

# SPIN Youth

## EMPOWER DIVERSE YOUTH



[www.sportinclusion.net](http://www.sportinclusion.net)



### European Networking Conference

## “Inclusion and Empowerment of Young People with Diverse Background in Sport – Challenges and new approaches in a transforming world”

16 – 17 April 2026

**Venue: Player Campus do Jogador SJPF, Odivelas**

*Avenida Miguel Torga, Lote B - Quinta do Porto Pinheiro, 2675 Odivelas, Portugal*

### Overview

Ongoing transformations within the European Union and globally have led to backlashes against Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives and programmes. What is the current situation in European sports? How can sports clubs and stakeholders sustain meaningful programmes that engage and empower diverse youth? What new forms of youth involvement and co-creation of policies affecting them are emerging?

This concluding event of the ERASMUS+ sport project SPIN Youth will examine the situation in several EU member states. It aims to raise awareness about the importance of fully including Young People with Diverse Backgrounds (YPWDB) at all levels of sport, both as volunteers and in non-playing roles. The conference will disseminate the outcomes of the SPIN Youth project to a wide range of grassroots sport stakeholders and will gather national youth panel members and project participants (youth role models) alongside experts, stakeholders, and project partners. Hosted by the Portuguese Players Union (SJPF), a key member of FIFPro, the conference will facilitate networking and enable the transfer of knowledge to local stakeholders, amplifying the message throughout grassroots sports in Portugal and beyond.

The conference addresses a diverse audience, including experts, opinion leaders, policy makers, sports managers, coaches, athletes & players, and relevant institutions. There will be a particular focus on initiatives from the Iberian region and grassroots sport organisations.

### Aims

- Foster networking and engage new stakeholders
- Discuss innovative models and approaches for using sport to socially include marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities, migrants, refugees, and women/girls
- Provide young participants (youth panel members, action researchers, inclusion role models) with an international platform to showcase themselves and share experiences
- Disseminate project outcomes to organised grassroots sport and media, enhancing the impact of the SPIN Youth project.

## Provisional Programme

THURSDAY, 16 April 2026

**15:00 – 17:30– General Assembly of the Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN)**

Venue: Hotel Acta MOA, Avenida Almirante Gago Coutinho 30, Areeiro, Lisbon

**20: 00 – Dinner**

FRIDAY, 17 April 2026

**9:40 Registration**

**10:00 – 10:25 Kick-off Session**

- Video portraits of youth coordinators
- Welcoming speeches:  
Joao Oliveira, Secretary General of SJPF  
Kurt Wachter, VIDC-fairplay Initiative  
Portuguese representatives)
- Spoken word performance

Overall moderation: Matilde Fidalgo, former Manchester City and Portuguese International

**10:25 – 10:35 SPIN Network – Presentation and next steps**

**10:35 – 11:25 Expert Panel**

***Rethinking Sport and Inclusion: Innovative Strategies for Engaging Diverse Youth***

Ricardo Bendito – Olympic Athletes Committee  
Des Tomlinson – Football Association of Ireland (FAI)  
Daniela Costa – Associação Nacional de Futebol de Rua  
José Miguel – Xico Andebol  
European representative (tbc)

Moderation: Stefan Belabed

**11:25 – 11:45 Coffee Break**

**11:45 – 11:50 Spoken Word Performance**

**11:50 – 13:00 Workshop Session**

***How can we empower young people to make a difference in their clubs?***

**Youth work but adults can also work with them: Youth Voices Wall**

Young participants work in small groups and write or draw their experiences in sports clubs. They can answer questions like: *What makes you feel welcome?* and *What makes it hard to stay involved?* Adults listen but do not interrupt. Afterward, youth present their ideas. This activity gives young people a clear moment to express themselves and be heard.

**Interaction: The Obstacle Course**

Using cones, ropes, or chairs, groups build a small physical obstacle course that represents a barrier migrants or refugees face in joining a sports club (e.g., cost, language, feeling unwelcome). Each group then explains their course to others. Movement makes abstract problems concrete and fun.

**Group brainstorming: Fix It Together**

In mixed adult-youth groups, participants pick one barrier and brainstorm three practical actions their club could take to remove it. Ideas are written on large paper. Adults and young people must contribute equally – a youth member presents the final ideas.

**13:00 – 14:00 Lunch**

**14:00 – 14:10 EWOS Reels Presentation**

Presentation of combined European Week of Sport 2025 reels.

**14:10 – 15:10 World Café - Round Table Session – Part 1**

Youth Coordinators will share their experiences and results of the SPIN Youth project.

**15:10 – 15:30 Coffee Break**

**15:30 – 15:35 Spoken Word Performance**

**15:35 – 16:00 World Café - Round Table Session – Part 2**

**16:00 – 16:05 Spoken Word Performance**

**16:05 – 16:25 Athletes Talk: Youth impact on the field**

Young athletes with diverse backgrounds share their experiences.

**16:25 – 16:45 Conference Wrap-up and closing**

For updates of the programme go to: [www.sportinclusion.net](http://www.sportinclusion.net)

Find more on the SPIN Youth Project, <https://sportinclusion.net/spin-youth-project/>

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