



# Monitoring Discrimination and Racism in Sport

A scoping of trends and practices in Italy,  
Belgium, Finland and Hungary

Edited by



# Monitoring Discrimination and Racism in Sport.

*A scoping of trends and practices in Italy, Belgium, Finland and  
Hungary.*

*Edited by*



*Monitoring Discrimination and Racism in Sport. A scoping of trends and practices in Italy, Belgium, Finland and Hungary has been produced within the framework of the MONITORA project.*

*The project is promoted by Lunaria in collaboration with UISP APS, ULiège – CEDEM, Stop Racism in Sport, ISCA, Liikkukaa – Sports For All, United against Racism and patronized by Unar*



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



## *Table of contents*

What is Monitora about?	3
The research consortium and design	5
Four country-cases in a nutshell	6
<i>Italy</i>	6
<i>Belgium</i>	8
<i>Finland</i>	10
<i>Hungary</i>	11
It, Be, Fi and Hu in summary	13
Formalized and informal monitoring mechanisms in place	14
Monitoring mechanisms: strengths and weaknesses	20
Roadmap towards an integrated monitoring protocol	21

# Monitoring Discrimination and Racism in Sport.

*A scoping of trends and practices in Italy, Belgium, Finland and Hungary.*

*This report presents the state of monitoring of discrimination and racism in sport in four European countries: Italy, Belgium, Finland and Hungary. It is realized in the framework of the international project MONITORA – MONITORing RAcism in sports, promoted by Lunaria<sup>1</sup> in collaboration with UISP APS,<sup>2</sup> ULiège – CEDEM,<sup>3</sup> Stop Racism in Sport,<sup>4</sup> ISCA, Liikkukaa – Sports For All,<sup>5</sup> United against Racism,<sup>6</sup> and supported by Unar.<sup>7</sup>*

## What is MONITORA about?

MONITORA's central objective is to support Civil Society Organizations, grassroots sports associations, and national and local institutions, in developing skills and strategies to monitor, document, and report discrimination and racism in sports through joint activities of transnational cooperation in research, training, and networking.

The project's specific operational objectives are:

1. to collect, analyse and share methodologies and good practices adopted at the local and national level on matters concerning the monitoring of discrimination and racism in sports;
2. to strengthen networking and collaboration among national and international stakeholders to co-design an integrated monitoring protocol;
3. to co-create, test and disseminate a training module to enhance the professional monitoring and reporting skills of CSO's operators, sportive operators and institutional representatives.

---

<sup>1</sup> Lunaria – Associazione di Promozione Sociale, Italy: <https://www.lunaria.org>.

<sup>2</sup> UISP – Unione Italiana Sport per Tutti, Italy: <https://www.uisp.it/nazionale>.

<sup>3</sup> Centre d'Etudes de l'Ethnicité et des Migrations – Université de Liège, Belgium: <https://www.cedem.uliege.be>.

<sup>4</sup> Stop Racism in Sport, Belgium: <https://www.stopracisminsport.org>.

<sup>5</sup> Liikkukaa – Sports For All, Finland: <https://sports4all.net>.

<sup>6</sup> United against Racism – UNITED For Intercultural Action, Hungary: <https://unitedfia.org>.

<sup>7</sup> UNAR – Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali, Italy: <https://www.unar.it/portale/>.

In this report we will firstly describe the research consortium and design, by introducing the research partners' profile, the methodology adopted in the research activity, and an overview of the data collected and analysed. Secondly, we will briefly describe the four country cases, focussing on the local cultural and political debate and trends concerning questions of discrimination and racism, and the related policy instruments. We will highlight general strengths and weaknesses, similarities and differences. Thirdly, we will focus on the specific monitoring mechanisms in place, on the strategies and practices adopted, formalized and informal. Again, we will focus on strengths and weaknesses, but also highlight a general lack of adequate monitoring mechanisms. Fourthly, the report will conclude with recommendations structured in a synthetic roadmap towards the definition of an innovative monitoring protocol to be tested in the next phase of MONITORA.

## The research consortium and design

The first phase of MONITORA analysed whether and how discrimination and racism in sport are currently monitored at the national and local level in Italy, Belgium, Finland and Hungary. Four country-case reports derived from this first scoping.<sup>8</sup> The scoping phase was managed by ULiège – CEDEM (Be) who provided the necessary theoretical, methodological and field research expertise. ULiège – CEDEM also conducted research in the Belgian fieldwork, and performed qualitative analysis of collected data to compile the present document. Researchers from Lunaria (It), Liikkukaa – Sports For All (Fi), and United against Racism (Hu) conducted research in the other national contexts.

