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## **Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination**

### ***Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence***

#### **Preventing and combating violence against women in sport**

***Minutes of the webinar held on 10 November 2020***

**Information document prepared by the Secretariat**

The Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence held a webinar on violence against women in sport on 10 November 2020. The webinar was chaired by **Mr Killion Munyama** (Poland, EPP/CD), Network member for Poland and rapporteur for a report on "The fight for a level-playing field – ending discrimination against women in the world of sport" for the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination.

Guest speakers were:

- Ms Sarah Abitbol, figure skater;
- Ms Dagmar Schumacher, Director, Brussels office, UN Women ;
- Mr Pierre-Emmanuel Luneau-Daurignac, Director of the documentary "Violences sexuelles dans le sport, l'enquête", ARTE ;
- Ms Nadezda Knorre, Vice-president, WomenSport International;
- Ms Béatrice Barbusse, Lecturer, Paris-Est Créteil University, Secretary General, French Handball Federation ;
- Ms Joyce Cook CBE, OBE, Chief Social Responsibility and Education Officer, Fédération Internationale de Football Association.

**Mr Munyama** opened the webinar and welcomed guest speakers and members.

**Ms Gurmai**, PACE General Rapporteur on violence against women and Coordinator of the Network, made introductory remarks. There were still many challenges to tackle on the way to gender equality in the world of sport. Since March 2020, the Assembly had adapted its working formats, with the use of new technologies, and the organisation of virtual meetings and online events. The Covid-19 pandemic gave a sense of urgency to the need to tackle pitfalls in inclusion, equality and to combat violence against women. It made inequalities more visible and aggravated them, including in sport. The Network was actively campaigning for the ratification and effective implementation of the Istanbul Convention, considered by many as the "golden standard" in the fight against violence against women.

**Ms Abitbol** explained why she decided to share her personal story in a book. She was feeling shame and guilt for being a victim of sexual violence from her trainer when she was a teenager. After the Me Too movement, she decided to break the silence to help victims of violence. She received many testimonies from girls thanking her for speaking out.

**Ms Schumacher** stressed the importance of providing equal opportunities for girls in sport, promoting equal participation of women in the media and of strong action to prevent and combat gender-based violence. Challenging negative stereotypes against women in sport was essential. Empowerment of girls to access all sports was a powerful tool for equality.

**Mr Luneau-Daurignac** stressed that sports federations were not at ease dealing with violence against women in sport. It was difficult to gather information, as sharing a testimony could make survivors re-live their experience of violence, which could be traumatic. Violence against women in sport was a global phenomenon.

**Ms Knorre** underlined that violence against women in sport included psychological abuse of athletes.

**Ms Barbusse** highlighted that sport was socially and historically mainly an activity for men, and therefore corresponded to the male gender. Male domination and sexism were institutionalised in sport. There were few women heads of sports federations. Pain was considered as routine in sport. There was a triple domination in sport: male over female, adult over young people, person with authority over a person under authority. A climate of confidence with the trainers could be a favourable ground for violence.

**Ms Cook** stressed that FIFA had realised at a late stage the urgency to combat violence against women in sport, but that FIFA was now very committed to preventing and combating violence against women in sport. Strong preventive measures were needed to eradicate violence.

**Ms Abitbol** planned to explain to her daughter what had happened to her. Children aged 5 or 6 should already be told that an adult did not have the right to touch a child's body. The testimonies of survivors could help potential victims.

**Ms Schumacher** stressed it was essential to have clear policies in place. A survivor-centred approach should be taken to protect survivors and whistleblowers. Athletes should be mobilised as role models. Joining the Generation Equality campaign would be a positive step.

**Mr Luneau-Daurignac** highlighted that violence against women was linked to a will to control. The media could contribute to combating violence against women and girls in sport by raising awareness. Famous athletes could play an important role in promoting respect and equality.

**Ms Knorre** underlined that having more women in sport leadership and coaching could have a positive impact in the fight against violence against women.

**Ms Barbusse** stressed that the world of sport should be feminised. A plan to prevent violence against women should be put in place. The testimony by Sarah Abitbol in her book had made a difference and contributed to raising awareness on the topic in France. All key actors working in the field of sport should receive adequate training on preventing and combating violence against women and girls. Political will was needed at the highest level for tangible progress. Prevention plans were needed in every sport federation.

**Ms Cook** mentioned that the priority was to educate children so that they understood that they could say “no” and protect themselves. Investigative journalism should respect a human rights code with regard to the collection of testimonies of survivors of violence. Preventing and combating violence against women in sport was the responsibility of all. FIFA was calling for the creation of a new entity to prevent and combat violence against women in sport, since not every sport had the resources to tackle it. It would be a multi-sport intergovernmental agency, which would be working according to a survivor-centered approach. Cases of abuse could be reported to this entity. Discussions were being held with Interpol about the creation of such entity.

**Mr Grin** mentioned that several gymnasts had complained in Switzerland about the tough discipline imposed by male coaches which could constitute psychological violence.

**Ms Abitbol** stated with respect to psychological violence, that for instance she had received negative comments on her weight. She still faced difficult moments. She thanked guest speakers for encouraging her.

**Ms Barbusse** regretted the existence of mistreatment in sport. More women were needed in the world of sport. Trainers were still very critical and negative, a different coaching approach would be welcome. The commitment of the world of sport and more participation of women in sport were essential in the fight against violence against women. The feminisation of sport was a fundamental element of its modernization.

