



# Monitoring discrimination and racism in sport

The case of Hungary



edited by



**united**

for intercultural action



# Monitoring Discrimination and Racism in Sport. The case of Hungary

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by



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Note:

For the variety of stakeholders officially we asked the organisations listed below, but their answers (if they answered) are not reflect the report as many were not giving any.:

- Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation  
Facebook: MahatmaGhandhiHumanRightsOrganization
- Hungarian Roma Team  
Facebook: ciganyvalogatott
- Hungarian Football Association (Magyar Labdarúgó Szövetség)  
Website: mlsz.hu
- HLSZ (Hivatásos Labdarúgók Szervezete)  
Website: hlsz.hu
- Budapesti Sportszolgáltató Központ Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft.
- MOB (Olympic Committee - Magyar Olimpiai Bizottság)  
Website: www.mob.hu
- Ferencvárosi Torna Club (FTC)  
Website: fradi.hu
- Magyar Olimpiai Akadémia (Hungarian Olympic Academy)  
Website: Magyar Olimpiai Akadémia
- Budapesti Labdarúgók Szövetsége (BLSZ)  
Jégkorong Szövetség (Ice Hockey Association)  
Website: jegkorongszovetseg.hu
- Magyar Kézilabda Szövetség (Hungarian Handball Federation)  
Website: mksz.hu
- ENGSO Youth Hungary
- Oltalom (Protection)  
Facebook: oltalom.karitativegyesulet
- Nagy Sportágválasztó (Great Sports Selector)  
Website: sportagvalaszto.hu
- MTK Budapest (Women's Football)  
Facebook: MTKBudapest
- MTK Budapest (Mens football)
- Maccabi Vac

About Creator of this report:

UNITED for Intercultural Action is a prominent European network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots initiatives dedicated to combatting racism, discrimination, and intolerance in all its forms. Established in 1992, UNITED operates as a collaborative platform that unites over 560 member organizations across Europe, working together to promote diversity, social inclusion, and intercultural understanding.

The core mission of UNITED is to raise awareness about the prevalence of discrimination, xenophobia, and human rights violations across the continent and to actively engage in projects and campaigns that challenge these issues. UNITED's efforts extend to a wide range of areas, including racism, hate speech, anti-migrant sentiment, LGBTQ+ rights, and the rights of minority communities.

UNITED's work is distinguished by its commitment to promoting grassroots initiatives and empowering local organizations. By facilitating networking, providing resources, and encouraging collaboration among its members, UNITED seeks to amplify the impact of individual efforts in the collective pursuit of a more inclusive and tolerant Europe.

This introduction offers a glimpse into the essential role that UNITED for Intercultural Action plays in addressing discrimination and promoting intercultural understanding throughout Europe, emphasizing its dedication to collaboration, awareness-raising, and the protection of human rights for all.

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## *Monitora project introduction*

This report is based on several oral and written interviews with sport professionals, organisations, Sport Federations and individuals. It delves into the critical issue of discrimination and racism within Hungarian sports. It encapsulates a range of interactions with various organizations and individuals to gather insights, perspectives, and information on the prevalence, challenges, and efforts to combat discrimination in Hungary's sporting landscape. While some responses were informally obtained through personal connections, it is noteworthy that official responses were not universally forthcoming, including from the Hungarian Football Association (FA). This report sheds light on the persisting challenges and the absence of government policies and support and shows the various incidents to foretell what is expected to happen on every stage of Hungarian Football and other sports.

Amidst these challenges, it underscores the grassroots initiatives, awareness campaigns, and international collaborations that offer hope for a more inclusive and equitable future within Hungarian sports.

# Chapter 1: Introduction - Racism in Hungarian Sports

## 1.1: Background

Hungary has a long and storied history in the world of sports. From the successes of legendary footballers like Ferenc Puskás to the nation's dominance in water polo, gymnastics, and fencing, sports have held a cherished place in Hungarian society. However, beneath the surface of these sporting achievements lies the troubling issue of racism. The country gives special attention to world events and tries to organize an Olympics as well. In 2023, the World Athletic Championship was also in Hungary.

