

# **CoE Conference on Integrity in Sport**

**Rome – 6-7 December 2021**

## **Session 1 – Integrity Guidelines**

Keynote Speech  
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Distinguished participants and guests,  
Dear colleagues, partners and friends,

In July 2017, the Kazan Action Plan was adopted by the 6<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Sport Ministers, MINEPS VI. In Kazan, the Council of Europe was, along the Commonwealth, stepping up to assume the coordination of the international implementation of one of the five actions of the Plan. Given the Council's historical, international leadership role in the field of sport integrity, we were confident that the ambitious objectives of Action 3 of the KAP could be achieved. This trust was fully justified.

Action 3 is entitled: "Unify and further develop international standards supporting sport ministers' interventions in the field of sport integrity (in correlation with the International Convention against Doping in Sport)." The first achievement of the Council's work was to interpret this Action by privileging "support" rather than "standard", hence to focus on capacity building, practical guidance rather than on standard-setting per se. The second achievement was to ensure the participation of a representative range of stakeholders in the elaboration of the guidelines, representative in geographical terms, in terms of stakeholder groups and in terms of competencies. The third achievement was the timely, efficient and high-quality delivery of the Guidelines in September 2020 on the occasion of the ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Physical Education and Sport, CIGEPS. This conference is indeed a fourth achievement as it marks the strong commitment to using, to activating the Sport Integrity Guidelines as a unique tool for fostering sport integrity.

I would like to express UNESCO's gratitude to the colleagues from Council of Europe for their excellent work and for their continued commitment. I also thank the Italian Department for Sport for hosting this Conference and providing a platform for the next and challenging phase of this Action.

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The rationale underpinning Action 3 of the KAP is more relevant than ever. As we just heard, the scope of threats to sport integrity has not diminished. The capacity of governments to tackle these threats is still largely insufficient, especially as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to diminish revenue streams within the sport eco-system. While, within the sport integrity field, most human and financial resources are devoted to the fight against doping, new priorities, especially at grassroots sport levels, as well as new phenomena are emerging, including safety and safeguarding, as well as the mental health of top athletes.

Can we ask Ministries of Sport to simply add such new priorities and issues to their already heavy agendas?

In most parts of the world, we cannot. Ministries of sport but also other public authorities will not mobilize the resources and capacities required for an effective protection of sport and its participants if we continue business as usual.

This is where the holistic approach promoted by the integrity guidelines appears to be the only feasible and plausible solution. The guidelines are indeed a robust methodological and pragmatic starting point, along with the practical experience of a few pioneer countries that have already put in place cross-cutting sport policies and structures. I am glad that we have several of these champion countries attending this conference.

How should we take this work further? I would like to propose five main areas of work:

Firstly, we should bring the guidelines to the attention of all countries, notably in connection with MINEPS VII that is planned to take place in 2022.

Secondly, we should sustain an up-to-date, open access resource in which new tools and good practice can be promoted; nothing is more effective for capacity building than peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and the guidelines will only succeed as a living document. We should envisage partnerships with universities to build such a knowledge platform.

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Thirdly, we should consider some more specific guidance on the organizational implications of the guidelines: which steps do interested governments need to take for setting-up the required policies and structures and capacities? I hope that some of the governments present in this conference would be available to organize workshops in developing countries that use the guidelines as a first step for a multi-stakeholder dialogue on sport integrity.

Fourthly, along with other sport for development trends, we need to elaborate the business case for sport integrity. As long as we cannot use precise data concerning its impact on the achievement of the SDGs and the social and economic return of investment in sport integrity, governments, development partners and the sport industry will not scale up funding to the required levels.

Finally, policy development and capacity building should build on standards, structures, capacities and practices developed in the framework of the UNESCO's International Convention against Doping in Sport. These can play, in many countries, an incubating role towards the holistic protection of sport integrity.

This Conference comes very timely and is a much-needed follow-up after the disruptions to our work caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. I wish to end with sincere words of appreciation and thanks to Stanislas Frossard. Stan, you have been a very competent and solid pillar in our work on sport integrity. I understand this conference is one of your last activities in your current position: thank you for thus placing the Guidelines as important part of your legacy. Please count on UNESCO's strong commitment to continue our excellent cooperation with your successors. Thanks also to Paolo Bertaccini who has been and remains an important ally in our work for protecting sport as a unique catalyst for sustainable development and peace.

I wish you all an excellent conference.