

Draft Press Release

Sport Against Racism Ireland Soccerfest Kicks Off in the Phoenix Park

19th year of Europe's largest intercultural 7-aside Soccer tournament

11th September 2015: Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI) Soccerfest will kick off tomorrow Saturday the 12th of September in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. The tournament, in its 19th year, is the largest intercultural seven aside soccer tournament in Ireland and brings together teams from Direct Provision Centres, Programmed Refugee Communities and nationals from more than 60 countries who are now resident in Ireland. This year Team Syria, comprised of Syrian refugees and long term residents, will also be making their debut at the Soccerfest.

Minister of State with responsibility for New Communities, Culture and Equality Aodhán Ó Ríordáin will present the winning men and women's teams with the SARI Soccerfest trophies at 5.30pm tomorrow (Saturday). The Office of the Promotion of Migrant Support is supporting the SARI Soccerfest tournament, which is a culmination of the work carried out by SARI and partners over the previous 12 months.

Minister Ó Ríordáin said "The SARI Soccerfest is a great example of the little things people can do to make a big difference in people's lives. Sport is an opportunity to overcome boundaries, look beyond differences and unite people and tomorrow men, women and children have come from right across the country to make that possible. As Ireland prepares to welcome refugees, the SARI Soccerfest shows that there is a willingness to integrate, learn and share with one another."

SARI Director and Former Ireland Manager Brian Kerr is encouraging people to come down to the Phoenix Park for the tournament which begins at 11am and sees mens and womens teams compete for the SARI Soccerfest trophy. "This is the biggest day in SARI's calendar of events, a culmination of the work carried out by SARI and partners over the previous 12 months and a genuine example of the power of sport in breaking down barriers. Minister O Ríordáin' support is critical to SARI Soccerfest and we are delighted that we have a further opportunity to bring everyone together for what is always a hugely entertaining day where people can see real football talent."

"I want give a big welcome to Team Syria who make their debut at the Soccerfest in a kit sponsored by Glentoran FC in Belfast. Sport is bigger than politics and SARI Soccerfest has generated teams that have a very powerful effect on people's lives. Hijabs and Hat-tricks and Diverse City FC were formed from the SARI Soccernites programme and they continue to inspire young people in Ireland and across Europe to come together through sport."

Soccerfest 2015 will take place on Saturday 12th September at the Garda Sports Grounds, Phoenix Park. For map [click here](#)

SARI, which was founded in 1997, develops and supports sporting activities that promote integration.

This year SARI and the League of Ireland will be linking up with the residents of Direct Provision Centres across Ireland to promote social inclusion and cultural integration. For more information on

the work SARI does log onto www.sari.ie

Ends

Media Contact: Sile Murphy, 01 475 1444 / 086 0288 132