



# **RAPORT**

## **“Gender and Sexual Diversity in Sport”**

**CONFERENCE**

**Kraków, 06.03.2015**

International conference „Gender and Sexual Diversity in Sport” took place in Krakow on 6th March 2015. It was attended by about 100 people from Poland and the rest of Europe. It was organized Stowarzyszenie Krakowski Klub Sportowy Krakersy with the support of: Kampania Przeciw Homofobii, European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation, Football Against Racism in Europe, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Heinrich Böll Foundation. The conference received Honorary Patronage of Mayor of Krakow – Professor Jacek Majchrowski.

After the opening of the conference by representatives of KKS Krakersy – Łukasz Siemieniec and Kamila Nalborska - short speech were presented by Klaus Heusslein - co-president of the European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation and Adriaan Palm - a representative of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Klaus Heusslein emphasized the importance of LGBT rights as human rights, stressing that the psychosexual orientation is not a choice. We should fight for acceptance rather than tolerance and try to work more effectively with the government. We need specific actions, clear communication and willingness to change.

Adriaan Palm talked about the fact that sport helps us to develop and therefore the right to sport is a human right. It allows us to be ourselves, to feel acceptance and respect for what we do. However, many LGBT people still have no access to this. Progress is slow and international cooperation is a very important factor, especially cooperation with the professionals and learning from each other. Our task is to encourage governments to create a safe space for coming outs. LGBT rights are rights for all people and we should fight for it



# Lecture 1: „Sport respects your rights”

Slava Melnyk, Campaign Against Homophobia



Slava Melnyk, a representative of Kampania Przeciw Homofobii, presented the project, which they dealt with over the last two years. The project is aimed at young people and covers a range of several fields of discrimination: homophobia, sexual abuse, sexism and racism.

The organizations from Germany, Italy, Austria, Great Britain, and Poland participated in the project. Its aim is to develop a culture of respect and inclusion.

The two main components of the project are:

1. Strengthening of youth - enhancing self-esteem, communication skills, assertiveness, respect for others and to prevent of sexual violence in sport.
2. Raising awareness on specific examples of sexual violence and gender-based violence in sports.

The project included activities both top-down and bottom-up. It consisted of workshops, information campaigns and round table meetings. Workshop groups were responsible for developing a campaign within one of three themes:

- Prevention of sexual violence against young people in sport;
- Fighting against discrimination of young people in sport based on sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Fighting against discrimination based on race and ethnicity.

The result of these workshops is the campaign [reaguje.info.pl](http://reaguje.info.pl) where you can get information about the discrimination as well as the ways to react when confronted with it.

## Lecture 2: „There is no such thing”

Renata Włoch, PhD, University of Warsaw, Faculty of Sociology



Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism commissioned a study in relation to Euro 2012. The theme of the research were to be controversial areas of the sport: discrimination, corruption, violence, position of women. Renata Włoch deepened her studies with the problem of homophobia. She has not received too many details, but it was a valuable experience for her as a researcher.

She gathered the data from participants involved in professional football. In general, the violence associated with homophobia in sport is ignored - in Poland, there are not much data on this subject. The organization Never Again in the years 2010 - 2012 recorded 17 acts of homophobia and 10 cases of physical violence.

In November 2014 Renata Włoch carried out structured interviews. All were short and did not yield any conclusive results. Interviews showed no monitoring of the problem nor any anti-discrimination policies - nobody sees the need for maintenance such thing.

According to Renata Włoch's respondents sports environment's attitude toward homosexuality is negative. Coming out for athlete is a synonymous of the end of his career. No one wants such people as the members of the team in the locker room either.

Another example is a Facebook profile LGBT Section of football club Legia Warszawa – Renata Włoch conducted the analysis of profile's discourse based on user's posts which was mostly very offensive.

The participants of dr Włoch's interviews were selected by using snowball sampling (participants were recruited by other participants). The study involved interviews with 5 gay men - basketball and football players. These were the most difficult interviews for dr Włoch - respondents did not want to be recorded and all of them stressed the need for discretion. Therefore the publication of any results is very problematic.

Hypotheses were confirmed: sport is very heteronormative, perceived as the last bastion of masculinity. Sport is also hypermasculine. There is an assumption in sport world that everyone is heterosexual. Homosexual individuals are forced to stay in the closet. There are also examples of both verbal and physical violence. The participants of dr Włoch's research had no knowledge of either the person or about any procedure that might help them in their cases.

According to Renata Włoch it is necessary to work at the institutional level. Ministry of Sport's role could be the creation of code of conduct. The presence of LGBT people in sport must be stressed out. Ministry must help in building a safe environment, because it affects the welfare of individuals. If there are no top-down changes, legal changes remain only on a paper.

The discussion that came after the lecture left following conclusions: the results of the research have not been used because Polish Ministry of Sport does not believe in existence of homosexuality in sports. Ministry's representative stated that these studies will not be ignored. However, to make any changes the ministry must have hard data from the studies. This data is needed in order to persuade the government bodies to finance those changes. The definition of "hard data" however could be questionable. There were voices that actions should not be dependent on the data collected because human rights should be protected institutionally. If we have to convince conservative politicians we can work with the opposition parties.

