

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Football for Equality. Challenging racist and homophobic stereotypes in and through football

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Executive Summary

Football offers the promise of an ethos based on equality and performance instead of ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation. The love of football both as players and spectators, the interest in the game and the comparatively low threshold for playing it – only a ball and a bit of space is needed – turn the sport into an adequate tool to reach out especially to young people and to convey ideas of equality and participation. However, given its history football is also deeply rooted in a culture of masculinity and linked to ideals of honor, glory and comradeship which foster exclusion rather than inclusion. Racism and xenophobia are despite many activities and campaigns still present on the stands and beyond and the issue of homophobia in football has only been tackled by single initiatives raising mostly from fan groups. The project “Football for Equality. Challenging racist and homophobic stereotypes in and through football” takes this ambivalent role of football as a starting point.

The evaluation is based on the participation of the evaluator at various of the project’s elements, interviews with stakeholders and project partners, project material and feedback sheets from the conferences at Berlin and Bratislava. The evaluation is structured around the project activities (Chapter 1) and the over-all goals (Chapter 2). Since the fight against homophobia in and through football is an integral and innovative part of the project this issue is given special consideration (Chapter 3). The evaluation is completed by a SWOT analysis and a list of recommendations.

Successful awareness-raising

The evaluation concludes that the awareness-raising with regard to homophobia and football has been particularly successful. Conferences and the FARE Action Week were used to put the issue on centre stage and to instigate further activities around it. Likewise, the various project activities were successful in fostering contacts and networking between different stakeholder and interested parties like NGOs, LGBT grass-roots groups, fan groups and football bodies.

Important aspects coming up in the course of the evaluation are the importance of role models, support from football and political governing bodies and the involvement of LGBT groups in mainstream football/fan organisations and NGO. The success of the project activities in these respects vary; however, an effective mobilisation of football and political bodies for the issue of discrimination in football is an on-going and time-consuming work. Likewise, the involvement and cooperation of grassroots groups from different sectors calls for continuous and, preferably local, engagement which could not be achieved throughout the whole project.

The evaluation has observed organisational and communication problems between the project partners that were partly due to the on-going transition process of the FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe) network in which the partners were involved. These had a particular impact on the time management of the FARE Action Week, the press work and single work flow elements.

Discrimination in football

With regard to the specific area of discrimination and especially homophobia (as an only recently debated issue) in football the evaluation points both at certain obstacles and opportunities. There is a marked reluctance with stakeholders to tackle this subject and to actively engage with initiatives against homophobia. At the same time the “newness” of this topics offers possibilities with regard to publicity and visibility and allows for the involvement of previously neglected groups. The evaluation also shows that both the debate on and the practice examples for activities against discrimination in and through football tend to separate the different forms of discrimination. The result is a lack of awareness for the actual workings of discrimination on a structural basis and a more additive rather than integral approach to the issue on the practical side (for example workshops separated according to discriminated groups not thematically).

The recommendations presented in the evaluation can be summed up as follows:

Recommendations

- stronger involvement of political bodies and football bodies by promoting the new EU roll in sports after the Lisbon treaty
- further mobilisation of LGBT groups and ethnic minorities through continuous cooperation and involvement of key persons during planning stage of activities
- develop more specific educational tools for engagement against homophobia in/through football based on the project experiences
- support and actively encourage role models for young people from Roma and LGBT community (“invisible minorities”)
- implementation of cooperation between anti-racist NGOs, football community and LGBT organisations as continuous and local activity
- provide resp. assemble academic background input for a more thorough discussion on the connection of different forms of discrimination

Introduction

The programme “Football for Equality. Challenging racism and homophobia across Europe” was supported by the European Commission (DG Justice) under the Specific Programme “Fundamental Rights and Citizenship”. It addressed and linked the priority areas “Combating racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism” and “Fighting against Homophobia” and was implemented by the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation – VIDC, FairPlay.

It builds on the use of football as a tool to promote fundamental rights, strengthen civil society and specifically fight against racism, homophobia and anti-Semitism in and through football and furthermore to build contacts and offer possibilities for exchange of information and networking between grassroots organisation like fan groups, the football community, NGOs and the LGBT community.

This evaluation focuses on the different modules/activities implemented as part of the programme. The main areas of evaluation are an assessment of the specific module’s aims and their implementation (Chapter 1.1 to 1.7) and the over-all objectives of the programme (Chapter 2). A special regard is given to the issue of homophobia and the project’s experiences (Chapter 3). The results are being resumed and supplemented by a SWOT analysis and recommendations (Chapters 4 and 5).

