a woman’s body and should be banned in the interests of fertility.¹⁴

16. So it is not surprising that in 1989 during the final of the European women’s football championship the German federation offered the winners “a reward fit to delight good housewives: a second quality dinner set and coffee service¹⁵”. Happily, things have changed; the UEFA fosters the development of women’s football across Europe, as do several national football federations. Nevertheless, certain fields of sport and some clubs remain reluctant to open up to female participation. For instance, it was only in 2014 that the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, the “home of golf”, issued their first women’s memberships.

17. Generally, women practice sport significantly less than men. The Eurobarometer Sport and Health Survey (2010) found that only 8 % of young women (15-24) compared to 19 % of the young men are regularly physically active. Surveys conducted in various countries revealed a similar picture and showed a dramatic decline in physical activities among girls starting already at the age of 13 to 15-years. According to the 2010 Eurobarometer Survey, 43% of men say that they engage in sport at least once a week compared to only 37%

⁹ <http://www.olympic.org/sport-for-all-commission>

¹⁰ Ms Rozière, who specialised in a social integration and gender equality in access to and the practice of sport, gave a presentation to our Committee in Paris on 2 June 2015.

¹¹ Law of 17 June 2011.

¹² http://www.sportanddev.org/en/toolkit/manuals_and_tools/?5590/1/Guidelines-for-Good-Governance-in-Grassroots-Sport

¹³ See Mareike Koenig, “Football féminin et société en Allemagne depuis 1900”. Ulrich Pfeil. Football et identité”, April 2006, Paris, France. pp. 179-194.

¹⁴ Taken from Mareike Koenig’s article, Op. cit., p. 8/9.

¹⁵ Mareike Koenig, Op. cit.

of women.¹⁶ Some sources claim that all in all approximately 40% of sport and physical activity participants are women¹⁷.

18. The barriers that prevent women from fully participating in sport are the same that prevent them from fully participating in the society: stereotypes, misperceptions, safety risks (such as sexual harassment and violence), inadequate resources, poverty and a lack of role models¹⁸. Self-censorship is also an issue, especially among young girls who tend to give up certain sports (e.g. swimming) for the fear of exposing themselves to view. However, research also supports the notion that there is less value placed on women's sports. This leads to unequal wages, awards and media coverage compared to men's sports.

19. Today, more women and girls are playing sports than ever before, yet this has not corresponded to an increase in coverage of women's sports in sports media. Only around 3% of airtime is dedicated to women's sports. Yet media is a tremendous driving force behind the popularity of any sport, alongside the manner in which the games are reported upon. When women's sports are covered at all, they are usually covered by men who merely go through the motions of reporting.¹⁹

20. A recent BBC Sports study has revealed that 30% of sports reward men more highly than women. Out of 35 sports that pay prize money, 25 pay equally and 10 do not. The biggest disparities were found in football, cricket, golf, darts, snooker and squash. Athletics, bowls, skating, marathons, shooting, tennis and volleyball have all paid equal prize money since before 2004. In the last decade, nine more sports have started doing so with five – diving, sailing, taekwondo, windsurfing and some cycling events – achieving equality in the past couple of years.²⁰

21. Tennis was the first sport to offer equal prize money for both male and female competitors when the US Open started doing so in 1973 after campaigning Billie Jean King and eight other female tennis players. Equal pay was only achieved in 2007 for the Wimbledon grand slam, owing to the efforts of Venus Williams who fought for fair winnings for female athletes. It is interesting how a single person can be a catalyst of a tremendous change.

22. We may be content that today in 70% of sports there is actually parity in awards. However, some of the most media covered fields such as football or golf continue to offer significantly smaller prizes to female players. In professional golf, the expected pay gap between men and women in 2016 is 83%. The top female golf player in 2015, Lydia Ko, earned USD 3,8 million in prize money and USD 1,5 million in sponsorship earnings, compared to the top male player, Jordan Spieth, who earned USD 12 million in prize money and USD 30 million in sponsorship²¹. In my own country, Spain, the situation is unfortunately not better: even though more than 30% of the registered members are women (they are above 95 000), rules applied in tournaments and awards (in number and amounts) are discriminatory. Women play however the same game, to the same level.

