

Mrs Androulla Vassiliou
Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth
of the European Commission
Brussels

Brussels, 21 November 2013

Dear Commissioner Vassiliou,

At the Informal Sport Council in Vilnius, on the 1st of October this year, the Finnish Minister of Culture and Sport, Paavo Arhinmäki made an oral statement on behalf of 19 Member States¹ with regard to respect for human rights when participating in organising major sporting events. In view of some upcoming major sporting events, both in and outside of the European Union, we, European Ministers for Sport, would like to invigorate this joint statement and elaborate on this important issue by writing you this joint letter.

We reaffirm the need to combat discrimination and intolerance where they occur within and outside the sporting context. We recognize the potential of sport as a universal language that contributes to educating people on the values of respect, diversity, tolerance and fairness and as a way of combatting all forms of discrimination and promote social inclusion for all. These values should be respected within the context of all sports.

We call upon all states that participate in organizing major sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games, World Championships and other major sporting events to respect the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Therefore, we call upon all states to uphold their international commitments to non-discrimination, freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, in particular in the framework of the Council of Europe, to protect the enjoyment of these rights by all individuals, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation or any other status.

Human rights are universal and indivisible and we believe that the European Union, as a key player in the area of fundamental rights, is in a unique position to promote human rights through sport and major sporting events, both within and outside of the European Union.

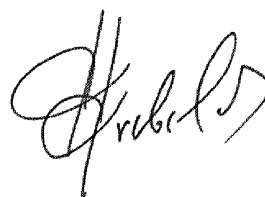
¹ Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

Therefore, we would like to call on the European Commission, within the respective areas of competences of the European Union, to commit to identifying an appropriate policy approach to this important issue.

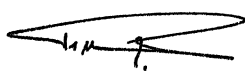
Yours sincerely,



Mr. Gerald Klug
Minister of Defence and Sports - Austria



Mr. Kyriakos Kenevezos
Minister of Education and Culture - Cyprus

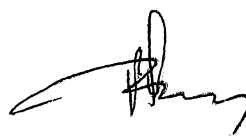


Mr. Philippe Muyters
Flemish Minister for Finance, Budget, Work, Spatial Planning and Sports – Belgium



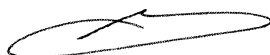
Mrs. Marianne Jelved
Minister for Culture – Denmark

Also on behalf of:



Mr. André Antoine
Vice-Président, Ministre du Budget, des Finances et des Sports du Gouvernement de la Communauté française – Belgium

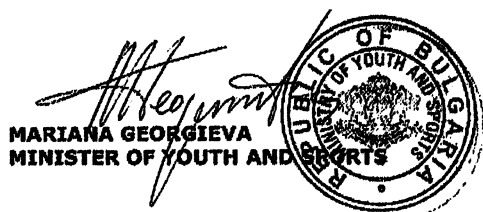
Mr. Rein Lang
Minister of Culture – Estonia



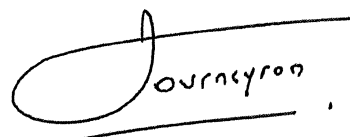
Ms Isabelle Weykmans
Minister of culture, media and tourism of the German speaking Community – Belgium



Mr. Paavo Arhinmäki
Minister of Culture and Sport - Finland

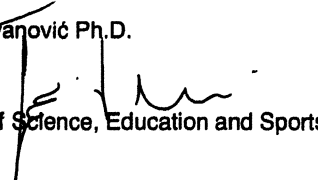


MARIANA GEORGIEVA
MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS

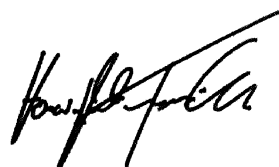


Mme Valérie Fourneyron
Ministre des Sports, de la Jeunesse, de l'éducation populaire et de la vie associative – France

Željko Jovanović Ph.D.



Minister of Science, Education and Sports
Croatia



Dr Hans-Peter Friedrich
Federal Minister of the Interior - Germany

Mr. Pál Szekeres,
Deputy state secretary for sport - Hungary

Mr. Emídio Guerreiro
Secretary of State for Sports and Youth – Portugal

Mr. Michael Ring
Minister of State of Transport, Tourism & Sport - Ireland

Mr. Dušan Čaplovič,
Minister for Education, Science, Research and Sport -
Slovak Republic

Mr. Graziano Delrio
Minister of Regional Affairs, Local Autonomies
and Sport – Italy

dr. Jernej Pikalo
Minister for Education, Science and Sport - The Republic of
Slovenia

Mr. Romain Schneider
Ministre luxembourgeois des Sports - Luxembourg

Mr. Jose Ignacio Wert Ortega
Minister on Education, Culture and Sport – Spain

Mr. Evarist Bartolo
Minister for Education and Employment - Malta

Ms Lena Adelsohn Liljeroth
Minister for Culture and Sport – Sweden

Mrs. Edith Schippers
Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport - The Netherlands

Helen Grant
Minister for Sport, Tourism and Equalities - The United
Kingdom

Minister of Sport and Tourism
of the Republic of Poland

Joanna Mucha