1. Project activities (Objectives and methods/visibility and response/over-all assessment and future perspectives)

1.1 Networking Conference “Football for Equality: Challenging racism and homophobia across Europe” (12–14 December 2009, Vienna)

The kick-off conference organised by the programme’s lead agency FairPlay-vidc (Austria) in Vienna in December 2009 was a pan-European meeting by fan groups, NGOs, LGBT groups, representatives from football bodies and fundamental rights and ethnic minority organisations, all in all almost 100 participants from more than 20 European countries. The three-day conference had a special focus on networking for grassroots initiatives with the opportunity to exchange good practice ideas in anti-racist activities in and through football as well as in the comparatively new area of anti-homophobia.

Objectives and methods +++ Visibility and response +++ Over-all assessment and future perspectives

The conference agenda consisted of a mix between plenary discussions, workshops, informal networking and evening events with the involvement of football governing bodies and players. The plenary discussions covered the work of the FARE (Football against Racism in Europe) network during the last 10 years and the future perspectives of the organisation. The initiatives discussed during the conference involve projects that use football as a tool to achieve more participation of ethnic minorities in civil societies, increase awareness for fundamental rights or spread an anti-racist message but also measures directed at the environment of football itself in order to change the situation in the stadium, within fan groups and the organisational structures of football.

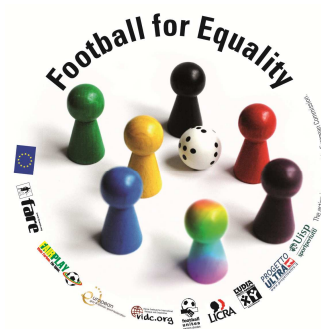
The opening statements of the representative from UEFA and from the LGBT Inter-Group of the European Parliament underlined the importance of addressing all forms of discrimination and including homophobia.

The workshops focused on a broad range of topics from the struggle against far-right tendencies in Eastern Europe with regard to the Euro 2012, anti-racist education and awareness-raising during the World Cup 2010 to the importance of involving fans in combating discrimination in football. Good practice examples of initiatives against homophobia and of the involvement of ethnic minorities through football were discussed in two further workshops. Especially the homophobia workshop showed a marked difference of experiences depending on what country the participants came from.

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The conference received a satisfying amount of press coverage including a report in Austrian television, website articles and news on the various partners’ and participants’ media channels. The attention focused mostly on the evening reception celebrating the 10 year anniversary of the FARE network with prominent Austrian and international football players and football representatives. This occasion was used for the public signing and presentation of an anti-discrimination declaration. Even here, the issue of homophobia received a prominent status as a topic of discriminatory work: “We, members of the football family – representing UEFA, FARE, players, fans and public institutions - fully support all efforts to kick racism and homophobia out of football.”

At the conference the logo for the Football for equality programme was presented for the first time to be used throughout all the following events (on banners, folders stickers, buttons ...) turning into a kind of trademark.



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As networking opportunity the conference fulfilled its purpose for the participants in the various workshops although there was not much interchange between the different workshops so that the issues of e.g. homophobia, far-right in Eastern Europe or the involvement of ethnic minorities through sport remained separate topics for the respective stakeholders rather than being discussed hand in hand.

A very positive factor pointed out by the FairPlay project workers was the attendance of prominent players and representatives from local and international football clubs and associations as well as the boost given to the conference by the presence of Austria MEP Ulrike Lunacek who stressed both the positive values of sports and the danger of those getting undermined by discrimination. However, it also became clear that there still is a marked ignorance and resistance among football governing bodies to really face the challenges of anti-discrimination initiatives beyond symbolic actions.

The NGOs, fan initiatives and fundamental rights groups involved in the conference also have to face their own shortcomings: In one of the plenary discussion it was pointed out that the panel was all white, the question of institutional discrimination is one that is also relevant for the anti-discrimination organisations themselves.

1.2 Sensitisation workshops (France, Italy, Slovakia and Austria)

The sensitisation workshops under the responsibility of four project partners (LICRA, France; UISP, Italy; Ludia Proti Rasizmu, Slovakia, and FairPlay-vidc, Austria) were aimed at different target groups according to the local settings. The common aim was to deliver information on specific topics of discrimination and gender and ethnic stereotypes as well as to offer examples for counteraction.

Objectives and methods +++ Visibility and response +++ Over-all assessment and future perspectives

The sensitisation workshops organized by the project partners targeted very different groups of stakeholders. In Italy UISP set up a workshop and discussion panel on “Deconstruction of gender stereotypes” at the Mondiali with experts from university contexts, LGBT and women’s groups from Italy and England. That workshop was visited by participants of the Mondiali, i.e. mostly football fans or people with relation to football and presumably already interested in the topic. The benefit of the event was to put the issue of homophobia and sexism more explicitly on the agenda and to offer examples from grassroots campaigning activities.

