



# SENTRY

## *Policy recommendations*



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*More about the project: [www.sentrysport.org](http://www.sentrysport.org)*

## INTRODUCTION

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TACKLING DISCRIMINATION IN SPORT

The following section provides recommendations for ensuring equal opportunities in sport by tackling discrimination. The recommendations outline concrete actions for grassroots sport organisations, local, regional and national authorities, and ultimately to the European institutions. It is of utmost importance to collaborate on establishing a sports sector with no discrimination on the grounds of 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.

These recommendations are the results of the SENTRY Sport project (January 2021 - September 2023). The SENTRY partners and their local sports educators have shared their findings and recommendations when collecting testimonies. These recommendations are accompanied by effective tools and practices that have been implemented across Europe to illustrate the ways in which sport can become more inclusive and open to all members of a community.



The SENTRY Sport project takes every type of discrimination in sport into account, with a particular focus on amateur sport. While this has provided the project with a broad focus for positively impacting many sectors of society, creating concrete recommendations has proved challenging at times.

# GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Urge sports associations and clubs to adopt and enforce zero tolerance policies for discrimination**, including in regards to penalty rules, and comply with the principles of fair play and integrity.
- **Encourage sports organisations to establish further internal measures, procedures, structures and registration systems** to protect their athletes from discrimination, complementing existing legislation.
- **Urge local, regional and national authorities to provide financial support to clubs**, in particular those located in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and promote educational sports projects.
- **Encourage the European Commission Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture** to create a quality label for sports centres committed to ensuring and encouraging equal access opportunities in sport for all.

## The 100% SPORT association (Vienna, Austria)

Working on behalf of the Ministry of Sport, the association 100% SPORT - Austrian Centre for Gender Competence and SAFE SPORT - offers assistance for sports organisations to take preventative measures against discrimination in sports. It promotes gender equality in all sporting matters, audits gender mainstreaming in Austrian sport, and focuses on raising awareness on the issues of sexual violence and sexual harassment in sport.

## Recommendations and Action Plan on Gender Equality in Sport (2022)

The High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport, which is composed of former high-level athletes, politicians, members of European and international sport federations, and academics, recently published its [recommendations](#) for achieving gender equality in sport. The report identifies eight transversal topics to be considered when developing and implementing actions: gender mainstreaming, intersectionality, funding, research and policy monitoring, education, communication, coordinators for gender equality, equality, and men as allies.



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPORTS ORGANISATIONS

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These recommendations are targeted towards professionals in the sports sectors at all levels, from amateur to professional, including sports federations, grassroots sports organisations, coaches in local clubs, youth monitors, educators and social workers.

## 1. GUARANTEEING EQUAL ACCESS TO SPORT FOR ALL

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- **Eliminate barriers and discrimination against minority groups**, including in venues and in regards to equipment and clothing.
- **Develop gender equity and inclusive policies** that provide women and minority groups equal participation opportunities, including the same financial support, wages and benefits that their male counterparts receive.
- **Increase sponsorship for women's sports** to increase visibility, increase attendance of women's sporting events and increase female participation in sport.
- **Establish welcoming and inviting spaces for migrant and asylum seeker** sports players.
- **Create accessible sports facilities** by installing features for people with disabilities, for example ramps and equipment with Braille.
- **Remove economic barriers for athletes with disabilities.** High transport costs and the need for specialised equipment may keep people with disabilities from participating in sports. Offering financial solutions is therefore extremely important.

### The Centro Sportivo Fulvio Bernardini (Roma, Italy)

The *Centro Sportivo Fulvio Bernardini* is a municipal sports centre run by Italian Union Sports For All (UISP Roma APS) on the outskirts of Rome. Built in 1987, it was designed as a barrier-free environment, a truly accessible sports centre for all. This avant-garde architecture truly embraces UISP's beliefs and reaffirms the idea that is central to its work: *Sport per tutti*, Sport for all.

### Liberi Nantes: the first football team in Italy made up entirely of refugees (Roma, Italy)

Liberi Nantes originally began as a response to racism and has now become the first football team composed entirely of refugees and asylum seekers to attend an official tournament in the Italian Football Federation. Founded in 2007, Liberi Nantes is the first Sports Association in Italy which provides free access to sport for refugees and asylum seekers. All sports and training activities, such as football, rugby, hiking and urban trekking, are completely free of charge.

