Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2465 (2022)[1]

The fight for a level playing field – Ending discrimination against women in the world of sport

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Substantial progress has been made in the field of sport in recent years as regards gender equality and combating discrimination. Female athletes are beginning to gain greater prominence in the media, some women's sports competitions have attracted worldwide interest and equality in sport is becoming a major topic. The Parliamentary Assembly welcomes these developments and encourages further efforts.

2. The world of sport, however, is not yet free from violence, sexism and gender discrimination. It continues to be more favourable to men. The #metoo movement, which has sent ripples through the sports world, has helped to bring human rights abuses of this kind to light. Sports federations have been called upon to act and implement measures to prevent and detect violence and support survivors. The Assembly reiterates its firm commitment to preventing and combating all forms of gender-based violence and to promoting the ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, Istanbul Convention). It supports "Start to talk", the Council of Europe's call for action to public authorities, the sports movement and other actors to take appropriate preventive and protective measures to put a stop to the abuse of and violence against children. It also reiterates the support given by its Resolution 2420 (2022) to FIFA's (International Federation of Association Football) plans to create an independent multi-sport centre or agency to promote safe sport, protect and support survivors, and to tackle impunity.

3. Inequalities in pay, treatment, access and status between women and men are still common in both professional and non-professional sport. Women, in all their diversity, are poorly represented in decision-making bodies. Women have less access to sport because of gender inequalities in relation to resources, time and lack of infrastructure. Sexist comments and stereotyped images of female athletes, questioning their "femininity", regularly appear in the media and on social networks. The Assembly condemns the hate speech and sexism directed at female athletes, including lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LBTI) athletes.

4. Female athletes must be recognised in all their diversity so that appropriate measures to prevent and combat discrimination can be implemented. Taking into account the intersectional dimension paves the way for a targeted response and proper policies. The Assembly calls to promote access to sport for all women and notes that discrimination against LBTI women has a negative impact on women in general. The Assembly condemns the use of sport as a means of controlling women's bodies.

5. Sport can be an important vehicle for changing attitudes and for fostering respect and diversity. It can contribute to social cohesion through its universality and raise collective awareness of continuing gender inequalities in our societies. It can also have benefits in terms of health and empowerment.

6. There is therefore a pressing need in the field of sport to prevent violence and discrimination, promote gender equality, invest in sport for all, encourage participation and put an end to the "invisibilisation" of women. Men have an important role to play in preventing and combating discrimination against women, in all their diversity, in sport.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 13 October 2022 (33rd sitting) (see Doc. 15611, report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Edite Estrela). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 13 October 2022 (33rd sitting).

7. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member and observer States, as well as on all States whose parliaments enjoy observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly, to:

7.1. as regards combating violence against women and girls, in all their diversity, including in the field of sport:

7.1.1. take measures to prevent violence against women and girls, including LBTI women, in sport at all levels, including in schools and sports organisations;

7.1.2. provide support to survivors of violence, with an independent and specialised structure;

7.1.3. train sports personnel at all levels to prevent all forms of gender-based violence;

7.1.4. ensure that perpetrators of violence are prosecuted and put an end to impunity in this area;

7.1.5. launch awareness-raising campaigns on preventing and combating gender-based violence, including at major sporting events;

7.1.6. collect, analyse and publish data on violence against women and girls in sport;

7.1.7. ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention, if they have not yet done so;

7.1.8. ensure the safety of all at sporting events;

7.1.9. implement the revised European Sports Charter of the Council of Europe, if they have not yet done so;

7.1.10. accede to the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport, if they have not yet done so;

7.2. as regards combating gender-based discrimination and gender stereotypes:

7.2.1. implement Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism;

7.2.2. implement Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech;

7.2.3. invest in education on gender equality, train teachers in these issues, including in the field of sport, and incorporate a gender perspective in sports education from an early age;

7.2.4. prevent and combat sexism and gender stereotypes and all forms of gender-based discrimination, in particular by adopting legislation and codes of conduct and by organising awareness-raising campaigns, including at major sporting events;

7.2.5. ensure the collection, analysis and publication of data on discrimination in sport at all levels, and contribute to international initiatives to collect and share data for the purposes of research, awareness raising and the development of public policies and sports practices;

7.2.6. recognise the fact that women from diverse backgrounds, LBTI women, women with disabilities, women from a migration background or with diverse religious affiliations are subjected to multiple discrimination;

7.2.7. abolish discriminatory policies against LBTI athletes and respect the human rights of female athletes in all their diversity;

7.2.8. ensure full and equal access to the practice of sport to all women and, to this end, allow transgender and intersex athletes to train and compete in sports competitions consistent with their gender identity;

7.2.9. prevent and combat harassment of LBTI athletes and prevent and combat lesbophobia, biphobia, transphobia and interphobia in sport;

7.2.10. combat the over-sexualisation of female athletes, including in the media;

7.2.11. promote inclusive and non-discriminatory media coverage of sporting events;

7.3. as regards the development of sport for all women and girls:

7.3.1. implement Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)2 on gender mainstreaming in sport;

7.3.2. invest in the development of sport for all, at local and national levels, and consider sport as a means of integration and emancipation; work to ensure equal opportunities for women and girls in all their diversity to participate in sports activities;

7.3.3. appoint ambassadors for gender equality in sport to carry out awareness-raising activities in the media and with young athletes;

7.3.4. ensure that sports facilities incorporate a gender dimension in their design;

7.3.5. support and encourage the broadcasting of women's sports competitions;

7.3.6. make the adoption and implementation of gender-equality strategies, including a commitment to eliminating gender-based discrimination, violence and sexism and to ensuring equal pay, a condition for obtaining funding for federations and clubs;

7.3.7. call on federations and clubs to prohibit gender-discriminatory practices, in particular as regards dress codes, where they are not justified by the sport itself;

7.3.8. promote women's participation in programmes designed to train sports coaches and referees and support women's access to these positions;

7.3.9. adopt a gender-sensitive approach in the preparation of budgets to be allocated to sports federations and structures.

8. The Assembly calls on sports federations to:

8.1. engage in the fight against gender-based violence and discrimination and take appropriate action against perpetrators;

8.2. support the practice of sport by women and girls in all their diversity and promote athletes' work-life balance;

8.3. ensure full and equal access to the practice of sport to all women and, to this end, allow transgender and intersex athletes to train and compete in sports competitions consistent with their gender identity;

8.4. promote the participation of women, in all their diversity, in the governing bodies of sports federations, notably through the adoption of quotas aimed at achieving 40% representation.

9. The Assembly supports the continuation of the joint Council of Europe and European Union project entitled ALL IN: Towards Gender Balance in Sport. It calls for the project's funding to be reinforced and its tools and recommendations implemented.

10. The Assembly expresses its backing for civil society organisations combating gender-based discrimination and violence against women in sport and calls for these organisations to be given support.