

Strasbourg, 7 April 2022

EPAS(2022)27

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)

Meeting of the Bureau of the EPAS Governing Board

Thursday 17 March 2022

9.00 am – 10.00 am CET

Via video-conference

Report

Participants:

Alexandre Husting (Chair), Andrea Carletti (Vice-Chair), Andrew Decelis, François Tricarico, İnanç Özçakmak, Kolë Gjelošhaj and Tone Jagodic.

EPAS Secretariat:

Sophie Kwasny, Francine Hetherington Raveney, Gabriela Matei, Francesca Carnio, Caroline Larghi, Despina Tramountani

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chair of the Governing Board.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The meeting agenda was adopted with the addition of an item under AOB regarding the publication of the report of the European Commission's High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport.

3. Report of the latest Bureau meeting (24/02/2022)

Bureau members received the report of the Bureau meeting from 24 February 2022 (document EPAS(2022)19) and agreed to share any feedback or comments by 30 March 2022, after which date the report would be considered final.

Concerning the publication of Bureau meeting reports Sophie Kwasny indicated that this is recommended good practice, shared by many other Council of Europe committees. Confidential or sensitive information can appear as discussed *in camera* and does not have to be published. The publication of reports was not done in 2020 and it is proposed to resume this practice as of 2021.

The GB Bureau agreed to resume the practice of publishing Bureau meeting reports.

4. Information from the Secretariat on the situation of the Russian Federation/Belarus in the CoE and its/their participation in the partial agreements following the invasion of Ukraine

Sophie Kwasny informed the Bureau of the decision adopted on 16 March by the Committee of Ministers to exclude the Russian Federation from the Council of Europe. The legal and financial consequences of the exclusion are under discussion in the Committee of Ministers but the direction taken is that the Russian Federation be excluded from all partial agreements. Similar measures should be announced about Belarus as well, which is probably going to be suspended from participation in Council of Europe activities including from partial agreements.

Similarly, neither the Russian Federation nor Belarus would be invited to attend the Ministerial Conference in October, therefore the Save the date message in view of the forthcoming CoE Ministerial Conference will not be sent to these two countries.

The financial implications of the exclusion of the Russian Federation are heavy, as the Russian Federation contribution amounts to roughly 15% of the total EPAS budget. To counter this loss, it will notably be important to expand the membership of EPAS.

The Chair inquired about the composition of the Bureau and the validity of its decisions, as both the Region 1 and Region 4 seats are currently vacant.

Sophie Kwasny pointed out that there is a representative of Region 1, although not occupying the Region 1 seat, as Italy is in the Bureau as vice-president. As for Region 4, the Secretariat will check whether the Ukrainian delegation wishes to maintain its application or a new call for application should be made. Concerning the validity of the decisions, only two out of six seats are vacant, which would correspond to a quorum and it, decisions can thus be considered valid. New elections can be held in June to complete the Bureau.

The Bureau agreed to continue in the current composition until the plenary meeting and to hold elections for the vacant seats at the June meeting of the Governing Board.

5. Accession of Canada to EPAS

Sophie Kwasny informed the Bureau of the positive outcome of the meeting of the GR-J (Rapporteur Group on Legal Co-operation of the Committee of Ministers), held on 16 March 2022. The GR-J recommends to the Committee of Ministers to invite Canada to become a member of EPAS. The formal decision will be taken by the Committee of Ministers on 30 March.

The GB Bureau took note of the information provided.

6. Planning of the EPAS Governing Board and Consultative Committee joint plenary meeting (13-14/6/2022)

Sophie Kwasny shared a few updates on the organisation of the EPAS GB/CC joint plenary meeting 2022, scheduled to take place on 13-14 June 2022, which will mark the 15th anniversary of EPAS. Due to the management of the consequences of the war in Ukraine, the Secretariat was not able to prepare the draft agenda to the Bureau.

The Chair stressed that he would prefer to only offer a physical meeting (no participation remotely) provided the health situation allows for this.

The Secretariat will provide a draft agenda to the Bureau for discussion at its next meeting.

Action: The Bureau decided that the EPAS GB/CC joint plenary meeting 2022 will be organised in Strasbourg with physical participation only if sanitary conditions allow.

7. 17th Ministerial Conference (Antalya, Turkey, 25-27/10/2022)

Inanç Özçakmak updated the Bureau on the ongoing preparation of the 17th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport, which will be held in Antalya on 25-27 October 2022. The venue cannot yet be confirmed.

The themes and sub-topics have been finalised, with a slight change in the wording:

- 1) Sport for all: uniting us for stronger societies
 - a. Gender equality - ensuring women's equal participation and involvement;
 - b. Sport as a means of inclusion: its role for disadvantaged groups;
 - c. Sport for children: education, prevention and development.
- 2) Rethinking sport: leading the way for a healthy and sustainable future
 - a. Addressing the emerging challenges to sport policies, relying on the ESC;
 - b. Facilitating access to sport and encourage practice as part of healthy lifestyle;
 - c. Boosting the return to sport activities.