23. Football represents the leading area of sexism-driven inequity and discrimination. Female footballers earn only a fraction of their male counterparts. For example, FIFA pays every team prize money for competing in both men's and women's World Cup. The total amount paid out for 2015 Women's World Cup was USD 15 million, compared to the USD 576 million in 2014 Men's World Cup. Such discrimination in wages is of course the typical situation in every country. For this reason, the members of the US women's soccer team are in conflict with their federation. Five of them – Alex Morgan, Carli Lloyd, Megan Rapinoe, Becky Sauerbrunn and Hope Solo – on behalf of the entire team, have filed in March 2016 a federal wage-discrimination complaint against US Soccer after it was revealed that the World Cup winners were paid far less than their male counterparts in 2015, despite generating nearly 20 million USD more in revenue²².

24. The 2015 Women's World Cup in Canada was marred by other incidents of gender discrimination and sexism. Namely, FIFA had accepted Canada's bid to host the games in venues that had artificial turf instead of grass. More than 40 elite players from Europe, the United States and South America filed a lawsuit against FIFA and Canada Soccer Association alleging that the decision to allow turf surfaces was discriminatory.^{23/24} Faced with a choice of either boycotting the tournament or dropping the lawsuit, the players decided to drop

¹⁶ *Gender equality in sports*. Council of Europe, September 2011

¹⁷ <http://www.livestrong.com/article/247625-gender-discrimination-in-sports/>

¹⁸ <http://www.sportanddev.org/?5417/Discrimination-in-sport-based-on-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>

¹⁹ <http://www.socialistalternative.org/2015/07/17/womens-world-cup-exposes-rampant-fifa-sexism-organize-fight/>

²⁰ <http://www.bbc.com/sport/football/29744400>

²¹ <https://golfsupport.com/blog/golfs-gender-pay-gap/>

²² <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2016/mar/31/us-womens-soccer-team-accuses-federation-wage-discrimination>

²³ No other World Cup, or major tournament, has ever been played on turf. Before accepting Qatar's bid for the 2022 Men's World Cup, FIFA had demanded Qatar to ensure that their stadiums have grass fields.

²⁴ <http://www.socialistalternative.org/2015/07/17/womens-world-cup-exposes-rampant-fifa-sexism-organize-fight/>

the lawsuit in January 2015. The positive outcome of this ‘rebellion’ was however that the organiser of the next Women’s World Cup in 2019 in France – the French Football Federation – has made it clear that all games will be played on natural grass.

25. I very much regret that, despite FIFA’s claims that growing the game of football is its primary mission, it continues to underfund the women’s game which is growing in popularity. FIFA spends an estimated USD 900 million yearly to develop football. Of that only about 15% goes to fund programmes to help grow women’s football.²⁵ Similarly, FIFA’s decision-making organs are largely out of gender balance. I nevertheless recognise that including one female elected member and two other female co-opted members in the Executive Committee is a positive – albeit not sufficient – step forward. I also recall that the Assembly commended in its report on *The reform of football governance*²⁶ the creation in 2013 of the Task Force for Women Football, which was set up to identify and promote priority opportunities for women’s football, and the launching of the UEFA Women in Football Leadership Programme, which aim at encouraging more women to be in decision-making roles in football. In this context, I congratulate FIFA for having designated a prominent woman for the post of Secretary General of the organisation.

26. Sexist attitudes and language is another prevailing problem in the sports world, even at the highest level²⁷. Furthermore, the image of female sport champions is also often not portrayed as well as the image of male champions. The comparative study on “Sport, media and stereotypes Women and Men in Sports and Media”²⁸ shows clear distinctions in how men and women in sports are portrayed by the media. Firstly, there are far fewer stories about women than men. Secondly, there is a strong tendency to idolise the leading men in sports, focusing on them as social celebrities as well as sportsmen. Thirdly, on the whole, sports news neither reinforces nor combats stereotypes. There are few exceptions, such as, for instance, the news coverage of female professional tennis tournaments. It is no coincidence that only three women cracked this year’s Forbes 100 Highest Paid Athletes list, and all three – Maria Sharapova, Li Na, and Serena Williams – are tennis players.²⁹

27. Women are a minority in leadership positions in all sports (exception female only sports), on all levels and in all countries. The percentage of women in decision-making and top management positions in sports organisations and sports clubs is far lower than the percentage of female active members.³⁰

28. This being said, a lot remains to be done. Television networks could certainly improve the quality of coverage of women’s athletic events, and should seek to reduce the gap between the amount of resources in the coverage of men’s and women’s sports. Also, news coverage of women’s sports should include visual as well as verbal coverage in proportions that are roughly equivalent to the coverage of men’s sports.³¹

29. I would also recall here that sport still faces the challenge of equal involvement of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans or intersex (LGBTI). Behind the challenge of bigger participation of the LGBTI population in the sport activities, there is the greater challenge of expressing the sexual orientation and gender identity in the sport environment without facing any prejudices or exclusion because of that.