The present report builds on the four country-case reports to elaborate and present findings in a comparative way and provide grounded recommendations and guidance to design a protocol for monitoring discrimination and racism in sport.

The research design included a desk-research scoping of the general debate on discrimination and racism in the four countries, combined with in-depth semi-structured interviews with different participants, including politicians and policymakers, journalists and other field experts, representatives from sport federations, organizations and clubs, CSOs involved in anti-discrimination activity, and other relevant stakeholders. We concentrated on a variety of public and private bodies (government's bodies but also NGOs and CSOs, for example), formalized or informal, national (regional, municipal, local, etc.) or small-scale grassroots organizations.

Both desk research and interviews were aimed at gaining information on how the problems of discrimination and racism, in general and in the specific case of sports, have evolved in recent times, and on the diversity debate in the four countries at the political and policy level. We also wanted to provide a specific non-exhaustive scoping of the existing anti-discrimination/racism structures (governmental bodies, institutions, groups, platforms, etc.) and in-place policies or practices of monitoring (monitoring, reporting, prevention, mitigation, compensation, and sanctioning mechanisms), although a formalized monitoring is non-existent in the countries under observation, as it will be highlighted below. We gained specific knowledge on the kind of

---

<sup>8</sup> The four reports are available at: <https://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/monitora-national-reports/>

data collected, the case reporting practices, the domains and disciplines involved, the socio-economic dimension of the structures and organizations involved (grassroots to mainstream), the system of classification, etc.

Finally, we conducted specific case studies and presented them along a what works/what doesn't perspective, highlighting good practices and bad experiences, favorable conditions, and obstacles. Although monitoring was kept as a central theme, we selected cases based on different elements, depending on what was relevant in each one of the specific country cases, and included cases where monitoring has not taken place. For example, we also selected well-known cases of discrimination on which there is abundant data available, in order to highlight what has been done (or what has not been done) to prevent, report and fix up.

It is important to highlight that people might be discriminated against or find obstacle to participate in sport for many personal factors such as gender, sexual orientation or disability, for example. While acknowledging this, In this report we will focus more specifically on race and ethnicity or, more generally, on migration-related diversity (ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, other).

## **Four country-cases in a nutshell**

Given the heterogeneity of the national contexts examined in this report, including four countries from southern, central, eastern and northern Europe, it is useful to introduce trends regarding issues of discrimination and racism, focusing briefly on the socio-cultural, political and policy aspects.

### ***Italy***

The problems of discrimination and racism in Italy have deep cultural roots, involving the country's history, the inter-War Fascist regime or the unresolved Southern question.<sup>9</sup> Despite having an increasingly diversified population, it is only in recent times that immigrants have started to gain visibility as part of the national community. In any case, global migrations have outlined a scenario of relatively widespread xenophobia since the 1980s. Race and ethnicity

---

<sup>9</sup> See on this theme: Alberto Burgio, Gianluca Gabrielli, *Il razzismo*, Ediesse, 2012.

are by far the most recurrent motives in reported cases of discrimination today.<sup>10</sup> Issues of discrimination and racism are generally represented in the media in a superficial, discontinuous and polarized way, and are often instrumentalized in the political debate. Politician, journalists and other commentators adopt a strong identity-based vocabulary, involving notions of race and ethnicity, but also derogatory terms commonly used to describe non-European immigrants.

In this scenario, discrimination and racism are often trivialized and normalized in sports. In football, the most relevant sport by large, racist incidents are often essentialized and normalized as a part of the game, and mediatic attention is generally only devoted to elite competition. Participants to our research also highlighted the backwardness of Italian sports culture in general, that would prevent principles of fair-play and solidarity to be effectively implemented.

In terms of policy and norms, Italy has a main instrument in the so called Mancino Law (Law 205/1993) and its subsequent integrations, which criminalizes racial discrimination and violence, incitement to racial discrimination and violence, the promotion of ideas based on racial superiority or ethnic or racist hatred, and any form of organization supporting racial discrimination or violence. In the context of sports, the Mancino Law is integrated by the so-called Daspo, which is the ban to access sports events. Relevant public bodies in charge of fighting discrimination and racism are the National Office Against Racial Discrimination UNAR, and the Observatory for Security Against Discriminatory Acts OSCAD which act as a facilitator for reporting by victims of discrimination.<sup>11</sup> In the context of sports, there exist one main National Observatory of Sporting Events (Osservatorio Nazionale sulle Manifestazioni Sportive) as part of the Ministry of Interior, although responsibility is often delegated to sport federation and other NGOs. Important actors implementing monitoring activity are the Italian Union of Sport for everyone UISP, the Italian Footballers association AIC, the Observatory on Anti-Semitism of the Foundation Jewish Contemporary Documentation Center CDEC, as well as organizations of the civil society centered around themes of anti-discrimination. Local

---

<sup>10</sup> UNAR data show that over 54% of reported cases of discrimination in 2021 are based on ethnic-racial grounds, followed by discrimination on religious grounds (16.5%) and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity (16.3%).

