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ENLARGED PARTIAL AGREEMENT ON SPORT
(EPAS)

2024-2025 STRATEGY

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	2
Background	2
EPAS Structure (within the Sport Division)	2
EPAS strategy: 2024-2025	5
Strategic objective 1 – ENVISIONING sport which is accessible for all	6
Strategic objective 2 - PROMOTING and implementing the European Sports Charter (ESC)	8
Strategic objective 3 – AMPLIFYING EPAS in terms of membership and visibility	10
Strategic Objective 4 – STRENGTHENING values-based sport and sport integrity	13
Appendix – Some examples of EPAS KEY achievements	15
Providing a unique platform for exchange between different stakeholders.....	15
Drafting and standard setting: Recommendations and Conventions	15
Preparing visibility material	15

INTRODUCTION

Background

On 11 May 2007, the Council of Europe adopted Resolution [CM/Res\(2007\)8](#) establishing the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), in order to create a new framework for pan-European sports co-operation to address the challenges facing sport in Europe and beyond.

Building on more than thirty years of Council of Europe experience in the field, EPAS provides a platform for intergovernmental sports co-operation between the public authorities of its [41 member states](#). EPAS encourages dialogue between public authorities, sports federations and other NGOs, in particular through the contribution of its Consultative Committee which includes up to 30 sports organisations. This contributes to better governance and governing, with the aim of making sport more [ethical](#), more [inclusive](#) and [safer](#) (the three pillars of EPAS' work) in line with the [European Sports Charter \(ESC\)](#), which underpins all of the Council of Europe and in particular EPAS' policy work in this area. Some of EPAS' key achievements to date are set forth in Appendix I.

EPAS Structure (within the Sport Division)

EPAS has three statutory bodies:

- a [Governing Board \(GB\)](#), made up of representatives from [41 member states'](#) sport authorities;
- a [Consultative Committee \(CC\)](#), with up to 30 sports organisations; and
- a [Statutory Committee \(SC\)](#) made up of the 41 member states' Permanent Representatives to the Council of Europe.

EPAS also has two non-statutory bodies:

- the [Network of Magistrates and Prosecutors Responsible for Sports \(MARS Network\)](#); and
- the [Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport](#).

The EPAS Secretariat is based in the Council of Europe's Headquarters in Strasbourg and ensures that the EPAS programme of activities is carried out, monitored and reported on.

The Secretariat supports all of the statutory and non-statutory bodies and works closely with other Council of Europe sectors also working in sport and related thematic areas, in particular the Sport Conventions and Joint Projects team, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) Unit, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the Gender Equality Division, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Special Rapporteur of the Secretary General on Migrants and Refugees, the Conference of NGOs (CINGOs), as well as other Divisions from throughout the Directorate for Democracy.

The Sport Division – Complementary Actions

EPAS works closely with the Sport Division including the Sport Conventions:

- the [Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events](#) (also known as the **Saint Denis Convention**);
- the [Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions](#) (the **Macolin Convention**); and
- the [Anti-Doping Convention](#).

EPAS also works closely with the Sport Division's European Union-Council of Europe joint projects:

- [Combating hate speech in sport - #SportsRespect](#) (1 January 2022 - 30 June 2024), which aims to combat hate speech in sport by providing technical assistance to public authorities in member states and other sport stakeholders (such as practitioners, referees, coaches, fans, etc.) to develop comprehensive strategies within a human-rights framework;
- [All In Plus: promoting greater gender equality in sport](#) (1 March 2023-28 February 2025), the aim of which is to highlight the benefits of greater gender equality in sport through data collection, the creation of an online library of best practice examples and media sensitisation. The main goal of the project is to ensure that the relative invisibility of women in sport and the ongoing lack of awareness about gender imbalance in sport and related issues are brought clearly to the forefront.;
- [Balance S4, Strengthening the Safety and Service pillars of the Saint-Denis Convention](#) (January 2024 – September 2025), which aims to support member States of the Council of Europe in reinforcing the implementation of the safety and service pillars of the Saint-Denis Convention at national level, in order to achieve the right balance with the security pillar.

