Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1635 (2003)[1]

Lesbians and gays in sport

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly declared itself to be against discrimination in sport in Resolution 1092 (1996) on discrimination against women in sport and more particularly in the Olympic Games.

2. It recalls that the Olympic Charter states that "any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, sex or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement".

3. Discrimination based on sexual orientation goes against the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocol No. 12, Article 1 on the general prohibition of discrimination, and is not acceptable in Council of Europe member states.

4. Sport is a key factor in social integration and the European Sports Charter states that participation in sport should be open to all.

5. Gays and lesbians complain that they are at a disadvantage when it comes to participation in sports activities both in regular sports organisations and at school.

6. The Assembly believes that homophobia in sport, both among participants and in their relations with spectators, should be combated on the same grounds as racism and other forms of discrimination.

7. The Assembly therefore calls on member states to:

   7.1. launch active campaigns against homophobia in sport and widen existing campaigns against xenophobia in sport to include homophobia;

   7.2. include homophobia and abusive language directed at gays and lesbians as grounds for accusation of discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation;

   7.3. make homophobic chanting at or around sports events a criminal offence, as is presently the case with racist chanting;

   7.4. involve NGOs from the gay and lesbian community in their sports campaigns and in all other necessary confidence-building steps.

8. The Assembly also calls on European sports organisations to:

   8.1. make homophobic chanting and other homophobic abuse an offence against their constitutions, as is already the case for xenophobic and racist chanting and other abuse;

   8.2. call upon UEFA to adapt its Ten Point Plan for Professional Football Clubs so as to include action against homophobia;

1. (see Doc. 9988, report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Mr Banks; and Doc. 10001, opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Ms Kósá-Kovács). Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 25 November 2003

8.3. adopt or adapt practical guidelines for professional sports clubs to help them fight against all discrimination, including racism, xenophobia, gender discrimination and homophobia; launch active campaigns against homophobia in sport; and widen existing campaigns against xenophobia in sport to include homophobia.

9. The Assembly encourages the media to depict fairly and accurately the strength and competence of female and male athletes, whatever their sexual orientation, to refrain from using sexist language and gender stereotypes while covering sports events and to elaborate a code of conduct for sports commentators.

10. Finally, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

10.1. extend the grounds listed in Article 4 of the European Sports Charter to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation;

10.2. address the issue of homophobia and discrimination in sport and education in the preparation of the 10th Conference of European Sports Ministers in 2004;

10.3. call upon the National Ambassadors for Sport, Tolerance and Fair Play to include this element in their mission;

10.4. consider including the issue of homophobia in the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sport Events and in particular at Football Matches.