<sup>11</sup> UNAR deals with fighting against discrimination in general, while OSCAD has a more specific task concerning the identification and follow-up of discriminatory crimes.



governments can also have their own specific entities such as the Anti-discrimination Service SPAD in the Municipality of Bologna.

## **Belgium**

Belgium is a federal state including three cultural-language communities and three political regions, and has a multicultural, polyethnic, and increasingly diversified population. It is also and more importantly a country of permanent immigration<sup>12</sup> where communities from Southern Europe, Africa, the Middle East and beyond have settled in throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> Discrimination and racism are relevant societal topics, and are generally articulated in the public and political debate towards a relatively inclusive approach, with some differences in the two main cultural-language communities, Flanders and Wallonia, and in the bilingual Brussels Region. Flanders has a more center-right public opinion than Wallonia, where the center-left and socialist tradition is historically dominant. The diversity-migration debate is thus more heated in Flanders, where there has also been a relatively strong representation of xenophobic and anti-immigration demands of the far-right.<sup>14</sup> On the other side, Wallonia is a predominantly left-wing socialist area, has experienced strong recession in the last decades and has a longer history of industrial and post-industrial immigration from European and extra-European countries.<sup>15</sup> In spite of that, research highlights that minority rights are generally more advanced in Flanders than in Wallonia, where colour-blind and radical secular approaches have historically predominated, although diversity approaches also developed more recently.<sup>16</sup> Brussels is a thirds space where discrimination and racism are particularly relevant issues, but there is also a strong focus on the identification of mitigation and contrast

---

<sup>12</sup> See for example: Petrovic M., Belgium: A Country of Permanent Immigration. *MPI - Migration Information Source*. November 15, 2012. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/belgium-country-permanent-immigration> accessed on 9/9/2023.

<sup>13</sup> As of January the 1<sup>st</sup> 2022, about one-third of the population in Belgium is composed of people with a foreign background. See: <https://statbel.fgov.be/en/news/diversity-according-origin-belgium-0> accessed on 5/9/2023.

<sup>14</sup> The Flemish *Vlaams Belang* is one of Europe's proportionally stronger far-right and anti-immigration parties, scoring its best electoral results in the mid-2000s. After a decline in support, the party was able to poll second in the Flemish region with 18.6% in the 2019 Federal and Regional elections.

<sup>15</sup> A recent article explains the differences between the political environment in Flanders and Wallonia in tolerating populist radical-right parties: The Curious Case of Belgium: de Jonge L. (2020), Why is There no Right-Wing Populism in Wallonia?, *Government and Opposition*, 56, 598–614.

<sup>16</sup> In an article appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> volume of the Belgian political review *Fédéralisme Régionalisme*, the authors speak of a real 'Belgian Cultural Diversity Paradox': Adam I. and C. Torrekens (2015). Different Regional Approaches to Cultural diversity. Interpreting the Belgian Cultural Diversity Policy Paradox, *Fédéralisme Régionalisme*, vol. 15: 2015.

strategies from public institutions, and exceptionally strong participation of Civil Society Organizations. Nevertheless, data show that there has been a striking rise of reports of discrimination in the 2010-2020 period.<sup>17</sup> Particularly recurrent are cases of hate speech, both in social media and in public places. Similarly to Italy, racism is the main criteria for discrimination in officially reported cases, over disability, religious or philosophical beliefs, and sexual orientation.

Belgium has a dedicated legislation to contrast discrimination and racism in the society. The normative framework is constituted around three laws: the Gender Act, the Antidiscrimination Act and the Antiracism Act. These laws identify a series of protected criteria that are transversal to all societal contexts, including sport. The Gender Act protects gender identity and expression, and criteria related to motherhood. The Antidiscrimination Act covers disability, religious or ideological beliefs, sexual orientation, age, wealth, civil status, political and trade union beliefs, health status, physical or genetic characteristics, birth, social background and language. The Antiracism Act covers criteria of nationality, national or ethnic origin, 'race', skin colour and cultural background. In terms of structures, the former Center for Equal Opportunities and Fight Against Racism, now called UNIA, is the main public body in charge of prevention, protection and advocacy against discrimination in all societal areas including employment, housing, access to health and other services, and also in sports. Public-funded organizations also exist at the local level, such as the so-called Centres for Intercultural Action that exist in Brussels and Wallonia.

