

The New Federalist

# THE FIGHT AGAINST INTOLERANCE



SPECIAL EDITION

JUNE 2014



YOUNG  
EUROPEAN  
FEDERALISTS

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*“Listening indeed to the cries of happiness arising from the City, Rieux remembered that such happiness would always be threatened. Because he knew what this happy crowd ignored, and which can be read in books, that the Plague bacillus never dies nor disappears, that it can remain asleep in wardrobes and linen for decades, that it patiently waits in bedrooms, caves, suitcases, napkins and papers, and that maybe, the day would come where, for the unhappiness and education of men, the Plague would awaken its rats and would send them to die in a happy city.”*

(La Peste, Albert Camus, 1947)

Intolerant movements, whether institutionalised or not, are on the rise across Europe. They are very diverse but tend to have a common denominator: a radical focus on a particular trend, entity or group of people, which goes against the fundamental European values of freedom, tolerance and universalism. Their targets are very diverse – religious groups, sexual orientation, immigrants, Europe, globalisation – but their hatred is very similar.

Tolerance is an essential feature of the Young European Federalists’ (JEF) DNA, as outlined in our political platform: “United in diversity - This motto conveys the idea that Europeans are united in working together for peace and prosperity, and that the many different cultures, traditions and languages in Europe are a positive asset for the continent and important for its dynamism.”

This printed special edition of The New Federalist (TNF) was created as part of the work plan “Young European Federalists for a tolerant united Europe”, supported by the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. It aims at understanding the key drivers of intolerant movements, in order to define whether it is a temporary or permanent trend. It will analyse how values are becoming increasingly polarised across Europe, which is important to define the best strategy to fight against intolerance. Such struggle should however not lead Europeans to sacrifice their fundamental values of freedom of speech and pluralism. There are numerous ways for civil society to promote tolerance efficiently, such as Sports, which has a proven direct impact on people’s perceptions. We call upon all European citizens – young and less young – to join us in this struggle for tolerance: “the only necessary thing for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing.” (Edmund Burke)

# RISING INTOLERANCE: TEMPORARY STRAY OR HERE TO STAY?

## ARTUS GALIAY

The 2014 European elections confirmed the trend of rising intolerance in Europe, though on a shocking scale. Understanding this trend matters because it defines the course of action one can take. If it is a by-product of the crisis, then growth-enhancing reforms can draw voters back to reason. If this is permanent, this may only be the beginning of hard times in which Europe will have to face up to its old demons.

### Extremism on the rise across Europe

On the 25th May, extremist parties across Europe made an unprecedented electoral break-through. Anti-establishment parties now control around one third of the European Parliament. The most radical populists (in the 'Non-aligned' Category) increased their number of seats from 33 to 101. Populists won more than 25% of the votes in three of Europe's biggest countries: France, Italy and the United Kingdom. The Front National (which came first in a national election for the first time in its history) and UKIP together have as many parliamentary seats as Spain. Germany has its first neo-Nazi MEP. On a more positive note, extremists in the Netherlands and Finland lost ground, and the four mainstream pro-European parties (EPP, S&D, ADLE, Greens) still control 70% of seats (down from 80% in the previous Parliament).

Six years into the worse economic crisis since the 1930's (bar the Second World War), one could argue that these results were expected and could actually have been much worse. But still, witnessing crypto-fascist (or openly fascist) movements arise, precisely 70 years after hundreds of thousands of soldiers sacrificed their lives on the shores of Normandy to fight against their then established regimes, these elections foster the strange and hopeless feeling that people don't learn from their parents' mistakes.

However, it would be a mistake to think that such a big and widespread movement is taking place without any underlying problem driving it. Discarding this as a simple hatred-driven movement would be a mistake. The acceleration of globalisation since the spread of internet and the multiple transformations experienced by European societies over the last 20 years offer other explanations to the rise of populism: the feeling of loss of sovereignty, elites' failure to secure a prosperous future for everyone, the increasing distance between societies and their elites (both national and European), migration and integration, etc.

