Speakers' biographies and pictures
Meeting on sports facilities, 25 November 2026

***Disclaimer**: Each speaker has provided their own picture and short biography which are published hereunder.*

Remco Hoekman

Director, Mulier Institute



Prof. dr. Remco Hoekman is the director of the Dutch Mulier Institute and professor in Sport Sociology and Sport Policy at the Radboud University. The Mulier Institute is an independent, non-profit, scientific sport-research institute in the Netherlands. As such, it is engaged in fundamental, practice-focused and policy relevant social-scientific sport research. As a researcher Remco has been in charge of and participated in (inter)national research and monitoring projects on sport policy, sport facilities, sport participation and funding of grassroots sport. He has an extensive national and international publication list, including both policy-oriented and fundamental research, and is a frequently asked expert, advisor and speaker on the abovementioned topics. He has successfully been the co-applicant of several national scientific research programs on transitions in active living, underusage of sport facilities, local sport policy, inequality in sport participation and use of sport facilities, and on affordability of sport practices. Internationally, he is known as the founder of the expert group on sport facility databases and related research and his ongoing work on mapping of sport facilities together with EPAS/Council of Europe. Furthermore, he has been the President of the *European Association for Sociology of Sport* (EASS) and is currently co-editor of the *European Journal for Sport and Society* (EJSS).

Céline Guth

Senior Project Officer, Sport Division, Council of Europe

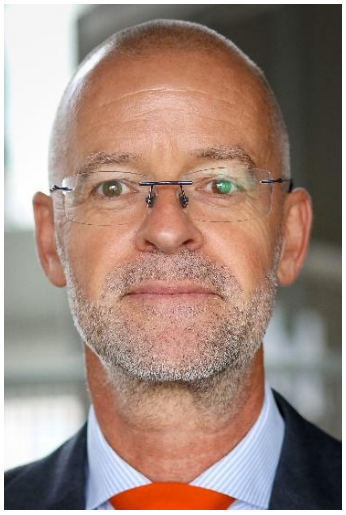


Céline Guth works as a Senior Project Officer at the Council of Europe's Sport Division, where she manages the European Sport Charter promotion and support and follow up visits. She is also Secretary of the EPAS Consultative Committee comprising 35 members of sports organisations, NGOs and international organisations. She also supervises the cooperation projects with the European Union on different topics like promotion of inclusion and combating discrimination against persons with disabilities and advancing women's health and equality in sport.

She brings over 15 years of experience within the Council of Europe, covering programme management, intergovernmental coordination, communication, and cooperation with civil society. Throughout her career, she has worked on a wide range of issues including youth participation, cultural heritage, and the rule of law. Beyond her role, she is also a certified coach, passionate about supporting people and organisations in finding clarity and balance in times of change.

Raymon Blondel

President, European Paralympic Committee



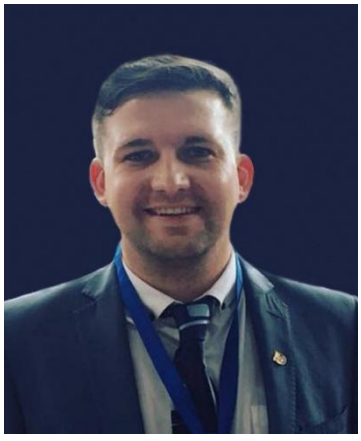
‘Everyone counts, everyone has the right to explore her or his life to the max! And therefore everyone has the fundamental right to be totally included. Inclusion is not an option - it is a necessity. A truly equitable society is one where every individual, regardless of ability, is given the opportunity to thrive, to contribute, and to be celebrated. I am convinced that Para sports hold a uniquely powerful role in leading this transformation. I believe in action over aspiration. I invest in visibility, grassroots participation, and governance that integrates rather than separates. Because when everyone can play, everyone belongs. And that is the future we must build - together.

In the realm of sports, Raymon Blondel has been a prominent figure in promoting inclusivity and excellence. Since 2021, he has been the President of the European Paralympic Committee (EPC), where he has been instrumental in advancing the Paralympic Movement across Europe. Under his leadership, the EPC has organized significant events, including the inaugural European Para Championships in Rotterdam in 2023, the European Para Youth Games in Istanbul in 2025 and is preparing for the European Para Championships in Geneva in 2027.

He served as President of the Netherlands Paralympic Committee from 2016 to 2024 and was Vice-President of the Netherlands Olympic Committee and Netherlands Sports Confederation (NOC*NSF) during the same period. Before 2016 he served as the President of the Dutch National Ski & Snowboard Federation and multiple other roles within organised sports.

Michael Rice

Operations Manager at AccessibAll



Michael is a highly experienced and passionate advocate of wider accessibility for disabled people within sport. He manages the day-to-day activities of the AccessibAll team and leads on media and communication strategies within the organisation. His roles also include stakeholder development and partnership building, management of the annual #TotalAccess campaign, and overseeing the expansion of audio-descriptive commentary (ADC) for partially sighted and blind people.

He has worked on numerous international tournaments and club competition Finals, ensuring the availability of accessible facilities and services for differently disabled supporters, and has provided training across the globe to advise on access improvements and effective communication with disabled people.

Tapani Laakso

Project Manager

University of Jyväskylä, Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences



Tapani Laakso, holds an MSc in Sport Sciences with a specialization in the Social Sciences of Sport. Since 2021, he has been responsible for the development, operation, and utilization of Finland's national sports facility database. His work focuses on collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that comprehensive and high-quality sports facility data is available, easy to produce, and effectively utilized. The system supports the accessibility and use of sports facilities while also providing evidence to improve the effectiveness and impact of sports infrastructure investments and planning.