In the context of sports, football is the main discipline where specific norms and instruments exist to combat discrimination and racism. The so-called Football Law, for example, has been revised in 2023 to toughen penalties for racism and xenophobia, as equal to offences such as physical violence and the use of pyrotechnic material in stadiums. In terms of structures, UNIA remains the main actor and contact point for monitoring and fighting discrimination, local governance also plays an important role. For example, the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation issued in 2019 and Observatory of ethics in physical and sporting activities. The Observatory centralizes the work of ethics referents, whose appointment is an obligation for all

---

<sup>17</sup> See : <https://www.unia.be/en/articles/number-of-reports-of-discrimination-rises-by-over-13> accessed on 11/9/23.

sport federations and organizations. The Observatory and referents monitor sport events, collect information and analyze trends, with the aim to prevent problems and formulate recommendations on matters related to the notion of sports ethics, that includes fighting discrimination and racism. Individual sport federations and sport clubs are also active in the field, particularly doing prevention and sensibilization activity, but also trying to set up systematic practices to monitor discrimination and racism. An example that will be illustrated below is the Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA).

## *Finland*

Due to its history and central geographic position at the Baltic Sea, Finland is traditionally a diverse and at least bi-lingual country. Additionally to the indigenous Sami People, other significantly large ethno-cultural groups are Roma, who settled in Finland since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, ethnic and linguistic Swedes, Finns, Russians, Jewish and Crimean Tatars of Islamic faith. Although immigrant population was less than 10,000 still in the 1980s, with most parts living in the capital region, larger population influx from outside started already after World War II (mostly South American refugees in the 1970s, Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s and European matrimonial partners and work-related immigrants during the 1990s). By the end 1990s, refugees from Somalia became the first large clearly visible ethnic minority in the country. It is around that time that the country faced a large rise in publicly noticeable racism. A 2018 report from the European Union's Fundamental Rights found Finland to be the most racist country out of 12 European countries against people of African origin,<sup>18</sup> and further recent research found significant problems with ethnic profiling in the country,<sup>19</sup> with related obstacles to foreigners on the labor market, housing and other societal domains.

The first time racism in Finnish sports forced itself to attention was when Darryl Parker, an African-American basketball professional, was attacked by a neo-Nazi group in the Finnish town of Joensuu. The incident got covered in the US media, which sent a shock wave through the country. The ministry of education, responsible for sports in Finland, swiftly encouraged

---

<sup>18</sup> See: Africans in Finland face highest amount of discrimination in EU: <https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/15989-africans-in-finland-face-highest-amount-of-discrimination-in-eu.html?fbclid=IwAR3zztigyNMu8I41b5s7wvkGz84ne2y3H0QCVa4Acp9Jjyeb2AIQq0JYKck>.

<sup>19</sup> See the SSKH Report: The Stopped – Ethnic Profiling in Finland: [http://www.profilng.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/The-Stopped\\_ENGL.pdf](http://www.profilng.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/The-Stopped_ENGL.pdf).

the Finnish Sports Federation to create an office and post for anti-racism, and to support anti-discrimination activity through NGOs. The office was eventually established in 1996 and had initial positive effects against racism in sports, including monitoring for the following decade through a dedicated Project Against Racism. The office was gradually diminished and funding distribution to NGOs stopped in 2009. In 2011, the Ministry of Education announced a new program for the integration of immigrants through sports in order to replace the previous anti-racist project, and shifted the responsibility away from NGOs and sports organizations towards local municipalities. In more recent years, the Ministry of Justice issued a specific Action Plan for combating racism called An Equal Finland, in which sport took a main place as a vector of diversity integration and interculturalism.<sup>20</sup> In accordance with the Ministry of Education and Culture, a working group for immigrants and the promotion of cultural diversity issued specific measures related to the increasing of diversity, planned non-discrimination, and inclusion in all societal sectors. The plan also required sports organizations applying for any kind of public grant to establish an equality plan and monitor its implementation.