Framework documents informing the EPAS 2024-2025 Strategy

When defining the key strategic objectives for 2024-2025, the following reference framework documents have been taken into consideration:

1. [The European Sports Charter](#) (ESC), which underpins all of EPAS' and the Council of Europe's work in the area of sport and promotes values-based sport, sport for all, multi-stakeholder sport and human rights in and through sport. The ESC also provides a holistic definition for personal, competitive and organisational integrity which informs EPAS' work in this area. Article 2 of the ESC defines "sport" and the scope of the Charter as follows: "1. For the purpose of this Charter, "sport" means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, are aimed at maintaining or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels. 2. This Charter highlights the common features of a framework for European sport and its organisation, understood by the sports movement as the European sport model, and provides general guidance to the Council of Europe's member States to refine existing legislation or other policies and to develop a comprehensive framework for sport. It has been specified and complemented by legally binding standards..."
2. The Council of Europe [Programme of Activities 2024-2027](#); this provides indicators that cut across the entire Sport Division in terms of deliverables and promotes complementary actions between EPAS and the Sport Conventions. The relevant EPAS-specific indicators have been extracted and included in the four strategic objectives. The [Reykjavik Principles for Democracy](#) have also been taken into consideration, in particular with regard to combating corruption, promoting integrity and freedom of expression and working with civil society.
3. [The Council of Europe and Sport Strategic Priorities for 2022-2025](#).
4. The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers [Declaration on Sport Integrity](#), which was adopted on 27 September 2023 and invites member states and sport organisations to "promote transparency, accountability, democracy and ethical behaviour in sport, including the establishment of robust governance systems, conflict-of-interest policies, whistle-blower

protection mechanisms, effective investigation and prosecution of corruption, manipulation of competitions, violence and other infringements of human rights and the rule of law in the sport context.”

5. The “**Review of the impact and future potential of the Council of Europe’s work in the field of sport**” carried out by **Mainlevel Consulting in 2023**, which found that one of the biggest challenges within EPAS and the wider Sport Division was the **lack of awareness among stakeholders** regarding the Council of Europe’s standards and role.

The review also found that at national level co-operation with EPAS had particularly helped to:

- build capacity, knowledge and expertise;
- improve the governance of sport; and
- promote inter-institutional co-operation.

This endorses the need for **ongoing national-level collaboration** with EPAS in all of the different strategic objectives. The review also defined measures where stakeholders considered that EPAS could be particularly useful in offering support in the future and these included:

- developing international networks of specialists;
- providing expertise for the development of comprehensive national/local strategies;
- developing and promoting training tools in different languages;
- monitoring the implementation of existing standards.

EPAS strategy: 2024-2025

The four 2024-2025 strategic objectives draw on the afore-mentioned work structure and framework documents and include:

Objective 1 - Envisioning sport which is accessible for all

Objective 2 - Promoting and implementing the European Sports Charter (ESC)

Objective 3 - Amplifying EPAS in terms of membership and visibility

Objective 4 - Strengthening values-based sport and integrity in sport

Strategic Objective 1 – ENVISIONING sport which is accessible for all

Why?

The role of sport in our modern societies is key, taking into account its social, educational, recreational, cultural, health-promoting and economic functions. Therefore, the more it is practised and accessible, the stronger and healthier our societies can become.

How?

