

Diversity Conference on Sport and intergenerational challenges for young people and older persons

21 October 2025, Strasbourg (France) / Online

Speakers' biographies

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

Hanne Juncher

Director, Directorate of Security, Integrity and Rule of Law, Council of Europe



Opening statement

Before becoming Director of Security, Integrity and Rule of Law, Hanne was the Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and in charge of the Council of Europe's action against economic crime, including MONEYVAL and large-scale technical assistance programmes on economic crime.

Before that she headed the Council of Europe's work on justice and legal co-operation, including the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), on private and public law, and on judicial reform.

Prior to that, she worked for the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), represented the Council of Europe in North Macedonia, and headed the Council of Europe's human rights support and awareness-raising work.

Hanne joined the Council of Europe as a legal adviser in 1997. She also worked for the Ministries of Defence of Denmark and the United Kingdom. She has postgraduate degrees in law from Copenhagen and Essex Universities.

Solène Charuau

Chair of the EPAS Governing Board, Council of Europe



Opening statement (only available in French)

Solène Charuau is a senior official at the French Ministry of Sports, Youth and Community Life, where she leads the International Department. With over 20 years of experience in European affairs and public policy in the fields of sport and youth, she plays a central role in France's international co-operation strategy in sport. She coordinated the European and international roadmap of the Ministry for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games and led key initiatives during the French Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2022.

Solène currently serves as Chair of the Bureau of the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) and also chairs the EPAS Working Group on European Sports Charter (ESC) monitoring visits. She has contributed directly to ESC monitoring missions in Portugal and Morocco and regularly represents France in multilateral negotiations.

In addition to her extensive institutional experience, Solène is a frequent speaker at high-level international conferences on sport policy, youth cooperation, and European governance. She holds a Master's degree in European Project Management and a Political Science degree from Sciences Po Grenoble, and is fluent in French and highly proficient in English.

Luca Wernert

Vice Chair of ENGSO Youth & Board member of the German Sports Youth



Statement

As a member of the board of the German Sports Youth (dsj) and Vice Chair of ENGSO Youth, Luca Wernert is dedicated to promote youth participation in sport at all levels. With a constant eye on grassroots sport, his work focuses on topics such as education, health promotion, inclusion and European cooperation, using sport as a unifying tool. The 27-year-old has a professional background in communications and public relations. He lives in Karlsruhe, south-west of Germany.

Cor Spreeuwenberg

Vice-president of the European Seniors' Union (ESU)



Statement

Cor Spreeuwenberg (1944) started his career as an airforce officer. He combined it with studying medicine. In 1972 he graduated as a doctor. He worked as GP, editor-in-chief of the weekly journal of the Dutch Medical Association, professor in integrated chronic care, dean of the Health Science Faculty of Maastricht University and member of the Dutch Health Counsel. At present he is vice-president of the European Seniors Union.

Jean-Michel Oprendeck

Former National Technical Director of the French Fencing Federation (FFE) and senior sports expert with the French Ministry of Sports and the French National Olympic Committee (CNOSF)



Statement

Jean-Michel Oprendeck is a fencer, coach, and senior French sports official, Knight of the Legion of Honor, who has devoted more than 45 years to serving sport within the Ministries of Defense and Sports. National Technical Director of the French Fencing Federation (FFE) during the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles—where the entire team returned with medals—he also held key positions within the French National Olympic and Sports Committee (CNOSF) and the French National Institute of Sport, Expertise, and Performance (INSEP), while steering national policy on centers of excellence. A fencing masters trainer, president of the *Fédération nationale des Joinvillais*, vice-president of the *Comité français Pierre de Coubertin* and the *Académie d'Armes de France*, he embodies a deep commitment to sports ethics and the transmission of Olympic values.

Ana Japaridze

Paralympic Medallist and Youth European Games Champion, Georgia



Statement

I'm Ana Japaridze, 20 years old, from Georgia. I am a FLEX finalist and graduated from both American and Georgian high schools. I'm a Paris 2024 Paralympic medalist and Youth European Games champion, with several other international medals. Through programs organized by Mobility International USA (MIUSA), I have experience and knowledge that I continue to use to raise awareness and promote inclusion in sports. In 2024, I was awarded the Order of Honor by the then-president of Georgia for my achievements in sport and advocacy.

Dovilė Šeduikytė-Suslavičienė

Head of Sports Group, LRT, Lithuania



Sports journalist from Lithuania, covering various sports for 12 years now. Worked at National broadcaster for 5 years and in 2025 was appointed the Head of newly formed Sports group, that gathered TV, Radio and News sites sports desks into one. Covered Tokyo and Paris Olympics, World football, swimming, athletics, basketball, figure skating championships. Figure skating commentator. The Journalism major at Vilnius university. Awarded the best Lithuanian sports journalist in 2022.

Antonio Parrilla

Member of the EPAS Governing Board Bureau, Italy



Presentation (available in English and Italian)

Antonio Parrilla is an official at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Department for Sport, focusing on international affairs, studies and research. He is currently a member of the Bureau of the Council of Europe's EPAS, Vice-Chair of the European Commission's OMC Group on hate speech in sport, Deputy Head of the Italian Delegation to the Saint-Denis Convention, and member of the Italian delegations to the Macolin, CAHAMA and T-DO conventions. He also teaches at the University of Rome Tor Vergata on emergency communication and disinformation, and has lectured for international organisations including the WHO. In 2005, he was awarded the honour of Knight of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic.

Stefano Gobbi

Head of Community Sport, Social Projects and the Non-Profit Sector, Italy



Presentation

Graduated in Law from the University of Modena. During his studies, he began his career as a football referee and became actively involved in the non-profit sector through the *Centro Sportivo Italiano*, an Italian NGO. Over more than thirty years of commitment to the Italian non-profit world, he has worked on public policies in the fields of sport, social affairs, wellbeing and health, culture, theatre, tourism, events, and the environment.

In the field of sport, he has acquired extensive managerial experience, dealing with the promotion and organisation of amateur sport, marketing and communication, the management of sports facilities, financial instruments, and public relations. He is also a registered journalist.

He has served on the boards of the banking foundations of Modena and *Con il Sud* in Rome, as well as of the *Ente Nazionale Teatro* ERT and the National Third Sector Forum. He lectures as a professor and expert in several university master's programmes in sport management and acts as a consultant on various inter-institutional committees.

Since 2022, he has been Head of the Social Projects and Third Sector Department at *Sport e Salute S.p.A.*, the state-owned company entrusted by the Italian Government with implementing national sports policies and promoting grassroots sport and healthy lifestyles throughout the country.

A long-standing advocate of innovation, he has promoted the establishment of WeSportUP, Italy's first accelerator hub for innovative start-ups in the fields of sport and health. A passionate enthusiast of history, classical music and contemporary art, he lives and works in Rome.

Conor Maher

Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, Ireland



Presentation

Conor Maher is an Administrative Officer at the Department of Culture, Communications, and Sport in Ireland. With a background in Economics and public policy, he works in the Sports Policy division and has a particular focus on increasing participation in sport.

Karen Cotter

National Co-ordinator, Active School Flag, Ireland



Presentation

[Video with subtitles](#) | [Video without subtitles](#)

Karen Cotter is the National Coordinator of the Active School Flag (ASF) programme in Ireland since 2011. She has overseen the evolution of the initiative from its' infancy to the present day where it forms part of Ireland's Programme for Government and vision for a Healthy Ireland. Key to the success of this programme is its' ability to 'fit' in to the school day and to adapt and change in response to challenges and opportunities, as they

arise.

Karen has a wealth of knowledge and experience in designing whole-of-school initiatives that prioritise participation, inclusion and fun while at the same time incentivising, encouraging and supporting teachers to integrate physical activity with teaching and learning. She looks forward to the further expansion of the ASF programme to the post primary sector (ages 12 – 19 years) later this year. This new process is anchored by student voice and student leadership, based on the belief that young people are best placed to find ways to encourage young people to become more active, more often.

Karen has a degree in Physical Education and English as well as a Master of Science, awarded by the University of Limerick.

Ana Japaridze

Paralympic Medallist and Youth European Games Champion, Georgia

See page 3.

Gianluca Esposito

Director General, Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe



Gianluca Esposito has been Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe since 1 August 2024.

He was previously the Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Prior to this, he served as Executive Secretary of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), Head of the Crime Problems Department, and Head of the Equality and Human Dignity Department.