## Hungary

Hungary's history, like many countries, includes periods of discrimination and prejudice. It's important to recognize that racism in Hungarian sports doesn't exist in isolation but is part of a larger societal context. The country has seen the rise of far-right and nationalist political movements, which have sometimes spilled over into sporting events. Football is largely predominant and overtly political in Hungary, with the far-right Prime Minister Viktor Orbán directly involved in clubs and the national team affairs, including visiting important matches and having direct contact with the coaches and footballers. Matches involving the national team and neighboring countries like Romania and Slovakia, often make big news in the international media, as they have seen their fair share of concerning incidents, marked by fan violence, hooliganism, and racism in stadiums. Fan violence and hooliganism are current problems, showing a dark side of fan culture, with incidents of clashes between rival fans, destruction of property, and physical altercations.

---

<sup>20</sup> See the full action plan: [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163737/OM\\_2022\\_2\\_ML.pdf](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163737/OM_2022_2_ML.pdf).

Football is not the only context for discrimination and racism in Hungarian sports. Other disciplines such as athletics and basketball are also involved, and incidents occur both in domestic league matches and international competitions. Discrimination encompasses a range of behaviors, some more overt than others. These concern the supporters firstly, with discriminatory chants and gestures are often heard and seen, targeting players based on their ethnicity or race. Far-right and nationalist banners, including symbols associated with extremist groups, are often seen at sports events. Players and coaches, similarly, have been making racially insensitive comments or gestures. Online abuse is another important dimension in the problem. Both Hungarian and non-Hungarian players often face racial abuse on social media platforms. Not only supporters, nevertheless, but also players, coaches and other sport professionals have been making racially insensitive comments or gestures.

When it comes to monitoring discrimination and racism, the Hungarian case brings specific challenges, particularly concerning problems of transparency, accountability, and the role of various stakeholders. In general, the context is affected by an evident lack of government funding, and an overtly negative perception of NGOs and other organizations fighting discrimination and racism as their mission, even including personal targeting of individuals. Although non-systematic and scattered reporting mechanisms for racist incidents may exist, they often lack transparency and standardization. This can result in inconsistencies in documenting and addressing incidents. In recent times, clubs also raised concerns about bias in sanctions imposed for racist behavior. Even the Hungarian Football Association's (MLSZ) responses have come under scrutiny, and there are perceptions that it may not be proactively addressing racism and discrimination. The only actions which attempt to mitigate such scenario are grassroots Initiatives coming from local organizations taking the initiative to promote inclusivity and diversity at the community level, and some sport clubs implementing anti-racism campaigns. These initiatives also include awareness campaigns to educate the public about discrimination and its impact on sports, and promote tolerance. This is the case for example of the initiative Ferencváros Against Racism promoted by elite football club Ferencvárosi Torna, or the pro-Jewish activism of the Hungarian Maccabi Association. International partnerships and collaborations with international organizations and sports bodies are also relevant, and have provided a platform for sharing best practices and seeking

support in addressing discrimination and racism. Organizations, however, lack recognition from the government, and have a limited influence, as a consequence.

Overall, discrimination and racism in Hungarian sport are likely to have strong consequences as both sport-related and societal problems. On one hand, psychological and emotional impact on athletes, hindrance to talent development, impact on fan experience and institutional consequences for local and national sport federations. On the other hand, the larger society is affected since racist incidents reinforce harmful stereotypes and attitudes, perpetuating racism in society. Grassroots initiatives and awareness campaigns are striving to make a difference in combating discrimination, and international partnerships offer a glimmer of hope for progress in this area. To effect real change, concerted efforts are needed to challenge discriminatory attitudes and promote inclusivity within the Hungarian sports community.

## **It, Be, Fi and Hu in summary**

### *Debate trends and features:*

- Discrimination and racism in sports are relevant issues in all countries involved, and are part of a larger culture, with deep roots in the countries' social and political history.
- These issues go along the migration-related debate. The more migration is an established feature of a country, the more open is the debate towards fighting discrimination and racism in sports.
- The public debate, as well as mediatic attention, seem to have a narrow look towards elite sports and prime sport events, while grassroots and amateur sports are much less taken in consideration.
- Anti-discrimination norms are part of the legal framework in Belgium, Italy and Finland, while are non-existent in Hungary.
- In the sports context, the normative framework is sometimes too generalized (eg: embedding anti-discrimination within security norms in stadiums), and contained in larger fair-play or sport ethics frameworks.
- In all countries, the role of NGOs, CSOs and other individual actors is crucial in implementing monitoring practices and anti-discrimination/racism activity in general.

- Systematic monitoring is very limited. Structures and mechanisms, where they exist, are rather focused on prevention (eg: by promoting awareness campaigns) or on repression (eg: case-evaluation and sanctioning system).