EPAS will achieve this strategic goal by:

- a. **Carrying out collaborative work on gender equality and sport**, including by:
 - **transversal gender mainstreaming work** in collaboration with the **Council of Europe's** Gender Equality Division, GREVIO (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) and the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), as well as other sectors working in this area;
 - **supporting the Governing Board and the Consultative Committee Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GERs)** in their promotion of EPAS' gender equality work;
 - serving as a **focal point in collaboration with the European Working Group on Sport (EWG)** co-ordinated by ENGSO;
 - offering to be the central focal co-ordinator for the work of the **International Working Group (IWG) on Gender Equality in Sport**, including by representing the IWG at pan-European level;
 - **ongoing collaborative work with bodies working in these areas, including UNESCO on tackling gender-based violence in sport, EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality) on data collection and the Global Observatory on Gender Equality and Sport (GO)**;
 - **close collaboration with the Sport Division's All In Plus EU-CoE joint project: promoting greater gender equality in sport**;
 - organising a **focus session on gender equality in the context of the 18th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport (10 October 2024)**, in partnership with the Portuguese authorities on the topic of "women and leadership in sport and the role of male allies";
 - co-ordinating annual **Breakfast Roundtables on International Women's Day**;
 - delivering other training sessions and webinars on an ad hoc basis and in line with findings from the joint All In Plus project.

b. Promoting diversity in sport, including by:

- publishing an **educational toolkit and a study on “the human rights of transgender and intersex athletes in sport”** by end 2024 and organising a follow-on workshop;
- ongoing work on the **inclusion of migrants and refugees in and through sport (including preparing a handbook, reviewing the online platform and collaborating with partner organisations including ISCA – International Sport and Culture Association) – by end 2025;**
- organising a **2025 EPAS Diversity Conference** on “Sport and intergenerational challenges for young people and the silver generation”.

c. Providing continuity in sports careers – dual careers

During the 18th Ministerial Conference a **focus session will be held on dual careers** (10 October 2024) in collaboration with the Portuguese authorities and partner organisations, including EAS (European Athlete as Student).

d. Anti-discrimination and sport work

From end February 2025 and based on the findings and recommendations of the analytical report of the joint EU-CoE All In Plus project, the outcome of discussions at the focus session of the 18th Ministerial Conference focus session on gender equality (10 October 2024), and in line with the [Council of Europe’s Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029](#), **EPAS will further define its positioning vis-à-vis its anti-discrimination work and gender equality work** in the field of sport as mentioned above.

Strategic Objective 2 - PROMOTING and implementing the European Sports Charter (ESC)

Why?

The European Sports Charter is the most advanced guidance for governments in the design and implementation of legal and policy frameworks for sport. As the backbone of policy development, it should be promoted and implemented at national, regional and grassroots sports level throughout all EPAS member states, through the network of Consultative Committee organisations and beyond.

How?

EPAS will achieve this goal by:

- a. **sharing information on the new methodology** which has been prepared by the ESC Working Group to enhance and improve the implementation of the ESC in member states;
- b. organising **Support and Follow-Up visits** three times a year on the basis of a questionnaire prepared by the ESC Working Group. Post-visit deliverables will include the preparation of country factsheets and a report to the member state. An online platform with questionnaire results will also be prepared;
- c. **launching a call to action** amongst GB and CC members inviting them to take ownership of, and be active stakeholders in, reaching this first strategic goal, by:
 - inviting them to take part in these visits (GB and CC level);
 - encouraging their countries to receive visits (GB);
 - asking them to share and promote related best practice initiatives (GB and CC);
 - acting as ambassadors at conferences and other events to ensure that there is strong visibility of the ESC and the values it stands for, including:
 - a wide definition of sport,
 - sport for all,
 - values-based sport:
 - education in values through sports ethics,
 - integrity,
 - sustainability,
 - human rights in and through sport,
 - supporting top-level and professional sport;
 - multi-stakeholder sport.

Multi-stakeholder sport is an essential part of the ESC, which states under Section B that:

“Article 3 – Public authorities

1. The role of the public authorities is primarily complementary to the action of the sports movement and corporate sector. Public authorities are responsible for setting framework conditions and, where appropriate, legal requirements which are necessary for the development of sport. In the development and administration of sports policies, public authorities should pursue the aims of this Charter and demonstrate that they place a high priority on respecting the rule of law and the principles of good governance.”

