

Game Changer

Sport's role in fighting discrimination

EQUINET
European Network
of Equality Bodies

Unar
Ufficio Nazionale
Antidiscriminazioni Razziali

High-level Conference
& Workshop
7 - 8 November 2024
Palazzo Merulana
Rome, Italy



Palazzo Merulana, Roma (Italia)

CONCEPT NOTE

Sport serves as a cornerstone of social interaction, possessing the unique ability to unite individuals from diverse backgrounds, irrespective of race, gender, or sexual orientation. It is not merely a pastime but a powerful vehicle for promoting the values of diversity, fostering inclusivity, and challenging discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice. However, the harsh reality reveals a troubling narrative of recurring racist incidents within European sporting arenas, alongside pervasive discrimination against women, racial minorities, and the LGBTQI+ community.

The persistence of these barriers, exacerbated by prejudice and harmful stereotypes, demands urgent action from EU institutions and Member States to dismantle systemic inequalities within the sports sector. The legal and policy framework at the European level provides a foundation for combatting discrimination, with the EU adopting [equality strategies](#) aimed at addressing disparities across all areas of life, including sports. Measures such as [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/817](#) and European Parliament [resolutions](#) underscore the imperative of collaboration among stakeholders to confront racism and discrimination head-on.

Equinet's exploration into the role of Equality Bodies in combatting discrimination within sports remains limited. However, several Equality Bodies have accumulated valuable experience in addressing these issues and stand ready to share best practices. This is the case of the Italian Equality Body, the National Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR), whose joint initiative with national sports federations and organizations [National Observatory Against Discrimination in Sport](#) is committed to promote equality and inclusion in and via sport throughout the country.

Equinet and UNAR seek to facilitate the dissemination of these insights, fostering a collective effort to drive meaningful change. Moreover, it is crucial to engage with relevant stakeholders to strategize on how Equality Bodies can collaborate effectively to promote equality and eradicate discrimination within sport. With this purpose, the conference will bring together Equality Bodies and relevant International and European institutions and organisations to share good practices and develop their cooperation on promoting equality and tackling discrimination in and through sport.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the conference is to **explore and discuss the work of national equality bodies and allied stakeholders on the topic of tackling discrimination and exclusion in sport.**

In particular, the conference will meet the following objectives:

- Share expertise and good practices
- Gather national expertise, knowledge and practices from the ground
- To identify challenges, showcase and disseminate knowledge about specific and potentially replicable activities of Equality Bodies and relevant stakeholders in promoting equality and inclusion in sports.

PARTICIPANTS

This workshop is targeted to EU institutions, national authorities, Equality Bodies, CSOs, sport federations and organisations, and experts working on equality and non-discrimination in sport.

AGENDA

Day 1 – 7 November (Conference)

Host(s): Danielle Madam

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|----------------------|--|
| 09:30 – 10:00 | Arrival and registration of participants (welcome coffee) |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Opening
Welcome participants, introduce agenda, UNAR and Equinet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eugenia Roccella, Minister for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities, Italy • Helena Dalli, EU Commissioner for Equality |
| 10:30 – 10:50 | Keynote speech
This session aims to provide an introduction to the topic. Highlighting the importance of sports, links with inclusion and non-discrimination, mentioning current challenges, areas of actions and needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danielle Madam, Athlete |
| 10:50 – 11:20 | Coffee & Stretch Break |
| 11:20 – 12:10 | Panel: Sport's role in fighting discrimination
This panel will discuss different challenges and aspects/angles of equality and discrimination in sport.
Chair : Daris Lewis Recio, Equinet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knut Oftung, Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, Norway • Rosi Mangiacavallo, European Roma Rights Centre • Dan Christian Ghattas, Organisation Intersex International Europe • Martino Corazza, Mixed Ability Sports |
| 12:10 – 12:25 | Q&A |
| 12:25 – 13:35 | Lunch Break |
| 13:35 – 14:00 | The best practices of the Equality Bodies |



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This session aims to provide a good practice example promoting equality and non-discrimination through sport featuring both UNAR (and Lega serie A) and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality of the Republic of Serbia

- **Mattia Peradotto**, UNAR (Italy)
- **Lorenzo Casini**, President Lega Serie A
- **Brankica Janković**, Commissioner for the Protection of Equality of the Republic of Serbia

14:00 – 14:20

Q&A

14:20 – 14:30

#TheyLedTheWay

The aim of this session is to have a dynamic conversation between the host and the athlete.

Pamela Malvina Noutcho Sawa, athlete

14:30 – 14:45

Promoting Diversity in the Olympics

This session aims to provide a good practice example promoting equality and non-discrimination through in the Olympics.

Charlotte Groppo, Head of Gender Equality Diversity and Inclusion, International Olympic Committee (VTC)

14:45 – 14:55

Q&A

14:55 – 15:15

Coffee & Stretch Break

15:15 – 15:30

Combating Hate Speech in Sport

This session aims to provide a good practice example promoting equality and non-discrimination through sport from the Council of Europe.

Gabriela Matei, Council of Europe – Sport is Respect

15:30 – 15:40

Q&A

15:40 – 15:55

Fostering Positive Social Change through Football for All

This session aims to provide a good practice example promoting equality and non-discrimination through sport from UEFA.

Presilia Mpanu-Mpanu, Social & Environmental Sustainability Expert UEFA

15:55 – 16:05

Q&A

16:05 – 16:15

Closing

Patrick Charlier, Chair of Equinet

16:30 – 17:15

Visit to Palazzo Merulana

17:30 – 18:15

Cocktail reception

Host welcome: **Agnese Canevari**, UNAR

Athlete/Sport speaker: **Rigivan Ganeshamoorthy**



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Day 2 – 8 November (Workshops)

Hosts: Daris Lewis-Recio and Jone Elizondo-Urrestarazu, Equinet

09:15 – 09:30 **Warm up: arrival and registration of participants**

09:30 – 09:35 **Welcome and introduction**

Welcome participants, share agenda and rules

09:35 – 10:00 **Replay: Reflections from the Conference**

During this session speakers from UNAR, the EC and Equinet will share their reflections from the Conference the previous day. Participants will be requested to share their impressions as well, both in an interactive manner as well as through Slido.

- Mattia Peradotto, UNAR
- Teresa Pedreira, Equinet

10:00 – 11:30 **Scoring Goals in Equality: Practice sharing**

Participants will be divided into groups. Speakers (Equality Body and/or a partner) will rotate from one group to the other. In each group, speakers will present their initiative and open the floor to questions from participants and rotate every 20 minutes to the next table.

1. Group 1 (Equality promotion and litigation): Jutila Matti, Non-Discrimination Ombudsman (Finland); Samuel Bashmakov, Finnish League for Human Rights (Finland)
2. Group 2 (Accessibility): Neil Martin, Equality and Human Rights Commission; Owain Davies, Level Playing Field (UK)
3. Group 3 (Litigation): Miha Lobnik, Advocate of the Principle of Equality (Slovenia)
4. Group 4 (Racism): Daniela Conti, UISP (Italy)

11:30 – 12:00 **Coffee & Stretch Break**

12:00 – 13:00 **Mauling: Open discussion on takeaways**

The host will moderate an open discussion to dwell into the main takeaways and thoughts/ open discussion regarding the two Conference and Workshop days.

13:00 – 13:15 **Final whistle & Farewell**

- Mattia Peradotto, UNAR
- Tamás Kádár, Equinet



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