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French partner LICRA developed a workshop concept for police divisions in Bordeaux and Lille together with the Ministry of the Interior, in the first case for a newly established police force working in football stadiums (Sections d’intervention rapide, Rapid Intervention Team), in the second for chiefs of stadium police divisions and experts on hooliganism from the whole of France. For the aims of the evaluation the French example is considered more closely:

Attendance to the workshops in Bordeaux and Lille was in both cases obliging, with 40 resp. 60 participants. Since the workshops were closed events there was little to no press work linked to it. The Lille event was preceded by a short press talk. The materials used in the workshops were produced by the FARE network in recent years (overview of racist, right-wing symbols and codes) and by French partner LICRA (Power Point Presentation and survey done in cooperation with research institute Ipsos on racism in football. In both cases, the objective of the workshop was to inform and alert the police forces about discrimination in football in France, explain symbols and behaviours and the legal tools available to the police to repel racism.

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With regard to the French workshops the upshot is mostly positive with the contents of the event filling an obvious need with the target group. As the responsible project worker concluded: “Most of them [the attending police men/women] weren’t really aware that there were problems of

discrimination in stadiums.” (IV5) The cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the positive feedback from the workshops will in the future hopefully lead to more sensitisation events among police forces, a follow-up meeting for stadium stewards in Lyon is already planned. With regard to homophobia the need for awareness-raising seems to be even more obvious according to the project worker’s report.

For the Football for equality project as a whole however, the sensitisation workshop module has not fulfilled the expectations since not all workshops could take place as planned. The reasons for this were discussed at the closing partner meeting in April 2011. One explanation – besides a possible reluctance from for example the Viennese football federation to tackle the issues of racism and especially homophobia – might be the rather open design of the module. The actual concept of the workshops was left to the respective national partner which might have turned out to be more of a hindrance since it gave way to organisational weaknesses. A common time frame, a more explicit common content for all workshops or transnational elements and cooperation might have lead to a more effective workshop facilitation.

1.3 Internet tool-kit for young People

The production of the internet tool-kit was carried out by the project partner Football Unites Racism Divides – FURD (United Kingdom) and involved the collection of good practice examples on the topic of discrimination in football.

Objectives and methods +++ Visibility and response +++ Over-all assessment and future perspectives

The objective was to put existing resources and online information on projects together into a searchable database which would be accessible on the web and available both for grassroots groups and multipliers, especially schools, organisations und fundamental right groups involved with young people. An open call to send in educational tools and materials was disseminated in November 2010 throughout the channels of the project partners and the FARE website and mailing list. Besides, the responsible project worker did an online research to identify further interesting materials. The collected resources covers different sorts of medias like video films, online quizzes, teaching materials for schools or brochures and consists of about 70 items (as of start of May 2011).

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This module is an on-going activity with the tool-kit being kept up-dated regularly with new information even after the project is finished. The final implementation of the database online is planned to coincide with the re-launch of the new FARE website in the summer 2011. However, a link to the tool-kit is being provided via the website from early May 2011. An online fill-in form and a press release to encourage further contributions to the tool-kit later on are planned.

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The planning of the activity was based on getting in a substantive response from the call – that expectation however was not fulfilled, response was rather sparse. As the project worker herself points out she had not enough language knowledge of for example German and French to research online resources on her own in a more detailed way, as a consequence the resources available at this stage are predominantly from the UK. To provide a broader input from more different countries either a better planning with regard to language abilities or more support from the other project partners would have been necessary.

1.4 Conference Football against Homophobia (21–23 May 2010, Berlin)

This project activity was carried about by the European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation (EGLSF), based in the Netherlands, and included a three-day conference in Berlin at the premises of German Bundesliga club Hertha BSC Berlin at the Olympia Stadium.



Objectives and methods +++ Visibility and response +++ Over-all assessment and future perspectives

The Berlin conference was a follow-up of a meeting of pan-European gay and lesbian football fan clubs in Barcelona in February 2009 (also organised by the EGLSF among others). For the purpose of the conference in the framework of the FFE project the target groups addressed were considerably broader. Among the 30 participants were representatives from gay and lesbian football clubs and supporter groups, LGBT sports and football organizations and non LGBT football institutions and supporters networks from countries all over Europe. Some of the contacts had already been established at the Networking Conference in Vienna in December 2009.

