



## For a proactive and effective monitoring of racism in sport

**The issue.** Sports is an important mirror of the tendencies that characterize the evolution of society and Europe continues to struggle in addressing the deeply entrenched cultural roots of the structural forms of racism that permeate its society. Systematically monitoring the forms of discrimination that pervade the world of sport daily is one of the essential steps to analyze its dynamics and characteristics and define effective strategies of prevention, mitigation and protection of individuals affected by systemic and structural racism that crosses all levels of sports. The member states of the EU have been repeatedly urged to establish organized mechanisms for reporting and managing discriminatory behaviors in the field sports and monitoring systems and data collection in collaboration with sports federations and all the stakeholders involved.<sup>1</sup>

Preventing, monitoring, and countering racism in sports in a more effective way means:

- a) amplifying the initiatives on rights, equal opportunities and the awareness-raising and training initiatives against discrimination aimed at young people and the school community as much as possible.
- b) calling for a greater daily commitment against racism from who has the actual power to change the institutional politics and to influence the public opinion: firstly, the companies/corporations, the sports federations, the athletes, and the equal opportunities bodies.

The analysis of such a complex, multifaceted and capillarily widespread phenomenon like that of racism to date cannot lean on systematic and harmonized collection of statistical and official administrative data. Limited transparency and uncertainty regarding the frequency of statistics and official reports; institutional focus concentrated on the main national sport; insufficient collaboration among the various institutional stakeholders involved; lack of harmonization between the classification systems used at local, national, and European levels appear to characterize the initiatives promoted in the partner countries of the MONITORA project.

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr: ECRI, General Policy Recommendation No.12 on Combating Racism and Racial Discrimination in The Field of Sport adopted on 19 December 2008, Strasbourg, 19 March 2009, p. 5, here: [https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-12-on-combating-racism-and-racial-discrimination/16808b5ae7\\_and\\_FRA\\_Racism\\_ethnic\\_discrimination\\_and\\_exclusion\\_of\\_migrants\\_and\\_minorities\\_in\\_sport\\_The\\_situation\\_in\\_the\\_European\\_Union\\_Summary\\_Report\\_2010.pdf](https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-12-on-combating-racism-and-racial-discrimination/16808b5ae7_and_FRA_Racism_ethnic_discrimination_and_exclusion_of_migrants_and_minorities_in_sport_The_situation_in_the_European_Union_Summary_Report_2010.pdf), p. 13 available here: [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/1206-FRA-report-Racism-in-sports-summary-EN-2010-10-28.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/1206-FRA-report-Racism-in-sports-summary-EN-2010-10-28.pdf)

## Guiding principles

**PARTICIPATION.** The **direct participation** of the subjects that are at a higher risk of racialization in the ideation and planning of the interventions is essential to establish trust which determines the success or failure of the initiatives of prevention, monitoring, mitigation, and reparation of the victims of discrimination.

**INDEPENDENCE.** Monitoring racism in sports, together with the promotion of “diversity” in sport, should be coordinated by an **independent agency**.

**COOPERATION.** Facilitating and incentivizing the **collaboration** between the different stakeholders (institutions, companies, sports federations and clubs, antiracist organizations, media) also thanks to the organization of *consultation tables* and to the pooling of information relative to the different interventions/projects and existing monitoring systems.

**HARMONIZATION AND COORDINATION.** **Harmonizing and coordinating the monitoring systems of discrimination**, the classification and the storage of the information adopted by the different stakeholders.

**PLANNING.** Planning for the medium and long-term monitoring activities to facilitate the continuity, systematicity and solidity of the collection and analysis of data.

**ACCESSIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY.** Facilitating as much as possible the reporting by victims or any witnesses of discrimination that occur in sports, **allowing anonymous reports** and creating efficient, standardized, and shared reporting tools also thanks to the structuring of **local networks and antennas against racism**, coordinated at national level.

## Methodological measures

Among the features that should qualify the monitoring systems of racism in sports, there are: **systematicity, replicability, quality of the information** and data gathered, **simplicity of the procedures and of the reporting tools, networking, and the effectiveness**, that is, the ability to assist the monitoring initiatives with interventions aimed to protect the rights of the individuals affected by discrimination and to prevent the reiteration of discriminatory phenomena.

It is crucial to **clearly define the goals, objectives and the object** of the monitoring initiatives of discrimination and racism in sports at a national or local level, clearly distinguishing between research objectives and the purposes of supporting victims of discrimination.

**Providing detailed information** on the sources used, the methods adopted to collect data and ensuring a full, exhaustive and transparent representation of the data and the information that is available should be a key tenet.

**Specifically monitoring the media narrative of racism in sports**, particularly in sports publications, local media, and their associated social media pages, could contribute to exposing, with greater scientific rigor, the forms of stereotyping that unfortunately still characterize the narrative of sports today, especially when practiced by Afrodescendant or Roma athletes.

## **Proactive monitoring and reactive monitoring**

*Proactive monitoring* methods (i.e. field research and surveys) are highly effective for disseminating up-to-date knowledge on discrimination and racism, as well as for activating prevention mechanisms. Proactive monitoring is often limited to a diachronic dimension and requires a localized and micro-investigative approach to capture complex and invisible forms of discrimination and racism. This approach necessitates resources to ensure adequate and extensive territorial coverage, as well as specific training for field operators (e.g., coordinators, match delegates, etc.).

