

Strasbourg, 8 January 2026

EPAS(2026)07

Meeting of the EPAS Governing Board Bureau

Wednesday 7 January 2026

1 pm – 2 pm CET

Online (Teams platform)

Working language: English

REPORT

Participants

Governing Board (GB): Solène Charuau (France, Chair), Ioanna Paraskevopoulou (Cyprus, Vice-Chair), Simon De Coster (Belgium, Member), Elnur Mammadov (Azerbaijan, Member), Antonio Parrilla (Italy, Member), Marija Jurčević (Croatia, Member), Florian Botto (Monaco, MSL19), Michael Landau (Monaco, MSL19)

Consultative Committee (CC): Mogens Kirkeby (ISCA, Vice-Chair)

Apologies: Charlotte Girard Fabre (IFSO, Chair)

Secretariat: Stanislas Frossard, Cassandra Mactavish, Caroline Dollet

1. Welcome

The meeting was opened by the Chair, who welcomed members of the Bureau and extended New Year wishes. Reference was made to the institutional context for 2026, including the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The Chair underlined that 2026 would be a year marked by important milestones for EPAS, notably in view of the preparation of the next Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The draft agenda was adopted without amendment (see Appendix).

3. EPAS Human Rights Forum (Paris, 16 December 2025)

The Secretariat provided an update on the EPAS Human Rights Forum held in Paris on 16 December 2025. The Forum gathered a total of 133 participants, both in person and online, including a significant number of members of the EPAS Governing Board and Consultative Committee. The morning session took the form of a webinar, followed by interactive workshops in the afternoon.

The discussions focused in particular on women's health, mental health, and safeguarding in sport. It was noted that the outcomes of the Forum would feed into future EPAS work in these areas, including at European Union level. In particular, the Forum's conclusions were expected to contribute to the newly launched EU–Council of Europe joint project "Active and Equal".

Members who had attended the Forum welcomed the format of the event, especially the concise and focused interventions in the morning session, which were considered effective for both in-person and online participation.

4. First Meeting of the Working Group on the Autonomy of Sport and Good Governance (Paris, 17 December 2025)

The Secretariat presented an overview of the first meeting of the Working Group on the Autonomy of Sport and Good Governance, held in Paris on 17 December 2025. The meeting allowed 19 out of 20

members to participate in a structured tour de table, with two-minute interventions on each of the two recommendations under revision. Members were invited to identify elements to be retained, revised or reconsidered, and to share overall reflections on the future direction of the recommendations.

The Secretariat presented the proposed working methodology and timeline. The next drafting meeting is scheduled for 27 February 2026 (online), followed by a second drafting meeting in April 2026, with a view to presenting a draft revised recommendation on autonomy of sport to the EPAS Plenary in May 2026. Discussion also took place on the sequencing of work on the two recommendations and on the possibility of extending the overall timeline.

The Bureau was invited to approve an extension of the Working Group's mandate from the end of 2026 to the end of 2027, in order to allow sufficient time to revise both recommendations. Following discussion, including clarification that there would be no budgetary impact, the Bureau agreed to support the extension, subject to subsequent validation by the Governing Board.

The Secretariat also summarised key themes emerging from the tour de table, including the balance between autonomy and accountability, the role of public interest in good governance, proportionality for smaller organisations, and the governance of international sports organisations. It was noted that these inputs would form the basis for the forthcoming drafting phase.

5. Last Meeting of the Working Group on the European Sports Charter (Paris, 17 December 2025)

The Chair reported on the final meeting of the Working Group on the European Sports Charter, held in Paris on 17 December 2025. The Working Group reviewed the state of play regarding the European Sports Charter (ESC) questionnaires and national overviews. Only minor changes had been received since the last plenary update, and nine member states had not yet submitted their questionnaires. The Working Group agreed on the need for additional targeted follow-up with the countries concerned.

It was agreed that a shortened version of the trends analysis presented at the previous plenary meeting should be prepared and published on the European Sports Charter webpage. The Working Group confirmed that the questionnaire should continue to be updated on a two-year cycle, in line with the Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport. Members also supported further analytical use of the collected data, including comparative approaches across themes such as gender equality and integrity.

The Secretariat presented updates on ESC support and follow-up visits, including planned visits in 2026 and the status of recent reports. Discussions also addressed the promotion and visibility of the European Sports Charter. It was agreed that the forthcoming Conference of Ministers could provide an important opportunity to further promote the Charter, and that discussions on visibility and outreach should continue, including at a future Bureau meeting.

6. European Union (EU)

The Secretariat updated the Bureau on co-operation with the European Union. Concerning the EU initiative on the "European Sports Model", it was recalled that a hearing with the Council of Europe Secretariat had been agreed in principle and was expected to take place in early 2026. A background paper prepared by the Secretariat would serve as the basis for this exchange.

The Secretariat also informed the Bureau about participation in the EU Open Method of Coordination (OMC) Group on the Social Rights of Athletes. It was proposed, subject to Bureau agreement, to involve colleagues from the Secretariat of the European Social Charter, given their expertise on social rights, while ensuring appropriate coordination with EPAS. The Bureau broadly supported this cross-sectoral approach.

Finally, the Secretariat presented the new EU–Council of Europe joint project “Active and Equal”, which officially started on 1 January 2026 and will run until the end of 2027. The project focuses on women’s physical health and sport across the life course and will involve five pilot countries. A launch event is scheduled for 5 March 2026, in conjunction with the annual breakfast round table on women in sport. Members took note of the information and of the project’s governance arrangements.

7. Membership

7.1 Member States

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that Spain had formally rejoined EPAS at the end of 2025. Initial contacts with the Spanish authorities were planned in order to present EPAS activities and opportunities for engagement. The Bureau welcomed this development.

The Secretariat also reported on exploratory contacts with Mexico and Kazakhstan, and on ongoing dialogue with the United Kingdom. It was noted that renewed efforts would be made to reopen discussions with Germany, in light of recent administrative changes. The Bureau took note of these developments.

7.2 Consultative Committee

The Secretariat presented the timetable for renewals and new applications to the EPAS Consultative Committee. Twelve renewals are foreseen in 2026, in accordance with the revised Terms of Reference. With regard to new members, it was recalled that the maximum size of the Consultative Committee had been increased to 35 members, allowing for up to five additional organisations.

The Secretariat outlined the selection process, which does not involve an open call but rather a targeted outreach based on the discussions with the Bureau and unsolicited applications, with a view to ensuring balanced representation. The Bureau took note of the proposed timetable, including consultation phases with the Bureau and the Consultative Committee, and subsequent submission to the Governing Board and the Committee of Ministers where required.

8. 19th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport (Monaco, 3–4 November 2026)

The Secretariat informed the Bureau of discussions with the Monaco authorities regarding the organisation of a youth-related event in connection with the Conference. A proposal was presented to hold a dedicated youth event in Strasbourg ahead of the May 2026 Plenary meeting, allowing youth inputs to feed into the drafting of resolutions at an earlier stage.

It was proposed that representatives of the youth event subsequently participate in the Ministerial Conference in Monaco, rather than organising parallel events during the Conference itself. The Monaco authorities had reacted positively to this approach. The Bureau welcomed the proposal, noting its potential to enhance the impact of youth participation.

9. Any Other Business

Under this item, information was provided by the Cypriot delegate on the priorities of the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the field of sport, including sport tourism and mental health. Several events planned for the first half of 2026 were outlined, and EPAS was invited to contribute to relevant discussions.

10. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

The Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting on 10 February 2026 at 1 pm CET, online.

The Chair thanked all participants and asked the Secretariat to add the agenda for the May Plenary to the agenda of the next Bureau meeting. She then closed the meeting.

Appendix:**Agenda**

1.	Welcome	
2.	Adoption of the agenda	EPAS(2026)01
3.	EPAS Human Rights Forum (Paris, 16 Dec. 25) ➤ Update	
4.	First meeting of the Working Group on the Autonomy of Sport and Good Governance (Paris, 17 Dec. 25) ➤ Update	EPAS(2025)44rev2
5.	Last meeting of the Working Group on the European Sports Charter (Paris, 17 Dec. 25) ➤ Update ➤ Reminders ESC questionnaires and overviews	
6	European Union <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing with CoE Secretariat on a/the “European Sports Model” • Participation in the OMC Group on Social Rights of Athletes • New joint project “Active and Equal” 	EPAS(2026)02
7.	Membership	
7.1.	Member states ➤ Update	
7.2	Consultative Committee ➤ Renewals ➤ New members	EPAS(2026)04 EPAS(2026)03
8.	19 th CoE Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport (Monaco, 3-4 Nov. 2026) ➤ Update	
9.	Any other business	
10.	Date and place of the next meeting	