### Symptom or illness?

Hence, defining whether rising intolerance is the symptom of a wider illness or an illness in itself is key to fighting its negative impact on European societies, whose sheer degree of cultural, historical and religious complexity make intolerance socially explosive. In France, the Front National scored 10.4% in the first round of the 2007 Presidential election, compared to 25% in the 2014 European elections. Does it mean that 15% of French voters suddenly became radically intolerant in between? Or have they always been intolerant, but are more open about it today, for a variety of reasons? Just like the Plague bacillus in Albert Camus' 'La Peste', extremism 'never dies nor disappears', it can remain hidden for decades in people's hearts and minds and suddenly resurface.

One way to understand this trend is to look beyond the classical left-right political spectrum. It is clear that the acceleration of globalisation and the openness and interconnectedness that come with it have produced winners and losers. The latter understandably do not see the opening up of national borders as a good thing. Asking them whether or not they have become more intolerant is missing the point: their livelihoods have been shattered and they see only a bleak future for their children. One can hardly blame them for paying attention to the simplistic solutions offered by populists. Here, the best response mainstream parties can provide (whether right- or left-wing) is to abide by their electoral promise for growth and job creation, which requires deep structural reforms. As Bertolt Brecht used to say, 'Erst kommt das Fressen, dann die Moral' ('First comes food, then morality'): the power of this rather cynical quote should not be underestimated.

### Political implications: don't let the symptom trigger the illness

A closer country-by-country political analysis seems to indicate that rising intolerance is more a symptom of the economic slump than a profound belief in populist parties' ideals. London provides a striking confirmation of this analysis: the area of Greater London is one of the most diverse places of the world, yet UKIP scored very low results in the heart of London (zones 1 and 2), where relatively high-earners live, and obtained its best scores in the outskirts, in much less favoured areas. This means that for an equal level of cultural diversity, UKIP votes differ radically, and depend more on economic wellbeing. Furthermore, UKIP came first in the election by campaigning almost exclusively on an anti-EU sentiment, whilst the more radical and immigration-focused British National party scored 1% (down from 6% in 2009),

Two girls kissing during the French anti-gay marriage protest, January 2013\*.



which suggests that voters were more attracted to a message of “bringing back powers to the UK” than the BNP’s outright xenophobic and racist message.

In France, the Front national only scored 7% on a national scale in the local council elections in March this year. Although this is partly attributable to the fact that the FN did not present lists in every single town in France, the immense gap with the 25% it scored in the European elections strongly suggests that FN votes in these elections were anti-EU, anti-elites and anti-globalisation rather than a vote in favour of the FN’s fascist ideals. In Italy, the xenophobic Northern League only won 5 MEP seats (compared to 9 in 2009), and the populist Beppe Grillo came second with 21% (less than expected), and although his party is clearly anti-establishment, it is very eclectic and not outright intolerant. It is also notable that no extremist and intolerant parties emerged in recession-battered Portugal and Spain. In Greece, although it is worrisome that the fascists from Golden Dawn won 9.4% of votes, it is much less than the 26.6% won by the anti-establishment and not

immigration-focused extreme left Syriza.

To conclude, although there is a clear rise of intolerance and extremism across Europe, this rise seems almost exclusively justified by the grave economic slump which has been battering European citizens’ hopes and aspirations for 6 years. In the face of such a mess, mainstream parties’ credibility was doomed to be shattered, and it is understandable that disillusioned citizens – particularly younger generations – feel attracted by the simplistic solutions (protectionism, euro exit,...) offered by populist parties. Hence, mainstream parties should strongly avoid chasing extremists’ ideas: why would voters want the copy when you can have the original? In order to make sure this rise in intolerance remains a temporary stray that History should not forget about, mainstream parties need to display political courage to tackle vested interests across Europe, kick-start European economies and make sure everyone gets a fair share. They can be sure that once there is food, Morality will follow.

