



# Manifesto

## on a

# Truly Inclusive Sport

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## **ENGSO Manifesto on a Truly Inclusive Sport**

The European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO) is a pan-European platform for national sports umbrella organisations including national Olympic Committees focussing on “grassroots sport” and “sport for all”. ENGSO presently consists of 40 members and one observer organisation. In addition, it cooperates with various other sport stakeholders such as the European Union and the Council of Europe.

Sport is the largest social and voluntary activity in Europe. More people participate and volunteer in sport than in any other activity. Sport is attractive to people and sport is not always just sport. It also plays an important social role in including people from different backgrounds. Thus, sport can be a powerful social tool in many areas and, for example, can help facing the new challenges outlined in the EU 2020 consultation such as the “integration of an increasing immigrant population, social exclusion... and solidarity between generations”. Furthermore, sport could have a positive effect in the field of gender equality through the European Roadmap for equality between Men and Women.

ENGSO members are aware of the important cohesive and inclusive role sport can play in society and of the opinion that this role should be better harnessed for its benefit in cooperation and with the support of public authorities. Therefore, ENGSO proposes the following recommendations, shaping the various aspects of the issue of social inclusion:

### **Inclusion of immigrant populations**

Many sport projects all over Europe prove that sport is unique in bringing people together and can connect people from all walks of life. In a sport club, people irrespective of belief, origin or ethnic background can engage in sporting activities, be physically active and move in a new social environment. There – besides being exposed to values conveyed through sport like team work, tolerance, solidarity – sport club members face also other important aspects of society such as democratic structures, the culture of the (host) country and its language providing valuable and important learning opportunities. Additionally, sporting activities also contribute to health and provide the chance to process trauma and/or reduce stress constructively.

ENGSO calls upon its members to

- Acknowledge the potential people from a minority group can bring into sport both as an athlete and as a(n) (voluntary) official;
- Create a framework of equal opportunities in sport and treat equally people from a minority group as the majority population with regards to membership and participation as club members, athletes, officials, volunteers etc.;
- Open up sport at all levels and abolish restrictions/ quotas in amateur sport in accordance with European and national regulations;
- Raise awareness of the public at sport events on including minority populations;
- Launch “inclusive” projects specifically targeted to people from a minority group (e.g. participation in sport);
- Launch projects such as trainings on inclusion for stakeholders/ multipliers and officials in sport and/or educational measures;
- Launch awareness raising campaigns promoting the potential positive role of sport in terms of inclusion and intercultural dialogue in cooperation with European and national authorities;
- Adopt a policy/ recommendation towards inclusion of minorities.



## **Social exclusion**

Social exclusion is where areas of the community lack access to power, knowledge, services, facilities, choice and opportunity due to problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime levels, bad health and family breakdown. Breaking out of the social exclusion cycle is difficult and it is Governments' responsibility to provide every opportunity to break free from this spiral. Sport is not necessarily the cure, but it should become an integral part of creating social cohesion. Sport can engage people at a community level, improve health and provide a focus in lives that have previously lacked structure and role models.

Where opportunities and support are offered to people, who are socially excluded, both targeted public and communities can benefit greatly. Sport can be a tool in the fight against social exclusion and a lot of local projects involving sport organisations and social organisms have shown that the values conveyed by sport help people to better integrate the common rules shared by the society. Sport allows socialisation and emancipation of individuals.

ENGSO calls upon its members to

- Create guidelines on how to use sport as a tool for social inclusion and implement them at national, regional but also local level. Provide support to the local sport clubs in implementing them;
- Improve cooperation with non sport stakeholders dealing with social inclusion issues (such as prisons, associations active in disadvantaged districts, etc.);
- Engage in European thematic networks to exchange good practices and learn from each other programme-wise and project-wise. European thematic networks might instigate the creation of national thematic networks;
- Create a label for "truly inclusive sport clubs".

## **Solidarity between generations**

Studies show that the European population is ageing and that this will be a challenge for the coming years with regard to the economic and social impact it may cause. A lot of European countries don't have sufficient national structures dedicated to sport activities for senior citizens.

