

## **Dear FIFA President Gianni Infantino,**

With this letter, we kindly invite you for a dialogue with us in the European Parliament. A dialogue about how we together can combat and overcome the problems with violence, harassments and discrimination against female footballers.

Women's football is on the rise at a faster pace than we have ever witnessed before. This summer's FIFA World Cup in Australia and New Zealand set attendance records. We also saw a record increase in the number of people streaming matches and in the reporting of these games.

As feminists, Members of the European Parliament, and enthusiastic football supporters, this makes us proud. However, while interest in women's football is growing, female football players still face poor conditions for training and pay, sexual violence and harassment and in many places outright oppression.

One concrete case from this summer is what we have all witnessed around the Spanish national team, which eventually led to Luis Rubiales resigning as president of the Spanish Football Federation.

We truly wish we could say that what happened in Spain is unique. Unfortunately, it is anything but that. The world of sports is filled with testimonies of sexual harassment and discrimination.

Rubiales stepping down is a positive and necessary step. FIFA's decision to suspend him sends signals that such behaviour is unacceptable. The pressure placed on him regarding his inappropriate behaviour is good. However, this pressure needs to be applied to the entire football world, every day of the year, in all football clubs.

No girl or woman should have to endure violence, sexual harassment, or discrimination. Whether it is in her local football club or among the world elite in national teams.

Politics and the world of sports need to work together with common goals.

Last autumn, the Council of Europe adopted a report on reducing discrimination in women's football, a report that FIFA warmly welcomed. This week, the European Parliament has debated the incidents of this summer within the Spanish national team and the challenges of sexual harassment in the world of sport. Now we would like to take the next step in this work by inviting you, Mr President, to a dialogue with us in the European Parliament to discuss how we together can achieve lasting change.

We need a world where girls and boys, women and men have equal opportunities to participate in the sports they love on equal terms. What happened in Spain during the summer has shed light on an issue that needs even greater attention than it has today.

We look forward to your response and hope that we will soon have the opportunity to meet in a constructive dialogue.

**Best regards,**

*Members in the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality:*

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Heléne Fritzon, S&D, Socialist and Democrats, Sweden

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