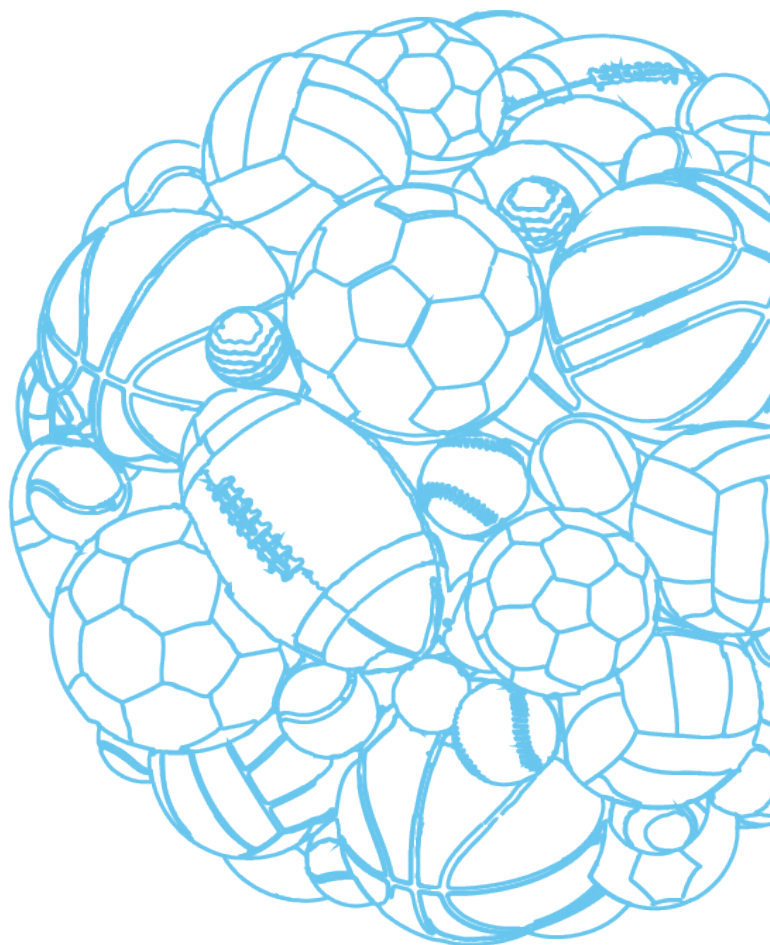


# The power of sport as a tool for social inclusion

An international conference organised by  
DIPLOCAT and the FC Barcelona Foundation

GLOBAL DEBATE - 24 March 2022



Conference report by Laura García Martínez, graduate in International Relations from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB).



**Location**

La Rambla 14, principal  
08002 Barcelona



**Contact**

+34 936 405 470

[info@diplocat.cat](mailto:info@diplocat.cat)

[www.diplocat.cat](http://www.diplocat.cat)



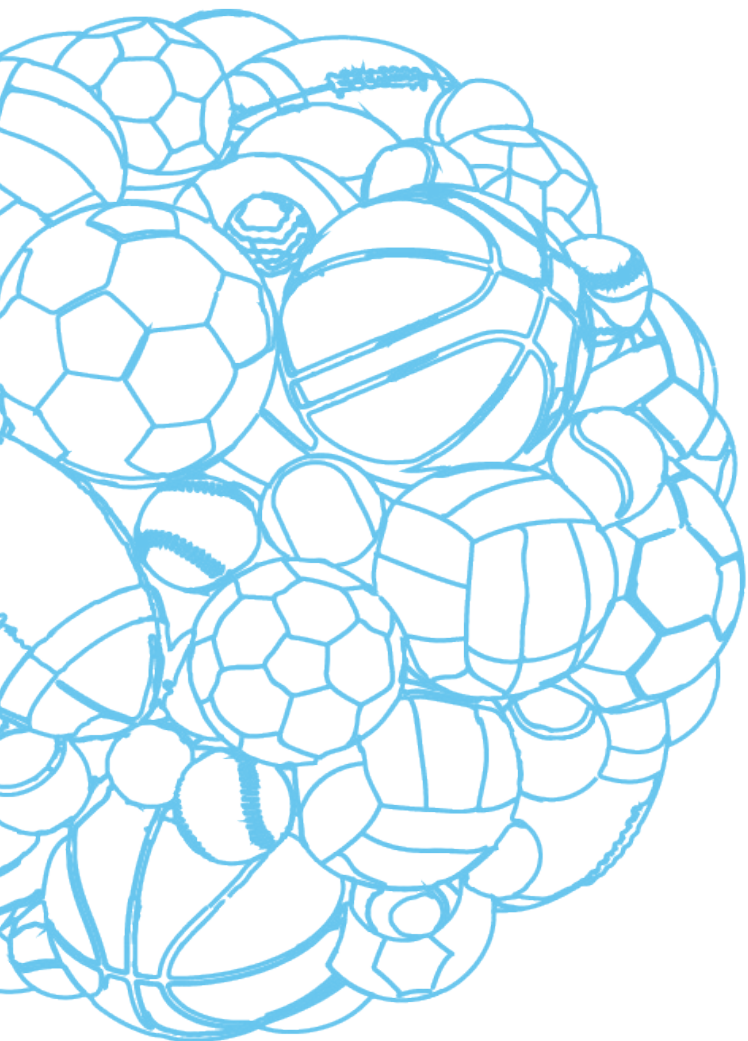
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# 1. Introduction

DIPLOCAT and the FC Barcelona Foundation organised an international conference on the role of sport as a tool for social inclusion. The conference opened with a welcome speech by FC Barcelona vice-president Elena Fort, who spoke about the objective of the day. Events such as this conference give meaning to the slogan “More than a club” and how FC Barcelona’s commitment to society extends beyond the sphere of sports through the club’s engagement with some of today’s most pressing issues, such as hunger, human rights violations, racism and gender equality.