However, the practice of physical activity within a sport organisation helps the seniors to develop personal confidence, enables social integration and avoids exclusion and loneliness through personal contacts and exchanges between the generations.

On the other side seniors can bring their knowledge and experiences to the sport structures, and eventually engage in sport structures as volunteers. Sports clubs offer a variety of opportunities for integration between young and old. Depending on the sport, the age range of participants vary but sports such as golf, yachting, rowing, cross-country skiing, bowls, or shooting will support active members for the entire age range, while team sports such as football and rugby have long traditions of attracting social members and utilising older players as coaches and volunteers.

ENGSO calls upon its members to

- Actively promote the solidarity between the generations and the practice of physical activity by



- seniors by supporting national initiatives and projects;
- Develop contacts with partner countries and cooperate in the framework of European projects;
- Raise awareness and initiate communication policies on sport for seniors;
- Promote the engagement of senior citizens in sport clubs and integrate senior volunteers in the sport structures at all levels.

## Gender Equality

The awareness of questions related to gender equality has increased in sport organisations during the past years with the help of consistent training, a continual flow of educational materials, communications, changes in statutes, networking and awards for best practices. For the moment ENGSO has two mentoring projects, ENTER ! and WILD, which both aim to increase representation by women in leadership positions in sport. The European Union has also emphasised the importance of gender equality in its sports policy, and financially supports those two projects.

Yet, many challenges still remain in sport organisations. There are still organisations that lapse into ‘the old ways’ when no positive attention to equality work is being paid. Vigilance is important. Educational materials in the field of sport should be prepared with a gender appropriate approach. Many trainers and coaches have positive attitudes towards equality questions *per se*, but do not know how to enhance these values in their own day-to-day work. Therefore their education should systematically include practices that develop gender sensitivity, which, among other things, involves awareness of what one regards as “natural” for girls and boys, women and men. Many talents may never reach their full potential when we limit young boys and girls by stereotyping.

Furthermore, the concepts commonly used in sports often work against gender equality when women are pejoratively compared to men. On the other hand, the model of masculinity is quite narrow. In terms of resources, women are still maintained on a lower resource level than their male counterparts. Including more women in leadership positions advance the change of concepts used in sports to become more equal.

Equal sport culture entails appreciating and making visible both genders – communicating new points of view of girls and boys, women and men, in sports and physical activities. Sports organisations need to see the business benefits of having a balanced leadership. Balanced leadership enriches the sport culture.

ENGSO calls upon its members to

- Increase the number of women involved in sports and physical activities at all levels, including the decision-making of sport organisation, coaching etc. areas where women are still a minority;
- Organise education, training and mentoring in order to increase the representation and participation by women;
- Provide sufficient resources for equality work;
- Provide educational materials in the field of sport with a gender appropriate approach.

## Racism

[www.engso.eu](http://www.engso.eu)

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Sport has the ability to cross divides unlike any other. “Sport has the power to change the world, the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else can”, according to Nelson Mandela. Research, however, shows that racism is apparent and effects the involvement of black, ethnic and minority (BME) groups at all levels of sport. Given that racism and ethnicity is also complexly interlinked with social exclusion, class, gender and many other dimensions, the challenge of addressing racism is difficult.

Campaigns can often challenge convenient stereotypes such as a small number of hooligan fans or unrealistic expectations of minority ethnic groups. But, while such projects bring open debate on racism, an emphasis on top-end sport can fail to change the approach to racism down to the grassroots.

Sports organisations need to better understand and have a coherent approach to racism, based on previous research and best practices. Governing bodies need to ensure models are understood throughout their sport and appropriate support is given throughout the sporting structure to ensure that policies are potent rather than existing just to meet inert high-level goals.

ENGSO calls upon its members to

- Create equity policies in order to combat racism at all levels of sport based on research and best practice;
- Ensure sports organisations not only have such policies, but have a commitment to deliver the goals;
- Create supporting structures to enable all levels of sport to carry out equity policies.