**Ms Cook** again stressed the importance of a survivor-centered approach. There had been death threats against athletes who reported violence and whistleblowers. They should get the protection needed.

**Ms Schumacher** invited all to participate in the Generation Equality Forum in 2021, including in the action coalition on combating gender-based violence.

**Mr Munyama** thanked all participants and viewers of the webinar for their contribution and participation.

## Appendix

## List of participants / Liste des participants

(The names of present members appear in bold. / Les noms des membres présents apparaissent en gras.)

## Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence Réseau parlementaire pour le droit des femmes de vivre sans violence

## Coordinator / Coordinatrice

1. **Ms Zita GURMAI** Hungary / Hongrie **SOC / SOC**  
General Rapporteur on violence against women / Rapporteuse générale sur la violence à l'égard des femmes

Member States / Etats membres	Political Group / Groupe politique
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5. Ms Petra BAYR	SOC / SOC
6. Ms Sevinj FATALIYEVA	EC / CE
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8. Mme Latifa GAHOUCHI	SOC / SOC
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15. ...	...
16. ...	...
17. ...	...
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25. ...	...
26. ...	...
27. <b>Ms Deborah BERGAMINI</b>	EPP/CD / PPE/DC
28. ...	...
29. ...	...
30. Ms Susanne EBERLE-STRUB	ALDE / ADLE
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60.	Ms Ruth JONES	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	SOC / SOC

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Mme Françoise HETTO-GAASCH

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**INVITED SPEAKERS / INTERVENANTS**

Ms / Mme Sarah ABITBOL .....Figure skater / *Patineuse artistique*  
 Ms / Mme Dagmar SCHUMACHER ..... Director, Brussels Office, UN Women /  
 ..... *Directrice, Bureau de Bruxelles, ONU Femmes*  
 Mr / M. Pierre-Emmanuel LUNEAU-DAURIGNAC ..... Director of the documentary  
 ..... “Violences sexuelles dans le sport, l'enquête”, ARTE /  
 ..... *Réalisateur du documentaire*  
 ..... « *Violences sexuelles dans le sport, l'enquête* », ARTE  
 Ms / Mme Nadezda KNORR ..... Vice-president, WomenSport International /  
 ..... *Vice-présidente, WomenSport International*  
 Ms / Mme Béatrice BARBUSSE ..... Lecturer, Paris-Est Créteil University,  
 ..... Secretary General, French Handball Federation /  
 ..... *Maître de conférences, Université Paris-Est Créteil,*  
 ..... *Secrétaire Générale, Fédération française de handball*  
 Ms / Mme Joyce COOK ..... CBE, OBE, Chief Social Responsibility and Education Officer  
 ..... Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) /  
 ..... *CBE, OBE, Cheffe de la Responsabilité Sociale et de l'Éducation,*  
 ..... *Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)*

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 Ms / Mme Elena PERSIANI ..... Cyprus / *Chypre*  
 Ms / Mme Eva VALIUS ..... Estonia / *Estonie*  
 Ms / Mme Panagiota MICHA ..... Greece / *Grèce*  
 Mr / M. Yaron GAMBURG ..... Israel / *Israël*  
 Ms / Mme Fabrizia BIENTINESI ..... Italy / *Italie*  
 Mr / M. Piero GAMBALE ..... Italy / *Italie*  
 Ms / Mme Victoria CAMPANA ..... Monaco  
 Ms / Mme Dorthe BAKKE ..... Norway / *Norvège*  
 Ms / Mme Alina ILIE ..... Romania / *Roumanie*  
 Mr / M. Kenan ARPACIOĞLU ..... Turkey / *Turquie*

Ms / Mme Denise O'HARA ..... EPP/CD / *PPE/DC*  
 Ms / Mme Natalia ODZIMKOWSKA ..... EPP/CD / *PPE/DC*  
 Ms / Mme Maria BIGDAY ..... ALDE / *ADLE*  
 Ms / Mme Anna KOLOTOVA ..... UEL / *GUE*

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**DGII - Directorate General of Democracy / Direction générale de la démocratie**

Ms / Mme Eida MORENO NILLANUEVA ..... Head of the Children's Rights and Sport Values Department /  
 ..... *Cheffe du Service des droits des enfants et des valeurs du sport*

**SECRETARIAT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE /  
 SECRETARIAT DE L'ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

**Communication Division / Division de la Communication**

Mr / M. Angus MacDONALD ..... Administrative Officer / *Administrateur*

**Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy /  
 Commission des questions politiques et de la démocratie**

Ms / Mme Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU ..... Head of Secretariat / *Cheffe du Secrétariat*



**Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination / Commission sur l'égalité et la non-discrimination**

Ms / *Mme* Penelope DENU..... Head of Secretariat / *Cheffe du Secrétariat*  
Ms / *Mme* Sarah BURTON ..... Secretary to the Committee / *Secrétaire de la commission*  
Mr / *M.* Giorgio LODDO ..... Secretary to the Committee / *Secrétaire de la commission*  
Ms / *Mme* Elodie FISCHER ..... Secretary to the Committee / *Secrétaire de la commission*  
Ms / *Mme* Solène FALK..... Project Manager / *Chargée de projet*  
Ms / *Mme* Naouelle TEFIFEHA ..... Assistant / *Assistante*  
Mr / *M.* Martin McMILLAN..... Assistant / *Assistant*