## **Formalized and informal monitoring mechanisms in place**

In this section, we will focus on the specific monitoring mechanisms in place, on the strategies and practices adopted. These include more formalized practices, typically implemented by federations and other stakeholders, and included in larger anti-discrimination action plans, but also more informal practices, typical of grassroots and small-scale organizations and sport clubs. As anticipated, our findings go towards the recognition of a general lack of systematic monitoring mechanisms, although examples of good practices exist in the countries under investigation.

As said, the forms of monitoring identified in the four country-cases are often combined with other activities in the larger area of the measures against discrimination and racism in sport. It is only in rare instances that an organization or public body implements a monitoring-specific activity, at least as a systematic and recurrent practice. Apart from the distinction mentioned above between formalized and informal practices, we can say that the forms of monitoring in place are divided in two main categories: active monitoring and passive monitoring. These two categories are interconnected and mutually generative, and are often combined by field actors to complete information and data collection. Furthermore, from passive monitoring, forms of active monitoring may generate, and vice versa.

Active monitoring identifies actions and practices that are either purposely designed as monitoring activity, or in which monitoring functions derive from other activities such as research and scoping. In general, such activities exist in all country-cases, and are implemented at all levels, from the national to the local level. Anti-discrimination public bodies and sport federations do research and scoping on a regular basis, implementing surveys and other forms of research. Examples are the activities of UNIA's Prevention Department in Belgium, or of The National Observatory of Sporting Events established by UNAR in Italy. In general, forms of active monitoring are articulated within larger anti-discrimination activities and action plans, and combined with communication, sensibilization and awareness raising campaigns. These

establish the operational frameworks within which active monitoring is implemented, and that see the collaboration of different stakeholders able to operate at different levels, including research activity, advocacy and consultancy on anti-discrimination matters, and protection for victims of discrimination. The main added value of this kind of activity, apart from updating general information on discrimination and racism and making it available to various stakeholders including policymakers and field operators, is that it activates mechanisms of information and prevention in the field. This is a key element according to all our interviewees, pointing out that the first and most important function of an integrated monitoring system should be to spread up-to-date knowledge in order to establish a culture of equality and respect, but also and more importantly the necessary knowledge to identify complex and less evident forms of discrimination, particularly among field operators such as sport clubs, coaches, sport practitioners, and so on, but also among the media and information sector.

Multi-stakeholders collaborations for active monitoring require different forms of expertise and networking to establish effective partnerships. More importantly, as it emerges from our interviews, these activities require a clear and coordinated system of classification for the different forms and dimensions of discrimination. Particularly in sports, participants to our investigation have urged for a clear definition of the criteria to scan the field and identify problems. Indeed, criteria of discrimination are often difficult to contextualize within the dimension of sporting competition or, more generally, within a sporting culture that tolerates certain behaviors and expressions. A meaningful example of this comes from the Belgian context, and particularly from the Observatory of ethics in physical and sporting activities that the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation established in 2019. Within the Observatory, sport federations are mandated to designate so-called Ethical Referents to collect information on problematic contexts and situations by actively scanning the field and attending sport events, or acting as contact points for sport practitioners to report cases or discuss problems. The main obstacle that prevents Ethical Referents from being an effective monitoring tool is that the definition of sport ethics is too broad and generalized. This results not only in a lack of focus and efficiency of the system itself, but above all in the impossibility for the ethical referent to handle extremely different circumstances and situations where they are supposed to trace irregular or at-risk behaviors. In this sense, the Belgian case is exemplary of an obstacle that is reported by our research participants in all country cases. Without a



specific focus on discrimination criteria, individual actors in charge of monitoring sport activity may often lack an adequate level of training and experience on such complicate matters like discrimination and racism.

Forms of passive monitoring exist when mechanisms are made available to the public to report and self-report cases of discrimination, and are typically formalized and informal reporting practices that exist in all country-cases. It is important to highlight that passive monitoring of discrimination (including but not limited to sports) is a relatively common practice implemented by public bodies, municipalities and other public-funded organizations at the national and local level. UNIA in Belgium and the SPAD system in Italy are some examples. In sports, formalized practices of passive monitoring are implemented by the UNAR's National Observatory against Discrimination in Sport "Mauro Valeri", and in Belgium by the Royal Belgian Football Association RBFA through the Come Together Action Plan. These are two main examples of monitoring involving a system of reporting points for victims and witnesses of discriminaton. The main advantage of passive monitoring is that it allows for a constant scanning of the field and lays the conditions for timely corrective action. This is often a function that active monitoring involving research and scoping activities cannot fulfill, having often an exclusively diachronic dimension. Passive monitoring, differently, is set as a synchronic practice in the contexts of our study. To be noted, passive monitoring can happen as an non-systematic practice in many instances, as organizations active in fighting against discrimination are generally open to receive alerts, complains and individual reports of victims and witnesses. Informal passive monitoring is also often implemented by sport clubs through different small-scale and face-to-face practices such as advice and support to their members, coaches, parents, and any other. We will focus here on formalized systems.

