

A photograph of two hands, one from a Black person and one from a white person, both making peace signs (V-signs) against a blurred background of green foliage. The hands are positioned on the left side of the frame, with the Black hand slightly behind the white hand. The image is partially covered by a large teal shape that extends towards the right, where the text is located.

Practical Tools to Prevent and Respond to Hate Speech in Sport

Gender Equality & Sport+ Conference 2026

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Hate speech in sport
3. The LGBTIQ+ Sport Observatory
4. Test the tool: set of standards
5. Test the tool: self-assessment
6. The observatory?





Introduction





Laura May (she/her)

KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT GENDER
AND DIVERSITY

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Mission statement

We believe that everyone should be able to experience sport in a safe and carefree environment. That is why we support the entire Flemish sports sector in creating and maintaining a positive and secure sporting climate.

From recreational athletes to elite competitors, and from individuals to organizations, we are committed to safeguarding the physical, psychological, social, and sexual integrity of everyone involved in sport.

01

**Knowledge
sharing**

02

**Policy
support**

03

**Support for
safeguarding
officers**

04

**Training and
education**



Safeguarding

**Safe and positive
coaching**

Fair play

Gender and diversity

Injury prevention

**Mental and physical
well-being**

**Exercising with
chronic diseases**

...



Who are you?





2.

Hate speech



How would you describe
hate speech in your own
words?



Hate speech =

all types of expression

Source: Council of Europe



Hate speech =

all types of expression
that incite, promote, spread or justify

Source: Council of Europe



Hate speech =

all types of expression
that incite, promote, spread or justify
violence, hatred or discrimination

Source: Council of Europe



Hate speech =

all types of expression
that incite, promote, spread or justify
violence, hatred or discrimination
against a person or group of persons, or that denigrates them,

Source: Council of Europe



Hate speech =

all types of expression
that incite, promote, spread or justify
violence, hatred or discrimination
against a person or group of persons, or that denigrates them,
by reason of their real or attributed personal characteristics or status such as
“race”, colour, language, religion, nationality, national or ethnic origin, age,
disability, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Source: Council of Europe





Rabat plan of action

- **Context** of the statement
- Position or status **speaker's**
- **Intent** to incite audience against target group
- **Content** and form of the statement
- **Extent** of its dissemination
- **Likelihood** of harm

[Analyse tool - Toolkit for human rights speech](#)



**What does hate speech in
sport look like?**



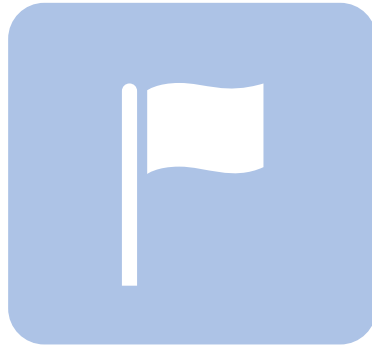
Hate speech in sport



Verbal insults
or slurs



Crowd chants



Banners and
signs



Gestures and
non-verbal
behaviour



Images and
symbols



Social media
content

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Source: Council of Europe





The LGBTIQ+ Sport Observatory

Erasmus+ project 2026-2028

3.