Prior to his current role, Tapani worked in several positions related to the administration and management of municipal sport services. Since 2015, he has also served as a consultant, producing analyses and information on sports facility networks to support decision-making in municipalities across Finland. From 2018 to 2021, he worked for the City of Kotka, where he was responsible for the management of municipal sports facilities and organized sport and physical activity services.

Throughout his career, Tapani has been committed to promoting equal opportunities for people from all population groups to participate in health-enhancing physical activity. He is particularly interested in strengthening the evidence base for sport and physical activity policy, enabling data-driven decision-making and supporting the development of accessible, impactful, and sustainable sport environments.

Dr Adam Omorczyk

Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw



Adam Omorczyk, PhD, is a sociologist and lecturer in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw. His research brings together the sociology of sport and urban sociology. He is particularly interested in how the location, design and operation of sports facilities shape opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity. As a member of the research team for Poland's national WF z AWF programme, he studies the barriers that children and young people face when taking part in sport and physical activity, with a particular focus on sports infrastructure. He also examines how major sporting events, reshape the urban fabric, including public spaces, infrastructure and the ways residents use their cities. His research on re-heritagisation explores how social initiatives give new meaning to the neglected legacies of major sporting events and bring it back into use. He also studies the development of the Olympic movement in Iran during the first half of the twentieth century. He is a member of the Polish Olympic Academy and the Polish Sociological Association.

Gearóidín McTavish

Disability in Sport Lead, Sport Ireland



Gearóidín McTavish is the Director of the 'Disability in Sport' Team at Sport Ireland, a role she assumed in early 2025 to advance inclusive sport policies and participation opportunities for people with disabilities across the country. Her appointment aligns with Sport Ireland's Statement of Commitment and Action to Disability Inclusion in Sport, National Human Rights strategy for Disabled people and Autism innovation strategy which underlines leadership, accessibility, and capacity-building within the sector.

Former Outdoor Recreation Manager at Sport Ireland, following a five-year tenure as National Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager at the GAA in Croke Park. In that role, she led initiatives promoting inclusive participation in Gaelic Games family, including programs for individuals with disabilities, intercultural engagement, and LGBTQI+ inclusion. She was instrumental in expanding the GAA's "GAA for All" initiatives, such as Wheelchair Hurling and Camogie, and the "All Stars" inclusive club program globally.

McTavish's earlier career includes research and development roles with Special Olympics Ireland, Dublin Gaelic Football, the Irish Amateur Boxing Association and development programs in Human Rights and youth restorative practice. Her leadership and research in inclusive sport has been recognised with her inclusion in the Sport for Business "50 Women of Influence in Irish Sport" lists in both 2021, 2022 and 2025. Her career spans Sport scientist by training, policy practitioner by craft.

In her current role, McTavish is tasked with implementing Sport Ireland's disability inclusion strategy, collaborating with national governing bodies, local sports partnerships, and community stakeholders to foster a more accessible and equitable sporting environment for all. Gearóidín is a guest lecturer on Digital Transformations in Sports Ecosystems. Digital transformation in sport is not only systems and platforms, but also governance, culture, and inclusion. Gearóidín teaches from that lens of universal design, how strategy gets implemented across federations, clubs, and national bodies when the work touches real participation, real people, and real organisational politics.

Kairis Ulp

Sports Data and Information Systems Expert
Founding member and former Head of the Estonian Sports Register



Kairis Ulp is a sports data and information systems expert, a founding member and former Head of the Estonian Sports Register. She has extensive experience in European and Estonian sport policy, having served as a Policy Officer in the European Commission's Sport Unit (2020–2022) and as Chair of the Working Party on Sport during Estonia's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2017. She is also an Emeritus Honorary Member of the International University Sports Federation (FISU) and has contributed to several international expert groups and initiatives linking sport, education and healthy lifestyles.

Caroline van Lindert

Senior researcher, Mulier Institute



Caroline van Lindert (Msc) has worked as a senior researcher at the Mulier Institute in the Netherlands since 2007. Prior to 2007, Caroline was a lecturer on sports management at the Academy for Leisure and Events at the Breda University for Applied Sciences. The Mulier Institute is a non-profit, scientific sport-research institute in the Netherlands. As such, the Mulier Institute is engaged in fundamental, practice-focused and policy relevant social-scientific sport research. It monitors the developments within the Dutch sports sector. As a cultural anthropologist, Caroline is interested in the underlying preferences, motivations and obstacles that influence sport participation of underrepresented groups, in particular persons with disabilities and older adults, and how their inclusion in sport can be stimulated through policy measures and interventions. Caroline is seen as an expert in disability sport (research) in the Netherlands. At the Mulier Institute, Caroline coordinates large and small-scale research projects on different aspects of disability sport in the Netherlands, e.g. sport policy evaluation and monitoring studies, sport participation surveys, qualitative studies on inclusion & diversity in sport. Caroline has been a critical friend for policymakers and practitioners on disability sport at the national and local level for almost 20 years and is a valued expert in meetings on the subject. Caroline was the lead editor of the Palgrave Handbook of Disability Sport in Europe.

Stanislas Frossard

Head of the Sport Division and Executive Secretary of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), Council of Europe



Stanislas has served as Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) following its creation in 2007. Since 2025 he is also responsible for the Sport Conventions. During his tenure he has led key initiatives, co-ordinated the negotiation of numerous standards and overseen the drafting of the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (the "Macolin Convention") as well as the organisation of Ministerial Conferences. From 2021 to 2025 he chaired the Council of Europe's Staff Committee. He joined the Council in 2003, working on the Anti-Doping and Spectator Violence Conventions, and liaising with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), UNESCO and international sports federations, among others. Prior to this, he worked as an NGO leader, trainer and consultant in the youth, refugee and environmental sectors.