

# FEDERATION WALLONIA-BRUSSELS BELGIUM

## Country-specific roadmap for effective child safeguarding in sport policies



**Child safeguarding  
in sport**

**” Up your game,  
strengthen your squad!**

European Commission (Erasmus+) & Council of Europe (Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport)

Co-funded  
by the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented  
by the Council of Europe

# **FEDERATION WALLONIA-BRUSSELS BELGIUM**

## **Country-specific roadmap for effective child safeguarding in sport policies**

*This document was produced with  
the financial support of the European  
Union and the Council of Europe.*

*The views expressed herein can  
in no way be taken to reflect the  
official opinion of either party.*

The reproduction of extracts (up to  
500 words) is authorised, except for  
commercial purposes, as long as the  
integrity of the text is preserved, the  
excerpt is not used out of context, does  
not provide incomplete information  
or does not otherwise mislead the  
reader as to the nature, scope or  
content of the text. The source text  
must always be acknowledged as  
follows: “© Council of Europe, 2021”.

All other requests concerning the  
reproduction/translation of all or part  
of the document should be addressed  
to the Directorate of Communications,  
Council of Europe (F-67075 Strasbourg  
Cedex or [publishing@coe.int](mailto:publishing@coe.int)).

Documents and Publications  
Production Department  
(SPDP), Council of Europe

Photos: Regis Suhner  
Council of Europe  
Layout: Insécable, Strasbourg

This publication has not been  
copy-edited by the DPDP Editorial  
Unit to correct typographical  
and grammatical errors.

Council of Europe Publishing  
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex  
<http://book.coe.int>

© Council of Europe, May 2022

# Table of Contents

---

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: TOWARDS CHILD SAFEGUARDING IN SPORT - DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROADMAP</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: STATE OF PLAY AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3: STRATEGY FOR SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN IN SPORT</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: THE SETTING UP OF CSO ROLES IN SPORT</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>50</b>
Stakeholder mapping – prepared by the FWB project coordination	50
Desk Research Belgium	63



# INTRODUCTION

---

Sport is great for children. It brings joy, boosts self-esteem, teaches healthy habits and important life skills. Sport also creates a sense of belonging and supports children adhere to key values like fairness, teamwork, equality, discipline, inclusion, respect and integrity. Unfortunately, children can be at risk in a sports environment. Violence against children in sport, happens far too often in all countries, in all disciplines and from grassroots to elite sport.

Public authorities and sport organisations must overcome the narrative of denial, break down taboos and take concrete measures to protect children and prevent and respond to all forms of violence in sport. To achieve this, comprehensive child safeguarding policies and action plans must be urgently developed and efficiently implemented to keep all children<sup>1</sup> safe in sport.

“**Child Safeguarding in Sport**” (CSiS) is a European Union (EU) and Council of Europe (COE) joint project implemented from 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2022.<sup>2</sup> Its main aims are to guide and accompany partner countries towards developing effective child safeguarding policies to ensure safe, positive and empowering sport environments for all children. This is achieved through the provision of national tailor-made roadmaps for the development and implementation of child safeguarding policies. Central to the roadmap will be the establishment of the Child Safeguarding Officers (CSOs) who will be key players in the delivery of such policies.

Six countries are partners in the project: Austria, **Belgium**, Croatia, Israel, Norway and Portugal. All are supported by country expert agencies and good practice examples<sup>3</sup> from European countries, as well as expert consultants from Safe Sport International (SSI) – a non-governmental international organisation based in the United Kingdom.

In Belgium, due to its three-level federal structure<sup>4</sup>, the responsibility for sport falls to the three language-based Communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking). **The Sport Administration (ADEPS<sup>5</sup>) of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels (FWB)**, has been the key partner and project co-ordinator for FWB. Terra Moveo, an NGO, was identified as the consultancy to support the project. Terra Moveo provides non-formal education tools to facilitate group meeting and contacts networks and develops training courses, seminars and educational tools linked to youth support and to human rights education.

The project has the following main expected outcomes.

- ▶ Country-specific roadmaps for (more) effective child safeguarding in sport policies, including concrete steps for setting up CSO roles in sport.
- ▶ The development of competencies and skills amongst those who will have a role to play in implementing the roadmaps and setting up CSO roles.

---

1 In this document the term “children” is used to refer to those below the age of 18 years in line with the definition of who benefits from child safeguarding in sport.

2 Implementation of the CSiS project was initially planned for 1 March 2020 to 31 October 2021 but was extended to 30 June 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3 The examples of good practice for the project came from Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland, Sport Ireland, NSPCC-CPSU, Dutch NOC\*NSF, German Sport Youth).

4 Under the reform of the state of Belgium, the pyramid of the unitarian state made way for a more complex three-level structure. At the top level are the Federal State, the Communities and the Regions - all three are equal from a legal viewpoint but have powers and responsibilities in different fields. The Regions represent the three different territories from north to south - Flemish Region, Brussels-Capital Region and Walloon Region. In addition to the three Regions, the Federal State has three Communities. They are based on the three languages spoken in Belgium, the Flemish, French and German-speaking Communities. The French Community (also named Federation Wallonia-Brussels) exercises its powers in the Walloon provinces (except the German-speaking municipalities) and in Brussels. Among the powers associated with the Communities are sport, education, culture and youth support. For more information see the website. [https://www.belgium.be/en/about\\_belgium/government/federale\\_staat](https://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/government/federale_staat)

5 ADEPS is the Sport Administration of FWB (Administration générale du Sport). The acronym ADEPS derives from the former name of the sport administration (Administration De l'Éducation Physique et du Sport).

- ▶ Equipping all those who can play a role in ensuring a safe sport environment for all children (CSOs, decision-makers, coaches, sport leaders, trainers, etc.) with resources and examples of good practice available from the updated and extended Online Resource Centre<sup>6</sup>.
- ▶ Providing opportunities for peer-learning, capacity-building and fostering exchanges between those who have a role to play in combating and preventing violence towards children in the field of sport through the establishment of a Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport.

---

6 The Online Resource Centre was established in 2017 through the “Pro Safe Sport+” project which shares practices and resources for preventing sexual violence against children in sport. Within the CSiS project, the Online Resource Centre will be updated and extended to cover all forms of violence and abuse against children in sport.







# CHAPTER 1: TOWARDS CHILD SAFEGUARDING IN SPORT - DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROADMAP

---

## A collaborative approach

One of the main outcomes of the CSiS project is the development of country-specific roadmaps. The roadmaps have been designed in a collaborative way, involving all the stakeholders that (can) have a role in protecting victims and preventing children from being harmed and abused in sport. This includes, but is not limited to, public authorities responsible for sport and children's rights, sports organisations, child protection agencies, people with lived experience of abuse in sport, specialist NGOs working with victims and survivors of abuse.

In each partner country two entities were set up.

1. **A steering committee** led by the CSiS national coordinators (one of the key stakeholders).

- ▶ This is a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary forum that engaged with the COE, the national experts/consultants and international experts in the design of the roadmap. This entity should ideally become a permanent co-ordinating forum for each country's long-term commitment to the implementation and further strengthening of child safeguarding in sport.
- ▶ For Belgium, the original plan for the steering committee was to include representatives from all three Communities. However, during the project, internal changes within the Flemish Community led to its representatives' withdrawal from the steering committee. The possibility of future support from the International Centre for Ethics in Sport (ICES) remains open for consideration. The FWB continued the implementation of the project through its core group and a steering committee was established at a later stage to adopt and implement the roadmap. Safe Sport International (SSI) has recommended that all Communities consider the benefits of developing mechanisms for sharing their safeguarding developments with a view to ensuring that all children in Belgium have a consistent experience of safe, inclusive and enjoyable sport.
- ▶ The steering committee member organisations for the FWB are:
  - ADEPS – Sport Administration of the FWB Ministry<sup>7</sup> – project coordinator for FWB
  - YAPAKA<sup>8</sup> – Coordination unit for child abuse prevention – FWB Ministry
  - ONE – Office of Birth and Childhood – independent body under the Minister for Childhood in the FWB
  - LFH – French-speaking Hockey League
  - ACFF – Association of French-speaking Football Clubs

2. **A core group** made up of the key members of the steering committee more closely engaged in the drafting process of the roadmap and consulting regularly with the steering committee.

- ▶ For Belgium, the meetings were initially held with the French and German Communities until the FWB established its core group who led the process of drafting the roadmap. The Council of Europe project lead and SSI expert met with the FWB project co-ordinator and independent consultant after core group and other bilateral meetings with key stakeholders to discuss progress and provide support and guidance.

---

7 The FWB Ministry has nearly 6,000 officials. It is organised into six main entities, namely the General Secretariat and five general administrations: Sport, Education, Culture, Youth Support and Houses of Justice. The mission of the FWB Ministry is to implement government policy after approval by parliament.

8 YAPAKA is also the name to identify the cross-sectoral action plan for prevention of abuse in the FWB, and its vision.

- ▶ The core group member organisations for the FWB are:
  - ADEPS – Sport Administration of the FWB Ministry – project coordinator for FWB
  - YAPAKA – Coordination unit for child abuse prevention – FWB Ministry
  - Youth Support Administration – Directorate of Prevention – Province of Brabant Wallon – FWB Ministry
  - ONE – Office of Birth and Childhood – independent body under the Minister for Childhood in the FWB
  - LFH – French-speaking Hockey League
  - ACFF – Association of French-speaking Football Clubs (which sent content but could not participate in meetings)
  - Atmospheres (AMO<sup>9</sup>) and the Collectif des AMO de Bruxelles (youth support sector)

Alongside support from international and national experts on safe sport the partner countries benefited from the sharing of good practice examples from European states who had successfully implemented systems including CSOs<sup>10</sup>.

## The roadmap development methodology

The CSiS project designed a **methodology** that would accompany and support each partner country in the development of its roadmap. The methodology is an inclusive process that begins with desk research to undertake a needs and gaps assessment, followed by recommendations, mapping of stakeholders and discussions of expectations. These discussions then lead onto a self-assessment activity undertaken by national stakeholders of the current state of play, and identification of measures to be taken in relation to five of the nine building blocks included in the “International Safeguards for Children in Sport”<sup>11</sup>. Once the actions are identified they are integrated into the roadmap.

The “International Safeguards for Children in Sport” describe what organisations need to put in place if they are providing sports activities for children. These safeguards which have been tested with over 50 sport organisations around the world were adapted for the CSiS project to reflect the inclusion of public authorities and other stakeholders in the development of a national strategic framework that ensured a multi-agency approach to safeguarding children in and through sport.

The following **five priority building blocks** were considered particularly relevant for this project<sup>12</sup>:

- ▶ 1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport
- ▶ 2. Partnerships
- ▶ 3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people
- ▶ 4. Advice and support
- ▶ 5. Education and training framework

Although the project does not elaborate on them, partners were also encouraged to consider doing work regarding the additional building blocks:

- ▶ 6. Minimum operating standards/quality assurance frameworks<sup>13</sup>
- ▶ 7. Guidelines for ethics and behaviour
- ▶ 8. Safe recruitment system
- ▶ 9. Monitoring and evaluation

<sup>9</sup> The AMOs (Actions en Milieu Ouvert) are places where young people are welcomed, listened to, informed, guided, supported and accompanied. An AMO provides social and educational assistance that aims to help young people develop in their everyday lives.

<sup>10</sup> In the project a series of webinars organised by the Council of Europe showcased five successfully implemented systems of CSOs <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/webinars>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.sportanddev.org/en/toolkit/child-protection-and-safeguarding/international-safeguards-children-sport> <https://www.sportanddev.org/en/toolkit/child-protection-and-safeguarding/international-safeguards-children-sport>

<sup>12</sup> Blocks six to nine are suggested for future development consideration particularly as the first five building blocks already address some parts and form a basis for the construction of blocks seven to nine.

<sup>13</sup> Minimum operating standards/quality assurance frameworks are aimed at developing a mandatory national set of operating standards for safeguarding and protecting children in and through sport by designing child safeguarding guidelines/protocols for different sport environments.

The initial desk research on the needs and gaps assessment was conducted by SSI in collaboration with each partner country to identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in terms of developing a strategy and implementation plan for child safeguarding in sport.

Based on an analysis of the nine building blocks (with priority given to the top five listed above) the desk research identified the challenges of working across the three Communities of Belgium. Each of the Communities were at various stages in their safeguarding journey and operated with different legal, child protection and sport administration structures and systems. SSI made recommendations which were shared at the initial round table meeting and became the foundation for the development of the roadmap.

Following feedback from the first round table, the CSiS Secretariat and SSI expert created a standardised planning document “Stages of the journey towards the roadmap”. The aim of this working document was to assist each country construct a more detailed self-assessment of how it was going to develop its roadmap.

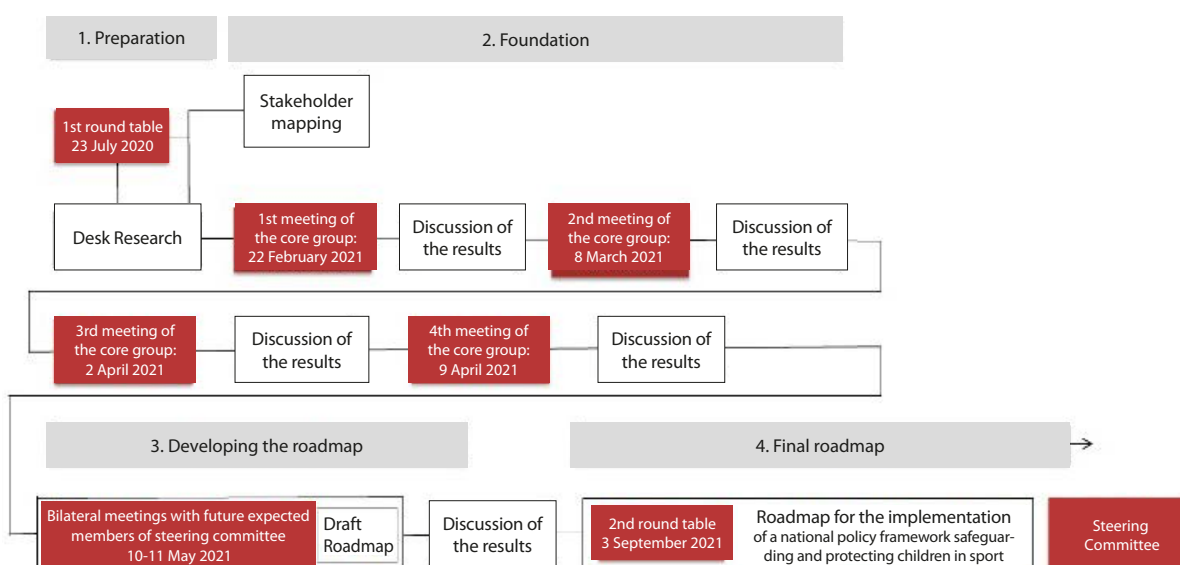
The “Stages of the journey towards the roadmap” contained the following:

- ▶ Summary of the desk research findings
- ▶ SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis
- ▶ Description of each building block with expectations and the recommendations from SSI
- ▶ Description of the steps to be completed which includes:
  - agreeing on values and principles
  - stakeholder mapping
  - setting the aims for each building block
  - agreeing who the key partners are
  - clarifying roles and responsibilities
  - setting priorities for the short, medium, and long term and
  - creating an action plan.

Using the information provided in the working document the first draft of the roadmap was prepared.

## Development of the roadmap: the process

The process for the development of the roadmap is shown in Chart 1 below.



**The first round table** for Belgium was held on 23 July 2020. The project was presented to stakeholders' representatives from the three Belgian Communities. (The national steering group was intended to be drawn from these stakeholders, see page 9 and below for explanation). The desk research findings were shared and discussed with participants who then began the process of identifying strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats as the next step to developing their country roadmap. The NOC\*NSF of the Netherlands<sup>14</sup> presented their CSO model which had been identified as a good practice.

The following outcomes were expected:

- ▶ clear understanding of the roadmap development methodology
- ▶ based on the results of the desk research, concrete ideas (standards, actions, measures, role of the stakeholders, etc.) for improving the efficiency of the child safeguarding in sport policy
- ▶ agreement on the model for the roadmap, its core values and scope, as well as the role and responsibilities of the steering committee/inter-sectoral group members
- ▶ agreement on the model for CSO roles to be further discussed, its scope in relevant organisations, the prerequisite knowledge and skills and support needs.

Following the first round table, the Flemish Community, which was the most advanced in terms of its approach to safeguarding in sport, decided to withdraw from the project. Although the initial plan had been to work with all three Communities to achieve a consistent approach to safeguarding all children across the country, it was agreed the project would continue and focus on the French-speaking Community through ADEPS, the FWB sport administration. The German-speaking Community, with the smallest population and more limited infrastructure and resource capability, would shadow the work.

The next step was the completion of the working document by the national coordinator and national consultant who worked closely with the core group and international consultant. The working document became the basis for drafting the roadmap.

Initial expectations were revised to accommodate the change of the focus to one community (the FWB) and the recommendations relating to a whole-country approach were not addressed in the French-speaking Community roadmap. However, it is important to note that the desk research (see Appendix) and the main findings (see Chapter 2) are reported in their entirety.

Four core group meetings took place to discuss the different objectives and expectations. The institutional complexity of the FWB was considered and influenced the richness of the exchanges which were produced. In addition to core group meetings, bilateral meetings were organised with the General Delegate of Children's Rights of the FWB, the External Affairs and Press Relations Manager of the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee and the Legal Adviser of AISF (sport federations' umbrella organisation).

**The second round table** for the FWB took place on 3 September 2021, when the draft roadmap was presented to key stakeholders. The discussion included the process of finalising the model for CSO roles, its scope in relevant organisations, the prerequisite knowledge and skills and support needs. Following discussions, the roadmap was finalised and adopted by the steering committee on 9 December 2021.

At the end of the process, national events were planned in each partner country to present and promote the roadmap. Support is provided by the Council of Europe to design and deliver a communication plan and awareness-raising video.

---

<sup>14</sup> The Nederlands Olympisch Comité\*Nederlandse Sport Federatie (NOC\*NSF) is the umbrella organisation for sports in the Netherlands. <https://www.nocnsf.nl/sportdeelname>







# CHAPTER 2: STATE OF PLAY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---

This section outlines the main findings of the desk research for Belgium and focuses on each of the five priority building blocks for the development of child safeguarding in sport policy.

In 2020, the SSI carried out desk research, SWOT analysis and specific recommendations addressed to all three Communities of Belgium. Following those recommendations and the expectations defined for each building block the FWB core group conducted a self-assessment of the current “state of play”.

## **The main finds from the SSI desk research (2020) are as follows:**

- ▶ Belgium has a highly complex sport system and structures with devolved sport and child protection systems. The three Communities only connect at National Olympic Committee (NOC) level.
- ▶ Policy on the protection of children in sport differs between the Communities.
- ▶ There is a need for a defined, holistic, child safeguarding standards framework (ideally linked to funding).
- ▶ Compared with many other countries, the Flemish and French-speaking Communities of Belgium are quite advanced<sup>15</sup> regarding the different actions taken over the last 10-15 years to protect children and young people in sport. No child safeguarding in sport policies and actions were noted for the German-speaking community.
- ▶ Common to both the FWB and Flanders is the existing cross-sectoral approach within the ministries/public authorities/other stakeholders - a Project Committee supported by a Steering Committee for the Prevention of Abuse in FWB, and the Flemish Youth and Children’s Rights 4-year Policy Plan in Flanders.
- ▶ The cross-sectoral approach can have many benefits, but there is a risk that sport’s role can be downplayed or drowned out when all sectors are covered.
- ▶ Both the FWB and Flanders have sport-specific decrees that have consequences for safeguarding, each with a slightly different approach. Both Communities have relatively new decrees which have either just been implemented or are going to be implemented soon.
- ▶ With respect to safeguarding, Flanders has the longest history, having participated in the development of the Panathlon Declaration on Ethics in Youth Sports in 2004. It has developed large and comprehensive curriculum of courses on safeguarding for different groups.
- ▶ The International Centre for Ethics in Sport (ICES) is an expert centre, which should also be valuable to draw upon in the future.
- ▶ Existing education and training can be built upon – preferably through the development of a skills framework for all roles in sport.
- ▶ A child-centred approach to minimum operating standards for all, will help navigate the highly complex Belgian political and sport systems. There is a Wallonia-Brussels vision and action plan for safeguarding children. The sport and safeguarding sectors largely operate independently, with limited collaboration.
- ▶ Child safeguarding and protection needs to be redefined within a child rights framework.
- ▶ CSO roles need to be part of a wider plan for safe sport.