Hungary's history, like many countries, includes periods of discrimination and prejudice. It's important to recognize that racism in Hungarian sports doesn't exist in isolation but is part of a larger societal context. The nation has seen the rise of far-right and nationalist political movements, which have sometimes spilled over into sporting events. This report is not about the relations of politics and sports, but it is an evident overreach how much the Prime Minister is directly involved in Club and National Team football, including visiting important matches and having direct contact with the Coach and the members of the team. This entangles the topic of "Family Based" values clashing with LGBTQI+ rights and football and politics.

Matches involving the Hungary national football team and neighboring countries like Romania and Slovakia have seen their fair share of concerning incidents, marked by fan violence, hooliganism, and racism in the stadium. Here's a more critical perspective on these issues:

**Fan Violence and Hooliganism:** These matches often witness a dark side of fan culture, with some supporters resorting to violence and hooliganism. Incidents of clashes between rival fans, destruction of property, and physical altercations have occurred, tarnishing the reputation of the beautiful game.

## 1.2: Scope of the Problem

Racism in Hungarian sports encompasses a range of behaviors, some more overt than others.

These include:

- **Discriminatory Chants and Gestures:** One of the most visible forms of racism in Hungarian football is the use of discriminatory chants and gestures by some fans during matches. These can target opposing players based on their ethnicity or race.
- **Online Abuse:** The digital age has brought with it new avenues for racism, with players often facing racial abuse on social media platforms. This abuse is not limited to Hungarian players but can be directed at athletes from other countries.
- **Player and Coach Behavior:** While fans are often in the spotlight, there have been instances of players and even coaches making racially insensitive comments or gestures.
- **International Incidents:** Some incidents have gained international attention, damaging Hungary's reputation on the global sports stage.
- **Far-Right and Nationalist Banners (Various Years):** Hungarian football stadiums have occasionally seen the display of far-right and nationalist banners, including symbols associated with extremist groups. These banners have raised concerns about the presence of extremist ideologies within the fan base.
- **Online Abuse of Athletes:** Like in many countries, Hungarian athletes, particularly those from minority backgrounds, have faced racial abuse on social media platforms. This online abuse is not limited to football players but extends to athletes from various sports.

The problem is not confined to any single sport but has been observed in various disciplines, including football, athletics, and basketball. Football, with its immense popularity, tends to be the focal point due to the larger audiences and passionate fan culture. Incidents occur both in domestic league matches and international competitions. This scope indicates that racism in



Hungarian sports is a multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach for effective mitigation. In the following CASE STUDIES, we will delve deeper into specific incidents, their impact, and explore potential solutions to address this troubling problem.

On the Club level there are fairly less incidents on the international level but In summary, matches involving the Hungary national football team and neighboring countries have repeatedly witnessed fan violence, hooliganism, and racism in the stadium. These deeply entrenched issues challenge the sport's integrity, highlighting the need for comprehensive solutions and a critical examination of fan culture and behavior.

### 1.3 Monitoring countering (really?)

#### Challenges in Monitoring Racism in Hungarian Sports

##### Introduction

While addressing racism in sports is a global concern, it's crucial to understand the specific challenges faced within the Hungarian context. In this section, we delve into the challenges associated with monitoring racism in Hungarian sports, shedding light on issues related to transparency, accountability, and the role of various stakeholders.

##### Transparency and Accountability

One of the primary challenges in monitoring racism within Hungarian sports is the lack of transparency. This lack of transparency extends to multiple facets of the issue:

**1. Reporting Mechanisms:** Reporting mechanisms for racist incidents may exist, but they often lack transparency and standardization. This can result in inconsistencies in documenting and addressing incidents.

**2. Sanctioning Bias:** Clubs have raised concerns about bias in sanctions imposed for racist behavior. The perception of inequitable penalties can erode trust in the system's fairness.

**3. Football Association's Response:** The Hungarian Football Association's (MLSZ) response to racism within the sport has come under scrutiny. There are perceptions that the MLSZ may not be proactively addressing racism and discrimination.

## Role of Independent Organizations

Independent non-governmental organizations (NGOs), like the Fare Network, can play a pivotal role in addressing racism in sports. However, their effectiveness may be hindered by a lack of recognition and engagement within the Hungarian context:

**1. Lack of Recognition:** Independent NGOs specializing in anti-racism initiatives may not be recognized or engaged effectively by sports organizations and authorities in Hungary.

**2. Limited Influence:** The influence of independent NGOs or media in shaping anti-racism policies and practices within Hungarian football may be limited, contributing to a gap in effective oversight.

As in specific to Football, despite such high-profile incidents drawing international scrutiny, there has been criticism of the Hungarian Football Association (MLSZ) for what is perceived as insufficient efforts to counter racism in Hungarian football. Concerns include:

- Inadequate Fan Education: Critics argue that more comprehensive fan education programs are needed to promote tolerance and inclusivity, addressing the root causes of racism and discrimination in sports.
- Limited Sanctions: Some argue that the sanctions applied by the MLSZ against clubs and fans found guilty of racist behavior are not stringent enough to act as an effective deterrent.
- Lack of Proactive Measures: The perception exists that the MLSZ needs to take a more proactive approach in addressing racism, rather than reacting primarily to high-profile incidents.

## 1.4 Victims of Racism in Hungarian Sports: A Disproportionate Impact

Racism in Hungarian sports has taken on various forms, but it disproportionately affects specific groups within society. In this section, we explore the typical victims of racism within Hungarian sports, shedding light on the challenges faced by these communities.

### Roma Community: The Largest Minority

The Roma community in Hungary constitutes the largest minority group, and sadly, they have been frequent victims of racism within the realm of sports:

1. Fan behavior Chants against Roma are regular. Not necessarily targeting specific players, but used as a slur and insult. Creating a personification of Roma=bad.
2. Discrimination and Stereotypes: Roma individuals have been subjected to systematic discrimination in education, healthcare, labor market. Such experiences can severely impact their participation in sports and block them to become more than athletes even after their career or enter to jobs as coach or referee.

3. Limited Opportunities: Barriers to accessing sports opportunities, including training and participation, have restricted the Roma community's involvement in sports.

## Antisemitism: Lingering Prejudice

While less prevalent than discrimination against the Roma community, antisemitism still exists within Hungarian sports:

1. Historical Context: Antisemitism in Hungary has deep historical roots, and it can manifest itself in sports through offensive chants, slurs, or symbols.
2. Isolation: Jewish individuals may sometimes feel isolated or uncomfortable within certain sports settings due to the presence of antisemitic attitudes.

## Emerging Challenges: The "Gender-LGBTQ" Issue

In recent times, there has been an emergence of discrimination related to sexual orientation, often framed derogatorily as the "Gender-LGTBQ" issue:

1. Homophobic Chants: Instances of homophobic chants and slurs directed at both players and fans have marred the atmosphere at sporting events.
2. Inclusivity Concerns: These incidents raise concerns about inclusivity within Hungarian sports, as LGBTQ+ individuals may feel unwelcome or unsafe in certain sports environments.
3. Support for "gay rights" in some instances famous sport athletes supported inclusive campaigns with statements or SM posts. There was a violent outcry against them on SM and nobody protected them from authorities, just few players.

## Xenophobia and Black Players

While migration itself may not be a significant issue in Hungarian sports, xenophobia can affect black players and individuals of foreign descent:

1. Integration Challenges: Some black players may face challenges in integrating fully into clubs and communities, encountering xenophobia in the form of derogatory comments, exclusion, or isolation.

2. Acceptance, Not Welcoming: While foreign players may be accepted for their skills and contributions to the team, they may not always be genuinely welcomed into the broader sports culture. Prejudices and stereotypes can persist, affecting their experience within the sporting community.