30. Referring to the Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2048 (2015) on “Discrimination against transgender people in Europe”, I should like to stress here the urgent need to take specific measures to ensure access to sport for transgender and intersex athletes who face unparalleled discrimination.³² Member States and sport movement organisations should take into consideration the conclusions of the IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism (November 2015) which stated that “it is

²⁵ <http://www.socialistalternative.org/2015/07/17/womens-world-cup-exposes-rampant-fifa-sexism-organize-fight/>

²⁶ Doc. 13738, report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Michael Connarty (United Kingdom, SOC)

²⁷ Sexist remarks such as the widely quoted comment of Mr Sepp Blatter, the former President of FIFA, “*Let the women play in more feminine clothes like they do in volleyball. They could, for example, have tighter shorts. Female players are pretty, if you excuse me for saying so, and they already have some different rules to men – such as playing with a lighter ball. That decision was taken to create a more female aesthetic, so why not do it in fashion?*” (quoted in <http://www.socialistalternative.org/2015/07/17/womens-world-cup-exposes-rampant-fifa-sexism-organize-fight/>) damage the image of professionalism of female football players and make them objects rather than athletes.

²⁸ *Sport, media and stereotypes Women and Men in Sports and Media*. Centre for Gender Equality, Iceland, 2006

²⁹ Flake, C. R., Dufur, M. J., & Moore, E. L. (2013). “*Advantage men: The sex pay gap in professional tennis*”. *International Review For The Sociology Of Sport*, 48(3), 366-376.

³⁰ *Mapping Gender Equality in European Sport*. Prof. Gertrud Pfister, Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences, University of Copenhagen

³¹ *Gender Stereotyping in Televised Sports*, Report by Margaret Carlisle Duncan, Ph.D., Michael Messner, Ph.D., Linda Williams, Ph.D., Kerry Jensen, Edited by Wayne Wilson, Ph.D., <http://www.la84.org/gender-stereotyping-in-televised-sports/>

³² <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=21736&lang=en>

necessary to ensure insofar as possible that trans athletes are not excluded from the opportunity to participate in sporting competition".³³

3. Enhance social inclusion of vulnerable groups

31. Integration is a burning issue today, and ensuring successful integration is a common challenge to both host and hosted communities.

32. The *Association for International Sport for All* (TAFISA) seeks to show, in every world forum that it organises, how sport "integrates" populations. For example, in the 2006 world forum, a presentation was intended to demonstrate integration through sport in the Netherlands, Germany, France, South Africa, Colombia and Japan.³⁴ However, research³⁵ suggests that, in fact, the integration process owes more to sports trainers and to the words and actions of the staff involved with sport than to hands-on sport itself. Nonetheless, it seems undeniable that the socialising dimension of sport can help the integration process.

33. The problem is that persons belonging to minorities are under-represented in sports. For example, research carried out in 2010 in five EU member states (Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden) found that the overall participation of ethnic minorities and migrants in amateur sport was low, especially among women and girls. In contrast to football, where many national teams reflect the diversity of European societies, in other popular national sports research has shown that migrants or ethnic minorities are particularly under-represented, which may affect the image of societies that are otherwise characterised by considerable diversity.³⁶

34. The 2010 report³⁷ from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) severely criticises a "glass ceiling" that restricts access to many sports by ethnic minorities and migrant populations, as well as various legal and administrative barriers to the participation of non-nationals in sport in some countries for athletics, basketball, ice hockey, handball, speedway, tennis, golf, and alpine skiing. Many national sports federations have introduced quotas limiting access for persons, who do not have the nationality of their host country to amateur and professional competitions.

35. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) raises the concern "that this can cause problems for young immigrants, whose feelings of rejection might seriously hamper their integration into the host society".³⁸

36. The political institutions of the European Union, as well as the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), have acknowledged problems of racism and ethnic discrimination in sport. FIFA and UEFA support or cooperate with national and European civil society actors active in this field. Incidents of racism, anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism were identified in football and basketball across the EU. Only 10 EU member States monitor systematically incidents of racism in sports and mainly relating to men's professional football, although racist incidents also occur frequently in men's amateur football. This kind of incidents certainly impact on the capacity for sport to be truly inclusive.