The objectives of the meeting included networking (both informal and formal by establishing/planning further activities), exchange of knowledge and experiences with regard to campaigning against homophobia in football and possibilities of cooperation with national football associations, clubs and LGBT organisations (good practice examples). A further goal was to empower and support LGBT groups in their engagement against homophobia in football. The possibility of networking was furthered by presentation sheets filled in by the participants in advance to be used and referred to during and after the conference. The conference agenda included informal get-togethers/dinners in the evenings and an extensive introduction session during the meeting. At the latter the different groups presented their own activities during recent years/months, outlined both problems and solutions. This exchange of good/bad practice examples compassed a variety of activities like football tournaments, discussion events, lobbying with clubs, football and political bodies etc. or the production of campaigning material like flyers or video clips. Further workshop discussion rounds concentrated on the planning of concrete activities like a European action day against homophobia in football, a pan-European charter and the survey of existing research on the topic of homosexuality/homophobia in sport/football. Working groups were formed to follow up on those plans.

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The prominent location of the meeting on the grounds of Bundesliga club Hertha BSC (along with the organisational help of one club employee) lent support to the conference and its issue, as did the visit of a local Berlin politician on the Sunday working session. Officials from football/sport bodies however were absent, with the exception of the English FA and the Dutch Sport Alliance, the participation of UEFA and the German FA being prevented by schedule difficulties. Response from other associations was non-existing or, as the responsible EGLSF organiser puts it in the evaluation interview: “The other associations are very cautious with regard to the issue of homophobia.” (IV2). Here, clearly more lobbying and campaigning is necessary.

Press coverage was comparatively sparse with a press release issued after the meeting and spread through the partners’ and the participants’ media channels. A better and more targeted PR around the meeting might have been possible (if a bit difficult due to staff resources) and was also desired by

some participants. On the other hand, it might have undermined the “internal” and networking character of the meeting where attention was focused within the group and not outside.

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Feedback from the participants shows high satisfaction with the meeting and its possibilities to exchange experiences and form new connections and networks. Most of the participants of grassroots LGBT organisations (fan groups, football clubs, sport organisations, LGBT rights etc.) however work on a voluntary basis which is a considerable hinder to implement future pan-European activities since the local and national actions already taking up much time. More meetings and working structures provided from other resources would be needed to ensure a broader an transnational approach from grassroots level to the problem of homophobia.

The differences between the various participating groups/persons and the situation of LGBT rights in their respective countries posed a clear challenge for the workshop especially with regard to the situation in Eastern Europe. The EGLSF project worker remarked: “You have a huge difference as to the national law. How far are rights for gays and lesbians established? There we have very different backgrounds depending on if we look at the Ukraine for example or England and Germany.” (IV2)

1.5 Mondiali Antirazzisti (7–11 July 2010, Casalecchio)

In the course of the Mondiali Antirazzisti (Antiracist World Cup) which is regularly organised among others by the FFE project partners UISP – Unione Italiana Sport Per Tutti and UISP – Comitato Regionale Emilia Romagna (Progetto Ultras) from Italy several measures of the FFE programme were incorporated. The Mondiali took place in July 2010 in Casalecchio di Reno near Bologna and saw a participation of nearly 30.000 persons over the three days of tournaments, concerts, cultural and discussion events with all in all 204 teams (fans, migrant teams, teams with ethnic minority backgrounds) from 34 countries playing in the tournament.

Objectives and methods +++ Visibility and response +++ Over-all assessment and future perspectives

The Mondiali took place for the 14th time in 2010 and is established as a grassroots demonstration against racism in football, for the involvement of ethnic minorities and for civil rights. It enjoys credibility among fans and had a growing attendance of teams over the years. The solid foundation of antiracist activism has been broadened by the topics of sexism and homophobia which according to one of the responsible organisers has involved many discussions but is seen as a step forward. The struggle against homophobia figured prominently on the Mondiali’s public displays and promotion. Part of the planned measures was also the invitation of gay and lesbian teams to take part in the tournament and other activities. In the course of the Mondiali a sensitisation workshop was organised (see 1.2).

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With regard to the visibility and promotion of the issue of homophobia as part of genuine anti-discriminatory action within football the measures at the Mondiali were successful. Three “Football for Equality” banners were presented on the grounds, posters were displayed at the main meeting and event point, the Piazza Antirazzista. Stickers and pins were distributed among the participants. Furthermore, an information stall at the Piazza Antirazzista provided materials and detailed information on the Football for Equality project and on discrimination in football in general and the project activities were also taken up in press releases spread through the FARE network’s media resources. A participant from Germany remarked positively on the presence of the banners and displays, but did also note that the Football for equality logo did not have an obvious link to the topic of homophobia (IV3).

