



MARS – MEDIA AGAINST RACISM IN SPORT

Media, Diversity & Racism in Sport

NATIONAL MEDIA ENCOUNTER

Ethics & Editorial Management

INITIAL REPORT

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MARS - Media Against Racism in Sport

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ORGANIZERS AND MEETING PRINCIPLES

Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy Polskich (Polish Journalist Association), **European Union of Journalists** and **Council of Europe's MARS Programme** joined forces in organizing first of a kind in Poland meeting of sport journalists, editors and reporters from various genre of media in Poland.

The event took place at 21 and 22 January 2012 in Warsaw, Poland at the Polish Journalist Association headquarters at Foksal 12 street. Workshop was preceded by a brief informational campaign. Major media organizations from press radio and television as well as online were contacted and informed on the set of objectives of the talks as well as list of issues which were to be covered during the meeting.

In 2012 sport reporting gained significance in Poland's news outlet. One of main reasons is the upcoming great sport events in Europe and Poland. EURO 2012 in Poland/Ukraine is expected to be a biggest world class event ever held in Poland, Olympics in London also concerns Polish public opinion partly due to growing population of "Polish Londoners" who work and live in UK's capital. As a result a representative group of over 35 journalists editors and writers showed up at the event. According to agenda meeting was a two day event with first day was devoted to the printed press (daily, and weekly sports magazine, online magazine, etc.) and the second to broadcast media (radio and TV and online media). Such setup allowed to compare practices and issues from various newsrooms and from many cities across the country.

OPENING THESIS

In an opening remarks Mr. **Krzysztof Skowroński**, president of SDP said that its utmost important that such conference on sport and ethics is organized in January before great sporting events that are going to take place in Poland. Skowronski pointed that racism defined as perception of superiority of one man over another should be considered unacceptable in a modern world. President of SDP encouraged everyone to take part in an open discussion. "Open discussion disregards the "political correctness" in pursuit of a real world problems and effective ways to handle them" said Skowroński.

Steven Pearce, secretary general of European Journalist Union who was present at day 1 of the conference stressed the importance of the ethical journalism. In his opinion role of journalists unions and organizations – such as SDP– is concentrated on promotion of such moral values among journalists. EJU main job is to enable journalists to work freely from political pressure and in a decent conditions as well as help them to report the events in an objective manner thus facilitating a democracy. But one should never omit moral values and ethical foundation of this profession. "As journalists have the key influence over the way the people see the world around them, and the decision we take on what angle we approach the story on the type of language we use have an impact it is our mission and responsibility as well" said Pearce. He described some accidents from the UK that are connected to alleged racism remarks in football teams. As a way of dealing with such accidents Pearce referred to the Media Ethics Charter (which SDP had a key role to implement in Poland). In many EU countries local journalist organizations are producing sets of standards and rules on the reporting on racial, asylum, immigration etc. Such regulations are in place in Italy, UK, and many other European countries. However, the crucial issue is to include these standards into a daily practice of journalism. Another part of the agenda is the introduction

of diversity and antidiscrimination in the workplace. Pearce expressed his confidence that the MARS encounter in Warsaw is just a step in a good direction.

Reynold Billon started the discussion from setting the agenda of the meeting. He described activities of Council of Europe's that's are concentrated around the promotion of human rights, rule of law and democracy. These basics are behind all the CoE is doing. Billon highlighted the role of CoE, its structure and goals of the organization. Regarding the issues of non discrimination and diversity and media activity of CoE are based on its founding documents. There are three main principles:

1. Media should include the diversity into programming and coverage,
2. It's required to include (and recruit) people of various backgrounds into the media organizations
3. There is a demand to include diversity, non discrimination and racial issues within the content produced.

Billon described a "Speak out against discriminations" international campaign that has three activities such as training, ethics and production. While presenting assumptions on which MARS program is based upon, Billon described the mixed racial and national composition of modern European societies and the fact that such diversity is largely ignored by the media. Thus urgency to include into a basic stream of news and stories facts related to racial diversity and non discrimination issues. In opinion of Billon and MARS program founders such concerns should become an ongoing angle of media coverage. The ideal place to implement such agenda is sport reporting. Sport is popular and easy to understand by large part of society. Sport is integrating people from various social strata around simple values and slogans. Finally sport has a powerful impact on society both in terms of generating common emotions as well as in terms of business it is generating.