## The "Take the Knee" Gesture

The "Take the Knee" gesture, popularized by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, has been adopted by athletes worldwide as a symbol of solidarity against racism and social injustice. However, in Hungary, this gesture encountered resistance and controversy during Euro 2020 games and qualifiers.

### Official Discouragement

Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Hungary publicly declared their opposition to the national team taking the knee. This official stance sent a message that diverged from the global trend of supporting the gesture as a means to address racism in sports.

### Fan Reactions

The reaction from Hungarian fans when opposing teams took the knee during matches was telling. Whistles, jeers, and negative attitudes were prevalent, signaling a divided sentiment within the fanbase. These reactions demonstrated a level of resistance to recognizing and addressing the issue of racism in sports.

### Impact on Solidarity

The "Take the Knee" gesture, intended to symbolize solidarity against racism, faced challenges in Hungary. The contrasting views between officials, fans, and the global sports community highlighted the complex nature of addressing racism within the country's sporting culture.

## 1.5 Impact Of Racism in Hungarian sports

The impact of racism in sports is profound and far-reaching, affecting not only athletes but also fans, communities, and the integrity of the sport itself. Here are some key aspects of the impact of racism in sports:

### 1. Psychological and Emotional Impact on Athletes:

- **Mental Health:** Athletes who experience racism may suffer from stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues due to the emotional toll of discrimination.
- **Low Self-Esteem:** Racial abuse can erode an athlete's self-esteem and self-worth, affecting their performance and overall well-being.
- **Burnout:** Racism-related stress can lead to burnout, impacting an athlete's career longevity and success.

### 2. Hindrance to Talent Development:

- Racism can deter young talents from pursuing sports careers, limiting the diversity of athletes in various sports.
- Discrimination may prevent talented individuals from marginalized communities from reaching their full potential.

### 3. Impact on Fan Experience:

- Racist behavior in stadiums can create a hostile and unwelcoming atmosphere for fans.
- It can lead to confrontations among fans and deter people from attending games.

### 4. Missed Opportunities for Social Progress:

- Sports have the potential to be a platform for social change and progress, but racism hinders this opportunity.
- Athletes' activism against racism can be met with resistance, slowing progress on important social issues.

### 5. Institutional Consequences:

- Sports organizations may face fines, sanctions, and reputational damage due to racist incidents.
- They may be pressured to implement stricter anti-racism policies and education programs.

### 6. Impact on Society:

- Racist incidents in sports reflect broader societal issues.
- They can reinforce harmful stereotypes and attitudes, perpetuating racism in society.

## 1.6 Incident Reports

List of negative cases

### CASE 1

High Level, Id Case: The Mészöly Kálmán “incident”. Mészöly played a total of 61 matches and scored six goals for the Hungary national team. He participated in the 1962 FIFA World Cup, the 1964 European Championship, and the 1966 FIFA World Cup. His team, Vasas, was Hungarian champions with his participation in 1961, 1962, 1965 and 1966. He also was part of Hungary's squad for the 1960 Summer Olympics, but he did not play in any matches.

Mészöly played in several World All-Stars games during the 1960s and 1970s. He later had three reigns as head coach of the Hungary national football team: 1980–83, 1990–91 and 1994–95. He led Hungary to the 1982 FIFA World Cup.

In 2007 however in a TV broadcast he said a completely racist thing (compared them with cave like apes, who just recently came down from the trees) about “migrant” black players and had to resign from his position, but in 2012 was completely rehabilitated causing a little scandal in the sport world. He is now dead, but he was completely celebrated, and nobody spoke about the racism he did.

### CASE 2

- Romanian Fan Fights: Rivalry between Hungarian and Romanian fans has sometimes escalated into physical confrontations. Incidents of fans from both sides engaging in violent clashes have been documented, casting a shadow over the matches and raising serious concerns about fan behavior.



