

Strasbourg, 25 February 2026

EPAS(2026)17

Final Conference of the “Start to Talk” project

Implementing child safeguarding in sport policy at federation level

CONCEPT NOTE AND PROGRAMME

27 February 2026

9.30 am to 1.30 pm (EET)

VENUE:

University of Nicosia, Discovery Hall, 46 Makedonitissas Avenue, CY-2417, Nicosia

Working languages:

Greek and English with simultaneous interpretation provided

Background

"[Start to Talk](#)" is a flagship project of the Council of Europe that supports authorities and the sport movement in implementing child safeguarding policies. In 2024, the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport ([EPAS](#)) began implementing the project in the Republic of Cyprus by organising a trauma-informed training course on child safeguarding and the awareness conference "For a better protection of children in sport".

Following this successful initial phase the project collaborated closely with the Cyprus Sport Organisation in 2025 to assist with the implementation of its Cyprus Sport Organisation's child safeguarding policy within four pilot federations: football, swimming, gymnastics, and triathlon. On 21 November 2025, a first roundtable was held with the child safeguarding officers of the pilot federations to discuss the deliverables and incorporate their views into the work. Representatives from the National Strategy Implementation Council, "Foni", UEFA, the Aquatics Integrity Unit, and the [Council of Europe's Pool of international experts on safe sport](#) contributed to this first roundtable. As a result of this work, federative policy documents have been developed that are tailored to each federation and contain general safeguarding provisions, as well as specific provisions on safe recruitment and reporting procedures.

As set out in the [European Sports Charter](#), both public authorities and the sport movement are key stakeholders in striving for safer sports environments for children. "Start to Talk" has offered them a platform for co-operation.

The 2025-2026 "Start to Talk" implementation in Cyprus has been financially supported by a voluntary contribution from the Principality of Monaco.

Participants

Participants include public authorities responsible for sport and child protection, presidents and directors from Cypriot federations, child safeguarding officers and representatives from civil society and academia.

Terms of participation

Participation is free of charge. Travel and accommodation costs are the responsibility of participants.

Language

Working languages are Greek and English. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided.

Programme

Moderated by Elena Casero, *Programme Manager, Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), Council of Europe*

9.00 AM - 9.30 AM REGISTRATION

9.30 AM - 9.50 AM OPENING

Welcome by Yiannis Ioannou, *President, Cyprus Sport Organisation*

Opening by

Mr Gabriel Revel, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative, Principality of Monaco* (online)

Stanislas Frossard, *Executive Secretary, EPAS, Council of Europe* (online)

Kalli Hadjiiosif, *Vicepresident, Cyprus Sport Organisation*

09.50 AM – 11.10 AM IMPLEMENTING CHILD SAFEGUARDING IN SPORT POLICY AT FEDERATION LEVEL

Melanie Lang, *Professor of Safeguarding and Children's Rights in Sport, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom, member of the Council of Europe's Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport* (online)

Stephanie Wheeler, *Appointed Safeguarding Officer, Cyprus Sport Organisation*

Elena Casero, *Programme Manager, EPAS, Council of Europe*

Maria Papaefstathiou, *National Consultant at the "Start to Talk" project, member of the Council of Europe's Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport*

11.10 AM – 11.40 AM COFFEE BREAK

11.40 AM – 12.20 PM THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE SPORTS FEDERATIONS

Andreas Morias, *Deputy Director General, Cyprus Football Federation*

Christiana Liadi, *Member of Board of Directors, Cyprus Gymnastics Federation*

Nikos Nikolaou, *Commissioner / Officer, Cyprus Swimming Federation*

Georgiou Theophanis, *President, Cyprus Triathlon Federation*

Aphrodite Kalogirou, *Child Safeguarding Officer, Cyprus Football Federation*

Skevi Andreou, *Child Safeguarding Officer, Cyprus Gymnastics Federation*

Michalis Papadopoulos, *Child Safeguarding Officer, Cyprus Swimming Federation and Cyprus Triathlon Federation*

12.20 PM – 1.25 PM

REPORTING CASES AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE

Christina Ioannou, *Senior Educational Psychologist*, Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth,
Member of Council FONI

Claudia Villa, *Safeguarding Specialist*, Centre for Sport and Human Rights, member of the
Council of Europe's Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport (online)

1.25 PM – 1.30 PM

CLOSING WORDS

Elena Casero, *Programme Manager*, EPAS, Council of Europe