As the key outcome of the MARS encounter Billon would like to see the implementation of the racial and non discriminating issues as ongoing angle of coverage another important factor would be an encouragement of the exchange of various newsroom practices that are applied regarding such issues.

Wojciech Szczepek – a renowned Polish sport journalist was a guest speaker and facilitator of the first day panel discussion. He introduced the subject by presenting several examples of racism in sport. Szczepek started from history of racism in sport. The players from Africa, Middle East and Asia have very often begun their careers in a teams of European (or colonial) countries.

In 1912 – a 100 years ago native-American sportsman Jim Thorp won gold medal in Olympics in Stockholm. Six months later American Sport Federation charged him for being a professional (Thorp took part in a paid baseball game). Instrumental in these charges was a white-man Thorp's competitor. Thorp was denied all of his awards. He was cleared of the charges 30 years after his death. In 1936 Olympics in Berlin was famous of black sportsman Jesse Owens who won most of the prizes. This is the well known story. Less known is friendship between Owens and Nazi sportsman Long who being chief competitor gave crucial advices to Owens how to measure long jump.

Another example from the 20th century are famous fights between German Max Schmelling and black American Joe Lewis. At the time press pictured the fights as a struggle between Black and White "fight of the century" etc. However, despite the propaganda of "eternal enemies" Lewis and Schmelling became real life friends. Schmelling (who lived almost till his 100 birthday) financially

EXCERPTS FROM THE GROUP MEETINGS RESOLUTIONS

The discussion within the groups was lively and heated. Participants found some statements a challenging one and used very profound arguments to raise their cases. By every means the discussion was a most interesting part of the Encounters.

Participants recalled a number of real life situations where a reporter or his or her Editor had to make quick decision based on ethical principles. One has to say that in general the proper training and professional values prevailed and decision were made properly.

The foundation of journalist profession is the disseminating information. It is important what and how we are reporting but also what influence we have by using our language, pictures or way the story is composed. This is why it is utmost important to stress the responsibility for publication.

In relation to ethical journalism non discrimination and antiracism it is extremely important to put an effort in education of the journalists. This education should be both formal and practical while on the assignment. participants of MARS encounter are pointing towards masters of journalism profession, they see those mature, renowned journalists as a role model for young ambitious writers and editors. Therefore exchange of views and practical education should play a key role in education of prospective reporters. One another piece of the puzzle is exchange between news organizations. International internships for young reporters might provide them with valuable insights into way the news are presented and what are the angles of coverage.

Lawmakers should include violation of ethical journalism into code. The journalism profession is open to anyone who wishes to write and express himself or herself. However standards, rules and basic ethics of this profession should be known and acceptable across society. Participants of the MARS meeting suggest implementing more strict control on set of standards that constitute journalists profession.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JOURNALIST ETHICS CODE:

KODEKS ETYKI DZIENNIKARSKIEJ - Stowarzyszenia Dziennikarzy Polskich

With acceptance of Media Ethics Card and declaration of International Journalist Association we agree that the role of a journalist is to pass to the public unbiased information as well as opinion and allowing various views to be taken into account during a public debate.

- **Freedom of expression** should be accompanied by a responsibility for a publications Publisher in Press Radio and TV as well as in the New Media.
- **The good of readers.** Listeners and viewers benefits should be considered as a supreme over the interests of writer, editor, publisher or broadcaster.

I – Information and opinion

1. Information should be clearly separated from the opinion.
2. Information should be balanced and exact, to enable leader to differentiate between facts suppositions and gossip. News should be presented in a proper context and be based upon sources that are credible and include many points of view.
3. Opinions presented could take an extreme positions but it cannot bend the facts and be caused of an external pressure.

4. Mistakes should be corrected as soon as possible. Even if not writer nor the newsroom was responsible. The „corrections“ should be Publisher regardless if anyone demands it.

II – Documentation of the story

5. While on research one should not break the law. Except from an investigative journalism it is unacceptable to use hidden camera, voice recorder or telephone tap. This is due to the greater good: following corruption or abuse of Power. Each such case should be allowed by supervisors.
6. It is unacceptable to violate a persons privacy and/or intimacy. The exception is allowed in a case of investigative journalism including public figures.
7. Reporter is obliged to maintain secrecy of the source, its personal data and image. This could be revealed only to supervisor.
8. The exception of the news, interview or opinion should not change its sense or meaning; archives and reconstructions should be used in a proper way.