## CASE 3

- Incident Involving Sekou Junior Diarra (2019): In September 2019, Sekou Junior Diarra, a Malian-born football player who was playing for Honvéd FC in Hungary, became the target of racial abuse during a Hungarian league match against Debrecen. Diarra was subjected to racist chants and gestures by some of the Debrecen supporters. This incident drew significant attention and condemnation from both domestic and international football organizations.

## CASE 4

- "England 4 Racist 0"

During a football match between the England national team and Hungary, a headline emerged that encapsulated the persistent issue of racism in Hungarian football. The headline "England 4 Racist 0" drew global attention to incidents of racism and discriminatory behavior by some Hungarian fans during the match.

This headline was symbolic, signifying that the match against racism was being won by a significant margin, with racism represented as "0." It underscored the need for decisive action to address racism in football and the broader sport community.

# Chapter 2 Good practices

## 2.1 Organization Summary: Hungarian Maccabi Association

### Introduction

The Hungarian Maccabi Association is a prominent organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Jewish identity, culture, and sports in Hungary. Founded in 1895, it has a rich history of fostering Jewish heritage and community engagement. This report provides a brief overview of the Hungarian Maccabi Association and its significant contributions to both Hungarian and global Jewish life.

### Historical Significance

The Hungarian Maccabi Association was established during a time of growing Jewish consciousness and cultural revival in Europe. Its founding aimed to create a space where Jewish individuals could come together to celebrate their heritage, engage in athletic pursuits, and build a strong sense of community. Throughout its existence, the organization has played a pivotal role in preserving Jewish traditions, despite the challenges posed by historical events such as World War II and the Holocaust.

### Promotion of Jewish Identity

One of the primary objectives of the Hungarian Maccabi Association is the promotion of Jewish identity. Through various cultural and educational programs, the organization encourages individuals to explore and embrace their Jewish heritage. This includes language courses, cultural events, and initiatives that connect young Jewish Hungarians with their roots.

## Sports and Athletics

The Hungarian Maccabi Association has a strong focus on sports and athletics. It organizes sporting events and competitions, providing a platform for Jewish athletes to excel in various disciplines. These activities not only promote physical well-being but also serve as a means to foster camaraderie and unity within the Jewish community.

## Community Engagement

Community engagement is at the heart of the organization's mission. The Hungarian Maccabi Association actively participates in interfaith dialogue and collaborates with other cultural and sports organizations. This outreach helps build bridges of understanding and promotes tolerance and inclusivity.

## Preservation of Memory

Given its long history, the Hungarian Maccabi Association also plays a vital role in preserving the memory of Jewish life in Hungary. This includes commemorating Holocaust victims and educating the public about the rich tapestry of Jewish history in the region.

## 2.2 Project Report: Ferencváros Against Racism

### Introduction

"Ferencváros Against Racism" is a commendable initiative led by Ferencvárosi Torna Club (FTC), a prominent football club in Hungary, to combat racism and promote inclusivity in sports. This report provides an overview of the project's objectives, activities, and its impact in addressing racism within the sports community.

## Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the "Ferencváros Against Racism" project are:

- **Raising Awareness:** The project aims to raise awareness about the harmful effects of racism and discrimination in sports, both among the club's fanbase and the wider community.
- **Preventing Racism:** FTC is dedicated to creating a zero-tolerance environment for racism within its stadium. The project seeks to prevent racist incidents and chants during matches.
- **Promoting Inclusivity:** Through educational programs and events, the project promotes inclusivity and diversity within the club and the broader football community.
- **Community Engagement:** FTC actively engages with fans and the local community to foster a sense of responsibility and ownership in combating racism.

## Project Activities

"Ferencváros Against Racism" employs a range of activities to achieve its objectives:

- **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** The club conducts educational campaigns to inform fans about the negative impact of racism and discrimination in football. These campaigns include workshops, seminars, and the dissemination of informational materials.
- **Fan Engagement:** FTC collaborates closely with fan groups to encourage responsible and respectful behavior in the stadium. Fans are encouraged to actively participate in the fight against racism.