Gianluca started his career at the Council of Europe in 1995 where he was involved in the negotiation of several conventions and other legal instruments, in the areas of nationality, anti-corruption, cybercrime, the efficiency of justice, combating trafficking in human beings, money laundering, terrorism and its financing. From 2005 to 2009, he was an adviser in the Private Office of the Council of Europe's Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General. Gianluca served as the Council of Europe's first Ethics Officer.

From 2009 to 2015, Gianluca was as a Senior Counsel in the Legal Department of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington, DC.

Solène Charuau

Chair of the EPAS Governing Board, Council of Europe

[Presentation](#) (only available in French)

See page 1.

Denis Roussier

President, French Federation for Sports Retirement (FFRS)



[Presentation](#) (only available in French)

[Video](#) (only available in French)

Retired from the French civil service in the field of urban planning. (73 years old)

- President of the La Rochelle Sports Retirement Club from 2016 to 2021
- Hiking and swingolf (simplified golf) instructor and facilitator
- President of the FFRS for the past year

Patrik Peroša

Member of the EPAS Consultative Committee Bureau, International Dance Organization



Presentation

Video

Mr Patrik Peroša, MSc, is a dedicated professional in the field of sport and physical activity, committed to promoting active lifestyles as a foundation for health, inclusion, lifelong learning, social cohesion and sustainable development. His work spans from local communities to European and global cooperation frameworks, connecting people and ideas through sport and active lifestyles.

With over two decades of experience across Sport for All, Elite Sport, Institutional Sport, Company Sport and University Sport, he works to bridge policy, research and practice in creating inclusive and evidence-based environments that encourage participation and lifelong engagement in physical activity and sport.

Believing in the social value of movement – its capacity to connect generations, strengthen communities and inspire positive change – he continues to advocate through numerous European and international initiatives for active living as an essential part of everyday life and a shared responsibility for a healthier future.

Cor Spreeuwenberg

President of the European Seniors' Union (ESU)

See page 2.

Ioanna Paraskevopoulou

Member of the EPAS Governing Board Bureau, Cyprus



Presentation

Ioanna Paraskevopoulou is an EU and International Affairs Officer at the Cyprus Sports Organisation. She studied Physical Education and Sport Science (University of Athens, Greece, 1995) and holds an MBA from the University of Cyprus (2009).

She has been employed by the Cyprus Sport Organisation since 1997, first in the National Sports for All department and then, since 2011, in the EU and International Affairs department.

She has been actively involved in EU matters mainly as national representative in the EU's Working Party on Sports since 2011 and has vice-chaired it during Cyprus' Presidency in 2012. Moreover, she has been a member of the EU expert groups with regards to "Sport and Health", HEPA Focal Points Group" and "Strengthening the recovery and the crisis resilience of the sport sector during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic".

Her expertise has been developed during the last 15 years in EU projects development, administration and management in topics such as sport and physical activity, good governance and volunteering in sport. Furthermore, since 2015 she has been the National Coordination of the European Week of Sport initiative in Cyprus.

From June 2022 to May 2025, she was an elected member of the EPAS Bureau, where she also served as the Gender Equality Rapporteur for the Governing Board. Since May 2025, she has been the elected Vice-Chair of the EPAS Bureau for the Governing Board. Furthermore, she was designated as the National Coordinator for the implementation of the EU – CoE joint project, “All In Plus Project.”

Annamarie Phelps

Member of the EPAS Consultative Committee Bureau, European Olympic Committee



Presentation

Annamarie Phelps CBE OLY is Co-Chair of the Global Executive of the International Working Group on Women and Sport [IWG], the largest global network for the advancement of gender equality in sport and Vice Chair of the British Olympic Association. In September 2025 she was elected Vice-President of World Rowing for the period 2026-2029. As a member of European Olympic

Committees Executive Committee, she chairs the EOC Sustainability & Active Society Commission and represents the European Olympic Movement on the Bureau of EPAS at the Council of Europe.

Annamarie is committed to improving the accessibility of sport, to integrity and good governance, and to addressing the gender imbalance in sport, and has a particular interest in safeguarding in sport. She has previously served on the Legal and Ethics Committee of the IPC, the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Commissions of IOC and ANOC, IOC Education Commission.

She has previously held roles of President European Rowing; Chair, British Rowing; Vice Chair British Paralympic Association, and independent chair of the national Safeguarding Adults in Sport Strategic Partnership. Annamarie chaired the British Horseracing Authority, the governing and regulatory body for horseracing overseeing development in safeguarding practices, governance, an industry-wide commitment to Diversity and Inclusion and steering the sport successfully through the pandemic as the UK's first major professional sport to return to competition. In 2016-17 she chaired the Independent Review into the culture and climate of British Cycling's high-performance programme.