Disclaimer

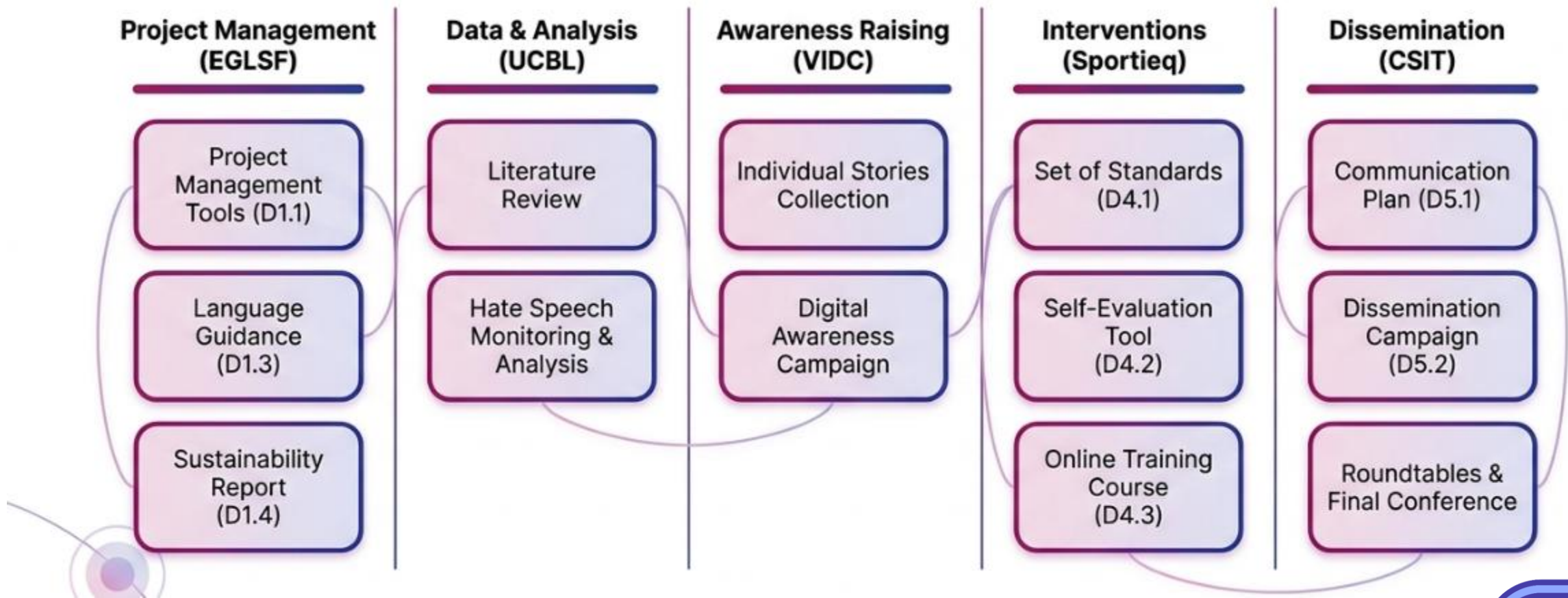
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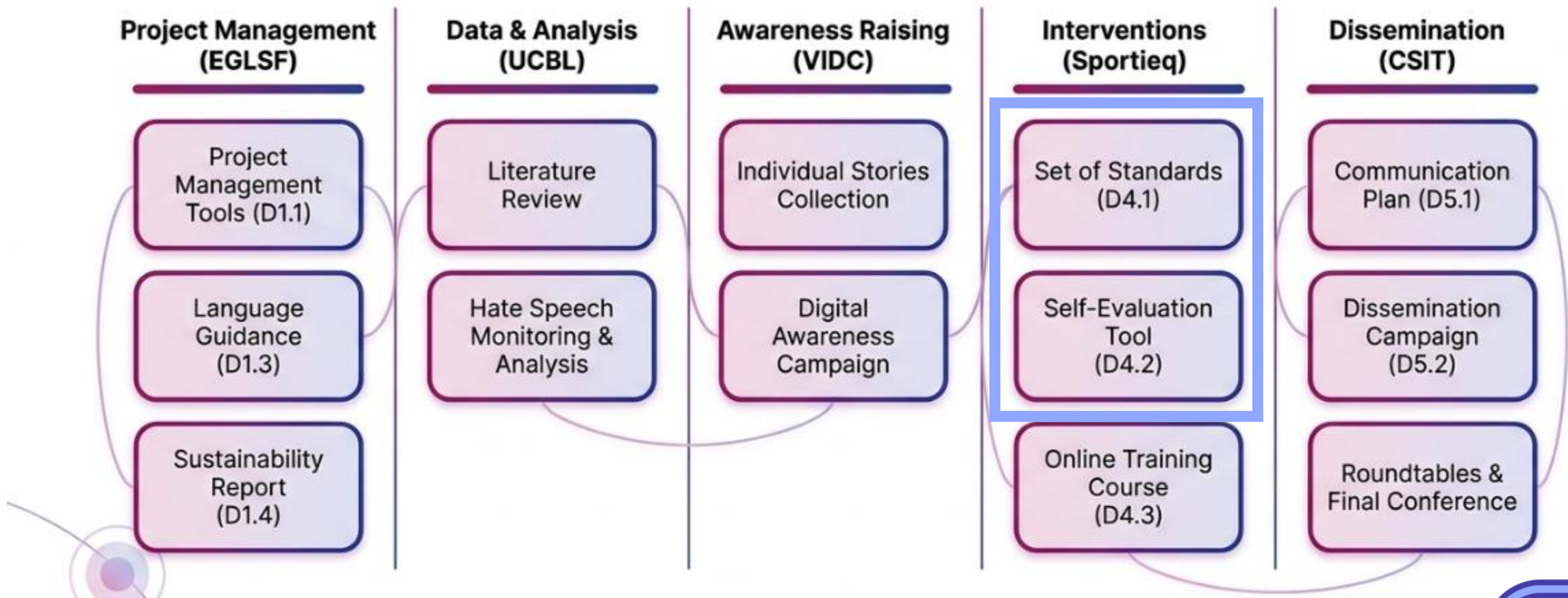