- **Inclusive Events:** The club hosts events that celebrate diversity and inclusivity, inviting fans from different backgrounds to come together and enjoy football in a welcoming atmosphere.
- **Matchday Initiatives:** On matchdays, the project ensures strict adherence to anti-racism policies. Fan behavior is monitored, and immediate action is taken against any racist incidents.
- **Collaboration:** FTC collaborates with international organizations like Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE) to exchange best practices and gain insights into effective anti-racism measures.

## Project Impact

The "Ferencváros Against Racism" project has had a significant impact in multiple areas:

1. **Reduced Incidents:** The project's efforts have resulted in a reduction in racist incidents and chants during matches held at the Groupama Arena.
2. **Enhanced Awareness:** Fans and the broader community are more aware of the harmful consequences of racism in sports.
3. **Positive Fan Culture:** A culture of respect and inclusivity is gradually becoming the norm within FTC's fanbase.
4. **International Recognition:** The club's commitment to fighting racism has garnered international recognition, showcasing Hungary's dedication to addressing this issue.

## 2.3 Project Report: Romani People Football Team - CONIFA World Football Cup

### Introduction

The Romani People Football Team's participation in the CONIFA World Football Cup is a remarkable initiative that promotes inclusivity and provides a platform for Roma athletes to showcase their talents on the international stage. This report offers an overview of the team's objectives, achievements, and its significance in fostering equality and diversity in sports.

### Project Objectives

The Romani People Football Team's primary objectives include:

- **Promoting Inclusivity:** The team aims to break down barriers and combat stereotypes by actively participating in international football competitions, challenging preconceived notions about the Roma community.
- **Empowering Roma Athletes:** By creating opportunities for Roma athletes to compete at the highest level, the team empowers individuals from marginalized communities to pursue their passion for football.
- **Raising Awareness:** The team raises awareness about the challenges faced by Roma communities, particularly in Europe, and highlights the positive contributions of Roma individuals to the world of sports.

### Project Activities

The Romani People Football Team achieves its objectives through various activities:

- Participation in CONIFA World Football Cup: Competing in the CONIFA World Football Cup provides a global platform for Roma athletes to represent their community and challenge stereotypes associated with Roma people.
- Community Engagement: The team engages with Roma communities and advocates for equal opportunities in sports. They serve as role models, inspiring younger generations to pursue their sporting dreams.
- Cultural Exchange: Through their participation in international tournaments, the team fosters cultural exchange and promotes understanding between the Roma community and other nations.
- Advocacy: The team actively advocates for the rights and inclusion of Roma people, drawing attention to social and economic disparities they face.

## Project Impact

The Romani People Football Team's participation in the CONIFA World Football Cup has had a significant impact:

**Inspiration:** The team serves as an inspiration for Roma youth, showing them that they can excel in sports and break down barriers.

**Challenging Stereotypes:** Through their performance on the field, the team challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about the Roma community.

**Global Awareness:** Their participation in international tournaments has brought global attention to the issues faced by Roma communities, encouraging a broader dialogue on equality and inclusivity.

Community Pride: The team's success has instilled a sense of pride and unity within Roma communities worldwide.

## 2.4 Project Report: Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation - Promoting Tolerance Through Sport

### Introduction

The Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation (MGHRO) is an esteemed non-governmental organization based in Hungary with a rich history of promoting human rights, tolerance, and diversity. This report sheds light on MGHRO's remarkable initiatives that employ sport, particularly football, as a powerful tool to combat discrimination and foster social inclusion.

### Project Objectives

MGHRO's initiatives revolve around the following objectives:

**Combating Discrimination:** MGHRO is dedicated to eradicating discrimination in all its forms, particularly discrimination against migrants, refugees, and marginalized communities.

**Promoting Tolerance:** The organization actively promotes tolerance and diversity, emphasizing the importance of respect and understanding among people from different backgrounds.

