

Strasbourg, 14 May 2025

EPAS(2025)35

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)

## **Activity Report 2024**

### **Raising the game for values-based sport**

## Contents

Forewords.....	2
Member states .....	4
Highlights.....	5
18th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport in Porto (Portugal) “Governing and Governance in Sport: Supporting a Fresh Approach to Match its Societal Importance.”, 8-10 October .....	5
Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.....	7
Implementation of the European Sports Charter (ESC) .....	8
Support and follow-up visits to Finland and Morocco .....	8
ESC support and follow-up visit to Finland – Helsinki, 18-19 April .....	8
ESC support and follow-up visit to Morocco – Rabat, 11-12 June .....	8
The three pillars of EPAS.....	9
1st pillar – Ethical sport .....	9
Third meeting of the MARS Network – Lyon, France, 18-19 June .....	9
EPAS's contributions to the 57th edition of Sport and Citizenship magazine .....	9
2nd pillar – Inclusive sport.....	10
Breakfast Roundtable on Sport officiating and gender equality – Strasbourg, France, 8 March....	10
Combating discrimination in sports: Educational Workshop on the European Sports Charter – Budapest, Hungary, 3-4 April .....	10
Conference “Equality and diversity in French-speaking sport: a reality?” – Paris, France, 25 July	11
3rd pillar – Safe sport .....	12
Start to Talk.....	12
Pool of International Experts .....	12
Statutory matters.....	14
The three statutory bodies of EPAS .....	14
Governing Board.....	14
Consultative Committee .....	14
Statutory Committee .....	14
Budget .....	15
External action.....	17
Participation in events .....	17
Co-operation with UNESCO .....	18
Co-operation with the Commonwealth.....	18
Co-operation with the European Union (EU).....	19
Communication and visibility .....	20

## Forewords

### **Alexandre Husting, Chair of the EPAS Governing Board**

As Chair of EPAS, I am delighted to look back on a busy year of activities carried out in 2024, which have helped to reaffirm the unique and now widely recognised role of EPAS in shaping the future of sport.

Created as a unique and original intergovernmental platform, EPAS brings together public authorities, sports organisations, and other relevant actors to promote safe, healthy and accessible sport for all, based on the fundamental values of the Council of Europe. The fundamental principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law have always been the pillars on which our vision of sport is based.

One of the highlights of 2024 was the 18th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport, held in October in Porto, Portugal. Bringing together 43 member states, 29 international organisations, and 13 youth delegates, the Conference focused on collaborative governing and good governance in sport. This landmark event resulted in a strong resolution promoting transparent, inclusive and ethical governance at all levels of sport. Thematic sessions on leadership, gender equality, and dual career enriched our understanding of the systemic challenges facing athletes and sports institutions. For the first time, a roundtable discussion entitled “Champions for Youth in Sport” gave young people a strong voice and a role in ministerial discussions, contributing to the dynamism of the Conference.

Many other events took place throughout 2024, and you will find a detailed account of them in this report. These events, their number, quality and the interest they generated demonstrate the dynamism of EPAS. This was obviously only possible with the support of everyone: the EPAS member delegations and the Consultative Committee, the Bureau, and, last but not least, the unfailing support at the highest level of the Council of Europe and from the EPAS Secretariat, without whom these events would not have been such a success.

As Chair my ambition has been to build on this momentum by strengthening our impact on sport governance, our visibility and our credibility through strong collaboration and a constructive approach with all public and private institutional actors in the sports sector.

Next year, elections will be held to appoint a new Bureau and a new Chair of EPAS, who will be tasked with advancing our vision and shared values in the field of sport. I am confident that the new Bureau, supported by an impactful constituency, will continue to uphold EPAS’ high standards and promote sport as a common resource. I would like to conclude by thanking them all. My experience as Chair of EPAS may not always have been restful, but it has been a wonderful personal experience and a great collective adventure.

### **Charlotte Girard Fabre, Chair of the EPAS Consultative Committee**

EPAS continues to embody a collective commitment, where a wide range of organisations contribute actively to shared values and co-operation — across Europe, and beyond its geographical borders.

The word “Enlarged” in Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport is not incidental — it reflects a deliberate choice to open the doors of co-operation wider, to welcome diverse realities, and to build common standards that transcend regional boundaries. This openness is not a challenge — it is a strength.

The Consultative Committee plays a central role in this dynamic. It is not only a statutory body — it is a living space of expertise, rooted in the field, and deeply involved in the governance, the thematic work, and the visibility of EPAS.

The strength of EPAS lies in its ability to foster constructive collaboration despite differences, ensuring that every actor — whether public or private, institutional or from civil society — has a voice at the table in defending the core principles of ethics, access and inclusion in sport.

In 2024, the Consultative Committee consolidated its presence as an essential actor within EPAS. Many Bureau members were re-elected including the Chair and Vice Chair and new members joined as Bureau members. This allowed for continuity and reinforced the Committee's operational stability.

The Committee also grew, with the arrival of three new organisations: the *Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile* (FIA), Rugby Europe and the World Snowboard Federation, bringing the total number of members to 30. The addition of three new members reflects a growing interest in the work of the Committee, and a rebalancing towards a stronger presence of structured sport organisations, while maintaining a rich diversity of profiles.