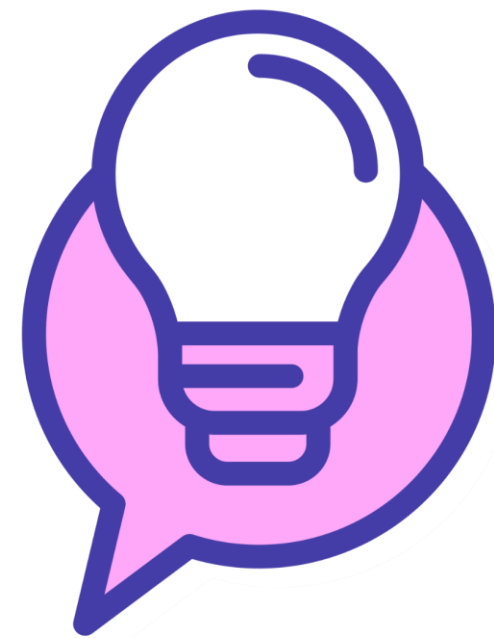
**LGBTIQ+
SPORT
OBSERVATORY**

Our goal is both simple and ambitious: to understand, prevent, and combat LGBTIQ+ hate speech in sport, while laying the foundations for a sustainable European Observatory on this topic.









Test the tool

Set of standards



What is the set of standards?

- Quality markers for sport organisations to work towards, in the context of preventing and responding to incidents of LGBTIQ+ hate speech in sport
- 7 standards
 - a short description what it means and why it is important
 - concrete examples how to do this



Inclusive

Confidential

**Affected-person
centred**

Flexible

Competent

Integrated

Accountable



**LGBTIQ+
SPORT
OBSERVATORY**

1. Inclusive

We recognise the diversity of LGBTIQ+ identities and experiences and ensure that policies, practices and environments are respectful and equitable for all.

1. Use inclusive language:

Adopt language that reflects diverse identities and avoids assumptions. Consistently use people's chosen names and pronouns to respect their identity and foster a sense of belonging.

2. Tailored awareness and education:

Deliver training and campaigns that highlight the diversity of LGBTIQ+ experiences, not just general concepts.

3. Intersectional approach

Consider how LGBTIQ+ identities intersect with factors such as ethnicity, disability, age, religion, socio-economic status or cultural background.

4. Nothing about us without us

Involve diverse LGBTIQ+ voices in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies.

2. Confidential

All reports and personal information will be handled with strict confidentiality, ensuring privacy, trust and protection for those involved.

1. Anonymous or confidential reporting systems: Provide accessible online or physical reporting channels where athletes, staff or spectators can submit complaints anonymously or confidentially.

2. Restricted access to case information:

Limit access to sensitive information to a small, trained group (e.g., safeguarding officers or ethics committees). Make sure information is only shared on a 'need to know' basis.

3. Clear data protection procedures: Establish protocols for storing, handling and sharing personal data in line with privacy regulations.

4. Confidential support services: Offer private counselling or support for victims and witnesses.

5. Communication protocols: Train staff and volunteers on how to respond to disclosures without sharing information beyond what is necessary.

3. Affected person-centred

The needs, safety and dignity of individuals affected by hate speech will be prioritised throughout all procedures and responses.

1. Respect the person's choices

Allow the person affected by hate speech to decide how they want to proceed (formal complaint, informal resolution or no action).

2. Ensure safety and protection

Take immediate steps to prevent further harm or contact with the alleged offender if needed. Protect the affected person from retaliation, stigmatisation and re-victimization.

3. Minimize re-traumatization

Avoid requiring them to repeat their story multiple times. For example: one trained staff member collects the testimony and shares it internally only when necessary.

4. Clear, compassionate and trauma-informed communication

Keep the affected person informed about the process in a respectful and transparent way.

4. Flexible

Responses will be tailored to the specific context and needs of each case, allowing for appropriate and proportionate measures.

1. Offer different reporting options

Allow individuals to choose how they report (anonymously, through a trusted person or formally).

