

**Council Conclusions of 21 May 2014 on Gender Equality in Sport**

(2014/C 183/09)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING THAT:

1. Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the European Union enshrined in the Treaties. It is one of the objectives and tasks of the European Union, and mainstreaming the principle of equality between women and men in all its activities represents a specific mission for the Union<sup>(1)</sup>.
2. Gender equality is enshrined in Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
3. In its Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015<sup>(2)</sup>, which identified five priority areas for action: equal economic independence; equal pay for equal work or work of equal value; equality in decision-making; dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence; and gender equality in external actions, the Commission has undertaken to encourage the mainstreaming of gender issues into all EU policies. In its Communication on the development of the EU dimension in sport<sup>(3)</sup> the Commission proposed actions focussing especially on access to sport for immigrant women and women from ethnic minorities, access to decision-making positions and the fight against gender stereotypes.
4. Gender equality is vital for fulfilling the EU objectives of economic and social cohesion and of a high level of employment, as well as for ensuring sustainable growth and competitiveness, and for tackling the demographic challenge.
5. The Council (EPSCO configuration) has adopted conclusions on various relevant aspects of gender equality<sup>(4)</sup>, in particular the Council conclusions on the European Pact of Gender Equality (2011-2020) and support of the implementation of the Commission strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015.
6. The EU Conference on Gender Equality in Sport of 3-4 December 2013 in Vilnius examined possible strategic actions with a view to reaching gender equality in sport by 2016-2020 and called on the Commission, Member States and the sport movement to develop a plan of strategic actions in this field.
7. The Brighton Declaration which was the result of the first World Conference on Women and Sport that took place in Brighton, UK in 1994, and the UNESCO MINEPS declarations of Athens (2004) and Berlin (2013), called for specific actions to promote equal opportunities in the area of sport.
8. The Conference on Violence against women across the EU: Abuse at home, work, in public and online of 5 March 2014 in Brussels, presented the results of the FRA (EU Fundamental Rights Agency) survey<sup>(5)</sup> on violence against women. The survey demonstrated that 33% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, with 32% of all victims of sexual harassment confirming that the perpetrator was a boss, colleague or customer. The majority of women that were victims did not report their experiences to either the police or any victim support organisation<sup>(6)</sup>.
9. The Hellenic Presidency seminar on 'Gender Based Violence in Sport: Protection of Minors' of 20 March 2014 in Athens, called for the addressing and regular monitoring of gender equality in sport at all levels and fields of sport, including gender based violence in sports, and for the assessment of the nature and extent of gender based violence in sport, focusing in particular on elite sport, the coach-athlete relationship,

<sup>(1)</sup> Articles 2 and 3(3) TEU and Article 8 TFEU.

<sup>(2)</sup> Doc. 13767/10.

<sup>(3)</sup> Doc. 5597/11.

<sup>(4)</sup> Docs. 18127/10 and 7370/11 respectively.

<sup>(5)</sup> The survey was based in face-to-face interviews with 42 000 women aged 18 to 74 years, across the EU's 28 Member States.

<sup>(6)</sup> <http://fra.europa.eu/en/vaw-survey-results>

the entourage of the sport-athlete relationship and the peer athlete-athlete relationship. It also called for sufficient tools (e.g. support services, counselling and telephone hotlines) to be developed for the athletes who have suffered sexual harassment or violence in sport.

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT:

10. Gender equality in sport already receives significant attention in certain Member States. Some work has also been done at local, regional and European level and at the international sport movement levels, but gender equality has not reached an acceptable level and the implementation of concrete actions is still lacking in many Member States and in the international sport movement.
11. As sport is a sector that involves minors, it is an environment that may carry risks of violence and sexual harassment due to, inter alia, the trust developed between individuals involved in sport.
12. Women are under-represented in many areas of sport. According to the Eurobarometer on Sport and Physical Activity (2013), girls and women still participate less than boys and men.
13. The number of women in leadership positions in sport governing bodies and coaching is still low.
14. Gender based violence in sport, especially sexual harassment and abuse of minors, is a significant problem but requires additional research so that it can be better understood.
15. Gender roles are taught and encouraged from a very young age and can influence the desires, interests and aspirations of women and men in private and public life.
16. The media, including the advertising industry, contributes to the reproduction of culturally transmitted stereotypes and images of women and men, and can play an important role in combating gender stereotypes.
17. In its conclusions on the role of sport as a source of and a driver for active social inclusion<sup>(1)</sup>, the Council invited the Member States and the Commission to promote actions related to mainstreaming gender equality into sport-related activities, especially as regards decision making positions, and to address sport in connection with gender roles as set out in the EU gender strategy. In addition, gender based violence should be combatted in order to ensure the full enjoyment by women and men of their human rights and to achieve gender equality.