Laura Foraster i Lloret, secretary general of DIPLOCAT, reiterated the conference’s aims and the vital role of well-known sports people and experts in highlighting the value of sport as a tool for social inclusion and transformation. She thanked the FC Barcelona Foundation and the club for their involvement and underlined the importance of their efforts to transmit values through sport. Foraster emphasised the potential of sport as a tool for transformation that can help build a more resilient and just world.

The secretary general of DIPLOCAT explained the role of the organisation, which, in line with its motto “International dialogue: connect, project, empower”, works to connect Catalonia to the world, building lasting bridges of dialogue between Catalan civil society and the rest of the world, projecting the country abroad, and empowering and training both the organisations that form part of the consortium and the country’s civil society in international relations. The entity participates in major global debates, encourages the exchange of best practices and experiences with other countries, and projects Catalonia abroad. It’s within this framework that DIPLOCAT promotes the values of Catalan sport worldwide, using it not only as a tool for social inclusion but also for international projection.

Foraster believes the transformative power of sport is undeniable and points to its contribution to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the UN’s 2030 Agenda. It plays a vital role in both individual health and self-improvement and in society as a whole, helping to eliminate xenophobia and racism, promote gender inclusion, eradicate poverty and promote values like respect, integration and solidarity. In short, sport is a unique tool that connects different peoples and cultures, promoting lasting global peace.

For all these reasons, the conference aims to debate the role of sport as a tool for social inclusion, focusing particularly on the importance of joining forces to overcome the global challenges of inequality and racism.



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## 2. Conversation with Lilian Thuram

Rita Marzoa, journalist and moderator of the event, talked with Lilian Thuram, the French former FC Barcelona player, founder of the Lilian Thuram Foundation for Education against Racism (2008), and author of books such as *My Black Stars: From Lucy to Barack Obama* (2009) and *White Thinking* (2022).

The objective was to discuss education and racism in the context of sports. In the interview, Thuram talks about the political, economic and cultural roots of racism and points to some possible solutions.

The following is a transcript of their conversation.

**Rita Marzoa (RM):** As a European, are you surprised by the contrast between how we are welcoming Ukrainian citizens fleeing the horrors of war and how we have welcomed, or not welcomed, other citizens arriving from the south?

**Lilian Thuram (LT):** That's a very interesting question, but I'm not going to answer as a European, because I can answer as a black person. I've had conversations with my children about this. They were shocked that black people were unable to leave Ukraine because they weren't being allowed into Poland. They asked me: "But, dad, why are they doing that?". It's a cultural issue. We have to understand that we live in societies that have been built for generations on a hatred of black people, even if many people find it hard to accept. I've been working on issues of racism for a long time, and in a way, this puts the spotlight on the violence that still exists against black people. I've known this for a long time because since I was nine years old, I've been aware that I'm seen as a black person; I know what it is to be considered black, and I know where I stand.

Most of us, if we're honest, will admit that there's a lot of prejudice towards black people, for better or for worse, because talking about these things can be an eye-opener. We often fail to make progress because of a hypocritical unwillingness to call a spade a spade. My hope, therefore, is that society as a whole will come to understand that mentalities must be changed, bearing in mind that in this war racism is, above all, political. Racism isn't a relationship between individuals; it's a political issue. Today, fortunately, we're welcoming Ukrainians, and that's good; leaving aside the fact that some are more welcome than others for a moment, the important thing is that we're welcoming people who need to be helped. But if we're welcoming and speaking positively about Ukrainians, it's because the political discourse in France, Spain, Italy, the United States, etc., is asking us to go in that direction. Equally, it's political will and political choices that cause us to reject other people.

**RM:** We could have had a similar conversation to the one we're having today about Ukraine ten years ago, about another humanitarian crisis affecting black or racialised people. Why aren't we making progress? What's stopping us mentally from understanding that, when all is said and done, this is about people?

**LT:** There's the weight of history, and there also needs to be an attempt to understand that racism, once again, is not about someone having good or bad morals. Racism is political and, above all, economic. Historically, there were hierarchies based on skin colour. Then came a very specific moment in history, the black slave trade. The idea that blacks were inferior had to be constructed in order to exploit them. It's an economic position: a narrative is built to justify some people being exploitable while a minority gets richer. When we talk about the exploitation of black people, we're talking about the exploitation of the African continent. We need to be aware of this: if you want to exploit people, you have to create a narrative that paints them as inferior. It's like the relationship between men and women. To exploit women, you first have to say that women are inferior. Once this narrative has been constructed and amplified, people eventually internalise it.

Speaking of racism and politics, historically, there have always been laws that regulate relationships between people, and the Western world has very often been built on laws that legitimise the superiority of white people. Most people aren't even aware that these laws exist. When people in France ask me if my country is racist, they want me to say no, or if they ask me if Spain is racist, they want me to say no so that everyone can be reassured. But France has had racist laws for more than 250 years. When you talk about racist countries, people think of the United States or South Africa, but in fact, they're not aware that racism in European countries officially ended in the 1960s, when colonisation came to an end. During colonisation, there were laws that said indigenous people were inferior to white people. Therefore, we're the product of that history; our attitudes are imbued with it, and that's why things are so difficult to change.

