

In my personal capacity and as EPAS chair I can only heartily welcome the fact that human rights in sport have become an increasingly permanent concern.

Obviously, the issue of respect for human rights in sport is a complex area, because of the wide scope of potential human rights violations in sport. As we heard this morning, when we discussed the right to a fair trial, the rights of young migrant athletes, racism or gender equality and other issues. A non-exhaustive selection. Other aspects would have deserved some attention, such as the right of disabled athletes or children's rights or the respect of human rights by the countries bidding for the organisation of major sporting events.

If the field of potential violations in sport is wide, so is the field of relevant stakeholders, as it involves private sports federations and States. While respecting the autonomy of sport, to which we are also very committed.

At the level of the Council of Europe, we can only be proud of the adoption of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in 1950, and the fact that this Convention is now more and more often mobilised to guarantee the fundamental rights of athletes. At the EPAS level, the topic of human rights in sport has also been a constant concern since the 2010s and with the example of the adoption, by the Ministers responsible, in 2018 of the resolution on "Protection of human rights in sport: Shared obligations and responsibilities".

Human rights also remain one of the central pillars of the European Sports Charter currently under revision, with the Chapter 6 covering the topic very exhaustively.

It is of course unfortunate that, as soft law, this Charter, these resolutions and declarations are not “very” binding, but they nevertheless reflect the fact that the issue of human rights in sport is becoming increasingly important in people's minds and in the public debate.

Today's seminar will obviously not be a one shot topic among others, the topic of human rights will remain high on the agenda of the Council of Europe and EPAS, and many avenues to ensure follow-up have already been outlined such as studies, data collection, collaborations with different stakeholders and other public events.

In conclusion, I would say that significant progress have been made in recent years to ensure that the issue of human rights in sport is more often taken into account, but much remains to be done and we must now work to reduce the gaps between declarations and the reality. Sport can certainly not change the world, but it can certainly contribute to it, it is up to everyone to do their part to advance human rights in sport and in society.

This concludes my intervention and I would also like to thank all the speakers and participants, the secretariat and the interpreters and I wish you a good afternoon.