

Breakfast Roundtable: Women in Sport

Wednesday, 8 March 2023

9.30am

Room 7 – Palais de l'Europe

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Dear speakers,
Dear participants,
Dear colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the second Breakfast Roundtable on Women in Sport, organised by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) of the Council of Europe, on the occasion of International Women's Day – 8 March.

This Breakfast Roundtable is an annual opportunity to take stock of the results of our work on anti-discrimination, guided by the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Sports Charter.

Gender equality in particular has been a key theme of this work, from standard-setting, such as the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender mainstreaming in sport, to numerous actions and initiatives undertaken by EPAS and the Sport Division to build capacity and raise awareness.

For us, this month marks the beginning of a new phase in this crucial work, under the flag of a joint European Union – Council of Europe project, our new project "All In Plus".

This project is centred around 3 pillars:

- 1) a new round of data collection that will further enrich the findings from the previous All In project and will help us assess progress towards gender balance in sport in participating countries – and will allow us to prepare recommendations for improving the situation across Europe and beyond;
- 2) the creation of an online library of best practices on gender equality in sport; and
- 3) media sensitisation, including awareness-raising training sessions for media professionals, as well as the preparation of audiovisual content to give greater visibility to female sports professionals.

The All In Plus project will also raise awareness about gender-based violence in sport and how to tackle it. The project just started and its formal launch will take place on 10 May, at a hybrid session online and here in Strasbourg to exchange on the areas

of activity in more detail with high-level representatives, experts, athletes, and partner organisations amongst others.

Safe sport has been one of our priorities for many years, as exemplified by the joint EU-CoE Child Safeguarding in Sport (CSiS) project and the ongoing Start to Talk (STT) project.

Today, for this year's roundtable, we have decided to focus on the different forms of gender-based violence against adults in sport and some of the ways of combating it. This topic is still not sufficiently addressed in the sports world. The fight against gender-based violence should be widely promoted across all areas of competence of the Council of Europe and particularly in the sports sector, which has a responsibility to give a voice to those most affected, to provide a platform for co-operation, and to take decisive action in order to safeguard sport from violence and abuse.

Today, we speak once again to advocate for gender equality. However, we must recognise that discrimination is a multifaceted phenomenon, targeting persons based on their religion, skin colour and many other characteristics, and we must ensure that an intersectional approach is upheld in the way we address the ongoing challenges. All individuals should be able to practise sport in a safe, ethical and inclusive environment. The three pillars of EPAS' work.

I would like to commend the collaborative nature of this event and thank the colleagues from other sectors of the Council of Europe, including from the Violence against Women Division, the Gender Equality Division and to highlight the work of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Unit as well as of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) amongst other bodies.

During the first part of the event, our international experts and guests will deliver presentations about initiatives in place to combat gender-based violence in sport, and a number of speakers will share their lived experience in this area. Following that, an informal discussion will take place, addressing the steps that could be taken moving forward and to improve women's position in sport more generally. We invite all those of you in the room today and joining remotely to use this panel session to ask questions to our panellists. The informal nature of this breakfast roundtable is deliberate, it is meant to promote open discussion.

I would finally like to echo the warm welcome expressed by the French Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe, Marie FONTANEL, to all of you present this morning to share their insights and expertise.

I also want to thank sincerely our speakers for their courage in sharing their personal experience of violence with us and their resolve to take a stance against gender-based violence in sport in spite of the pain inflicted on them.

As we all know whilst this event is happening on International Women's Day – every day is a day for the Council of Europe and all other active forces to work to combat gender-based violence. I wish you a productive morning.