Again, I can draw parallels between racism and sexism; we struggle to make progress with male-female equality because men are in a dominant position and will do whatever it takes to keep it that way, even if they do so subconsciously and without being open about it. It's the same with racism. When people are discriminated against because of their skin colour, others benefit as a result. These people will want to maintain a theoretically neutral position, saying, "no, it's not my fault" or "there's nothing I can do about it". And so the violence endures. It's incredibly complicated. To change things, we need openly non-racist policies; we need debates like the one we're having today; we need clubs like Barça that force us to engage in these debates. From the moment we begin to debate, we become more intelligent; we understand that if we want to overcome racism and sexism, we need to move towards policies of solidarity, and we realise that change will only be achieved if we act at a political level.

**RM:** What made you decide to create a foundation against racism?

**LT:** I created this foundation while I was playing for Barça because I'd become used to discussing these issues with children. One day a man, Juan Campmany, asked me: "What are you going to do when you grow up?". I was already at the end of my sporting career, and, for him, playing football was a child's game, after which it was time to become an adult. So, I gave him a child's answer: "When I grow up, I'm going to change the world". He asked me how I would do it, and I said I would like to explain to people that racism is not natural, that sexism and homophobia are not natural but cultural; customs passed down from generation to generation that should be questioned and challenged. He gave me the idea of creating a foundation, and, incredibly, I started talking to the first team players to make short videos, and the president, Joan Laporta, heard about it and asked me what he could do to help. It's often said that FC Barcelona is more than a club, which is true because this desire to be supportive and see how football can help change mindsets and attitudes is embedded in Barça's DNA.





**RM:** What's the main message you want the foundation to convey?

**LT:** Since 2008, we've been trying to make it clear that when we talk about racism, about skin colour, homophobia, sexism, religious conflicts, etc., we need to recognise that all these forms of discrimination share a common link, which is something we often fail to see. It's as if these issues are separated by walls, but in reality, they're not. Political will is omnipresent. Equality is the result of political will, and so is inequality. We live in societies that send us messages every day. We're governed by a capitalist system. That means we have to consume, we have to get rich, and we have to exploit everything, even nature... Perhaps we don't see it, perhaps we don't talk about it openly, but it's the reality. Global warming is linked to an economic system; slavery is an economic system; colonisation is an economic system... But economic systems don't admit to their violence. On the contrary, economic systems maintain that they're fantastic. That's why I say that when we talk about racism, we have to tread carefully and understand that it's related to an economic and political system. Slavery wasn't described as a racist system, nor was segregation or apartheid. So when I speak out today and say that there are racist structures in our societies, people aren't happy because they don't want to see it. But the reality is that I can speak as a football player, as a European and as a black person, and I say that if we want to change these racist structures, which do exist, first we have to question the economic system we live in because the economic system we live in threatens the very survival of humankind. It needs to be called into question because it's also the very nature of that system that makes solidarity so hard.

**RM:** Are you calling for a revolution?

**LT:** What does revolution mean? It means change. We have to be careful when we use words. Some have negative connotations. But obviously, to want revolution is to want change. I think the principal revolutionaries in our societies are women because they've been suffering from male domination for years, and in the past when women demanded change, they were killed and burned. So it can be interesting to think about what's hidden behind a revolution because they're often linked to an image of violence, and because of that, we tend to reject them without first considering the fact that all systems endure through violence.

Racism is an extremely violent system that involves violating a part of the world, violating people. I mean, when we talk about someone not being able to leave Ukraine because they're black, imagine the violence that my children or myself felt at that moment, because it reminded us of this idea that we're not human beings like the others, like the ones who are allowed to cross borders. It's interesting because when there's a war, the animals can't escape the country either; they don't have that option. So, in the presence of violence, we absolutely need a revolution of mentalities, yes. We cannot accept the status quo. It disturbs me that so many people do. I was a football player for many years, and from time to time, the crowd would make monkey noises. I'd go into the dressing room and get really angry. Then the other players would tell me it wasn't serious; the managers would tell me it wasn't serious. What is serious is to say that it's not serious. So I'm convinced that a revolution of mentalities is necessary, and, for me, the major revolution will come on the day when all human beings consider themselves as equals. That day will be fascinating. But we need a revolution in the mind of every individual: I don't see a black person, a man, a woman, an Italian or a Spaniard; I see a human being, and, as a human being, there are many things to do, and there are many things I cannot accept.

**RM:** Among those of us here today, I doubt that anyone would declare themselves racist or who consciously thinks that they are racist. Almost certainly, everyone would say they are neither a racist nor a chauvinist. Perhaps speaking in this setting is somewhat easier or more comfortable because there's a minimum degree of consensus, even though if we were to scratch the surface a little, we'd undoubtedly find both racists and chauvinists. But what's the reaction to your discourse when the audience isn't as pre-disposed to accepting it as this one?



**LT:** As I've already said, racism and sexism are cultural. There's a history there that most of us cannot escape. I'm a man, and when I analyse how I do and say things, even within my own family, I sometimes identify sexist, macho behaviours. We have to be aware of this. It's not good enough to say, "I'm not a racist". That doesn't help to advance the revolution. The first thing we have to do is ask this question: I am a black person, and you are a white person, but who in this room knows more about the histories of these identities? It's interesting because I'm not really black-skinned, and you're not really white-skinned. The whole concept is a political construction, and whenever we use these identities, we do so with the history that is embedded in them and in the way we think about them. Generally speaking, white people aren't aware of their identity as a white person. If you say "you're white" to a white person, they often feel attacked. In my book, I question a friend: if I'm black, what are you? He answers: I'm normal. That's why I argue that the issue of racism and the power of the conditioning we've received needs to be questioned and analysed and why I tell everyone that you have to have the humility to hear and read the words of people who have been working on these issues for many years.

