

**16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Responsible for Sport Ministers of the Council of Europe**

**Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**(10:00 – 11:30)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Session:**

**Unit 2: Human Rights in Sport**

**Welcome-Greeting by the Deputy Minister, Mr. Lefteris Avgenakis**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you to our virtual 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Council of Europe in Sport.

I would like to reiterate my regret that, unfortunately, because of the 2<sup>nd</sup> surge of the pandemic, affecting all the member-states of the Council, it was not feasible to host this meeting live in Athens!

I would have so much liked to host the proceedings of the Conference here, in Athens, in Greece, in the country that gave birth to the Olympic games and what are today the ecumenical values of the Olympic spirit and the Olympic ideal.

Following our first (opening) session on November 5<sup>th</sup>, today we are going to discuss with our distinguished speakers the subject of human rights in sport.

It is no coincidence that we chose Human Rights as the subject of our 2<sup>nd</sup> session of our Conference. It is a highly important and sensitive matter, an issue that preoccupies all democratic societies and constitutes an element of respect for the individual rights and freedoms and of the substantial operation of the rule of law.

I do not wish to take more of your time, I look forward to listening with great interest to the interventions by our distinguished speakers.

I wish to state that in Greece, we are organizing a wide meeting (via teleconference), with all sport bodies to discuss in due course the subject of human rights in sport.

I warmly thank you for your participation and I look forward to your interventions.

I also deeply thank the moderator of today's debate, Mr. André-Noël CHAKER. A personality with multiple talents, author, businessman, lawyer and economist. As a businessman, he has been the leading force in several companies, related to science, technology, gaming and sport.