### Herts Disability Sports Foundation (Hertfordshire, United Kingdom)

The [Herts Disability Sports Programme](#) was originally established to promote the development of disability sport across Hertfordshire, in the UK. This is due to the fact that disabled adults are less likely to be physically active than non-disabled people, with only 45% of disabled adults found to be active in England. Increased levels of physical activity for disabled adults can improve physical health, mental health, and overall well being.

## 2. RAISING AWARENESS OF ALL TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION IN SPORT

- **Encourage sports clubs to organise awareness campaigns** which focus on the value of inclusion and tolerance and tackle stigma surrounding minority groups in sport.
- **Organise activities that portray players from minority groups** as being active in sport, so that they become role models.
- **Support athletes who speak up and encourage players** to report discrimination when they experience or witness it.

### SPIN Women exhibition [in]visible – HerStories of Minority and Migrant (Vienna, Austria)

The SPIN Women exhibition [\[in\]visible – HerStories of Minority and Migrant](#) Women in Sport strives to create role models for women and girls. It tells the stories of minority and migrant women in sport and gives them a voice for sharing their achievements, even while facing and overcoming barriers to become powerful athletes.

### VIDC Handbook Let the Girls Play! (Austria)

The VIDC [Girls' Football Handbook](#) provides practical information for clubs that want to build up girls' teams or are concerned about equal opportunities for girls and boys in their teams, helping to open up the club to more girls. Published in 2022, it addresses topics that are important to many girls who play football and which can also be implemented by any grassroots sports club.

### The FIER Sport label (France)

The FIER Sport label was awarded to the City of Lyon by the *Fondation Inclusion pour un Environnement Respectueux* (FIER) for LGBTQIA+ people (commitment to implementing the 17 recommendations put forward by the Foundation, and agreeing to assess their concrete achievements for the inclusion and respect of LGBTQIA+ people).

### Fairplay Action Weeks for Diversity (Austria)

Coordinated by the fairplay initiative at VIDC in Vienna, the [#fairplayaktionswochen](#) – until 2021 as part of the Europeanwide [#FootballPeopleWeeks](#) – raise awareness of discrimination in Austrian football. Professionals and amateurs, women and men, adults and youth teams and grass-roots initiatives are sending a clear signal for diversity and a democratic society. The focus is on different forms of discrimination and the slogan changes every second season. In October 2022 + 2023, the motto of the nationwide campaign is "Against hate and agitation - For diversity in football".

### The #BeInclusive EU Sport Awards

Every year, the [#BeInclusive EU Sport Awards](#) aim to reward and give visibility to the best projects that have successfully supported inclusion through sport.

### Sport for all Genders and Sexualities

Led by VIDC, the Erasmus+ project [Tackling Sexism, Trans- and Homophobia in European Grassroots Sport \(SGS\)](#) aims to promote the inclusion and participation of all genders and sexualities in European grassroots sport beyond a prevailing binary gender norm. They launched an Europe-wide survey with the German University for Sport and Physical Education (DHS) and published a report on Good Practices including transgender and non-binary people in sport.

### The Conference for Queer Sports Clubs (Cologne, Germany)

The *BundesNetzwerkTagung des queeren Sports* (BuNT) – the German networking assembly of queer sports – celebrated its [fifth anniversary](#) in November 2022 at the German Sport University Cologne. This conference aims to shed light on queer issues, participation and equal opportunities in sport and was organised by the *Landessportbund NRW*, the *Deutsche Sporthochschule Köln* and the *StadtSportbund Düsseldorf*.



### 3. TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF UNDERREPORTING

- **Create monitoring and data collection systems** via a local network to monitor discrimination.
- **Promote the establishment of national, regional or local observatories on discrimination in sports** to understand the problem and gather data.

#### The National Observatory against Discrimination in Sport in Italy

In 2020, the National Anti-Racial Discrimination Office (UNAR) launched the National Observatory against Discrimination in Sport with the president of UISP - Italian Union Sports For All - and the vice president of the [Lunaria](#) association. The objectives are: (1) Identifying 10 UISP local committees to act against discrimination in the world of sport, (2) Promoting the activities of the Observatory around the region, (3) Collecting data on episodes of discrimination in the world of sport, (4) Supporting grassroots sport clubs (*Associazioni sportive dilettantistiche* - ASD) in carrying out anti-racist initiatives and projects and (5) Collecting the best practices in the region.

