

Strasbourg, 1 April 2026

MARS(2026)2

NETWORK OF MAGISTRATES/PROSECUTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR SPORTS (MARS)

ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday 28 April 2026 (9 am - 12.30 pm and 2 pm - 5.30 pm)

Wednesday 29 April 2026 (9 am - 12.30 pm)

Council of Europe Headquarters

(Palais de l'Europe, Avenue de l'Europe, Strasbourg, France)

Meeting Room No. 6

**Meeting Room No. 1 for the Joint Session MARS Network –
Saint-Denis Committee**

Working languages: English and French

(with simultaneous interpretation)

CONCEPT NOTE AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Network of Magistrates/Prosecutors Responsible for Sports (MARS) was set up under the authority of the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) in 2023 with the aim of strengthening international co-operation and the exchange of information in the protection of sports integrity. Since then, this pursuit of co-operation and exchange of knowledge has materialised in the organisation of annual meetings and in the development of work on legal frameworks to fight crimes against the sport integrity.

This year's annual meeting will include practical discussions on four main topics:

- Legal framework and responsibilities in investigation and prosecution.
- Artificial Intelligence in the investigation of crimes against the integrity of sport.
- International and Inter-Institutional Co-operation.
- Evidence collection in criminal cases: standards and challenges.

Members of the MARS Network are invited to actively contribute to the discussions by presenting their views and referencing specific cases (the presentation of cases where a judgment has already been delivered is highly welcome although not necessary). To organise contributions from MARS members, members are invited to let the EPAS Secretariat (sport.epas@coe.int) know to which session(s) they would like to contribute **by Friday 10 April**. Please note that some experts will be invited to contribute to the discussions and that some sessions will be facilitated by experts (see the meeting agenda for more information). However, the contribution of MARS Network members is still highly encouraged.

On Wednesday 29 April at 11.20 am, a joint MARS Network–Saint-Denis Committee session will be organised. The aim of this session is for both groups to share information about their respective work and discuss a practical example of co-operation between prosecutors and law enforcement authorities. A networking lunch will follow. Please refer to the meeting agenda for further information.

DATE AND LOCATION

The annual meeting will be held on Tuesday 28 April 2026 from 9 am to 5.30 pm and on Wednesday 29 April from 9 am to 12.30 pm at the Council of Europe Headquarters (Palais de l'Europe, Avenue de l'Europe, Strasbourg, France):

- Meeting room No.6 for the meeting of the MARS Network
- Meeting room No.1 for the joint meeting MARS Network – Saint-Denis Committee

MEETING TYPE

The meeting will be in person. The working languages will be English and French (with simultaneous interpretation).

Further information can be found in the draft agenda of the meeting.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Legal framework and responsibilities in investigation and prosecution

1. Who is responsible for detecting, investigating and notifying authorities about the manipulation of sports competitions and other crimes against the integrity of sport in your country?
2. What is the role of the prosecutor's office and other law enforcement agencies in the early stages of sports corruption investigations?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the investigation of crimes against the integrity of sport

1. How can artificial intelligence be applied to detect and investigate crimes against sport integrity?
2. What are the advantages, limitations and risks of AI as support for prosecutors and judges in sports corruption cases?
3. How effective are algorithms for analysing betting patterns as evidence in criminal proceedings?

International and Inter-Institutional Co-operation

1. How is international co-operation facilitated in cross-border match-fixing cases and other crimes against sports integrity, including legal assistance and the use of European legal tools?
2. What are the main obstacles to and examples of good practice in co-operation between police, prosecutors and sports federations in investigations?
3. How do different agencies and institutions collaborate to overcome procedural and jurisdictional challenges?

Evidence collection in criminal cases: standards and challenges

1. What are the main sources and types of evidence used in investigating and judicial proceedings on criminal cases against sport integrity?
2. What challenges are faced regarding the quality and sufficiency of evidence in match-fixing cases, including indirect evidence and digital traces?
3. How do standards and levels of proof differ between disciplinary proceedings and criminal proceedings?
4. How are experts with specialist knowledge utilised during prosecution and adjudication of criminal cases?