The full version of the desk research is available in the appendix.

---

<sup>15</sup> Several elements explaining this “quite advanced” status will be presented in the rest of the document, see especially Chapter 2 - State of Play and Appendix.



## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths and Opportunities

- ▶ The strengths and opportunities in Belgium stem from the length of experience in two Communities applying ethics and integrity concepts in practice.
- ▶ There is a great deal of experience in terms of training programme design and delivery to prevent violence and safeguard children in sport which can be shared and further developed.
- ▶ Within sport, developing relationships with statutory agencies and specialist NGOs from a child rights perspective will be beneficial for building capacity.
- ▶ Stakeholders of the three Communities participating in the first round table were very engaged and committed. The leadership role of the NOC provided the opportunity for consistency of approach across the Communities to ensure all children receive equal protection.
- ▶ The devolved systems of governance support implementation at Community level because a model for inter-sectoral working already exists.
- ▶ The implementation process of the new decree on sport ethics provides an opportunity to position the steering committee as a key influencing body.

### Weaknesses and Threats

- ▶ The weaknesses and threats relate to gaps in the national approach to safeguarding and minimum operating standards to ensure that all children, in all Communities are equally safe in sport.
- ▶ Sport can get lost in the current inter-sectoral arrangements so there is a need to raise awareness of how sport can contribute to both safeguarding children and to their overall development.
- ▶ The specific risks in the sport context need to be articulated to statutory authorities and statutory systems need to work alongside sport when responding to cases.
- ▶ There is a clear need to develop a set of common definitions for the range of ethics and integrity roles and clarify how these definitions link to safeguarding to ensure coherence and consistency of approach.

---

## BUILDING BLOCK 1: NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

---

### Expectations

A policy framework is in place to ensure that all children and young people are safeguarded in and through sport.

This should include:

- ▶ agreed national values and principles based on a child rights approach
- ▶ a written policy document that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children and sets out expectations of key stakeholders
- ▶ a multi-stakeholder approach supported by government departments and organisations with devolved responsibility for child protection and for sport
- ▶ an agreed action plan which sets out clear roles and responsibilities for implementation. Safeguarding children is everyone's business and no agency or organisation can provide effective safeguards on their own.

A multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approach is essential for successful outcomes for children.

**NB:** please cross-reference with Building Block 2: Partnerships

The **recommendations** made to Belgium based on the desk research were as follows:

- ▶ There is a clear need for coherence in safeguarding policy from national level through all Communities. This will require close co-operation between the responsible Ministries for sport and child protection, stakeholder engagement/consultation and communication between the three Communities. We would recommend the development of a national policy framework for safeguarding children in sport and an action plan to realise this.
- ▶ In each Community, there should be a review of current legislation, government guidance, structures and systems to consider what needs to change or be built upon to realise the vision and mission of the roadmap to ensure every child is safeguarded in sport in Belgium. The roadmap should be validated by the respective Ministries in each Community.
- ▶ The existing ethical frameworks should be built upon and incorporated into over-arching guidance on safeguarding children (and ideally adults) in sport.
- ▶ Existing research (mainly from European studies and other countries with developed research structures) should inform policy and practice. The government should consider identifying gaps and supporting research into the prevalence and incidence of abuse in sport in Belgium to demonstrate the need for this work, to raise awareness in the sport community and identify priorities for action.

### Self-assessment by the FWB core group (State of play 2021)

There is a Wallonia-Brussels cross-sectoral vision and action plan in relation to the prevention of abuse and protection of children. The **“Project Committee for the prevention of abuse”**, co-ordinated by YAPAKA, works on the prevention of abuse and on the responses to concerns in co-operation with all sectors represented in the FWB Ministry. Since 2018, the sport administration (ADEPS) has been actively participating in this committee through the presence of a sport liaison officer. Many actions in the sensitisation and education/training fields have been undertaken and are ongoing.

There are **currently four applicable main decrees** to be considered in relation to the prevention of abuse and protection of children in sport which are set out below. It should be noted that there will be significant changes when the new decree on “sports ethics and establishing an Observatory of Ethics in Physical and Sports Activities” is enacted in 2022. This will strengthen the approach to child safeguarding in sport.

#### *Decree on assistance to child victims of abuse (2004)*

The purpose of this decree is to organise the protection of and assistance to child victims of abuse and to establish the principles of care in this sphere. The decree was developed with the two principles in mind.

1. A hierarchy of measures based on powerlessness to act, lack of competence, or absence of a framework, must be avoided.
2. Protection and care measures must be organised in a complementary, multidisciplinary manner, with the responsible involvement of all "generalist" or "specialist" professionals.

In this decree, requirements for professionals would incorporate the relevant roles in sport for those working with children and young people, even though sport roles are not specified. Four key articles of this decree are important when it comes to understanding the policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children:

**Article 1 § 4.** Situation of abuse: any situation of physical violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse or serious negligence that compromises the physical, psychological or emotional development of the child. An abusive attitude or behaviour may be intentional or not.

**Article 2.** At the request of the person in charge of a service, institution or association, the professional must at any time be able to produce an extract showing no convictions or committal orders for acts set out in various articles of the Criminal Code committed against a minor under the age of 16 or involving his or her participation.

**Article 3 § 1.** In view of his or her mission and capacity to act, the professional is obliged to provide assistance and protection to child victims of abuse or to children against whom such abuse is suspected. If the interests of the child so require, and within the limits of the professional's mission and capacity to act, assistance shall be given to his or her family or family environment. This assistance shall be aimed at preventing or ending the abuse.

**Article 3 § 2.** To organise this assistance, any person confronted with a situation of abuse or at risk of abuse may contact one of the following specific bodies or services for the purpose of being accompanied, guided or assisted in taking charge: the psycho-medical-social centre, the school health promotion service, the "SOS Enfants" team, the counsellor or any other competent specialist. Any co-operation must be carried out in a discreet manner and involve information essential only for the care of the child/children.

### ***Decree on various measures to promote ethics in sport, including the development of a code of ethics for sport and the recognition and funding of a sports ethics committee (2014)***

This decree has not been enforced except for Article 8. In Article 8 each recognised sport federation has designated an ethics officer in charge of issues relating to tolerance, respect, ethics and fair play, with the aim of identifying a Single Point of Contact or SPOC. The ethics officers have been in place since 2018 without any official mandate or role. Nevertheless, the sport administration has organised four meetings with them to promote the exchange of information on ethics and fair play, including safeguarding. The objective of dissemination down to club members has largely not been met and neither has facilitating the resolution of ethical problems and disputes.

One of the challenges for these ethical officers is the diversity of their mission and the fact this role is currently carried out by employees or volunteers with other important duties. There also appeared to be some hesitation as to the role given to them by the federations and sport administration. Some solutions to increase their effectiveness in dealing with the prevention of abuse could be found by drawing upon the good practices of other countries around ethics for sport.

### ***Decree on the organised sport movement (2019)***

**Article 8.** The organised sport movement is committed to respecting the physical, psychological and moral integrity of its members.

**Article 21 § 16.** The Government may recognise a sport federation...provided it undertakes to:

- a. set up a structure in charge of issues relating to tolerance, respect, ethics and sportsmanship and designate an ethics officer.
- b. set up a structure to support high-performance athletes in their dual careers and designate a dual career SPOC.

### ***New: Decree on "sports ethics and establishing an Observatory of Ethics in Physical and Sports Activities"***

Voted by the Parliament of the FWB on October 13, 2021, this decree will replace the 2014 decree (see above) and provide the FWB with structures and a legal framework aimed at making progress within the FWB sport sector on issues regarding ethics, fair play, deontology and good governance.

This decree identifies situations of abuse<sup>16</sup> as being part of ethics issues. Therefore, safeguarding is an ethics issue.

The decree defines **ethics officers<sup>17</sup> in sport federations** as persons with responsibility for the following issues and activities.

1. Relaying the issues addressed within the Ethics Network<sup>18</sup>.
2. Relaying requests for information from the Observatory of Ethics in Physical and Sports Activities (OEPSA).

<sup>16</sup> Any situation of physical violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse or serious negligence that compromises the physical, psychological or emotional development of the child; an abusive attitude or behaviour may be intentional or not.

<sup>17</sup> In current practice, there seems to be some hesitation as to the role to be given to them by the federations and by the sport administration (although the concept predates the draft of the new ethics decree, it has not really been implemented).

<sup>18</sup> The Ethics Network will be composed of the ethics officers of sport federations (as defined in Article 21 §16a of the Decree on the organised sport movement) and four representatives of the sport administration. Their mission will be to promote the exchange of information and best practices in the field of sports ethics between the organised sport movement and the Observatory of Ethics in Physical and Sports Activities (OEPSA) and to formulate proposals to the Sports Minister for actions aimed at the promotion and observance of sports ethics within the organised sport movement.

3. Ensuring the application of the Code of Ethics and its variations.
  - a. On the proposal of the OEPSA, the Government will adopt a new Code of Sports Ethics applicable to the organised sport movement. This Code will include the principles, values, rules and duties in terms of sports ethics applicable to the organised sport movement and to the wider "Physical and sports activities" sector<sup>19</sup>.
  - b. The organised sport movement will incorporate the Code of Ethics and its variations into its respective regulations. It will take the necessary measures to ensure its promotion among and by its clubs, members and sport and administrative staff.
  - c. The organised sport movement will take all necessary measures to ensure that its administrative and sport staff, including those in its clubs, meet the legal requirements to exercise their functions.
4. Relaying the OEPSA's recommendations on sports ethics.

## BUILDING BLOCK 2: PARTNERSHIPS

### Expectations

Action is taken by key stakeholders at national level (public authorities responsible for sport, major sport organisation, children's rights agencies, etc.) to develop partnerships to ensure children are safeguarded in and through sport; to promote and influence safeguarding developments.

This should specifically include that:

- ▶ inter-sectoral sport safeguarding partnership arrangements are in place at national strategic level and at relevant regional/provincial/local levels.
- ▶ partnership arrangements cover distribution of safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
- ▶ partnership and funding arrangements contain safeguarding criteria.
- ▶ partnerships provide written guidance to their stakeholders on safeguarding expectations.

One **recommendation** made to Belgium based on the desk research was as follows:

- ▶ The steering committee should become the long-term strategic group to drive forward the agenda for child safeguarding in sport. This group needs to formalise its terms of reference based on the best hopes (vision), values, principles, etc. which were discussed at the first round table.

### Self-assessment by the FWB core group (State of play 2021)

A strong partnership exists between YAPAKA and ADEPS, which has led to various achievements including:

- ▶ designation of a sport liaison officer within the Project Committee for the prevention of abuse
- ▶ dissemination of the poster "What to do in case of concerns about a situation of child abuse?"
- ▶ information, awareness-raising and training for sports federations' ethics officers
- ▶ training for ADEPS sport centre instructors
- ▶ training for local sport centre managers
- ▶ training for high-level sports training centre management teams
- ▶ distribution of books from the "Temps d'Arrêt" collection, including a guide to preventing abuse.

In terms of institutional partnerships, the emerging partnership between the sport administration and youth support administration within the Ministry of the FWB should be highlighted.

<sup>19</sup> Any form of sport and/or physical activity which, whatever the setting, has as its objective the expression or improvement of physical health and mental condition, the development of social relations, with or without competition.

The sports federations point out the need to create new partnerships with the child protection sector, especially the youth support sector. They underline the existence of partnerships with other institutions of the FWB and with other French-speaking sports federations or their Flemish counterparts. They feel the current role and mandate of the ethics officers lack clarity of definition and are of no added value to meet the needs of the emerging partnership.

Anchoring partnerships locally needs to be fully developed. This includes the enforcement of all children and young people's right to free time and rest, enjoyed in a safe and quality environment (Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child). Sports clubs can join the ATL scheme (Leisure Time Activity coordination at municipality level) without the need for specific approval (a prerogative provided for by the ATL decree), and benefit from its advantages. This is one way to address the issue of prevention of child and youth abuse at the local level, one of the missions of the ATL.

---

## **BUILDING BLOCK 3: SYSTEM AND STRUCTURE FOR RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

---

### **Expectations**

Case response/management structure and system with a step-by-step procedure help to ensure a prompt response to concerns about a child's safety or well-being.

This should specifically include:

- ▶ A national guidance document about the systems and procedures that need to be in place in sports bodies to safeguard and protect children where there are concerns about a child. It should include and cover:
  - role and responsibilities of statutory agencies and sports bodies and how they should work together where there are concerns about a child
  - how allegations against staff or volunteers (particularly where the adult is in a position of trust) will be managed between statutory and sport bodies.
- ▶ Minimum operating standards for case management systems which clarify expectations for sports bodies (this may be covered by national guidance which applies to all organisations, including sport).
- ▶ Sports bodies which receive public funding should have clear written procedures and step-by-step guidance in place about what action to take if there are concerns about a child's well-being or protection. The guidance should be available to all stakeholders and provided in formats which are easily accessible.
- ▶ That there is a focal point for reporting concerns within each organisation as well as signposting to sources of external help, advice (this may be the national CSO but could also be a component of an existing role which deals with the organisations response to integrity complaints) and whistleblowing.
- ▶ That children and young people are provided with information about what will happen if they or their parents report their concerns.
- ▶ Processes that are fair and transparent. Arrangements are in place to provide support to children, parents, volunteers and staff during and following an incident, reported concern/allegation and the end of disciplinary/statutory agency processes.

The **recommendations** made to Belgium based on the desk research were as follows:

- ▶ At national level there should be a coherent policy framework for how each Community can implement consistent principles to inform case response and case management structures and systems for

responding to concerns about children who may be at risk of significant harm, addressing the needs of children in sport.

- ▶ Within sports federations at all relevant levels there should be coherent guidelines on how concerns should be reported and responded to, including concerns about poor practice, or bullying which may not meet the threshold for statutory agency intervention.
- ▶ The role and responsibilities of the CSO in case management at different levels needs to be addressed.

### Self-assessment by the FWB core group (State of play 2021)

The poster “What to do if you are concerned about child abuse”<sup>20</sup> was produced by YAPAKA in co-operation with all sectors represented in the FWB. It highlights both key advice and points of contact and it has been widely distributed in all sectors (10,000 units in the sport sector) as an awareness-raising tool.

Currently, when situations of abuse arise, they can be reported to statutory agencies such as SOS Enfants and/or the SAJ<sup>21</sup>, but also to local (specialised) services (CPMS<sup>22</sup>, Mental Health Centre, Family Planning, etc.), which most citizens have already heard of and/or been in contact with, thus making them easier to access, and to hotline services (103 for children, 107 for adults).

At the sport federations’ level, the Association of French-speaking Football Clubs (ACFF) provides a contact person and reporting form on its website<sup>23</sup>. It is currently promoting the implementation of Integrity Contact Points (ICP) in each of its clubs as the contact person for child protection at club level. In 2020, the French-speaking Hockey League (LFH) introduced the notion of “deviant behaviour” into its regulations with the support of the Belgian Court of Arbitration for Sport (CBAS), which deals with these situations. The reporting form<sup>24</sup> was created in June 2020 but has not yet been used. While this is due partly to the lack of competition and activity because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it also reflects the difficulties of disseminating information, resources and procedures to clubs and federation members. To overcome this barrier an awareness-raising campaign<sup>25</sup> is being prepared on breaches of the code of ethical conduct.

## BUILDING BLOCK 4: ADVICE AND SUPPORT

### Expectations

Arrangements are in place for children and young people to be provided with advice and support, including information on where to go for help if they are experiencing abuse. Arrangements need to also be in place for adults and people with responsibility for safeguarding in sport when seeking advice and support.

This should specifically include that:

- ▶ Children and young people are provided with information in the relevant media about their rights and where to go for help if they have worries.
- ▶ Designated officer functions and roles at appropriate levels from ministry through the sport system are in place – including CSO role(s) in sports bodies.
- ▶ Access to support and advice is available for people with responsibilities for safeguarding children in a broad sense (adults, coaches, sport leaders, etc.).
- ▶ Access to support and advice is available for people in CSO roles.

NB: Education and training are addressed in Building Block 5.

20 [https://www.yapaka.be/sites/yapaka.be/files/texte/maltraitance-web\\_2.pdf](https://www.yapaka.be/sites/yapaka.be/files/texte/maltraitance-web_2.pdf)

21 SAJ stands for Service d'Aide à la Jeunesse (Youth support service).

22 CPMS stands for Psycho-Medical-Social Centres whose services are available to all pupils of the FWB.

23 <https://www.acff.be/clubs/projets-sociaux/protection-des-enfants>

24 <https://hockey.be/fr/violence-harcelements-et-comportements-deviants/formulaire-de-signalement/>

25 <https://hockey.be/fr/violence-harcelements-et-comportements-deviants/>



The **recommendations** made to Belgium based on the desk research were as follows:

- ▶ In relevant Ministries, there should be a requirement to include responsibility for child safeguarding in their portfolio and appoint one or more responsible staff members whose job description requires them to be a focal point for child safeguarding in sport.
- ▶ Sport umbrella bodies should have a designated focal point to lead work on safeguarding children in sport and should receive relevant training to undertake this role. People with responsibility for making future funding decisions based on safeguarding criteria would also need training to assess whether the evidence presented by sports meets the criteria.
- ▶ Advice and support to children and adults reporting current and non-recent abuse as children needs to be clearly signposted. This should include information about a range of options from the CSO roles in sport to independent NGOs and local authority child protection services. Children need to be provided with information about their rights and what to do if they are worried.
- ▶ There will be a benefit to sharing the respective CSO models which are in place and building on the best elements of these across all three Communities.

### Self-assessment by the FWB core group (State of play 2021)

Current counselling and support arrangements in the FWB are built around the foundations of abuse prevention<sup>26</sup> which seeks to strengthen the capacity of adults to be aware and to act. It also seeks to avoid placing any responsibility for prevention on children while ensuring that their rights are guaranteed. The principle is to communicate with children about their rights and about child abuse in a way that does not frighten them and helps them know what they can do if their rights are not respected.

Information should be provided to children in an age/development appropriate way and should be managed by professionals and/or parents. Resources exist to work with children on abuse prevention from the age of ten years (including the booklet “Une vie de Chien”<sup>27</sup> produced by YAPAKA).

It is very important to be able to create spaces for children where they can speak out and express in complete confidence the difficulties they encounter. Setting up these spaces in sport structures could be inspired by mechanisms developed by the scouting movement or by other youth organisations with Youth Councils which are used for programming activities, making decisions, listening to and representing young people and their concerns. It is worth noting that some youth organisations use games and various tools for sharing experiences and evaluations which could easily transfer to the sport sector.

It will be important to design new tools, adapt existing ones and accompany their dissemination with discussion, debate and an evaluation of effectiveness. Trusted adults in the places where children participate in activities are best placed to create those spaces for discussion and exchange experiences.

Other initiatives are also under way, such as the PARCS project (*Pour des Activités Récréatives dans un Cadre Sûr – For Recreational Activities in a Safe Environment*)<sup>28</sup> which addresses the idea of a child protection policy within leisure and sports organisations using a child rights approach. It will be necessary however to co-ordinate with the various stakeholders to ensure a congruent, consistent approach.

The methodology of non-formal education and all the experiences linked to informal moments in sport, for example during training sessions, the journey to competitions and between matches at tournaments provides opportunities for exploring issues related to abuse of children and young people in sports activities. This approach requires skills and knowledge such as being able to work with the emotional load carried by the children and young people.