37. Discrimination against groups in a situation of exclusion, such as Roma or undocumented migrants, is also found in communication strategies and image-building as far as athletes are concerned. Their origins are often highlighted by the media when a particular nationality is involved, but in the case of a community, especially one in a vulnerable situation, the origin is generally not mentioned either in the press or the new media.

38. Thus many past or present athletes of Roma origin are not instanced as such. It is uncommon to see a journalist recall that the footballers Zlatan Ibrahimovic³⁹, Jesus Navas⁴⁰ and Hristo Stoichkov, or the former

³³ http://media.wix.com/ugd/2bc3fc_c2d4035ff5684f41a813f6d04bc86e02.pdf

³⁴ TAFISA Magazine, 2007/1, The integrative force of sport for all: building new understandings.

³⁵ GASPARINI, W. (2008), *L'intégration par le sport ?*, revue *Sociétés contemporaines* (Presses de Sciences Po), n° 69, mars 2008

³⁶ *Racism, ethnic discrimination and exclusion of migrants and minorities in sport : the situation in the European Union*, FRA, 2010 (Summary: http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/1206-FRA-report-Racism-in-sports-summary-EN-2010-10-28.pdf ; Full report: http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/1207-Report-racism-sport_EN.pdf)

³⁷ http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/1206-FRA-report-Racism-in-sports-summary-EN-2010-10-28.pdf

³⁸ Paragraph 16 of the ECRI Explanatory Memorandum to ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 12 on combating racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport, <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1396797&Site=COE>

³⁹ Sadly, racism against sports players of Roma origin is still strong. In January 2012, a huge banner mocking Swedish AC Milan star Zlatan Ibrahimović as a "gypsy" in his native language was unfurled in the San Siro stadium by fans of Inter Milan during the local derby between the two Italian giants. Instead of the title "I am Zlatan Ibrahimovic", the sign read, in all capital Swedish letters, "I'm a Gypsy" ('Jag är en zigenare'). It is not the first time the Swedish striker has been singled out for specific abuse by rival fans.

boxer Johann Trollman, are of Roma origin. Thus the media participate actively in the exclusion of this group and permit the more general forms of discrimination affecting these communities.

39. Besides, access to institutionalised sport by undocumented migrants is impossible. The sports federations generally ask for identity papers in the form to obtain a licence. This formality is no doubt justified, since it is necessary to have a means of identifying participants in a sports competition for security reasons. Nonetheless, it is important to recall that many young people migrate to Europe in the hope of becoming professional athletes. The case of migrant athletes has already been raised before our Assembly.⁴¹ Thought should be given to the possibility of allowing sports participation for migrants in an irregular situation. At Lampedusa in Italy there is a sports ground.

40. Today, the media often report on incidents of discrimination, including racism or sexism, that have occurred among spectators at sports events. Moreover, the sports practised by young people are frequently the scene of such incidents. Only a few European states have systems for monitoring incidents of discrimination and racism in sport. Having said that, most of the data available relate only to football, but such incidents also occur elsewhere so it is becoming a matter of urgency that we obtain a better picture in order to develop improved prevention strategies and take appropriate remedial measures.

4. Promote integration by overcoming social, cultural and other barriers that prevent access to sport

41. The main factors of inequality linked with social criteria in access to sport are dwelling place, income, educational standard and occupation. Socio-economic factors combine here with the gender factor: they influence women more than men in their decision to engage in sport activities. Income is often a dividing factor in the pursuit of a sports activity. Switzerland is a country where income constitutes the predominant influential factor: the higher an individual's income, the likelier he/she is to engage in sports activity.⁴²

42. It would appear that, 22% of French women do not engage in any physical activity, this rate rises to 42% for jobless women. In the UK, women, whose annual household incomes are £52 000 or more are three times more likely to be physically active than women earning less than £15 600. However, having a job does not automatically prompt people to engage in a physical or sports activity. Research conducted in France showed that the level of education is the most discriminating factor where women's access to sport is concerned, even ahead of income levels.⁴³

43. Inequalities in access to participation in sports in Europe differ significantly from one country to another. There is a correlation between a nation's wealth and the number of infrastructure facilities that enable people to engage in leisure or competition sports (gymnasiums, playing-fields, swimming-pools, skate parks, fitness studios, facilities for outdoor sports, etc.).⁴⁴ However, this fact needs to be put into perspective: one EU citizen in two engages in sport either at home or outdoors in places where no specific public or additional and/or private facility is required.

