

# RESPONSIBALL

## RESPONSIBALL Ranking 2014

The Fourth Annual Social  
Responsibility Ranking of Football  
Leagues in Europe

October 2014

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# RESPONSIBALL Ranking 2014

1 (11)	Denmark		Superliga		
2 (3)	Netherlands		Eredivisie		
3 (1)	Germany		Bundesliga		
4 (2)	England		Premier League		
5 (9)	Italy		Serie A		
6 (5)	Spain		La Liga		
7 (4)	Poland		Allsvenskan		
8 (12)	Sweden		Allsvenskan		
9 (13)	France		Ligue 1		
10 (6)	Portugal		Primeira Liga		
11 (8)	Rep. of Ireland		Premier Division		
12 (7)	Russia		Premier League		
13 (14)	Greece		Super League		
14 (10)	Ukraine		Premier League		
15 (15)	Czech Rep.		Football Liga		
16 (16)	Croatia		First League		

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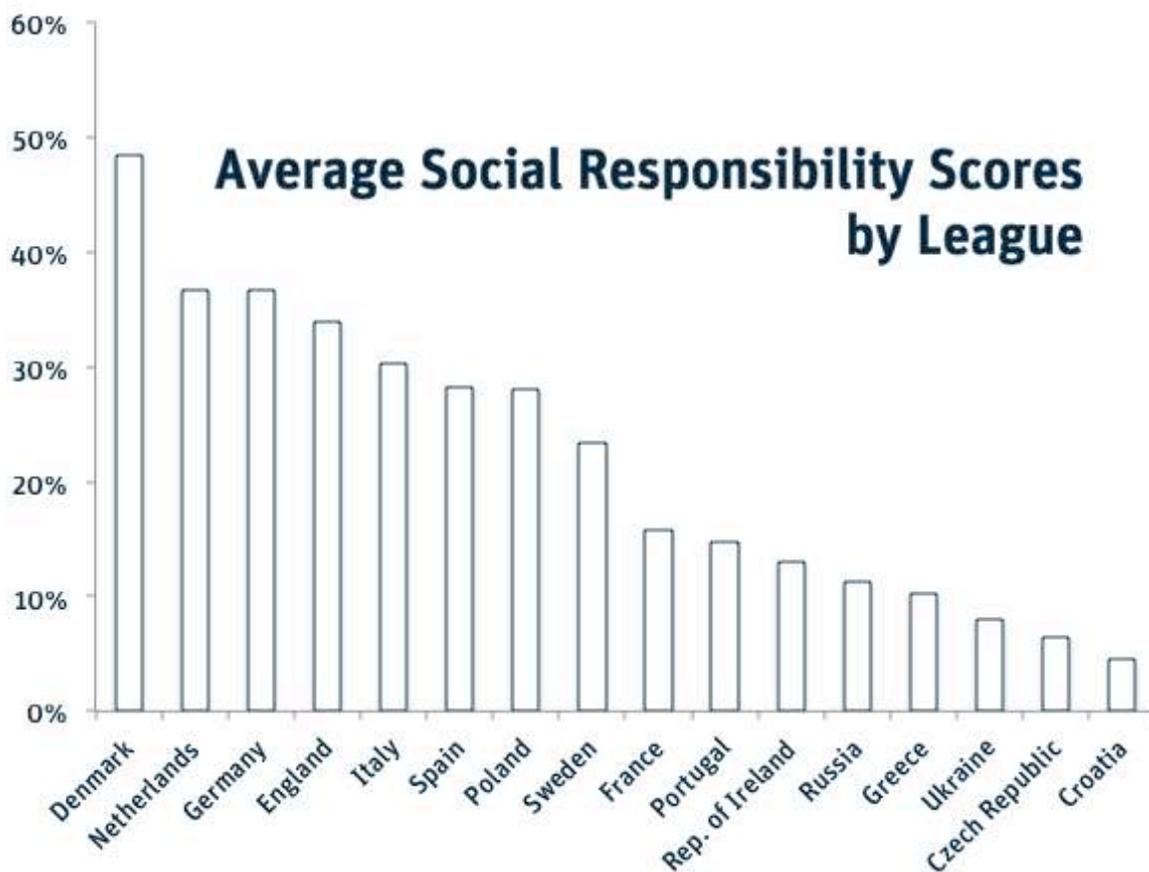
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# The Ranking

Welcome to the fourth annual RESPONSIBALL Ranking for the 2014/2015 season. This report details our research into social responsibility at football clubs in Europe's top leagues.