The involvement of gay and lesbian football/sports teams however turned out much less satisfactory. Only very few responded positively. An activist from project partner EGLSF remarked critically that LGBT teams wouldn’t feel invited enough to come. “What am I meant to do there with my lesbian or

gay team if I don't feel sure I am really welcome and maybe have trouble with other participants? We go to tournaments to have fun. Most teams go to the Euro Games or Gay Games or other LGBT events and they don't have the resources to then also travel to events like the Mondiali." (IV2)

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The possibilities of a better involvement of LGBT groups and teams were discussed at the partner meeting of the FFE project in April 2011. It was proposed to invite certain groups or individuals already in the planning stage of the tournament through "Friends of the Mondiali" meetings during the year. That would ensure a more positive identification and create a more inclusive event. In the past the Mondiali met the challenge to involve migrant groups and other target groups beside the classical young male football fan.

The on-going process at the Mondiali of broadening a genuine antiracist approach to incorporate also gender-related forms of discrimination can be seen as representative for similar developments of other groups and organisations. It might be worthwhile to evaluate this process separately and try to identify successful strategies. With regard to the follow-up it seems important to keep up the focus on homophobia (and sexism) and try to interlink those aspects more closely with the discussion of other forms of discrimination.

1.6 FARE Action Week against Racism and Discrimination in European Football (14-26 October 2010)

The FARE Action Week taking place annually in October since 2001 has long been established as a tool to raise awareness within football to the problem of discrimination and as a way to present a public and united front against it with huge attention guaranteed by the high visibility of for example European League matches. With the backing of UEFA the FARE network has mobilised not only football clubs and associations, but also enables more than 1000 grassroots groups, fan initiatives or amateur clubs by small action grants to realize various actions against racism and discrimination under the common label of the Action Week. In the course of the Football for Equality project the Action Week 2010 was explicitly targeting the issue of homophobia. The responsible partners for the implementation of the FARE Action Week measures were FairPlay-vidc (Austria) and EGLSF (Netherlands).



Objectives and methods +++ Visibility and response +++ Over-all assessment and future perspectives

The Action Week 2010 had a special focus on homophobia in the multilingual "Call for Action" sent out among football institutions, fans' networks and fundamental rights NGOs all over Europe. The addressees of the call, i.e. fan groups, clubs and football governing bodies were thus encouraged to tackle the issue of negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians and widespread gender stereotypes within football. Together with the call proposals of actions and past examples were given like football tournaments, local debate events or exhibitions along with the production of a variety of materials with high affiliation to football like t-shirts, stickers, banners, pins etc. or highly visible actions in the stadium on the pitch or choreographies on the stands. In the Action Week 2010 a special poster on LGBT rights under the claim "Be visible!" not only took up the issue of homophobia explicitly but also displayed examples of anti-homophobia events from previous Action Weeks thus linking awareness-

raising with good practice ideas. In Austria, FairPlay developed a special campaign under the claim “Vorurteile platzen lassen” (Make prejudices burst) which did focus on different forms of discrimination and got players and teams from the whole top league Bundesliga involved. Furthermore, in 2010 special action grants dedicated to anti-homophobia measures were distributed. The actions sponsored by the special anti-homophobia grants ranged from football tournaments in Italy and Ireland over panel debates in Germany to the production of t-shirts for a lesbian amateur team also in Germany.

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The interlink of the project activities with the FARE Action Week made a high visibility on different levels possible: both with the general call of action or the various materials produced and with the special activities financed by the FFE project. The Austrian contribution included the separate production and contribution of a variety of materials like balloons and info posters. Even here, declarations were read out by the team captains on the pitch.

A definite problem arose from the bad time planning of the 2010 Action Week itself, which was due to the transformation process of FARE. As a result of that the call came fairly late in the year so that response and attention was not what might have been with more times for groups to plan activities and apply for money.

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As one of the FairPlay campaigners put it, the Action Week offered the possibility to “put the fight against homophobia on the forefront with a clear message also on the level of the UEFA European matches [Note: it was also mentioned in the declaration read out by team captains]”. With regard to this the “Be Visible!” campaign within the Action Week 2010 was definitely successful although media attention (of the Action Week as a whole) could have been better especially with visibility on television. The photo poster produced for the occasion can also be used in future campaigns to deliver good practice examples for fan groups and other stakeholders.

One of the EGLSF project worker interviewed for this evaluation points out that the Action Week presents a useful tool to reach out to grassroots groups and encourage them to take action and plan their own activities. However, there is still potential for improvement: “Still there are too little groups taking up the issue of homophobia. In 2010 the delay of the call was certainly a problem but anyway there is still a definite resistance within the football community. In most cases it’s fans’ groups in professional football and/or LGBT groups who support the action.” (IV2) One proposal for future activities is to actively encourage cooperation between the football community and LGBT groups (within football or outside of it). Amateur football is another area to be tackled even in countries like England and Germany with a comparatively high level of awareness.