## A SHARED EUROPE, COMMON VALUES? RUBEN LOODTS

It is nothing but an understatement that Europe has changed over the last decade. Citizens no longer accept elitist decision-making and reclaim their autonomy, often by voting for parties that take “the will of the people” into consideration (or make them believe they do). Populism and extremism are on the rise, bringing more than ever racist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic politicians into the European Parliament following the elections of May 2014, with a neo-Nazi being elected as a very troublesome symptomatic precedent.

European integration started after centuries of war, building on common values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law, out of which the Council of Europe arose.

Maybe, anno 2014, our common European values are just not that common anymore? In the last years, a strong polarisation has been noticeable among citizens, but also among political elites on our European continent. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban is determined to abandon ‘liberal democracy’ in favor of an ‘illiberal state’ based on national foundations, citing Vladimir Putin’s Russia as his preferred example, which brings us to the case addressed in this article. Putin plays on a nationalism nurtured by wounded pride, risking changing Europe forever with an increasingly ambiguous attitude towards European values and – looking at what is happening in East-Ukraine – bringing war back to our continent. Even though a full-fledged member of the Council of Europe, Putin’s Russia is more unpredictable than ever. How could it get that far?

*“I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest.”*

Winston Churchill, 1939

\*Source: [http://fressoz.blog.lemonde.fr/files/2013/01/article\\_photobaiser1.jpg](http://fressoz.blog.lemonde.fr/files/2013/01/article_photobaiser1.jpg)

## Russia's riddle

"Nobody and nothing will stop Russia on the road to strengthening democracy and ensuring human rights and freedoms," claimed Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2004. Today, Putin himself seems like the main roadblock to human rights in Russia. Following his return in 2012 for a third Presidential term, the Kremlin unleashed the worst political crackdown in Russia's post-Soviet history. Antigovernment and anti-Putin protests were brutally silenced whilst international observers suggested the use of (cyber) censorship, pseudo-legal marginalisation of opposition voices, widespread intimidation and electoral fraud.

Since then, Putin approved a series of draconian laws designed to suppress any form of dissent, further curbing political freedoms and human rights in Russia. What followed were years of increasing restrictions on the activities of civil society, where foreign-funded independent groups are depicted as destructive forces alien to Russian traditions (foreign agents law); the introduction of a series of repressive laws on freedom of expression and media censorship; a law banning propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships, widely understood to mean lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) relationships; legally indefinable anti-blasphemy laws following the Pussy Riot protest in a cathedral in Moscow; prosecution of political opposition and a dangerous cultivation of xenophobia in the Russian population.

It should be no surprise that currently over 20% of all cases pending before the European Court of Human Rights involve Russia, often resulting in a ruling against the Russian state. The European Court's judgements represent a long series of condemnations by the international community on the state of human rights and political freedoms. It seems unlikely that those judgements will lead to any change in Russia, which has returned to practice some of the worst excesses of the Soviet-era, including using criminal law for political purposes.

## Council of Europe and Russia, another failed marriage?

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation was confronted with a mission to develop new relations with organisations and states on the European and international scene, beyond its initial sphere of influence. Despite its democratic failures, the Russian Federation joined the Council of Europe in 1996, the international organisation – older and larger than the European Union – tasked to extend human

rights, promote democracy and uphold the rule of law on the European continent. It was a political decision for both parties. Accession was seen as a step towards democratic conversion, in the understanding that drawing former communist countries into dialogue is better than isolating them.