And in “Article 4 – The sports movement

1.The sports movement, which comprises non-governmental, non-profit sports organisations, is the main partner of public authorities for the implementation of sports policies. Its organisations are bound by the requirements and limits imposed on them by legislation in accordance with international standards.”

This call for action will be reiterated during the EPAS plenary sessions with the GB and the CC (29-30 May 2024 and in 2025) and during the 18th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport.

Outreach material will be provided to support the promotion of the ESC including:

- a dedicated webpage,
- a wide range of translated versions of the ESC,
- a series of 10 factsheets (to be made available at the May 2024 plenary sessions),
- a short video (to be released during the 18th Ministerial Conference, 8-10 October 2024),
- a MyCloud space to share best practice examples between the Governing Board and the Consultative Committee.

Strategic Objective 3 – AMPLIFYING EPAS in terms of membership and visibility

I MEMBERSHIP

Why?

EPAS' rich and diverse composition is instrumental for the quality and impact of its work and the sustainability of its action.

How?

Expansion to CoE non-EPAS member states (within and outside the EU)

Encouraging the remaining CoE member states that are not yet part of EPAS to join, including Germany and Spain, should be a priority in 2024-2025, especially given the recent accession of Denmark (1 April 2024) and Ireland (15 May 2024).

Governing Board representatives who are part of the EU Working Party on Sport could encourage EU member states that are not yet members of EPAS to join. Various events at EU level could provide an opportunity to present EPAS and encourage the EU member states that are not yet EPAS members to join.

Extended EPAS Statutory Committee meetings, such as the one held in December 2023, can continue to offer the opportunity for other Council of Europe non-EPAS member states, such as the United Kingdom, to join.

Expansion to new member states beyond the EU and the Council of Europe

Given the global nature of EPAS' work and the possibility of extending owing to the Enlarged Partial Agreement status, it makes sense to reach out to other partners across the globe. The following could be ideal target regions:

- the wider Mediterranean region (Algeria, Tunisia, etc.) – which already work closely with the Council of Europe,
- English-speaking territories such as New Zealand and Australia,
- interested countries in the Middle East,
- Latin American countries, further to the regional conference held in Argentina on [“preserving the integrity of sport by combating competitions manipulation: focus on the Macolin Convention in Latin America”](#) – 18 April, 2024)

Side events during international conferences such as MINEPS could provide opportunities to encourage non-EU and non-CoE countries to join.

II VISIBILITY

Why?

EPAS as a brand lacks widespread visibility and needs to further ensure that it is recognised for its strong work on policy guidance.

How?

a. EPAS has a number of unique selling points (usps) which it can be promoted by the Governing Board, the Consultative Committee, the Statutory Committee and the Secretariat, and others working closely with EPAS, to raise awareness of its work:

- EPAS is **an ideas hub**, generating innovative policy content and preparing standards in the field of sport and human rights, by drawing on the know-how of its multi-stakeholder infrastructure of key actors and proposing change in the sector in line with the values of the ESC.
- EPAS offers **technical co-operation** (technical assistance and capacity building) to enhance the knowledge and capacities to implement Council of Europe sport policies by facilitating constructive dialogue and positive change with sport stakeholders at international, European and regional levels.
- EPAS has an *avant-garde* position in terms of **reacting to new trends or challenges** in sports policy.
- EPAS is a **label of excellence** in terms of delivering sports policy content and advising member states, grassroots sports organisations and other sports actors, as how to achieve best practice and gain know how in the field of sports policy.
- EPAS has a wide range of **capacity-building deliverables** including:
 - national level policy roadmaps in the field of safe sport,
 - national factsheets and country profiles linked to the ESC,
 - training courses and materials;
 - a source of best practice information through the new shared MyCloud space (accessible for Governing Board and Consultative Committee representatives) and the EPAS website,
 - educational toolkits (e.g. on the protection and promotion of human rights of athletes),
 - studies and reports (which can be used by stakeholders widely).
- **EPAS works transversally garnering Council of Europe (CoE) co-operation**, thereby ensuring the pooling of expertise from different sectors and then bringing together outreach and resources. An example would be the Human Rights Fora (many representatives participate from throughout the CoE, including the ECHR, ECRI, Sports Conventions). Another example would be the drafting of Recommendations in relevant areas which can then go on to be adopted by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers (see those referred to in the introduction to this paper).
- **EPAS works collaboratively with many key bodies, including UNESCO**, other United Nations (UN) bodies, the Commonwealth, the European Commission, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and other international sports bodies, including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), FIFA and UEFA, to name but a few. This ensures that EPAS can have a **pivotal co-ordination role** further enhancing its position as an **ideas hub** and a **label of co-operational excellence**.