44. The cultural, including in particular the religious, background is also a factor that could trigger exclusion or prevent access to sport. For example, certain practices or rules, which are well established in collective sports, may be considered as unacceptable for religious reasons. Other barriers may emerge as a result of a person's culture of origin or simply their personal sensitivities, for example in the case of sports with codified rules of conduct, such as judo, or mixed-gender sports, which changes an individual's body image. This type of problem raises tricky issues which could usefully be taken into account, in particular when discussing the role that associations and trainers have (or should have), and in the training of trainers to ensure that they are aware how they can, through their attitudes, foster sporting practices that are inclusive because they are

⁴⁰ Let us mention here a New York Times article by Rob Hugues, "A free spirit who merits a look for the World Cup", published on 6 October 2009, who takes an interest in his origins and condemns the discrimination suffered by his community in the media. Electronic version of the article available at this address: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/07/sports/soccer/07iht-soccer.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

⁴¹ During the PACE debates on Ms Reps' report, "Unaccompanied children in Europe: issues of arrival, stay and return", two members (Ms Ohlsson and Ms Keaveney) said that the report should take account of migrant children in connection with sport.

⁴² Swiss Federal Office of Sport OFSPO, Report "Sport Suisse 2014. Activité et consommation sportives de la population suisse", p. 27. It emerges from this report that a woman between 15 and 29 years of age will be a very active sports player in 39% of cases if she is part of the 50% with the lowest income, whereas 53% of women are very active players among the 50% with the highest income. The difference is appreciably the same for men, irrespective of age.

⁴³ *Gender equality in sports*. Council of Europe, September 2011.

⁴⁴ Virtually all citizens from states with a higher GDP said that the area in which they lived provided numerous opportunities for engaging in physical activities. However, in eastern and southern European countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Poland), which are among those with a lower GDP, fewer than 60% of citizens questioned said that they were satisfied with the sport infrastructure available.

respectful of a diverse range of personal sensitivities.

45. People with disabilities still do not have all the necessary conditions for engaging in sport activities. They are still facing barriers with regard to the accessibility of sport playgrounds, sport equipment and other sport resources. For this population, on the one hand, there are infrastructural and technical barriers, and, on the other hand, social barriers, such as stereotypes and prejudice.

46. Education systems should be inclusive. Schools should ensure participation of pupils and students with disabilities in sport lessons and in sport extra-curricular activities organised by them. Unfortunately, only a few countries in the EU have implemented sports programmes, which focus specifically on children with disabilities.

47. Difficulties in access to sports participation for individuals with disabilities deserve here specific consideration. 165 countries took part in the last Paralympic Games in London in 2012. Comparing this figure with the number of countries recognised by the UN, few countries did not take part. Moreover, virtually all Council of Europe member states had a delegation at the last Paralympic Games with the exception of Monaco. This was Albania's first participation.

48. This success ought not to conceal the difficulties which people with disabilities continue to encounter over access to sports participation. These difficulties lie chiefly in access to sports facilities and to clubs. Countries like France and the United Kingdom have thousands of clubs spread throughout their territory⁴⁵. However, while France numbers over 17 000 football clubs, only 259 of its clubs are affiliated to the disabled sport federation allowing the pursuit of footballing activity.⁴⁶ This therefore falls far short of permitting access throughout the territory. In the United Kingdom, a study has shown that 61% of the 443 respondents think their club lacks facilities permitting sports participation by someone with a disability.⁴⁷ It would be interesting to be able to compare these data with those of other countries in Europe.

49. Inclusion is a challenge for the entire community. In order to remove barriers to access to sport through conscious, targeted action, the first step is understanding and awareness.⁴⁸ From the human rights point of view, access to sport is an equality and non-discrimination issue. The adaptive physical education can serve as a stepping stone in the right direction. There should be willingness to change on both the participant and the club level, and local authorities should support that. The providers of adapted physical activity should become agents of change instead of "gatekeepers" by acting as facilitators and consultants, or critical friends as in British schools, or case managers as in Australian sports.

50. The 2010 report by the Agency for Fundamental Rights on racism in sport⁴⁹ indicates that in at least 16 EU member states equality bodies⁵⁰ or other institutions, such as national human rights institutions, take action in cases of inequality regarding access to sport or racist incidents or ethnic discrimination in sport. Equality bodies and national human rights institutions should therefore be more involved in combating discrimination in sport. They could work with sports federations and clubs in organising awareness-raising activities and could provide support for victims and, if authorised to do so, participate in legal actions brought against perpetrators of offences.