If racism persists in society, it's because people are defending that system. Human beings don't like change. If we're asked to change our ways, we don't like it. It's the same with racism. I'll give you an example of how customs can be very powerful. Here's a map of the world. When I visit schools, the children tell me to turn the map around because, according to them, it's upside down. So I say to them: the world is like a ball, and we can't say that a ball is upside down; it's just a way of perceiving things. As a rule, people aren't aware that Europe here is enlarged. On the maps we're familiar with, the proportions aren't exact. The African continent is reduced in size to the extent that Russia appears to be bigger than Africa. But we're used to seeing it that way, so we don't question it. To question it would be revolutionary, and we humans generally don't like to ask questions that disturb us.

**RM:** The map is definitely a good example. Another is that many people use the phrase 'new world' to refer to a territory that was only new to those who colonised it. Could you suggest five things we're doing wrong and five ways we could improve?

**LT:** Wow, five things, I don't know, it's difficult; I wasn't expecting that! Maybe we should ask ourselves if we're aware that when we speak and act, we do so as white people, or black people, as men or women, or as someone with a particular social position... From what point of view do I speak? How have I been educated? Have I ever put myself in someone else's shoes, for example, in those of a disabled person? When my children were young, and we took the metro, I always used to ask them if they thought someone in a wheelchair could have made the same journey. Putting yourself in other people's shoes gives you a different perspective. We'll leave it at that because five's a lot. Let's just start with this one first.

In any case, I think it's important to be aware that we are not neutral. We often pretend to be neutral in situations of injustice, claiming that there's nothing we can do and that it's out of our hands. But being neutral is a luxury because it means that, ultimately, you won't be affected by the injustice, and I think that, sometimes, we fail to make progress because too many people are entrenched in this neutrality. There's a quote from Einstein that's stayed with me for a long time: "The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing". Most people look on and do nothing, which is why taking an interest in politics is so important. More so every day because every day there's more inequality. We need to push for policies that redistribute wealth. In other words, we need to support solidarity policies. Unfortunately, I get the impression that, in our society, solidarity has almost become a dirty word, an ugly word. Yet, we have no other option. We must show solidarity. The very survival of humankind has depended on solidarity. Therefore, we cannot remain confined in small groups or small worlds. I'm French. At the moment, the presidential election debates are taking place and it's so disconcerting to watch the political narrative be broken down to the "us". The "we" are the whites, and at the other extreme are the non-whites, those who want to occupy "our" world. It's hard to believe that people still fall for that trap because the central problem in our society is the redistribution of wealth. If there's no redistribution of wealth, violence will inevitably break out at some point.

**RM:** How can we collaborate with your foundation here in Catalonia?

**LT:** You're already doing it! FC Barcelona helps me a lot. If I'm here today it's because you invited me. Anyone interested in our foundation can go to the website. There are several ways to help spread our message and make people think. I'm a great believer in the power of reflection, and I often say to my children that I might be old, but it seems to me that the world they live in today is more conducive to superficiality and narcissism than reflection. And I warn them to be careful because perhaps people aren't familiar with the story of Narcissus, but he ends up drowning. So it's good to reflect.

### 3. First round table: “Promoting social inclusion and integration through public and private institutions”

Next on the schedule was the first round table, with participation from Philipp Müller-Wirth, Head of Sports for UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector; Floor van Houdt, Head of the European Commission's Sports Unit (Erasmus+); Anna Caula, Secretary General for Sport and Physical Activity for the Government of Catalonia; and Marta Segú, Director-General of the FC Barcelona Foundation. The round table aims to showcase the work and values of the public and private bodies that work to promote inclusion through sport, both nationally and internationally.

How does UNESCO use sport as a tool for inclusion? Philip Müller-Wirth explained that, despite being a vast organisation, the Sports unit is a small team that forms part of the Social and Human Sciences Sector. He highlighted three of the team's various responsibilities. Firstly, the creation of legislation, i.e. creating a favourable environment for establishing a legislative framework that ensures sport is a safe, inclusive setting in which human rights are guaranteed. Secondly, it's important to promote and create policies that support these efforts. Therefore the team has to involve those responsible for implementing these policies, such as foreign affairs, health and youth ministers, non-governmental organisations, etc., as their role is to assist the people and organisations on the ground. Lastly, UNESCO plays a key role in capacity building, for example, through campaigns to promote physical activity in schools or by offering courses and resources to NGOs so that they can extend their reach.

In terms of policy implementation, Müller-Wirth pointed to the need to bring together different actors on a global scale with the aim of creating common standards. In this context, he spoke about the Feed for Life project and the need to reach a consensus and use the same methodology when quantifying, generating global development and increasing the impact of sports interventions. However, he also acknowledged that every context is different and will require targeted and specific solutions. In other words, these global tools will need to be adjusted. Therefore, although common capacities are critical for addressing problems and finding solutions, these standards and tools then need to be fine-tuned to work with local capacities.

Another of UNESCO's roles is to provide a model for sports ministries and the different stakeholders. Müller-Wirth stressed the need to change the concept of sport as a purely competitive discipline and highlighted the enormous benefits it offers society in terms of making it more inclusive and promoting values such as citizenship.