## **Sexual Orientation**

For many years homosexuality and homophobia have been taboo subjects in sport. The silence is an expression of homophobia. The negation and invisibility of homosexuality does not mean that there is no homosexuality within the sport movement. In order to counteract the silence and to combat the discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, the sport organisations, athletes, coaches, clubs and fans have to acknowledge the existence of homosexuality.

Sport organisations and their leaders should establish an atmosphere of acceptance of different sexual orientations. Education, campaigns and dissemination of information are essential tools to enhance tolerance and atmosphere of acceptance. Sport federations should enhance equality in all areas, including sexual orientation, in their daily activities. Fight against discrimination on grounds of sexual preference should be a duty of sport organisations.

Furthermore, contacts have been created between ENGSO and the European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF), and this cooperation will be further developed. Both EGLSF and ENGSO are members of the Consultative Committee of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport of the Council of Europe. <http://www.eglsf.info/eglsf-about.php>

ENGSO calls upon its members to

- Fight against discrimination in sport on grounds of sexual preference;
- Educate coaches, trainers and other stakeholders. Media campaigns and dissemination of information are essential tools in fight against homophobia;



- Establish an atmosphere of acceptance which enables and supports the coming out of gay and lesbian sports men and women.

## Violence

Violence in sport covers a huge range of topics. Sporting misdemeanours on the field of play can stretch from excessive body contact to actual criminal violence. Many sports do involve a certain amount of controlled aggression by nature. If this aggression does not harm others involved, then this may be acceptable. Of course where aggression is not controlled and, in fact, violence is the end product, sport must take action. Televised sports where bad behaviour is glamourised can prove to be a catalyst for bad behaviour in grassroots level sport or in society itself.

Meanwhile, off-field violence can range from hooliganism to violence against women. The effects of the former are well known, but violence against women is often less associated with sport. However the phenomenon is naturally distressing, and recent reports have highlighted that “controversies over sexual assaults, domestic violence, drug abuse, and other forms of anti-social behaviour by professional sportsmen... [h]ave fuelled community perceptions that some sporting codes involve sexist subcultures in which ‘boys behaving badly’ is normal, if not celebrated”

ENGSO calls upon its members to

- Encourage sports federations actively work towards fair play;
- Prevent a culture of aggressive tactics by coaches or team owners;
- Embrace anti-hooliganism projects and learn from best practice;
- Provide educational material in the field of violence in sport with a gender appropriate approach.

## Disability

Desire to improve, evolve, compete and to exercise is common to all sportsmen, and has nothing to do with whether you have a disability or not. Sport helps us to build self-esteem, setting goals and focusing on the opportunities we have. In the sports club you get new companions with the same interests as yourself. Sport helps us to find our identity, develop and to reach new goals. So is it for all of us, and on top of that, doing sports is among the most fun you can do!

Some people who do sports have a disability. This can include the hard of hearing, vision or mobility, or some form of intellectual disability. Sport is an equally important part of life for these people as for everyone else, and therefore we must work to get more facilities that are available, getting more disabled people to pay attention to all the positive values of sport and ensure that more sports will find creative solutions how to adjust their sport for persons with disabilities.

In sport disabled people will be able to participate on equal terms with everyone else. You should be able to bike, ski or paddle, to name just a few sports, along with your family and friends. Sport opens new doors for many people with a disability. Imagine yourself in the feeling of freedom when riding a horse in the woods if you otherwise sit in a wheelchair.



A disability occurs in the environment around them. If we plan our activities and our environment from the view that anyone who wants to participate can do that, we exclude a large part of what is now creating inaccessibility. Therefore it is so important that sport is striving to create conditions so that all who wish to practice a particular sport are given the opportunity to do so!

ENGSO calls upon its members to

- Work for achieving equality of sporting opportunities for disabled people;
- Work for increasing participation in sport for disabled people and improve access to sport of their choice, at a level of their choice;
- Get more clubs that offers sport for disabled people;
- Work for getting more arenas available also for disabled people.