

Strasbourg, 3 October 2025

EPAS(2025)30

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)

Diversity Conference

Sport and intergenerational challenges for young people and older persons

Tuesday 21 October 2025

**Room 9, Palais de l'Europe
Council of Europe**

Strasbourg

Concept note and draft programme

The Conference will be hybrid, allowing those who so wish to join remotely. It will also be live streamed. Simultaneous interpretation in French and English will be provided.

The Council of Europe’s Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) Diversity Conference 2025 will explore “*Sport and intergenerational challenges for young people and older persons.*” It will provide a platform for member states, public authorities and sport stakeholders to examine barriers to participation, share best practices, and identify concrete ways to foster inclusive, age-friendly sport environments. While sport is widely recognised for promoting health, inclusion and social cohesion, participation rates among young people and older adults remain worryingly low. This conference will combine an analysis of underlying causes with a strong focus on results, offering guidance on implementing proven solutions across Europe.

Both young people and older adults stand to gain immensely from sport. For young people, physical activity supports healthy development, builds life skills, and aids social integration. For older adults, it promotes healthy ageing, combats loneliness and encourages social participation. Despite these benefits, barriers to participation persist. Young people often face limited access to affordable facilities, socio-economic inequalities, lack of information, and cultural or gender-based norms that discourage participation. Older adults contend with health concerns, inaccessible infrastructures, and ageist stereotypes. Both groups are also underrepresented in mainstream sports culture, which tends to focus on elite performance in the 20–40 age range.

The conference will highlight these obstacles while placing particular emphasis on successful initiatives that have already helped to overcome them. Examples include youth-led sports programmes in disadvantaged areas, age-appropriate fitness opportunities for seniors, and intergenerational activities that foster understanding and solidarity between young and old. Participants will explore how such practices can be scaled up or adapted in other contexts.

This approach reflects key European and international frameworks. The European Sports Charter (2021) calls on governments to ensure equal access to sport in safe, inclusive environments. The Council of Europe’s Youth Sector Strategy 2030 stresses the importance of engaging young people in shaping policies that affect them, including sport. [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2014\)2 on the promotion of human rights of older persons](#) affirms their right to participate fully in community life, while [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)6](#) highlights the need for youth empowerment and civic engagement. The EPAS/Mulier Institute White Paper (2023) on “Social Sustainability of Sport Facilities” further underlines that accessible, inclusive infrastructure is vital to boost participation across all ages.

Building on the outcomes of previous EPAS Diversity Conferences, the 2025 edition will not only identify causes but also showcase a range of best practices. A key goal is to equip member states with practical tools and policy recommendations to implement these solutions effectively. An online compendium of examples and a roadmap for follow-up will ensure that the conference leads to tangible change.

The Diversity Conference 2025 is a timely opportunity to turn analysis into action. By bringing together member states, sports organisations and other stakeholders to exchange examples of best practice and identify clear paths for implementation, the event will strengthen intergenerational solidarity and advance the vision of “sport for all.” Creating accessible, inclusive opportunities for young people and older adults is essential for promoting health, cohesion and dignity across generations – and with collective commitment, it should be an achievable goal.

Draft Programme

- 9.00am – 9.30am Registration**
- 9.30am – 10.00am Welcome introduction**
- High-level speakers**
Hanne Juncher, Director, Directorate of Security, Integrity and Rule of Law, Council of Europe
Solène Charuau, Chair of the EPAS Governing Board, Council of Europe
- 10.00am – 10.20am Setting the scene**
- Luca Wernert**, Vice Chair of ENGSO Youth & Board member of the German Sports Youth
Cor Spreeuwenberg, Vice-president of the European Seniors' Union (ESU)
- 10.20am – 11.00am Spotlight presentation**, moderated by **Dovilė Šeduikytė-Suslavičienė**, Head of Sports Group, LRT, Lithuania
Jean-Michel Oprendek, Former National Technical Director of the French Fencing Federation (FFE) and senior sports expert with the French Ministry of Sports and the French National Olympic Committee (CNOSF)
Ana Japaridze, Paralympic Medallist and Youth European Games Champion, Georgia
- 11.00am – 11.15am Coffee break**
- 11.15am – 12.30pm Panel I discussion followed by questions – Younger persons' engagement in sport - best practices and how to apply them**
- Moderator: Ana Japaridze**, Paralympic Medallist and Youth European Games Champion, Georgia
- Sport di Tutti - Carceri - Italy**
- Antonio Parrilla, Italy, member of the EPAS Governing Board Bureau
 - Stefano Gobbi, Head of Community Sport, Social Projects and the Non-Profit Sector, Italy
- Active School Flag initiative – Ireland**
- Conor Maher, Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, Ireland
 - Karen Cotter, (Active School Flag, National Co-ordinator)

- 12.30pm – 2.00pm** **Lunch break**
Demonstration of walking football in collaboration with the **European Collectivity of Alsace** and the **Alsace Football District**
Address by Gianluca Esposito, Director General, Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe (TBC)
- 2.00pm – 3.15pm** **Panel II discussion followed by questions –**
Older persons’ engagement in sport - best practices and how to apply them
Moderator: Cor Spreeuwenberg, Vice-president of the European Seniors' Union (ESU)
TBD – France
 - Solène Charuau, France, Chair of the EPAS Governing Board
 - French Federation for Sports Retirement (FFRS)**SLOfit Senior Fitness Testing – Slovenia**
 - Patrik Perosa (International Dance Organization), member of the EPAS Consultative Committee Bureau
- 3.15pm – 3.30pm** **Coffee break**
- 3.30pm – 4.45pm** **Panel III discussion followed by questions –**
Young and older persons working together for greater engagement in sport
Moderators: Ana Japaridze, Paralympic Medallist and Youth European Games Champion, Georgia & **Cor Spreeuwenberg**, Vice-president of the European Seniors' Union (ESU)
Olympics4All
 - Annamarie Phelps (European Olympic Committee), member of the EPAS Consultative Committee Bureau**Generations Uniting Through Movement**
 - Martina Dinkova, Bulgaria, member of the EPAS Governing Board
 - Helen Vost (International Sport and Culture Association, ISCA)
- 4.45pm – 5.00pm** **Conclusions/Closing of the conference**
Charlotte Girard Fabre, Chair of the EPAS Consultative Committee
Francine H. Raveney, EPAS Deputy Executive Secretary, Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe