

**Speaking points for the opening of the  
EPAS International Women's Day Event:  
Breakfast Roundtable on women's health and sport  
by Gianluca Esposito,  
Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law  
Friday 7 March at 9:30  
Room 7, Palais de l'Europe**

Welcome participants to the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Breakfast Roundtable of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), held on the occasion of International Women's Day. The event serves as a reminder of the need to continue promoting women's rights and gender equality in sport.

And, while it's good that the Paris Olympics were the most gender equal of all, gender inequality in sport remains staggering.

The joint EU-CoE project "*All In Plus: promoting greater gender equality in sport*" which concluded last week showed clearly the persistent gender inequalities in sport across almost all disciplines and in many areas, including participation, and media sensitisation.

One startling piece of data from the project found that girls across all jurisdictions drop out of sport in large numbers around adolescence, and overall girls' and women's

participation in sport across all jurisdictions and disciplines only stands at 33% - despite the clear health benefits for women and girls participating in sport.

So we still have a lot of work to do. And EPAS will certainly continue working on this topic building on the results of this project.

Thank all involved with the project, including the country focal co-ordinators and network of journalists, among others.

Thank Luxembourg for hosting the closing event of the project, and for the active participation of the Minister responsible for Sport (Georges Mischo, who has also come to Strasbourg for other events during the Presidency).

Today provides an opportunity to dig deeper into areas with potential for further development.

Acknowledge the pioneering work done by EPAS in the area of equality and sport. This first awareness-raising and discussion session on women's health and sport – a subject so far overlooked at pan-European level - will lead the way for more concrete work.

This roundtable will also set the scene for the Annual EPAS Forum on Sport and Human Rights, taking place on 16 December, which will focus on sport and health and further develop the gender equality component.

Welcome the increased youth perspective in this breakfast roundtable, with representatives from the youth sector sharing their insight and experiences.

We are on a fast track of technological developments and evolution of practices in the field of health and sport, but the specificity for women and girls needs to be included in these discussions and developments.

Look forward to following EPAS' ongoing work in this area as an outcome of today's roundtable discussions.