We have assessed a club's commitment to social responsibility (SR) - to the extent that certain aspects are communicated transparently - across three main pillars: Governance, Community, and Environment. The actual ranking is based on the average Overall SR score of all clubs in a certain league. This average Overall SR score is taken from the average score of the three pillars, which are weighted equally.



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This year, we have once again chosen to assess the top leagues of the 16 qualifying nations from the UEFA EURO 2012 tournament, to compare the results with previous years' ranking.

### **New Indicators**

This year we conducted a review of the SR indicators that are used to analyse the information that football clubs communicate on their websites. The indicators were selected following a series of feedback rounds with stakeholders.

In the last three years we ranked the leagues based on just over 30 SR indicators. This year, following the review, we have 51. However, our objective was not to increase the number of indicators but to ensure their quality. More information on the review process can be found in the Methodology section.

### **Danish Frontrunners**

It would be an injustice to go any further without mentioning the season's surprise winners: the football clubs that make up the Danish Superliga. The Superliga has topped the ranking by a clear margin of 11%, with three of its clubs featuring in the top 10.

The result comes as a surprise because the country standings in the previous years' rankings have been fairly consistent, with the Superliga finishing mid-table on all three occasions. Although the indicators have changed this year, the position of the other countries' leagues has remained more or less in-line with previous rankings.

In search of an explanation, we turned to Professor Kenneth Holm Cortsen of the Department of Sport Management & Experience Industry at the University College of Northern Denmark:

“While I am surprised at the extent of Denmark's rise in the ranking, I also believe that the recognition of Danish clubs' SR work is thoroughly deserving.

A general acknowledgement of the importance of SR across all industries within the country has grown steadily over time. It is unsurprising, therefore, that, in a country with a reputation for progressive and innovative thinking, the SR agenda has really taken root, and has even begun to take a strong hold in the football sector.

I was actually slightly surprised that the Danish Superliga clubs hadn't been better positioned in last year's ranking because of the work that was being undertaken. I would suggest that this year's result reflects primarily on the fact that the clubs are now communicating this work more effectively.

As an example, FC Midtjylland was involved in a pilot project with the Danish Business Authority, which looked at integrating SR into small- and medium-sized

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organisations. Under this initiative, the club implemented a SR concept, which has borne fruit in the form of a number of holistic SR projects.

Furthermore, FC Copenhagen has implemented integrative reporting of SR initiatives in association with its financial reporting, which suggests another reason why Denmark has improved in the ranking this year.

In general, the Danish Superliga has done more in recent years to encourage and direct its clubs on how to communicate better with their main stakeholders, mainly through their websites and social media channels. Until very recently, many clubs did not even have a relevant presence on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook, and one or two didn't even have well-functioning websites!

The organising and governing bodies behind sports and football in Denmark, along with the overall corporate agenda and societal debate, have helped to thoroughly articulate what SR means for a football club in Denmark, and the benefits that clubs can expect through concentrated implementation.

I want to underline that this has not been an overnight change for Denmark's football clubs. Improvements have been made steadily overtime, in collaboration with a number of different cross-sector partnerships. However, it is clear that the clubs' communication of SR now fits better with the commitments that have been made."

### Ranking Medallists

The **Danish Superliga** receives the **gold medal** this season with an overall SR score of 48 per cent, taking over the throne from last year's winners, the German Bundesliga. Less of a surprise, though no less deserved, is the **Dutch Eredivisie** in **silver medal** position with 37 per cent, up from bronze position last year, and leap-frogging last year's gold and silver medal winners, the German Bundesliga and the English Premier League, in the process. The **Bundesliga** finished in **bronze medal** position this year, with a score of 37 per cent (though 0.18 per cent lower than the Dutch Eredivisie), slightly ahead of our 2012 Ranking winners, the English Premier League, with 34 per cent.

The Danish clubs' strong lead owed much to their prowess in the Governance and Community pillars, both of which they topped with 55 per cent – 11 per cent ahead of the Spanish La Liga in second place – and 78 per cent – a massive 25 per cent ahead of the second-placed Dutch Eredivisie – respectively.

