

FRA Press Release
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No level playing field: racism and discrimination in sport in the EU

The [European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(FRA\)](#) will today present its new report on racism, ethnic discrimination and the exclusion of migrants and minorities in sport in the European Union. Delegates at the [16th European Fair Play Congress in Prague](#) will discuss the report's findings, including the need to make sport more inclusive and ways of addressing the underrepresentation of persons belonging to minorities in sport. The FRA report also highlights the lack of data available showing the occurrence of racist incidents in sport. It emphasises the need to develop effective ways of monitoring such incidents among players, referees and club officials, as well as between or by fans.

FRA Director Morten Kjaerum: *"Sport has enormous potential to bring people from all walks of life together. Sports events therefore provide the ideal platform for fostering inclusion, diversity and mutual respect, while combating racism, discrimination and exclusion. Our research findings show, however, that often this potential is not realised. Instead, incidences of racism and ethnic discrimination continue to affect sports at both professional and amateur levels across the EU. We have to get the ball rolling and tackle this; everybody needs to take up their responsibility in this regard."*

Widening participation in sport

In many sports across the European Union, minorities and migrants are underrepresented, especially in the management of sports organisations. Women and girls with an ethnic minority background are particularly underrepresented.

More targeted activities by sports governing bodies, federations and clubs are necessary – such as diversity programmes to encourage the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in sports, and initiatives to remove the barriers to accessing management positions in sports organisations.

Monitoring racist incidents in sport

Systems monitoring racist incidents in sports only exist in a number of EU Member States. Some are more advanced and capture more racist incidents than others; most available data, however, are related to football.

National and local authorities are encouraged to develop effective ways of monitoring racist incidents and discrimination in sport, in close cooperation with sports federations.

Equality Bodies and sport

The FRA report shows that in at least 16 EU Member States [Equality Bodies](#) and other institutions, such as National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), take action in cases of racist incidents and ethnic discrimination in sport.

Equality Bodies and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) should be more involved in addressing racial discrimination in sport. These bodies could support sports federations and clubs in developing awareness-raising activities. They could provide support to potential victims and, where this is permitted, participate in legal action against perpetrators.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has published two reports on racism, ethnic discrimination and exclusion of migrants and minorities in sport in the EU:

- [Racism, ethnic discrimination and exclusion of migrants and minorities in sport: a comparative overview of the situation in the European Union](#)
- [Racism, ethnic discrimination and exclusion of migrants and minorities in sport: the situation in the European Union – Summary Report](#)

A *Handbook of good practice* will be published in 2011 for sports federations, clubs, and players or athletes, with examples of initiatives to combat racism, ethnic discrimination and the exclusion of migrants and minorities in sports.

The reports, together with background information, are available at www.fra.europa.eu

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Notes to Editors:

- The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is mandated to provide evidence-based advice to decision makers in the EU. The Agency's evidence aims at informing EU and national policy makers about fundamental rights challenges on the ground, as well as at contextualising debates on fundamental rights issues in the European Union.
- The report contains the results of interviews with representatives of sport federations, player and athlete organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from across the EU, together with an analysis of secondary data and information on racism, ethnic discrimination and the exclusion of migrants and minorities in sport. Professional and amateur sports involving men, women and young people and children were included in the study. Football and athletics were examined in each of the 27 EU Member States and a third sport, popular in the respective Member State, was also covered (see table below)

Sports examined in each Member State

EU Member State	Sports
Austria	Football, athletics, alpine skiing
Belgium	Football, athletics, basketball
Bulgaria	Football, athletics, volleyball
Cyprus	Football, athletics, basketball
Czech Republic	Football, athletics, ice hockey
Denmark	Football, athletics, handball
Estonia	Football, athletics, basketball
Finland	Football, athletics, basketball
France	Football athletics, tennis
Germany	Football, athletics, handball
Greece	Football, athletics, basketball
Hungary	Football, athletics, water polo
Ireland	Football, athletics, hurling/camogie
Italy	Football, athletics, basketball
Latvia	Football, athletics, ice hockey
Lithuania	Football, athletics, basketball
Luxembourg	Football, athletics, cycling
Malta	Football, athletics, basketball
Netherlands	Football, athletics, korfbal
Poland	Football, athletics, speedway racing
Portugal	Football, athletics, handball
Romania	Football, athletics, handball
Slovakia	Football, athletics, ice hockey
Slovenia	Football, athletics, alpine skiing
Spain	Football, athletics, basketball
Sweden	Football, athletics, ice hockey
United Kingdom	Football, athletics, cricket