UNDERLINES THE POTENTIAL OF SPORT TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES:

18. Sport can be an effective tool for equal opportunities and social inclusion. Real gender equality cannot be achieved by means of legislation alone. Specific measures and gender mainstreaming are also required, to ensure that the sport sector's significant potential in this regard will be exploited, given for example its importance in shaping the identities of children and young people.
19. Sport could increase women's and men's skills, knowledge and competences and thereby enhance their mobility and employability. Sport could benefit from a more gender inclusive workforce and will evolve accordingly, attracting more women and men to sport and leading to new and innovative approaches to coaching, training, management and refereeing.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 5.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY TO:

20. Consider developing and maintaining national action plans, general agreements or strategy on gender equality in sport, in close cooperation with the sport movement.
21. Highlight the value of diversity and gender balance in sport administration and promote gender equality in decision-making at all levels and in all fields of sport.
22. Consider development and use of educational materials for the training of decision-makers and coaches in sport, as well as for parents, thus contributing to the elimination of gender stereotypes and the promotion of gender equality at all levels of education and sport training.
23. Consider developing policies and programmes for eliminating gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality in education curricula and practices from an early age, including research, studies, statistics and analysis of the effect that gender stereotypes have on efforts to achieve real gender equality in sport.
24. Promote the prevention of gender based violence in sport from an early age and the protection of victims and potential victims of sexual harassment in sport. Exchange best practice on how sports organisations can prevent and handle sexual abuse and harassment in sport.
25. Consider the opportunity provided by major sporting events to organize prevention and awareness raising campaigns on human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCES AND WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY AND WHILE RESPECTING MEMBER STATES RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPORT POLICY, TO:

26. Consider developing with sport organisations adequate and proportional measures, in accordance with national and EU law and applicable data protection legislation, to verify the suitability of persons working in the field of sport (especially with minors). Such measures could be registration systems, interviews or references (inter alia certificates of good conduct).
27. Strengthen and mainstream the gender perspective in sport policy and promote the elimination of gender stereotypes through sport and other related policies and EU programmes at all levels, in accordance with the principle of integrity of sport.
28. Include the issue of gender equality in sport in the context of relevant future actions for Sport at national and EU level.
29. Promote accessibility among all relevant stakeholders and encourage participation in European programmes such as Erasmus+ and other EU funding instruments, where appropriate, for the promotion of gender equality in sport, focusing in particular on coaches and coach education and a fair portrayal of sports in the media.
30. Consider including gender equality objectives as a condition for the granting of public funding to sport organisations, where appropriate.
31. Encourage the inclusion of a practical gender based approach to the assessment by public bodies of proposed projects and programmes in sport.
32. Consider establishing a set of guidelines which could support the implementation of key actions at the EU level.
33. Consider launching, in cooperation with the international sport bodies, a 'pledge board' on gender equality in sport.

HAVING REGARD TO THE AUTONOMY OF SPORT ORGANISATIONS CALLS ON SPORT ORGANISATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO:

34. Consider developing and maintaining action plans or strategies, on gender equality in sport.
35. Highlight the value of diversity and gender balance in sport administration and among coaches, and promote gender equality in decision-making at all levels and in all fields of sport.
36. Consider and mainstream gender equality in sport and promote the elimination of gender stereotypes through promotional campaigns and development and use of educational materials for training of decision-makers and coaches in sport for all ages.
37. Include specific measures and procedures regarding gender based violence in codes of ethics and consider establishing target measures such as hotlines and specific support services for those affected.
38. Encourage the promotion of the non-sexist media coverage of sport.
39. Encourage increasing gender balance on executive boards and committees in the field of sports, as well as in management and coaching and try to remove non-legislative obstacles preventing women from taking up such functions.

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

40. Mainstream the gender perspective in all aspects of sport policy and promote the elimination of gender stereotypes in sport at all levels.
  41. Promote the active cooperation between the relevant social partners in the framework of the social dialogue and with the sport movement in the framework of the structured dialogue, in order to reduce gender inequality in various fields including in the labour market.
  42. Support transnational initiatives (e.g. awareness-raising campaigns, exchange of good practices, studies, networks, projects) focussing on the implementation of national and international strategic actions on gender equality in sport within the framework of EU funding programmes including Erasmus+, with a focus on decision making in sport governing bodies, coaching, and the fight against gender-based violence and negative stereotypes in sport.
  43. Conduct research on gender equality in sport at all levels and fields of sport, focusing in particular on coaching, training, management and refereeing in close cooperation with the European Institute of Gender Equality. In addition, launch a specific study to assess the nature and extent of gender based violence in sport.
  44. Support the development and promote the use of adapted gender mainstreaming tools such as gender budgeting and gender impact assessments and consider implementing these instruments in the framework of Erasmus+ and other EU funding instruments, where appropriate.
-