1.7 Closing Expert Meeting (8–10 April 2011, Bratislava)

The closing expert seminar was organised and hosted by project partner Ludia Proti Rasizmu (Slovakia) in Bratislava. About 35 participants from antiracist NGOs, Roma interest groups, fans’ initiatives, football bodies and LGBT groups were meeting with special emphasis on participants from Central and Eastern Europe. Initially the meeting was planned on a slightly smaller scale, the decision to make it bigger allowed for the inclusion of more (including younger) people engaged in antiracist/anti-homophobia activities.

Objectives and methods +++ Visibility and response +++ Over-all assessment and future perspectives

The inclusion of Roma through football and the issue of homophobia in football formed the topics for the main workshop along with plenary discussions focused on the presentation of on-going and new projects (including the Football for Equality 2 programme) and the possibility of informal networking, for example through the agenda topic of a “NGO speed-dating”. The workshop addressed activists mainly from the two areas of Roma and LGBT rights both within and outside of football/sports.

Discussions starting with the opening speeches focused repeatedly on the situation in Central and Eastern Europe with participants from different countries like Slovakia, Hungary or Macedonia bringing in their expertise. The workshop sessions on Roma respectively homophobia saw both expert inputs and an exchange of good-practice ideas.

Irena Bihárióvá, director of *Ludia Proti Rasizmu*, did in her opening speech emphasize the role of football as a tool with a huge positive potential for integration especially for younger people quote, “where people are not judged based on their origin or the colour of their skin but by their performance and team play.” This was underlined also by the statement from Matteo Bonini-Baraldi from FRA, Vienna, who pointed to the reinforced importance of sports as an educational tool and social factor with the new EU competence for sports after the Lisbon treaty.

Further discussion in the workshops focused on ethnic minority sports clubs as well as LGBT sports clubs, federations and tournaments like the EuroGames and their ability to foster empowerment of minority groups by creating a more tolerant (but also a more homogenous) environment. Interestingly, here a structural similarity between the situation of Roma and LGBT persons emerged since both in many cases must be regarded as an “invisible” minority who may choose or, in many cases, are forced to hide their ethnic resp. sexual identity.

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Evaluation of the feedback sheets from the conference shows a high satisfaction especially with the workshop sessions on homophobia where the exchange of good practice enabled participants to pick up ideas from other groups. Furthermore, the workshop offered the development of concrete projects like media training for journalists to make them take up the topic of homophobia/homosexuality and sport. As already indicated by the experiences of the fan conference in Berlin 2010 (see 1.4) the issue of anti-homophobia activities within and through football is still a comparatively new area with a marked need for networking and with structures relying mostly on voluntary work.

Press visibility was encouraged by a release before the meeting which generated some interest from local/national media. The FFE programme materials (banners, buttons, stickers) were on display throughout the conference resp. distributed among the participants as was the conference report from the Vienna conference 2009 (see 1.1).

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A more dedicated media work for the meeting, for example targeting especially recent Roma politics in different European countries mentioned during opening speeches and discussions would have been desirable. Organisational problems and staff shortage with the responsible project partner made this difficult. Besides the positive comments from participants on the positive working atmosphere and possibilities for networking the absence of representatives from Slovakian and/or UEFA football bodies and from the Slovakian government (preferably in Roma issues) were mentioned as downsides. Both would have been especially worthwhile with regard to the discussion on the situation in Central and Eastern Europe and the potential of working against discrimination in the framework of the Euro 2012 in Poland and Ukraine. A more efficient lobbying within governmental and football bodies would be necessary to ensure participation of decision makers and stakeholders.

As a perspective for future seminars and work plans a more explicit connection between the different forms of discrimination seems indicated. With regard to this conference it might have been possible to bring together the topics of the Roma situation and homophobia in football by comparing different action strategies or, more theoretically, by considering the structures of discrimination.

The possibility for closer cooperation especially between the LGBT community and NGOs within and outside football both in Central and Eastern and in Western Europe was offered an invitation of the EGLSF representative from Hungary to take part in the “twinning” EuroGames in Rotterdam and Budapest in 2011 and 2012. These occasions do also figure as important parts of the Football for Equality 2 programme.

2. Assessment of the project's over-all objectives

The anticipated results of the Football for Equality project as outlined in its description were:

- greater understanding and awareness of discriminatory practices, discourses and stereotypes in football in particular the continued discrimination of gay and lesbians (homophobia) and the exclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities
- stronger usage of football as a medium for promoting fundamental rights and intercultural dialogue
- exchange of good practise, information and educational materials
- enhanced networking and increased expertise among grass-root organisations to address and campaign against racism and homophobia on a local level
- mobilisation and future involvement of participating migrant communities, fan groups and gay and lesbian initiatives in actively combating homophobia and racism inside and outside stadiums