#### The Commission against Violence, Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Sport (Spain)

The [Comisión Estatal contra la Violencia, el Racismo, la Xenofobia y la Intolerancia en el Deporte](#) is the body in charge of the creation of active policies against violence, racism, xenophobia and intolerance in sport. Its fundamental objective is to isolate and sanction violent and intolerant behaviour inside and outside sports stadiums. In 2022, they improved their strategies for achieving gender equality and established new tools for tackling the issue of violence in sport.

#### The SENTRY Sport methodology

SENTRY Sport has developed a methodology which provides sports educators with the necessary knowledge and tools for monitoring, preventing and responding to discriminatory acts in their neighbourhood, including a step-by-step guide and a monitoring form that can be easily filled in. It can be accessed [here](#).

#### The Women and Sports Seminar (Spain)

The *Mujery Deporte* seminar is an annual event that takes place in Spain to raise awareness on gender inequality and the importance of empowerment in sports. The seminar gathers experts, professionals, athletes, and stakeholders from various fields to exchange knowledge, experiences, and strategies for advancing gender equality in sports. The seminar covers a wide range of topics, including women's leadership in sports organisations, gender stereotypes in sports, equal opportunities for female athletes, challenges faced by women in sports journalism and coaching, and the promotion of women's sports at all levels.

## 4. BUILDING TRUST BETWEEN VICTIMS AND ORGANISATIONS AND ENCOURAGING VICTIMS OF DISCRIMINATION TO COME FORWARD

- **Set up an online resource centre** providing relevant information on available psychological support, social services and legal support for victims.
- **Create information campaigns for victims of discrimination.** These campaigns could be in the form of online portals, helplines, social media channels, brochures, leaflets and public posters. The information should be easy to access and available in languages spoken by minority groups. It should also be accessible with people with impaired sight or impaired hearing.
- **Establish contacts with national, regional and local authorities** to make them aware of the concerns of victims of discrimination in sports.
- **Ensure that the victim is informed** of the available psychological and legal support, and provided with follow-up help.
- **Allow victims to participate in empowerment activities** which provide direct trauma support and assistance to victims of crime and violence. These activities could also involve agencies and networks who assist victims.

### Successful Trauma Informed Victim Interviewing (International Association of Chiefs of Police)

Depending on how a question is asked, it may be perceived by a victim as blaming them for their actions or for specifics they might not remember. The International Association of Chiefs of Police has prepared a [template](#) to help build rapport and trust with victims at the start of an interview. A hands-on version can be found in Chapter 6 of the [SENTRY Sport Toolkit](#) (6.1.1. Interviewing victims of discrimination).

### Campaign “Racists, out of Football” (Spain)

Following the racist insults directed at Real Madrid star Vinicius Junior in May 2023, the *Consejo Superior de Deportes* (CSD), the *Real Federación Española de Fútbol* (RFEF) and *LaLiga* launched a campaign against racism and xenophobia with “[Racists, out of football](#)” as their slogan. The campaign is not limited to the Spanish top league and the *Segunda*; it also includes amateur and grassroots football players. Initiatives include educational talks in schools, integration events, and awareness campaigns in stadiums which promote values of respect and tolerance.







## 5. IMPROVING MEDIA COVERAGE OF SPORTS

- Encourage the local, regional and national media to pay attention to the way in which they convey minority groups in sport.
- Improve the portrayal of minority athletes in order to empower them to reach their full potential – not just as players, but as captains, coaches and leaders.
- Denounce the portrayal and lack coverage of women’s sport, which is still heavily gender-biased.
- Develop a sports communication strategy that promotes the importance of slogans such as “Speak up against discrimination”, “Don’t ignore a discriminatory act” and “Don’t be a bystander.”
- Promote training sessions for sport journalists on the need of using a non-discriminatory language, the importance of covering promising anti-discrimination projects and campaigns, and highlighting successful stories of athletes coming from minority groups.

### **Les Sportives, a French media group in women’s sport**

Les Sportives is a French media group in women’s sport which notably publishes a print magazine *Les Sportives* and has a website ([LesSportives.fr](http://LesSportives.fr)), a sports annual, podcasts and webinars.

### **« Pas de filles hors jeu » to improve television coverage of major women’s sporting events**

Back in 2011, the *Femmes Solidaires* Association launched a petition calling for better television coverage of major sporting events for women. It was launched at the time of the triumph of Lyon’s women’s football team and by the Dominique Strauss-Kahn affair in 2011. The debates highlighted a definite rise in sexism and “ordinary machismo” in sport and also in other areas of society.

