

Football is the world's most popular sport and is played all over the world. Football is a common passion shared by millions of people, of every age, religion and ethnic background and has become a real intercultural sport - still the issue of racism troubles football!

Racism in football has different forms, whether it is racist chants and insults against an African player, discrimination of players of different ethnic background or the spread of racist and neonazi propaganda in some stadiums.



FOOTBALL WITHOUT RACISM

UNITED THEMATIC LEAFLET no 4

Expressions and incidents

Racism in football has different expressions, some are easier to spot and recognise than others. The more visible incidents can be:

Physical violence against players of different ethnic background

- In Serbia at the club Borac Cakac, the Borac player Mike Tamvaniere, from Zimbabwe, was not only the target of racist abuse from a group of Borac neonazi fans, but in April 2006 was physically attacked just outside the stadium by Borac fans.

Racist, anti-Semitic or Islamophobic chants or abuse against a certain player or a team

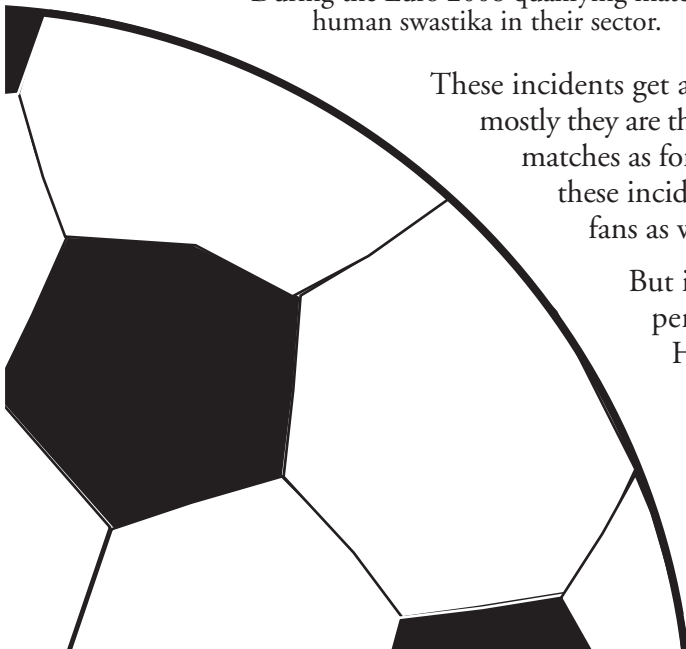
- At the UEFA cup match on March 12th, 2008 between Zenit St. Petersburg and Olympique Marseille, three black players of Marseille were targeted by racist abuse during the match. A part of the Zenit fans threw a banana at them and made "monkey noises".

Displaying of fascist, racist or neo-Nazi flags, symbols and propaganda by some of the fans

- In Slovakia, on April 20th, 2007 during a league match between FC Senec and Slovan Bratislava, the visiting fans of Slovan displayed a picture resembling the face of Adolf Hitler along with a banner "Alles Gute Adi" (Best Wishes Adi), where the letter S was replaced by a Sig rune. This was done on the date of Hitler's birthday. Similar events were repeated this year, in Denmark and Austria.
 - During the Euro 2008 qualifying match, between Italy and Croatia, the Croatian fans formed a human swastika in their sector.

These incidents get a lot of attention from the public and the media, but mostly they are the work of a small group of supporters that use football matches as forum to express their far-right or neonazi views. Often these incidents happen with the silent support of the rest of the fans as well as the majority population.

But it is not just the fans who offend, sometimes football personalities or even coaches do so. For example in Hungary, the former international coach Kalman Meszoly, when asked about African players in Hungary said: "They have barely come down from the trees". This goes to show that there are different, sometimes hidden, expressions like the discrimination of minorities and immigrants playing football or being a part of football life in general.





Fans against Racism

Fan culture is a very important part of any sport, football especially. Being a fan means to have a passion for your club, your players and football as such. Even though it is not easy to categorise fans we can distinguish three different types of fans and fan groups.

Hooligans • The hooligan movement was formed in the nineteen sixties in England and was closely connected to the first wave of skinheads. Hooligans were hard-core supporters of their clubs, known for their violent acts and fights with other hooligans. Hooligans and football hooliganism then spread from England to the whole of Europe. Even though most hooligans have a rule of keeping politics out of their fights, many neonazis since the 1980's are members of hooligan firms, especially in Eastern European countries where most hooligans are recruited from members of the extreme right.

