Speaking notes by Mr Mogens Jensen, Monaco, 4 November 2026

Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

19th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport

Ministers, Secretary General, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

As we bring this conference to a close, I would like to return to its central ambition: a healthier and safer sport for all children.

Sport can give children confidence, friendships and a sense of belonging. But for too many, it can also mean bullying, discrimination, abuse or pressure to remain silent when something goes wrong.

Our responsibility is to make sure that safety, respect and dignity are the rule, not the exception. This requires effective safeguarding, clear responsibilities and reporting mechanisms that children can trust.

In Resolution 2607 and Recommendation 2297 on *Protecting human rights in and through sport: obligations and shared responsibilities*, the Parliamentary Assembly called for concrete action to protect human rights in and through sport, including stronger accountability and support for victims.

But we must also look at the environments in which sport takes place, and the leadership that shapes them.

Yesterday, the Parliamentary Alliance for Good Governance and Integrity in Sport met here in Monaco to discuss inclusive stadia, as we mark the 10th anniversary of the Council of Europe's Saint-Denis Convention. The Convention promotes an integrated approach to safety, security and services, placing people and their experience at the heart of sporting events.

Our discussion, with contributions from Football Supporters Europe and Athletic Club Bilbao, explored how these principles can work in practice.

A stadium should be a place where children can enjoy a match with their families, where women and girls feel welcome, and where nobody faces racism, sexism or intimidation. The same must be true of sports clubs, training grounds and changing rooms.

This brings me to good governance. When transparency, accountability and independent oversight are lacking, abuse can go unreported, complaints can be ignored and those responsible can escape scrutiny.

Good governance is not simply an institutional matter. It is a condition for protecting people in sport.

Recent developments in international football have underlined this point. In its September statement on the crisis in leadership, governance and integrity in international football, the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media raised serious concerns about FIFA's governance and called for an independent external review of its governance framework for major strategic initiatives. The Parliamentary Alliance will pursue these issues at a hearing in Paris on 1 December, to which we have invited FIFA alongside other key stakeholders.

Accountability and integrity must apply consistently across the entire sporting movement.

The decision by the International Weightlifting Federation to award Moscow the 2030 World Weightlifting Championships is deeply troubling. Equally concerning is the recent ruling paving the way for the return of Russian national teams to international ice hockey competitions.

At a time when Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues, these decisions risk lending legitimacy to a state responsible for ongoing violations of international law. In Resolution 2608 (2025), the Parliamentary Assembly made clear that the autonomy and neutrality of sport cannot justify silence or inaction in the face of serious violations of human rights and international law.

Individual athletes should not automatically be held responsible for their governments' actions. But this cannot justify the unconditional return of Russian national teams or the awarding of major sporting events to Russia while its aggression continues. International sports federations must uphold the values they claim to represent and ensure that human rights remain central to their decisions.

We believe that dialogue and scrutiny must go hand in hand. Sporting organisations must be accountable to the people affected by their decisions, and human rights must remain central to their work. This includes decisions about where major competitions are held, not just how sporting organisations are run.

Ministers, as you conclude this conference, I urge you to move beyond declarations of principle. Commit to concrete measures, clear responsibilities and measurable progress. Ensure that safeguarding systems work, that complaints can be raised safely and independently, and that victims receive support. Invest in prevention and inclusive sporting environments, and give children and young people a voice in decisions affecting them.

Use the Council of Europe's standards, including the Saint-Denis Convention, to share good practices and turn commitments into action. Work closely with your national parliaments to promote cooperation and follow-up at national level. Assess progress honestly and address shortcomings.

Ultimately, safer and more inclusive sport depends on responsible leadership, transparent decision-making and genuine accountability.

Let us work towards a sporting movement in which integrity is upheld, human rights are respected, discrimination is challenged and everyone, from athletes and

supporters to children taking their first steps in sport, can feel safe, respected and welcome. Thank you.