Already since Putin's second term in office (2004-2008) we could observe a Russian strategy undermining the legitimacy and normative power of the Council of Europe. There had indeed been criticism that Russia may have used its chairmanship (2006) to weaken the council's work, but for the critics the real point of discussion was whether Russia should be a member of the Council of Europe at all. A debate which continues to date, as demonstrated by the international outcries related to Russia's anti-gay propaganda law (in particular ahead of and during the Winter Olympics in Sochi) as well as the political situation in Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea earlier this year. Following sanctions imposed on Russia by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) over the political situation in Ukraine, Russia suspended all cooperation with PACE in a tit-for-tat move, clearly embarking a new low in the relations between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation, and creating another clash between different interpretations of our 'common set of values'.

## A shared Europe, common values?

In times where human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe face a crisis unprecedented since the end of the Cold War, how patient should we be with political actors like Vladimir Putin for whom nothing but the domestic context prevails in order to gain popular support among conservative natives? To what extent has the Council of Europe influenced Russia, and in what way has Russia modified the current nature of the council? Might Russia's admission to the Council of Europe have been premature 18 years ago, or is Russian membership still desirable?

Either way, we as Young Europeans must continue building a tolerant and united Europe and contribute to creating a common understanding of tolerance, respect and unity among Europeans. We must continue emphasizing and enforcing the peremptory importance of human rights, democratic values and respect for the rule of law in Europe and the world. How big of a challenge this may seem, this is our duty. Nothing less.



# INTOLERANCE: A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT?

## ESPEN BERG-LARSEN, JACOPO BARBATI

One of the main traits of democracy is the representation of people's views. Pluralism is arguably one of the success factors of a democratic system as it allows for the representation of minorities' views. In effect this can be a security valve to political tensions, and to some extent prevent the outburst of violence. Freedom of speech, and the limits to it as such can therefore be subject to discussion as we see the rise of parties with views that contradict, or challenge the views of the majority.

Is intolerance towards intolerance really tolerant?

History has shown us that difficult times can draw ordinary people towards the outskirts of the political landscape in search of better solutions. The forces that can be found there tend to have forceful rhetoric and simple answers to exaggerated challenges. Identifying threats to our way of living and our traditions seems to be a common denominator. But how do we counter them?

Supposedly there are several answers to this question. One approach is to impose laws to limit the possibilities of extremists to present their views in public, or to develop their thoughts openly. Another approach is to treat these actors as a part of the democratic life, and openly challenge their views. Here is a short introduction to the two different approaches, and challenges related to them.

If society turns to ridicule the extremist views voiced by some, are we fighting intolerance, or are we feeding coal to the furnace infuriating the voices that utter such statements? Introducing new sets of laws would mean undermining one of the fundamental principles of democracy: the freedom of speech. Although even in the most liberal democracies, there are some limits to this freedom; crimes like *vilification* or *lèse-majesté* are present in many sets of rules all over the World.

In Italy the current Constitution says that there should be the possibility, for every citizen, to gather in associations and to freely express their opinions. These opinions are nevertheless limited by the already mentioned "vilification crime" that foresees that one can be persecuted for utterance that is against some groups, identified by ethnical or religious belonging, or against high-level State symbols including the flag, or the President of the Republic. Moreover, the same Constitution says that any attempt of re-establishing the Fas-

cist Party is forbidden. As you can see, even though the law talks of "freedom of gathering", one cannot create an association or party that follows the same ideology as the Fascist party had. This trait is seen in several other constitutions. The restrictions seem rational, but they can also serve as obstacles forcing certain groups under ground, making them more difficult to monitor or even counter.

By imposing restrictions like this it is tempting to draw a line, defining fascism in order to put a legal limit to the views that are not considered suitable in a democracy.

The risk to this is however that the marginalized groups can adopt a "martyr" like behavior – and thus obtaining undeserved attention to their claim to a "Truth that can destroy the System itself". In an ideal world it would be more desirable to be able to counter the views that the majority considers to be wrong. If they are wrong it should be easy to do just that.

This is to some extent the approach that has been tried in liberal democracies for the past 50 years. Over the course of these years we have seen a gradually more tolerant society emerging. Freedom of expression remains one of the core values of our society, but not without challenges.