2. Adapt the response to the severity of the case Use a range of measures depending on the situation, from education to disciplinary action. For example: a first-time minor offense might lead to mandatory awareness training, while repeated or severe cases result in sanctions.

3. Create flexible resolution pathways

Provide both formal and informal ways to resolve issues.

4. Adjust timelines and processes

Take into account the emotional readiness and availability of those involved. Allow a person targeted by hate speech to delay providing a statement until they feel ready, without penalizing them.

5. Competent

All individuals responsible for handling incidents will be trained and equipped with the knowledge and skills required.

1. Designate trained safeguarding officers Designate specific individuals with expertise in safeguarding, diversity and inclusion to handle cases. Provide ongoing learning opportunities to keep staff up to date with evolving terminology and best practices.

2. Use external expertise when needed

In complex cases, involve external professionals or organisations with specialized knowledge.

3. Provide guidance and tools

Provide practical resources to support qualified decision-making such as clear protocols, checklists and reporting guidelines that help staff act consistently and confidently.

4. Mandatory training for staff

Ensure that coaches, referees, safeguarding officers and board members receive training on LGBTIQ+ inclusion and hate speech.

6. Integrated

This policy is embedded within organisational structures, procedures and everyday practices to ensure consistent and sustainable implementation.

1. Embed anti-hate speech in official policies Include LGBTIQ+ inclusion and anti-hate speech measures in core documents. For example: a federation's code of conduct explicitly prohibits homophobic and transphobic language.

2. Integrate into communication and branding Make inclusion visible in all communications and public messaging.

3. Bystander training

Equip all staff and participants with practical tools and confidence to intervene safely or report incidents when they witness hate speech.

4. Secure long-term resources

Allocate budget and staff time to ensure sustainability.

5. Partner structurally with experts

Establish ongoing collaborations with LGBTIQ+ organisations.

7. Accountable

Clear responsibilities, transparent processes and consistent enforcement mechanisms will ensure that all cases are properly addressed.

1. Clear roles and responsibilities

Define who is responsible for preventing and addressing hate speech at each level.

2. Consistent enforcement of rules

Apply policies and sanctions fairly, regardless of status or position.

3. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

Keep records of incidents, decisions and outcomes. Build systems to regularly assess progress.

4. Public reporting and transparency

Share aggregated information about incidents and responses.

5. Feedback and complaints mechanisms

Allow individuals to challenge decisions or raise concerns about how cases are handled.

6. Integrate

A practice should be...

1. Inclusive

We recognise the diversity of LGBTIQ+ identities and experiences and ensure that policies, practices and environments are respectful and equitable for all.

LGBTIQ+ people are not a single, uniform group, but a diverse community with different identities, experiences and needs. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer individuals may face distinct forms of discrimination. An inclusive and intersectional approach takes this diversity into account.

By actively considering these different experiences, sport organisations can create policies and practices that better meet needs and are more equitable, for example by addressing the specific challenges faced by trans athletes, non-binary participants or individuals who have not come out publicly. Inclusivity also means ensuring that language, facilities and support systems reflect and respect this diversity.

Focusing on inclusivity helps create an environment where all LGBTIQ+ individuals feel seen, respected and safe, and in which the diversity of their experiences is recognized rather than overlooked.

How to do this

1. **Use inclusive language:** Adopt language that reflects diverse identities and avoids assumptions. Consistently use people's chosen names and pronouns to respect their identity and foster a sense of belonging.
2. **Tailored awareness and education:** Deliver training and campaigns that highlight the diversity of LGBTIQ+ experiences, not just general concepts.
3. **Intersectional approach:** Consider how LGBTIQ+ identities intersect with factors such as ethnicity, disability, age, religion, socio-economic status or cultural background. Recognize for example that a LGBTIQ+ athlete of colour may face different challenges than a white LGBTIQ+ athlete, and adapt support accordingly.
4. **Nothing about us without us:** Involve diverse LGBTIQ+ voices in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies.

3

8



What you like
about the
standards



What you are
unsure about

Questions,
doubts, ...