With regard to awareness-raising in particular concerning the exclusion and discrimination of gays and lesbians in football, the project activities were successful. The visibility during the Action Week, the Mondiali and through the various conferences has put homophobia more strongly on the agenda of European football, both on grassroots level and on the level of the UEFA matches in the Europa League and Champions League. Besides this “symbolic win”, as one of the FairPlay campaigner put it in the evaluation interview, there was also a concrete “spin-off” related to the project activities. In the case of homophobic remarks from Vlatko Markovic, president of the Croatian Football Association, in November 2010 reaction was prompt: Sharp criticism came from project partner EGLSF, fan groups and also from Ulrike Lunacek, opening speaker at the Vienna conference 2009 (see 1.1) and Austrian delegate at the European Parliament and member of the Parliament's LGBT intergroup. The incident was taken up by the media and linked to activities in the frame of the FARE Action Work and the FFE project. This example however also shows the need for a strong media work which was not realised throughout all the project activities.

Equally successful were the networking and good practice aspects offered through the different modules of the project. Especially for grassroots groups based on voluntary work these opportunities to form transnational connections have turned out to be quite valuable. A continuing of this work to foster more sustainable alliances especially in Central and Eastern Europe will be part of the Football for Equality 2 project. Elements of the FFE project will be carried on independently including the internet tool-kit, the FARE Action Week and the Mondiali Antirazzisti; a sequel to the sensitisation workshops in France is also planned. The decision was taken to provide the results and reports of the FFE project not as printed documents but to instead set up a website with downloadable documents, pictures and presentations from the various events. This website is also to be used for the follow-up project and will provide more accessibility, usability and visibility than printed materials, even after the project.

The mobilisation and involvement of LGBT groups, migrant communities and ethnic minorities was only partly successful (see 1.5). Expectations in this regard might have been too high or rather the need for discriminated groups to establish their own networks before joining in broader alliances was underrated. For the future, special measures as how to invite and involve these stakeholders could be developed, possibly with special emphasis on role models and testimonials (see 5. Recommendations). The usage of football/sports as a tool to promote equality issues, tolerance and fundamental rights has been successful also with regard to the topic of homophobia, this is also due to the groundwork done by project partner EGLSF and the contacts provided there. With regard to future projects tackling problems of discrimination and the promotion of equality in and through

sports, a similarly broad cooperation of partners with expertise from different areas (within and outside of football, varying target groups, NGOs and interest groups) is highly desirable.

The flow of implementation during the project was partly hemmed by the on-going FARE transformation process. The delay with the “Call for Action” for the FARE Action Week was one negative impact here, but also some organisational aspects. The internet tool-kit (see 1.3) and the media work in general might for example have profited from a already thoroughly functioning communication flow via the “new” FARE’s channels.

The involvement of political and football bodies as stakeholders and cooperation partners was not successful throughout all project parts. The importance of a broad support also from decision makers in these institutions however was underlined by one of the interviewed EGLSF activists: “To fight against discrimination you have to get not only the discriminated groups involved. It’s not enough to be against homophobia in football if not UEFA, FIFA, the German or the Italian FA don’t also speak up against it.” (IV2) Where support and engagement from these organisations was given and visibly given (e.g. at the Vienna Conference, the FARE Action Week or the Workshop in France) it showed an impact. The project experiences however also points to the still existing resistance of football institutions to get actively involved especially with the issue of homophobia.

3. How to tackle homophobia in and through football – Experiences from the FFE project

The experiences from the project's different activities show that despite considerable progress during the last years there is still a reluctance in the football community to tackle discrimination, this is especially true for the still rather new subject of homophobia. Interestingly, one aspect with regard to awareness-raising and mobilisation is the actual term of "homophobia". The French partner's project worker describes her experiences from the sensitisation workshop for police forces: "Some participants didn't even know the term of homophobia, they were confusing it with homosexuality or creating a term like homophobic, which doesn't exist in French. It was really useful for them to get more to know about this problem." (IV5) The FairPlay project workers recounted similar experiences from the FARE Action Week in Austria but also remarked on the fact that the term gave rise to discussions: "In several cases there were discussions among players and teams involved in the Action Week, not because they didn't want to use the word, but because they were arguing about the best term. It obviously instigated discussions." (IV1) From an educational point of view it can therefore be useful to work with the term of homophobia itself.



Similarly, the fact that homophobia is a comparatively "new" topic to be debated within and through football has an ambivalent impact: There is a marked reluctance to tackle the subject, sometimes even with institutions and individuals who are involved in anti-racist activities. On the other hand the introduction of the topic of homophobia can have positive side-effects in countries where antiracist work is already more established. This is the experience from one of the FairPlay project workers: "We noticed that it was good for the press since they were interested in writing about that, more perhaps than about racism or anti-racism. It made people curious and worked as an eye opener." (IV1).

