

Conference on the Contribution of Sport to Inter-Cultural Dialogue

Istanbul, Turkey, 9-10 September 2004

The Istanbul Declaration

- Bearing in mind the Council of Europe's Recommendation Rec(2001)6 on the prevention of racism, xenophobia and racial intolerance in sport;
- Recalling the Council of Europe's Recommendation on the revised Code of Ethics and the principles of the appended Code of Ethics No. R(92)14 rev;
- Considering the Declaration on Inter-Cultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention adopted by the European Ministers of Culture in Opatija, Croatia (2003);
- Recalling the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace";
- In view of the 3rd Summit of the Heads of States of the Council of Europe (May 2005), the 10th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport (October 2004) and the 50th Anniversary of the European Cultural Convention (2005);

The participants of the Council of Europe's Conference on the Contribution of Sport to Inter-Cultural Dialogue, held in Istanbul on 9 and 10 September 2004, recognise that:

- The promotion of inter-cultural dialogue should be geared towards a large part of the population in today's globalised world;
- The fundamental values of sport, such as fair play, mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, tolerance and the fight against racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, need to be upheld and furthered;
- Sport has the power to open borders since the language of sport is universal and uncontroversial;
- Sport can develop essential skills, such as mutual respect, team spirit, integration and social inclusion, which form the basis of our society;
- Sport is an appropriate means to reach a large part of the population, in particular the younger generations;
- Sport and physical education, as an integral part of culture, need to be recognised as such and should be included in the educational systems of all countries;
- Properly promoted and delivered, sport can constitute a first step in the efforts to achieve inter-cultural dialogue by bringing together different nationalities and cultures in a common game with common rules;
- Sport may, however, also be misused and lead to intolerance, nationalism and violence;
- Therefore, in order to allow a true inter-cultural dialogue, additional measures must be added to the usual practice of sport.

To this end, the participants of the Conference recommended the following measures:

Sport for all

1. NGOs and public authorities should promote regional, national and international groups of children and young people to practice sport for leisure and take part in inter-cultural sport exchange programmes;
2. Trainers and leaders in charge of such programmes should be fully qualified i.e. a holistic approach needs to be developed;
3. Such inter-cultural sports exchange programmes should include other cultural activities and promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures e.g. music, dance, artwork, etc;
4. Public authorities, sports organisations and communities should develop programmes based on the needs of the communities that allow the integration of immigrants into national sporting life.

Elite sport

5. To encourage and enable athletes, former athletes and coaches to use their position of role models to further inter-cultural dialogue. Towards that end, they should:
get involved in inter-cultural projects;
be encouraged to use their position to facilitate dialogue between these cultures, particularly those familiar with different cultures;
share their experience in sport e.g. that inter-cultural learning formed a part of their training to achieve elite status.
6. To raise awareness of the philosophy and history of the Olympic Games as an example of how to promote the peaceful co-existence of human beings and facilitate the efforts of those extending the values of the Olympic Games on a general every-day basis;
7. In order to achieve the above, it is essential that all relevant organisations include, in their activities, experience of top-level competition and respect gained for others.

Spectators and fans

8. Organisers of sports events should develop fan coaching, including inter-cultural education e.g. underline the importance of the preparation of fans for large or major sports events;
9. The journeys of supporters to other cultural regions in order to attend a large or major sports event (whether inside or outside their country) should be used to organise, with their counterparts, exchanges and dialogue between different cultures and thereby aim to prevent cultural misunderstandings;
10. The cultural and animation programmes around large or major events should aim to promote inter-cultural dialogue and celebrate the diversity of the participants.