

Helsinki Spirit 2000

Recommendations of the Helsinki European Women and Sport Conference

The mission of the European Women and Sport (EWS) network is to promote gender equality in sport. **The main objective of the EWS Group is to create a sports culture where all girls and boys, women and men shall have equal opportunities to participate, act and make decisions. Attention is focused on activities which support women's leadership in sport.**

During the 1990's, several of the 41 member nations of the EWS network have made significant progress in developing equality as part of the European sports culture. Much work remains to be done in the new millennium to provide equal opportunities in sport and decision-making. Equality in sport is essential if sports culture is to develop, thrive and keep pace with the rapidly changing world.

The fourth EWS Conference was organised under the theme "Women, Sport and Culture - How to change sports culture?" and was held in Helsinki, Finland, on 7-10 June 2000. **250 delegates from 47 countries formulated the Helsinki Spirit 2000. These recommendations are founded on earlier documents which form the basis of equality work in sport: namely the 1994 Brighton Declaration and the 1998 Windhoek Call for Action.**

Recommendations, Helsinki Spirit 2000

1. That women's role as a resource for sports culture and decision-making be strengthened

- Women's know-how should be used in sports culture. The number of women involved in decision-making should be increased and supported through training and professional advancement.
- Decision-making should be transparent and ethically sustainable on all levels.
- Women and men should participate equally in discussions on the basic values and development of sport.
- Women in sport should build strong networks at regional, national and international levels.
- Women should seek elections in international bodies and be supported in those roles.
- Women and men should participate equally in international sports policy making.
- The amount of media coverage of women sports should be increased and quality improved. More women should be trained as sports journalists.

2. That women and men share responsibility in/for equality in sport

- Women and girls, men and boys should have the opportunity to choose their own sports and equally participate in their sport's organisational activities.
- Both women and men should participate productively in equality work.
- The structures and rules of sport must fulfil the needs of both women and men.
- Both women and men should participate in the planning of sports facilities.

3. That sports and physical activities for people with disabilities and special needs be guaranteed an equal part in sports culture

- People with disabilities and special needs should have equal opportunities to participate in physical activities, both in different sports and at different levels.
- Women with disabilities and special needs should have equal opportunity in sport decision-making at all levels.
- Enhance tolerance through co-operation and communication among people with and without disabilities. Promote contact among diverse groups.

4. That the awareness and value of equality in sport be increased

- Equality work in sport should receive fair financial resources and strong political support.
- Ongoing evaluation and research of the equality work should provide a basis for advancing the movement.
- Sport and physical activity should be promoted as a positive strategy for dealing issues on broader political agendas, e.g. health, substance abuse, nation building.
- History, archives and activities in the development of gender equality in sports should be recorded and maintained.

5. That the Bratislava Council of Europe resolution on sexual harassment be implemented and monitored

- The Bratislava Council of Europe resolution on sexual harassment be implemented and monitored in all European countries, both by sports organisations and authorities.
- This resolution is a highly revealing and particularly positive development. It is a challenge to create a safer environment for people in sport.

6. That the Berlin Agenda for Physical Education and the Declaration of Punta del Este be implemented and monitored

- Ministers for sport and education should work together with the physical education profession, to ensure that girls and boys receive high quality programmes of physical education throughout their school lives.
- In recognition of the particular role of school physical education in preparing girls and young women for their future lives in sport, the place of physical education in school curricula should be strengthened.
- Teacher training programmes should include courses aimed at improving the inclusiveness of physical education for girls and boys, all abilities, cultural and social backgrounds.
- Teachers of physical education should encourage equal participation of girls and boys in school programmes of physical education, sport and physical activities.

Ratification of recommendations

The EWS Conference calls upon the European countries that the Helsinki Spirit 2000 be ratified at different levels both within the sports movement and the governing bodies. Recommendations are directed at:

- National and regional sports organisations, national Olympic and Paralympic committees and Ministries responsible for sport, youth and education,
- the European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO), the European Olympic Committee (EOC) and the European sports federations and physical education, sport and sport science organisations,
- the European Sports Conference (ESC),
- the Committee for the Development of Sport of the Council of Europe (CDDS), and
- institutions of the European Union (EU).

Implementation of recommendations

Conference delegates call upon all relevant organisations, their networks and all member countries of the European Sports Conference to take account of these recommended actions in their gender equality work. To assist in implementing these recommendations, gender equality plans should be developed by all organisations and agencies. Good practices, monitoring and evaluation of equality activities should be shared through the EWS network.