Another aspect to be considered is the cooperation and interaction between LGBT groups and the football organisations. One of the EGLSF project workers gives her assessment (referring to Germany): "From my experience the gay-lesbian groups both within and outside of football are open for cooperation with football institutions. But often they don't make progress if they don't meet or contact the right people in the clubs or the federations. Much depends on individual persons and the question if they want to take on the issue or not." (IV2)

A deficiency one of the FairPlay project workers remarked on and which was also discussed at the partner meeting in April 2011 is the lack of a thorough discussion of the workings of discrimination itself and the connections of different forms of discrimination. "In most cases the different sets of discrimination and anti-discrimination are simply running beside each other while connections and the basis structure of discrimination are not sufficiently debated." (IV1) For future projects it would be important to consider the workings of discrimination, the interaction of different forms of exclusion and the danger of minorities getting played off against each other.

One problem of anti-homophobia work is a lack of role models and testimonials, i.e. open gay or lesbian players or coaches to get involved in campaigning which is a very useful feature within anti-racist activities in and through football lending them both attention and credibility. As was pointed

out at the closing workshop the situation of Roma people as an “invisible” minority shows a structural similarity. The solution can’t be to enforce “outings” but to empower more and more representatives for the struggle both from the respective minorities and from mainstream society.

4. SWOT analysis

➤ Strength

The usage of football as a tool to point at discrimination both in football and in society has, as anticipated, turned out to be a successful approach. Love of sports, supporter spirits and/or achievements based on performance rather than ethnicity, gender etc. can be used as a unifying force. Furthermore, football with its high popularity allows for good visibility of the various measures.

Homophobia in football has been a rather neglected issue so far, especially on a European scale. The innovative character of the FFE project could thus draw attention to a “new” topic and create alliances between LGBT groups, football organisations and NGOs.

Another strength of the project was the broad approach by bringing together partners and stakeholders from very different angles (NGOs, football community, LGBT community, ethnic minority interest groups etc.) and countries from all over Europe.

➤ Weakness

This last mentioned element however must also be regarded as a weakness since the diverse experiences of for example participants at the conferences in Vienna or Bratislava (see 1.1 and 1.7) made the transfer from discussion to action difficult.

Grassroots (LGBT, ethnic minority) groups are very often relying on voluntary work which can hinder mobilisation and future common activities difficult.

➤ Opportunities

The Lisbon treaty is giving EU a stronger influence in sports, this has already lead to a raised interest of stakeholders both in sport/football and from governmental organisations and NGOs in using sport as a tool to promote fundamental rights issues.

The development of the civil right situation in CEE countries like Hungary is very critical, makes action even more necessary and might put more political pressure behind future activities.

➤ Threats

The difficult situation for ethnic minorities and LGBT people in some parts of Central and Eastern Europe however might also be a hindrance for future activities.

The different situation in certain countries might lead to a imbalance between Western and Eastern Europe partners/countries: Eastern Europe might be seen as the learning part and the West as the educated and already thoroughly civilized one, when in fact the situation in Western Europe with regard to discrimination and social inequality is not what it should and could be either.

Finally, attention within and for football and the connection to Central and Eastern Europe might wane after the Euro 2012 and before the World Cup in Russia 2016.

5. Recommendations for future activities

- Stronger involvement of political bodies and football bodies might be achieved by promoting the new EU roll in sports after the Lisbon treaty
- Further mobilisation of LGBT groups (and ethnic minorities) through continuous cooperation and involvement of key persons during planning stage
- Develop more specific educational tools for engagement against homophobia in/through football based on the project experiences
- Support and actively encourage role models for young people from Roma and LGBT community (“invisible minorities”)
- Implementation of cooperation between anti-racist NGOs, football community and LGBT organisations not as a one-off event as but continuous and local activity
- Provide academic background input for a more thorough discussion on the connection of different forms of discrimination

6. Interviews and material

Interviews & background information

- **Interview 1:** FairPlay representatives (face-to-face)
- **IV2:** EGLSF representative (telephone & email)
- **IV3:** Participant Mondiali (telephone)
- **IV4:** FURD representative (email & face-to-face)
- **IV5:** LICRA representative (email & face-to-face)
- **IV6:** LGBT campaign representative (email)
- **IV7:** LUDIA representative (face-to face)
- Face-to-face talks with participants of closing workshop Bratislava

Materials

- Project description Football for Equality
- Interim report Football for Equality
- Conference Report Vienna (draft and final version)
- Results Evaluation sheet Berlin Fan Conference
- Conference report Berlin Fan Conference
- Power Points Sensitisation workshop France
- Concept Sensitisation workshop Austria
- Evaluation sheets Closing Expert Workshop Bratislava
- Minutes Partner Meeting Bratislava