Throughout the year, the Committee contributed to all of the major thematic events organised by EPAS. It played a key role during the Ministerial Conference in Porto as well as in other events, including the Breakfast Roundtable on gender and officiating (8 March), the Equality and Diversity Conference in Paris (25 July), and other key moments addressing inclusion, ethics, and integrity in sport.

However, 2024 was not defined by a couple of single events. Its true highlight lies in the consistent presence, transversal engagement, and growing synergies demonstrated by the Consultative Committee across all EPAS activities.

In 2025, we will continue to raise awareness of EPAS' work through the lens of the Charter and to make visible the added value of the Consultative Committee — not only as a technical contributor, but as a strategic ally for the Governing Board and the Council of Europe as a whole.

### **Sophie Kwasny, Executive Secretary of EPAS and Head of the Sport Division**

In 2024, EPAS continued to assert itself as a driving force for progress in sport governance. Anchored in the values of the Council of Europe and guided by the European Sports Charter, our work this year strengthened the foundations of sport as a space embracing dignity and diversity.

Our strength lies in a unique combination of policy innovation, pan-European co-operation, and value-based action. From thematic factsheets to support missions, from expert platforms such as the MARS Network and the Pool of Experts on Safe Sport to Ministerial dialogue and engagement, EPAS offers the tools, networks and vision to turn shared principles into tangible progress.

A key achievement in 2024 was the deeper integration of the European Sports Charter into our policy and operational work. The Porto Ministerial Conference in October was a defining moment, reaffirming the Charter's role as the backbone of our shared approach to sport. The Charter was not just referenced in 2024—it was activated. Across all three pillars of our mandate—ethical, inclusive and safe sport—we saw the Charter inform reforms, shape cooperation and inspire events and guidance. Our member states and Consultative Committee brought dynamism and expertise to every initiative, reinforcing our shared ambition to make sport a transformative tool for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. With the European Sports Charter as our compass, EPAS is uniquely positioned to continue advancing a sport sector that serves all people—fairly, safely and with dignity.

## Member states

### List of member states

1. Albania
2. Andorra
3. Armenia
4. Austria
5. Azerbaijan
6. Belgium
7. Bosnia and Herzegovina
8. Bulgaria
9. Croatia
10. Cyprus
11. Denmark
12. Estonia
13. Finland
14. France
15. Georgia
16. Greece
17. Hungary
18. Iceland
19. Ireland
20. Israel
21. Italy
22. Latvia
23. Liechtenstein
24. Lithuania
25. Luxembourg
26. Malta
27. Monaco
28. Montenegro
29. Morocco
30. Netherlands
31. North Macedonia
32. Norway
33. Poland
34. Portugal
35. San Marino
36. Serbia
37. Slovak Republic
38. Slovenia
39. Switzerland
40. Türkiye
41. Ukraine

In 2024, EPAS welcomed two new members: **Denmark** and **Ireland**.

## Highlights

18th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport in Porto (Portugal)  
“Governing and Governance in Sport: Supporting a Fresh Approach to Match its Societal Importance.”, 8-10 October

The 18th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport, held in Porto from 8 to 10 October, was the defining highlight of the year for the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS). With representatives from 43 member states, 29 international organisations, and 13 youth delegates, the conference focused on **“Governing and governance in sport: supporting a fresh approach to match its societal importance.”** This theme set the tone for a discussion on how sport can better reflect societal values and serve communities.

The event culminated in the adoption of a resolution emphasising that, in light of its societal benefits, sport has to be promoted as a common resource, fostering its social, health and educational role and preserving it for future generations. Ministers thus committed, and called for, a fresh approach to collaborative governing and good governance in sport. This notably implies for states and sports organisations to sustain a continuous dialogue with athletes, local clubs, concerned youth representatives and civil society, recognising them as instrumental partners in promoting values-based sport.

The conference opened with addresses from **Pedro Duarte**, Portuguese Minister for Parliamentary Affairs responsible for Sport, **Bjørn Berge**, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and **Linda Hofstad Helleland**, Chair of the Parliamentary Assembly’s Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media. A session showcasing the European Sports Charter highlighted its role as a cornerstone for values-based sport policy, with contributions from key figures such as **Thomas Bach**, President of the International Olympic Committee, and representatives from the European Paralympic Committee and Laureus Sport for Good. Their interventions underscored the Charter’s potential to drive inclusive governance.

The conference was structured around two main sessions. The first, **“Collaborative Governing: Time to Adapt the Rules of the Game?”** addressed the evolving relationship between public authorities and other key stakeholders. Discussions stressed the importance of building mutual trust, ensuring stakeholder participation at all levels, and fostering co-operative governance models that reflect sport’s diverse roles in society. The second session, **“Good Governance: Moving the Goal Post Forwards?”** focused on the systemic challenges facing sports governance, including corruption, athlete exploitation and financial transparency. Participants emphasised the need for ethical frameworks, the integration of athlete voices in decision-making and innovative solutions.

