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19th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport

Monaco
3-4 November 2026

CONCEPT NOTE

prepared by

19th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport

Date: 3-4 November 2026

Place: Principality of Monaco

Responsible body: Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)

Theme: “Safer and healthier sport for all children”

Context and objectives of the conference

Sport is fulfilling for children and young people and depends on their engagement from an early age. It generates positive emotions and develops healthy habits as well as skills and attitudes that will be useful throughout their entire lives. Sport also contributes to the improvement of their physical and mental health. It boosts self-esteem and creates a sense of belonging. Through sport, at grassroots or high-performance level, children abide by key values and learn important skills in many areas.

However, sport’s full potential can only be realised if it offers a safe, participatory, and inclusive environment and offers children and young people the necessary conditions. Thus, it is crucial that they are protected from all forms of violence and discrimination, and that they are educated from an early age to avoid negative behaviours that can affect themselves, their teammates or other competitors. Sport is indeed also a place where violence and abuse of any kind may occur, with studies indicating that children experience various forms of violence within sport.

The protection of children against violence and abuse is a priority for the Council of Europe. The European Sports Charter notably aims to implement human rights in the field of sport, whereby sport should be values-based, accessible to all, and free from all forms of violence and discrimination. Children, in particular those in a vulnerable situation, must enjoy enhanced protection.

Through its flagship project “Start to Talk”, the Council of Europe’s Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) supports national authorities responsible for sport and sports organisations in improving their child safeguarding practices and sports governance. The project also promotes the participation of children in prevention and protection policy-making processes, as a way to empower them to exercise their own rights and to improve the effectiveness of public policies.

The assessment of the risks and benefits of sport for children will take into account a range of new challenges that threaten the full enjoyment of their human rights. It will also build on the findings of various Council of Europe studies and standards in this area. The growing role of information and communication technologies in everyday life has contributed to increasingly sedentary lifestyles. Children’s socialisation now takes place partly in digital environments, with video games playing a prominent role in their leisure time. This trend brings specific risks, including addiction (as underlined by the Pompidou Group) and cyber-bullying. In addition, appearance-focused sports or the relentless pursuit of performance may push children towards doping practices, which harm health and foster addiction, or towards the use of improper or counterfeit medical substances, which are targeted by the Medicrime Convention.

The 19th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport, to be held in Monaco, will provide an unparalleled opportunity to exchange best practices on measures to protect children against all forms of abuse and violence and to promote safe and healthy sporting environments for them.

These themes are aligned with the priorities of Monaco's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (May-November 2026).

These questions will be addressed on 4 November in two sessions of high relevance to Ministers responsible for sport under the following sub-topics:

- Under Sub-topic I, the Conference would address the means to prevent, detect and respond to violence and abuse, including cyber-bullying against children.
- Under Sub-topic II the Conference would consider a healthy sport, free from addiction and dangerous substances, as a means of protecting and promoting children's physical and mental health and well-being.

The 10th anniversary of the "Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and other Sports Events", commonly known as the [Saint-Denis Convention \(CETS No. 218\)](#) will be marked on 3 November with a half-day session.

Expected results from the conference

The Conference will provide Ministers with an opportunity to engage with other stakeholders on developing comprehensive systems for the prevention of, and protection against, violence and abuse of children in sport. It will also promote a shared vision of sport as a human-rights based, safe, and supportive environment for all children.

The event will result in a resolution reaffirming key principles and offering guidance for the Council of Europe's work on creating safer and healthier sporting environments for children, among two main lines:

a) Preventing, detecting, and responding to violence and abuse against children in sport, for example by:

- Implementing, at national level, measures by public authorities and sports organisations to protect children in sport.
- Clarifying responsibilities among stakeholders and providing appropriate training for all involved.
- Strengthening co-operation and trust between the various stakeholders.
- Gathering and sharing good practices for recruiting, training, and supervising staff and volunteers in sport.

Undertake efforts to prevent and combat all forms of violence, including cyber-bullying, which may occur in sport. Promoting sport as an activity that safeguards and enhances children's physical and mental health, for example by:

- Striking a healthy balance between performance goals and children's well-being.
- Preventing the use of drugs and doping substances.
- Developing sport as a safe, inclusive activity that fosters skills while respecting human and social rights.
- Identifying and promoting good practices that support children's mental health and well-being in sport.

- Consider ways to reduce the use of improper or fake medical substances by children in sport.

The conference outcomes will contribute to moving forward the international debate and co-operation between stakeholders by recommending new standards and tools for safer and healthier sport for all children, in full alignment with the Council of Europe's mission and priorities.

Conference participants

- 46 Council of Europe member States;
- EPAS non-Council of Europe member States: Israel, Morocco;
- Other States party to the European Cultural Convention: Holy See, Kazakhstan;
- Committee of Ministers;
- Parliamentary Assembly;

Guest

- European Union.

Observers

- Canada;
- Japan;
- Mexico;
- United States of America;
- World Anti-doping Agency (WADA);
- International Olympic Committee (IOC);
- International Paralympic Committee (IPC);
- Fédération internationale de football association (FIFA);
- United Nations agencies (UNESCO, joined, where appropriate, by representatives of other UN agencies e.g. UN Women, UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR, etc.);
- The Commonwealth of Nations;
- Monitoring Group of the Anti-Doping Convention (T-DO), Anti-Doping Convention (ETS No.135);
- Ad Hoc European Committee for the World Anti-Doping Agency (CAHAMA);
- Follow-up Committee of the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (T-MC Committee), Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (Macolin Convention, CETS No. 215);
- Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events (T-S4), Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (Saint-Denis Convention, CETS No. 218);
- Alice Milliat Foundation;
- The Association for International Sport for All (TAFISA Europe);
- Centre for Sport and Human Rights;
- European Association for Sport Management (EASM);
- European Athlete Student Network (EAS);
- European Athletes and Players Association (EAPA);
- European Athletic Association (European Athletics);
- European Fair Play Movement (EFPM);
- European Gay & Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF);
- European Network of Sport Education (ENSE);
- European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO);
- The European Olympic Committees (EOC);
- European Paralympic Committee (EPC);
- European Physical Education Association (EUPEA);
- European University Sports Association (EUSA);
- Fare network;

- International Automobile Federation (FIA);
- International Basketball Federation (FIBA);
- International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE);
- International Dance Organization (IDO);
- International Federation of Sport Officials (IFSO);
- International School Sports Federation (ISF);
- International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA);
- Panathlon International (PI);
- Peace and Sport;
- Play the Game (PTG);
- Rugby Europe;
- Sports Rights Owners Coalition (SROC);
- Union of European Football Associations (UEFA);
- World Snowboard Federation (WSF)

Budgetary Implications

The costs of the conference borne by the Organisation (as distinct to the costs borne by the host country) will be covered by the EPAS budget under its 2026-27 Programme of activities.