51. The Council of Europe has been quite active in promoting integration by overcoming social, cultural and other barriers that prevent access to sport. On 7-8 October 2013, in Budapest, it held a conference on the "*Inclusion and Protection of Children in and through Sport*", co-organised by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) and the Hungarian Secretariat of Sport in co-operation with the Council of Europe's ONE in FIVE Campaign, to stop sexual violence against children. Regarding the inclusion of Roma children in and through sports, specific actions were envisaged. Participants suggested that EPAS should organise regional seminars to bring together managers of relevant projects to exchange information and share good practices,

⁴⁵ France has, for example, 1641 clubs recognised by the Fédération française handisport. The United Kingdom has 2585 recognised clubs.

⁴⁶ Adding up the clubs for 5, 7 and 11 a side football, electric wheelchair football and table football. These figures do not include football for the blind.

⁴⁷ The study is contained in a document of the Sport and Recreation alliance, the umbrella association for sport and leisure in the United Kingdom. Consultable at this address, p. 11 :

http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/sites/sportandrecreation.org.uk/files/web/images/Olympic%20and%20Paralympic%20Legacy%20survey_1.pdf

⁴⁸ Sport and Discrimination in Europe, by William Gasparini and Clotilde Talleu, Council of Europe Publishing, September 2010, <http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/EPAS/resources/6722-4-ID8707-Sport%20and%20discrimination%20in%20Europe.pdf>

⁴⁹ *Racism, ethnic discrimination and exclusion of migrants and minorities in sport : the situation in the European Union*, FRA, 2010 (Summary report: http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/1206-FRA-report-Racism-in-sports-summary-EN-2010-10-28.pdf; Full report: http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/1207-Report-racism-sport_EN.pdf)

⁵⁰ See the European network of equality bodies Equinet: <http://www.equineteurope.org/361.html>

and to share information about funding possibilities in order to increase the number of projects targeting Roma people. EPAS may also share the experiences of approaching young Roma people through sport to involve them in education, with those authorities and organisations which are working on Education for all.

52. Several positive examples of policies fostering integration through sport can be cited. This includes the experience of Switzerland where in-depth work during the last few years have led to the formulation of the more systematic approach by the Centre of Competence for promoting integration through sports.⁵¹ The concrete actions of the Centre of Competence included the development of a manual for sports instructors based on the results of applied research, the development and implementation of courses for sports instructors, teachers and other target groups, the mainstreaming of the concept in existing physical activity programmes or the establishment of the information, knowledge-sharing and networking platform. These are subject to evaluation by the Swiss Federal Office of Sports. Depending on the outcome of this evaluation, the programme is to be adapted and implemented.⁵²

5. Promoting a shift in sports policy in Europe

53. At the end of this analysis, we will need to ask ourselves what we can change to be more effective in combating the inequalities identified, while at the same time recognising that the authorities have only finite resources at their disposal and that the current trend is towards budget cuts rather than increases. We must first stop telling ourselves that there is too little scope for action and have the courage to act, albeit in a considered way.

54. In this connection, my first proposal is to adopt a different approach and refocus sports policies on two priority areas: public health and integration/social cohesion. The aims of a sports policy at national level should be the well-being of individuals and harmonious co-existence within a national community. There is nothing surprising about such an approach.

55. On the one hand, more than 60% of Europeans themselves say that they engage in some form of sport, primarily to improve their health.⁵³ Greater account should be taken of this fact in the context of public policy: sport is a healthy activity and any inequality in accessing it impedes individual efforts to keep in good health. To put it another way, investing in sport can help to control health service expenditure by acting as a prevention factor.