In spite of the new indicators, the Environment pillar was once again low scoring. The Bundesliga topped the ranking, as its clubs have done for the past two rankings, with a score of 23 per cent. The runner-up is the Danish Superliga with 19 per cent and, in third place, is the Dutch Eredivisie with 14 per cent, just edging out the English Premier League on 12 per cent and the 2011 Environment pillar winners, the Polish Ekstraslasa, on 10 per cent.

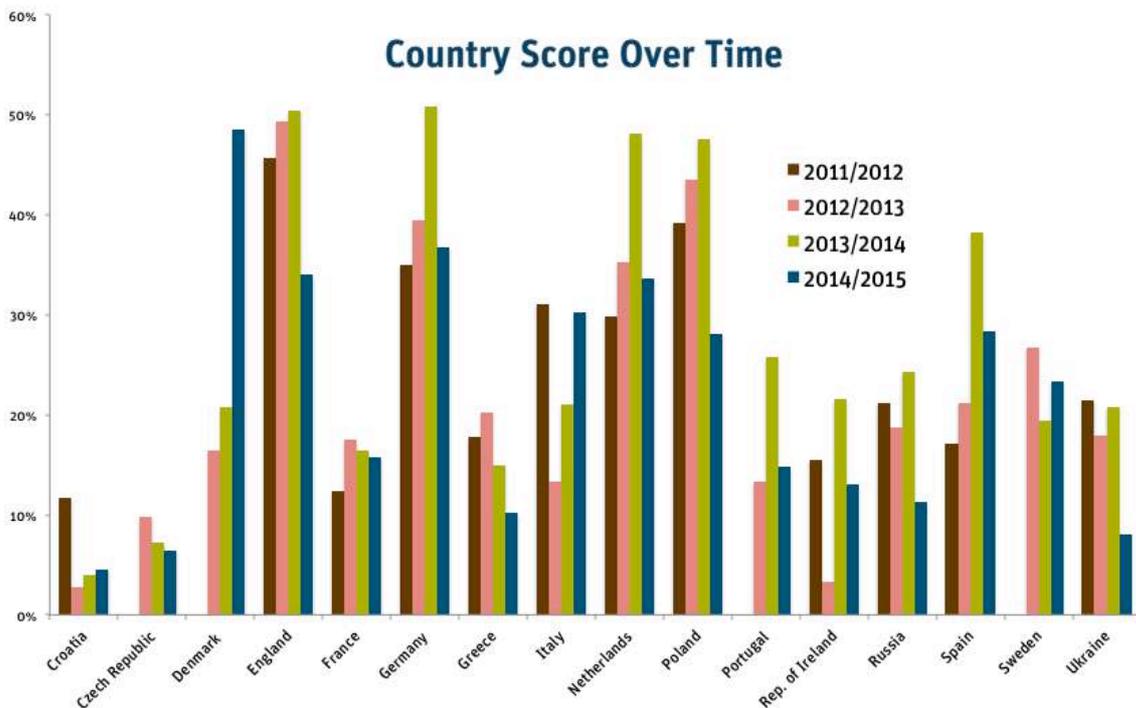
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## Changes on Previous Years

# Positions remain similar despite complete review of indicators

It should be repeated that new indicators have been used to assess football club's social responsibility this year. Thus, a year-on-year comparison carries less importance than had the indicators stayed the same. Nevertheless, despite a complete review of the indicators, it is interesting to note that the positions of the leagues have not fluctuated that much, with the obvious exception of Denmark.



