

Study Visit at the Finnish Sports Federation in the Frame of “Creating a Level Playing Field”

Visiting Partners

- Bulgarian Ski Federation
- German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB)
- Regional Government of Styria (Austria)

Date and Place

- 20 – 21 March 2012
- Vantaa / Helsinki, Finland

Participants

<i>Surname</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
Andreeva	Mila	Bulgarian Ski Federation
Axmann	Gitta	DOSB
Dimitrova	Veneta	Bulgarian Ski Federation
Finkelmann	Britt	DOSB / Sports Youth Berlin
Heinonen	Kristiina	Finnish Sports Federation - SLU
Hirschböck	Thomas	Regional Government of Styria
Jäger	Thomas	Regional Government of Styria
Klenova	Lyuba	Bulgarian Ski Federation
Matouschek	Stefanie	Regional Government of Styria
Schenk	Andreas	Regional Government of Styria
Strauch	Melanie	ENGSO
Varbanova	Kalina	Bulgarian Ski Federation
Vogl	Stephan	DOSB

I. STUDY VISIT SUMMARY

- **20 March 2012**

The study visit began in the City of Vantaa situated in the Helsinki metropolitan area and consists of more than 200 000 inhabitants of which approximately six per cent are migrants. However, the situation varies largely in different parts of the city. The seminar started with general information on Finnish Sports and more specifically on the integration of migrants in sports in Finland. This was followed by introductions of two migrant sport organisations Finnish Multicultural Sports Federation Fimu (Anna-Liisa Kakko) and Liikkukaa (Petri Öhman). These organisations are acting as umbrella organisations for multicultural sports and are using sport as a tool for social inclusion. Fimu is also a member of the Finnish Sports Federation.

Afterwards, the participants got further insights on the migrant situation in the city of Vantaa and especially on how the education of migrants is organised. They also heard about specific organisations and projects using sport as a tool for social inclusion. Vantaan Icehearts (Ville Turkka) does preventative child welfare work with the help of team sports. The aim is to prevent social exclusion, promoting social skills and providing a secure, long-term adult commitment throughout children's lives. This non-profit organisation works in close cooperation with professionals from social services and schools as well as with children's homes. In this project, children become part of teams when they are six years old and stay with the same educators and teammates until they turn 18.

The Sport for Everyone project (Marja Eroma) is a three-year project aiming at promoting migrants' active participation in sport and thus social integration of migrants through physical activities. The City's Sports Services, the Youth Services and the Immigrant Services, the Vantaa Sports Associations and the Immigrant Sports Associations form a network that is responsible of the project. The immigrants' own sports associations and clubs are seen as the resource of the project, as a route to the mainstream sports clubs. The main focus is on children and youth and in order for the threshold to participate in sports to be as low as possible there are separate groups for girls and boys.

Participants have also had the possibility to attend some of the activities of the Sport for Everyone project in different suburbs of Vantaa such as Mikkola where nearly 20 per cent inhabitants are migrants. These activities included team sports for children (age 9-12), floorball for girls (9-12) and table tennis for children (age 9 -12). These activities are mainly organised in youth centres or schools and the project cooperates with the local sports clubs which provide the instructors for these activities that are open for all that are interested.

- **Wednesday 21 March 201**

The second day of the visit was organised in the House of Sports in Helsinki. Senior Advisor Satu Heikkinen, from the Ministry of Education and Culture presented the Development Programme for Integrating Immigrants through Sports launched 2010 by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The main aim of the programme is to get migrants to use the mainstream sport services. Priority areas are children and adolescents and groups in danger of marginalisation; males 15-30 years and girls and young women. Measures used to achieve the objectives of the programme are norm- and resource-based steering, research and monitoring. Also development grants to local authorities for integrating immigrants through sport are part of the programme.

Appropriation in state budget for this purpose was in 2011 0.7 million euros and in 2012, 1 million euros. This grant is for local efforts to integration of young immigrants (under 29 years) and local authorities are meant to cooperate with local sports clubs and organisations.

The programme continued with presentations and discussions about the Anti-Racism Programme of the Football Association of Finland (Maurizio Pratesi) that was established after a research on racism in Finnish football. A central aim has been to mainstream the issue to all activities of FA of Finland with special emphasis on training and education (e.g. education and awareness programme as part of the existing coaching-, refereeing- and player training) and communications (e.g. media campaigning and PR events). Maurizio Pratesi also spoke about diversity/tolerance workshops organised in schools (60 in year 2012) around Finland by a non-profit organisation called Walter. This organisation is using sports as a tool for social inclusion and awareness building.

The Sport Department of the City of Helsinki (Isabella Ranta) introduced its projects for children and young people in sport: Easy Sport and FunAction. Both projects are aiming at promoting participation in sports by making it as easy and accessible as possible for children and young people. EasySport is targeted at children aged 7-12 in the afternoons. There are more than 120 groups in 50 different places (in schools and sport halls nearby) and most of these groups are free of charge. The activities are organised in cooperation with the schools and local sport clubs. FunAction is targeted for youngsters (age 13-18) and it consists of exercise-cards that cost 20 euros and allow taking part in 20 to 30 different sports lessons. During the school holidays, there are also different events. These activities are organised together with the Youth Department and sports clubs. In addition, there is an Exercise and weight control programme for obese 7 to 12 year old children called EasySport start.

Finally, the study visit was concluded by the participants and discussions were continued in the Final Conference of Creating a Level Playing Field that followed the study visit.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND EVALUATION

- The outcome of the German delegation has been to hear and think about a Finnish Multicultural Sports Federation (Fimu) as a member organisation of the Finnish Sports Federation. So far, in Germany, there are existing multicultural sport clubs or sports clubs for ethnic groups. The need and the advantages of having such a Multicultural Sports Federation (e.g. the higher chance and lower access for migrants to become leaders in sport organisations, or to take over other responsibilities within sport clubs or sport associations) have been seen, but in terms of talking about integration of migrants and ethnic minorities, the German Olympic Sports Confederation stays on keeping up with an extra Multicultural Sports Federation. This has been seen as a parallel structure, which has no effects on integration. But the discussion is open and the outcomes of the Finnish Multicultural Sports Federation will be observed furthermore.
- The Vantaan Icehearts (Ville Turkka) does preventative child welfare work and supports the idea of continuous work in the field of social inclusion. This is confirmative and also helpful for arguing for German projects and programmes to really have an ongoing process while working with migrants and ethnic minorities or disadvantaged people.

- The presentation about the diversity/tolerance workshops in the programme Walter of the Anti-Racism Programme of the Football Association of Finland was once more confirming the social inclusion work within the German Sports Structure. Again, to be confirmed how important the intercultural or cross-cultural sensitisation is in developing a sustainable social inclusion work in sports.

The study visit contained vast information on sports and inclusion specific projects in Finland. There could have been little more time for interactive parts providing time to discuss and reflect. On the other hand the study visit was followed by the Final Conference of the project and the participants were able to continue discussions in this frame. In general, this study visit has been considered as a highly informative and valuable seminar.

Persons in charge of the programme and report:

Kristiina Heinonen, Finnish Sports Federation

Gitta Axmann, German Olympic Sports Confederation