III – Reporter/Journalist in respect to guests and recipients.

9. The guests should be informed in the way the interview shall be used. An authorization is mandatory of the guest will request it. Children’s opinion and views could be used only upon earlier agreement with parents or caregivers.
10. Journalist should pay respect to any people he meets regardless on their differences either in ideology, cultural or racial and sexual orientation.
11. One should pay particular attention to the dignity of people with mental and physical disabilities, seniors and ill as well as those who cannot compete in modern society.
12. One should be particularly careful in reporting on new experimental medical treatments when those are unproven and not certified. Fortune tellers and horoscopes cannot be presented as credible information and a guidance.
13. Language used for a reporting should be used in a elegant form. Writer should not use vulgar words and expressions.

IV – Crime and exceptional situations

14. When revealing crime and names of people suspected of committing crime, reporters should adapt particular care. Any description which enable to recreate crime or antisocial behavior should be avoided. Journalists are not courts and should avoid blaming anyone until judge should issue a lawful sentence.
15. While reporting war, street protests and skirmishes journalists should maintain unbiased position and avoid being manipulated.
16. It is unacceptable to show close up pictures of a death. Results of war and natural catastrophes, cruelty and violence could be described and shown only when the proper balance is kept between the precision of the report and public feelings, particularly regarding victims and their families.

V – Conflict of interest

17. Credibility and independence of journalists cannot be compromised by accepting „gifts“ especially in value over PLN 200 (EUR 50), the same applied to „free“ trips or „testing“ the electronic equipment, cars, etc.
18. Journalist cannot be involved in sales, advertising and Public Relations. With the exception of cherty. All such publications should be clearly stated as “non news”.
19. Especially disgraceful is to take part in covert advertising and hiding information for private use.

20. Journalist should not use for private profit any information possessed during his work. Especially when covering business.
21. Unacceptable is to Take active part in direct activity connected to politics and party. Journalists should not be active Public Servants nor political activists.

VI – Colleagues and Supervisors

22. The relations between colleagues and supervisors should be on a friendly, professional level. Unfair competition is not acceptable as is stealing someone's else's work and even the idea.
23. Journalist should be loyal towards supervisors, editors and Publisher. However, journalist can not be requested to break the law, behave unethically or cross his beliefs.

VII – Responsibility and penalties

24. Breaking the journalist ethics code makes responsible the author, editor, and Publisher.
25. Penalties are being applied by a respective journalist assemblies depending on a way that ethical code was breached and a size of the breach. In some cases a Journalist Court could demand the publication of a judgment.

APPENDICES

Interview with Zbigniew Rytel about racism and chauvinism in sports, and sensitivity of Polish journalists to those phenomena

by *Błażej Torański*

Zbigniew Rytel is a historian, journalist, and film director. Zbigniew graduated in history from Catholic University in Lublin, Poland (KUL), and in journalism from Texas Tech University, USA. He received a scholarship from the United States Congress. He also completed many journalism courses and workshops in Poland, the USA and the United Kingdom. Zbigniew is an editor working for TVP, the national broadcaster in Poland, and an author and director of documentary films. He also publishes articles. In 2006-2008, he had a column in *Gazeta Bankowa* daily and was the editor-in-chief of *Pieniądz* monthly (Money Magazine). As a reporter, Zbigniew prepared releases for CNN. He sits in the Board of the Association of Polish Journalists (SDP).

Just a few years ago, in Poland coloured football players used to be hurled insults and thrown bananas at. Martins Ekwueme, a player from Jeziorak Iława, was flung oranges at by the hooligans from Jagielonia Białystok. When John Carew from F. C. Valencia was leading the ball in a game with Legia, the fans of the Warsaw-based club shouted *ku-klux-klan*. Are racism and chauvinism still so strong in sports in Poland?