## Wykład 3: „Run Dota Run”

**Dota Szymborska, blogger ([oneginetatopa.blogspot.com](http://oneginetatopa.blogspot.com)), sportswoman, coach**



Dota Szymborska trains endurance sports like Triathlon. These sports are perceived as difficult and not for women. The situation of women in these sports have changed over the years – for example 10 years ago there were not even women's locker room for competition. Different motivations for running are represented by men and women (national list of runners in 2014). Women choose shorter rather than longer distances, but it may be due to the fact that they started to run relatively recently. It is possible that in the future the results for men and women will become similar. For now, however, women are seen as weaker and less durable. This creates very unpleasant situations for women taking parts in endurance sports. When they take part in the competition the prize for the best woman is usually significantly lower than for the best man. This can sometimes be justified by the fact that there are less women in the competition , as well as the fact that there is only one winner. Women also meet with unpleasant comments ("Don't let the woman beat you").

## Discussion 1:

### „Whose problem is inequality in sport?”

Participants:

**Joanna Żukowska – Easton** – Deputy Director of the Department of Strategy and International Cooperation of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, Warsaw, Poland

**Katarzyna Wolska - Wrona** – a representative of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, Warsaw, Poland

**Barbara Barend** – sports journalist, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**Pavel Klimenko** – FARE activist, Kiev, Ukraine

**Elizaveta Zhuk** – FARE activist, a lawyer specializing in human rights, Moscow, Russia

Moderator – **Magda Dropek, queer.pl**



Participants were asked questions about discrimination in sport. They all agreed that sport is and should be for all. In some countries the situation is good. For example in the Netherlands women in sport achieve even greater success than the men. In other countries the situation is tragic, as in Russia and Ukraine, where there are anti – LGBT laws introduced. However, even in those countries where the situation is good, there are situations demonstrating that a lot still remains to be done in terms of equality in sports - for example, women's sport still receives less funding than men sport. In Poland, Ministry of Sport is aware of the problem of discrimination and wants to cooperate with sports associations. However, they are limited by the internal rules – sport unions are autonomous in relation to the Ministry. Thus Ministry focuses more on educational activities.

One of the topics discussed were anti-discrimination laws. In Poland it is still a problem with an autonomy of sports associations. In addition to this, the problem is not only the existence or non-existence of laws, but their enforcement. We can be supported by EU directives, but the most important are adequate organizations to support anti-discrimination policies. We need to start working on the basics and we have an obligation to implement equality programs for example, to have the opportunity to train girls in school football. Again it was emphasized that LGBT rights are human rights and they should be

taken seriously, regardless of the data from the studies. We must also remove loopholes in the law. Very important action is the support from non-LGBT movements – not only LGBT should defend their rights, but also others should defend our rights because LGBT rights are human rights, and where human rights are respected, there the society and the environment are friendly to everyone.

Important action is support from well-known athletes. Unfortunately in Poland the famous athletes either pretend that there is no homosexuals in sport or speak about them in an offensive way. In Russia, there are no outed athletes which is bad because there is a need for a positive role models to show the society who the LGBT people really are. In Ukraine the situation is similar to one in Russia - people try to avoid the subject. However, UEFA has the ability, under the provisions of law (any discrimination is prohibited) to punish sport clubs for homophobic behavior. FARE is also monitoring the situation. When there is no relevant national regulations we can take advantage of the autonomy of sport and non-governmental organizations as well as the rules of international organizations.

What can be done to clubs and sports associations comply with anti-discrimination policy? In Poland they are 90% financed by the state budget, so it can be used as a method of the influence. There are already initiatives such as "Fans Together" which has a stable funding and has aspects of anti-discrimination. Fans themselves have come out with the initiative. Another pressure could be gained from the sponsors, but they mainly pay attention to actions which is profitable.

## Discussion 2: „Biopolitics of sport”

Participants:

**Judith Schuyf, PhD** – historian, former counselor for Transgender people in the Dutch government and the Dutch Olympic Committee and member of EGLSF, Utrecht, The Netherlands

**Wiktor Dynarski** – President of TransFuzja Foundation, Warsaw, Polska

**Katherine Burrows** - LEAP Sports Scotland (Leadership, Equality and Active Participation in Sports for LGBT people in Scotland), Glasgow, Scotland;

Moderator: **Rościław Peresłucha**, KKS Krakerys



Biopolitics is the management of people by how they are perceived basing on their biology. Therefore biopolitics includes rules for the transgender people if they want to be athletes. Particularly difficult is the situation of intersex people, because sex is seen as binary.