WE COULD  
**DO**  
**BETTER**

There is still a gap between most of the anti establishment parties on the rise today and real extremism, but given the history of our continent – and the rhetorical similarities between the fascist movement of the thirties and a lot of the far right parties on the rise, there are reasons to be alert.

It seems far too easy to tear down the peace that has been built in Europe, and that gives us all the more reason to counter them, not by law, but by verbal confrontation. Not by force, but by standing up for liberal values. Extremist views and intolerance may not be pleasant, but it should remain your right to defend what you believe in – then it is up to the rest of us to defend our values against attack. We could do better.

# SPEAK UP AGAINST INTOLERANCE!

## PETER OOMSELS

Here's why and how you can honour the memory of Europe's horrific past.

### Intolerance's comeback on the European scene

The fallout from the tumultuous European elections has begun to hit politics across the continent. Ian Traynor, the Guardian's European editor, argues that there are strong gradations in the European far-right parties that have entered the European Parliament. He uses the term 'neo-fascist' to describe Jobbik (Hungary) and Golden Dawn (Greece), but considers Front National (France) as "*a party rooted in racism and anti-Semitism*". Austria (FPÖ), the Netherlands (PVV), Sweden (SD), Denmark (DPP), Belgium (VB), Germany, (NDP), Italy (Lega Nord) or Britain (UKIP) now all have representatives in the European parliament that can be considered to be far right or extreme right. But it's not worth spilling ink over the discussion about whether to call these parties neo-Nazi, neo-fascist, or 'merely' extreme-right. They are united in their very core beliefs: at the very heart of these growing movements lies intolerance.

Intolerance made a comeback on the stage of European politics. It was not unexpected, since history has already shown that difficult financial, economic and social times nurture the need to find scapegoats for unemployment and other systemic problems. While it is unlikely that these parties will have a large influence on the daily work of the European Parliament, since the majority will do its best to shut them out, this does not mean that we should feel at ease. The real danger is not that these intolerant parties win power in the Parliament, but that they will win the minds and hearts of the European public.



### The far-right's Siren songs

But how would they do this? The champions of intolerance often use difficult times to inspire fear about urgent social and economic 'problems', such as immigration, a rise in crime, or the collapse of the monetary system. Their argument is always that these problems are never caused by 'us', but always caused by 'them', whoever they are. They succeed in attracting media attention for these claims by 'spicing up' their messages with short, simple sound bites and fictional exaggeration of numbers to give a factual impression (for instance, Nigel Farage kept repeating "*massive and uncontrolled immigration*" of "*29 million Bulgarians and Romanians*", even when the facts all contradicted that claim). Media attention is also attracted through highly emotive language, use of strong imagery and theatrical rage against the political machine. As such, they distinguish themselves from the governing 'elite' and present themselves as the heroes of the people.

Those are the notes of the far-right's Siren songs. So why is this tune so appealing to a part of the European public?

### Cold silence

"Cold silence has a tendency to atrophy any sense of compassion between supposed lovers, between supposed brothers."

Lyrics to 'Schism' by 'Tool'



With these words James Maynard Keynan describes crystal-clear how the message of intolerance speak to so many in the European public, how division can grow where unity should exist. Intolerance, division, and hatred grow when there is nobody who speaks up against it. We have seen this before, but nowhere has it been formulated better than in Martin Niemöller's poem about the rise of Nazism in Germany:

“First they came for the Jews  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a Jew.  
Then they came for the Communists  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a Communist.  
Then they came for the trade unionists  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a trade unionist.  
Then they came for me  
and there was no one left  
to speak out for me.”

Poem attributed to Martin Niemöller (1892–1984)

### So speak up!

The low turnout of 43.1% in the European elections shows that once more, the silent majority fails to see the consequences of its taciturnity. For this reason, we should not hold back our disagreement with these parties. Our duty now is clear. Our duty is to speak up against these parties, against their intolerance, and against their hatred. So we must make sure that we make a convincing argument. Aristotle describes three appeals to make persuasive arguments: an appeal to logos, ethos, and pathos.