A document with information about the themes, as well as a proposed schedule will be circulated in due course.

Action: The Bureau confirmed that the themes and sub-topics can be communicated to invited participants and to the Committee of Ministers.

8. Consultative Committee

1) Terms of reference (ToR) – draft amendments

Kolë Gjelošhaj, Chair of the Consultative Committee (CC), informed the Bureau about the proposed revision of the ToR of the CC aimed at encouraging greater gender balance and establishing the role of a Gender Equality rapporteur, in line with good practice in other Council of Europe committees.

Sophie Kwasny confirmed that the proposed amendments are based on similar provisions in other Council of Europe texts.

Action: The Secretariat will proceed by sending out a circular letter to Governing Board members regarding the proposed amendments to the ToR of the CC, with a view to enabling CC members to consider their representation ahead of the call for applications for the Bureau elections.

2) Application from the Centre for Sport and Human Rights (CSHR) next steps

Sophie Kwasny informed the Bureau that the application from the CSHR is still pending as the quorum was not reached in the first round of consultation with CC members. After an extension of the deadline, the CC had expressed support for the CSHR application, therefore the consultation of the Governing Board can now be launched. Should the outcome be positive, the Secretariat will then ensure that the request is submitted to the Committee of Ministers for decision.

Action: The Secretariat will proceed by sending out a circular letter to Governing Board members regarding the CSHR application.

3) Elections

The CC will hold elections at its plenary meeting in June and would ask the Secretariat to prepare a clear notice about the election procedure (how to bid, rules for sharing information on candidates, etc.) to be circulated two weeks to a month prior.

Sophie Kwasny underlined the importance of the revision and circulation of the ToR before the elections.

Action: As instructed by the CC Bureau, the Secretariat will prepare an information document for the CC elections.

4) Renewal of the membership of three CC organisations

The membership of three CC member organisations (GAISF, IDO and EASM) is approaching its close. The Secretariat sees no obstacle to their being renewed and will approach these organisations as to their willingness to renew their membership.

9. Evaluation visits

1) Draft summary report North Macedonia

The Secretariat circulated a draft summary report about the findings of the evaluation visit in North Macedonia. The aim would be to finalise this document by the end of April and to move to the next steps of the evaluation exercise, notably an in-person meeting in Skopje.

The Chair expressed some doubts about the process, as the draft report circulated already contained some recommendations, which are normally the aim of the outcome of the physical meeting to be held in Skopje. He suggested clarifying the process and renaming the document “**intermediate report**”.

Sophie Kwasny agreed with the Chair on the need for clarifications in the process and of a clear methodology, especially in view of future evaluation visits.

Action: The Secretariat will finalise the intermediate report on the basis of comments by members of the evaluation team and share it with counterparts of North-Macedonia for feedback and will organise a follow-up meeting in Skopje. A document presenting the methodology to be applied for evaluations will be prepared by the Secretariat ahead of the June meeting.

2) Future evaluation visit to Albania

Albania had expressed great enthusiasm about a future evaluation visit, the Secretariat now needs to confirm a date for the first online discussion and the constitution of the team which would be carrying out the evaluation.

Action: The Secretariat will initiate the organisation of the first steps of the evaluation process (composition of the evaluation team and online meeting with Albanian stakeholders).

10. PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) Recommendation on football governance

Sophie Kwasny informed the Bureau that a draft reply to the Committee of Ministers consultation on the Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2221 (2022) on Football Governance: Business and Values, has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Action: The Bureau is asked to share any feedback on document EPAS(2022)22 by 22/3 noon, after which date the draft will be considered final and communicated to the Committee of Ministers.

11. Co-operation projects

Gabriela Matei, Project Manager, presented the new EU-CoE joint project “Combating Hate Speech in Sport” to the Bureau.

A launch event for the project will be organised in June, possibly during the 3rd Meeting of the T-S4 Committee on Thursday 9 June¹.

The GB Bureau took note of the information on the new co-operation project and supports its implementation.

12. Any other business

1) *Publication of the reports from the European Commission’s High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport*

Kolë Gjeshaj informed the Bureau and the Secretariat about the publication of the final report of the European Commission’s High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport, of interest to EPAS in light of the work of the Balance in Sport and ALL IN projects. The Secretariat confirmed that it was looking forward to reading the report especially in light of the preparation of the continuation of the All In project as of 2023.

2) *Breakfast Roundtable: Women in Sport (8 March 2022)*

Francine Hetherington Raveney informed the Bureau of the positive results of the Breakfast Roundtable held on 8 March 2022. The event featured excellent speakers, good visibility and over 100 participants. The European Broadcasting Union also participated, which is important in view of future co-operation on women’s representation in media. All of the speakers had been chosen

¹ This tentative date was subsequently changed to 31 May due to a change in the dates schedules for the 3rd Meeting of the T-S4 Committee.

with a view to the upcoming All In project in 2023 and in particular representatives from partner organisations.

13. Date and place of the next meeting

The next meeting would be held online during the third week of April and the exact date would be announced by the Secretariat at a later stage.