### Focus sessions

The focus sessions held on 10 October in the framework of the Ministerial Conference provided a pivotal platform for addressing critical issues in sport leadership - through **gender equality in sport** and **dual career**. They brought together high-level speakers and showcased actionable strategies to promote equity and sustainability in sports leadership.

The session on **gender equality in sport** brought together leading voices to discuss strategies for promoting inclusivity and diversity in sports leadership. Opened by **Gianluca Esposito**, Director General for Human Rights and the Rule of Law at the Council of Europe, and **Pedro Dias**, Portuguese

Secretary of State for Sport, the session showcased diverse perspectives on addressing gender imbalances in sports governance and management.

Keynote speakers included **Annamarie Phelps**, Co-Chair of the International Working Group on Women and Sport, and member of the EPAS Consultative Committee Bureau, who shared insights into global efforts to transform leadership patterns in sports. **Ticha Penicheiro**, a former professional basketball player and sports agent, highlighted the unique challenges faced by female athletes in career planning and leadership, emphasising the importance of mentorship. **André Seabra**, Director of the Portugal Football School, presented initiatives that aim to embed gender equality in football education and management. **Paoline Ekambi**, President and co-founder of Sportail Community, provided practical strategies for transitioning female athletes into corporate careers, showcasing innovative ways to merge athletic and professional development.

The second focus session, dedicated to **dual career for athletes**, explored how athletes can successfully balance high-performance sports with education and professional development. This session featured an array of perspectives from esteemed speakers with direct experience in the field. **Laura Capranica**, President of the European Athlete as Student (EAS) network, outlined the importance of dual career policies allowing athletes to pursue academic and athletic ambitions simultaneously. **Sofia Ramalho**, Team Manager for SL Benfica women's basketball team and an alumna of the FIBA Time Out 2.0 project, illustrated how education and leadership training can support athletes' post-sport transitions. **Gévrise Emame**, an Olympic judoka and Lifestyle Athletes Manager, shared her expertise in guiding athletes through socio-professional development, while **Andrej Pisl**, Projects and Policy Manager at the European University Sports Association (EUSA), presented European initiatives fostering youth engagement and skills development. **Andy Criere Martin**, a Spanish professional surfer and entrepreneur, added a unique perspective on leveraging athletic fame for career diversification beyond competitive sports.

Both focus sessions generated significant takeaways. On gender equality, the need for concrete frameworks to enforce diversity and inclusion in sports governance was reinforced. On dual career, the session highlighted the importance of integrating sport and education policies to provide athletes with sustainable pathways beyond their sporting achievements. These discussions reflected the overarching theme of the conference - promoting governance in sport that aligns with its societal importance, ensuring it remains a vehicle for inclusivity, opportunity, and resilience.

### **Youth Initiative**

A significant innovation of this Edition of the Ministerial Conference was the introduction of youth mainstreaming, including the *"Champions for Youth in Sports"* roundtable, which marked the first dedicated platform for youth delegates at a Ministerial Conference. Youth representatives shared their perspectives on governance, sustainability, and inclusivity, emphasising the transformative potential of sport in addressing pressing societal challenges. Their participation in the Conference and in other side activities reinforced the importance of embedding youth voices in sport policy making. One of the key highlights of the Youth Initiative was the opportunity for Youth Ambassadors to participate in a "speed networking" session with members of the Consultative Committee. This interactive format allowed Youth Ambassadors to briefly present their work and areas of focus while also gaining insights into the activities of various organisations represented in the Committee. By engaging directly with experts in fields that aligned with their interests, the Youth Ambassadors were able to establish possible valuable connections and explore potential opportunities for future collaboration.

### **10th Anniversary of the Macolin Convention**

The Council of Europe marked the 10th anniversary of the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions - the **Macolin Convention** - with a conference held in Porto on 8 October. The conference highlighted its achievements as the first international treaty combating sports manipulation and fostered new commitments for expanded implementation and enhanced international action, supported by a declaration adopted by the participants.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the Ministerial Conference demonstrated EPAS's commitment to advancing human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in sport. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, it reinforced the need for collaborative and values-driven sport governance to ensure that sport continues to serve as a powerful societal force. The Porto conference laid a foundation for future ministerial dialogues, with the next edition set to be hosted by **Monaco on 3-4 November in 2026**.

### Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games

**The Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games** offered a powerful platform for the Council of Europe to amplify the promotion of values-based sport, as enshrined in the European Sports Charter. A central highlight was the arrival of the **Olympic and Paralympic Torch** at the Council of Europe headquarters, a historic event that symbolised the shared mission of promoting peace, inclusion, and human rights through sport. This unprecedented moment, accompanied by a ceremony in the Parliamentary Assembly Chamber, underscored the enduring connection between Olympism and the Council's foundational principles.

Marking this occasion, EPAS inaugurated an **exhibition outside the Agora building in Strasbourg** underlining the deep alignment between the **European Sports Charter** and the **Olympic Charter**, emphasising themes of inclusivity, fairness, and universal access to sport. Designed as an evolving showcase, the exhibition revealed new panels weekly, providing an engaging narrative that reinforced the values shared by both charters. The exhibition served as an educational tool, drawing attention to the role of sport in fostering equality, dignity and opportunity for all.