We at Association of Polish Journalists don't have precise data. As a journalist and author of films about sports I feel that it is marginal phenomenon and becoming less and less important, although it still exists. It seems to me that Poland is not much different in that regard compared to our neighbours or other countries in Europe. Our racist ways are not very different than theirs. Perhaps the situation in Western Europe is slightly better because of years they have been taking various initiatives that are turning effects today. Let's just remember that the phenomenon is present in Poland, but let's not exaggerate it – there is always a margin of idiots both in Poland and anywhere else. There are also teams of quasi-professional racist and fascist hunters, often financed by public grants and donations. They always know how to find racist behaviour or fascist symbols on the stadium, and if not, they know how to create them. Contrary to them, I believe that it is not a problem by which Poland stands out in any way against the rest of the world; it is not the kind of threat that would haunt Poland all the time.

As a sports journalist and a former runner in the Polish national team, have you experienced acts of chauvinism or racism?

No, of course not. Why 'of course'? Track and field sports are a discipline where all human races, religions, cultures and beliefs have been mixed around for years. Except for the shameful event at 1936 Olympic Games when Adolf Hitler publicly refused to shake hands with a coloured winner of many medals, Jessie Owens, except for that there has not been any racial segregation for many years. It would be rather difficult as coloured athletes are currently the best in track and field. Our fans are also different, they respond and support athletes more like volleyball or basketball spectators. Those fans are very motivating and this can be experienced during every game of the Polish volleyball team, for example. This is also the proof for the power of sports today.

And the powerful emotions sports trigger.

Sports are among the most significant phenomena of the modern civilisation, triggering powerful emotions. Those emotions naturally build a very strong commitment to a given social group. It could be commitment to a city district, like Widzew in Łódź, or the city of the football club, or the country of the national team. That commitment might have a very positive effect, it helps develop the national identity based on traditions, and more and more often based on the religion, as well.

The fans play a role in that process.

Fans, especially the football fans more and more often join various initiatives of patriotic or religious nature. The best examples are annual festivities celebrating the Warsaw Uprising and the fans pilgrimage to the Częstochowa sanctuary led by priest Jarosław Wąsowicz. Then and there everybody joins and creates one big community regardless of personal club strings. Those are examples of the positive effects sports have. Others include the values which the ancient Greeks had brought into sports: the fight for the victory as the ultimate reward in itself, obedience to the rules of the fight, fair play on the path to the victory, and defeat accepted with dignity. Regardless of all the negative phenomena in sports today, the ancient values are still there. This is how sports contribute to our civilisation.

Quite an idealistic point of view.

It is not idealistic. All this is present in today's sports, without a change for hundreds of years, although certain negative effects have evolved, as well. Sports are the key link in the modern civilisation and as such sports can help develop a healthy identity of the society, but powerful emotions that sports trigger can lead to negative behaviour, as well, for example chauvinism. In the saying "my team above all others", the "others" are not sports rivals, they become an enemy to be fought using all power and means.

Why there are scandals breaking out one after another? In 2008, Arkadiusz Mysona from ŁKS football club wore a shirt saying "Death to the Jewish wh*re Widzew".

I keep saying that this phenomenon is becoming increasingly marginal. I am by no means a psychologist of the football fan circles, but such behaviour – except in pathological communities – usually results from poor knowledge. The more open we are to people from other cultures or of other skin colours, the less we encounter such behaviour and the more it is condemned by the public. We have two Israeli players in Wisła Krakow football club. When one of them, namely Maor Melikson, was thinking about joining the Polish national team because of his mother's roots, he was attacked very brutally, but not in Poland – in Israel. I cannot imagine any Polish mass media reacting in such way to a Polish player playing for a foreign national team. Many Poles play in foreign national teams.

Perhaps financial penalties are the best method to counteract racism? In the case of Mysona, he was imposed a fine of 15 thousand złotych and suspended for five consecutive games.

I am not sure whether it is the best method. Certainly, such scandalous behaviour must be subject to a penalty. And the financial fines are truly very painful. Perhaps in extreme cases those penalties should be even more hard? After all, professional athletes enjoy high privileges, including financial ones, and so they have certain obligations to perform because all eyes are on them.

The role of the mass media in the dialogue about racism was discussed by sports journalists during MARS Journalist Workshops, organised by Association of Polish Journalists (SDP).