---

26 Promote a policy based on the general interest; recognise the complexity of each situation; support benevolence when meeting with families; promote a policy of assistance based on solidarity; strengthen the position of adults; avoid putting the burden of prevention on children; a prevention policy in conjunction with professionals; create intersectorality; zero risk does not exist.

27 <https://www.yapaka.be/enfants>

28 Further information available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/org-details/999999999/project/856898/program/31076817/details>

## BUILDING BLOCK 5: EDUCATION AND TRAINING FRAMEWORK

### Expectations

Everyone with responsibilities for children and young people in sport has access to information, education, and training to help them to fulfil their roles in safeguarding children in and through sport including coaches, sport leaders, managers and volunteers. Those with specialist roles, such as CSOs, will need a higher level of training.

This should include:

- ▶ Agreed core competencies from which to develop curricula for training courses for all roles.
- ▶ Training courses that are available to all who need them through approved deliverers.
- ▶ Training providers (organisations and trainers) that meet the core competencies.
- ▶ That a specific training framework for CSOs is in place.

The **recommendations** made to Belgium based on the desk research were as follows:

- ▶ Ideally there should be a Community-based framework for education and training in sport setting out minimum standards for the range of different roles. Safeguarding children (and adults) should be included as a core component for the vast majority of (if not all) roles but with content tailored to the requirements of the role. This may be a longer-term aim given the priority to create the CSO role which will lead the work going forward.
- ▶ Before undertaking CSO roles people should have undertaken a basic safeguarding awareness course. There is significant opportunity for adapting existing foundation training currently being delivered by different stakeholders. A seamless pathway needs to be created so learning about different ethics and integrity issues/projects is seen a part of a coherent approach. Decisions need to be made about the feasibility and desirability of combining the CSO role with existing roles from other programmes.
- ▶ The steering committee needs to decide on the role descriptions for people with designated safeguarding officer responsibilities from ministerial to club level and prioritise which need training first. Inter-federal/Community level roles will need greater knowledge and different skills and competencies than those at grass roots level. When the role descriptions are complete, core person specifications describing a candidate's required knowledge, skills, qualifications, experience and competencies can be developed. Recruitment should be a thorough process involving interviews, qualification verification and background checks.
- ▶ The steering committee needs to make decisions based on exploring the good practice examples from other countries.
- ▶ Further work needs to be done to create the CSO training delivery model for all three Communities, including mapping the size of demand, potential providers, and the resources (financial and human) which are required. This needs to be put into an implementation plan with SMART objectives. We would recommend a pilot of each level (or review of existing programmes) which is prioritised to review and refine the content based on stakeholder feedback.

### Self-assessment from the FWB core group (State of play 2021)

Several training offers are in place, and ADEPS has been working on these with the systematic support of YAPAKA.

The first training course developed for the sport sector and conducted by YAPAKA was given to ethics officers of sports federations during an afternoon session in 2018.

Since then, **around 300 sportspersons have been trained by YAPAKA and their feedback is very positive. The training is clearly answering a need** and is described below.



- One-day training for sport activities leaders from the 17 ADEPS sport centres provided during a full day in 2018 and 2019.
- This training was recently transformed into a 2.5-hour session by videoconference which has been delivered to 80 ADEPS sport activity leaders, 50 local sport centres (out of 109 who are being subsidised by the FWB), to the supervisors of the High-Performance Training Centres and to the ethics officers of the sport federations.
- In addition, YAPAKA offers an online training course (MOOC)<sup>29</sup> designed so it can be followed either individually or collectively. It is adapted for the sport sector and based on concrete content, situation scenarios, questions and multiple-choice exercises.

---

29 <https://www.yapaka.be/mooc>





# CHAPTER 3: STRATEGY FOR SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN IN SPORT

---

This section sets out the strategy for safeguarding children in sport which was adopted by the FWB steering committee on 9 December 2021 and includes a presentation of its values and principles.

The strategy intends to address the key elements, expectations and recommendations identified in each building block and the current state of play (presented in Chapter 2) and detailed body of work completed by the FWB core group.

It is an action-oriented strategy with two-level objectives for each building block:

- ▶ strategic objectives - what we want to achieve
- ▶ operational objectives - key steps to achieve strategic objectives

In the strategy, each building block includes milestones defined as a sequence of actions on a timeframe (2021-2024) needed to fulfil the objectives, the stakeholders to be involved and potential obstacles to implementation.

The strategy includes six strategic objectives (SOs), fifteen operational objectives (OOs) and thirty-one milestones. These are presented in a table for each building block and in a diagram showing the sequence of milestones.

## VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The strategy is based on key values and principles identified by the core group, which considers them to be transversal to the various elements of the roadmap, to the dynamics of the working group and of the project. The first core group meeting started with a discussion about these values and principles, enabling members to get to know each other and establish a common base upon which to build.

These values operate at different levels and in different directions among sports leaders, children and other professionals. The values are not isolated from each other, a thread exists between them. In addition, when the values are combined, they can induce other values to be adopted.

Five values emerged as paramount for the development of the project:

- ▶ Empathy
- ▶ Confidence
- ▶ Partnership
- ▶ Responsibility
- ▶ Commitment

Six other values were put forward and discussed among the members of the core group:

- ▶ Health
- ▶ Justice
- ▶ Equality
- ▶ Open mind
- ▶ Dignity
- ▶ Fun

More details about the values and principles can be found at the end of this chapter.

## BUILDING BLOCK 1: NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

Safeguarding children can only be effectively achieved by a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach with ministries, child protection agencies and sport organisations collaborating with all key stakeholders such as expert NGOs, affected persons, parents and young people themselves. At a strategic level there is a need for a policy framework which brings key stakeholders together.

The four applicable decrees considered in relation to the prevention of abuse and protection of children in sport and the existing Wallonia-Brussels cross-sectoral vision and action plan on the prevention of abuse provide the foundation for the objectives and milestones outlined below which focuses on ways to strengthen the current policy framework.

### Key objectives and milestones

SO1 - Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen the safeguarding of children in sport in the FWB and in Belgium		
Operational objectives	Milestones	Timeframe
OO1. Set up the first Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) within the FWB's sport administration (ADEPS).	1. Raise awareness with a presentation of the results from the CASES <sup>30</sup> project.	November 2021
	2. Confirmation of the need for CSOs within the sport sector.	2nd quarter 2022
	3. A first full-time ADEPS CSO is hired and integrated into the ethics network.	4th quarter 2022
	4. Communication and dissemination of information on the functions and roles of CSOs for sport.	1st quarter 2023
	5. Evaluation process of the first ADEPS CSO.	1st quarter 2023
OO2. Set up several CSOs within the sport sector <sup>31</sup> .	6. The long-term vision: - one CSO in each of the 7 ADEPS Centres for Sport Advice <sup>32</sup> and in each sport federation, - a framework for safeguarding adults in sport and - a co-ordination mechanism between the three Communities of Belgium.	by end 2024

A first step for strengthening child safeguarding in sport in the FWB and Belgium will be to establish as a pilot project the first CSO within the FWB sport administration, before setting up CSOs in other organisations.

As ADEPS received several reports of abuse and violence towards children (psychological and sexual), both peer to peer and by coaches, including one concern of intrafamilial abuse, the need for CSOs (or Single Points of Contact<sup>33</sup>) within the sport sector, available for any user in any sport setting, emerged as a priority. The data collected within the CASES project presented to key stakeholders in November 2021, provided further insight

30 CASES is an Erasmus+ Sport project aimed at delivering a prevalence study into child exploitation and abuse in sport in six EU countries including Belgium. The results of the report for the FWB carried out by the University of Antwerp, were presented in November 2021 to key stakeholders to raise awareness about the situation of abuse and violence against children in sport settings.

31 For the purpose of this roadmap the sport sector includes not only sport federations and their clubs, but also all structures offering sport activities e.g. youth centres and neighbourhood centres, regardless of their recognition by sport federations or ministerial bodies.

32 The Centres for Sport Advice are true "One Stop Shops" offering information, advice and support to any user in any sport setting and are in constant contact with sports federations, sports clubs, local (integrated) sports centres and municipal administrations.

33 The SPOC could be a person or a structure. In their already long journey of child safeguarding in sport, public authorities and sport organisations in several countries (Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Finland and Germany) have identified the same need and have established a network of resource persons in charge of child protection in sport.

into the situation of abuse and violence against children in sport settings in the FWB. In practice, the need for CSOs should be further consolidated into ADEPS' priorities through the following steps:

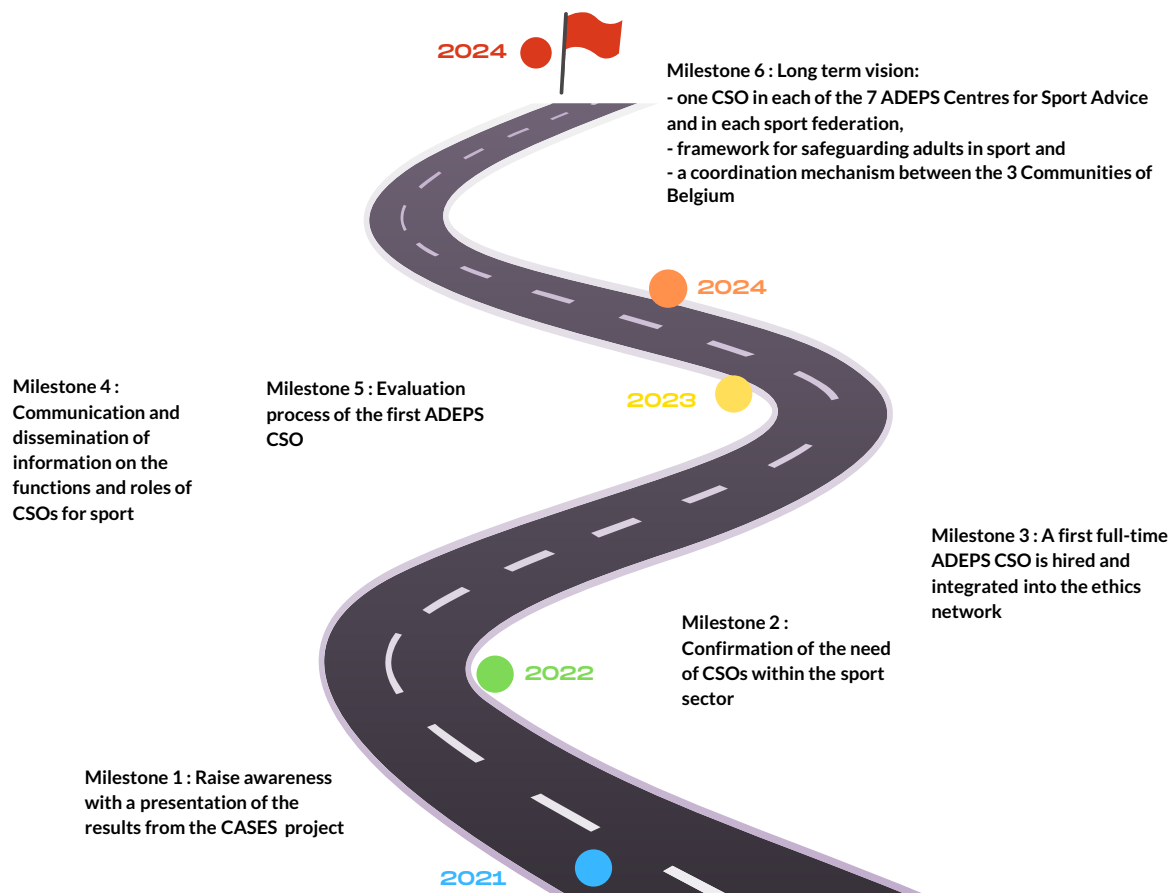
- a. Presentation of this roadmap to the sport administration and cabinet of the Minister responsible for sport.
- b. Lobbying for financial and human resources to be invested in the pilot project.
- c. Decision and approval by the Minister responsible for sport and ADEPS.

The first full-time CSO should be hired and located within the FWB's sport administration (ADEPS). Special attention should be given to how the function is named to avoid any misunderstanding. The preparation of the job description should involve relevant experts, while the hiring process should be completed by ADEPS Human Resources. The CSO, once appointed should be integrated into the Ethics Network recently established by the Decree on Sport Ethics (2021).

As a next step, information about the functions and roles of CSOs in sport should be disseminated to the general population and the sport audience. In addition, as the first CSO in ADEPS is a pilot project, an evaluation process should be carried out after the appointment is made to identify any lessons learned and where improvements can be made in the recruitment and on-boarding process.

Following the pilot project in ADEPS and as a part of the long-term vision, CSOs should be hired in all seven ADEPS Centres for Sport Advice and in each sport federation. Additionally, a framework for safeguarding adults in sport will be developed, as well as a co-ordination mechanism among the three Communities of Belgium (such as a co-operation agreement, an interministerial conference, or some other mechanism).

## Milestones for Strategic Objective 1



## Stakeholders to be involved and their role and responsibilities

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities in the achievement of the goals
Sports Minister cabinet, with the support of the sport administration	<p>1. Proactive follow-up of the execution process of the new Decree on “sports ethics and establishing an Observatory of Ethics in Physical and Sports Activities”.</p> <p>2. As the new Decree refers to the legal requirements for the exercise of functions of administrative and sport staff, including those in clubs, make sure that those legal requirements exist, and are known and met by the organised sport movement.</p>
Sport administration (ADEPS)	<p>As soon as the new Decree is in force, activate the Ethics Network, whose mission will be to promote the exchange of information and best practices in the field of sports ethics between the organised sports movement and the OEPSA.</p> <p>Agree to launch the pilot experiment of a first CSO and get the support of the Sports Minister and a budget for human resources. Integrate the first ADEPS CSO as one of the four representatives of the sport administration in the Ethics Network</p>
ONE <sup>34</sup>	Support the preparation of a job description. ONE already has 11 CSOs <sup>35</sup> in its sector. Their experiences will be a clear added value for the CSO in sport (example of a job description <sup>36</sup> - available in French).
YAPAKA	Once the pilot project is launched, give support to the sport administration to make sure the first ADEPS CSO is identified as a SPOC for the whole sport sector, with communication and dissemination to the general population and more specifically to a wide sport audience.
University of Antwerp	The Minister responsible for sport of the FWB has asked the sport administration to conduct research about violence in sport. As a result, a “Study into the prevalence of interpersonal violence against children in sport in the Federation Wallonia-Brussels” has been subcontracted by the sport administration of the FWB to the University of Antwerp, enabling the FWB to be in the European project CASES <sup>37</sup> . ADEPS anticipated that the prevalence would be significantly higher than the reported cases. This gap has been confirmed by the study which will help estimate the additional resources needed to strengthen safeguarding capacities. The Belgian and the FWB results were presented by the University of Antwerp in November 2021.

### Potential obstacles

Misunderstanding the scope of CSOs risks limiting the acceptance of these roles as specific only to the organised sports movement, potentially ignoring other sport and physical activity settings. In addition, asking the sports federations to take sole responsibility for child safeguarding without external and independent support would be difficult to achieve. These obstacles should be avoided thanks to the new decree on sports ethics and the establishment of an Observatory of Ethics in Physical and Sports Activities, and the forthcoming Code of Sports Ethics.

## BUILDING BLOCK 2: PARTNERSHIPS

It is essential for children and young people that the adults in their community – both individuals and organisations – work together to ensure they are safeguarded and protected. To consistently achieve for every child, organisations need to ensure a collaborative approach from national or federation level to local level through

<sup>34</sup> Public organisation in charge of all questions related to childhood, childhood policies, the protection of mother and child, the medical and social support of the (future) mother and child, activities of children outside their family environment and support for parenthood.

<sup>35</sup> Identified as « Référénts maltraitance » (in French)

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.one.be/fileadmin/user\\_upload/siteone/Emploi/2020/Referent\\_maltraitance\\_Hainaut.docx.pdf](https://www.one.be/fileadmin/user_upload/siteone/Emploi/2020/Referent_maltraitance_Hainaut.docx.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/603014-EPP-1-2018-1-UK-SPO-SCP>



clearly established partnerships where everyone understands their role, responsibilities and contribution. Multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working is the basis for sound safeguarding systems. Bringing together sport, statutory agencies and NGOs with relevant expertise is a relatively new dynamic for safeguarding in sport in Belgium and meeting the aims of this building block is a particularly critical step for Belgium.

## Key objectives and milestones

SO2 - Strategic Objective 2: Further develop and expand existing cross-sectoral partnerships to agree on a common vision of how to address the transversal challenges of safeguarding children and young people, with the support of the Project Committee for the Prevention of Abuse		
Operational objectives	Milestones	Timeframe
<p>OO3. Empower the future CSOs in sport as facilitators for the implementation of this common vision.</p> <p>OO4. Ensure coherence between the different current projects related to child protection.</p> <p>OO5. Set up a system to share information within a collaborative and transversal framework and facilitate decision-making.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invest in the existing partnership between ADEPS and YAPAKA (developing the training strategy).</li> <li>2. Create a partnership between ONE-ADEPS-YAPAKA (preparation of the CSOs' job description, starting with the first ADEPS CSO).</li> <li>3. Invest in the newly created partnership between Youth Support administration and ADEPS.</li> <li>4. Create a partnership between ATL<sup>38</sup> and the sport sector (to promote the connection of local sport clubs/settings to ATL).</li> </ol>	in 2022

Stronger cross-sectoral partnerships are needed to address the transversal challenges of safeguarding children and young people in sport. These partnerships already exist in some capacity but need further development (with the support of the Project Committee for the Prevention of Abuse) to be able to fully implement this common vision.

The future CSOs in sport will have a key role as facilitators in this process making it necessary to empower them through additional investments in existing partnerships (especially concerning the preparation of the CSOs job description and development of the training strategy).

When it comes to the development of the training strategy, additional investment should be made to the existing partnership between ADEPS and YAPAKA, focusing on the following specific aspects:

- ▶ To define the role and mission of the CSOs taking into consideration the recent concerns and/or situations of abuse reported by sport stakeholders to ADEPS and the need for a SPOC.
- ▶ To develop the training and pedagogical frameworks for the future CSOs.
- ▶ To facilitate the connection of the first CSO with the existing safeguarding network.

Furthermore, a partnership between ONE, ADEPS and YAPAKA should be created, with the task of preparing a job description for the CSOs (starting with the job description for the first ADEPS CSO). This process will also enable ONE to share its knowledge and experience of the CSOs' job description and will facilitate the development of a relationship between sport CSOs and SOS Enfants teams.

While developing and expanding existing cross-sectoral partnerships, it is necessary to ensure coherence between the current projects related to child protection. A congruent working framework for the various stakeholders will help pool their resources and skills and avoid repetition and dysfunction<sup>39</sup>. It will be necessary to integrate all projects by maintaining coherence between the various approaches and tolerance of different ambitions. This coherence should be found in the training programmes, communication campaigns and tools which seek to limit confusion among actors in the sport world and the general population.

<sup>38</sup> ATL - Leisure Time Activity coordination at municipality level.

<sup>39</sup> As an example: ADEPS, YAPAKA and the General Delegate for Child's Rights are involved in the CSiS project and in the Steering Committee of the PARCS project which aims to implement a child protection policy within organisations offering sports and leisure activities. This allows a congruent working framework in both projects.