The Games themselves further illustrated the importance of these principles. With the Paralympic Games highlighting the extraordinary achievements of athletes with disabilities, the Council of Europe reiterated its commitment to inclusion and breaking down barriers. The Games were a global reminder of sport's ability to inspire and to challenge societal norms, aligning closely with the **European Sports Charter's objectives**.

## Implementation of the European Sports Charter (ESC)

### Support and follow-up visits to Finland and Morocco

The **European Sports Charter** is the Council of Europe standard which lays down the basic principles for national sports policies, allowing governments to support and provide opportunities for the practice of sport for all under well-defined conditions.

As part of the EPAS mandate, European Sports Charter support and follow-up visits are carried out each year in its member states.

The **findings, recommendations and good practices** identified during each visit are compiled in a report. The adopted reports are made available to the public on the [EPAS website](#).

#### ESC support and follow-up visit to Finland – Helsinki, 18-19 April

The EPAS team met with the key stakeholders playing an active role in the implementation of values-based sport in Finland, including **Sandra Bergqvist**, Minister of Youth, Sport and Physical Activity and representatives from the sports movement including the Olympic and Paralympic Committees, non-organised sport, athletes, the media and others.

The EPAS team consisted of **Kaarel Nestor** (Estonia), member of the EPAS Governing Board, **Diana Santos** (Portugal), **Hugh Torrance** (EGLSF), member of the EPAS Consultative Committee and two members of the Secretariat.

#### ESC support and follow-up visit to Morocco – Rabat, 11-12 June

The EPAS team met with the key stakeholders playing an active role in the implementation of a values-based sport in Morocco, including **Youness Shimi**, Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, Pre-school and Sport and representatives of the sports and para-sports movement, education, the media and others.

The EPAS team consisted of **Alexandre Husting** (Luxembourg), Chair of the EPAS Governing Board, **Solène Charuau** (France), member of the EPAS Governing Board Bureau, **Annamarie Phelps** (EOC), member of the EPAS Consultative Committee Bureau, **Mark Lichtenhein** (SROC), member of the EPAS Consultative Committee and two members of the Secretariat.

## The three pillars of EPAS

### 1st pillar – Ethical sport

Third meeting of the MARS Network – Lyon, France, 18-19 June

The Network of Magistrates/Prosecutors Responsible for Sports set up under the authority of the Council of Europe's **Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)** aims to strengthen international co-operation and exchange of information in the **protection of the integrity of sport**.

**The MARS Network** held its third annual meeting on 18–19 June at the Interpol General Secretariat in Lyon, France. This meeting focused on key challenges to sport integrity, with sessions addressing money laundering through betting, multi-club ownership, and sports agents as critical areas of concern. Experts shared practical case studies and discussed detection and prosecution strategies to combat these crimes.

Participants also reviewed national systems for investigating and prosecuting crimes against sport integrity, with dedicated discussions on match-fixing, anti-doping, and event safety frameworks. **The Database on Alleged Cases of Corruption in Sport (DACCS)** and the **HELP course on human rights in sport** were presented as tools to support these efforts.

The meeting reinforced the MARS Network's role as a platform for strengthening **judicial co-operation** and ensuring coordinated action to address corruption and threats to sport integrity effectively.

### EPAS's contributions to the 57th edition of Sport and Citizenship magazine

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport contributed to the 57th edition of *Sport and Citizenship*, published on 12 June, with eight articles addressing sport integrity challenges. The texts were grouped into four themes: personal integrity, competition integrity, organisational integrity and a holistic approach.

In the holistic theme, Deputy Secretary General **Bjørn Berge** emphasised key Council of Europe texts like the **European Sports Charter** and the **Committee of Ministers' declaration on sport integrity**, highlighting EPAS' leadership in shaping policy. **Andrea Carletti**, EPAS Governing Board Vice-Chair, reinforced the importance of collaborative action to protect sport values.

Personal integrity featured insights from **Elena Casero** on the role of Child Safeguarding Officers, and **Gabriela Matei** on combating hate speech in sport.

On competition integrity, **Sophie Kwasny** detailed the Macolin Convention and Anti-Doping Convention as vital tools for fair play, while **Jean-Yves Lourgouilloux** discussed the MARS Network's judicial efforts against illegal betting, match-fixing, and hate speech.

## 2nd pillar – Inclusive sport

### Breakfast Roundtable on Sport officiating and gender equality – Strasbourg, France, 8 March

On the occasion of International Women’s Day, EPAS organised a Breakfast Roundtable on sport officiating and gender equality, which took place on 8 March in hybrid format.

The event focused on addressing gender-based discrimination in sports officiating and promoting equal opportunities for women referees.

Central to the discussions was the relevance of the *European Sports Charter* and the continued importance of implementing **Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)2** of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender mainstreaming in sport. Additionally, participants reflected on the early findings of the ongoing “*All In Plus: Promoting greater gender equality in sport*” project. The session provided valuable insights into the structural and cultural changes needed to make the sports officiating sector more inclusive, such as mentorship programmes and anti-discrimination policies.