Next, Floor van Houdt, representing the European Commission, spoke about society and sports in the EU programmes. In this case, given that the geographical scope is narrower, the starting point is somewhat different. In theory, therefore, certain shared values already exist and are enshrined in the

legislation, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European treaties, which specifically promote the equality of men and women, reject discrimination and are based on the principles of solidarity. These values are implemented in EU policies and strategies, and sport plays a crucial role in achieving objectives such as equality, winning the fight against racism, safeguarding the rights of people with disabilities, and ensuring the acceptance of LGBTI people, etc. However, Van Houdt acknowledged that achieving these goals is a complex task that requires long-term effort.

As a facilitator, the EU supports those who play a more active role. For example, its Erasmus+ programme is designed to promote education, training, youth and sport during the 2021-2027 period. In addition, the EU funds a number of sport-focused projects and also supports those that act as role models. The European #BeInclusive Awards, for example, recognise and raise the profile of projects that have been successful in promoting inclusion through sport. The EU is aware of the problems posed by inequalities and how sport can serve as a tool to help overcome them. Van Houdt explained that it's essential minorities not only play sports but become actively involved in their organisation.

Anna Caula then took the floor to speak about the Catalan government's actions in terms of enhancing inclusion through sport. It views sport as a tool for general transformation and takes a holistic and comprehensive educational approach. Caula emphasised the idea of sport as a circular instrument that has implications for leisure, competition, health, ongoing development and the economy, and, as such, provides a valuable return on investment. In Catalonia, sport is part of the soul and personality of the country, with thousands of sports entities and more than 2 million people registered with schools, federations, gymnasiums and other types of associations.

Caula explained the importance of sport for personal development and its role in transmitting fundamental values in society. In an increasingly digitalised world, sport plays an essential role in learning to share and concede. For this reason, we must ensure that as many people as possible can access it. The Catalan School Sport Plan is designed to introduce children to sporting activities. As some sports require a more significant financial investment, for example, tennis or horse riding, it provides grants and subsidies so that every child has the same opportunities.

In her last speech, Marta Segú focused on FC Barcelona's actions in the field of social inclusion. Since 2006, the Barça Foundation has been collaborating with international cooperation programmes (such as UNICEF, for example) and local cooperation programmes in Catalonia. These programmes take a holistic approach to transforming the lives of vulnerable children and young people who have been the victims of abuse or are dealing with functional diversity or socio-economic difficulties. It also promotes

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gender equality through sport with its SPRING project, which assists female refugees. The Foundation collaborates with small-scale local organisations that have limited resources but are familiar with specific areas and contexts, but equally, it works with larger international organisations such as Save the Children, benefitting from its wealth of expertise.

For the Barça Foundation, sport is a tool with multiple functions, from transmitting positive health messages to reducing school absenteeism and promoting gender equality. The Barça Genuine project, for example, includes 20 boys and 4 girls with functional diversity who compete based on values such as sporting conduct, fair play, teamwork, respect and self-improvement. Segú also referred to other programmes that use sport to transmit civic values, such as Step for Youth, which receives EU funding.

Segú believes that the Barça Foundation provides substance and validates FC Barcelona's motto of "More than a club". Moreover, the Foundation takes advantage of Barça's capacity to mobilise and acts as a tool that channels all of the club's social actions, which, in turn, help to transform the lives of thousands of children and young people.

## 4. Second round table: "Best practices and success stories"

The second round table presented examples of best practices and success stories, with contributions from Henry Gilham, methodological coordinator for the Barça Foundation's Inclusion Programme; Oriol Parés, sports manager at the Brians 2 penitentiary centre; Federica Minardo, educator at Cooperativa Prospettiva (Italy); and Amina Moustafa, board member of Sport Against Racism Ireland.

Firstly, Henry Gilham discussed two specific successful projects: the inclusion project within the educational centres in the juvenile justice system, in collaboration with the Government of Catalonia's Ministry of Justice, and the project for social inclusion in Catalan municipalities, which is supported by the provincial councils. Regarding the first, he explained that it aims to equip the young people with tools to help them acquire social and personal skills and thus improve their lives. He noted that they typically come from backgrounds that lack family support, structure or normal family life, so the programme uses sports, physical activity and dialogue to educate them on moral standards. In addition, the cooperative games and challenges emphasise the benefits of healthy lifestyle choices. The programmes initially lasted for one year but are now being extended due to their success. Unfortunately, however, many children and young people still need to be reached, and the scope of the programmes needs to be widened.

The contribution from Oriol Parés focused on the role of sport in improving the lives of inmates. Based on his experience at the Brians 2 prison, Parés explained that sport facilitates holistic development, offering psychological, cultural and social benefits alongside its well-known physical and physiological advantages. In this context, sport imparts knowledge, teaches respect for rules, and makes differences irrelevant. An excellent example of inclusion and social transformation is the *Corre a gran* charity run, which was created in 2017 by a group of inmates who had become aware of the positive changes that physical activity had brought them. In 2022, the race attracted 920 participants, and the profits were donated to further research into Rett Syndrome and fund treatments for Berta, a young sufferer of the disorder. Parés finished by stressing the need for increased financial investment to fund more activities and improve the quality of those already available.

Next, Federica Minardo from Italy agreed on the importance of sport as a tool for social inclusion and spoke of its ability to transcend languages and cultures, allowing people to understand each other in multicultural environments where it can sometimes be challenging. The people who take part in the activities organised by her cooperative come from sub-Saharan Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Romania. Sometimes they're second-generation migrants or children experiencing



problems at home or with no family, and sometimes they're just kids from the neighbourhood who want to join in with the activities. Regardless, the aim remains the same: to equip them with the tools they need to empower them in the future. Thanks to the Step for Youth programme, the number of participants and activities has increased and offers a more inclusive structure.

