



Recommendation 1701 (2005)¹

Discrimination against women and girls in sport

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Almost ten years after its [Resolution 1092 \(1996\)](#) on discrimination against women in the field of sport and more particularly in the Olympic Games, the Assembly is distressed to observe that women still suffer frequent discrimination in their access to, and practice of, both amateur and professional sport. This discrimination manifests itself in the persistence of stereotyping, the lack of a back-up and support structure for sportswomen and for girls who show potential in their sport, the difficulty of reconciling work/sport and family life, the problem of reintegrating into the world of work, inadequate media coverage of women's sport and the limited nature of private funding.
2. The lack of women on sport's ruling bodies constitutes a particular obstacle to the achievement of equality between women and men in sports activities. Notwithstanding the efforts made by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), women's participation in ruling bodies remains marginal in most Council of Europe member states.
3. This clearly constitutes a discrimination against women and girls which is contrary to the principles of the Council of Europe. In fact, the European Sports Charter, adopted by the Council of Europe in 1992 and revised in 2001, guarantees the promotion of the practice of sport for all parts of the population (Article 6) and expressly mentions the prohibition of discrimination (Article 4). In its first article it lays down certain principles, among them the aim "to enable every individual to participate in sport" and "to protect and develop the moral and ethical bases of sport, and the human dignity and safety of those involved in sport".
4. Moreover, the 10th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport, held in Budapest on 14 and 15 October 2004, emphasised that the particular role played by the Council of Europe in the realm of pan-European co-operation relating to sport was linked to the cardinal values of the Council of Europe (human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law). The combating of discrimination against women and girls in sports activities is one of these efforts to achieve equality between women and men and requires that effective measures be taken.
5. The involvement of the Council of Europe with the issue of women's participation in sport started, however, much earlier, in 1980, with the seminar entitled *A Greater Involvement of Women in Sport*, organised by the Committee for the Development of Sport (CDDS). As a result of this, and of other similar initiatives, the network *European Women and Sport (EWS)* was created. The subject was discussed in ministerial conferences under the aegis of the Council of Europe and UNESCO from 1981 to 2004. The IOC also organised three world conferences on the topic.
6. The Assembly welcomes the work of the Council of Europe (CDDS), UNESCO, the IOC, the EWS and of all bodies, at national, European and international level, to combat discrimination against women and girls and to promote their participation in sport. In this context it supports the Brighton Declaration (1994), the Windhoek and Paris Calls for Action (1998 and 2004 respectively) and the Berlin Memorandum (2002).

1. Assembly debate on 27 April 2005 (13th Sitting) (see [Doc. 10483](#), report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Ms Aguiar). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 April 2005 (13th Sitting).



7. The Parliamentary Assembly therefore calls on the Committee of Ministers to :

instruct the CDDS to continue, in co-operation with other relevant bodies, to promote the participation of women and girls in sport, to combat discrimination against women and girls in sport and to conduct an in-depth study of national sport policies and their impact on women's and girls' participation in sports activities and to work out a European strategy for women and sport which would ensure :

- a. *that physical education is accorded more importance in school and that women and girls are encouraged to take part in sport from their schooldays onwards, while respecting the principle of co-education ;*
- b. *that the responsible officials in the departments of sport, education and health are implicated in awareness-raising and information campaigns on the necessity of practising sport, in particular for women of all ages, including handicapped women ;*
- c. *that gender is taken into consideration in the definition of public action to promote sport (gender mainstreaming) and in the allocation of funds intended for sports activities (gender budgeting) ;*
- d. *that violence, racism, sexual harassment and sexual abuse, both in sport and amongst spectators, are combated, as well as doping amongst sportsmen and sportswomen ;*
- e. *that action is taken to promote women's sport, particularly in respect of highly popular sports ;*
- f. *support for women's participation in top-level sport ;*
- g. *equal treatment for women and men in terms of pay, prize money and bonuses derived from professional sport ;*
- h. *that women play a greater part in sport's ruling bodies ;*
- i. *that gender-specific statistics are collected relating to the granting of funds and the practice of sport, enabling the impact on women and men of sport promotion policies to be gauged ;*
- j. *increased media coverage of the sports played by women and representation of women athletes which is more in conformity with the spirit of sport ;*

organise a European ministerial conference to launch this strategy.