56. This is all the more worth considering as lifestyles in our modern societies are creating health risks that sport can help to fend off. In this connection, many studies, e.g. the studies of the *European Society of Cardiology*, Euroaspire I, II and III, prove that the lifestyles of Europeans are very often unhealthy, which is conducive to risks of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

57. Moreover, sport provides opportunities for meeting other people and engaging in dialogue, and we are well aware that it can be a powerful factor in creating and strengthening a feeling of local, national and even European belonging. There is therefore a link between sport and “living together”. William Gasparini and Clotilde Talleu pointed out that “sport does have virtues in terms of integration and can help to build character, as well as consolidating and diversifying socialisation, provided that it has been designed and organised to fulfil these purposes”.⁵⁴

58. I am therefore disappointed that little consideration is given to sporting activities in the Council of Europe report “Living Together – Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe”.⁵⁵ The potential of sport is mentioned in the report, but it is underestimated. For me, sport must be an integral component of building and improving life in society. As associations, sports clubs have a very important socialisation potential, quite simply because citizens enjoy engaging in sports. It is because people develop an enthusiasm for sport due to the positive examples set by champions and the messages conveyed to the general public that sport has its own role to play in building social relations: investing in sport can help us build societies that are more united and more inclusive.

59. This twofold observation should lead us to draw a twofold conclusion:

⁵¹ Sport facing the test of cultural diversity, by William Gasparini and Aurelie Cometti, Council of Europe Publishing, April 2010, <http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/EPAS/resources/6718%20Sport%20facing%20cultural%20diversity%20assemble.pdf>

⁵² <http://www.baspo.admin.ch/internet/baspo/fr/home.html>

⁵³ European Commission, Eurobarometer Special Survey No. 412, “Sport and physical activity”, March 2014.

⁵⁴ Sport and Discrimination in Europe, by William Gasparini and Clotilde Talleu, Council of Europe Publishing, September 2010, <http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/EPAS/resources/6722-4-ID8707-Sport%20and%20discrimination%20in%20Europe.pdf>

⁵⁵ Council of Europe, “Living Together – Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe”, report by the Council of Europe’s Group of Eminent Persons.

- if inequalities in access to sport have a direct impact on public health, then sports policies should be better co-ordinated with health policies to combat these inequalities;
- if inequalities in access to sport have a direct impact on living together, then sports policies should be better co-ordinated with other policies to bring about integration and cohesion in our societies, including social policies and education policy.

60. The approach I have just mentioned opens up new and, I believe, interesting avenues to explore. For example the gradual development of measures such as “sport on prescription”⁵⁶ could be a joint initiative between sports and health ministries. Furthermore, encouraging children and young people to become involved in school sports would extend the school’s role in the field of sport. This would be an excellent addition to physical and sports education classes, which are limited for pupils by the constraints of the school timetable. The appropriate availability of school sport can also encourage young people to make a different choice concerning the use of their free time, because for health and socialisation one hour spent engaging in sport is an excellent alternative to yet another hour spent in front of a computer or tablet. In Spain, Law 10/1990 clearly refers to sport as a fundamental element of the education system and seek to promote the practise of sports activities by young people and persons with disabilities also through the development of adequate sports equipment in public and private education institutions.

61. In France, a recent Court of Auditors report drew attention to partnership contracts signed between several school sports federations and 19 ordinary sports federations.⁵⁷ These partnerships enable federation club facilities to be used as part of an educational approach by schools, thereby avoiding the construction of costly amenities for small schools, which rarely have the resources to build them. In this way, the school sports federations help overcome inequalities in access to sport.

62. The link between sport, education and integration is even more apparent when considering the role that can be played by sports instructors, whose influence on young athletes is well-known. Accordingly, in order to combat stereotypes, sports instructors could be trained to be vehicles for education for democratic citizenship. Young people who reject parental authority and the authority of their school often listen to their trainer or sports instructor. If that instructor is suitably trained and keeps repeating views that encourage young people to ask about their situation as citizens, this approach can be very effective in terms of social integration.

63. Consideration of the sports dimension of other policies may go still further. We are aware that the lack of financial resources, coupled with the shortage of facilities available at reasonable cost, is still the main obstacle to access to sport by the population as a whole. The key to combating this type of inequality lies in the ability of the public and private sectors to finance sports infrastructure, but this generally means a substantial – and sometimes quite simply unsustainable – budget for the relevant authorities (whether local, regional or national).

64. A trend to be encouraged in order to overcome this obstacle is the development of public-private partnerships in building this infrastructure.⁵⁸ However, that is not enough. In rural areas with a low population density and few resources, the authorities – rightly – mainly focus on the development of other facilities. The sport dimension could nevertheless be better integrated into development projects.