An appeal to logos refers to an appeal to logic and reason. Here, *“persuasion is effected through the speech itself when*

*we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question”*. You can use facts, data and logical conclusions to guide your audience through your argument. Aristotle considers logos to be the most ethical appeal, and suggests using the other appeals only when logos does not suffice or is not available.

An appeal to ethos refers to an appeal to credibility: here, *“persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible”*. Ethos is about establishing your moral legitimacy as a speaker, for instance by using famous quotes, by mentioning that you have personal experience with what you are talking about, or by stressing that you are just a ‘normal citizen’.

Finally, an appeal to pathos refers to an appeal to your audience's emotion. Here, *“persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions”* As a speaker, you try to evoke emotiveness and inspire hope, joy, fear and sadness, for instance by speaking about the unemployment of your friends, about how your grandfather died in battle against fascism and Nazism, for the future of his children.

### But who leads the fight against intolerance?

The biggest difficulty is not ‘how’ to fight against intolerance, but effectively standing up and doing it. So the question is who should speak up against intolerance. The answer is clear: this is the duty of us all. You may feel alone when you speak up against intolerance, and you may feel the cold silence around you. But realise that you are never alone when you speak up against intolerance.

We can be proud of our peace project in Europe – but only if we practice what we preach. We can never again yield against intolerance. We must always speak up against it. Because we cannot drive Europe back into the hell-hole from which it only barely managed to crawl out of.

**Because that is the duty we have to our past.**

# SO SPEAK UP!



# SPORT: A BRIDGE TO INTEGRATION AND TOLERANCE

PAULINE GESSANT, MIRIAM POSTIGLIONE

Why write an article about sport in a publication dedicated to intolerance? Maybe because sport is always balancing between being a symbol of extreme intolerance between opposing players and supporters and a means of building a society living together.

## Sport as the magnification of intolerance and national patriotism

Sport can produce nationalistic expressions that are detrimental to peace. The Olympic games, in particular, are the greatest example of this tendency to foster overt displays of patriotism by most of the participating countries.



The Olympics have been used by Nation-States as a surrogate forum for international competition. This phenomenon is permanently present from the 1936 Olympics until the latest event

in Sochi. The 1936 Berlin Olympics were used by the Nazi Party to promote anti-Semitic ideals and to validate national and racial theories of physical and technical superiority in order to affirm the dominance of the Aryan race and Germany over other countries in sport.

Even though Nazism has been defeated, national politics and the international dynamics are still playing a massive role in worldwide sport events. The Cold War shaped how the Olympic Games were viewed, by both sides and there are two main events occurring in the Olympics that are nearly incomprehensible without considering the political context. Those are the “blood in the water” pool match between the Hungarian and URSS team in 1956 and the “miracle on ice” between USA and URSS.

In more recent history, the Chinese Government spent an enormous amount of money in preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, with the objective of displaying the success and superiority of the Chinese nation.

Each of those episodes of nationalistic promotion is in contradiction with the ultimate goals of the Games, as stated in the Olympic Charter: “no kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas”.

Nevertheless, the influence of politics in sport is mainly a magnification of national patriotism. These worldwide events may bring about progressive change. Having in mind the recent Beijing games, the dramatic issue of human rights violations was raised to global attention. They entailed an intense scrutiny of China’s human rights record and created many calls for boycotts and protests which have resonated with the population. However, those reactions had limited potential to produce lasting change. On sport’s ability to raise consciousness on important matters, the latest winter Olympic games in Sochi were a clear example of how the will to use sport to diffuse a nationalist and anti-homosexual propaganda by the hosting nation. This produced a series of appalled reactions, such as the boycott of the Games by many states representatives and athletes.

