

- Before anything else, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the speakers who have shared their stories with us today. It is not easy to speak about such painful experiences, and I want to acknowledge the courage and resilience it takes to do so.
- By speaking out today, you have shed light on the reality of gender-based violence in sport, and you have also given hope to those who may be going through similar situations. You have shown them that they are not alone and that there is support available for them. Your voices matter, and they are making a difference – you are driving the policy shifts needed.
- Gender-based violence against women differs from other types of violence: the fact that they are women is both the cause of the violence perpetrated against them, and the result of unequal power relations between women and men that lead to women's subordinate status.
- The term "gender" acknowledges how harmful attitudes and perceptions about roles and behaviour expected of women in society play a role in perpetuating violence against them. As we have heard, such attitudes and culture are regrettably still very present in sport. Referring to gender is not meant to replace the biological definition of "sex" but aims to stress how much inequalities, stereotypes and violence do not originate from biological differences, but from harmful preconceptions about women's attributes or roles that limit their agency. This takes another dimension in what was presented today as an inherently competitive environment, built on male superiority and physical dominance.

- Indeed, this type of violence is often rooted in deep-seated gender inequalities, stereotypes and power imbalances. It results in women and girls being disproportionately affected by it.
- What is more, gender-based violence is often perpetuated by systems of racism, homophobia and other forms of oppression, impacting people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ athletes and persons from ethnic minorities to a larger degree. This is why we must centre the voices and experiences of those most affected by gender-based violence and address systemic inequalities in order to effectively combat it.
- Our new joint EU-CoE All In Plus project was mentioned by both Jeroen Schokkenbroek in his opening and Francine on a number of occasions so I will not repeat it but do count on us through this joint project to tackle gender-based violence in the 25 participating countries. We have taken note for our section on best practices of the initiatives from Estonia and Finland notably.
- We will be using in this work the essential reference that is the Istanbul Convention, developed for protecting women against all forms of violence and preventing, prosecuting and eliminating violence against women, including in a sporting setting, as this will be instrumental in the All In Plus media training work.
- Finally, I would like to thank all of the experts, guests and colleagues who have contributed to this discussion and who have raised awareness about gender-based violence in sport. I am honoured to stand with you today and work together towards a world of sports where everyone feels safe and valued, and is treated with dignity and respect.
- Sport both constitutes an environment with unique risks of gender-based violence and a powerful instrument to combat this violence, stereotypes and sexism. It is our responsibility to make it an

instrument to combat gender-violence and not an environment conducive to it.

- Big round of applause to our speakers and special thanks to all my colleagues at EPAS, to our interpreters and to all of you participating today - Happy International Women's Day.