65. In economic development area projects, in addition to thinking about building parking spaces would it not be possible to provide some areas with sports facilities, which would also be an asset? Similarly, when a school or university is being built, consideration could also be given to sports facilities: laying an athletics

⁵⁶ Sports on prescription is a pilot project in France, tried out in Strasbourg, where doctors are prescription diabetics, the chronically ill and obese and those with heart problems a new diet of swimming, rowing, Nordic walking or cycling. It is being run with the city, the Alsace health agency, the local Assurance Maladie, the prefecture and education authority. It involves 50 volunteer doctors who will prescribe exercise for their patients after a check-up under the “Sport-santé sur Ordonnance” scheme. The prescription will allow the patients to visit special trainers for a further check and to get a coupon for a free enrolment for an activity. <http://www.connexionfrance.com/sport-prescription-Strasbourg-social-security-budget-14232-view-article.html>

⁵⁷ Court of Auditors, public thematic report on “Sport for all and top-level sport: towards the reorientation of state action”, 2013.

⁵⁸ These partnerships may take on various forms:

1. The first involves the state as the major player in the construction and management of facilities and only enlisting the help of the private sector for certain limited tasks. This is what happens regarding the very large number of municipal swimming-pools in Europe.
2. The second involves the state assigning the construction of facilities to a private company and only being responsible for their management, or the other way round, with the state financing the construction of facilities but not considering itself competent enough to make their use pay and therefore enlisting the help of a private company to manage them for a given period fixed by contract. This is often what happens with regard to large stadiums.
3. Finally, the state may delegate the entire construction and management of a sports facility to one or more private companies and only retain a supervisory power over the facility built.

track, a basketball court or a football field or the construction of a multi-purpose gymnasium do not necessarily constitute prohibitive expenditure and can be just as important for the school environment as other facilities.

66. Public authorities should foster the establishment of sports clubs in rural and disadvantaged urban areas. Measures should be taken to implement the Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2015) 3 on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights.⁵⁹ The Recommendation calls upon member States to “improve the living conditions of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods by providing accessible, affordable and youth-friendly public services” in various fields, including sports. It recommends, in particular, to “ensure full and equal access to public sports amenities, including investing in their provision or improvement”.

67. Public authorities should also overcome the widespread lack of interest in women’s sport in, so called, priority urban neighbourhoods.⁶⁰ Bearing in mind that street culture has an increasing influence on the socialisation process of some girls in these neighbourhoods, more should be done to offer positive alternatives. The fact remains that the sports activities available in these neighbourhoods are specifically aimed at boys. Provision of girls-friendly sports facilities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods should allow girls and young women to have access to sport without fear, free from violence or apprehension with regard to the way they are perceived in the neighbourhood. In Spain, the Organic Law 3/2007 on effective equality between women and men requires that this principle must be duly considered in the design and implementation of all public programmes on sports development and it calls the government to promote women’s access to sports at all ages and at all levels (including decision making) through specific programmes.

68. It would also be necessary to adopt a different approach to the economic issues involved in sport and give thought to a better redistribution of revenues generated by top-level professional sport – especially by the major sports events that attract large television audiences – in order to allocate a percentage of those revenues for funding projects to improve access to sport for all. This is an issue of public interest.

69. It should also be pointed out that some obstacles are made more difficult to overcome by attitudes that it is possible to change without additional financial outlay. For example, public service broadcasting could devote more air time to women’s sport and, at any rate, promote a non-sexist view of sport.

70. The national and local authorities should be encouraged to put in place, in co-operation with the sports federations, effective mechanisms for monitoring discrimination in the field of sport, including incidents of discrimination based on a person’s disability, racial, cultural or ethnic identity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual characteristics, in order to improve the recording of these incidents and make it easier to lodge individual complaints.

71. I should also like to support the proposal put forward by the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe to support wide-ranging research on the subject of sport and social inclusion, in order to create evidence based policies for the future and take well informed decisions in the field of sport.

72. Finally, sport for all is an area where co-operation between the authorities and the world of sport can, I believe, take place fairly easily as they have interests in common. I believe that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and National Olympic Committees can play a fundamental role in fostering equal access to sport for all and in changing cultures, not only through their own action, but also as a catalyst of commitment by other major stakeholders, including the major sports international organisations, media broadcasters and sports brands. I would thus suggest recognising this role and asking the IOC and National Olympic Committees to help in this process.

⁵⁹ <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2282497&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

⁶⁰ Sport and Discrimination in Europe, by William Gasparini and Clotilde Talleu, Council of Europe Publishing, September 2010, <http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/EPAS/resources/6722-4-ID8707-Sport%20and%20discrimination%20in%20Europe.pdf>