



## **MARS – MEDIA AGAINST RACISM IN SPORT**

### **Media, Diversity & Racism in Sport**

#### **NATIONAL MEDIA ENCOUNTER**

#### ***Media Cross-Production for Inclusive Coverage***

### **Open Your Mind: Look Deeper**

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#### **OUTPUT**

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#### **MARS - Media Against Racism in Sport**

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Do you know how many human races we have? All you say we have the white one the black one the yellow the red and may be you count also the Inuit. So do you agree about that? Let's talk now about cats. As you can see we have many types of cats, black ones, cats with greyish coat, colourful cats, Angora cats, Siamese and alley cats. But how do you call them? Of course you call them just cats. So why do you shape humans as different races? THERE IS ONLY ONE HUMAN RACE. All the others are different expressions of the same kind. All black, white and so on, even tall, even fat, even with small eyes even without eyes we are exactly the same. So OPEN YOUR MIND / LOOK DEEPER and make diversity the greatest advantage in our life.

The European Union is by reality a multicultural society where massive waves of migration optimize the cultural diversity of the continent. Even the homogeneous societies of Eastern Europe, particularly during the Cold War era, have now experienced scores of migrants that wish to improve their standards of living. The demography in the Europeans countries has changed quickly by becoming multiculturalists mostly.

Unfortunately, this has been considered as negative developments by those people who do not know the value of humanity. Xenophobia, exclusion, discrimination and racism have taken an important place in the society that division becomes visible and it is consequence brings weakness in the actual society. This did not stop there but went until in sport and especially in football which should be considered as a game and inspire the society by its inclusion of every human been. Racism divide but football unites: this should be the idea. Xenophobia and racism has taken place in wide range of form in football.

Although football is becoming a game that should practice human value of all in order to inspire the society. Racism taking place toward players and also fans having an immigrant background by racist songs and slogans is something to combat strongly because this should be the beginning of the destruction of the spirit of the game by itself. Football should be a tool which could help communities that are divided to come together and spend some time, a tool which could even help to unify broken communities. When racist slogans take place here, it contributes a lot on the division of people.

There are too many communities which look like Flemish and Walloons in Belgium, from the same country and live with racial discrimination overshadowed sometimes the sentiment of national unification. Football can contribute to put them together or to divide them more, it depend on the practice done in there. It is the same way that politicians are trying to use sport to divide people more accordingly to their political point of view. This also brings racists acts in sport and lead people to division.

We should understand that "Racism divides but Sport unites". And sport with racism should be two realities which should not cooperate together.

### **Nationalism and football**

The 19th century is known as the age of nation building. This process was made under an environment that was full of human made ideologies and symbols. All of them dominated and made the background and the foreground of nationalism ideologies. As people say our country, our nation is this and this and this. Anybody who had the infelicity to live in such a country because his ancestry used to live there for centuries,

but their belief were different or they did not belong in the national identity which was technically human made and represented the nation, were just aliens. The difference was evil, and had to be battled. And then came football!! In such an environment England introduced the football game in Europe. The next step was the national teams, and the follow was the national anthems the flags and the symbols. As the philosopher Benedict Anderson wrote in his book all of this stuff is an illusion, is a cloud we make and prison there material and thoughts with no historical senses but with a meaning of some things a reconstruction and an explanation we make and after we say "this is what we are". So football came at the right time and since it was popular, afterwards became the king of the sports, technically was transmitted into a propaganda symbol. Most well known political terms made a reflection of their ideology and philosophy in football, in other words they use it as political promotion propaganda. The result was that the regional diversity found a way to prove its difference illusion above, in racism style actions. The conclusion is that if in European union we want to make real the slogan "united in diversity", then the first step is not to make a European Union nationality but to replace it with a multicultural identity, so football has to be used as a tool for prove in action the advantages of the diversity.

And as Jimmy Panousis, a well known Greek singer, say all the nations worship drawers (underclothes) and flannels.

Most European football clubs are suffering from racism fans. The variety in Europe in racism styles types has to do with the area. There are a lot differences not only even in the same country but in the same neighbourhood. The expressions of this behaviour have their roots in the past, when ideologies were made in order to prove that a difference was an advantage. Past was not enough to put those believes to an eclipse, not even two world wars. But still Nazi's symbols are in use in football fans...Unlike for him Adolf was born in the wrong era. If he was present in nowadays it is out of question that he would be an owner of a football club. Why Berlusconi and not Adolf; First owner of Milan club and after Italian Prime Minister. Sorry Adolf you choose war, you didn't know, you had to ask first.