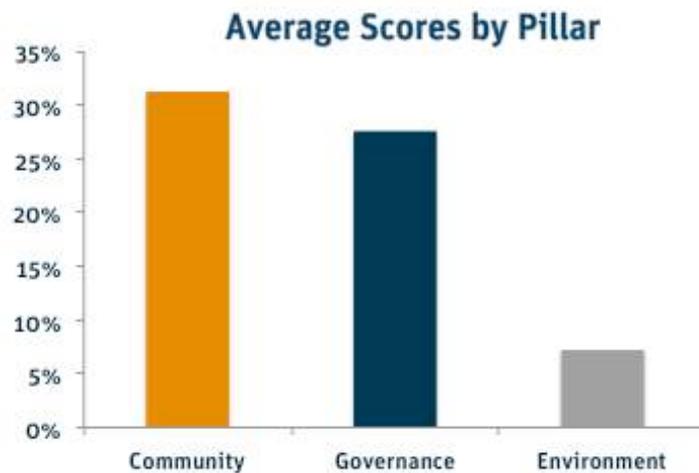
The overall scores of most countries have decreased this year with the introduction of the new indicators (apart from Croatia, Denmark, Italy and Sweden). Up until this year there was an overall improvement in clubs' performance under all three SR pillars. In the 2012/2013 season, the highest overall score was 49 per cent (English Premier League), with only five leagues obtaining a score of more than 20 per cent. Last season's (2013/2014) ranking included 11 leagues that obtained an average score of above 20 per cent, with the top two league scores above 50 per cent. This season (2014/2015), the number above 20 per cent is eight and the highest score 48 per cent.

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## Pillar Comparisons

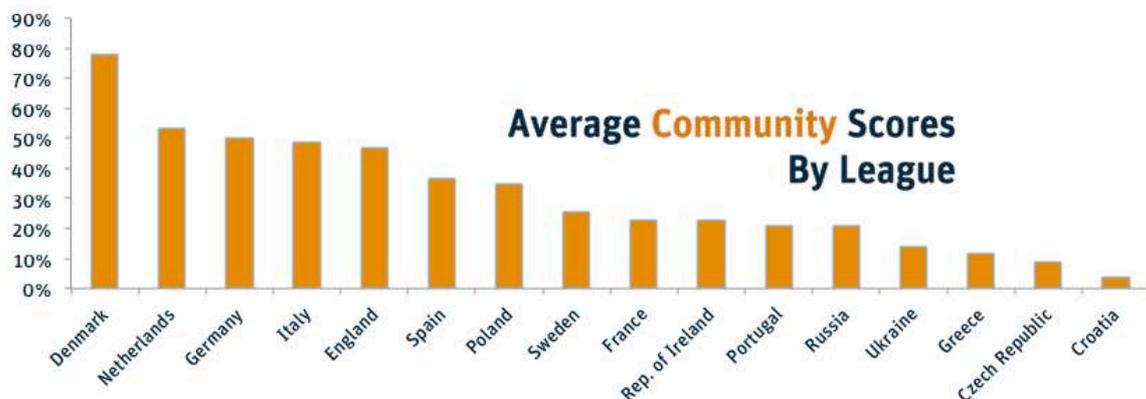
In almost precise correlation with last year's results, we again find that initiatives in some areas are more difficult to implement than in others. For instance, leagues achieved the highest scores under the Community pillar (35 per cent on average), suggesting that efforts in this domain are more easily implemented and/or communicated. The relative ease of implementation may be due to the long-standing tradition of addressing community development issues, with 'football in the community' schemes present in some nations since the 1980s. Similarly high scores under the Governance pillar (31 per cent on average) could be explained by the fact that this area is often reviewed, providing clubs with a structure that facilitates implementation.



