

**REPUBLIC OF GREECE
MUNICIPALITY OF SERRES**

1 Merarhias Str.,
62100 SERRES

**Participation of two young people
in the Youth Forum
in parallel with
the 2nd General Conference of ECCAR in Bologna**

and

Presentation of their work

Participants :

**TSAFARIDOU HARITINI (STUDENT)
AND
TSIKALA KYRIAKI (STUDENT)**

August 2008

INTRODUCTION

Municipality of Serres invited dux students from the Secondary Education and convinced them to participate in the project "Youth Voices Against Racism" and cooperate in order to discuss the main topic "Racism and sports".

These young people who worked in a daily basis were 11 persons (boys and girls) and they were divided into working groups. At the end of these local consultations between the young people, Municipality of Serres selected two students (according to the instructions of the project), who are going to represent us to the Youth Forum. These persons are : Tsafaridou Haritini and Tsikala Kyriaki.

Young people's work is based on a questionnaire that they made in order to discuss the main topic and write down their points of view.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What means the term "racism"?

Racism is the phenomenon, which infringes on the fundamental right of each person to live without discrimination, because of national or religious identity, sex, infirmity or disability.

2. Are there any cases or instances of racism and potentially violence in the athletic spaces or sports grounds?

The mass violence in the fields is not an independent phenomenon by the social developments, but it is connected to them. It is a product of capitalism crisis. The wild "sports fans" who are permanently dissatisfied with each result of their team, are usually unemployed persons, young people who have grown up with cheap, lower middle-class ideals or uneducated persons.

Wild "sports fans" are nothing less than wild proletarians who live a bad or uneasy life and look desperately for ideals to count on. They idealize football and fight for the greatness of their team, because the field of their team is the only place where they can express themselves. It is fact that the most violent partisans are these of teams, which have their basis in poor districts of every Greek or European city.

However, things do not stop here. This situation is likeable or pleasing to the politicians and rich people. Football is a great means for the division of the mass, the degeneration and control of proletariat. We don't have to ignore the fact that the football is controlled by the big economic interests. This is not accidental. Capitalists want to gain the sympathies of workers that they exploit and the football is the ideal way or means in order to succeed in their object.

On the other hand, these social problems can not be solved with the interference of the police because in this way the existing situation is confirmed.

In the past few years there are cases or incidents of racism in the sports grounds of a lot of European countries. These cases concern mainly individual fans' racial comments, as the imitation of the monkey's, voice when the rival player takes the ball and the disposal of banana and peanuts inside the fighting space. The countries, which are in the epicentre of the problem, are Spain and Italy, as well as the countries of Eastern Europe. We can

indicatively report some incidents (from the international and local press, which concern mainly the football space :

1992 The people-“world” of Italian football rises up because of the racial offences that were heard against R. Gkoylit and A. Vinter.

1994 During the important match of the bowl between Olympiakos and Panathinaikos for the basket, the fans of “greens” (of Panathinaikos) shouted “Kou Kloux Klan” as soon as Endi Johnson caught the ball.

1996 During the European championship of football, E. Davits protests against the racial discrimination for the national team of Holland and the coach turned him away.

2000 Fans of Leeds beat fiercely (in the region of Sheffield) a Turkish owner of restaurant. During the repetitive football match of UEFA with opponent the team of Galatasarai, two English fans are murdered in Turkey.

2004 Tieri Anri claims that in the game between Panathinaikos and Arsenal for the Champions League, the fans of Panathinaikos disapproved him with racial characterizations.

The coach of national team of Spain Louis Aragonies refers to Tieri Anri with racial characterizations. Immediately, a “war” of announcements and statements begins between the national federations of England and Spain. During the friendly game that is carried out after a little time, the Spanish sports fans imitate the voice of the monkey each time where the ball goes to a black player. The result was to be punished the Spanish team by UEFA.

2005 Samuel Eto accepts racial comments from the beginning of the game with Saragosa. He tries to leave the fighting space, but his playmate Ronaldigno makes him change his mind. After the end of the game, he dances like a monkey in order to provoke the rival fans.

Eto having suffered from this phenomenon in the Spanish grounds, he declares that he would never bring his children in the ground and he suggests to all football players to leave in similar cases.

2006 The football player Asamoa of Salke accepts racial comments from fans of Chansa Rostock and it is punished with heavy fine.

2007 The football player of Panathinaikos of N. Doggie becomes victim of racial behaviour during the friendly game with the Lazio in the ground “[Olympiko]” in the summertime.

In the game Lithuania-France the fans of home team raise a placard which shows Africa with the colours of the French flag and with the slogan: “Welcome in Europe”.

In Slovakia, fans of Bratislava raise photos of Hitler in the game of the championship.

2008 In the game between Atromitos and Olympiakos, a racial comment from the platform caused Loua Loua’s intense reaction.