**Upholding Human Dignity:** MGHRO works tirelessly to uphold the human dignity and rights of all individuals, irrespective of their nationality, ethnicity, or migrant status.

### Project Activities

MGHRO achieves its objectives through a diverse range of activities:



**Legal Aid and Counseling:** The organization provides crucial legal aid and counseling services to migrants and refugees in Hungary, ensuring their access to justice and protection of their rights.

**Cultural Events:** MGHRO organizes African festivals and cultural events, fostering cross-cultural exchange and celebrating diversity.

**Workshops and Trainings:** The organization conducts workshops and training programs in Budapest high schools, focusing on topics such as the Roma community, African culture, discrimination, tolerance, and diversity.

**Football Initiatives:** MGHRO places special emphasis on using football as a means to combat discrimination and facilitate communication among diverse groups. In 1994, the organization established the African Stars football team, comprising exclusively of refugees and migrants. This team has participated in various tournaments and won several prizes, including the prestigious anti-racism World Cup "Mondiali Antirazzisti" tournament held in Italy in 2006.

## Project Impact

MGHRO's initiatives have had a profound impact on society:

**Legal Support:** The legal aid and counseling services have been instrumental in safeguarding the rights of migrants and refugees in Hungary.

**Cultural Understanding:** Cultural events, workshops, and training programs have promoted understanding and tolerance among Hungarian youth, breaking down stereotypes and prejudices.

**Sport for Social Change:** The African Stars football team exemplifies the transformative power of sport in promoting social inclusion and combating discrimination.

International Collaboration: MGHRO collaborates with various international, governmental, and non-governmental organizations that share its vision and goals, amplifying the impact of its initiatives.

## **Chapter 3 Summary of Engagements with Key Organizations**

This part of the report compiles insights and information gathered through interactions with various organizations and individuals concerning the issue of discrimination and racism in Hungarian sports. Many of the interviewed were concerned about their participation and specifically asked to be anonymous. The engagement aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the prevalence of discrimination, challenges faced, and efforts to combat discrimination in the Hungarian sports landscape. It is important to note that while some responses were informal and based on personal connections, official responses were not received from many parties, including contacts at the Hungarian Football Association (FA).

### **3.1 Prevalence of Discrimination:**

- **Widespread Discrimination:** Participants in the engagement consistently reported the presence of discrimination and racism within Hungarian sports. Racist incidents go completely unreported and are common. Not just in Football, but in many levels, also in amateur clubs targeting Roma, LGBTQI+ and Refugees. Words like, girly, gipsy or fag or retard are used as common insults by coaches and team members alike. Systematic discrimination was also observed in various forms, including distrust in others, lack of cultural awareness, no safe space for diverse individuals, etc, and (for example) lack of opportunities for Roma professionals on higher levels.

- Lack of Government Funding: One notable challenge in addressing discrimination in sports is the absence of government funding or support for projects aimed at combating discrimination and promoting inclusivity. This lack of financial backing hinders the implementation of effective initiatives.

### 3.2 Challenges in Addressing Discrimination:

- 3.2.1 Labeling NGO-s as foreign agents, global propagandists, traitors, etc.

Negative Attitudes towards NGOs: A recurring theme was the prevailing negative attitude towards non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Hungary. NGOs working on discrimination-related issues often face skepticism and hostility, which can hinder their efforts to promote change.

Working with LGBTQ+, ROMA, and Refugee communities makes you or your organization a target. For a certain period of time the youth movement of the ruling party posted a huge red label on the doors of several well established organizations (Amnesty Hungary, HelsinkiCommitte Hu, Menedék): foreign funded organisation supporting illegal migration to Hungary. The ones who sued won against this process (defamation), but the media was reporting only the labeling, that was an intimidation attempt, so “we” stop. These organisation are frequently labeled as traitors, fake-civilians, they are facing stigmatization, and have no public funding for any activity. This is making it even more challenging to address discrimination within the sports sector or help those in need and this creates an aura of fear.