## 6. PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES IN SCHOOL, USING SPORT AS A TOOL TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE

- **Stress the importance of allocating resources for ensuring quality physical education programmes in schools** and extracurricular school sport activities for all lower dropout rates from physical education and school sports activities.
- **Include sports activities that raise awareness against discrimination in school**, including in formal and non-formal learning.
- **Support development of coaching programmes**, particularly for members of minority groups for them to progress from local clubs to professional teams.

### Deporte Inclusivo en la Escuela (Spain)

*Deporte Inclusivo en la Escuela* ([DIE](#)) is an educational programme developed by the *Cátedra Fundación Sanitas de Estudios sobre Deporte Inclusivo* (CEDI). Its creation was thanks to collaboration between the Faculty of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences (INEF) of the Polytechnic University of Madrid (UPM) and the Sanitas Foundation. It is aimed at primary and secondary school students and their physical education teachers, as well as sports technicians. The programme promotes inclusive sports practice in educational institutions and empowers people with disabilities to participate in sport. They have a website with a variety of didactic resources where you can learn about existing methodologies to improve the situation of people with disabilities in sports practice.

### The projects “Il Calciastorie” and “Pinocchio” (Italy)

The project “Il Calciastorie” (football storytelling) started based on the experiences of discrimination of well-known footballers. The project involved workshops in schools. Project “Pinocchio” is about the importance of denouncing violence and discrimination, using dynamic workshops which involve role playing, acting and debates.

### The Giocagin initiative on diversity in sports (Italy)

For the past 30 years, UISP has been organising the [Giocagin initiative](#), a two-day event which promotes *the right to play for everyone* through exhibitions of different disciplines across 60 Italian cities.

### El Mundo en Movimiento (Madrid, Spain)

Refugee Reception Centers (CAR) run by the Spanish Government and Red Deporte have founded [El Mundo en Movimiento](#), a football team made up of refugees and local players who train and play matches together. The project also involves other football teams in the city with meet-ups and smaller tournaments. They organise workshops to develop skills, improve employability and promote intercultural dialogue.





## 7. STRENGTHENING TRAINING MATERIALS ON EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- **Promote training activities, initiatives and materials on the prevention of discrimination in sports**, such as the SENTRY Sport toolkit.
- **Develop or strengthen initiatives to prevent discrimination** with the involvement of volunteer parents.
- **Develop or strengthen training programmes to help sports staff** provide better support for victims of psychological, physical and or verbal abuse.

### The Parents Fair-Play initiative (Liège, Belgium)

Based in Liège, the Parents Fair-Play initiative appoints parents to oversee that their children's matches run smoothly. By interacting closely with other parents who have kids on the team, they can defuse signs of conflict so that it is not solely the responsibility of the referee. The role of a "fair-play parent" is to create a positive and constructive environment during the match (welcoming the opposing team and their parents, maintaining the position of parents at the side of the pitch, etc.); to act as a moderator and advisor on the side of the pitch (at both home and away matches) while having no punishment powers or legal responsibility. A [presentation leaflet](#) and a [toolkit](#) are available in French.

## 8. BUILDING A NETWORK FOR FIGHTING AGAINST AND PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION IN SPORT

The approach proposed by SENTRY Sport highlights the role that sport ecosystems (venues, clubs, federations, municipal services, etc.) and, specifically, sports educators can play in our societies to monitor and mitigate discriminatory acts. This idea stems from the experiences of many sports clubs. Sports educators often report that they play a role beyond just coaching, as figures of trust for athletes and players. Indeed, sports educators and other sports professionals can play an important role (as SENTRIES<sup>1</sup>) in detecting acts of discrimination, supporting victims, referring them to relevant organisations or services and shaping conflict-mediation initiatives.

The SENTRY Sport project aims to promote a **network of SENTRIES** composed of different stakeholders such as sports associations, social and cultural NGOs, local bodies, health care systems, victim support centres, anti-discrimination associations, housing centres, welfare centres etc. The aim of this network is that sports facilities (sports centres, sports halls, football grounds, clubs etc.) become centres where sports educators, coaches and other key figures in sport can observe, monitor and encourage the reporting of acts of discrimination.

<sup>1</sup> The word 'SENTRY' or 'SENTRIES' in this project is not used in a military sense, but rather refers to the etymology of the Italian *Sentinella* "hearing over" (*sentinella* comes from the verb *sentire*, to hear).



# SENTR SPORT



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