## Environmental practices more difficult to implement and communicate

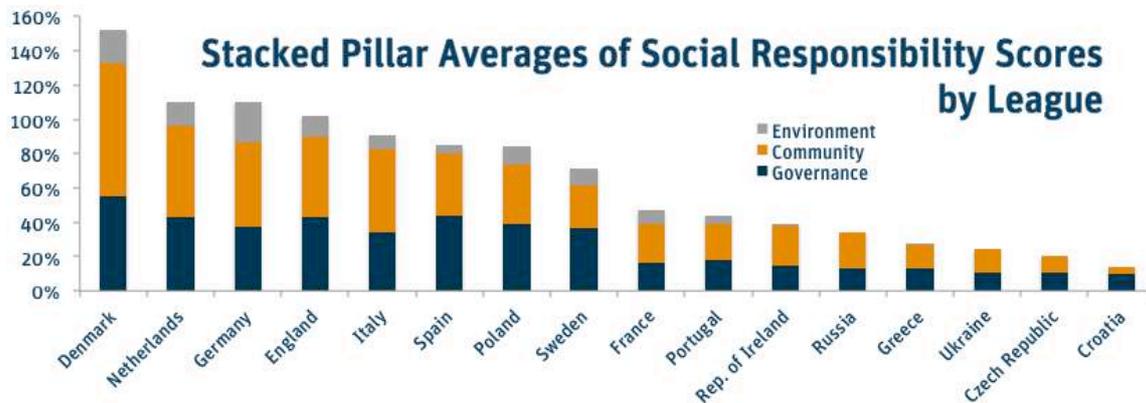
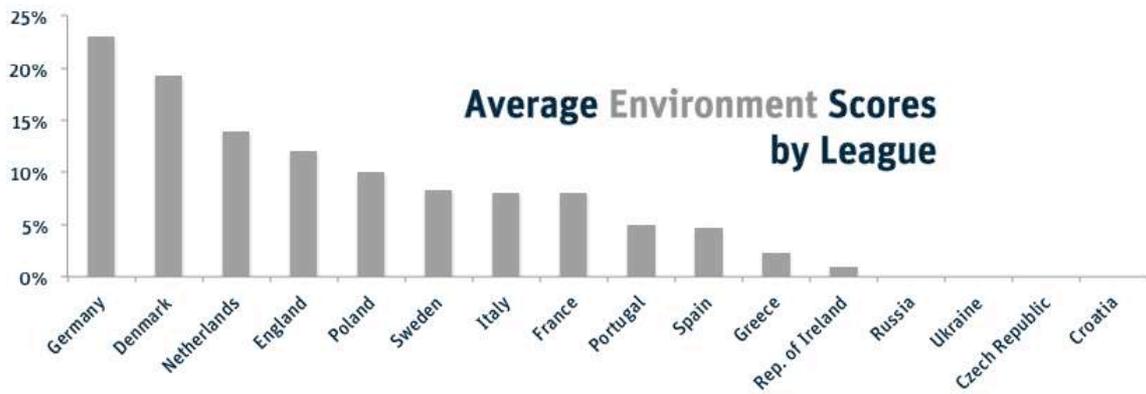
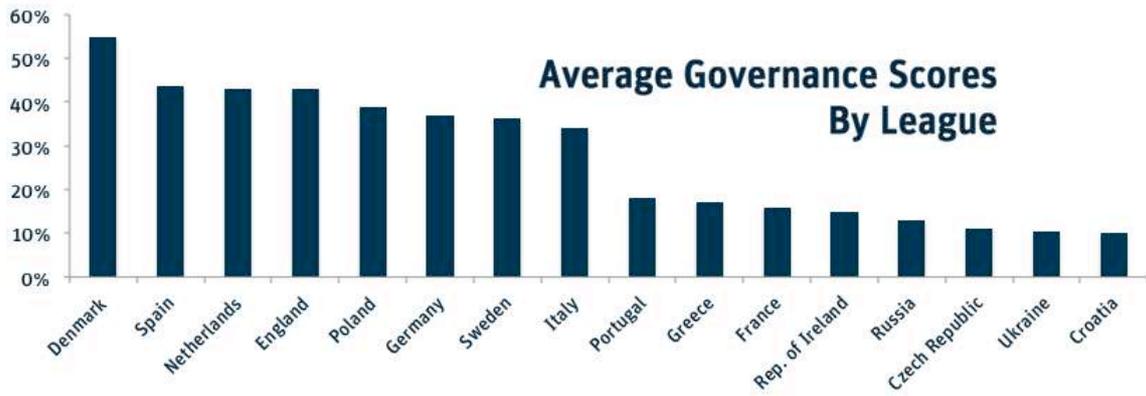
Conversely, the leagues scored lowest under the Environment pillar (8 per cent on average), perhaps reflecting the fact that this pillar requires greater initial fixed costs. Initiatives are more resource-intensive and more closely linked to financial investments, despite potentially resulting in substantial long-term savings.

The following charts illustrate the SR scores by league for each of the pillars.



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## Social Responsibility Poorly Publicised

Much remains to be desired in the area of clubs' communication and sharing of SR practices. As we have found this year, not one league has an average SR score above the 50 per cent mark. Despite encouraging progress in Denmark, and consistent improvements in most of the top leagues, there is still a lot of room for improvement in this domain.

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# Methodology

## Leagues

We have included in our ranking the 16 top-tier national leagues of the nations that qualified for the UEFA EURO 2012, in order to compare their year-on-year commitment to SR practices.

## Data Sources

The Ranking was based on the analysis of information that football clubs communicate on their websites. This reflects our philosophy that good practices in SR should be communicated and shared by football clubs.