- **EPAS has strong communication potential.** Its key work areas are highly visible and so there is a strong potential to gain visibility for this Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement and as a knock-on effect for the Council of Europe itself too.

This means that any ad hoc events linked to high-level events – e.g. Paris Olympics 2024 and the associated social media campaign – are sure to garner wide interest and should be explored as a means of raising the profile of EPAS.

b. EPAS also has a number of visibility tools which can be drawn on when promoting its work:

- a **series of factsheets** in key subject areas: EPAS, ESC, Human Rights, Sport for All, Safeguarding in Sport, Education, Migrants and Refugees, Sustainability, Gender Equality and Integrity;
- an **upcoming edition of *Sport and Citizenship* magazine** highlighting the work of EPAS in the area of sports integrity (summer 2024);
- a **website** that is constantly evolving and includes the latest calendar of activities and other news information on EPAS' work;
- a **promotional campaign to tie in with the 33rd Summer Olympic Games and 17th Paralympic Games (2024)**, including the creation of 10 messaging panels with visuals, one to be used as a slogan per week during the 10-week period, and to be shared also via social media; other side events and communication tools will be rolled out during this period;
- **upcoming videos on the ESC** (available in October 2024), and **the Start to Talk project** (available in September 2024));
- **ongoing creation of social media content** which can be **retweeted from X (@Coe_Sports)**, **recordings on Facebook** from the **Council of Europe main page news items on the main EPAS website (e.g. 8 March Breakfast Roundtable on Sports Officiating and Gender Equality)** which can be reposted to gain more views, as well as **regular posts shared on LinkedIn by members of EPAS Secretariat which can be retweeted**. Use of the **hashtag #COE4Sport** for all related tweets and social media news items;
- a range of **publications**, educational **toolkits** (including one on promoting and protecting the human rights of transgender and intersex athletes), **studies** (including a White Paper on Social Sustainability and Sport commissioned by EPAS and prepared by the Mulier Instituut – to be made available by end 2024), **brochures** and other documents to be shared as examples of best practice.

Strategic Objective 4 – STRENGTHENING values-based sport and sport integrity

Why?

As a major component of society, sport is at the heart of communities and brings people together around values such as respect, equality and fairness, and is thus an excellent vector and tool for promoting human rights and democratic principles and values. But sport faces complex and ever-evolving threats (such as doping, violence at sports events, manipulation of competitions, corruption and human rights violations) which can undermine the confidence of society in it and increasingly expose sport to human rights infringements and to breaches of the rule of law.

Upholding the integrity of sport requires a coordinated and stronger emphasis on education and implementation of the applicable standards by the competent authorities.

How?