Minardo highlighted the influence of today's media, political rhetoric and certain specific policies, and argued that inclusion and integration policies have suffered as a result in Italy in recent years. The hate speech makes children feel unwelcome, and during the different activities, it's evident that the foreign children are more accustomed to difficult situations and show more resilience than their local counterparts. The educator argued that Italy's investment in education is lacking and called for an educational revolution based on local realities, which is where the best results are obtained.

To conclude, Amina Moustafa talked about racism in Ireland, which remains a problem despite being less overt these days. The Irish Anti-Racism Network detected 404 cases of racism in the summer of last year, and any study of representation in organisations or access to higher education and good job opportunities reveals that the proportion of non-white people is always lower. Sport Against Racism Ireland aims to fight racism and reach out to vulnerable communities through sport. In 2014, for example, following the repeal of the law banning Muslim women from playing football, the organisation actively encouraged them to do so, incorporating dialogue workshops and confidence-building excursions.

Moustafa believes that sport is vital for channelling voices and allows people to put themselves in other people's shoes. For this reason, it's essential that women not only participate in sports but also in their implementation and organisation, to increase their autonomy and self-confidence. With this in mind, she also advocates for the association's members to be independent when it comes to creating programmes.

During the question and answer session, the idea of introducing a basic Europe-wide school curriculum that includes sports and human rights was put forward. Amina Moustafa immediately spoke in favour and said that associations and organisations in the sector should be involved in its design. Henry Gilham then answered a question posed by a consultant and doctoral student from the University of Birmingham on best practices for the inclusion of people with disabilities, based on the idea that activities should always be adapted for people with functional diversity so that they can participate and feel included. Mariona Corbella, from the Esportsalus Foundation, highlighted the benefits of sport not only for the individual or beneficiary but also for the society that receives these boys and girls, as it creates a more cohesive and tolerant society and one that's better prepared because it's more diverse.



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In response to a question posed by Sara Vila, from the NGO Superacción, about feelings and emotions in sport and how the different organisations address them, Oriol Parés stressed the importance of creating a climate of trust in which everyone can be honest and feel protected, to pave the way for activities that can foster the habits and values they lack. Federica Minardo then underlined the need to create safe spaces and explained that they arrange regular meetings with psychologists and work alongside a psychiatric team and several other public service associations. However, their financial resources are limited as mental health isn't viewed as a fundamental piece of the puzzle in these situations.

Finally, Amina Moustafa remarked that her organisation doesn't want people to be re-traumatised and implements practices to ensure everyone feels comfortable. If they do detect warning signs and symptoms, they do their best to react and respond quickly. The last question came from Celso Pérez, director of the Gavina Foundation, who raised the issue of the pre-eminence of football in socio-educational activities. Oriol Parés replied that he personally tries to avoid it as there are plenty of other sports with the same positive qualities but fewer political, media and economic interests involved, and the aim should be to create sportsmen and women, not footballers. Gilham explained that it can take a bit of persuasion, but most participants eventually come to appreciate alternatives to football, citing the particular success of korfbal among the activities they organise.

## 5. Presentation by Alex Roca, sportsman and ambassador for the FC Barcelona Foundation

Alex Roca, an athlete with a 76% physical disability caused by cerebral palsy, shared his experience of sport, accompanied by his partner, Mari Carmen Maza. He described sport as his primary tool for social inclusion, allowing him to relate to others, communicate beyond speech and overcome challenges.

For Roca, sport is an instrument that helps him develop ethics such as hard work, sacrifice, perseverance, teamwork and communication. It's also his most important channel of communication. He went on to explain that sport has taught him to keep fighting and never give up.

As examples of that ethic, he pointed to his experience of participating in triathlons, despite the physical barriers, and the world's toughest mountain bike race, the Titan Desert, which involves cycling 650 km across the Sahara desert. A challenge which, after several unsuccessful attempts, he finally completed in 2019.





Alex Roca dedicated his final words to FC Barcelona, the club that has given him so much happiness, reaffirming the power of Barça and the value of sport as a tool for mobilisation and inclusion.

## 6. Closing act

During the closing act, Elena Fort and Marta Segú once again took the stage to announce the club's collaboration with UNHCR over the next four seasons.

For her part, the Catalan Minister for Foreign Action and Open Government, Victòria Alsina, closed the event by reiterating the idea that sport is a key issue for the country and stressed that collaboration between public and private entities, foundations, companies and governments has a critical role to play on the path towards the shared goal of social inclusion.

According to Alsina, the war in Ukraine has given rise to some shining examples of collective solidarity. As an illustration, she mentioned the 220 children who arrived from Poland thanks to FC Barcelona. The minister concluded by thanking the FC Barcelona Foundation for supporting some of the most disadvantaged children and helping to integrate them into society.

Finally, Alsina mentioned the role of the European funds in financing inclusion projects for refugees that wouldn't otherwise be possible. She also affirmed that sport is one of the best means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included in the United Nations 2030 Agenda: the eradication of poverty, health, quality education, economic growth, sustainability and peace.

# Annex. Participants



## > VICTÒRIA ALSINA

### MINISTER FOR FOREIGN ACTION AND OPEN GOVERNMENT. GOVERNMENT OF CATALONIA

She has a degree in Political Sciences and Administration and a doctorate in Political and Social Sciences from Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona. She has a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and an Executive Master in Public Administration degree from ESADE business school, Barcelona. She was awarded the European Union's prestigious Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship. She is a lecturer and director of studies on leave of absence from the New York University Center for Urban Science and Progress and Head Researcher at the Governance Laboratory (The GovLab) at the same university. She had previously held various posts at the Harvard Kennedy School: Associate at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Democracy Fellow at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, and Fellow at the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government. Additionally, she is a member of the Senior Common Room at Lowell House at Harvard University. She also has been delegate of the Government of Catalonia to the United States and Canada. In the international field, she has worked all over the world for some of the main international bodies and organisations such as the European Union, the OECD, the Council of Europe, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations.