A former World Champion in Women's Lightweight Coxless Fours and indoor rowing, Annamarie represented Great Britain in the women's eight at the Atlanta Olympic Games, 1996 and was athlete representative throughout her competitive career. She was awarded a CBE for services to rowing in 2016.

Martina Dinkova

Member of the EPAS Governing Board, Bulgaria



Presentation

Martina Dinkova is currently a Senior Expert at the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Bulgaria, where she coordinates the Youth and Sport Working Group within Bulgaria's EU Coordination Mechanism. In this role, she ensures Bulgaria's active participation in the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council of the EU and represents the Ministry in the Governing Board of the Council of

Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport.

In addition to her government career, she has been actively engaged in the non-governmental sector, serving as Secretary General of the European Youth Movement Bulgaria for five years.

Academically, Martina holds a Master's degree in Cultural Liaisons and Geopolitics of the EU and a Bachelor's degree in European Studies from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Her expertise is further demonstrated through her involvement in numerous Erasmus+ projects, authorship of a White Paper on Youth Volunteering, and participation in international conferences and youth initiatives.

She is a young and enthusiastic professional, dedicated to contributing to the development of sport and youth policies.

Helen Vost

International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA)



Presentation

Videos

Helen has been a Vice-President of the International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) since 2021.

She is also Managing Director of Youth Sport Trust International, a sport for development charity based in the United Kingdom which works globally to improve the life-chances of young people using the inspirational power, of play, physical activity, physical education and sport.

Youth Sport Trust International has been a partner with ISCA on a number of EU Erasmus+ sport funded projects including Generations Uniting through Movement (GUM). This intergenerational project brought young and older people together to take part in physical activity sessions to improve their health and wellbeing and build positive relationships across differing age groups.

Ana Japaridze

Paralympic Medallist and Youth European Games Champion, Georgia

See page 3.

Cor Spreeuwenberg
Vice-president of the European Seniors' Union (ESU)

See page 2.

Charlotte Girard-Fabre
Chair of the EPAS Consultative Committee



Closing statement (in English and French)

Charlotte Girard-Fabre is a French sports leader and international expert in officiating, gender equality, and governance in sport.

She currently serves as Chair of the Consultative Committee of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) of the Council of Europe, President of the French Multisport Referees Association (AFCAM), Secretary General & CEO of the International Federation for Sports Officials (IFSO), and Board Member of the French National Olympic and Sports Committee (CNOSF).

A former Olympic and World Championship ice hockey referee, she has dedicated her career to promoting integrity, diversity, and inclusion in sport, as well as to supporting the recognition and development of referees and umpires worldwide.

Beyond sport, she works as a management consultant and leadership advisor, helping organisations and decision-makers strengthen collective performance through fairness, accountability, and trust.

Charlotte Girard-Fabre was awarded the title of Chevalier of the Ordre National du Mérite (France, 2025) in recognition of her national and international contributions to sport and society.

Francine H. Raveney
EPAS Deputy Executive Secretary, Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe



Francine Hetherington Raveney is an expert in the fields of: sport policy, gender equality, diversity, project management, script analysis, audiovisual co-productions, and communication, amongst others. She obtained a Masters Degree in English and French Literature at The Queen's College, Oxford University (1992-1996), a Masters Degree in Women's Studies at The Queen's College, Oxford University (1996-1997) and then carried out doctoral studies in France in politics and literature at Strasbourg University (1997-1998).

Since 2000, she has worked in a number of international organisations, including the Council of Europe, where she was a project manager for the Eurimages film fund for 11 years (2009-2020), and WHO Europe (2004-2005) where she was a Managing Editor. She is the founder, former Executive Director and

currently an Honorary Member of the European Women's Audiovisual (EWA) Network. She is also a member of the New Dawn Film Fund jury and regularly teaches pitching and gives presentations at festivals and universities throughout Europe.

Since April 2021 she has worked as the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), where she oversees resources, works with the Governing Board and partner organisations to ensure that topical thematic activities (such as gender equality, diversity, integrity and good governance in sport) and conferences (e.g. on combating gender-based violence in sport) are dealt with smoothly and effectively.