Personal testimonies underscored the systemic challenges they face, while discussions reaffirmed the Istanbul Convention as a critical tool to combat gender-based violence in sport. The roundtable explored the steps necessary to combat biases and foster greater collaboration among stakeholders, driving actionable commitments to enhance gender equality in sports officiating.

### Combating discrimination in sports: Educational Workshop on the European Sports Charter – Budapest, Hungary, 3-4 April

On 3-4 April, EPAS organised an Educational Workshop on the European Sports Charter in **Budapest, Hungary**, in partnership with the **Ukrainian Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Ice Hockey Federation**. Targeted at the U-18 Ice Hockey National Team of Ukraine, the workshop was a response to the EPAS Governing Board’s 2023 decision to focus on promoting equality and combating discrimination in sports.

The workshop addressed two critical themes: understanding and combating hate speech and discrimination in sports, and empowering athletes to serve as ambassadors for equality and respect. Using the Council of Europe’s *Bookmarks* and *We Can!* manuals, the programme combined educational presentations, interactive group exercises, and role-play scenarios. Participants explored real-life examples of hate speech in sports, developed counter-narratives, and engaged in team-building activities to foster mutual respect and cohesion.

Sessions emphasised the influential role athletes play beyond their performance, equipping participants with the tools to challenge discrimination and promote inclusivity. Participants crafted personal and team commitments, discussed practical applications for addressing discrimination, and reflected on how sport can unify and build resilience within communities.

By focusing on real-world scenarios, the event equipped participants with adaptable strategies to foster equality both on and off the field.

Conference “Equality and diversity in French-speaking sport: a reality?” – Paris, France, 25 July

On 25 July, ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, EPAS hosted the conference “*Equality and Diversity in French-Speaking Sport: A Reality?*” This event served as an important platform for addressing entrenched issues of discrimination and inequality while fostering dialogue on creating more inclusive sports environments.

The conference shed light on enduring challenges such as racism, gender inequality, and discrimination based on sexual orientation - issues that tarnish the values sport seeks to promote. Two panels looked into these themes: one **shared tools and best practices for combating racism in French-speaking sports**, while the other exposed the persistent gender gaps in participation, pay, and media representation, as well as the **structural barriers women face in sport**.

Beyond merely analysing some of the key issues, the conference underscored the deeply rooted social tensions manifesting as violent and abusive behaviour in sports and the broader societal implications of inequality in sport. It recognised sport's dual role as a potential amplifier of these issues and a unique platform for their prevention and resolution. With the Paris 2024 Games marking a historic milestone in achieving gender parity among athletes, the event emphasised that such progress must be matched by structural and cultural shifts across all levels of sport governance. It called for co-ordinated and sustained efforts to harness sport's transformative power as a tool for building a fairer, more inclusive society.

### 3rd pillar – Safe sport

#### Start to Talk

*Child safeguarding in sport is one of the priorities of EPAS, implemented in particular in the framework of the Start to Talk project.*

*Start to Talk assists national authorities responsible for sport in the production of country-specific roadmaps for the effective development and implementation of child safeguarding in sport policies, including concrete steps to set up child safeguarding officer (CSO) roles in sport.*

#### **Launch of a Start to Talk campaign in Cyprus – Nicosia, 16-18 September**

The launch of the Start to Talk campaign in Cyprus marked a significant step forward in safeguarding children in sport. The initiative, led by EPAS and the **Cyprus Sport Organisation**, emphasised the critical need to create safe, supportive environments for young athletes. It combined a **conference** and a **training course**, fostering dialogue among public authorities, sports organisations, NGOs, and experts in child protection.

The training course introduced trauma-informed approaches, equipping safeguarding officers with tools to address the pervasive nature of trauma and prevent re-traumatisation within sports settings. The conference provided a platform for sharing best practices and strategies to tackle issues like abuse, harassment, and discrimination in sport, highlighting the importance of collaboration among all stakeholders.

This initiative underscored the responsibility of public authorities and sports organisations to prioritise child protection, promoting systemic changes that ensure sport remains a safe and positive experience for all.

#### **Report on child consultation on safeguarding in sport in Bulgaria**

The Bulgarian Ministry of Youth and Sports was supported by The **Start to Talk** project in the development of a roadmap for the implementation of child safeguarding policies in sport, including concrete steps to set up Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) roles.

The publication of the report on child consultation regarding safeguarding in sport in Bulgaria, authored by **Melanie Lang**, marked a significant advancement in the development of child protection policies within sports. The report draws from a consultation session held by the **Bulgarian State Agency for Child Protection's Child Council**, involving young athletes aged 15 to 17 who could express their perspectives on safety, abuse prevention, and the broader safeguarding environment in sports.

This report amplifies the voices of young athletes, and it offers a **practical roadmap for systemic change**. It stands as a powerful reminder of the importance of involving children in crafting policies that directly affect their safety, marking an essential contribution to the ongoing efforts to create supportive and abuse-free environments in sport across Bulgaria and beyond.