## > ANNA CAULA

### SECRETARY GENERAL OF SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY. GOVERNMENT OF CATALONIA

Anna Caula i Paretas is the Secretary General of Sports and Physical Activity of the Government of Catalonia since 8 June 2021. She is the second woman in this position. Her professional life has centred around basketball. She was the coach of the Spanish national team U20, winning three gold medals and two silver medals in five European Championships. She was the coach of the mini Catalan national team with the Catalan Basketball Association. As coach of Uni Girona (2008-2014) she promoted the team to the Women's League. She is director of children and youth leisure activities and has studies in psychology. Within the political sphere, she has been member of the Parliament of Catalonia since 2015. She was elected First Vice-president of the Board on the latest parliamentary elections, but she resigned in order to hold its current position.



## > LAURA FORESTER

### SECRETARY GENERAL OF DIPLOCAT

Laura Foraster i Lloret (Barcelona, 1976) holds a degree in Economics and Business Administration at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), a degree in Humanities at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) and an MA in European Studies at the KU Leuven. She also has specific education in Public Diplomacy and in Election Observation.

Missions. Prior to her current position as Secretary General of DIPLOCAT, she was Executive Director of the entity until its temporary closure in April 2018. Foraster has been Chief of Cabinet of the Minister for Innovation, Universities and Enterprise and of the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Consumer Affairs of the Government of Catalonia during two consecutive legislative terms, where she was responsible for the management of the Minister's Cabinet, the political assistance to the Minister and for European Union and international issues. Her previous professional experience includes Parliamentary Assistant to Catalan Members of the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg, following the Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Foreign and Security Policy Committee and the Constitutional Affairs Committee. In Brussels, she also worked for the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the Catalan Government Delegation in the EU.



## > ELENA FORT

### VICEPRESIDENT OF FC BARCELONA

Elena has a degree in Law from the University of Barcelona. She is a lawyer specialising in public law and urban issues, and founder of BRF Advocats SLP. She was a member of the Catalan Parliament from May 2019 to December 2002. She is a member of the Barcelona Bar Association. She was member of the board at FC Barcelona between 2008 and 2010.



## > HENRY GILHAM

### METHODOLOGICAL COORDINATOR OF THE INCLUSION PROGRAMME. BARÇA FOUNDATION

Henry Gilham Gracia was born in Girona on 13 July 1995. He is passionate about sport and education. He graduated in physical activity and sport sciences by the University of Girona (EUSES) and specialised in education, with a master's degree in teacher training by the International University of Valencia (UVIVO). Currently, he is the methodological coordinator of the Barça Foundation's inclusion programme in Girona and also the *FutbolNet* educator at the Montilivi juvenile justice centre (Girona). Previously, he was local coordinator of the Barça Foundation's inclusion programmes in Salt (2 years) and in La Bisbal de l'Empordà (3 years). Moreover, he has also worked as a trainer in cooperative sport in the courses of initiation to sports technician (CIATE). Previously, he was also involved in different educational and sports projects in the city of Salt and educator in leisure, an agency of the European Union.



## > FEDERICA MINARDO

### EDUCATOR AT COOPERATIVA PROSPETTIVA

Federica Minardo is an educator for Cooperativa Prospettiva. She started cooperating with "Prospettiva" in 2015 as an intern, during her undergraduate studies. She has a bachelor's degree in Sociology, a M.A. in Human Rights and multi-level governance and, currently, she is studying for a master's degree in Pedagogy. During her studies, she had the chance to take part in the Erasmus program in Portugal and to achieve a double degree in Poland. She loves traveling and getting to know other cultures. As an educator, she takes part in the organization of the educational services that the cooperative provides to kids living in our city, Catania. She contributes to the empowerment of children that live in difficult environments, by offering them a multiplicity of perspectives that may inspire them for a successful and better future.



## > AMINA MOUSTAFA

### BOARD MEMBER. SPORT AGAINST RACISM IRELAND

Amina Moustafa is a Programme Manager for the Women's Leadership Programme at the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation and is a Board Member of Sport Against Racism Ireland. She previously taught 'Sport, Culture and Society' at Nottingham Trent University as part of the Sport Sociology team. Passionate about sport from a young age, she has been using sport as a non-formal learning tool to tackle numerous social issues, she has worked with sports organisations in Ireland and abroad such as FIFA Foundation, the Special Olympics, Michael Johnson Performance, Sport Against Racism Ireland and Champions Factory. In 2021, Amina was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award for the Volunteer in Sports Awards and in 2018 was selected as one of 10 Michael Johnson Young Leaders from around the world for her contribution to community development and in 2019, she acted as an Ambassador Coach for Ireland helping bring the Irish women's team to the Final in the Global Goals World Cup in Copenhagen.



## > PHILIPP MÜLLER-WIRTH

### CHIEF OF THE SPORT SECTION, SECTOR FOR SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES. UNESCO

Philipp Müller-Wirth is currently Chief of UNESCO's Sport Section. Philipp holds an MBA in Economics and Finance. His career in UNESCO since 1991 evolved around three areas: partnerships with the business community, institutional communication and branding, and sport policy. He coordinated the last two World Conferences of Sport Ministers: MINEPS V in Berlin, Germany in 2013 and MINEPS VI in Kazan, Russia in 2017 and chaired the revision of the International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport in 2015. As Secretary of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS), he is coordinating the implementation of the Kazan Action Plan.