What happens today is exactly the same as was in the 19th century. Biological approach, and physical attributes are in the field, have their independent position into the game, works parallel to the game as individual states. The result is that in most times they influence the result of the game. Many times also the game never comes to the end. In order to understand somebody the crazy of the thing we provide the next example. 2002 Thierry Henry used to play for Arsenal. During a game abroad he was always claims to the referee, his team was back in score and the game was to end, then a lot fans of the local team started to behave to him as he was a monkey. At the same time the favourite player of the local team was also black (coloured), but not even one fan of the local team ever exhibited any racist behaviour towards him.

In England the behaviour sometimes reminds us the colonialism years. Until 1996 no one black was working as the head coach at a team of the Premier League. Then came Ruud Gullit, an ex Holland player, to work as a head coach in Chelsea, one club with has fans with a PHD in racism! In 19th century England army never used to put black people as sergeants. Only when they had to solve problems at British colonies they used local people as sergeants.

An attempt to explain the racism situation in football is to realize the socio-political situations in every society. In such a situation involves political parties, extreme groups and economical mercenary motives.

We have to see if football has the ability by itself to solve the racism issue. There are a lot anti-racism campaigns in whole Europe. In football this comes in two ways. First many of them are trying to put football as an educational tool to send messages on the advantages of multicultural living and diversity by using its popularity. Second a lot of them suggest starting a fight against racism using the law and all the necessary authorities as we have a fight against terrorism.

#### Football as educational equipment

Xenophobia has been exploited in whole Europe. Still we have 19th century remains. Many people feel the diversity as an evil production. Fascism remains not only from the two world wars are still in use as racism tools. Second half of 20th century neo-nationalisms in many political parties still are used as ideologies against globalization. This is a must that EU has to fight and sport actions are a perfect idea in order to isolate neo-nationalism ideologies and prove that diversity through the competition is the forward step or the secure way for the future. Till now democracy and economy were the tools that Europe used to use in order to make different cultures to participate together. After the Bosman case things changed. All Europe sport clubs can have European Union player as local players. At the same time players from all around the world have essential role in most clubs.

Anti-racism organizations have not been supported as they had to be. EU has the most responsibility on it. EU made the frame for it, but was not able enough to control frame's instructions to function with the effectiveness that it had to be more applicable in most members of EU. Political pressures from external or internal interlaces are the brake to all anti-racism actions. A good project of the Council of Europe that aims to help people to realize that diversity always has to be an advantage is SPARDA project. SPARDA uses the slogan: Shaping perceptions and attitudes to realize the diversity advantage. We have to live together, communicate together, work together with people from different countries and civilizations and cultures. Such a mix is a chance for knowing and understanding each other, and final to make clear to ourselves that. We are all human beings. EU has to introduce anti-racism in education as an independent lesson or subject. Texts or animations that show the advantages of diversity have to be basically components in all school books from the first classes. Our proposal for middle school classes until the graduate class are books like Benedict Anderson's bestseller "Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (1980)", which is a must for everybody, to have certain role in education programs.

The variety of racism behaviours in sports acts individual. Racism among players, among fans and so on puts some rain drops in the cloud of racism ideology. The solution is also an individual action. Rules from the teams to their players, UEFA also has its rules but the revolution is only one. Players with racism behaviours will not be allowed to be a part of the game for ever. Maybe if they prove by participate in antiracism actions with free membership to be allowed to play again. On the other hand racism laws and penalties have to be changed. At the year of 2012 we have to equal racism as the same as a

murderer action, otherwise we will lose the game. Maybe prison is not the solution but a lot of years of compulsory membership in social action groups of anti-racism campaigns functions better. The difficulty is the fans that still exist with racism behaviours because they have an ideological background that is it difficult to be changed. To change a numb mind with underground culture is the same as to teach a dog how to drive. But with somehow humans, maybe some of the above solutions manage to function businesslike. The only issue is that we have to be very careful because many times antiracism campaigns action paradoxically and have an unexpected result. At such cases those campaigns are causes of racism. We hope Council of Europe takes this serious and our suggestion is next MARS has as a subject "How to make anti-racism campaigns more effective".