What you
don't like
about the
standards

+ suggestions
how to improve

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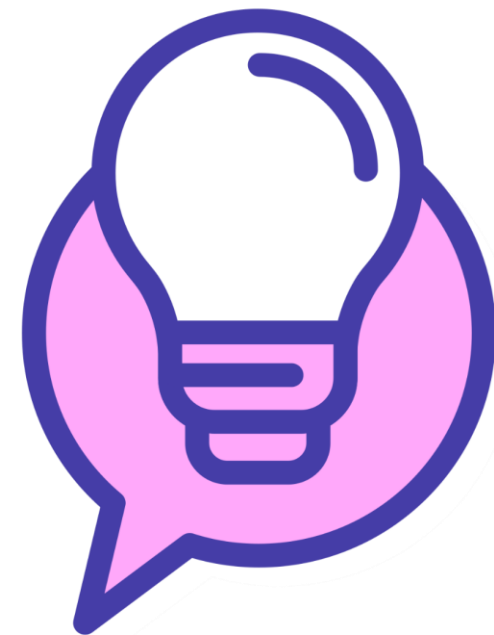
Accountable



**LGBTIQ+
SPORT
OBSERVATORY**



5



Test the tool

Self-assessment



What is the self-assessment?

- Online tool to help sport organisations reflect on how they prevent and respond to LGBTIQ+ hate speech.
- 7 short sections, based on the set of standards
- 4 questions per section: rate 1-5
- And 1 additional reflection question per section
- At the end you receive a report with recommendations depending on your score





1. Inclusion

How effectively does your organisation ensure that LGBTIQ+ people can participate safely and feel comfortable reporting concerns?

All fields marked with * are required and must be filled.

We recognize that LGBTIQ+ inclusion is relevant to our sport organisation. *

1

2

3

4

5

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

We use inclusive language in our communication and activities. *

1

2

3

4

5

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

We take concrete actions to support LGBTIQ+ inclusion. *

1

2

3

4

5

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

We actively involve LGBTIQ+ people and make them feel welcome in our organisation. *

1

2

3

4

5

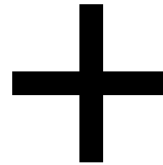
Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

Please reflect on your answers. What evidence, examples or experiences support the score you gave your organisation?

BackNext

 ACCESSIBILITY
ENABLED FORM



1 September 2026

LGBTIQ+ Hate Speech in Sport Self-Assessment

Thank you for completing the LGBTIQ+ Hate Speech in Sport Self-Assessment.

This report summarises your results across the seven assessment areas. For each area, add together the scores of the four statements to calculate a total score out of 20. Use the score guide to see where your organisation currently stands and discover practical recommendations for further improvement.

We hope these insights support your efforts to make sport safe, inclusive and welcoming for everyone.



About the project

The LGBTIQ+ Sport Observatory project ("European Observatory on LGBTIQ+ Hate Speech in Sports: Developing a system to prevent and protect athletes from hate speech") is a 36-month Erasmus+ Sport initiative led by EGLSF in partnership with universities, sport organisations and human rights actors across Europe. Our goal is both simple and ambitious: to understand, prevent and combat LGBTIQ+ hate speech in sport, while laying the foundations for a sustainable European Observatory on this topic.

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1

Easy to understand

Relevance

User-friendly

Length

Practicality

Likelihood to recommend



What did you like most about the self-assessment?

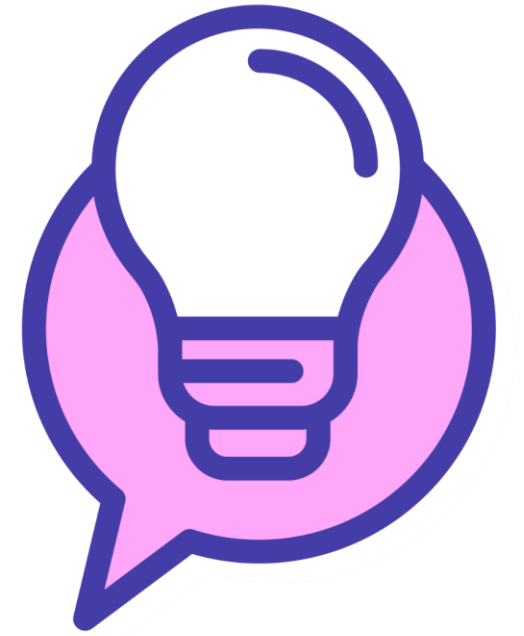
What would you improve?

Were any important topics missing? If so, which ones?





6



The observatory?



The Horizon: Open Discussion

Vision

What does a permanent, impactful European LGBTIQ+ Sport Observatory look like beyond 2028?

Sustainability

How can we best ensure that the Sustainability Report (D1.4) translates an into lasting policy shifts rather than just a project output?

Leverage

Where are the immediate opportunities within your respective networks to amplify the early data and tools we produce?

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