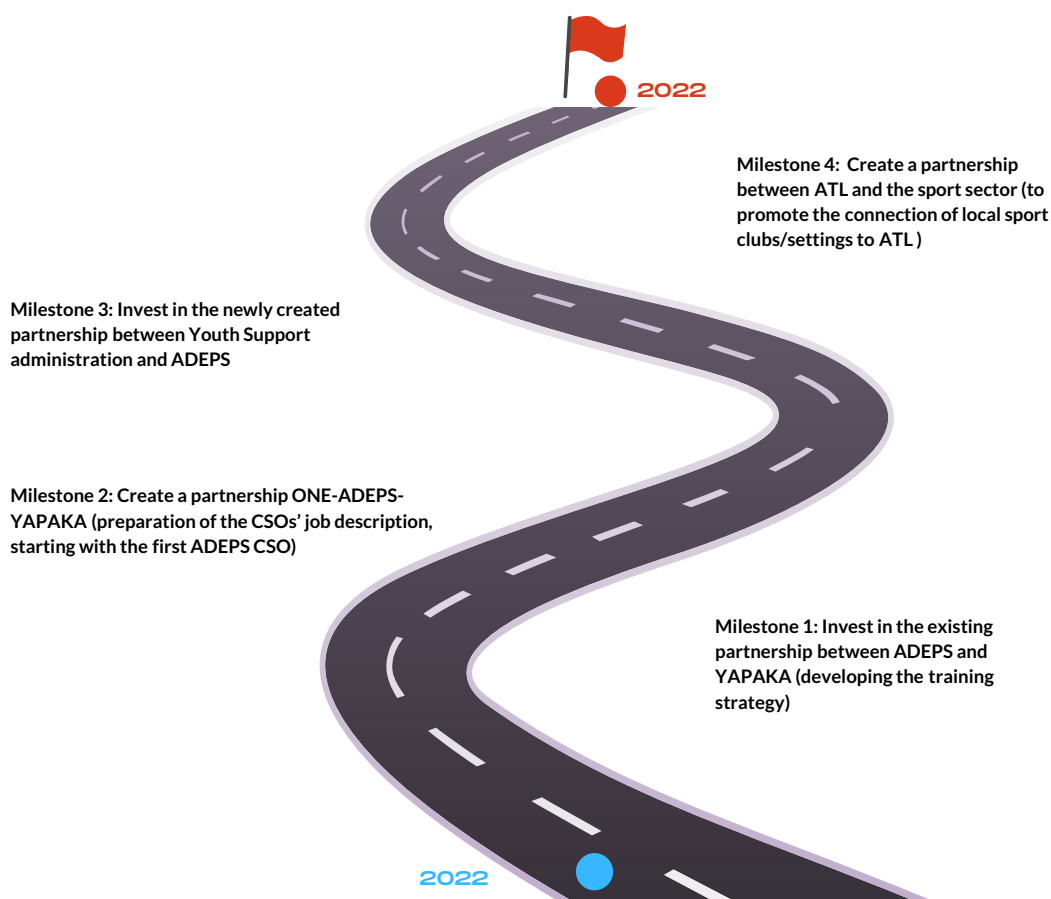


In this regard, an important step will be the investment in the newly created partnership between Youth Support administration and ADEPS which will:

- ▶ Connect the first CSO with the Prevention College, a new body for the support and effective development of the prevention policy. The Prevention College acts as an interface between the Prevention Councils and the Prevention Services in the districts, administrative and political bodies at the level of the FWB.
- ▶ To make sure sport actors are aware of the specific needs of young people under the protection of youth assistance services.

Finally, it is necessary to set up a system to share information within a collaborative and transversal framework and facilitate decision- making. To achieve this, one of the important steps involves creating a partnership between ATL and the sport sector and promoting the connection of local sport clubs/settings to ATL - the Leisure Time Activity coordination<sup>40</sup> at municipality level. Any sport setting should be encouraged to get involved in ATL as it may help them increase the quality of their activities and their reputation. Sports federations could firmly encourage their clubs to contact the ATL co-ordinator of their municipality to participate in the coordination meetings.

## Milestones for Strategic Objective 2



<sup>40</sup> ATL is supported by ONE, and this partnership could be supported by the work of the Observatoire de l'Enfance, de la Jeunesse et de l'Aide à la Jeunesse (Observatory of Children, Youth and Youth Support), whose recent conclusions in an evaluative study show the lack of representativeness of sports structures in ATL.

## Stakeholders to be involved and their role and responsibilities

Partnerships to be built/improved	Role and responsibilities in the achievement of the goals
ADEPS/Youth Support administration (YSA)	ADEPS' role and main responsibility is to set up all the necessary elements for implementing the CSO roles in the FWB sport context. YSA will support this process by sharing its expertise on the specific needs of young people under the protection of youth assistance services.
ADEPS/YAPAKA	Develop the training and pedagogical frameworks for the future CSOs.
ADEPS/YAPAKA with the support of ONE	To define the role and missions of the CSOs, based on the cases of abuse and/or reported concerns managed jointly. ONE could support the preparation of the sport CSO job description and could also help sport CSOs to connect with SOS Enfants teams.
ADEPS/ATL with the support of ONE	The role of this partnership would be to encourage local sports clubs joining ATL networks at the municipal level.
ADEPS/Youth Forum	Disseminating the information campaign.

### Potential obstacles

Partnerships that mobilise a multitude of actors tend to be stronger and deliver a variety of effective actions. However, the horizontal nature of child abuse prevention/protection can create problems of ownership and limit the effectiveness of collaborations and partnerships.

With most partners operating on a just-in-time basis, developing new collaborations and therefore new actions could be problematic when no additional financial and human resources are available.

To help decide on additional financial and human resources the results of ongoing studies about the prevalence of interpersonal violence against children in sport in the FWB (CASES), the social return on investment in sport for all in the FWB (SROI) and the economic impact of sport in Belgium (SSA) could be used for evidence-based policymaking when it becomes available (2021-2022).

## BUILDING BLOCK 3: SYSTEM AND STRUCTURE FOR RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

When concerns about a child's safety or well-being arise, it is essential these are managed in a child-centred way with a documented process for responding that everyone understands. Sports bodies need to have step-by-step procedures which are operated within structures and systems which complement those of statutory agencies. They need to be able to respond to concerns in sport as well as concerns about children in their communities. Concerns often start with early indicators that something is wrong, and sports bodies need to be responsive – particularly where the concern may not meet the threshold for statutory agency action.

Sports bodies and statutory agencies need to understand and work with each other's roles and responsibilities. While most interventions by the statutory agencies tend to focus on cases of higher thresholds of abuse, sports bodies still retain responsibilities for ensuring that individuals are safe to work with children and to have procedures and systems for responding to concerns.

For example, if a criminal justice case fails in respect of an individual working with children in sport, the sport body still needs to consider what action it needs to take in terms of potential breaches of its codes of ethics and conduct. Procedures and case management systems need to be reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect current issues such as online abuse, peer abuse and so on. Everyone involved needs access to advice and support.

## Key objectives and milestones

SO3 - Strategic Objective 3: Develop the system and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people in sport, based on the new services within the existing safeguarding network		
Operational objectives	Milestones	Timeframe
OO6. Ensure the application of the new Code of Ethics and its variations.	1. The new Code of Ethics and its variations are proposed by the OEPSA, in coordination with the Ethics Network.	3rd quarter 2022
	2. The new Code of Ethics is approved by the Government.	4th quarter 2022
OO7. Develop coherent guidelines for sports federations on how concerns should be reported, supported and responded to and clarify the role and responsibilities of the CSO in cases of reported abuse/concern, in line with SSI recommendations.	3. The Ethics Network has consulted key stakeholders about necessary actions to prepare coherent guidelines for sport federations and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the CSO.	4th quarter 2022
	4. The Ethics Network has agreed on the approach for developing appropriate protocols and/or policies <sup>41</sup> for safeguarding children.	1st quarter 2023
	5. The Ethics Network has made a proposal for the approval by the Minister responsible for sport, and coherent protocols/guidelines are ready for implementation.	4th quarter 2023
OO8. Identify and promote sport CSOs as a new function providing new services in the already existing network.	6. YAPAKA will clarify the way networks of professionals responsible for child safeguarding operate taking into account the new function of CSO.	1st quarter 2023
	7. ADEPS, YAPAKA and sport federations will devise effective communication strategies to clearly identify the existing contact persons and services, including the CSO.	1st quarter 2023
	8. A new communication campaign is launched.	1st quarter 2023

Although different statutory agencies deal with situations of abuse and there are local specialised services and hotlines available to citizens, there is a need to develop the system and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people in sport, based on the new services within the existing safeguarding network.

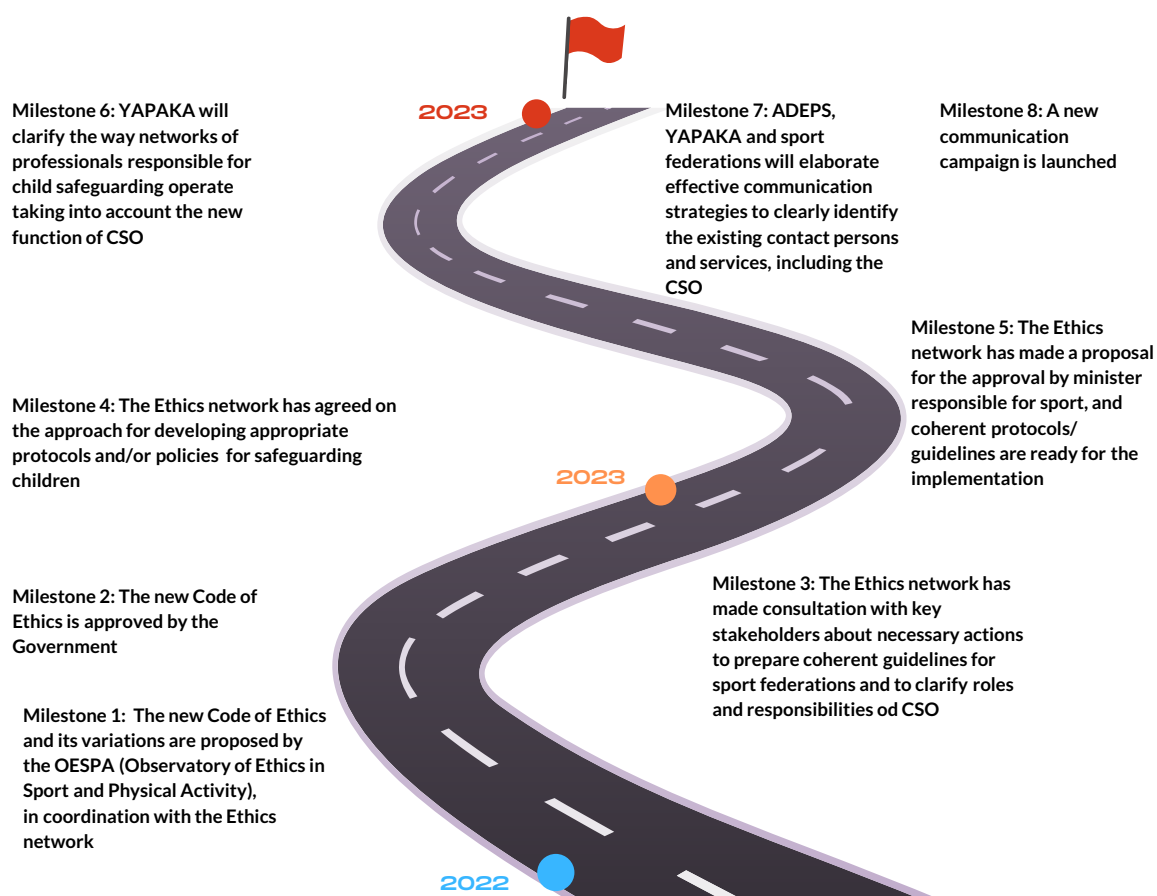
Following the Decree on Sports Ethics (2021), the Observatory of Ethics in Physical and Sports Activities, in co-operation with the Ethics Network, will prepare a new Code of Ethics and its variations to be adopted by the Government. The Code will set out the principles, values, rules and ethical duties applicable to all those involved in sport and physical activity.

Furthermore, following the recommendations by SSI, within sport federations at all relevant levels, there should be coherent guidelines on how concerns should be reported, supported and responded to (including concerns about poor practice, or bullying which may not meet the threshold for statutory agency intervention). The role and responsibilities of the CSO in case of abuse situations/reported concerns need to be clarified. In this regard, the Ethics Network will consult with key stakeholders (YAPAKA, Project Committee for the prevention of abuse, the first ADEPS CSO, prevention colleges and councils, the commission for the prevention of abuse within the youth support sector) about the necessary actions to prepare coherent guidelines for sport federations and to clarify roles and responsibilities of CSOs. Once the approach for developing appropriate protocols and/or policies (linked to the New Code of Ethics) for safeguarding children is agreed upon, the Ethics Network will make a proposal for coherent protocols/guidelines for approval by Minister responsible for sport.

Finally, CSOs need to be identified as a new function, providing new services in the already existing safeguarding network. This function should be actively promoted. YAPAKA will clarify the way networks of professionals responsible for child safeguarding operate taking into account the new function of CSO. ADEPS, YAPAKA and sport federations will devise effective communication strategies to identify the existing contact persons and services, including the CSO, and launch a new communication campaign.

<sup>41</sup> This could be guidance on the “duty of assistance and protection” and/or good practice guidance supported by codes of ethics and conduct. Those protocols will need to include the importance of psychological and emotional support in the event of concerns/cases of abuse.

## Milestones for Strategic Objective 3



## Stakeholders to be involved and their role and responsibilities

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities in the achievement of the goals
Sport federations	<p>As stated in the Decree on the organised sport movement (2019), sport federations should set up a structure in charge of issues relating to tolerance, respect, ethics and sportsmanship and designate a relay person (the ethics officer).</p> <p>Once the new Code of Ethics is adopted by the Government, and as envisaged by the new Decree on sport ethics, sport federations will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Incorporate the new Code of Ethics and its variations into its various regulations and take the necessary measures to ensure its promotion to and by its clubs, members, sport and administrative staff.</li> <li>- Take all necessary measures to ensure that its administrative and sport staff, including those in its clubs, meet the legal requirements for the exercise of their functions.</li> </ul>
Ethics Network	<p>With the support of experts:</p> <p>Develop coherent guidelines on how concerns should be reported, supported and responded to.</p> <p>Clarify the role and responsibilities of the CSO in the event of abuse situations/ reported concerns.</p>

## Potential obstacles

The poster "What to do if you are concerned about child abuse" was widely distributed in 2020 and is intended to continue being shared and disseminated using new channels on an ongoing basis.

The turnover of ethics officers, and the almost continuous flow of information often daily, may lead to a real risk of dilution and loss of information. Sport federations experience difficulties in reaching and raising awareness among both their salaried and volunteer staff on ethical issues and a solution is to reflect on and build a communication and dissemination strategy aimed at ensuring that information is regularly conveyed (for instance, on a yearly basis) and that the resources created are put forward and shared as widely as possible.

Statutory agencies and other (specialised) prevention and protection services may find it difficult to deal with some of the specific problems in the sports context, such as the prevalent problem of psychological abuse. The first ADEPS CSO will be responsible for addressing this obstacle.

In terms of other potential obstacles, the main fears are based on the lack of human and financial resources for the structural and sustainable installation of institutional and organisational developments in the prevention and management of child and youth abuse in sport.

As stated above in the other Building Blocks, it is important that decisions on additional financial and human resources required are informed by the results of ongoing studies about the incidence of interpersonal violence against children in sport in the FWB, the social return on investment in sport for all in the FWB and the economic impact of sport in Belgium. The research findings could provide useful evidence which could be used for policymaking once available (2021-2022).

## BUILDING BLOCK 4: ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Responding to concerns about children, particularly where an alleged perpetrator is known in the sport organisation can be extremely stressful for all affected persons. Advice for children and their parents or guardians about their rights and about what they should expect from the organisation should be provided in appropriate formats upon joining the organisation. Many victims of abuse report that they did not understand their rights or know what was considered acceptable behaviour in the sport context. If a child or parent raises concerns these must be treated seriously and information must be provided to them on sources of help and support, inside and outside of sport, and the process that will be followed when the concern is assessed and/or investigated. For bystanders such as coaches, volunteers and other affected persons, advice and support must also be signposted. Where a person is accused of abusing and causing harm to a child they must also be provided with information about their rights and the concerns must be addressed in a fair and transparent process. People with specific roles in responding to and managing cases need access to professional support and supervision, particularly CSOs operating at higher levels (e.g., national or event safeguarding officers).

### Key objectives and milestones

SO4 - Strategic Objective 4: Promote available services and develop appropriate tools enabling children and young people to share their situation/concerns		
Operational objectives	Milestones	Timeframe
OO9. Raise awareness among children and young people of available services and tools.	1. Communication campaign and web platform of the PARCS project <sup>42</sup> dedicated to children.	4th quarter 2021
OO10. Adapt the communication to different target groups.	2. Launch new ways and tools to inform children and young people about their rights and who to turn to if they have concerns.	1st quarter 2023

<sup>42</sup> The PARCS project – managed by the NGO DEI Belgium where YAPAKA and the General Delegate for Children's Rights are the main partners – focuses on child safeguarding and protection within a child rights approach. Because it considers this project an added value to other actions and projects (including CSiS), ADEPS has decided to support the project by spreading the communication campaign and actively participating in the construction of the tools - podcasts, web platform and toolkit ([www.tupeuxledire.be](http://www.tupeuxledire.be); [www.chartedelabiensveillance.be](http://www.chartedelabiensveillance.be)).

SO5 - Strategic objective 5: Strengthen the position of adults responsible for children in sport		
Operational objectives	Milestones	Timeframe
OO11. Ensure that people in charge of children in sport have a clear idea of the network around them, by raising awareness and providing information.	3. Launch PARCS communication campaign and web platform dedicated to adults.	4th quarter 2021
	4. Launch PARCS toolkit.	1st quarter 2022
	5. Inform sport clubs about ATL coordination in their municipality.	3rd quarter 2022
	6. Communication campaign on the first ADEPS CSO.	1st quarter 2023
OO12. Provide support and advice for people in CSO roles at club/local organisation level.	7. Link CSOs at club/local level with the ATL co-ordinators and the safeguarding sector, including the ethics officers of sport federations.	3rd quarter 2022
	8. Link CSOs at club/local level with the ADEPS CSO or Federation CSO.	1st quarter 2023

To ensure access to information, advice and support for children and young people encountering safeguarding concerns, and adults with different roles and responsibilities for child safeguarding in sport, the FWB will focus on the promotion of available services and the development of appropriate tools enabling them to share their situation/concerns.

It is necessary to raise awareness among children and young people of available services and tools, including the 103 hotline service, the [maintenantjenparle.be](https://www.maintenantjenparle.be) chat and the tools created by YAPAKA (distributed in schools, in order to enable children to identify their emotions, invite them to turn to trusted adults when they are uncomfortable in a situation and to support them to speak up). The communication campaign will be developed, as well as the web platform of the PARCS project.

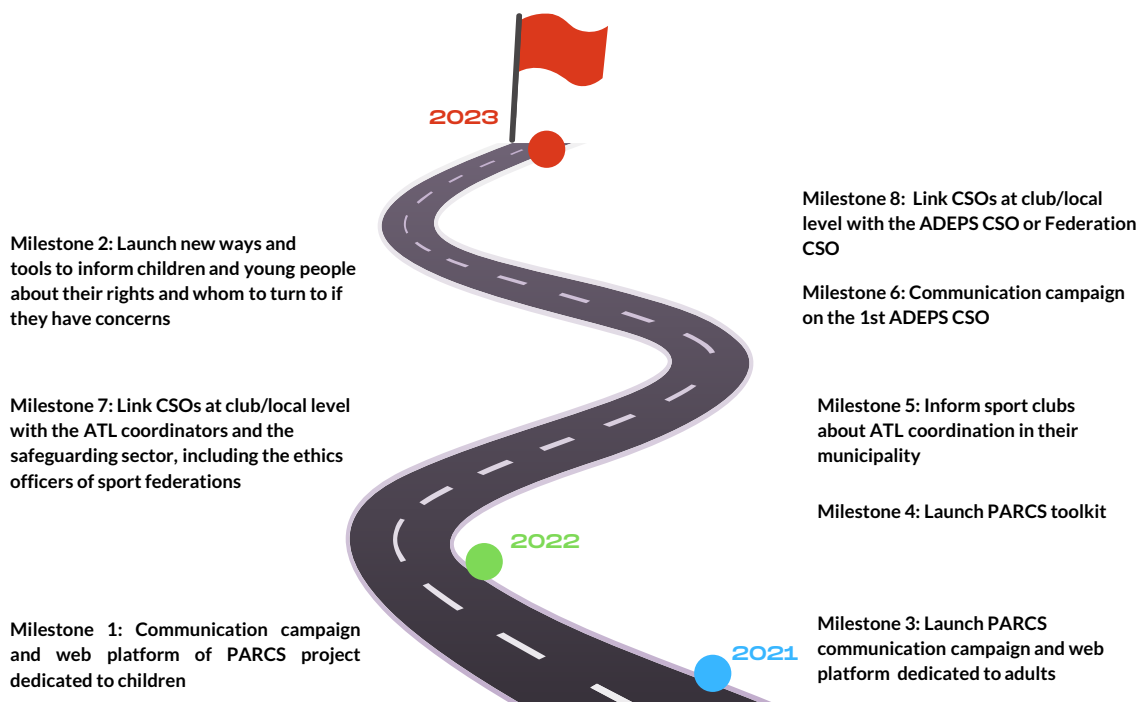
Furthermore, communication should be adapted to different target groups to reach children and young people with messages and media that are age appropriate. Some existing good practice examples will be used for guidance. For example, the French-speaking Hockey League has launched an awareness-raising campaign via video clips produced in the form of cartoons to expose situations of deviant behaviour that go beyond child abuse. New ways and tools to inform children about their rights and who to turn to if they have concerns will be prepared and launched.

