



Strasbourg, 6 October 2020

EPAS(2020)50

## **“Impact of COVID-19 on sport: how to address new challenges in Europe”**

Public Webinar organised by EPAS

Wednesday, 7 October 2020  
11:30 – 13:00

Venue:  
Online via Kudo

### **Concept note**

## **Background**

As sports continues to start up again after unprecedented lockdowns, many operational and organisational shifts have occurred to allow for sport to be practised in a context of this pandemic. Even at the peak of the crisis, allowing sport and physical activity was a major concern for governments, illustrating how they are essential for health and therefore questioning a “right to sport” in all circumstances.

Nonetheless, a survey conducted by EPAS in May shows that sport has been badly impacted, and that recovery will take time. If governments and sports organisations have implemented solutions to maintain the population’s physical activity, results are ambivalent. On the one hand, some non-active people became active, taking advantage of new opportunities to keep fit at home. On the other hand, it seems that for other people, especially children, the lockdowns increased sedentary lifestyles.

The crisis has challenged sport in every way. Various studies show to what extent the sports sector has been heavily impacted since the beginning of this crisis and this will not be limited to the problems encountered during lockdown. Many grassroots sport stakeholders have already suffered from the economic crisis and would need support to recover. Suspension of activities has had repercussions on facilities and recruitment by sports structures,<sup>1</sup> events and competitions have been postponed or cancelled,<sup>2</sup> therefore having negative consequences on their revenue. Despite the decrease or suspension of activity, structures seem to have managed to maintain relations with their volunteers and members, even during confinement and in a context of activities being restricted. Associations developed new ways of sharing with their volunteers and members, sometimes proposing new remote activities.

In this context, one can observe an increasingly unequal access to sport by different groups, depending on their environment and socio-economical level. Participation in sport will be affected by an increasing social gap, hence a reminder of the importance to promote sport for all. In the mid- to long-term perspective, these issues need more assessment and attention by public authorities. Undertaking a reflection on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will allow for future preparation, monitoring and evaluation of sports policies in the later stages of the Covid-19 pandemic and during any future temporary suspension of sport practices caused by health crises or any other reasons.

## **Objectives**

To further explore these challenges, EPAS is delighted to welcome institutional and civil society experts to a Webinar on 7 October 2020. This diverse panel will reflect on the impacts of Covid-19 on sport, assuming this unprecedented situation will affect the organisation of sport and that it could be an opportunity for new ambitions. Among other topics, this Webinar will focus on new modes of practice and question the current and future solidarity between

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<sup>1</sup> <https://agirpourlesportamateur.fr/resultats>

<sup>2</sup> [https://lemouvementassociatif.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/03/LMA\\_note\\_plaidoyer\\_COVID19\\_avril2020.pdf](https://lemouvementassociatif.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/03/LMA_note_plaidoyer_COVID19_avril2020.pdf)

sport stakeholders. Participants will discuss the impact of the crisis on sport and reflect on the valuable lessons we can take from the management of the COVID-19 crisis for the future.

More concretely, the discussions will contribute to identifying key principles of action in the area of sport and physical activity in times of Covid-19 and will support EPAS in its work on this topic.

## **Speakers**

The webinar will be chaired and moderated by Alexandre Husting, Chair of EPAS Governing Board.

Speakers include representatives and experts from the Council of Europe, national institutions, organised sport and civil society:

- Ms Snežana Samardžić-Marković, *Director General of Democracy at the Council of Europe*
- Mr Hoss Rafaty, *Secretary General of World Taekwondo Federation*
- Mr Stewart Harris, *Chief Executive of sportscotland (National Agency for Sport)*
- Ms Wanda Wendel-Vos, *Researcher from the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (Netherlands)*
- Mr Detlef Dumon, *Executive Director of the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICCSPE)*

## **Structure and practical arrangements of the webinar**

The webinar is scheduled to last 90 minutes with 60 minutes reserved for speakers' interventions, followed by 30 minutes reserved for questions and discussions. As a public webinar, participants will be invited to pose questions through the chat function of the Kudo online platform which will be used for the webinar and presented to the speakers by the chair of the webinar.

The webinar will be held with simultaneous interpretation in French and English.