#### Pool of International Experts

*The Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport is the single entry point to a unique source of multi-disciplinary expertise covering all forms of violence and abuse against children in sport. It brings together policy makers, researchers and academics, Specialists supporting people with lived experience, Child safeguarding officers (CSO), trainers/consultants and agents of change. The Pool is a means for peer-learning, capacity building and fostering exchanges between all those who have a role*

*to play in preventing and combating any form of violence and abuse against children in the field of sport.*

### **Annual meeting of the Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport: focus on trauma-informed child safeguarding practices – Strasbourg, France, 3 December**

The Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport held its third annual meeting on 3 December in hybrid format. Organised by EPAS as part of the Start to Talk project, the meeting focused on advancing trauma-informed practices in child safeguarding.

The session restricted to Pool members, began with updates from participants on their ongoing work and a review of 2024 deliverables. Discussions centred on the preparation of guidelines for safer recruitment procedures in sport, a topic identified during the previous year’s meeting. The Pool also outlined its priorities for 2025, reaffirming its commitment to creating practical tools and resources for safeguarding practices.

A seminar, entitled “Trauma-Informed Child Safeguarding Practices in Sport” was held under the framework of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. It brought together experts to discuss how trauma-informed approaches can shape policy, training, and survivor-centred frameworks. Speakers included **Georges Mischo**, Minister of Sport of Luxembourg; **Delphine Costantini**, Directorate of National Education, Youth and Sport of Monaco; and **Hanne Juncher**, Director of Security, Integrity and Rule of Law at the Council of Europe. The seminar emphasised the importance of engaging individuals with lived experience of abuse and ensuring sport environments promote healing rather than re-traumatisation. Deliverables presented included the *Glossary on Safe Sport* and a *Compendium of Resources on Safe Sport*.

This meeting highlighted the Pool’s pivotal role in advancing safer sport environments through evidence-based, human rights-compliant approaches. By fostering collaboration between experts, policymakers, and practitioners, the Pool continues to provide practical solutions to safeguarding challenges, ensuring alignment with the Council of Europe’s child protection strategies and broader human rights framework. Progress on the development of guidelines for human rights-compliant screening procedures in sport demonstrates a commitment to preventing harm at the recruitment stage.

## Statutory matters

### The three statutory bodies of EPAS

#### Governing Board

The Governing Board and Consultative Committee of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport held their annual plenary meetings on 29-30 May in Strasbourg, France. The meetings provided a platform for reviewing EPAS' activities, discussing strategic priorities and finalising preparations for key upcoming initiatives.

A highlight of the meeting was a dedicated session on the European Sports Charter, showcasing best practices from member states and sports organisations in areas such as human rights in sport, sport for all, education, the inclusion of migrants and refugees, and sustainability. The roundtable discussion was opened by **Bjørn Berge**, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, **Sandra Bergqvist**, Minister of Youth, Sport and Physical Activity of Finland, and **Kaari Mattila**, Secretary General of the Finnish League for Human Rights. This session reinforced the Charter's role as a guiding framework for sports governance and policy development.

The meeting welcomed **Denmark** and **Ireland** as new EPAS member states, reflecting the continued growth of EPAS. Delegates finalised key documents for the 18th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport, scheduled for 8–10 October in Porto, Portugal, and endorsed the development of a new series of ten thematic factsheets covering EPAS' core areas of work. Discussions also explored potential themes for the 2025 EPAS Diversity Conference, with a focus on intergenerational inclusion.

#### Consultative Committee

Following a decision by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 29 May 2024, the **Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA)**, **Rugby Europe** and the **World Snowboard Federation (WSF)** were invited to join the Consultative Committee bringing the total amount of members to 30.

Based on the final decision of the Governing Board, all organisations who had requested renewal of their membership of the Consultative Committee, had their membership renewed namely:

Alice Milliat Foundation, European Athletics, European Gay & Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF), European Network of Sport Education (ENSE), European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO), European University Sports Association (EUSA), International Basketball Federation (FIBA), International Federation for Sports Officials (IFSO), Panathlon International (PI), Peace and Sport, TAFISA Europe, and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA).

#### Statutory Committee

**Child safeguarding at the centre of the extended Statutory Committee meeting -  
Strasbourg, France, 8 November**

The annual meeting of the EPAS Statutory Committee, held on 8 November in Strasbourg, addressed programming and budgetary issues falling within the competence of the Statutory Committee. The meeting was followed by an extended session chaired by **H.E. Gabriel Revel**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Monaco to the Council of Europe, and was open to representatives from EPAS and non-EPAS member states. The session highlighted the work of EPAS, in particular in the area of child safeguarding and trauma-informed practices.

**Catherine Moyon de Baecque**, President of the French National Olympic Sports Committee's Commission for the Fight Against Sexual Violence and Discrimination in Sport, delivered a moving intervention. She drew on her own history as a high-level athlete and as one of the first people in France to break the silence about abuse in sport, she highlighted the ongoing need for vigilance, support, and systemic action to protect children and ensure the integrity of athletes' physical and psychological well-being. She commended EPAS initiatives like Start to Talk for fostering a culture of openness and awareness, urging continued investment to expand and amplify these efforts. Her testimony emphasised the dual imperative of addressing violence and cultivating environments where athletes, especially young ones, can thrive.

## Budget

The EPAS budget for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2024 amounted to **€1 193 100**.