Whereas sport can sometimes be considered as a magnification of intolerance, it often plays an important role in national cohesion and respect for Difference.



## Sport as a factor of national cohesion and mutual respect

Sport has often been used as a way to create a sense of belonging to a community in respect of one another within a country or between countries. A clear example of the influence of sport in national cohesion is what we have seen in Belgium recently. In fact, the Red Devils seem to have united a divided nation with their historical qualification to the 2014 world football cup. But it is also interesting to see how the cohesion factor of sport works at a smaller scale, such as in South Africa with the program “bridging divides”.

Its aim is to use basketball to bring children and communities together, working strongly on the educational factor of sport.

One of the most important aspects in the education of children is respect between people. The Open fun Football Schools implemented in Eastern Europe and the Middle East organised street events for the wider community, which sometimes acted as the first significant post war contact between communities that were formerly close but were deeply hostile to one another.

Furthermore, at the institutional level, sport institutions express sometimes themselves a sense of responsibility in their task to contribute to mutual respect. Thus, the Union of European Football Association (UEFA) launched the Respect campaign in 2008. It consisted in a social responsibility program whose main objective is to work towards unity and respect across gender, race, religion and ability. The campaign was mainly visible through TV spots which were broadcasted at half-time during UEFA EURO 2012 games, as well as on stadium screens.

### Sport as a factor of integration

Sport is also a channel for integration in society, helping socially vulnerable people get back on track. We may refer to the very positive impact of the Paralympics games on how disabled people are perceived and considered in society.

In Italy, the initiative “diamo un calcio all'omofobia” (give a kick to homophobia) launched by the site paddy power, in cooperation with gay and lesbian associations, currently asks to use shoes with rainbow laces. The initiative has been directed to the entire sport world and has been adopted and supported by the national football association (Figc) and by the Italian national football team.

Moreover, sport plays a strong role in promoting skills and values that will be useful in a professional environment and in life as a whole. Teamwork and management, self-confidence, leadership and organisation skills are abilities that may be developed through sport and are important ways to increase employability. Thus, the method of Sir Alex Ferguson, former Manchester United coach, is studied in management schools. Sport teaches perseverance and fighting spirit but, even more important, it teaches how to rebound from setbacks, to understand why you failed and to do your best to win next time.

This role of integration is recognized by Europe. A 2013 motion by the Assembly of the Council of Europe named “*sport*



for all: a bridge to equality, integration and social inclusion<sup>14</sup> stated «Especially for children and young people, practicing a sport is an excellent means of socialisation between people of different gender, ability, culture or nationality. It opens up possibilities for meeting and exchange, it helps immigrants to bond with other members of society and it facilitates positive relations with underprivileged groups and categories which suffer from discrimination. Sport has (and must play) a role in promoting equality between men and women, social ties and a culture of “living together”. Consequently, it is important to promote an inclusive approach to sport». Also in its programming period 2014-2020, the European Union has included sport in the new Erasmus + integrated programme with the aim of promoting voluntary activities, social inclusion, and equal opportunities in sport.

LET'S  
GIVE A  
PENALTY  
FOR  
INTOLERANCE  
IN SPORT!

Racial slurs by sport fans are often a symptom of intolerance but when it is well managed, sport can be a strong treatment for tolerance by bringing multicultural and diverse teams together. Sport should be considered as a vehicle for integration and social cohesion. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders, sport federations, opposing players, coaches and officials, referees, opposing supporters. Let's give a penalty for intolerance in sport!

<sup>14</sup>Source: [http://fressoz.blog.lemonde.fr/files/2013/01/article\\_photobaiser1.jpg](http://fressoz.blog.lemonde.fr/files/2013/01/article_photobaiser1.jpg)  
<sup>1</sup> <http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewPDF.asp?FileID=20226&Language=EN>



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In 2014 the Young European Federalists have received financial support by the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the Council of Europe

