OFFICE FOR HUMAN AND MINORITY RIGHTS

Department for Monitoring the Implementation of International and Regional

Treaties in the Field of Human Rights

B e l g r a d e

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RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Resolution of the Human Rights Council 24/1 on Promoting Human Rights through Sport and the Olympic Ideal

1. **How is sport used in your country to promote human rights? What are the best practices being applied?**

According to the Law on Sports ("Official Gazette of the RS", no. 24/11 and 99/11 – state law), which was enacted in March 2011, sport is an activity of particular importance for the Republic of Serbia (Article 2). Everyone has the right to engage in sport. Engaging in sport must be humane, free and voluntary, healthy and safe, according to the natural and social environment, fair, tolerant, ethically acceptable, responsible, independent from any abuse and objectives that are contrary to the spirit of sports and available to all citizens on equal ground regardless of age, level of physical ability, degree of any disability, gender and other personal characteristics (Article 4).

Pursuant to the decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to proclaim 2013 the year of tolerance and fair-play in sport, the Ministry of Youth and Sports launched a campaign called "Fair-play is Victory" in order to promote fair play and prevent violence at sporting events. The action was officially initiated on 1 February, with a public lecture in Belgrade's primary school "Karadjordje" held by our famous football players, the national youth teams director Savo Milosevic and national football team coach Sinisa Mihajlovic. The second public lecture was held in Sirca village near Kraljevo, where basketball legend Vlade Divac, former captain of the Republic of Serbia volleyball team Zeljko Tanaskovic and former athlete Dane Korica talked about fair-play. During the same period, the Minister of Youth and Sports opened a third public lecture on tolerance and fair play in the biggest school in the Republic of Serbia, primary school "Nikola Tesla" in Vinca. This time, support was provided to the Minister by young football players from the ranks of Red Star and Partizan, Darko Lazovic and Lazar Markovic, who through their example showed that the two clubs could work together.

**2.What are the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to strengthen respect for human rights?**

The main objectives of the Olympic Committee of Serbia are spreading ideas of Olympism, evolution of sports in general, the development and protection of the Olympic Movement in Serbia, and representing the country at the Olympics and world, continental and regional competitions. The Olympic Committee of Serbia is a non-governmental, non-political and non-profit sports organisation belonging to the Olympic Movement which respects the fundamental principles of the international Olympic movement enshrined in the Olympic Charter and the Anti-Doping Code. Opportunities to strengthen respect for human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal are promoted by: encouraging sport and competition with the mediation of national and international sports institutions from around the world, co-operating with public and private organisations with the aim of placing sport at the service of humanity on the basis of "Sport for All" development; advancement of women\s position in sports at all levels and in all structures with a view to achieving equality between men and women; opposing all forms of commercial exploitation of sports and athletes, combating doping and stimulating sports ethics and fair play.

**3. What are the sports practised in your country and how far are they all inclusive (for women, youth, vulnerable groups etc.)?**

The Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Youth and Sports follow principles of the policy "Sport for All", defined at the Conference of European Sport Ministers, under the title "European Charter on Sport for All". Everyone has the right to engage in sport. The Ministry of Youth and Sport emphasises the importance of physical education and sport as the most relevant elements and integral parts to the process of continuous education of human and social development. Sport contributes to social cohesion, mutual tolerance and integration of different ethnic and cultural minorities. Lifelong sports activities are being promoted, while sport programs and physical activity have been made available to the elderly and persons with disabilities. Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms, without distinction as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other conviction, national or social origin and property.

The most popular sports in the Republic of Serbia are football, basketball and tennis. Swimming, water polo and athletics also occupy a high place, and these are generally the sports in which the athletes of the Republic of Serbia are globally famous and successful.

4**.In what way can sport and the Olympic ideal become a means to:**

1. **advance the cause of peace ?**
2. **promote development?**
3. **combat all forms of discrimination?**

By adopting and promoting basic postulates on which sport rests as an activity that contributes to the improvement of health, physical education and healthy competition. The fact is that the national school system provides for the implementation of physical education of school children and youth through regular (required) physical education classes and operations of the school sport system. This said, it would be desirable to take advantage of such a form of teaching for the promotion and development of tolerance, co-existence of different members of society and unabated solidarity at all levels. Sport is a valuable aid in the education of children and youth. Learn about oneself and others, learn to be with others, respect each other-the easiest way is through play and fun. Sport always refers us to others, teaching us how to live together. It creates friendships, strengthens human relations and testifies to the existence of a connection. Today, the role of sports in a society has become even more pronounced, and, therefore, significant more than ever. Sport is a means of social integration.

**5.What kinds of challenges are faced in promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal?**

Violence still represents the biggest problem at sports events, especially among football fans.

**6.How can the media help in the promotion of human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal?**

One of the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Culture and Information in the field of public information is the free development of an independent, professional media system and media in general through the production of media content from all sectors of life, including - sport. This social area holds more importance than just providing basic public information due to the fact that promoting sports lifestyle makes it easier to achieve goals related to the improvement of public awareness on respect for diversity of individuals and social groups. In addition, programs in the field of sports, mostly dedicated to children and young people, contribute to the creation of a value system devoid of discrimination, stereotypes and prejudices, and help prevent and suppress violence among young people.

In accordance with this, the Ministry of Culture and Information, through regular annual competitions in the field of media, supports projects dealing with sports issues. Thus, in 2013, the project of "Loznicke novosti" entitled "Sport on Concrete Courts" was supported with 233,000.00 RSD, while one of the co-financed projects in 2014 was "Sports Arena, Stadium, Non-violence" of IN Radio from Novi Sad, which was handed over 230,000.00 RSD. The goal of this project is to prevent youth violence by broadcasting radio programs that discuss sport activism, facing problems and ways of overcoming them, hosted by current world kick-boxing champion and Serbian acclaimed fighter Nenad Pagonis, with guest appearances from distinguished athletes and celebrities. Furthermore, successful young athletes shall also appear as guests, speaking about their motives for engaging in this activity and the advantages a sporty lifestyle provides on the road toward adulthood.

In addition to the provision of financial support to media programs with sports contents, the Ministry of Culture and Information has also made great contributions to the adoption of the National Sports Development Strategy for 2014-2018 and the Action Plan for its implementation.

The latest drastic illustrations of how sports or athletes have the capability to provide help and as a role model influence others occurred during the catastrophic floods that hit the Republic of Serbia and the surrounding region when athletes donated financial and humanitarian assistance to disaster victims.

It is not necessary to make a special commentary regarding the example of Serbia's best tennis player, Novak Djokovic, who aware of the relevance of the media, pointed out that the world's television networks had not adequately reported on the situation in the Balkans during the devastating floods, which instigated an immediate response from CNN and the BBC.