Come Together in Belgium and the UNAR's Observatory in Italy, as said, are two main cases of passive reporting involving a publicly available system to report discrimination and racism in sport practice, events and structures. It is therefore useful to see in detail how these cases work, and to highlight their strengths. The UNAR's National Observatory against Discrimination in Sport "Mauro Valeri" conducted a pilot project that can be presented here as an example of monitoring system involving different actors and combining different practices and sources, including also forms of active monitoring such as research and scoping. We focus here on

passive forms of monitoring. The Observatory centralized several sources of data and information collected through a contact center and an online platform for reporting general cases of discrimination, not only related to sports, provided by UNAR. Active and passive monitoring were also combined for scoping online sources. The Observatory did systematic research to intercept complaints disseminated on social media or available on the websites of major sports federations. The Observatory's main source of passive monitoring data specifically concerning sports came from reports gathered in local communities by UISP, which implemented a program of report gathering in ten municipalities in Italy, and direct reports from victims or witnesses received by a platform called *Cronache di Ordinario Razzismo* (Ordinary Racism Chronicles) run by anti-discrimination organization Lunaria. An interesting aspect of the system is that a specific classification system was adopted to classify and analyze the reports collected. This includes information about the individuals involved, and other logistical, chronological and general context data, but also and more importantly a specific taxonomy for the discriminatory act or behavior (namely discrimination, verbal violence, physical violence or damage to property or assets). Verbal violence, the most recurrent in recorded cases, was split into three main categories: racist insults, threats or violent acts; propaganda (writings, banners, flyers, posters with discriminatory content, hate speech); public rallies (which encompass racist chants). Other information concerned the victims' responses (whether complaints to the competent authorities were filed, public complaints were made or no complaints at all were made), and the type of sanctions imposed.

Come Together is the anti-discrimination action plan of the Royal Belgian Football Association, in collaboration with the Dutch- and French-speaking association of Belgian football clubs.<sup>21</sup> The action plan is based on five different pillars: listening to people who are confronted with racism in sport; representation and inclusion of diversity within football associations; training on diversity and tackling discrimination, prevention and awareness-raising; measuring diversity, discrimination and racism; communication of anti-discrimination activity and support instruments. The passive monitoring mechanism implemented in the plan is therefore articulated within a larger and more complex set of activities. It consists of a dedicated hotline hosted on the RBFA website, where users can report incidents and other cases through a

---

<sup>21</sup> *Voetbal Vlaanderen and Association des Clubs Francophones de Football ACFF.*

protocol that collects preliminary data on the people involved and the events that occurred. Aside from recording logistical, chronological and general context data, similarly to the Italian example described above, the protocol sets a taxonomy of discrimination by inviting reporters to choose a reason for their report among different pre-determined options including: discrimination (racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism, ...); offensive behavior (physical, psychological and/or sexual violence, bullying); competition distortion, doping; lack of integrity (from RBFA representatives/employees). The system also asks details about the people involved and informed about the fact, and actions taken, if any. Again, similarly to what happens with the UNAR Observatory, data collected through the online protocol are part of a larger dataset integrated by data from different direct sources, including reports from match delegates, referees and club representatives.

As anticipated, examples of monitoring exist also as informal practices, typically implemented by grassroots and small-scale organizations and sport clubs. In many instances, sport clubs at all levels put in place internal mechanisms to control their own activity and prevent discrimination to take place within their structures, activities and events, and among their members. Although such mechanisms are mostly informal, they end up being particularly effective in shaping the internal culture of the clubs that adopt them towards an inclusive and anti-discrimination approach. Different are the examples in diversity-concerned sport clubs that participate in diversity-inclusion projects, and are also particularly involved in activity with newcomer refugees, following the 2015 migration crisis. An interesting example is Belgian football club FC Kraainem. The club does not have a formalized monitoring in place, but implements various actions to keep constant control over its delegates, members and activities. The system is based on a constant training of professional members and volunteers, also including parents and other people who are not directly included in the club's organizational chart, and recurrent informal meetings. For the training, the club relies on a network of CSOs, but also on the support of public bodies such as Unia, or the management and staff of refugee reception centres. Synergies and collaboration are indeed a key component, as remarked by all our interviewees, in order to establish a multi-stakeholder network of diversity-concerned actors able to provide support on a wide range of topics. In parallel, FC Kraainem put much stress on the creation of a community, both as a local community in the areas where the club structures are located, and in the larger football milieu. Particularly important is the

