
Council of Europe: discrimination and abuse in sports. Berge (deputy secretary), “sporting clubs need to cooperate”

“Change is needed, and it is only by working together that we will find effective solutions”: this was said by Bjørn Berge, deputy secretary general of the Council of Europe, this morning as he opened a meeting with prominent figures from the world of sports, antiracism and discrimination about “how to fight racism, homophobia, sexism and any form of hate speech in sports and sports events”. There are multiple “well-meaning treaties and written pledges”, but we all know that “there is no full adhesion to or implementation of such legal guidelines”, Berge stated, and “hatred – based on race, religion, sexuality, gender and other factors – is still an obstinate, unwanted and unacceptable fact in too many sports events”. In Berge’s opinion, a way to go is that of cooperation, as it already happens with UEFA and FIFA, but more, new ones are needed; next to this, “governmental action” is required and “sporting clubs must take the lead” on this fight, so as to eventually have “sporting events that are completely free of any form of racism and hate speech”.

Valentina Bombelli