

## **Press Release for Project "Sport WHISTLE"**

The past few years the major successes in the fight against corruption in sport were the result of people blowing the whistle and revealing corrupted athletes and organizations. Frankie Andreu and Yuliya Stepanova are such examples of people who revealed doping frauds. Whistleblowing represents a decisive action to report bad practices in one's organizational environment, and can be a powerful corrective tool against corruption. Doping use and match fixing are corrupted practices that threaten the integrity and public image of competitive and professional sports. International sport organizations, such as the World Anti-doping Agency and the International Olympics Committee have recently capitalized the importance of whistleblowing for the early detection and prevention of such practices. However, the scientific evidence on sport whistleblowing is very limited and there are scarce resources and initiatives to empower and educate athletes and other sport stakeholders engage in whistleblowing. UNEFS is currently embarking on an ambitious and highly prestigious project funded by the European Commission/Erasmus+ (Project "Sport WHISTLE") about research and education on sport whistleblowing.

Monica Stănescu, Professor Ph.D. at UNEFS and national coordinator of this project for Romania, reports:

"The project is timely and important because there is literally no scientific evidence about the factors that promote whistleblowing behaviour in sports. We need to find out what empowers athletes to blow the whistle when they witness doping, match fixing or other corrupted practices in their sport, and what refrains them from doing so. We will use this knowledge to create and implement effective educational

programs that will promote and improve whistleblowing practices in sport settings and organizations. Essentially, the project will shed light on the decision-making aspects of whistleblowing, and inform both preventive education and policy-making practices".

Project "Sport WHISTLE" is funded by the European Commission (Erasmus+) and will develop an evidence-based educational program to promote and facilitate whistleblowing behaviour in sport settings. The project is governed by an international consortium of expert academics, policy-making and sport organizations from Cyprus, Germany, Greece, France, Italy, Romania, and UK. The project is led by Prof. Haralambos Tsorbatzoudis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece. Past Wednesday the kick-off meeting of the project was held in Bucharest, Romania. Representatives of all partner organizations attended the meeting and discussed the project objectives and activities. The key milestones of the project were identified and the upcoming activities were scheduled.