In the game between PAOK and Panserraikos, fans of PAOK act with vandalism and destroy whatever they find.

3. Can athletics be used as a vehicle to combat racism and promote respect and solidarity?

Of course, athletics can be used as a means of combating racism and promoting respect and solidarity.

Athletics as activity of personal disposal of free time is an activity of investigation of limits of individual freedom that beyond expediencies helps the individual to the configuration of

“behaviour” between the social frames. This behaviour has as starting-point, freedom and democracy.

Finally, sports promotes the feeling of rivalry or competition, not in the base of capitalistic competition but with the significance of a system of organisation and discipline, which maximizes the importance of individual and minimises the significance of social rules of intervention in a form of a developed cultural society.

In that point, we have to deal with the today’s meaning of **Olympic Truce**. According to its ancient Greek meaning, Olympic Truce was institution of interstate right and one of the more important elements of Olympic Games. Furthermore, it was an action of truce of hostilities that ensured the temporary postponement of the war and the unhindered process of Olympic Games.

The Olympic Games of antiquity were connected with the vision of fraternity, because they signalled the “Olympic Truce”. Nowadays, it works of course only in an informal way. On the other hand, it is fact that the ultimate aim of the Games should be the real achievement of Olympic Truce. The above can only be achieved with initiatives in political and diplomatic level. So, through International Organizations, the interruption of hostilities during the Olympic Games can be decided or determined.

For instance, everybody was aware of the hostilities that had been carried out between Georgia and Russia during the starting date of Olympic Games of this year. However, the release of the pigeons at the opening ceremony in Beijing didn’t have any results.

Olympic Truce, by definition, refers to an ideological frame antiracial, conciliative, anthropocentric, humanist and deeply ancient Greek. And this because it means the repression of passions, the by-pass of errors. It expresses the age-long ambition of humanity for peace, good will and reconciliation and through this message, which is something more than a symbol, also expresses the real wish of all populations for a peaceful world united against the violence. Finally, it means that sports can unite the world when it is the value of above each material world or interest and in that case it can resolve all the problems even that of refugees.

On the other hand, each modern state gives particular importance in sports because it is unbreakably connected with the social organization, the nature of regime and the sought expediency.

It is fact, that in athletic organizations, there are political conflicts, which destroy the athletic idea. These conflicts are transported in the fields as if they wait for their resolution through the athletic organizations.

Sports inflates the chauvinistic feelings

Who doesn't feel proud when his national flag is raising during the playing of the national anthem? The athlete is considered to be the representative of the nation, who offers service in his nation and not to the humanity because of the optimization of human possibilities or abilities.

Sports differentiates the social levels

Each sport creates an “elite” that obeys in the laws of show business, creating an activity, which is not approachable to all people and for this reason it reveals the economic status

of the society. So, there are common and elite sports. Common sports athletes are usually low educated, whereas elite sports athletes are high educated.

Sports and Violence - Hooliganism

Every time we try to deal with phenomenon like fanaticism or violence in sports, the result is embarrassing. This happens because although these phenomena are unrelated to the sports, ways are found to be developed quickly.

However, sports generally is not the only "thing" to blame. It is attached to the society, it is influenced by society's pathogenesis, so that it develops the contrasts and the problems of the society.

Social competitions

The lack of unity and companionship between athletes or fans is an indication of social breakdown. Because in a society with weakened conscience of collectiveness, social "we" gives its place in subsets in vertical and horizontal social subdivisions (type, layer, place, sex). The discrimination with criterion the athletic team and the development of competitive relations between them reflect the hard-strict social competitions and the social aspect of what is considered to be strange and is against the personal benefit

4. Can the lesson of Physical Education in schools be the means of combating racism and discrimination and how?

The lesson of Physical Education in schools is very important because through this, children are taught a lot of useful things and are informed about the noble rivalry, the competition and not the antagonism.

The lesson of Physical Education helps children to become right persons without racial behaviour and social discrimination.

Therefore, sports promote the person. It develops human's physical, mental and intellectual powers. Sports helps people not only to develop the qualities that the nature gave them, but also to try to overcome the restrictions that the nature gave them.

We don't have to forget that from the middle of 20th century several societies used Physical Education as a means, a vehicle for the development of coherence, solidarity, respect and antiracism. The lesson of Physical Education can contribute to the approach with the different, to the approach with the foreigners, immigrants and refugees. Furthermore, it contributes to:

- cooperation
- team spirit
- acceptance

independently of sex, parentage, social identity.

It also can be an effective inter-cultural means, which facilitates the knowledge of cultures of other nations.

The lesson of Physical Education helps to the integration of foreign children, as the game and exercise integrate all the members of the team. Then, the problem of the language doesn't affect the attribution of the children that speak other language. Concerning the game, the words don't matter. The body language is common for all.