A number of projects and initiatives allow EPAS to meet this objective, namely:

- [Start to Talk](#): this project protects children in sport by seeking to eliminate all forms of abuse and violence against them. It provides technical support, resources and materials to support public authorities responsible for sport and sports organisations in their efforts to make sport safer and assists its stakeholders in developing and implementing child safeguarding policies, awareness-raising campaigns and training for relevant stakeholders. It ensures that children benefit from a safer, more positive and more empowering sporting environment. **Fundraising for the project** is part of ongoing strategic work to ensure continued impact.
- The [Pool of international experts on safe sport](#): this meets on an annual basis for a restricted technical meeting followed by a public webinar. It provides:
 - a shared space for best practice;
 - consultant analysis of upcoming work areas to avoid overlap and repetition;
 - the preparation of a glossary and other deliverables.
- the [Forum on Sport and Human Rights](#): 2025 edition to focus on risks to health from sport;
- the [MARS Network \(Network of Magistrates/Prosecutors responsible for Sport\)](#): this Network bridges the gap between the judiciary and areas relating to sports integrity across Europe and beyond. It strengthens international co-operation and the exchange of information in the protection of the integrity of sport. Annual plenary meetings are held and the Bureau meets online every few months to address threats and challenges to sports integrity;
- the [18th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport](#) (Porto, Portugal – 8-10 October 2024): this biennial conference will focus on “**Collaborative governing**” and “**Good governance**”. A resolution on “Governing and Governance in sport: supporting a fresh approach to match its societal importance” will be adopted subsequently to guide the work of EPAS and member states in these areas. The Conference will also celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the [Macolin Convention](#) (Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions), which was originally drafted by EPAS.

- the promotion of **human rights education in and through sport**: educational workshops are held by EPAS, e.g. in April 2024 with the [Under-18 Ice Hockey National Team of Ukraine](#). This workshop focused on the ESC as a tool to promote equality and anti-discrimination in sport. EPAS also contributes to human rights education in sport through the online Council of Europe Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals ([HELP](#)) [training programme](#);
- the **Database on alleged cases of corruption in sport (DACCS)**: this database, which has been under preparation for a number of years, will be available by end 2025;
- **revised [Guidelines on Sport Integrity](#)** (pursuant to Kazan Action Plan 3, MINEPS and for which the initial co-ordination was carried out by EPAS): there is **ongoing collaboration with UNESCO** in the preparation of these guidelines and it is envisaged that the revised version will be published by end 2025; and
- the **[IPACS Benchmark on Good Governance](#)** (the co-ordination of which was carried out by EPAS): there will be **ongoing collaboration with the International Olympic Committee (IOC)** to ensure the follow-on and implementation work of these Benchmarks throughout 2024-2025.

Appendix – Some examples of EPAS KEY achievements

Providing a unique platform for exchange between different stakeholders

EPAS supports multi-stakeholderism in sport as set forth in the European Sports Charter. One of the means it has achieved this is through providing different fora for international exchanges and co-operation. These include:

- the biennial *Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport*,
- the biennial *EPAS Diversity Conference*,
- *roundtables, including an annual breakfast roundtable on gender equality in sport*,
- *annual plenary meetings and Statutory Committee meetings*,
- *fora on sport and human rights*,
- *webinars, and*
- *other events.*

Drafting and standard setting: Recommendations and Conventions

EPAS has overseen the preparation and drafting of a wide range of Recommendations and Conventions, bringing experts together to draft and then provide legal frameworks for sports policy throughout signatory states. These are then adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers and include:

- [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2021\)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the Revised European Sports Charter](#)
- [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2021\)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on extreme martial arts and combat activities](#)
- [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion of good governance in sport and its Explanatory Memorandum](#)
- [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2015\)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender mainstreaming in sport](#)
- [Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions \(18/11/2014\)](#)

For a full list see: [Adopted texts on Sport policies - Sport \(coe.int\)](#)

Preparing visibility material

Handbooks and other communication material

EPAS has also produced and prepared a wide range of handbooks and other communication material to ensure the sharing and promoting of best practice in sport, in particular under its three pillars of **safe, ethical** and **inclusive** sport.

See [Publications - Sport \(coe.int\)](#)

It has also produced a wide range of visibility material highlighting its work: [Multimedia - Sport \(coe.int\)](#) and [Visibility materials - Sport \(coe.int\)](#)