Yes, the workshops financed by the Council of Europe were organised jointly by the CoE, European Federation of Journalists and our association, and they gathered dozens of journalists from various mass media in Poland. We managed to invite very reputable representatives of the sports media. The workshops were attended by, to name a few: Stefan Szczepłek from Rzeczpospolita daily, Janusz Basałaj – long-lasting editor of the sports section in Canal Plus, Paweł Wójcik – assistant director in Polsat Sport, and Tadeusz Olszański. There were also present representatives of the Council of Europe (Reynald Blion), European Federation of Journalists (Secretary General Stephen Pearse, and Yuklan Wong), and the community of athletes - Yared Schegumo from Ethiopia, who

currently represents Poland. We didn't have any doubts that such phenomena as racism or neo-fascism should be and in fact are condemned in the mass media. Journalists from all of Poland, from different newsrooms, small and large, shared their experience in that area. They discussed the mechanisms to prevent exposure of negative phenomena in sports. They also gave some examples where it was the media people who forced the local host to remove abusive content, such as Nazi symbols.

What are the mechanisms?

There are the codes of ethics. The code of Association of Polish Journalists was appreciated, because it stands against such phenomena and enforces sensitivity among the journalists. But the discussion demonstrated that the reality of the newsroom could be different. Just like in majority of newsrooms around the world, in Poland there are no codified dos and don'ts of journalism. We lack stylebooks where such rules would be set. Among Polish journalists there is no room for such phenomena, but not all newsrooms have such rules defined clearly. I believe that our history has made the journalists in Poland particularly sensitive to such negative phenomena.

THE CODE OF JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

*Adopted by the Governing Board of SDP,
Association of Polish Journalists
(in Polish SDP, Stowarzyszenia Dziennikarzy Polskich) in 2001.*

Accepting the principles of the Media Ethic Charter and the declarations of the International Federation of Journalists we acknowledge, that:

- The task of a journalist is to transmit reliable and neutral information, diverse opinions and to enable participation in the public debate.
- Freedom of speech must be accompanied by responsibility for any material published in the press or through radio, television or the Internet.
- The common good and the interests of readers, listeners and viewers shall have priority over the interests of the author, the editor, the publisher or the broadcaster.

I - Information and opinions

1. Information has to be clearly distinguished from interpretation and opinions.
2. Information should be balanced and exact, so that the recipient can differentiate between facts and assumptions or gossip. Information should also be presented in the appropriate context and rest on trustworthy sources which - if possible - represent various points of view.
3. Opinions may be biased, but should not distort the facts or be the outcome of external pressure.
4. Mistakes and lapses need be corrected as soon as possible, even if they were not the fault of the author or the editorial office, irrespective of whether someone demands their correction.

II - Gathering and reworking material

5. In the gathering of material, using illegal or unethical methods is inadmissible; the use of a hidden camera or a microphone and phone-tapping are acceptable - with the knowledge and approval of one's superiors - only in the case of so-called investigative journalism revealing crime, corruption or misuse of power in the name of the public interest.
6. The privacy or intimacy of a person may not be disturbed, with a possible exception - in justified circumstances - in the case of investigative journalism. This also concerns public figures.
7. The journalist is obliged to respect the secrecy of a source of information and the identity

and image of an informant on his/her request; this secret information may be revealed only to one's superiors.

8. Reworking or shortening information, an opinion or an interview should not change its meaning or significance. The use of archival material or the reconstruction of events in electronic media should be properly marked.

III - The Journalist in relation to interlocutors and recipients

9. Interlocutors should be informed about the way their utterance is to be used; authorization for the use of given information must be requested if the interlocutor makes such a reservation; statements by children may be used only with approval from their parents or a person having legal custody over them.
10. A journalist should show respect to other persons, regardless of ideological, cultural or moral differences of opinion; this does not mean agreeing with their views.
11. No harm should be caused to the physically or mentally disabled, the elderly, the ill or the practically challenged.
12. Special prudence should be exercised when reporting on new medical methods if they have not yet been fully tested and are merely experimental in character. Predictions and horoscopes may not be presented as reliable information or instructions.
13. The language of reporting should be careful, vulgarisms and obscene expressions should be avoided.

IV - Crime and exceptional situations

14. When revealing criminal acts and information about their suspected perpetrators, far reaching consideration should be exercised in avoiding descriptions which make possible the imitation of antisocial deeds. The guilt of the offender should not be prejudged before a court has issued a legally valid verdict.
15. In relation to wars, riots or demonstrations a journalist should behave as an uncommitted observer in order not to become a subject of manipulation.
16. Showing close-up scenes of death is inadmissible, the bloody consequences of war or natural disasters, acts of atrocity or violence may be described and shown only on condition that a balance is maintained between exact reporting and the sensibility of the recipients, especially the families of victims and persons close to them.

V - Conflict of interests

17. The reliability and independence of a journalist is irreconcilable with receiving presents worth more than 200 zlotys, taking advantage of free travel or testing products or appliances.

18. A journalist is not allowed to engage in sales promotion or participate in advertisement or public relations, only with the possible exception of social campaigns or charity; editorial material must be clearly distinguished from commercial or promotional content.
19. Hidden advertising or concealing information for one's own benefit is highly reprehensible.
20. A journalist may not use for his/her own benefit from classified information obtained in professional activity, especially in the field of financial or economic journalism
21. Direct engagement in (party-) political activity by journalists is also an indication of a conflict of interests, thus accepting such positions or involvement in public administration or political organizations should be ruled out.

VI - Colleagues and superiors

22. Relations between co-workers should be collegial, unfair competition and the appropriation of someone else's work or even thoughts is inadmissible.
23. Journalistic loyalty to superiors, publishers or broadcasters constitutes an obligation, but not the power to give a journalist orders which are against the law, professional ethics or his/her convictions. A journalist has a right to decline such orders.

VII - Responsibility and penalties

24. Both the author of a publication in the press, radio, television or the Internet, as well as the editor, publisher or broadcaster of the content are responsible for violations against the principles of journalistic ethics.
25. Journalists' courts impose penalties appropriate to the character and scale of the misdemeanour by admonition, through reprimand and temporary withholding of membership rights in the SDP to expulsion from the association. The Supreme Journalists' Court may publically pronounce its verdict in the media.

Media, Diversity & Sport - Key Figures!

In Europe, only a quarter of news subjects are women, even though they account for over half of the European population (GMMP, 2010)! While immigrants represent around 10% of the EU population (*Eurostat, 2011*) migrants and ethnic minorities represent less than 5% of the main actors in the news in Europe (*Ter Wal, 2004*). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people represent roughly 6% of the population of the United Kingdom but account for less than 1% of the population seen on TV. 20% of the British population is disabled but less than 1% is represented in British TV (*CDN 2009-10 Progress Report*).

Through the sources they use, the subjects they select and the treatment they choose, the media influence the agenda (what to think about) and public perception (how to think) of contemporary debates. This is why the Council of Europe considers truly inclusive information - where everyone can participate as witnesses, players, producers etc. - to be crucial for social cohesion and democratic participation. But today, too many people are still excluded from public debates!

The MARS - Media Against Racism in Sport – EU / CoE joint programme chooses to focus, though not exclusively, on sport because it is considered as an important area for building social cohesion as it is also a major sector of investment in the media industry. However, sport media coverage does not reflect social and cultural diversity and does not ensure equity for all. Only 5% of press articles cover cultural and social aspects of sport; 40% of all sport articles refer to only one source and 20 % refer to no sources at all; female athletes have four times more chances to be covered by a female journalist rather than a male one but less than 5% of sport news and stories are made by female journalists (*Play the Game, 2005*)!

Building upon standards set by various Council of Europe bodies on media pluralism, expression of diversity and non discrimination and the outcome of the 2008-10 CoE's antidiscrimination Campaign, the MARS – Media Against Racism in Sport – EU / CoE joint programme aims at considering non discrimination and expression of diversity as an ongoing angle of media coverage.

Through this approach applied to sport coverage, MARS wants to encourage innovative modes of media content production that could be reproduced in all media sectors and used by any form of media coverage. By stimulating media cross-practices in the field of training, ethics and production, MARS aims at implementing an inclusive and intercultural approach to media content production. To achieve these outcomes, the MARS programme offers media professionals (journalism students and trainers, journalists, media managers, etc.) to participate in **National and European Media Encounters** and **Media Work Exchanges** conceived as first steps towards a European media network against racism and for intercultural dialogue.

More – www.coe.int/mars !