

Brussels, 20th November 2019

Concern: Gender discrimination in football

Dear Mr O'Flaherty,

I am writing to you as the first Vice-Chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs in the European Parliament, in order to urge the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to take urgent action to fight the gender discrimination and aggressions against women in football.

I am profoundly alarmed about the discrimination that female football players and female referees have to face in different leagues and matches, such as threats, harassment or insults on the field.

There is still sexism in football, where women have to deal with more difficulties than their male colleagues and experience unfair pay, degrading treatment, and other discrimination. With regard to women referees, there are cases of insults in public without the intervention of sports authorities.¹ Unfortunately, this is happening in many countries of the European Union.

There is a global movement in Europe to denounce this situation. Evidence of this is that Spanish women first division footballers have gone on a historic strike in which they demand equality in football and ask for a collective agreement with the clubs like the one men have.²

A succession of international human rights treaties has expanded the rights contained in Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Over the decades, jurisprudence has added more obligations to the prohibition of discrimination. This is the case of the Articles 20 and 23 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, which recall the prohibition of sex discrimination and stress that "equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay".

I therefore call on the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to call on the Member States and the football community to take urgent action and to commit themselves to raising awareness on this problem and to developing concrete actions to combat discrimination of women in football.

I am looking forward to your answer on how to combat this situation.

Yours sincerely,



Maite Pagazaurtundúa
Member of the European Parliament

¹ https://elpais.com/ccaa/2019/11/19/madrid/1574148954_849055.html

² <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/football/2019/11/18/entire-weekend-schedule-spains-top-womens-football-league-postponed/>