Ultras • Ultras as a movement were formed at the end of the 1960's in Italy and since the ultras movement has spread across all of Europe and into other parts of the world.

Ultras are the most passionate supporters of their club. To be an Ultra is more than to be a regular supporter. Ultras follow their club to away matches, sing and support their club during the whole match, prepare choreographies as well as pyrotechnic shows and displays. Ultra groups are the heart of the clubs supporters...

Most hooligans, are active supporters of their teams, but some of them use the football matches for starting fights. The Ultras, on the other hand, can engage in violent acts, conflicts with the police or even riots, but differently than Hooligans Ultras are more concerned in supporting their club.

Fans/Supporters • these are people who support their team, cheer it on. Although they mostly are not as passionate and die hard as Ultras, they have a strong link to the club and are an integral part of fan life at the stadium.

The issue of racism and fascism, in football and in general as well, has also touched fan culture. Many different fan groups are active in the fight against

racism. Ultra groups such as Ultras Sankt Pauli (FC St. Pauli, Germany), Biris Norte (FC Sevilla, Spain), Commando Ultras (Olympique de Marseille, France), Rangers Pisa (Pisa Calcio, Italy) and many others, have a clear antiracist and antifascist stance and they both promote and demonstrate it, both inside and outside the stadiums, either by choreographies or other displays, or by taking part in other activities, such as antiracist fan tournaments or supporting migrants.

Fans, and fan culture as such, are an important part of football and it is best when they themselves speak out against racism in football and work to eliminate it from their stands. These fans serve as a great inspiration for other fans all around the world. For that, it is necessary to set up an action supported and led from the bottom up, starting with collaboration among ultras groups and fans.



FARE - Football Against Racism in Europe

FARE - Football against racism in Europe is a European wide network of NGO's that work against discrimination in football. The network started in 1997 as a supporter's initiative and after 11 years of work, it now consists of 37 national partners working in all aspects of the game, with the fans, players and local communities as well as with clubs and FA's (Football Associations), to combat discrimination in football. The FARE network is also the home to different projects all over Europe, such as:

"Let's Kick Racism out of the Stadiums" in Poland

This is the campaign slogan of the Never Again Association, a FARE, as well as UNITED partner, it targets to promote antiracism and *combat* racism in Polish football stands. One aspect is to monitor and counter neonazism in Polish stadiums and work effectively along with the Polish Football Association to raise awareness of the problem and to force neonazis out of the Polish football grounds.

A good example of their active approach could be seen at the league match

between Legia Warsaw and Widzew Lodz, when players of both teams came on the pitch wearing shirts with the slogan and logo of the campaign, to support the fight against racism in Polish football. The shirts were signed by the players and later auctioned off, to also support Never Again's activities financially.

The second aspect is antiracist work with different fan groups and organisations to promote football as a game for everyone. The Never Again Association also works at the Pryzstanek Woodstock music festival, where it yearly holds an antiracist football tournament, as well as discussions and workshops.

Along with the project in Poland there are two other projects running in Eastern Europe, one based in Slovakia - Football Unites Us (futbal.rasizmus.sk), which targets primarily at the exclusion of Roma communities and working through football at bringing Roma and non-Roma communities together and tackling ethnic stereotypes. The second is based in the Balkans - The FARE Alpe Adria Balkans Project, that faces the challenge of strong xenophobia and nationalism and works with youth teams and football clubs.

FARE Action Week

The FARE Action Week is a campaign to support and unite the European football community active in the fight against racism in football. The main idea is to support small, grass roots initiatives to address local problems. In the year 2007 more than 190 different groups, from all over Europe took part in the action week. The activities are focused around football, whether it is: a fan choreography against racism, a friendly match or a local football tournament to involve local minority and migrant communities, or a football event with discussions at a local school or youth centre, there are many possibilities. Any fan group, NGO, minority organisation, or anyone who has an idea as how to combat racism in football, or through football, in their local community, is invited to submit their creative proposals. The FARE network tries to support financially as many projects as possible, while also providing free informational and campaign materials.