*Reactive monitoring* is essential to identify criteria of discrimination gathered in the field, providing stakeholders with an empirical view of the problem along a synchronic dimension that evolves over time. Reactive monitoring requires effective and facilitated post-reporting processes to ensure that reported cases are analyzed and addressed for the protection of victims.

In general, any form of formalized monitoring should be based on systematic and organic actions aimed at fostering the development of a culture of mutual respect and enhancing the ability of involved actors to identify at-risk situations, contexts, and behaviors: informal monitoring cases can provide valuable insights on how to achieve these objectives.

## **Road map towards an integrated monitoring protocol**

### *Preparation*

An effective and transferable monitoring protocol should be based on clear definitions for discrimination and racism. These should be regularly reviewed. *Adaptation* is a key principle.

The *combination of proactive and reactive monitoring methods* is essential to ensure a transversal cover of the different dimensions of sports (from elite to grassroots, from professional to amateur, from national to local, etc.).

Communication and information materials should be aimed at field operators, with the goal of providing them with the specific knowledge needed to address less visible and normalized forms of discrimination.

The insertion of monitoring tools in wider anti-discrimination plans can enhance their effectiveness. However, it is important to prioritize concrete practices of active and passive monitoring, otherwise the plans risk being solely focused on awareness-raising.

Sports associations, especially, should be involved in the definition of the monitoring protocol and encouraged to incorporate it in their daily activity as an integral part of their social mission.

## *Implementation*

Although centralizing information is important, reporting tools should be organized and distributed in a decentralized network, so they can be adapted to local social, cultural, and political circumstances.

The mechanisms and criteria should be reviewed regularly to better adapt to the evolution of the complex manifestation of discrimination and racism but also to the everchanging local circumstances. Sustainability is a key principle.

Data and information from both passive and active monitoring should be continuously combined. An effective monitoring protocol should also include the possibility to share exemplary cases, good practices or bad examples, in order to inform the monitoring network about its functioning and provide guidance to users.

An effective monitoring protocol should also aim to provide information (particularly to the vulnerable and at-risk individuals and to victims of discrimination) on the mechanisms of reparation on the protection and sanction system and on the procedures following the report.

These should be simplified and made visible to the stakeholders involved, particularly to citizens. Transparency is a key principle.

### **A proposal for classification**

A monitoring activity necessitates a classification system capable of methodologically defining how the relevant indicators will be measured. An hypothesis of classification could consider the following variables:

- The **type of discriminatory act or behavior** (discrimination, verbal abuse, physical abuse or damage to things or property). Verbal abuse, which is the most common, is broken down in three main categories: *insults*, *threats or racist violence*, *propaganda* (writings, banners, flyers, posters that have discriminatory contents), *public demonstrations* (racist chants fall under this category);
- The **geographical area** (municipality, province and region);
- The **sports disciplines** involved;
- The **sport level** (professional/elite, high and medium level amateur; amateur and competitive grassroots sport; recreational and non-competitive activity);
- The **discriminatory motive**: somatic features, nationality or “ethnicity” of origin, religious affiliation and personal beliefs, ability status, sexual orientation;
- The **gender and nationality of the victims**;
- The **age group of the victims** (minors 0-17 years old, young adults 18-29, adults 30-64, elderly over 65 years old);
- The **groups of actors involved in the discrimination** (players, individual fans or group of fans, referees, sports managers, private citizens, groups of supporters of fascist/nazi nature);

- The **age group of the actors of the discrimination** (minors 0-17 years old, young adults 18-29 years old, adults 30-64 years old, elderly over 65 years old);
- The **type of reaction of the victims** (report to the competent authorities, report through public statement, no report);
- The **type of adopted sanctions** (disciplinary, against the club, against the executives, no sanction).

## Monitoring tools of the MONITORA project

Within the MONITORA project, **guidelines** have been developed for the definition of collaboration protocols with the purpose to facilitate the creation of local networks aimed at combating racism in the world of sports. The guidelines are available [here](#).

([https://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/wp-content/uploads/1D.2.3.MONITORA\\_protocol\\_ENG\\_DEF28.11.2023\\_def.pdf](https://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/wp-content/uploads/1D.2.3.MONITORA_protocol_ENG_DEF28.11.2023_def.pdf))

An operational and editable version of the monitoring protocol was designed for the **online training course Monitoring racism in grassroots sports**, made in the context of the project, available for free [here](#). (<https://emonitora.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/>)

The editable protocol is also available in [Italian](#) and [English](#):

(IT: [https://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/wp-content/uploads/Editable-version-protocol-Monitora-Eng\\_DEF.pdf](https://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/wp-content/uploads/Editable-version-protocol-Monitora-Eng_DEF.pdf)

ENG: <https://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/wp-content/uploads/Editable-version-protocol-Monitora-Italiano1-1.pdf> )

The monitoring tools have been created from the analysis of the existing monitoring experiences in Italy, Belgium, Finland and Hungary converged in four national reports and in a European report, which are available [here](#).

(<https://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/monitora-national-reports/> )

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