Why sport is so focused on the differentiation based on sex? Because sex is one of the first characteristics that people perceive. Binar sex division is also important for the conservative tradition. The actual sex differences are found meaningful in a small number of sports and those differences change over time – for example women skaters now have better results than men skaters before. Gender testing (gender verification procedure based on studying biological material, usually to discover the presence of the Y chromosome) makes no sense - none of the tested characteristics do not fully resolve the division of sex. In addition, such studies are degrading and contribute nothing. The only thing that could differentiate players in some disciplines is the level of testosterone.

If the athlete is gay all coverage on him/her immediately focus on orientation, rather than on results. Media here have a greater impact than the law, so the most important thing is to change media approach to LGBT athletes. With the transition male → female athlete loses the status of a man and it must be proven that on can belong to female group. Often there is a plea of too high levels of testosterone which force someone to wait a certain time to in order to testosterone level to drop.

To make the sport more an inclusive we have to make people feel invited and welcome. The problems begin in the childhood - such as example 9-year-old transgender boy, who swims, but cannot take part in the competition with other boys. To make things simpler more people should come out. In regards to coming out, transgender people are about 20

years behind the LGB people. LGB are their allies, but their coming outs have no impact on situation of transgender people.

Sports should be re-designed in some ways. There should be other tests for steroids for trans-women. The simple rules will not discourage people from taking part in the sport. New equality regulations are also required.

The issue of people who do not go through surgical sex transition is rarely mentioned. To make sport inclusive it would be better to other categories than the gender ones. Creating another category is creating another problem, not the solution. It is a utopia, but in some sports the mixed team competition already exists..

How to make amateur clubs more open to transgender people? The best teams would be mixed teams. People may be feel awkward at first, therefore there is a need for allies to create a welcoming space for everyone. Including a new group of people can cause frustration on both sides, but it must to be dealt with. Transgender people are afraid to disclose and coming out is always a lengthy process. You have to ask how such a person wants to be called and which pronoun should be used. Even if there are no outed transgender people in the club this question still needs to be asked as it gives the information and it creates a friendly space. People must also be educated at all levels.

# Round Table

Participants:

**Joanna Żukowska – Easton** – Deputy Director of the Department of Strategy and International Cooperation of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, Warsaw, Poland

**Katarzyna Wolska - Wrona** – a representative of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, Warsaw, Poland

**Łukasz Siemieniec & Dorota Maraj** – Krakowski Klub Sportowy Krakersy

**Suzi Andreis** – Klub Sportowy Chrzęszczyki

**Zdzisław Kassyk** – Krakow Basketball Association

**Slava Melnyk** – Kampania Przeciw Homofobii

**Łukasz Wierdak** – Warsaw Volleyball Club Volup



The important part of the conference was 'round table' meeting. It was a closed meeting of representatives of LGBT organizations with representatives of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment and sports associations. They discussed the situation of LGBT sports clubs and professional LGBT .

During the Round Table we discussed the issues related to the difficulties faced by NGOs working in the field of sport for the LGBT community and topics related to exclusion, discrimination and homophobia in professional sports.

The main difficulties in activity of NGOs are grants and sponsorships. At this moment it is impossible to obtain a grant for LGBT amateur sport. The discrimination is not priority of sports grants and Ministry of Sports' strategy is aimed primarily at children and young people. At the other hand for the grants, where the priorities are discrimination there is always a need to maneuver in order to persuade that sporting activities can be classified as anti-discrimination. In addition, each time when the patronage by Ministry of Sport and the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment is requested, they are rejected due to political reasons. It is not going to be changed in the future, but NGO organizations must continue to ask and try not to give up.

Another extremely important issue during the discussion were issues related to homophobic behavior and aggression. Poland do not have people or institutions that loudly and publicly condemn such behaviour, discipline the perpetrators. Sports associations have the tools that can be used in such situations, but they do not use them. Nobody requires those actions to be enforced by the sports associations. Also there are no athletes who openly declare their orientation and could be the ambassadors of the LGBT community. This is due to the absence of any anti-discrimination policy in the government.

During the Round Table delegations of NGOs learned that the Ministry of Sports is currently working on the Sports Development Strategy for the years 2016 - 2020. This document will be put to public consultation in late May 2015. A very important issue for NGOs is possible to consult this strategy to take into account the recognition of non-heteronormative people and to fight the discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity more effectively.

The last topic raised at the meeting was the need of education and the promotion of positive behaviors and practices on many levels. Especially important is education of sports associations and athletes themselves. If they will react on the discriminatory behavior on their end, it is likely that these practices will be translated to other. Education will be included in the Sport Development Strategy for the years 2016-2020.

In summary, LGBT clubs were encouraged to analyze the strategy and submit their comments, by submitting a letter to the Ministry of Tourism. Both Ministry and the Government Plenipotentiary are open to cooperation with NGOs.

Shortly after the conference, an informal coalition of NGOs working on LGBT sport was created. We requested for the outline of the strategy of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism for the years 2016-2020. We are currently waiting for feedback from the Ministry.

## Organizers:



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## Honorary patronage:



Prezydent Miasta Krakowa  
Prof. dr hab.  
**Jacek Majchrowski**

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## Partners:



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