

Safer, better, stronger!

Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse in sports

Recommendations to the European Commission

The physical, social and emotional interaction experienced during sports and recreational activities are very important for the development of social cohesion, not only amongst children and young people but amongst sportsmen and women of all ages. By offering numerous possibilities for non-formal education, sport is an essential factor to help create a harmonious and inclusive European social environment.

Close personal relationships often develop within sport. Whilst this is rightly considered a positive and enriching aspect of sport participation, it also represents an area of significant risk for sexual and gender harassment and abuse.

Sexual violence can have serious, long-term negative consequences for victims. It can also be extremely damaging for sport organizations. Therefore, preventive strategies to safeguard children and young people from such experiences are now a priority for the sports community. With this in mind, a network of national and international sport federations carried out a project on the prevention of sexualized violence in sports within the framework of the preparatory actions in the field of sports of the European Commission.

In the process of this European-wide project, a congress was held in November 2012 in Berlin gathering 130 participants from institutions and governmental agencies all over Europe.

In the early phase of the European project, a team of eleven renowned European experts gathered information on existing good practice examples and strategies on the prevention of sexualized violence in sports. As a result of their work, the catalogue *Prevention of sexual and gender harassment and abuse in sports - Initiatives in Europe and beyond* was introduced at the conference.

In addition to the existing useful - but scarce - research and valuable publications, including recommendations such as the *Consensus statement on sexual harassment and abuse in sport* (2007) of the International Olympic Committee and the UNICEF review *Protecting Children from violence in Sport* (2010) which the signees of this document explicitly support, the catalogue lists a number of examples on how the problem of sexual harassment and abuse is tackled in various contexts in different European countries. By listing these, it aims to inform and raise awareness.

As a result of these findings, the subsequent recommendations focus specifically on the European dimension of the prevention of sexualized violence in sports:

The prevention of sexual harassment and abuse in sports is clearly a comprehensive issue with many different stakeholders and institutional players on the European, national and local level. However, across the member states there is wide variation in the extent to which this issue is recognized and addressed. Sports organizations in many countries lack appropriate structures and mechanisms for the prevention of sexualized violence and the protection of children and young people from such abuse.

In order to remedy these shortcomings, national authorities responsible for sport should develop national strategies and guidelines for the prevention of sexualized violence in sport, taking into account the specificity of the national sport, health and education system as well as cultural identity and diversity.

As the discussion on sexualized violence in sports on a national level might not emerge on its own terms, a transnational approach on a European level could have excellent complementary effects and results.

Whenever possible, the European Commission should aim to support and give impulses for a European-wide discourse on the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse in sports.

In accordance with article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty and the principle of subsidiarity we, the signees, therefore recommend to the European Commission that:

1. The topic of sexual and gender harassment and abuse in sports shall be tackled by relevant European agencies. It shall remain on the EU sport agenda and should be included in the (eventual) sport chapter of any future funding program.
2. Data drawn from statistical and research instruments, on the topic of sexual and gender related harassment and abuse, shall include the sport sector and in this context research programmes shall pay special attention to cross-national longitudinal studies.
3. The European Commission shall support the establishment of a European network of stakeholders, experts and governmental agencies to act as a clearing house for information and resources on sexual and gender harassment and abuse in sport.
4. The European Commission shall support a European Task Force on sexual and gender harassment and abuse in sport to develop an evidence-based policy response for the implementation of prevention measures and to coordinate progress.
 - a. In order to establish a European review of sexual and gender harassment and abuse in sport, which will evaluate progress towards international recommendations and evaluate the effectiveness of existing prevention strategies within European sport.
 - b. In order to promote, guide and support the generation of coordinated national action plans for the prevention of sexual and gender harassment and abuse in sport and to facilitate progress of the Task Force strategy;
 - c. In order to establish a monitoring system to enable both the long-term collection of prevalence and incidence data on sexual and gender harassment and abuse in European sport, and an evaluation mechanism of the nations' progress towards national action plan objectives.

Signees:



Deutsche Sportjugend im Deutschen Olympischen Sportbund e.V. (dsj)



ENGSO Youth (Youth organization of European Non Governmental Sports Organization)



Sportunion Österreich



Federazione Italiana Aerobica e Fitness (FIAF)



Fédération Internationale Catholique Education Physique et sportive (FICEP)



TAFISA – The Association For International Sport for All



European University Sports Association (EUSA)



Fachstelle Mira

MIRA
PRÄVENTION SEXUELLER AUSBEUTUNG
IM FREIZEITBEREICH



“Women and Sport” Committee of the Cyprus Sport Organisation