development and circulation of field knowledge about those mechanisms of discrimination that are often hidden or trivialized in the everyday sport practice. Interestingly, forms of training also exist internally at FC Kraainem in the form of peer shadowing and other one-to-one relationships among members, particularly between older and newer members. Recurrent meetings and group activity to exchange and debate problems of discrimination are also key activities. Their main function is to share problems and propose solutions in the form of recommendations, for example to coaches and parents, or presentation of best practices, and also external stakeholders can be invited to this scope. Again, the form of monitoring provided is mainly informal, although action is systematically taken in the case of incidents, and solutions can be undertaken both internally and externally, when more serious cases overtake the club's responsibility. FC Kraainem's internal meetings also helped establishing a culture of sharing issues within the club community, that is extremely helpful to intercept forms of micro- and everyday discrimination that are often hidden, commonly accepted or not recognized as such.

## Monitoring mechanisms: strengths and weaknesses

- Forms of monitoring in general are articulated within larger complex of anti-discrimination activities (eg: anti-discrimination action plans) and operates as real sensibilization and awareness raising campaigns.
- Multi-stakeholder networks are mobilized to implement such complex of activities, providing expertise and support over different crucial dimensions (prevention, advocacy, communication, protection, etc.).
- Forms of active monitoring (eg: research and scoping) are very useful to spread updated knowledge about discrimination and racism, and to activate prevention mechanisms.
- Passive monitoring is key to identify criteria of discrimination directly from the field, providing stakeholders with an empirical view on the problem along a synchronic dimension that evolves over time.
- Active monitoring is often limited to a diachronic dimension and needs a localized and micro-investigation approach to capture complex and invisible forms of discrimination and racism.
- Such approach needs resources to allow adequate and widespread territorial coverage and specific training for field operators (eg: referents, match delegates, etc.).
- Passive monitoring needs effective and facilitated post-report processes to ensure that the reported cases are analyzed and addressed towards the protection of victims.
- In general, any form of formalized monitoring should rely on systematic and organic actions aimed at supporting the development of a culture of mutual respect and the capability of the actors involved to identify at-risk situations, contexts and behaviors (cases of informal monitoring can teach us a lot about how to achieve these goals).

## Roadmap towards an integrated monitoring protocol

In this final section of the report we will sketch out a roadmap to support developing an innovative monitoring protocol to be tested in the next phase of the MONITORA project. The roadmap is divided in two phases: preparation and implementation. For each phase, we will provide a series of synthetic recommendations in bulleted lists.

### *Preparation:*

- An effective and transferable monitoring protocol should be set on clear and updated criteria of discrimination and racism. These should be revised on a regular basis. Adaptation is a key principle.
- Combining forms of active and passive monitoring is key to ensure a transversal coverage of the different dimensions of sports (from elite to grassroots, professional to amateur, national to local, etc.), a constant updating of field information, and a real sustainability of the monitoring system over time.
- Communication and information material should be aimed at field operators, with the objective to provide them with the specific knowledge to address less visible and normalized manifestations of discrimination.
- Embedding monitoring tools within larger anti-discrimination plans can increase effectiveness. However, it is important to give priority to concrete active and passive monitoring practices, otherwise plans can end up being merely awareness-oriented.
- Sport clubs, in particular, should be involved in the definition of the monitoring protocol, and invited to embed these into their daily activity, as part of their own societal mission.

### *Implementation:*

- Although centralizing information is important, reporting tools should be organized and distributed as a localized network, in order to adapt to local social, cultural and political circumstances.
- Criteria and mechanisms should be revised on a regular basis, in order to adapt to the evolution of the complex manifestations of discrimination and racism, but also to the changing circumstances in local settings. Sustainability is a key principle.
- Data and information from passive and active monitoring should be constantly combined. An effective monitoring protocol should also include the possibility to share exemplary cases, good practices or bad examples in order to inform the sector about its functioning and provide guidance to users.
- An effective monitoring protocol should also aim at informing the sector (particularly vulnerable and at-risk individuals and victims of discrimination) about compensation mechanisms, the system of protection and sanctioning, and post-report procedures. These should be simplified and made visible to the actors involved, particularly to. Transparency is a key principle.