## > ORIOL PARÉS

### SPORTS SPECIALIST AT CORRECTIONAL FACILITY BRIANS 2

Oriol Parés is 41 years old and was born in Roda de Berà (Tarragona). He is a natural born soccer player, but above all a sportsman. He has a degree in Physical Activity and Sport Science, specialized in educational itinerary. Professionally involved with the coordination and stimulation of schools and sport camps, he briefly worked at Decathlon shop in Manresa as Head of the Running Section. He has been a Sports Specialist at Correctional Facility Brians 2 for the last 15 years. He understands physical activity and sport is the best tool for social inclusion, not only because it grants a comprehensive education, but offers ideal situations and contexts for people to be successful.



## > ALEX ROCA

### SPORTSMAN AND AMBASSADOR OF BARÇA FOUNDATION

Alex is a 30-year-old athlete known for having finished triathlons and races of great difficulty, such as the Titan Desert last 2019. He has overcome cerebral palsy with a 76% physical disability and two foot operations. He communicates with sign

language and sport is a fundamental pillar in his daily life, as well as being his way of life to improve himself. He wants to show the world that you set your own limits (which is also the title of his book), and that no one can tell you not to try. He is also an ambassador for the Barça Foundation and gives motivational conferences and inspirational talks based on his personal story.



## > MARTA SEGÚ

### DIRECTOR GENERAL OF BARÇA FOUNDATION

Marta has a bachelor's degree in Medicine and Surgery and post degree in Tropical Medicine from the University of Barcelona and a Master in International Public Health from Boston University School of Public Health. Dr. Marta Segú is the current Executive Director of the Futbol Club Barcelona Foundation, being this her second stage at the Foundation, where she was working from 2006-2010 and she hold the position of Executive Director. In the last 10 years, she has been Executive Director at Probitas Foundation of Grifols group. She has more than 30 years of experience in various foundations working on programs to improve health and quality of life of the most vulnerable populations. Marta has also focused on the field of poverty-related diseases, such as malaria, Chagas and HIV / AIDS, working also with children and young people at social risk in Catalonia and Spain. She has been collaborating as WHO consultant in different fields, and in partnership with several organisations such as UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO, WFP, Save the Children and RED Cross among others. She has also been involved in the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.



## > LILIAN THURAM

### FORMER PLAYER OF FC BARCELONA AND FOUNDER OF THE FOUNDATION LILIAN THURAM EDUCATION AGAINST RACISM

Lilian Thuram was born in Guadeloupe in 1972 and he started the *Foundation Education contre le racisme, pour l'égalité* in 2008. He has written several books including *My Black Stars* (PUL, Liverpool, 2021), *Seligmann Prize against Racism*, *Manifeste pour l'égalité* (Autrement, 2012), *Notre Histoire* (Delcourt, 2014 and 2016), *White Thinking* (Hero, London, 2021). He was chief curator of the exhibition *Exhibitions. The invention of the savage*, at the Quai-Branly museum in 2011/2012. In 2014 he received the Kéba-Mbaye Foundation Ethics Prize in Senegal. He has been awarded an honorary doctorate in human sciences of the University of Stockholm in Sweden (2017) and of the University of Stirling in Scotland (2019). In a previous life, he accomplished a prestigious career as an international footballer. Together with the French team, he won the world championship in 1998 and the European championship in 2000.



## > FLOOR VAN HOUDT

### HEAD OF UNIT FOR SPORT. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ms Floor van Houdt has worked for the European Commission for more than 25 years. Currently, she is the head of the Sport Unit in charge of European sport policy. Prior to this position, she worked on EU policies in the fields of youth, research, entrepreneurship and maritime affairs. Before joining the Commission, she studied law and European studies in the Netherlands, Spain and Belgium and she worked a consultant in EU public affairs.

# The member entities of DIPLOCAT

## » Public institutions and municipal entities

- Government of Catalonia
- Barcelona City Council
- Tarragona City Council
- Girona City Council
- Lleida City Council
- Vielha e Mijaran City Council
- Barcelona Provincial Council
- Tarragona Provincial Council
- Girona Provincial Council
- Lleida Provincial Council
- Conselh Generau d'Aran
- Catalan Association of Municipalities and Counties
- Federation of Municipalities of Catalonia

## » Entities of the business sector

- General Council of the Official Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Catalonia
- Entrepreneurs association Foment del Treball Nacional
- Association of Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises of Catalonia (PIMEC)
- Confederation of Cooperatives of Catalonia
- Multi-Sector Business Association (AMEC)
- Private Foundation of Entrepreneurs (FemCAT)

## » Entities of the social, trade union and sports sector

- The Group of Entities of the Voluntary Sector of Catalonia
- Trade union Unió General de Treballadors de Catalunya (UGT)
- Trade union Comissions Obreres de Catalunya (CCOO)
- Football Club Barcelona

## » Universities, business schools and academic institutions

- University of Barcelona (UB)
- Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB)
- Technical University of Catalonia (UPC)
- Pompeu Fabra University (UPF)
- University of Lleida (UdL)
- University of Girona (UdG)
- Rovira i Virgili University (URV)
- Ramon Llull University (URL)
- Open University of Catalonia (UOC)
- University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC)
- International University of Catalonia (UIC)
- Abat Oliba CEU University (UAO CEU)
- Barcelona Institute of International Studies (IBEI)
- EADA Business School
- Barcelona School of Economics (BSE)