The breakdown of the **member states' compulsory contributions** to this 2024 budget can be seen in the corresponding table below.

**Contributions of Member States to the budget of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) for the financial year 2024**

<b>MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE</b>	<b>% contribution</b>	<b>Amount payable in €</b>
ALBANIA	0.7846	9 361.06
ANDORRA	0.7846	9 361.06
ARMENIA	0.7846	9 361.06
AUSTRIA	3.3684	40 188.38
AZERBAIJAN	0.7846	9 361.06
BELGIUM	4.1112	49 050.73
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	0.7846	9 361.06
BULGARIA	0.7846	9 361.06
CROATIA	0.7846	9 361.06
CYPRUS	0.7846	9 361.06
DENMARK	2.5454	22 818.37
ESTONIA	0.7846	9 361.06
FINLAND	2.0740	24 744.90
FRANCE	16.5866	197 894.73
GEORGIA	0.7846	9 361.06
GREECE	1.7196	20 516.55
HUNGARY	1.4504	17 304.72
ICELAND	0.7846	9 361.06
IRELAND	2.9669	22 341.42
ITALY	16.5866	197 894.73
LATVIA	0.7846	9 361.06
LIECHTENSTEIN	0.7846	9 361.06
LITHUANIA	0.7846	9 361.06
LUXEMBOURG	0.7846	9 361.06
MALTA	0.7846	9 361.06
MONACO	0.7846	9 361.06
MONTENEGRO	0.7846	9 361.06
NETHERLANDS	6.9781	83 255.71
NORTH MACEDONIA	0.7846	9 361.06
NORWAY	3.0017	35 813.29
POLAND	5.4779	65 356.83
PORTUGAL	1.9663	23459.93
SAN MARINO	0.7846	9 361.06
SERBIA	0.7846	9 361.06
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	0.9177	10 949.08
SLOVENIA	0.7846	9 361.06
SWITZERLAND	5.4814	65 398.59
TÜRKIYE	7.9541	94 900.37
UKRAINE	2.5805	30 787.95
<b>NON-MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE</b>		
ISRAEL	1.5109	18 026.55
MOROCCO	0.9734	11 613.64
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0000</b>	<b>1 193 100.00</b>

## External action

### Participation in events

#### **PACE parliamentary hearing on sport betting addiction**

The **PACE parliamentary hearing** on sport betting addiction, held on 25 June, addressed the exponential growth of the sports betting market, which exceeded €46 billion in 2024, and its associated challenges. Organised with the support of EPAS and the **Pompidou Group**, the event focused on addiction as a public health issue, the vulnerability of athletes and young people, and the links between betting, match-fixing, and criminal networks.

Experts and stakeholders emphasised the urgent need for harmonised international regulations and stronger preventive measures. Contributions included data on illegal betting, personal testimony from a former athlete on the impact of addiction, and insights into legal and regulatory frameworks from practitioners across Europe.

This hearing marked a significant step in aligning parliamentary efforts across Europe to address the societal and ethical risks of unchecked sports betting, reinforcing the Council of Europe's broader agenda on protecting integrity and fairness in sport.

#### **PACE conference: promoting safety, integrity, equality and inclusion in sport**

The PACE Conference on "Promoting Safety, Integrity, Equality, and Inclusion in Sport," held in **Athens** on 4-5 November was a landmark event in the Council of Europe's ongoing efforts to strengthen the governance of sport and uphold its foundational values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The launch of the **Parliamentary Alliance for Good Governance and Integrity in Sport** during the conference added a crucial parliamentary dimension to global and national efforts in addressing the pressing challenges within the sports sector. This represents a significant step towards mobilising legislative support and fostering policy coherence across member states to ensure effective and values-based governance in sport.

**Alexandre Husting**, Chair of the EPAS Governing Board, highlighted the role of EPAS in safeguarding sports integrity while emphasising human rights and the shared European framework outlined in the European Sports Charter. His remarks underlined EPAS's commitment to combating match-fixing, illegal betting, and doping through initiatives like the Macolin Convention and the MARS Network. Meanwhile, **Ioanna Paraskevopoulou**, EPAS Governing Board's Gender Equality Rapporteur, provided insights on the tangible progress made under the "All In Plus" joint project, reinforcing the Council's dedication to advancing equality and inclusion in sports environments.

#### **North-South Prize to honour the inclusion of refugees in the Olympic and Paralympic Games**

In its 30th edition, the Jury of the [North-South Prize](#) of the Council of Europe decided on 22 October, to honour the initiative enabling refugees to compete in the Olympic and Paralympic Games (led by the [International Olympic Committee](#), the [Olympic Refugee Foundation](#), and the [International Paralympic Committee](#)). This recognition reflects their significant contributions to fostering understanding, solidarity, and inclusion on the world stage.

The initiative supporting refugee participation in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, through the Refugee Olympic and Paralympic teams, challenges stereotypes about refugees and people with disabilities in sports. By competing globally, refugee athletes exemplify resilience and raise awareness

about the need for greater inclusion, equal rights, and the unifying power of sport rooted in fair play and tolerance, as promoted by the European Sports Charter.

