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## Written Declaration

of the European Parliament on tackling racism in football



## a golden chance to score

It is a sad reflection of our world that racism continues to blight the beautiful game. Football is not the cause of racism, but it is in our stadiums and on our pitches that some of the most visible and violent abuse takes place.

We should see this as an opportunity. The massive popularity of football presents us with the means to reach millions of people and, we must hope, to promote tolerance and understanding. By winning hearts and minds on the terraces and on the pitch, we make a crucial breakthrough in the bigger battle to free society of racism.

No one government or organisation can fight racism alone. It demands the support of every part of society, of every individual. It is a problem that requires close cooperation between the public and private spheres. In the world of football, a similar picture exists. Each member of the family – the associations, leagues, clubs, players, referees and supporters – has its role to play. That is why our Declaration calls for a joint effort from everyone that cares about football.

We take great encouragement from the work of UEFA, Football against Racism in Europe (FARE), and the other organisations that are committed to fighting racism in football. They have understood that football has a special responsibility – and, again, an opportunity – to tackle the problem.

But now is not the time to relax – we can and must do more. The European Parliament should call on all those with a stake in football to join the fight against racism, and to do what they can in their community.

We urge you to make your own contribution by supporting this Declaration.

Thank you,

Emine Bozkurt MEP (PES/NL)  
Christopher Heaton-Harris MEP (EPP-ED/UK)  
Cem Özdemir MEP (Green/DE)  
Alexander Nuno Alvaro MEP (ALDE/DE)  
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*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. recognising the serious incidents of racism that have occurred in football matches across Europe,
- B. whereas one of the objectives pursued by the European Union, under Article 13 of the Treaty establishing the European Union, is the protection against discrimination based on ethnicity and nationality,
- C. whereas football players, like other workers, have the right to a racism-free working environment, as set down in the case-law of the European Court of Justice,
- D. whereas football's popularity offers a new opportunity to tackle racism,
- having regard to rule 51 of its Rules of Procedure:
- 1. Strongly condemns all forms of racism at football matches, both on and off the field,
- 2. Commends the excellent work that various organisations, including UEFA and FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe), have done in tackling these problems,
- 3. Calls on all those with a high profile in football, above all players and coaches, to speak out regularly against racism,
- 4. Calls on national football associations, leagues, clubs, players' unions and supporters' groups to draw up action programmes to combat racism,
- 5. Calls on UEFA and all other competition organisers in Europe to ensure that referees have the option, according to clear and strict guidelines, to stop or abandon matches in the event of serious racist abuse,
- 6. Calls on UEFA and all other competition organisers in Europe to consider the option of imposing sporting sanctions on national football associations and clubs whose supporters or players commit serious racist offences, including the option to remove persistent offenders from their competitions,
- 7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the other European institutions and the Governments of the Member States.