



## MARS – MEDIA AGAINST RACISM IN SPORT

### Media, Diversity & Racism in Sport

#### NATIONAL MEDIA ENCOUNTER

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

### Sport for the reunification of Cyprus

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#### OUTPUT

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#### MARS - Media Against Racism in Sport

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The conflict of Cyprus affects sport as well. Specially, as the Cyprus Republic don't recognise self proclaimed Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC) and TRNC don't recognise the EU-member Cyprus Republic in the south, the Turkish Cypriot sport effected negative, especially on international level. In this situation, Turkish Cypriot sport individuals and clubs isolated competing in international platform like FIFA-UEFA, IAAF and most of all IOC (International Olympic committee). Only if they accept to compete in Turkey, as overseas player, or simply in the Cyprus Republic, they can compete in these international platforms.

There for, a raising number of Turkish Cypriot sportsmen and -women joined Greek Cypriot federations. Such as Zafer Sukusu in Athletics competed in European Cup organized in Malta, Melis Redif also competed in Cyprus domestic organisations. As a football player Coskun Ulusoy played for Nea Salamina football club, a Greek Cypriot football club in Larnaca. "I have experiences on both sides.", he said. With his move, Coskun get well know and encouraged the people for reunification the island by using means of Sport, especially younger generations of Cypriots on both sides. In same time he also received negative reactions and verbal attacks from a view people from the south because of his Turkish Cypriot origin or in the north as a traitor. Personally he never faced violently attacks and had good experienced to play in a Greek Cypriot team. "Racism in politics, but also in football is a strategy to weaken your enemy. Overcoming this is possible by cooperation", he think.

In the history of the Cyprus conflict, there are several examples where Sport plays a important role for or against reunification, like Steve Meneray researched for his article "Football & the Cyprus Conflict". The first split in the Cyprus Football Association (CFA), founded 1934 by Greek and Turkish people, began already 1955. The Turkish Cypriot team Cetinkaya, the soccer champion 1952/53, were banned from playing at the Greek Cypriot part of the island and the Turkish Cypriots founded the KTFF, their own association, Menary finds out. Since that time, the FIFA nether accepted two separated football representation from Cyprus, even KTFF insists on it several time. The situation get less comfortable, when FIFA didn't allow anymore KTFF member to play against FIFA member, after the northern part declared their own independence 1983, recognised only by Turkey so far. But practically in sport events Turkey could also not recognize Turkish Cypriot teams and can't compete with them, because of the restriction of international sport bodies.

Even already some games with FIFA member happened in recent years, a intervention by CFA to prevent a football match with a FIFA Team from UK in northern Cyprus in summer 2007 raised not only a dispute in the media but also on political level. Turkish Cypriot politicians cancelled the talks with Greek Cypriot politicians after that. In same year FIFA repeated their statement, that they will not accept a second member from Cyprus. In 2011 a Turkish Cypriot football team put pressure an the KTFF and published a statement, that they are likely apply for CFA membership, after they received a long-lasting ban. Rumours araised, that this step would be a breach of the constitution of the northern republic. CFA President Costakis Koutsokoumnis said in a statement to the "Cyprus Mail": "We have heard so many times before [that Turkish Cypriot clubs wish to join]. Let them come and discuss this, and we can take it from there". Until today this club didn't join the CFA.

The main condition for a reunification is the respect between the communities. But this is less or not the case, especially regularly during professional football and basketball events. Effected are also black player. Nicos Trimikliniotis, a researcher at the University in Nicosia, stated already 2009 in his research about racism, xenophobia and related intolerance in sport study on Cyprus, that responsible authorities and institution denying the existing of such a situation or underplay the problem. But several violently incidents, verbal attacks and repeated cases of racism and discrimination are known and documented.

Coskun Ulusoy realised with his activities, that there is no necessary basis for fear and discrimination he expected. But he is also not sure, if the penalty teams receiving for racist attacks by their fans are each time really appropriate or also too low. He can't understand why until today there are no strong initiatives against racism or discrimination, regularly react on that. It seem nobody want's to take a responsibility and it's also well known that this problem arising in the younger generations. Today the negotiations for the reunification of Cyprus still goes on and its still not sure if it will ever come to an end.