



we can begin the journey down the next stage of the road. I am glad that you are here, and I am certain that together we can make a real difference."

A problem for all of Europe

Mr Aigner's speech was followed by addresses from Piara Powar, National Co-ordinator of Kick it Out and FARE; David Davies, Acting Chief Executive of the FA; Dr Alfred Sengle, Vice-President of the German Football Association (DFB) and Frantisek Laurinec, President of the Slovak Football Association (SFZ). Powar argued that racism *"is a problem that affects all corners of Europe"* and stressed several ways in which the problem can be tackled. *"Education is a key word, education of fans, of players, of administrators, of us all,"* he said. Powar also highlighted the importance of "community engagement" by clubs.

Davies said that *"football's commitment to fight racism shows our sport at its best"* and added that the oft-stated fear that by confronting racism the problem could be made worse was "plain wrong". Meanwhile, Sengle outlined the raft of "practical measures" that the DFB has implemented in their campaign against racism, including regular training sessions with security and safety staff and club officials on how to "identify, tackle and eliminate racism from grounds". Laurinec's address showed how the SFZ had reacted to racist abuse directed at England players that marred last autumn's EURO 2004 encounter between the two countries. *"Our reaction was improvised but prompt,"* he said, before describing educative and institutional initiatives that have since been initiated to combat racism.

A key emphasis of the conference was on practical action. Indeed, after the conclusion of the opening speeches delegates headed into a series of workshops designed to offer practical tips, encourage exchanges of ideas and foster discussion. The four workshops, entitled 'Educating fans, stewards and police', 'Developing policies at a national level', 'What clubs can do' and 'Tackling racism in UEFA competitions', were very constructive.

Suggestions from the workshops were summarised for the whole conference in the afternoon and many of the points raised will be incorporated into the guide to good practice in combating

racism in European football. *"We will certainly evaluate at length what has been suggested and proposed,"* said Mr Aigner. *"We will have to integrate a number of new elements into the guide to good practice which should be a working instrument for the future."*

Powar added: *"Already I can see there are things we need to add. We will take on board notes from workshops and significant others. Ultimately we hope the good practice guide will stand as the standard for practice across Europe. Once we have finalised this document, it's out there for use by the football family, and available for associations to fund some of the ideas we've heard."*

The last of the afternoon's activities was a question-and-answer session chaired by former Tottenham Hotspur FC forward Garth Crooks, which saw Chelsea FC's Marcel Desailly and Gianfranco Zola, Arsenal FC's Ashley Cole, former Celtic FC player Paul Elliott, Daniela Conti of FARE and UISP (Unione Italiana Sport Per tutti), and David Dein

discuss their views on and experiences of racism. Zola spoke for many when he told of the effect the conference had had on him: *"I will use these experiences to try and educate my children in the right way. That's something everyone should hopefully do in the future so we'll produce a better generation."*

The conference was judged to have been a great success by many of the participants. *"We're delighted that so many organisations from so many countries were represented,"* said Lord Ouseley in his closing speech. *"I feel energised and inspired."* However, it was also recognised that the day was merely the start of a long road towards eliminating racism from football. *"I don't see these events in a vacuum,"* said David Davies. *"From here people will take away shared experiences. Ten years ago the very fact we would have been sitting here with representatives from 52 countries [discussing the problem of racism] would have been unthinkable."*

Futsal in Belgium: red card for racism

The Belgian Football Association (URBSFA) has been fighting racism in Belgian football for many years.

The URBSFA is very active in this area: last November for example, we supported KRC Genk's "Red Card for Racism" campaign. This was a joint initiative by the city of Genk, KRC Genk, the Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Fight against Racism, and the URBSFA.

A similar campaign is now being launched with our national Futsal team as the vehicle. We plan to distribute a number of anti-racism posters to each Futsal club in national divisions 1 to 4, who will be encouraged to display them in cafeterias, sports halls, club houses, etc. We also took a large number of posters to the European Championships in Italy, where they were used as a kind of visiting card.

We are very proud that our national team supported the campaign in this way.

It goes without saying that our national Futsal team is a worthy example of how players of different origins, cultures or beliefs can work together successfully. We are delighted with the results achieved by Damien Knabben's team, which prove how unified our indoor players are.

In the future, we will look at other ways of fighting racism further and launching new campaigns to promote social integration in football and intercultural unity through activities involving players from different ethnic backgrounds.

François Vantomme



URBSFA