Concurrently, activities are planned to ensure that adults responsible for children in sport, including coaches, sport centre managers and parents have a clear idea of the networks available.

One element of the communication campaign and web platform launched within the PARCS project is dedicated to informing adults. A toolkit has also been developed as a practical guide to support the establishment and implementation of child protection policies in sport and leisure organisations.

Dissemination of information to sport clubs about ATL co-ordination in their municipality will follow, as well as a communication campaign about the first ADEPS CSO. To provide support and advice for people in CSO roles at the club or local organisations level, it will be necessary to link them with the ATL co-ordinators and the safeguarding sector, including the ethics officers, the ADEPS CSO and the sport federation CSO.

## Milestones for Strategic Objectives 4 and 5



## Stakeholders to be involved and their role and responsibilities

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities in the achievement of the goals
YAPAKA, with the support of the Project Committee for the prevention of abuse (meeting twice a month).	New ways and tools for children to be provided with information about their rights and who to turn to if they have a concern, adapting them for the sport context
YAPAKA, with the support of the Project Committee for the prevention of abuse (meeting twice a month).	Information and awareness-raising about the network around adults, including the sport CSO role.
ADEPS, with the support of YAPAKA.	Use the tools prepared by YAPAKA to raise awareness among children and teenagers by providing them with information about their rights and where to go for help if they have worries/concerns while participating in sport activities (whatever the setting). ADEPS, the sport administration of the FWB also organises sport activities for children during school time which involves more than 1000 schools and around 83,000 children who participate in one-day and/or one-week sport activities/camps during school time. Approximately 25,000 children participate in week-long sport camps during school holidays. These provide interesting opportunities to invest in delivering advice and support.
DEI, with the support of DGDE, YAPAKA and ADEPS.	Launch the tools and resources prepared by the PARCS project including communication campaign, web platform and toolkit.

### Potential obstacles

The frequent turnover of sports instructors, the limited time available to devote to this topic and the fact they are mostly volunteers can all constitute obstacles to the successful implementation of this strategy.



A solution is the promotion of educational alliances among adults around the child which could be between the sport organisation, specifically the members of the team supervising the child within the sports organisation (discussing this subject as a team means that knowledge and experience do not disappear completely with the departure of a key person) and the child's parents/carers/guardians.

One of the best ways to foster prevention is for adults to create a climate of trust enabling children to speak out. It is important that children feel there is trust between their parents and their supervisors and this can only happen if parents are properly informed of what happens in these different settings. Educational alliances<sup>43</sup> need to be put in place and communication between the parties involving a range of different media (for example, meetings, email, social media, web-based information, etc.) is important.

Mutual trust and an awareness of the role each adult plays in relation to the other educators in the life of each child requires clarity. The educational alliance within the sports organisation means taking the time to reflect on what is being put in place, how it fits within each sports structure, what should be put in place in the future to improve the alliance and be prepared for challenges that arise. Sport instructors must be encouraged to involve and inform the parents of their child's progress raising any concerns. This can be achieved through very simple proposals such as sport clubs asking parents to referee matches or to become fair-play parents to help reduce the problems of violence on and off the pitch.

## BUILDING BLOCK 5: EDUCATION AND TRAINING FRAMEWORK

The development of a system for safeguarding education and training, at national or at the Community level is essential and needs resource prioritisation.

Everyone in sport has a role to play – officials, administrators, coaches, etc. – whether they are volunteers or paid staff. Everyone needs to be familiar with their organisation's policies and procedures and know what to do if a concern is raised with them.

People with significant contact with children need safeguarding training to be a core part of their professional training. Those with specialist roles, such as CSOs, need a higher level of training to ensure they have the right skills, knowledge and competencies to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Senior administrators, executive and non-executive board members also need to understand their responsibilities as safeguarding is a key part of good governance and overall ethics and integrity management.

### Key objectives and milestones

SO6 - Strategic Objective 6: Set up a more advanced safeguarding training strategy for the sport sector		
Operational objectives	Milestones	Timeframe
OO13. Extend the existing offer of safeguarding training for the sport sector.	1. To map the existing resources and the needs to cover.	2nd quarter of 2022
OO14. Provide people in charge of children with safeguarding knowledge, expertise and tools according to their role and responsibilities.	2. To define the different pedagogical contents based on the principle to include the prevention/protection from abuse at different levels in the basic and/or ongoing training processes.	4th quarter of 2022
OO15. Motivate sport stakeholders to undertake training.	3. Promote the use of existing online tools.	3rd quarter of 2022
	4. Create a good balance between self-training resources and training offer with instructor (online and offline).	4th quarter of 2022
	5. To define the incentives such as the quality label, the conditions for access and its advantages, and the benefits for the organisations would be part of this approach.	2nd quarter of 2023

<sup>43</sup> An education alliance allows all adults taking care of a child in different environments (school, sport club, family, etc.) to have a space to exchange any relevant information and concern. <https://www.yapaka.be/texte/texte-la-confiance-entre-adultes-autour-de-lenfant>

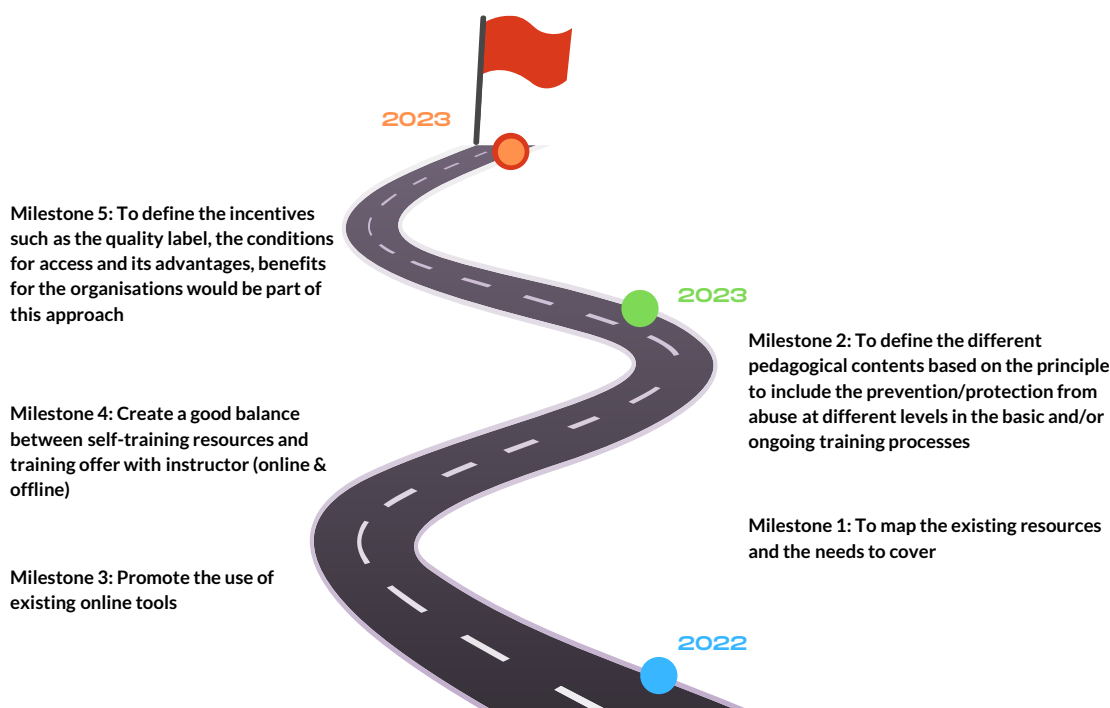


Some safeguarding training programmes and resources for the sport sector exist in the FWB, but it is necessary to set up a more advanced strategy to extend the current training offer. To do so, mapping of existing resources and an assessment of training needs, including the number of people to be trained should be carried out. Based on this evaluation, and on lessons learned from the existing training offer, YAPAKA should be able to seek out and identify operators, training partners and professionals in the field of safeguarding.

All people in charge of children in any sport setting (coaches/instructors, supervisors, CSOs, ethics officers, sport managers, etc.) should have the necessary child safeguarding knowledge, resources and tools. The pedagogical content should include both the prevention of and protection from harassment and abuse and should be adapted to the different functions and roles and to different levels, from basic to advanced.

All stakeholders should be encouraged to undertake safeguarding training, through a balanced offer of self-training resources and training sessions with instructors, both online and offline. The existing online tools, such as the YAPAKA online self-training course should be promoted. Incentives could also be defined, such as a quality label, to increase motivation but also to recognise and reward organisations that are committed to child safeguarding.

### Milestones for Strategic Objective 6



### Stakeholders to be involved and their role and responsibilities

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities in the achievement of the goals
YAPAKA, with the support of ADEPS	To provide educational content adapted to different sports professionals (employees and volunteers) according to their role and responsibilities.  To provide a training framework for CSOs that recognises the realities on the ground and the specificities of sport activities. There needs to be role descriptions in place and person specifications which set out the skills, knowledge and competencies on which the training should be based.
YAPAKA	To seek out new training operators to build up a sufficient pool to disseminate the training elements to as many people as possible.
ADEPS	Integrate safeguarding training into its digital training platform for sport instructors

AISF, with the support of ADEPS and YAPAKA	Integrate safeguarding training into the curriculum of sport managers (federation, club and sport centres).
ADEPS, YAPAKA, AISF, DEI	Meet with ICES (International Centre Ethics in Sport) to explore training content and tools.

### Potential obstacles

One major difficulty is the number of people to be trained and consequently the human and financial resources needed to achieve this aim. To help decide on additional financial and human resources, the results of ongoing studies could be used to inform evidence-based policy, once they are available.

As the general principle is to develop a culture, a common vision of how to plan and manage prevention and protection from abuse and response to concerns, the training will have to reach all the actors across the sports world from sports instructors and directors of federations to managers of sports centres and clubs.

The lack of motivation from some clubs and the absence of a certification requirement for coaching are also potential obstacles that need to be addressed. Indeed, as training is not currently compulsory for sport actors, it is conceivable that specific training on child safeguarding will not be a priority. Politicians and the sport movement must lead on positioning the importance of these issues. Parallels with the scouting movement could add value to building a narrative that advocates for training on safeguarding. Financial incentives could play a role, as well as targeted communications making the training programme more attractive particularly if the format could be digital.

Another obstacle is motivating the various actors to undertake training influenced by a lack of support from their organisations. Also, the inefficiency in disseminating existing resources, some of which need to be reworked and adapted to the different age groups. Although some significant developments can be noted, for example, the French-speaking Hockey League which has seen a significant increase in the number of trained coaches, the issue of bringing about real change in attitudes and culture and contributing to the professionalisation of sports coaching remains a challenge. Certain practical obstacles are currently being overcome by the continuous development of online training which reduces time commitments which previously included travel. Attempts to enhance the value of these sport leaders' functions, whether symbolic and/or financial could contribute to increased recognition of their role. The "quality-marking" of clubs could be another option to encourage the integration of a child protection approach into their various processes provided sufficient incentives are offered to adhere to the quality-marking process.

## VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGY

The core group identified the question of values and principles as being transversal to the various key elements of the roadmap as well as to the dynamics of the working group and the construction of the project. As a result, the first core group meeting started with discussion about the values and principles which enabled members to get to know each other and to establish a common base upon which to build.

To carry out the values and principles question, identified by the FWB core group, to guide the policy framework, its aims and expected achievements, we used the BB Games Legacy (<https://bb-games.eu/>) adapted for online work – an open-source tool, funded under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships (KA2) call for projects.

These values operate at different levels, and in different directions among sports leaders, children and other professionals. A thread exists between these values which can induce other values to be adopted.

Five values emerged as paramount for the development of the project. Below is the core group's definition and explanation of the values.

**EMPATHY** - Sports federations need to be empathetic to problems that may arise for young athletes in the event of breaches of codes of conduct and ethics. The main idea behind the sport specific CSO roles is having someone available to talk to when anyone has a concern. Listening is more important than empathy, but it is also not enough to just listen. Listening requires a certain amount of practice and ethics. Listening is a primary value that must be exercised within a defined framework.

**CONFIDENCE** - This value is translated into the working framework as a **climate of confidence to be established within the club or any other sport setting** between the children and the professionals in charge of them, among the professionals themselves and between the professionals and the children's parents/guardians. Children must be able to have total confidence in their supervisors, coaches and trainers and must sense this confidence is shared among professionals and their parents. The implementation of the project will require mutual trust among adults in charge of the children's education and supervision. Field practice of child safeguarding indicates that confidence is enhanced when the CSO can build a relationship with the people running the activity and/or with the parents. When facing concerns and/or dealing with abuse, confidence will help sport supervisors, coaches and trainers to identify the need to request support from other professionals.

**PARTNERSHIP** - The key word in situations of abuse is "don't stay alone", so partnerships and networks must be developed. It is essential for sport federations to create partnerships with institutions that can support/advise and, when needed, take the lead on case management. Clarity and mutual trust should be at the centre of any effective partnership. When roles and responsibilities are not clear there is a risk of expectations not being met. **Children need all the adults around them to work together to safeguard them.**

**RESPONSIBILITY** - Everyone, whether it be at the level of the supervisors, club leaders, federations or other sports authorities has a degree of responsibility to ensure that concerns are heard and that victims have appropriate support beyond the sporting or economic interests or reputation of the federation or club. The value of responsibility is linked to the value of courage. Courage for victims to speak out and for the leaders to help them, despite the risk of harming a sporting result or reputation. It is essential that everyone is aware of their responsibility.

**COMMITMENT** - Relates to the value of responsibility. In its professional dimension it is a question of being committed to what one does. CSOs will be required to commit to their role and embody the values and principles defined in the policy framework. Safeguarding is a delicate subject which will include, among other things, emotional involvement. The commitment to professionalism from CSOs will demonstrate the value of the position in sport.

Six other values were also put forward and discussed among the members of the core group.

**HEALTH** - The benefits of physical activity and sport should be enhanced rather than impeded. Sport is clearly a source of health – physical, psychological and social – provided the environment is positive.

**JUSTICE** - This value is not necessarily associated with the judiciary. Some children, adolescents and families need a sense of justice if they feel they have been abused, delivered either through specialised support and/or through the judicial system. It should be noted that in Belgium the system for prevention/protection of abuse works with the logic of dejudicialisation.

**EQUALITY** - Allowing everyone to have access to the same support systems.

**OPEN MIND** - Being open to others allows for trust, respect, exchanges and discussions.

**DIGNITY** - When concerns or cases of abuse arise; confidentiality needs to be maintained and information shared on a “need to know” basis. Proceedings need to be respectful of everyone’s dignity – the victims and the perpetrators - whatever the complexity of the situation.

**FUN** - The basic principle when engaging in this project is to ensure that sport remains a safe, stimulating, fulfilling and fun environment. Children and young people participate in sport because it gives them pleasure, which leads to well-being.



## CHAPTER 4: THE SETTING UP OF CSO ROLES IN SPORT

---

At the beginning of the CSiS project, during the first round table in July 2020 the representative of ADEPS drawing on the results of the desk research underlined that Belgium could be considered quite advanced in respect of the different actions taken to protect children and young people in sport. Nevertheless, the need to strengthen capacities to prevent and respond to all forms of violence and abuse in the sport sector remained.

Since the first round table, this need has been confirmed by abuse cases and/or concerns coming to light in the sport sector of the FWB. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the forced interruption of non-professional organised sport activities, several concerns of abuse were reported to ADEPS.

- Disclosure of sexual abuse and psychological violence (cyber harassment) at a high-level sports training centre, where a child abused other children.
- During interviews with the psychological unit of the High-Performance Support Centre (CAPSy), high-level athletes revealed they had been victims of psychological and sexual abuse by coaches since their childhood.
- A coach reported his concern about intra-familial abuse of a 12-year-old athlete.
- After a sport camp, a parent filed a complaint about psychological abuse of his child by another child.
- A sport federation asked what to do with the contract of a coach recently sentenced by a Court of Appeal to a 12-month suspended prison sentence after committing several acts of sexual abuse on one of his athletes.

The ethics officers of the sports federations concerned, had neither been contacted, nor involved in the aforementioned situations/concerns of abuse. Therefore, the expectations various sport stakeholders had from ADEPS were extraordinarily high. To address these expectations many other stakeholders were involved, including the Minister responsible for sport and a huge amount of work and time was invested in ADEPS, YAPAKA and in the field. In some cases, working groups were set up to analyse the situation and discuss the implementation of mechanisms for preventing abuse and responding to abuse concerns, including one dedicated to the prevention of abuse in high performance sport, led by CAPSy and ADEPS. The provision of information, education and training on child safeguarding, as well as regulatory aspects, were also considered.

As a result, the sport liaison officer's workload increased to a full-time position. However, the sport liaison officer is not regarded as a Single Point of Contact (SPOC). In addition to the involvement in the Project Committee for the prevention of abuse, the sport liaison officer has many other core assignments in the R&D department of ADEPS, such as co-ordinating several projects (CSiS and PARCS) and studies (CASES, SROI and SSA), working groups and trainings, while also supporting stakeholders regarding concerns and/or reports of abuse.

Despite the successful YAPAKA-ADEPS partnership, the complexity of this situation can be viewed as a stress test for a safeguarding system and the need for a full time SPOC offering support to the sport sector. This SPOC would be a new function offering new services within the existing network including centralisation, co-ordination, guidance and the development of capacities to cope with safeguarding issues.

The role of SPOC corresponds to the one identified by the CSiS project as a CSO, since it includes co-ordination and support to the sport sector. In other words, the CSO is a resource person in charge of providing the sport sector with the necessary safeguarding knowledge and access to tools and services to be used within the framework of comprehensive policies to safeguard children from all forms of violence and abuse.

Ideally, CSO roles should be put in place at multiple levels.

- The **Sport Administration CSO** or **ADEPS CSO** at the FWB level, will take a leadership role in the project by assessing the situation and checking with each federation what can and cannot be implemented



and offering support. The ADEPS CSO will collaborate with many sport stakeholders (such as the sport liaison officer within the Project Committee for the prevention of abuse, the ethics officers of the sport federations, the ATL co-ordinators of municipalities and sport centre managers) and with stakeholders from other sectors (statutory agencies such as ONE, SOS Enfants, youth care services, together with other specialised services and existing networks). The first ADEPS CSO should be a pilot project while the long-term vision would be to have one CSO in each of the seven Centres for Sport Advice (belonging to ADEPS, they are located at provincial level offering local accessibility and some autonomy from the central administration). The ADEPS CSO will have a leading and co-ordinating role for the sport sector and for the setting up of other CSOs within ADEPS and in other sport settings including federations and their clubs, other sport associations and sport centres.