Personal Targeting: Individuals and organizations working on discrimination-related projects are often personally targeted through smear campaigns and harassment. This personal targeting creates a hostile environment for those trying to combat discrimination.

### 3.3 Efforts to Combat Discrimination:

Grassroots Initiatives: Despite the lack of government support, grassroots initiatives have emerged to combat discrimination in Hungarian sports. Local organizations and communities are taking the initiative to promote inclusivity and diversity at the community level.

Awareness Campaigns: Some organizations are running awareness campaigns to educate the public about discrimination and its impact on sports. These campaigns aim to change attitudes and promote tolerance.

International Partnerships: Collaborations with international organizations and sports bodies have provided a platform for sharing best practices and seeking support in addressing discrimination in Hungarian sports.

Conclusion: Discrimination and racism remain persistent issues in Hungarian sports, with marginalized communities often bearing the brunt of such prejudices. The lack of government funding, negative perceptions of NGOs, and personal targeting of individuals working on these issues present significant challenges. Nevertheless, grassroots initiatives and awareness campaigns are striving to make a difference in combating discrimination, and international partnerships offer a glimmer of hope for progress in this area. To effect real change, concerted efforts are needed to challenge discriminatory attitudes and promote inclusivity within the Hungarian sports community.

Engaged Organizations

Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation (MGHRO): MGHRO emerged as a prominent organization dedicated to promoting human rights, tolerance, and diversity in Hungary. They have effectively utilized football as a tool to combat discrimination and foster social inclusion.

Ferencvárosi Torna Club (FTC): FTC has been proactive in implementing measures to address racism in football matches, particularly through campaigns and preventive measures.

Hungarian Football Association (FA): Despite outreach, formal responses from the Hungarian Football Association were not received, making it challenging to gain official insights.

### Common Themes

- Limited Transparency: Respondents noted a lack of transparency in monitoring and reporting instances of discrimination in Hungarian sports. This opacity has led to concerns about the fairness of sanctions imposed on clubs and individuals.
- Efforts by Clubs: Some football clubs, such as Ferencvárosi Torna Club (FTC), have demonstrated commitment to combating discrimination by implementing preventive measures and campaigns, but none of the other “internationally active” clubs did.
- In some other sports (ice hockey and Handball) there were also incidents but the Federation reacted swiftly
- Politics have an important aspect in Sport Life and there is a lot of government investment in sports and many federations and clubs have pro governmental owners or leaders.
- Challenges in Monitoring: The absence of a comprehensive monitoring system for discriminatory incidents poses a significant challenge. Discriminatory incidents often go unreported or undocumented.

- Diversity and Victims: Discrimination is primarily targeted at the Roma community in Hungary, with some instances of anti-Semitism and recent concerns about LGBTQ+ issues. Migrants generally face xenophobia, but foreign players are relatively accepted.
- Engagement in International Events: Hungary's involvement in international events, such as the UEFA European Championship (Euro 2020), highlighted instances of discrimination, including fan reactions to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protest and solidarity kneeling.

## **Chapter 4. Concluding Remarks**

This summary report provides a snapshot of engagements with organizations and individuals working to address discrimination and racism in Hungarian sports. While some entities, like MGHRO and certain football clubs, have taken proactive steps, challenges related to transparency and monitoring persist. The absence of formal responses from the Hungarian Football Association underscores the need for enhanced collaboration and transparency to effectively combat discrimination in Hungarian sports. Further research and dialogue are necessary to drive meaningful change and promote inclusivity and respect in the sporting arena.

Europe lacks effective and coordinated methodologies, tools, and procedures for monitoring racism and discrimination in the world of sports. Media and public attention tends to focus on the explicit forms of discrimination and racism that run through professional sports and involve the most famous athletes. For the most part, the forms of discrimination and racism that run through grassroots sports on a daily basis remain invisible.

This report offers a survey of experiences and monitoring practices tested in Italy to prevent and counter the phenomenon and makes some working suggestions to refine, coordinate and make existing experiences more effective.

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