## Co-operation with UNESCO

The EPAS Secretariat took part in the Ordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS) which took place on 3 and 4 April morning.

The Secretariat also participated in the Peace and Sport/UNESCO [“International Dialogue event on Freedom of expression and athletes”](#) on 4 April afternoon and outlined its gender equality work during the UNESCO policy roundtable on [“Gender equality: towards a safer playing field on combating gender-based violence in sport”](#) on 5 April.

The EPAS Secretariat also took part in the “Change the Game” Global Ministerial Sport Conference organised by UNESCO on 24 July and contributed to a panel discussion on the social impact of sport during the Partners forum which took place on 23 July and was dedicated to “Investing in Social Impact, in and through Sport”.

### **Sport Division Contributes to UN Call for Input on Violence Against Women in Sport**

In 2024, the Council of Europe Sport Division actively contributed to global efforts against violence towards women and girls in sport by responding to a call for input from the **United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls**. The submission highlighted the pervasive and multifaceted nature of violence in sport, including physical, psychological, and economic abuse, as well as online harassment, grounding its analysis in the principles of the **Istanbul Convention** and the European Sports Charter.

The response emphasised the human rights implications of such violence, referencing key protections under the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights' case law on inadequate responses to abuse. Additionally, findings from the EU-CoE “All In” project and ongoing data collection through All In Plus underscored the prevalence of gender-based violence in sport, with an alarming increase in online harassment targeting women athletes.

## Co-operation with the Commonwealth

The EPAS Secretariat took part in the 11th Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting (CSMM) organised on 24-25 July in Paris to present together with representatives of the IOC the benchmark on good governance developed by the International Partnership Against Corruption in Sport (IPACS). The theme of this 11th CSMM was ‘Building Inclusive and Resilient Societies through Sport’.

## Co-operation with the European Union (EU)

### **Contribution to the joint EU-CoE project “All In Plus: Promoting greater gender equality in sport”**

EPAS provided instrumental support to the All In Plus project throughout the year. Among the important results of All in Plus, one can mention:

- **A data collection campaign** conducted across 21 jurisdictions focused on six key indicators: 1. Leadership, 2. Coaching and officiating, 3. Participation, 4. Gender-based violence in sport, 5. Communication/media, 6. Gender programmes and policies. Results will be presented in 21 factsheets, an analytical report, and an interactive dashboard titled “**Gender equality in sport – results of the extensive data collection campaign**”.
- **A library of best practices** compiling 87 new examples of best practices to guide and inspire stakeholders in their efforts to promote greater gender equality within sports organisations and communities.
- **A series of 13 videos** featuring role models who champion gender equality in sport were edited and published on the All In Plus website, providing accessible, impactful resources for advocacy and education.

On 5 April, the All In Plus: Promoting greater gender equality in sport joint project was awarded the prestigious **Grand Prix Edouard Eskenazi** by the Association Française du Corps Arbitral Multisports (AFCAM). The prize recognises the project's innovative approach to promoting gender equality in sports officiating, particularly its extensive data collection efforts across over 20 European countries.

This recognition marks a significant milestone for All In Plus, which builds on its predecessor project to address gender imbalances in sport through data analysis, best practice dissemination, and media engagement. The Grand Prix Edouard Eskenazi underscores the importance of collective efforts to ensure that gender equality remains a priority in sports governance and practice.

### **All In Plus second informative session: the role of the media in promoting greater gender equality in sport**

Sports media holds a unique power to shape the way we view the world of sport. Every highlight reel, every interview, and every feature can either challenge or reinforce existing biases, particularly around gender equality. Recognising this, the joint EU-Council of Europe project “All In Plus” hosted its second media informative session on 22 November, at the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) Headquarters in Geneva.

This session built on the momentum of the first gathering in Lausanne in 2023 at the IOC, offering a space for media professionals to reflect on their progress and share insights. Among the high-level contributors were **Nelson Monfort**, the well-known voice of *France Télévisions*, and **Anne-Laure Bonnet**, a prominent sports journalist and presenter. Their contributions underscored the essential role of media in challenging stereotypes and ensuring balanced representation in sport.

## Communication and visibility

### Social networks

The Sport Division's X (formerly Twitter) account **@CoE\_Sports**, which encompasses the activities of the Sport Division and therefore of EPAS, was constantly updated throughout the year. By the end of 2024, the account had gained 229 new followers and had 2 394 followers in total. Its posts generated around 135 000 impressions in 2024.

The Council of Europe's X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn accounts have also helped to increase EPAS' visibility by sharing or creating content highlighting its events, projects and initiatives.

During the Paris Olympics a series of 10 panels were prepared which were both displayed outside the Council of Europe AGORA building in Strasbourg and the messaging was shared across social media over the 10 weeks of the Olympics looking at united values from the European Sports Charter and the Olympic Charter.

### Website

Throughout 2024, the Sport Division's website [www.coe.int/sport](http://www.coe.int/sport) was constantly updated with news items on EPAS activities, in particular. Over the last 12 months, EPAS has relentlessly promoted human rights in and through sport. In 2024 sport integrity took centre stage – to ensure the integrity of people, of organisations and of competitions in sport.