- ▶ The **Sport Federation CSO** is the relay person and contact for the sport clubs and relevant services promoting the use/setting-up of complaints and/or disciplinary processes. A Decree establishing the obligation to have one CSO per federation depending on the number of affiliated members and increasing grants and funding to sport federations, would help provide the CSO with the necessary support. It would also be necessary to define a clear mandate in terms of a legal framework, roles, responsibilities and boundaries.
- ▶ The **Local CSO** covers all local structures offering sport activities such as sport clubs, youth centres, neighbourhood centres, including those which do not enjoy official recognition by sport federations or ministerial bodies. The local CSO will play a similar role to the sport federation CSO in relaying relevant information and being the contact person for its members and the relevant services. Regardless of their status (paid worker or volunteer), the local CSOs will acquire a skilled sensitivity about abuse prevention provided by the training they will receive to be equipped to deal with children in difficulty. They also will need to network at the local level to share, report and document situations.

All CSOs in sport will be mandated to inform and advise their organisations and users, analyse reported concerns and facilitate the connection between the sport sector and the prevention and protection networks. A CSO in sport will not take on a case management or investigator role. Those tasks should remain the sole responsibility of the sport organisation and/or statutory agencies/specialised services, depending on the case. The new Code of Ethics will help to set case thresholds, knowing that every sport actor will have a responsibility for responding to reported concerns/abuse in line with their organisation's policies and procedures. Higher threshold concerns involving child protection must be reported to statutory agencies/specialised services which will co-ordinate investigations. Sports bodies must still have disciplinary processes to deal with any breaches of codes of ethics and conduct and it will not be the CSO's responsibility to manage these.

Experience and training will be needed to provide the best guidance about the actions to be taken and the services to be consulted in response to concerns which are reported.





# CONCLUSION

---

In Belgium all three Communities were initially taking part in the joint EU and Council of Europe project “Child Safeguarding in Sport” (CSiS). The very different sport and child protection systems in each community and their varied stages of safeguarding development, as reflected in the desk research, were considered. The Flemish Community had to withdraw from the project. However, the resources from that community, which has done considerable work in this area, remained an important source of knowledge and experience. It was agreed to proceed with the FWB to prepare the roadmap for effective child safeguarding in sport policies, with the German-speaking Community shadowing its work.

One of the key strengths of the FWB is its history of collaborative cross-sectoral work on social and ethical issues which has included sport administration in key areas. For the CSiS project there was a strong sense that safeguarding legislation and policy measures needed to be specific about including and making visible sport’s role, responsibilities and needs to safeguard children and young people.

Belgium also benefits from involvement in previous European projects relevant to safeguarding children. The CASES project, whose results were presented in November 2021, provides invaluable data about the prevalence of abuse in sport for all Communities in Belgium. The findings of this research provide the scientific evidence base for the actions needed and a strong platform for resource allocation to safeguarding children and young people in and through sport. The PARCS project, whose results were presented in February 2022, provides sport organisations with podcasts and a practical guide to support the establishment and implementation of child protection policies.

During the CSiS project the profile of safeguarding work has grown considerably due to the significant rise in reported concerns, both within sport and outside of sport. This has contributed to raising awareness of the scale of the issue and has greatly increased the workload of the sport administration (ADEPS). The need to pilot the first CSO role within ADEPS’ remit was highlighted.

ADEPS has taken a very strong lead in this project, further developing and strengthening existing partnerships and creating new ones. It has developed a clear vision for what is needed to deliver a holistic and evidence-based approach to safeguarding children in sport.

The plans for the establishment of CSO roles now need to be realised, starting with the establishment of a key role in ADEPS and working through other levels, including at the level of sport federations and major sport clubs, as well as the local level, covering all local structures which offer some sport activities.

There are opportunities in place with the established partnerships and collaborations, such as with YAPAKA, ICES and DEI, to develop a long-term education and training strategy for everyone in sport, but with a particular focus on key roles, such as the new CSO roles and coaches.

The success of the roadmap will depend on human and financial resource allocation to ensure that the aims of the new Decree are realised in practice. The completion of the enactment of the legislation affects the timeframes for delivery of the proposed action plan.

The project has firmly established the critical importance of collaboration on a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary basis to achieve improved safeguards for children. The support from SSI and an independent consultant at the level of the FWB exemplifies this approach which enabled mutual learning and created a strong value base for the roadmap. This approach will help to break down barriers to addressing this difficult subject area, raise awareness and lead to safer, more enjoyable and inclusive sport for all children.

It is also important to note that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children’s physical and mental health and well-being is striking. Sport has never been more important in the process of redressing the balance and helping children to recover. This can only happen if sport is a safe place and children know who they can turn to for support and protection.

The long-term commitment of the steering committee and development of new partnerships alongside existing ones is essential for the future of child safeguarding in sport.

# APPENDIX

---

**Stakeholder mapping – prepared by the FWB project coordination**



Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
L'Administration Générale de l'Aide à la Jeunesse  General Administration of Youth Care/Support	Youth  Specialised assistance	Administration  Public Body	<p>AGAJ is in charge of the following missions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Development of a prevention policy, through different actions. Referring and accompanying young people and families to front-line services. Developing general prevention actions in order to provide collective responses to difficulties frequently encountered in the field. Relaying to other authorities these recurrent difficulties encountered by young people and families.</li> <li>2) The youth welfare advisers and directors and their services - respectively the youth welfare services (SAJ) and the youth protection services (SPJ) - provide personalised assistance to young people in difficulty or at risk and to their families. These services are present in each judicial division.</li> </ol> <p>This assistance takes the form of redirection and support to front-line services, follow-up with families. The accredited services are monitored and subsidised by the AGAJ.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) The General Administration of Youth Assistance also subsidises open support services (AMO) which act outside of any mandate, at the express request of the young person and provide individual assistance or develop community action in his or her living environment.</li> <li>4) The AGAJ organises the care of young people who have committed an offence, by decision of a youth judge, with an emphasis on the educational and protection dimension.</li> </ol> <p>It must be understood as complementary and supplementary to other forms of general social assistance known as first line (CPAS, PMS/PSE, ONE).</p>	<p>To connect the first CSO with the Prevention College, a new body for the support and effective development of the prevention policy. This Prevention College acts as an interface between the Prevention Councils and the Prevention Services in the districts and the administrative and political bodies at the level of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.</p> <p>To share their expertise on the specific needs of young people under the protection of youth assistance services and to make sure that sports actors are aware of those needs.</p>	<a href="http://www.aidealajeunesse.cfwb.be/index.php?id=358">http://www.aidealajeunesse.cfwb.be/index.php?id=358</a>
Conseil Communautaire de l'Aide à la Jeunesse  Community Youth Care Council	Youth	Administration générale de l'Aide à la Jeunesse  Wallonia Bruxelles Federation	<p>A think-tank with general competence to issue on its own initiative or at the request of the government, opinions and proposals on all matters relating to prevention, youth assistance and youth protection, including assistance to child victims of abuse and with the exception of adoption.</p>	<p>To be aware of CSO existence when receiving some requests.</p> <p>To promote the CSO system throughout their network.</p>	<a href="http://www.aidealajeunesse.cfwb.be/index.php?id=7746">http://www.aidealajeunesse.cfwb.be/index.php?id=7746</a>



Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
Centre Public d'Action Sociale  Public Social Action Centre	Social Service	Public body  Front-line service  A national scheme with a municipal base	A CPAS provides social services and looks after the welfare of every citizen. Each municipality or city has its own CPAS offering a wide range of services. Examples of services offered are financial support, housing, medical support, home help and care, work placement, debt mediation, psychosocial support, legal assistance, admissions to institutions, reception in social welfare centres, and crisis reception. As far as children are concerned, the CPAS, apart from the benefits related to birth and family allowances, pay special attention to the respect of the Rights of the Child.	To be aware of CSO existence when receiving some requests. To promote the CSO system throughout their network. To disseminate information campaign in partnership with ADEPS partnership.	<a href="https://www.belgium.be/fr/famille/aide_sociale/cpas">https://www.belgium.be/fr/famille/aide_sociale/cpas</a>
Services de Santé Mentale  Mental Health Services	Social Service  Mental Health	National scheme with speaking community base	The Mental Health Services (MHS) provide psycho-medico-social assistance in a specialised outpatient setting to any person who requests it, in a multidisciplinary manner. They act especially when there is a legal constraint. The MHS receive all requests from children, adolescents, adults or the elderly. Some have several offices. Others have developed therapeutic clubs and/or specific initiatives and some MHS are also specialised in the treatment of children and adolescents.	To be aware of CSO existence when receiving some requests. To promote the CSO system throughout their network. To disseminate information campaign in partnership with ADEPS.	<a href="https://www.health.belgium.be/fr/sante/prenez-soin-de-vous/themes-pour-les-patients/soins-de-sante-transfrontaliers/normes-5">https://www.health.belgium.be/fr/sante/prenez-soin-de-vous/themes-pour-les-patients/soins-de-sante-transfrontaliers/normes-5</a>
Centre Psycho-Médicaux Sociaux  Psycho-Medical Social Centre	Social Service linked to Education field	Public Body	A place of welcome, listening and dialogue where young people and/or their families can discuss issues of concern to them in terms of schooling, education, family and social life, health, school and career guidance. The PMS Centre is available to pupils and their parents from the start of nursery education until the end of secondary education. It also develops activities for the benefit of students attending the Centres d'Education et de Formation en Alternance (CEFA), as well as their families. The PMS Centre is composed of psychologists (counsellors and psycho-pedagogical assistants), social workers (social auxiliaries) and nurses (paramedical auxiliaries) who work as a team. A doctor is also attached to each PMS Centre.	To be aware of CSO existence when receiving requests. To promote the CSO system through their network. To disseminate information campaign in partnership with ADEPS.	<a href="http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=24633">http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=24633</a>

Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
YAPAKA	Children & Youth	Wallonia Bruxelles Federation	<p>Programme for the prevention of abuse set up in 1998. The design of its programme and implementation are the result of a project committee that reflects the collaboration between all the administrative entities related to children. These include: ONE, the General Administration of Education and Scientific Research, the General Administration of Youth Assistance and the General Administration of Justice Houses, ADEPS, the General Administration of Culture.</p> <p>YAPAKA offers publications in different formats (books, videos, podcasts...) trainings, workshops and thematic information campaigns.</p>	<p>Give support to the Sport administration to make sure that the first CSO is appointed as a SPOC for the whole sport sector with communication disseminated to the general population and more specifically to a wide sport audience.</p> <p>Develop the training and pedagogical frameworks for the future CSOs with the ADEPS.</p> <p>To define the role and missions of the CSOs, based on the abuse cases and/or reported concerns managed jointly to date with ADEPS and ONE.</p> <p>To develop tools for kids with the support of the Project Committee for the prevention of abuse and to adapt them to the sport context.</p> <p>To inform and raise awareness about the network around awdults, including the CSOs in sport.</p> <p>To provide, with support of ADEPS, educational content adapted to the different sports professionals according to their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>To provide, with support of ADEPS, a training framework for CSOs that is sensitive to the realities on the ground and the specificities of sport activities.</p> <p>To seek out new training operators to build up a sufficient pool to disseminate the training elements to as many people as possible.</p> <p>To support AISEF, with ADEPS, to integrate safeguarding training in the curriculum of sport managers (federation, club and sport centres).</p> <p>To collaborate with ICES (International Centre Ethics in Sport) to explore their training content and tools.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.yapaka.be/">https://www.yapaka.be/</a></p>

Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance  Office for Birth and Childhood	Children	Wallonia Bruxelles Federation	The Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance is the reference body for all matters relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- childhood,</li> <li>- child policy,</li> <li>- the protection of mothers and children,</li> <li>- medical and social support for the (future) mother and child,</li> <li>- childcare outside the family environment and support for parenthood.</li> </ul> Other cross-cutting tasks are also assigned.	Support the preparation of a job description. ONE has already 11 active CSOs in its sector.  To define the role and objectives of the CSOs based in particular on the abuse cases and/or reported concerns managed jointly to date with ADEPS & YAPAKA.  Help sport CSOs to connect with SOS Enfants teams.	<a href="https://www.one.be/public/">https://www.one.be/public/</a>
Service d'Aide en Milieu Ouvert	Youth	NGOs  Local/ Municipality level	The AMO (Service d'action aux jeunes en milieu ouvert) is a place where young people are welcomed, listened to, informed, oriented, supported and accompanied. The AMO tries to remedy the problems that affect young people in their daily lives.  An AMO provides social and educational assistance that aims to help young people develop in their everyday lives.  It does this by offering individual help, supporting young people's projects and helping young people to resolve difficulties (family, administrative, legal, academic, etc.).	To be aware of CSO existence when receiving requests.  To promote the CSO system throughout their network.  To disseminate information campaign in partnership with ADEPS.	<a href="http://www.aidealajeunesse.cfwb.be/index.php?id=328">http://www.aidealajeunesse.cfwb.be/index.php?id=328</a>
Inter-Fédération de l'Aide à la Jeunesse et les Fédérations des services d'aide à la Jeunesse  Inter-Federation of Youth Care Work and Youth Care Service Federations	Children and Youth	NGOs  Speaking community base	The Inter-Federations comes together around common objectives and values. The majority of the federations are youth work institutions and services that represent the 360 accredited services of the sector.  Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to represent all member federations in the different fields of competence of the youth work sector.</li> <li>- to promote the youth work sector in all its diversity.</li> <li>- to seek to improve the financial, human and material resources of the services.</li> <li>- to strengthen solidarity, coherence and cohesion between the federations, and moreover between the accredited services, taking into account the needs of the sector.</li> <li>- to support and defend the various types of accredited services vis-à-vis the granting and administrative authorities in financial, social, educational and accounting matters.</li> <li>- to improve and develop the expression and visibility of the youth work sector.</li> <li>- to promote a policy of continuous training for staff and managers.</li> </ul>	To promote the CSO system through their network.  To disseminate information campaign in partnership with ADEPS.	<a href="https://www.interaaj.be/">https://www.interaaj.be/</a>

Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
<p>Délégué Général aux Droits de l'Enfant</p> <p>General Delegate for Child's Rights</p>	<p>Children and Youth</p>	<p>Wallonia - Bruxelles Federation</p> <p>Independent public institution</p>	<p>Its general mission is to ensure that the rights and interests of children are safeguarded and that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is applied. This includes receiving complaints and mediation requests relating to the rights and interests of children in all areas including, family, school, disability, abuse, youth care and protection and migration.</p> <p>In the exercise of his/her mission, the Delegate General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- informs about the rights and interests of children (an individual from 0 to 18 years of age according to the CRC) and ensures their promotion by organising information actions.</li> <li>- verifies the correct application of laws, decrees, ordinances and regulations concerning children.</li> <li>- recommends to any authority, with regard to children, any proposal aimed at adapting the regulations in force with a view to more complete and effective protection of children's rights and interests</li> <li>- receives information, complaints or requests for mediation relating to infringements of children's rights and interests.</li> <li>- undertakes at the request of the Council, all investigations into the functioning of the administrative services of the French Community concerned by this mission.</li> </ul>	<p>To promote the CSO system throughout their network.</p> <p>To disseminate information campaign in partnership with ADEPS.</p> <p>General Delegate for Child's Rights is also involved in the Steering Committee of the PARCS project, which aims to implement a child protection policy within organisations offering sports and leisure activities. This should allow compatibility for work related to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. communication campaigns</li> <li>2. development of tools</li> </ol>	<p><a href="http://www.dgde.cfwb.be/">http://www.dgde.cfwb.be/</a></p>
<p>Défense des Enfants International – Belgique</p> <p>Defence for Children International – Belgium</p>	<p>Children and Youth</p>	<p>NGO</p> <p>Long Term Education</p>	<p>Created in 1991, DCI-Belgium is the Belgian section of Defence for Children International.</p> <p>Its objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To advance, protect and defend the rights of children in all areas, especially those contained in international declarations and instruments, including the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) and its additional protocols.</li> <li>- To ensure that children receive the highest possible level of protection and advocacy in Belgium, especially those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds in society.</li> <li>- To foster a social climate of solidarity and democracy by promoting education in human rights and particularly in the rights of the child.</li> </ul>	<p>To launch the tools and resources prepared by the PARCS project: communication campaign, web platform and toolkit.</p> <p>To collaborate with ICES (International Centre Ethics in Sport) and explore their training content and tools.</p> <p>To promote the CSO system throughout their network.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.dei-belgique.be/index.php">https://www.dei-belgique.be/index.php</a></p>

Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
Observatoire de l'Enfance, de la Jeunesse et de l'Aide à la Jeunesse  Observatory for Children, Youth and Youth Care/Support	Children and Youth	Wallonia Bruxelles Federation	<p>The Observatory for Children, Youth and Youth Care is a cross-cutting service for research, analysis, evaluation of public policies and support for public decision-making.</p> <p>It is also in charge of supporting the implementation of the Action Plan on the Rights of the Child and delivering information and communication actions on the rights of children and young people. Its missions are segmented into four areas of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Getting to know children and young people better by constantly listening to them.</li> <li>- Getting to know the services of the French-speaking Community better by taking into account the expertise of the actors.</li> <li>- Promoting the rights and well-being of children and young people, by placing the International Convention on the Rights of the Child at the centre of its work.</li> <li>- Evaluating children and youth policies allowing everyone to better understand the effects of its actions.</li> </ul> <p>Its goal is to know, to gather, to articulate and to coordinate can be summarised in one statement - to produce useful knowledge for action.</p>	<p>To support the partnership between ATL and the sport sector through its work which most recently concluded in an evaluative study the lack of representativeness of sports structures in ATL.</p> <p>To be aware of CSO existence when receiving requests.</p> <p>To disseminate information.</p>	<a href="https://oejaj.cfwb.be/">https://oejaj.cfwb.be/</a>
Forum des Jeunes  Youth Forum	Youth	Wallonia-Brussels Federation	<p>The Youth Forum is the voice of young people aged 16 to 30 years of age in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. Its organisation is centred on concrete projects that young people from diverse backgrounds have decided to undertake collectively.</p> <p>The projects are defined during participatory days which highlight the main concerns of young people. These exchanges allow participants to question themselves and each other on priorities linked to current events, but also local, national and international issues that have an impact on young people.</p> <p>In addition to its political advocacy role, the Youth Forum puts youth participation at the heart of its actions.</p>	<p>To disseminate information.</p> <p>To promote the CSO system through their network.</p>	<a href="https://forum-desjeunes.be/author/conseil-de-la-jeunesse/">https://forum-desjeunes.be/author/conseil-de-la-jeunesse/</a>

Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
Accueil Temps Libre The Leisure Time Activity	Children and Youth	A national scheme with a municipal base	<p>The childcare sector for children aged 3 to 12 and over is a diverse sector. It includes all activities organised before and after school, on Wednesday afternoons, weekends and holidays.</p> <p>However, a distinction is made between two categories of activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural and sports activities. These activities are mono-thematic and aim, among other things, at learning a skill or an aptitude such as music academies, sports clubs, dance classes, judo and nature activities.</li> <li>2. Multidimensional activities. These activities offer children supervised care that considers their overall development, such as youth organisations, youth centres, holiday centres, homework schools and after-school care.</li> </ol>	<p>To encourage local sports clubs joining ATL networks at municipal level, in partnership with ADEPS.</p> <p>To be aware of CSO existence and their roles.</p> <p>To promote the CSO system through their network.</p> <p>To disseminate information campaign in partnership with ADEPS.</p>	<a href="https://www.one.be/professionnel/accueil-temps-libre/">https://www.one.be/professionnel/accueil-temps-libre/</a>
Parents/Family			<p>The Educational Alliance may appear straightforward to set up, but it requires certain communication approaches that consider the role of parents and the value of their relationship with sports supervisors and vice versa. Each should be aware of the role he/she plays in the life of an individual child.</p> <p>The supervisors must remember that children go home once the activities are over and as such respect the value of the family. Supervisors must make efforts to involve and inform parents. The creation of these relationships can be achieved through simple proposals, such as football clubs asking parents to referee matches.</p>	<p>To be aware of CSO existence and their role.</p> <p>To promote the CSO system to other parents.</p>	
Minister responsible for sport	Sport	Ministry Wallonia-Bruxelles Federation	<p>The Sport Ministry promotes physical, sporting and outdoor activities. It encourages the practice of sport for all under the best conditions throughout Wallonia and Brussels.</p> <p>It also aims to support sports clubs and federations whose projects have a significant societal impact, particularly in terms of encouraging the practice of women's sport, the integration of people with disabilities within federations, social inclusion, the promotion of fair play and good governance in sport.</p> <p>It also promotes high-level sport by supporting athletes whose results contribute to its influence.</p> <p>It is also responsible for the organisation of doping controls to defend clean and honest sport.</p>	<p>Decision and approval of the recognition of the needs for CSOs within the sport sector.</p>	



Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
<p>ADEPS</p> <p>Administration de l'Éducation physique, du Sport et de la Vie en Plein Air</p> <p>Administration of Physical Education, Sport and Outdoor Life</p>	Sport	Administration générale du sport FWB	<p>The mission of the General Administration of Sport (ADEPS) is to promote, organise, encourage, and supervise physical and sporting activities for the French-speaking population of Wallonia and the Brussels-Capital Region.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The development of Sport for All among schoolchildren and the general public particularly among people who are more distant from regular sports activities (disadvantaged population, people with a disability, etc.).</li> <li>- The organisation and support of high-level sport to help athletes (and their federations) obtain the best possible results in international competitions (Olympic Games, World Championships, work contracts and individual grants for elite athletes, additional subsidies to sports federations for high-level sport, permanent physical fitness centres, etc.).</li> <li>- Financial support to other sports operators (recognised sports federations, affiliated clubs, local authorities, etc.).</li> <li>- The improvement of the supervision and management of sport via recognised training courses for sports instructors with an educational, managerial and safety vocation.</li> <li>- Representation of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation in the various international sports bodies including the European Union and International Organisation of the Francophonie.</li> </ul> <p>The 18 ADEPS sports centres (14 in Wallonia and 3 in the Brussels-Capital Region, plus the centre in Les Arcs en montagne in France) welcome a cross section of the public throughout the year with introductory or advanced training in no less than 80 sports disciplines. In its sports centres, ADEPS offers and/or supervises a wide range of sports activities for children, teenagers, adults in groups, families or an individual basis.</p>	<p>Coordinating the entire process of developing and implementing CSO's system. The main responsibility is to set up all the necessary elements for implementing the CSO roles in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation sport context.</p> <p>As soon as the decree is adopted, activate the Ethics Network whose mission will be to promote the exchange of information and best practices in the field of sports ethics between the organised sports movement and the Observatory.</p> <p>Agree to launch the pilot project of a first CSO (integrated as one representative in the Ethics Network) and get support from the Sports Minister and a budget for human resource.</p> <p>Develop the training and pedagogical frameworks for the future CSOs with YAPAKA.</p> <p>To define the role and missions of the CSOs, based on the abuse cases and/or reported concerns managed jointly to date with YAPAKA and the support of ONE.</p> <p>To encourage local sports clubs joining ATL networks at municipal level.</p> <p>To disseminate information campaign.</p> <p>To use the tools prepared by YAPAKA to raise awareness with children and teenagers by providing them with information about their rights and where to go for help if they have worries while participating in sport activities.</p> <p>To support YAPAKA provide educational content adapted to the different sports professionals according to their role and responsibilities.</p> <p>To support YAPAKA provide a training framework for CSOs that considers the realities on the ground and the specificities of sport activities.</p> <p>To integrate safeguarding training in its digital training platform for sport instructors.</p> <p>To support AISF, in co-operation with YAPAKA, to integrate safeguarding training in the curriculum of sport managers (federation, club and sport centres).</p> <p>To collaborate with ICES (International Centre Ethics in sport) and explore their training content and tools.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.sport-adepts.be/">http://www.sport-adepts.be/</a></p>

Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
Ethics Network	Sport	Network  Wallonia-Bruxelles Federation	Each recognised sport federation has a designated ethics officer in charge of issues relating to tolerance, respect, ethics and fair play, with the aim of identifying a SPOC (Single Point of Contact). The ethics officers have been in place since 2018 without any official mandate or role. The sport administration has organised four meetings with them to promote the exchange of information on ethics, fair play, including safeguarding. One objective was dissemination of information to club members which to date has not been met. In addition, the aim of facilitating the resolution of ethical problems and disputes encountered has also not yet been delivered.	To implement the following recommendations with the support of experts (sport liaison officer of the Project Committee for the Prevention of abuse and the first ADEPS CSO): 1) within sports federations at all relevant levels there should be coherent guidelines on how concerns should be reported, supported and responded to, including concerns about poor practice or bullying which may not meet the threshold for statutory agency intervention. 2) the role and responsibilities of the CSO in case of abuse situations/reported concerns need to be addressed. To inform/consult/involve actors who do not work on responding to reported abuse/concerns but on social prevention and could support the further development of processes, practices and regulations including the cross-sectoral Project Committee for the prevention of child abuse, the Prevention colleges and councils and the commission for the prevention of abuse within the youth support sector.	
Observatoire de l'Ethique, du Fair Play et de la bonne gouvernance  Observatory for Ethics, Fair Play and Good Governance	Sport		The Observatory for Ethics, Fair Play and Good Governance will be composed of 20 members from various sectors of society including the General Sports Administration, sports world, General Delegate for Children's Rights and UNIA and will meet at least twice a year. Its mission will be to analyse all issues related to discrimination, harassment, ethics, good governance and gender equality in French-speaking sport, and to propose actions to the Minister and the government. It will also act as a guide for sports federations. The work of the Observatory will be supported and reinforced by two related structures. 1. An ethics network composed of one representative per recognised sports federation/association. This "ethics referent" will have a double mission. It will be responsible for collecting data/initiatives/problems from the field to input into the work of the Observatory. It will be responsible for relaying the Observatory's recommendations to the clubs and ensuring the application of the Ethics Charter and its variations. 2. A disabled sports network in charge of reporting to the Observatory initiatives that will accelerate the inclusion of less able-bodied people in able-bodied clubs and federations.	To be aware of CSO existence and their role. To promote the CSO system through their network. To disseminate information campaigns in partnership with ADEPS.	

Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
L'Association des Etablissements Sportifs  The Association of Sports Establishments	Sport	NGO  Wallonia-Brussels Federation  German Speaking Community	The AES was born in 1979 from the merger of the Association des Bains Publics and the Association des Centres Sportifs. Its main role is to bring together, represent and defend the interests of the sports centres of the French and German-speaking Communities. Today, more than 400 sports and aquatic centres are members of the AES. Its missions: - To advise recognised sports centres or those wishing to apply for recognition, as well as the Government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. - To help set up and constantly improve the management and operation of sports facilities. - To contribute to the encouragement and promotion of sport at all levels. - To be interested in all other related aims directly or indirectly related to the decree organising the recognition and subsidisation of local sports centres and integrated local sports centres, as well as its application decrees. - To be interested in any way in any other association or grouping pursuing similar or related aims.	To be aware of CSO existence and their role. To promote the CSO system through their network. To disseminate information campaign in partnership with ADEPS.	<a href="https://www.aes-asbl.be/">https://www.aes-asbl.be/</a>
Fédérations sportives  Sport Federations	Sport	NGO  Wallonia-Brussels Federation	The recognised sports federations and their affiliated clubs are one of the major interlocutors of the General Sports Administration for initiation and improvement in the practice of sports disciplines (examples below) participation in national and international competitions. They are governed by various decrees and orders of the French-speaking Community government.  Athletics, gymnastics, physical education, walking, orientation, water sports, ball sports, wrestling, boxing, weightlifting, martial arts, horse riding, speleology, school and university sports federations, sports federations for people with disabilities.	To set up a structure in charge of issues relating to tolerance, respect, ethics and sportsmanship and designate a relay person (the ethics officer).  Once the new decree on sport ethics is enacted by the Parliament and the new Code of Ethics is adopted by the Government, it is to incorporate the new Code of Ethics and its variations into its various regulations. The necessary measures will be undertaken to ensure its promotion to and by its clubs, members, sports and administrative staffs and to ensure that its administrative and sport staff including those in its clubs, meet the legal requirements for the exercise of their functions.	<a href="http://www.sport-adepts.be/index.php?id=4156">http://www.sport-adepts.be/index.php?id=4156</a>

Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
Association Interfédérale du Sport Francophone  Interfederal Association of Francophone Sport	Sport	NGO  Wallonia-Brussels Federation	<p>The AISF is the association of the French-speaking Belgian sports federations. Officially recognised as the representative of these federations it currently has seven member federations.</p> <p>It has been working for the development of French-speaking sport, its federations, its clubs and their members including managers, coaches and referees.</p> <p>Its missions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to help French-speaking sports federations and their clubs in their daily operations.</li> <li>- to represent the interests of French-speaking sport to the public authorities.</li> <li>- to support the development of French-speaking sport.</li> <li>- to promote the practice of sport.</li> </ul>	<p>To integrate safeguarding training in the curriculum of sport managers (federation, club and sport centres) with ADEPS and YAPAKA support.</p> <p>To meet with ICES (International Centre Ethics in Sport) to explore their training content and tools.</p>	<a href="https://aisf.be/">https://aisf.be/</a>
Clubs Sportifs		Municipality level	<p>In 2018, more than one in five Belgians were members of a sports club, which represents a total of 2,137,521 Belgians (Het Nieuwsblad - Belga). According to ADEPS in 2018 there were 720,093 members of sports federations in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.</p> <p>In Wallonia and Brussels, football remains - as in Flanders - the sport that attracts the most members. In addition, there are members of the indoor football federation which is independent of the Belgian Football Union. Ranked second for the most members is tennis and basketball is the third most practiced sport according to ADEPS.</p> <p>Gymnastics, horse riding and athletics follow and hockey comes seventh, ahead of indoor football and shooting. Swimming closes the top ten.</p>	<p>To be aware of CSO existence when receiving requests.</p> <p>To promote the CSO system through their network.</p> <p>To disseminate information campaign with the ADEPS partnership.</p>	
L'Association des Fédérations Francophones du Sport Scolaire  The Association of Francophone School Sport Federations	Sport Youth Education	NGO	<p>The NGO is made up of the three school sports federations: the FRSEL, the FSEOS and the FSWBE.</p> <p>It aims to present a better coherence of French-speaking school sport for potential partners who may support activity. This extends to leisure, educational institutions, authorities organising teaching and educational circles. It is currently only developing activities in partnership, to avoid drawing on the financial resources of federations.</p> <p>At each meeting, the three Chairs assisted by the technicians of the three federations assess the various activities carried out and planned and take decisions. These technicians form the permanent technical commission. They are responsible for studying the feasibility of activities and proposing the practical arrangements.</p>	<p>To be aware of CSO existence and their role.</p> <p>To promote the CSO system through their network.</p> <p>To disseminate information campaigns with the ADEPS partnership.</p>	<a href="https://www.sportscolaire.be/">https://www.sportscolaire.be/</a>

Stakeholder	Sector	Type of organisation (kind, level)	Mission	Role/s in CSO process	Website
Comité Olympique Interfédéral Belge Belgian Interfederal Olympic Committee	Sport	NGO	<p>The COIB is an 'inter-federal' association, which includes national sports federations, usually divided into two or even three community leagues. Representatives of these 81 sports federations sit on the COIB General Assembly. These in turn represent more than 30,000 sports clubs and more than 2,000,000 active athletes.</p> <p>Mission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To select the Belgian sporting elite who will perform at the Olympic Games in accordance with the Olympic values.</li> <li>- To mobilise all the country's active forces to create a 'high-level sport climate'.</li> <li>- To support the sports federations and members of the COIB in their activities.</li> <li>- To base our action on the values of the Olympic Movement of which the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee is the representative in Belgium.</li> </ul>	<p>To be aware of CSO existence and their role.</p> <p>To promote the CSO system through their network.</p> <p>Participate in the long-term vision to have a coordination mechanism between the 3 Communities of Belgium via its role in the ABCD Commission.</p>	<a href="http://www.team-belgium.be">www.team-belgium.be</a>
University of Antwerp	Education	Public Body	<p>The University of Antwerp develops, provides access to and disseminates scientific knowledge through research, teaching and academic service to the community and accomplishes these tasks in a spirit of academic freedom and responsibility.</p> <p>The University of Antwerp espouses active pluralism. In that spirit, it stimulates critical research and teaching, reflection and debate on scientific, social, philosophical and ethical questions.</p>	<p>The minister responsible for sport of the FWB has asked the sport administration to launch research about violence in sport. As a result, a "Study into the prevalence of interpersonal violence against children in sport in the Federation Wallonia-Brussels" has been subcontracted by the Sport administration of the FWB to the University of Antwerp, enabling the FWB to be in the European project CASES. Belgian results were presented by the University of Antwerp in November 2021.</p>	<a href="https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/">https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/</a>



## Document prepared by Kari Fasting, Safe Sport International (July 2020)

The first Article of the Belgian Constitution is: “Belgium is a federal state, composed of communities and regions”<sup>2</sup>. Its political power and institutions are divided into three levels: a federal government, three community governments (Flemish, French and German-speaking), and three regional governments (Flemish, Wallonia and the Brussels-Capital Region). Each community has its own sport administration, acting independently and developing different sport policy programmes. There is no national approach to sport policy, so policies differ across the communities.<sup>3</sup> There is no national minister responsible for sport nor any national sport laws. These responsibilities are located at the community level. According to van Poppel et al (2018), p 274 “Sport policymaking in Wallonia is mainly characterised by regulation and monitoring... whereas in Flanders a strong civic involvement in sports predominates”.

The ministries (governmental structure) appear to have a strong role in the landscape of sports in all communities. They recognise and subsidise most, but not all the sport federations, since there are also non-recognised sport federations. There are some differences between the communities, but the main structure seems to be that the municipalities and sport clubs are key players at the local level and the majority of sport clubs are affiliated to a sport federation that is a member of a sport confederation. The structure of the landscape of sports in the communities is quite complicated and is presented in Appendix 1 and 2 for respective Federation Wallonia-Brussels and Flanders.

The Belgian Olympic and Inter-federal Committee (BOIC) is found at the national level as seen in Appendix 2, as is the ABCD Commission. In this commission the Dutch, French and German-speaking sport administrations and the Olympic Committee (BOIC) meet.

With respect to safeguarding in sport, a study from 2019 revealed that the Belgian Olympic Committee had developed an action plan for combating gender-based violence and implemented procedures for minimising risk (criminal record checks, risk assessment procedure, etc.) and had in their statutes included a reference that forbids gender-based violence<sup>4</sup>.

There are some federal laws (among others the Penal Code) that have implications for safeguarding in sport. There is among others a **system for criminal record checks**. There is no obligation to report (presumed) child abuse cases to the judicial authorities. This means that care providers themselves must consider whether they report a case of suspected child abuse, when they should do it, and to whom (police, the judiciary, VK (Confidentiality teams for child abuse and neglect)/SOS Enfants, consultation with colleagues)<sup>5</sup>. Yet, professionals, as well as any citizen in the society have a moral responsibility to ensure children’s wellbeing and to act accordingly. Although there is a legal general duty imposed on any citizen to help a person in great danger (Penal code art. 422bis), imposing mandatory reporting has been judged to not be necessary. When someone is applying for a position as a coach, it is possible for a sport organisation to ask the coach to provide a criminal record. The coach has to get it him/herself (digitally or through his town hall/city administration), the organisation cannot do it in his/her place. This is not mandatory. How it is practiced in the different communities is described later.

**The protection of children is part of the competences that have been transferred to the three communities.** Each of them has provisions, requiring that individuals or committees involved in the protection of children, report mistreatment and sexual offences. Because of the different policies the three communities are described separately below.

1 The data is collected by Jord Vandenhoudt, Policy Officer Sport, Flanders Sports Agency, Olivier Courtin, Attaché, Sport administration of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels, André Sommerlatte, Advisor Sports Department, Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft and followed up by interviewing.

2 [www.belgium.be](http://www.belgium.be)

3 van Poppel, M., Claes, E., & Scheerder, J. (2018). Sport policy in Flanders (Belgium). *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 10(2), 271-285; Vertommen, T., Tolleneer, J., Maebe, G., & De Martelaer, K. (2014). Preventing child maltreatment and transgressive behaviour in Flemish sport. *Safeguarding, child protection and abuse in sport: international perspectives in research, policy and practice*. London: Routledge, 31-9.

4 European Union (EU) & Council of Europe (COE) joint project. ALL IN: Towards Gender Balance in sport. Leaflet Belgium: <https://rm.coe.int/belgium-gender-equality-in-sport-leaflet-2019-/1680971a1f> . Project website: <https://pjpeu.coe.int/en/web/gender-equality-in-sport/home>

5 Vinck I., Christiaens W., Jonckheer P., Veerman G., Kohn L., Dekker N., Peremans L., Offermans A-M., Burzykowska A., Roland M. How to improve the detection of child abuse in Belgium?. Health Services Research (HSR) Brussels: Belgian Health Care Knowledge Centre (KCE). 2016. KCE Reports 269. D/2016/10.273/5



## Federation Wallonia-Brussels

The legal framework of the French Community (called Federation Wallonia-Brussels) is the **decree of 12 May 2004 related to the aid provided to child victims of abuse**. It provides that any person whose profession or mission, even as a volunteer or as a part-time worker, is to contribute to the education; psychological, medical, social guidance; help; protection; and supervision of infants or children must bring help and protection to children who are victims of mistreatment. Mistreatment is defined by the regulation as any type of physical violence, corporeal ill-treatment, sexual abuse, psychological violence, or grave (intentional or not) negligence that impairs the physical, psychological, and affective development of the child. **This decree is not sport specific but is valid for sport as shown below**. As a follow-up of the decree, the Federation Wallonia-Brussels passed an order in 2016 to coordinate the prevention of child abuse in a **cross-cutting program** managed by a **Project Committee and supported by a Steering Committee for the Prevention of Abuse**. Since January 2018, a **representative of the Sport administration (government department) has been acting as liaison officer** in this Project Committee for the Prevention of Abuse. He/she participates regularly in the work of the Project Committee (2 meetings per month), shares relevant content of the sport policy, guarantees sport content in the construction and implementation of the cross-cutting program managed by the Project Committee for the prevention of abuse.

With respect to **criminal records**, Art 2 of the decree of 12 May 2004 relates to the aid provided to child victims of abuses. "At the request of the head of a service, institution or association, all intervenors (any person whose profession or mission, even as a volunteer or as a part-time worker, is to contribute to the education; psychological, medical, and social guidance; help; protection; and supervision of infants or children) must at any time produce an extract from the criminal record free of conviction or internment order". This is however not mandatory for sport organisations.

The organised sports movement of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels has a new decree (a specific sports law) as of May 2, 2019. According to this, the organised sports movement is among others committed to:

- ▶ Art. 2) an ethically responsible sport and is subject to the provisions of the decree of March 20, 20146 carrying out various measures in favour of ethics in sport **including the development of a sport's code of ethics**.
- ▶ Art. 3) respecting the basic principles of the so called "adapted governance" ... around four themes: **integrity; autonomy and accountability; transparency; democracy, participation and integration--** including equality between women and men in sport.
- ▶ Art. 8) a practice respecting physical, psychological and moral integrity of its members."

A follow up of Article 8 of the decree on sport ethics of March 20, 2014 ("*Each recognised sports federation recognises a relay person or a structure in charge of questions relating to tolerance, respect, ethics and sportsmanship, with the aim of identifying a reference interlocutor, to facilitate the resolution of ethical problems and disputes encountered as well as promoting the exchange of information in matters of ethics and fair play*") is that since February 2018, **ethics officers, a total of 63, have been appointed in every recognised sport federation**. There is no formal job description for these officers available so far. The Sport administration organises meetings with these ethics officers twice a year, with the prevention of mistreatment in sport being on the agenda each time so far.

**A new decree on sport ethics is under construction**. It will specifically refer to the "International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (UNESCO, 2015)" and to the "Code of Sports Ethics (Council of Europe)".

Through the new decree, an Observatory for the Ethics of Physical Activity and Sports will be set up. It will propose a **Code of Ethics** setting out the principles, values, rules and ethical duties applicable to all those involved in sport and physical activity.