## Analysis

Our analysis covered the three main social responsibility pillars of Governance, Community, and Environment. It involved the evaluation of over 50 pre-defined SR indicators created by adapting guidelines from widely recognised social responsibility frameworks and standards, such as GRI and ISO 20121.

## Review of indicators

Three internal stages and two external stages (direct feedback from partners and a public survey) made up a review to re-define the indicators. The objective of the review was to ensure that the indicators we use are current – up to date with international standards – and relevant to football, and also that they met three important principles 1) Applicable to all football clubs; 2) Reasonably expected to be found on the website of the football club; and 3) Relevant to making a positive and sustainable impact on communities. Indicators can be found on [www.responsiball.org](http://www.responsiball.org)

## Results

Leagues were ranked across four main areas: the three pillars of Governance, Community, and Environment, and an overall SR ranking, which we got from taking the average score of the three pillars.

## Limitations

The limitations to our methodology are as follows:

- 1) The indicators we use are not standards. We do not claim to set the standard for social responsibility at football clubs.
- 2) These indicators have been used because they are non-specific. They were chosen because they should apply to all clubs. Clubs must implement their social responsibility strategy according to the needs of their stakeholders.
- 3) We check the information that is available on websites because we believe that communication is an essential facet of social responsibility. A more thorough check would involve a physical audit of the club but, due to the extent of such a task, this was not possible.

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# About RESPONSIBALL

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RESPONSIBALL is the first point of reference for responsible football clubs. It supports the progress of social responsibility at all football clubs.

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An initiative funded by the work of Schwery Consulting, RESPONSIBALL provides a platform for a community of practitioners within the football sector to act in unison; thus promoting and maintaining high standards of meaningful social responsibility.

RESPONSIBALL has two main goals at the heart of its mission:

- To showcase good practice in governance, community development and environmental stewardship; and
- To support a community of practitioners who want to **connect** with others, **share** good practices, **compare** and progress.

## Connect

RESPONSIBALL supports a community of people who want to connect with others that share similar passions, interests and jobs - all of whom understand, or want to learn more, about the how football clubs can work in harmony with their communities and the environment.

## Share

RESPONSIBALL is built to house a community that can exchange knowledge and insights. Alongside the Community function, it holds a Good Practice database that allows members to easily upload and share good practices that may be useful or interesting for others.

## Compare

RESPONSIBALL incorporates many search fields on the Good Practice database so that members can compare club practices with others' on a similar level (by Division, Revenue, Country, and so on) and progress along their own path.

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# Supporting Partners

RESPONSIBALL places considerable importance on the partnerships it has with supporting organisations. Members of the platform benefit in many ways from these partnerships, not least from being able to search for good practices endorsed by an organisation with expertise in a specific aspect of social responsibility in football.

ConnectSport



Specialising in CSR, grassroots and social inclusion projects, ConnectSport capitalises on the proliferation of media formats to raise the profile of worthwhile campaigns. Two decades at the heart of the UK's sports media means we are trusted by those who make the news and those who break it.



The European Healthy Stadia Network supports sports stadia and governing bodies of sport across Europe in the development of stadia policies and initiatives promoting healthier lifestyles, from improved diet, increased physical activity, smoking cessation and lowered alcohol consumption, to the overall benefit of fans, stadia workforces and local communities.



Scort is an operative and non-profit foundation located in Basel (Switzerland) that uses football as a tool to foster health, integration, conveyance of core values and development.



Football Against Racism in Europe - FARE - will fight through football all forms of discrimination in football: in the stadium, on the pitch, in the changing room, at the training ground, in the office and classroom; by fans, players, managers, coaches, administrators or educators.



CAFE - Centre for Access to Football in Europe has been created to promote and ensure equal access in European football stadiums across UEFA's region. CAFE is providing support, guidance and advice to all of our partners and stakeholders.



Coethica is a limited company founded on embedded ethical values, we offer specialist expertise across the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spectrum to private, public and voluntary sector organisations whatever shape or size.

Please note, the data in this report does not represent the experience nor the opinion of any of RESPONSIBALL's Supporting Partners.

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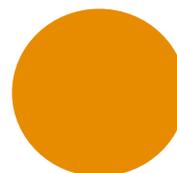


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