#BEACTIVE

European Week of Sport
10 - 18 September 2016

SPORT AND MIGRATION:
WHICH CONTRIBUTION FOR FOOTBALL?

Salle Gothique
Hôtel de ville, Grand Place
Brussels, Belgium

12 September 2016 – 15:00
BACKGROUND – EU, INTEGRATION AND SPORT

The European Union (EU) is currently facing the largest migration flows of its young history. According to Eurostat, the 28 EU Member States (MS) protection status to 333,350 asylum seekers in 2015 which represents a 72% increase compared with 2014. In total, nearly 1.1 million asylum seekers have been granted protection status in the EU since 2008.

Discussions and debates at European level have tended to focus on “distribution” and “numbers” so far. Indeed, once (and if) the distribution takes place, there is a necessary need to support refugees in their integration curricula. Also, whilst EU-coordination and national support are needed, the responsibility of creating the conditions for integration are in the hands of local authorities, private and public.

Sport is an under-estimated and underutilised vehicle for social integration in this context. It enables people from different backgrounds, religious beliefs and languages to play together and learn to discover and exchange on each other’s cultures.

The integration process is not a one-way street: the burden of integration does not fall only on the shoulders of those who arrive in a new country. Host communities also have a role to play in terms of adapting to newcomers, with an integration curriculum that is consequently a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation and potential benefit.

Sport and recreation can underpin and celebrate diversity but, without coordinated efforts, how can ongoing opportunities be realised and without a reliance on agency and government resources? Equally, what can the contribution of clubs and sport federations look like? How can they help migrants volunteer and thrive through sport?

It is interesting to glaze at how sport clubs and local authorities have put into place policies that tackle this issue.

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1 http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7233417/3-20042016-AP-EN.pdf/34c4f5af-eb93-4ecd-984c-577a5271c8c5
PROJECT

With this background in mind, the Sport and Citizenship think tank proposes to organize a conference during the 2nd European Week of Sport, supported by the European Commission.

The roundtable will address the following questions:

- How can we define integration through sport? How to evaluate success/monitor progress?
- How to facilitate access to sport and local communities for refugees? Which are the obstacles in place?
- How to activate multistakeholder partnerships that steer in the same direction?
- How can coaches and clubs work together to foster tolerant, safe and inclusive environments for refugees?

OBJECTIVES

- BENEFIT from the EWoS momentum to discuss the potential of sport in the integration of refugees
- IDENTIFY and HIGHLIGHT several good practices in Europe, whilst singling out factors of success;
- EXPLORE the role of sport clubs, particularly in football, in the integration curricula of refugees
- DISCUSS possible concrete and operational recommendations directed at: European institutions, national governments and cities.

AGENDA

15:15 Introduction
Antonio SILVA MENDES, Director Youth and Sport, European Commission

15:20 Roundtable “Sport and migration: which contribution for football?"
Moderation by Laurent THIEULE, Sport and Citizenship Think Tank
   - Ignacio PACKER, Secretary General, Terre des Hommes International Federation
   - Piara POWAR, Executive Director, FARE Network
   - Kurt WACHTER, Project Coordinator, Sport Inclusion Network
   - Benjamin RENAULD, Project Manager, Kraainem Football Club, Belgium
   - A representative of UEFA (TBC)

16:20 Questions and open discussion

16:40 Closing address
Thierry ZINTZ, Catholic University of Leuven / Member of Sport and Citizenship

17:00 Cocktail reception