Most common symbols you may see on flags, scarves or banners:



Swastika: official symbol of German National Socialism and NSDAP (1933-1945)



Celtic Cross: most popular logo of the extrem right in Europe, also used as a symbol of the White Power movement. Sometimes used to replace the letter 'O'



Totenkopf: was a symbol of an SS Tank Division, today it is the symbol of the neonazi organisation "Combat 18"



Sig rune: commonly used in pairs to represent the symbol of the SS, sometimes used to replace the letter 'S'



Odal rune: was the sign of the Hitler Youth, today it is a very common symbol between neonazis



Symbol of the first SS division: "Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler", the particular form of the shield is commonly used by right wing fans



Roman Fasces: symbolise the fascist regime and the National Fascist Party created by Mussolini (1922-1945)



18: Stands for the first and eight letters of the alphabet 'AH' - Adolf Hitler



88: Stands for the eight letter of the alphabet 'H' - the Hitler Salute "Heil Hitler"



14: Code for the 14 words by American neo-Nazi David Lane: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children"

Mondiali Antirazzisti

The Mondiali Antirazzisti, or the Anti racist World Cup, is a large annual 5 day football tournament, in the region of Emilia Romagna, near Bologna, in Italy. It is open to fan groups, antiracist organisations, immigrant associations, youth groups, or just to anyone who enjoys fair-play football. The tournament is non-competitive and is focused to bring people together, rather than create rivalries.

But the Mondiali is not just a football tournament. It is a big festival of antiracism, with many different activities, such as discussions, workshops, film screenings, concerts and many more activities.

Last year, more than 4000 people representing more than 200 teams (male, female and mixed) from 20 European and non-European countries attended, creating a lively and colorful community. The Mondiali is a great event for anyone who loves football and wants to enjoy it in an atmosphere not constrained by racism or discrimination.



Racism at your stadium?

What to do if you notice a racist incident at your stadium?

The best thing that you can do is draw attention to the incident, report it to your club authorities and try to inform other people about the incident, even through the media. Even if in your country the issue of racism in football may not be taken as a serious problem, the best thing is to bring it to the public, to inform people that this is what is happening and try to open a discussion on the topic.

Most football fans disapprove of such behavior and the great majority of racist incidents are the act of a small group of people. Most fans either have little or no knowledge about the incidents, or rather just ignore them quietly, a silent consent to the whole incident. It is best to get as many people involved and draw attention to the problem, both to the club and to the rest of the fans.

But don't stop there. Try to continue with what you have started, for example: create a fan group that will set an example to others, or try to promote the discussion

on the topic, by getting more people involved, or be creative and think of new approaches.

A few ideas to what you can do:

- If you are part of a fan, or ultra group bring it up as an issue and get your group involved in anti-racist activities.
- Inform other people about the incident, best through the (local) media or via your clubs fanzine or bulletin.
- At your next fan meeting, open the debate on racism at your stadium or in football in general and try to get more fans involved. Perhaps your fan group can take part in one of the antiracist tournaments like Mondiali Antirazzisti or St. Pauli Antira.
- Promote your work! Organise a small football match between fans of your club and a local minority community.
- Invite members of minorities to your fan groups to make them part of football life at your stadium.
- There are different ways, so try to be creative and get as many people involved as possible.

Racist incidents in stadiums are mostly the work of a small group of people that usually do not count on resistance. It is best to show them that there are fans and people who will not tolerate such things in their stadium. So don't just be silent, make yourself heard!

Football really is a beautiful game, a sport anyone can play and enjoy and everyone should have the right to enjoy the game, without being intimidated by racists or discriminated from playing it. Racism ruins football for everyone, the players, the fans and the supporters, that's why it is important to play the game the way it is meant to be: freely, by everyone, without fear and intimidation.



Useful websites

- FARE > www.farenet.org
- Mondiali Antirazzisti > www.mondialiantirazzisti.org
- Show Racism the Red Card > www.TheRedCard.org
- St. Pauli Antiracist Tournament > www.antira-stpauli.org
- Kick Racism Out of Football > www.kickitout.org
- Coordination desk Fan-projects Germany > www.kos-fanprojekte.de
- Football Unites - Racism Divides > www.furd.org
- FairPlay. Different Colours. One Game > www.fairplay.or.at

This Thematic Leaflet was developed in the frame of the project: 'Civil Society Against Right-Wing Extremism - Developing New Lifelong-learning Strategies for NGOs' a project supported by the Grundtvig Program of European Commission and implemented by UNITED for Intercultural in partnership with:

- ARI Immigrant Association Rieti, Italy - www.ariweb.it
- DUHA - Rainbow Association, Czech Republic - www.duha.cz
- Kulturbüro Sachsen, Germany - www.kulturbuero-sachsen.de
- Movement Against Intolerance, Spain - www.movimientoontraintolerancia.com
- MTP Oradea, Romania - www.mtporadea.ro
- Never Again Association, Poland - www.nigdywiecej.org
- Norwegian People's Aid, Norway - www.antirasisme.no
- People Against Racism, Slovakia - www.rasizmus.sk
- University of Venice, Master on Immigration Programme, Italy - www.unive.it/masterim



AN INITIATIVE OF UNITED AGAINST RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM

Background information about the project "Civil Society Against Right-Wing Extremism"

This project was developed after many years' experience of UNITED network in antidiscrimination campaigns and deep analysis on the current trends of European civil society active in the fight against right-winged extremism, racism and discrimination.

Experience shows that despite the quantitative and qualitative work done by many organizations active in this field, many NGO's have little knowledge about democratic institutions and processes. Nevertheless, there are effective ways to tackle discrimination at its local and regional level through innovative and informal learning strategies. There are as well ways to give the best practices a European dimension.

The aim of the project is to create a space for antiracial adult education and make it qualified, available and accessible throughout Europe. The objectives are: the creation of feasible ways to enhance the work of local grassroots groups and NGO's active in the field of antiracial education, their training as learning facilitators in antiracial education, and the counterbalance of the unevenness in antiracial fight Europe-wide. The project has as its direct target group precisely NGOs activists. Ultimately, the project is also expected reach-out the NGOs' target groups, mainly disadvantaged social categories with less opportunities to access education else way. The main activities envisaged include identification, selection and dissemination of best practices in the antiracist field, conferences, workshops and campaigns, which will eventually bring the following outputs: publications, handbooks, info leaflets, web-pages and campaigning material.

What is UNITED?

UNITED for Intercultural Action is the European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees. Linked through UNITED, more than 560 organizations from a wide variety of backgrounds, from all European countries, work together on a voluntary basis. They base their cooperation on common actions and shared activities on a mutual respect. UNITED is and will remain independent from all political parties, organisations and states, but seeks an active co-operation with other anti-racist initiatives in Europe. Through the UNITED network organizations meet each other, work on common actions and share information. European-wide action weeks, campaigns and such are planned and discussed on UNITED conferences. Like-minded organisations find each other on such conferences and work together on specific projects and on specific topics. Information is received from more than 2000 organisations and mailings go out to about 2500 groups in Europe. If you want to get involved, discuss the ideas and aims of the UNITED network within your organisation. Let us know that your organization would like to join or receive information. And add us to your mailing list!

UNITED for Intercultural Action

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UNITED is Supported by

more than 560 organisations from all European countries, many prominent individuals, private supporters and long-term volunteers from Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste, Austrian Service Abroad and Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Since 1992 financial support was received from various sponsors such as: European Commission (General Budget/Socrates/Grundtvig/Youth Programme/DG Employment Social Affairs/ TACIS), Council of Europe (European Youth Foundation/European Youth Centres), Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, World Council of Churches, Olof Palmes MinnesFond, Cultural Council Sweden, Ministry of Education Slovenia, Green Group-, Socialist Group-, and GUE/NGL Group in the European Parliament, European Cultural Foundation, Stiftung West-Östliche Begegnung, Aktionsbündnis Gegen Gewalt, Rechtstextremismus und Fremdenfeindlichkeit Brandenburg, Home Office UK, Ministry of Interior-BZK NL, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs CH, Ministry Foreign Affairs-BUZA NL, Vuunwerk Internet, Instituto Português da Juventude, National Integration Office Sweden, Service Nationale de la Jeunesse Luxembourg, LNU - Norwegian Youth Council, Europees Platform Grundtvig, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Youth Board of Cyprus, Federal Social Insurance Office (Dep. for Youth Affairs) CH, Swiss Coordination Office of Youth for Europe, Federal Service for Combating Racism (Fund for Projects Against Racism) CH, Migros Kulturprozent CH, Comunidad de Madrid, Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan, Final Frontiers Internet, Dijkman Offset and others.

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This publication is part of the project 'Civil Society Against Rightwing Extremism' part funded and made possible by the support of the European Union Grundtvig Program.



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