**The organized sport movement will be required to incorporate the Code of Ethics and its variations into their rules and regulations. It shall include in its disciplinary code sanctions for breaches of the Code of Ethics and its variants.**

---

6 This Decree will be replaced by a new one which is now being prepared to enter the decree procedure.

**Relevant training for trainers, sport centre's managers and ethics officers** is given by Yapaka<sup>7</sup> in partnership with the sport administration. From generic safeguarding basic awareness training to more elaborated "tailor-made" content. In addition, an online training is available on Yapaka's website. It consists of a basic module with benchmarks to prevent abuse: <https://www.yapaka.be/page/formation-en-ligne-module-de-base-points-de-repere-pour-prevenir-la-maltraitance>

## Flanders

Based on Decree of 20 January 2012, **The Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy Plan (2015-2019) is a policy instrument of the Government of Flanders which bundles together the youth and children's rights policies in Flanders.** It is a 4-year Policy Plan and a new plan from 2020 – 2024 will be published soon. It is followed up by an inter-ministry working group of focal points. **The policy is not sport specific, but valid for sport.** The Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner was created by Flemish Parliament Act ([Decree creating a Commission for Children's Rights and establishing the post of Commissioner for Children's Rights, 15th July 1997](#)) (217.67 kB) It is an independent body of the Flemish Parliament.

Since 2012 different policy domains coordinate measures and action plans on integrity and child protection (Sports, Welfare, Education, Youth). This resulted for example in the **helpline 1712, a scientific report on violence in the settings of family, school and leisure, educational tools like the Flag System and setting up Integrity Contact Points, an anti-bullying campaign.** In the future there will be a **new intersectoral plan specifically around sexual violence, and a section on integrity in the Youth and Children's Rights plan,** mentioned in the previous paragraph. Flanders Sport Agency is represented in a cross-sectoral working group (ministry-political level, in coordination with the cabinet of the minister).

Two sport specific decrees are relevant here: The Decree of 20 December 2013 **on Healthy and Ethical Sports** and the decree of 10 June 2016 on the **Recognition and Subsidisation of the Organised Sport Sector.** The last one has new conditions which came into force on January 1, 2021. To be eligible for subsidies a sport federation must **pursue an integrity policy** as well as **organise an integrity contact point.** The following measures have to be implemented and stimulated in the operation of the federation:

- ▶ 1. organise an integrity contact point, by:
  - appointing one or more persons or an organisation as an integrity contact point and ensure a clear mandate from the integrity contact point.
  - supporting the integrity contact point and publicising it internally.
  - evaluating the function of the integrity contact point.
- ▶ 2. organise prevention, training and awareness-raising.
- ▶ 3. establish an **advisory body** that can provide advice to the board and to the integrity contact point in the sports federation.
- ▶ 4. enforce one or more **codes of conduct**, depending on the context.
- ▶ 5. have a **protocol of action** so that a clear roadmap of procedures are available in the event of questions, reports or incidents.
- ▶ 6. put in place a **disciplinary system**, specifically for harassment and abuse by:
  - including in the disciplinary regulations of the sports federation a section on harassment and abuse.
  - having a disciplinary body in place which can take protective measures, enforce sanctions or make a referral to such a body.
- ▶ 7. implement an integrity policy **at the club level** through **sports club support** by encouraging the use of easily accessible contact persons, codes of conduct and a protocol of action in its sports clubs.

With respect to **criminal records** there is no further regulation/law/policy than the one at the federal level to require the system for a criminal records check to be used in the sports sector. It is referred to as a possible measure in recruitment policies in sport. The Centre for Ethics in Sport advice is in favour of doing this.

---

<sup>7</sup> YAPAKA is the name of the cross-cutting program for the Prevention of Abuse. It also relates to a team of eight people managing its coordination on a daily basis, the development of a training offer being one of their tasks.

**A code on good governance** is implemented in the decree on Healthy and Ethics in Sports. It can be found here in English: [https://kics.sport.vlaanderen/Sportfederaties/Documents/160711\\_Code\\_of\\_good\\_governance\\_in\\_Flemish\\_sports\\_federations.pdf](https://kics.sport.vlaanderen/Sportfederaties/Documents/160711_Code_of_good_governance_in_Flemish_sports_federations.pdf)

It consists of 43 principles, doping and match fixing are two of them, but not safeguarding.

In 2018 a set of model documents was drafted to guide sports federations in their integrity policy and codes of conduct. <https://kics.sport.vlaanderen/Pages/Info.aspx?DocID=KICS-30-161>

The International Centre for Ethics in Sport (ICES) is an expert centre, recognised by the Flemish ministry of Sport, within the decree on Healthy and Ethical Sports, to inform, sensitise and support Flemish sport organisations in all their activities concerning ethical issues in sport. **It is the primary policy partner to develop and implement safeguarding policies and tools.** Their main objectives are:

- ▶ To act as a knowledge centre in the field of sport ethics.
- ▶ To monitor and evaluate existing practices.
- ▶ To translate information, expertise and knowledge into relevant new practices for sport organisations.
- ▶ To support the Flemish government with regard to sport ethics.
- ▶ To raise public awareness among Flemish sport organisations to take action concerning ethical issues in sport.

According to the decree on the Recognition and Subsidisation of the Organised Sports Sector the integrity contact point (ICP) is the person(s) (or organisation) who act as contact point for cases of safeguarding, harassment and abuse that harms an individual's physical, psychological and sexual integrity. The ICP shall be in charge of:

- ▶ **offering initial support:** acting as a contact point in cases and recording reports.
- ▶ making a **referral**, if necessary.
- ▶ **coordinating internal procedures** to promote the integrity of individuals, more specifically the monitoring of the protocol of action.
- ▶ **offering prevention and support** to combat forms of harassment and abuse, raising awareness and supporting the sports federation and its sports clubs by proposing measures to optimise the prevention policy on safeguarding and internal procedures.

Since 2018 the appointment, by the recognised sports federations, of an **integrity contact point** has been active. This means that 70+ Flemish sport federations have one or more integrity contact points at the federation level.

Model profiles for safeguarding officers have been made, e.g. based on the profiles of the Dutch vertrouwenscontactpersonen, and are available for sports federations to use, and are used by ICES for their training courses:

- ▶ Profile Safeguarding Officer (federation) <https://kics.sport.vlaanderen/Pages/Info.aspx?DocID=KICS-30-159>
- ▶ Manual Safeguarding Officer (federation) <https://kics.sport.vlaanderen/Pages/Info.aspx?DocID=KICS-30-163>
- ▶ Profile Club Welfare Officer [http://ethicsandsport.com/images/uploads/downloads/Profielomschrijving\\_Club-API.docx](http://ethicsandsport.com/images/uploads/downloads/Profielomschrijving_Club-API.docx)
- ▶ Manual Club Welfare Officer can be provided if necessary, but is not a public document.

ICES develops and provides training for different target groups. ICES also provides case support and guidance for safeguarding officers in the federations. For training of coaches ICES works among others, with the Flemish Trainers School. The following basic training courses which lasts three hours each, have been developed and include **“Sport With Boundaries”**; **“Time Out Against Bullying”**; **“Sport Parent(al) Behaviour: Tips and Guidance”** and **“Towards Safeguarding Policy: A Toolkit for Clubs”**. In addition, two specialist training courses have been developed; **“Getting Started as Club Welfare Officer” (three hours)** and **Getting Started as a Club Welfare Officer” (two days)**. A more detailed descriptions of these courses are found in Appendix 3.

## German-speaking Community

The Decree on **the Centre for the Healthy Development of Children from 31 of March 2014**, takes care of **child welfare from 0-20 years in every aspect of life, including sport**.

The separate sports decree is from 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2004.

**Leaders of sports** camps must request a **police clearance** certificate from their community. This document will show whether the person has been in conflict with the law. If this is the case, the person is no longer allowed to perform the function of caring for children and youth (Art. 27 of the Sports Decree from 19<sup>th</sup> April 2004).

The German-speaking community has a **code of conduct** for competitive athletes, who have to agree to act according to general ethical principles (Article 22 § 10 in the Sports Decree).

They don't have any child safeguarding officers in place and therefore no job descriptions. There is also no training.

**Concluding remarks:** As indicated above, the policy for the protection of children in sports differs between the communities. Except for The German-speaking Community, Belgium is quite advanced with respect to different actions taken to protect children and youth in sport over the last 10-15 years. Common for both the Federation Wallonia-Brussels and Flanders is the cross-sectorial approach within the ministries/ public authorities/stakeholders - a Project Committee, supported by a Steering Committee for the Prevention of Abuse in Federation Wallonia-Brussels and the Flemish Youth and Children's Rights 4-year Policy Plan in Flanders.

The cross-sectorial approach can have benefits, but there is always a chance that the field of sport can be downplayed or drowned out when all sectors are covered. However, both the Federation Wallonia-Brussels and Flanders have sport specific decrees that have consequences for safeguarding, with slightly different approaches. Both communities have relatively new decrees, which have either just been implemented, or are going to be implemented soon. With respect to safeguarding, Flanders appears to have the longest history of participating in the development of the Panathlon International Declaration on Ethics in Youth Sports in 2004. They also seem to have developed a larger curriculum with respect to courses on safeguarding for diverse groups, which should be built upon in the development of the roadmap (s). The International Centre for Ethics in Sport (ICES) is an expert centre, which also should be valuable to draw upon in the future work. The main challenge is to develop one Belgian roadmap for safeguarding children in sport that takes into account the difference between the communities.

## APPENDIX 1<sup>8</sup>

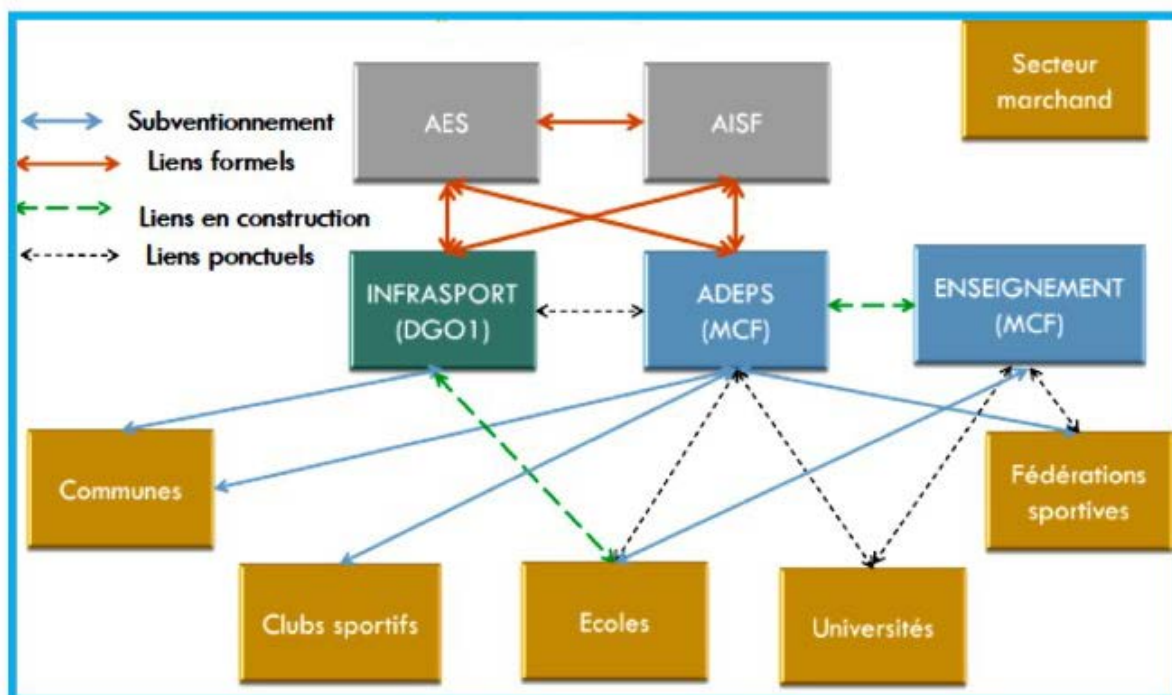


Figure 2. Les acteurs liés au sport

*Note pour les figures 2 à 5:*  
 Cases bleues : Administrations de la Communauté française  
 Cases vertes : Administrations de la Région wallonne  
 Cases grises : collaborateurs réguliers  
 Cases brunes : autres types de collaborateurs

- ▶ AES: non-profit making association uniting, representing and defending the interests of Sports Centres in the Federation Wallonia-Brussels and the German-speaking Community.
- ▶ AISF: non-profit making association uniting, representing and defending the interests of the Sport federations in the Federation Wallonia-Brussels and the German-speaking Community.
- ▶ Infrasport: the Sports Infrastructures Department of Wallonia.
- ▶ ADEPS: the Sport administration of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels.

8 Synthèse des résultats du processus HEPA-PAT (Health Enhancing Physical Activity - Policy audit Tool) en Belgique francophone et germanophone. <http://hdl.handle.net/2268/233546>



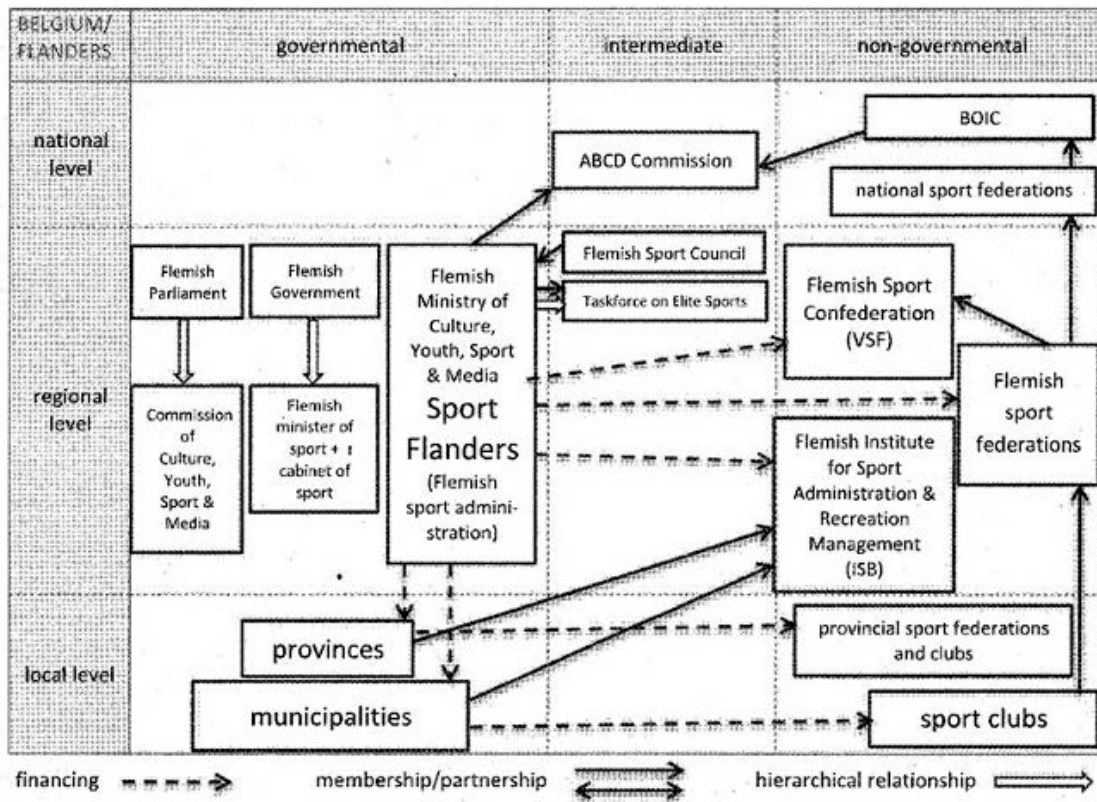


Figure 1. The organisation of sports in Belgium and Flanders.

Legend: ABCD Commission: consultation Adeps, Sport Flanders, BOIC and German-speaking Community; Adeps: Administration of Physical Education, Sport & Life Open Air (Administration de l'Éducation physique, du Sport et de la Vie en Plein Air of the French-speaking Community); BOIC: Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee.)

Source<sup>9</sup>: van Poppel, M., Claes, E., & Scheerder, J. (2018). Sport policy in Flanders (Belgium). *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 10(2), 271-285.

9 Today the provinces have no role in sports policy (although they still have programs in leisure/tourism which is related to sports and health programs, e.g. a network of touristic walking routes). The financing of the municipalities from the ministry of Sport with a specific budget for sports policy has been removed. This budget has been included in the general subsidy of the Government of Flanders to each municipality, but with no guarantee that this money is used for sports.



## APPENDIX 3

### TRAINING COURSES FOR DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS DEVELOPED BY ICES (FLANDERS)

#### Basic training: “Sport With Boundaries”

- ▶ Awareness raising about SHA in sport
- ▶ Understand types, signs and indicators of SHA in sport
- ▶ Learn how to recognise and respond to concerns of SHA in sport

Format: face-to-face workshop

Duration: 3 hours

Target group: coaches, club management, club welfare officers

#### Basic training: “Time Out against Bullying”

- ▶ Awareness raising about (cyber)bullying in sport
- ▶ Understand types, signs and indicators of (cyber)bullying in sport
- ▶ Learn how to recognise and respond to concerns of (cyber)bullying in sport

Format: face-to-face workshop

Duration: 3 hours

Target group: coaches, club management, club welfare officers

#### Basic training: “Sport Parent(al) Behaviour: Tips and Guidance”

- ▶ Awareness raising about sport parents and poor parental behaviour
- ▶ Understand types, signs and indicators of poor parental behaviour
- ▶ Learn how to recognise and respond to concerns of poor parental behaviour

Format: face-to-face workshop

Duration: 3 hours

Target group: coaches, club management, club welfare officers

#### Basic training: “Towards Safeguarding Policy: a Toolkit for Clubs”

- ▶ Learn about the importance of a club safeguarding policy
- ▶ Learn how to assess your own club
- ▶ Learn how to develop and implement a club safeguarding policy

Format: face-to-face workshop

Duration: 3 hours

Target group: club management

#### Specialist training: “Getting Started as Club Welfare Officer”

The “Sport With Boundaries” training is a pre-requisite to enrol for this course.

- ▶ Learn about what a Club Welfare Officer is and does
- ▶ Learn about how the Club Welfare Officer fits into the wider Club Safeguarding Policy
- ▶ Learn how to respond to concerns of harassment and abuse
- ▶ Learn how to work in collaboration with legislative and statutory agencies

Format: face-to-face workshop

Duration: 3 hours

Target group: club welfare officers

**Specialist training: “Getting Started as Safeguarding Officer (federation)”**

- ▶ Learn about what a safeguarding officer is and does
- ▶ Learn about how to develop and implement a Federation Safeguarding Policy
- ▶ Learn about how the safeguarding officer fits into the wider Federation Safeguarding Policy
- ▶ Learn how to respond to concerns of harassment and abuse
- ▶ Learn how to work in collaboration with legislative and statutory agencies

Format: face-to-face workshop

Duration: 2 days

Target group: safeguarding officers (federation)





Warm thanks to everyone who has contributed to the development of the roadmap, in particular **Olivier Courtin**, **Abigaël Lucas**, **Stéphanie Baclin** and **Elena Popirayko** from the Sport Administration (ADEPS) of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels (FWB), **Bernard Moreau** from **Terra Moveo**, **Anne Tiivas** and **Kari Fasting** from Safe Sport International and to the FWB core group and steering committee members.

## ” Up your game, strengthen your squad!

[www.coe.int/CSiS](http://www.coe.int/CSiS)

 @sport\_coe



“Child Safeguarding in Sport” (CSiS) aims to strengthen the ability of partner countries to prevent violence against children and to promote their well-being in sport, by developing effective child safeguarding in sport policies that ensure safe, positive and empowering sport environments for all children. Activities include:

- Designing country-specific roadmaps which include concrete steps for setting up positions of Child Safeguarding Officers in sport.
- Updating and extending the existing online resource centre with examples of practices and initiatives to cover all forms of violence and abuse against children in sport.



PREMS 07/322

BEL

The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Member States of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

<http://europa.eu>

European Commission (Erasmus+) & Council of Europe (Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport)

Co-funded  
by the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented  
by the Council of Europe