

START TO TALK

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ROADMAP FOR EFFECTIVE CHILD SAFEGUARDING IN SPORT POLICIES

BULGARIA



start to talk

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All other correspondence concerning this document should be addressed to the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS),
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
France
E-mail: sport.epas@coe.int

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INTRODUCTION

Sport offers many benefits to children. This includes the development of healthy habits, increased self-esteem, a sense of belonging and joy. In addition, participation in sport enables children to develop core values and essential life skills. However, it is important to acknowledge that children can be exposed to safeguarding risks in the sports environment.

Violence against children in sport is a pervasive issue that crosses borders, sporting disciplines and extends from grassroots to elite levels. To address this complex problem, public authorities and sports organisations must eliminate denial, break the silence surrounding it and confront it head-on. Concrete measures are needed to protect children, prevent all forms of violence in sport, and implement effective responses when necessary.

“Start to Talk” aims to protect children in sport by eliminating all forms of abuse and violence against them. The project provides technical support, resources and materials to public authorities responsible for sport and sports organisations to support their efforts to make sport safer. “Start to Talk” assists its stakeholders in developing and implementing child safeguarding policies, awareness raising campaigns and training for relevant stakeholders. By involving all relevant stakeholders, the project aims to improve the protection of young athletes and their families from grassroots to elite and professional sport levels. The project’s impact is maximised by ensuring the safeguarding capacities of coaches, sports administrators and other relevant staff are reinforced to provide a safe environment for children.

“Start to Talk” is run by the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement of Sport (EPAS). The project takes a comprehensive approach to child safeguarding, addressing different forms of child abuse and promoting child well-being. The “Start to Talk” project launched its activities in 2018 with a focus on addressing child sexual abuse in sport which led to the development and implementation of several national campaigns¹. The project has also produced open access awareness and training materials on child sexual abuse in sport which are available on the “Start to Talk” webpage.

The unique objective of “Start to Talk” is to support stakeholders create bespoke country-specific roadmaps as instruments for the effective development and implementation of policies on child safeguarding in sport. Each roadmap is designed with support from international and national experts in the field of child safeguarding in sport and follows the roadmap methodology developed within the joint European Union - Council of Europe project “Child Safeguarding in Sport” (CSiS). Included in the roadmap are the concrete steps for establishing Child Safeguarding Officers (CSOs) in sport.

Bulgaria is the first partner country creating their roadmap within the “Start to Talk” project. Using a collaborative approach, Bulgaria’s roadmap is a tailor-made document presented in a step-by-step format. It outlines objectives, milestones and actions and defines the responsibilities of relevant stakeholders. It aims to clearly identify and describe the stages of development with a particular focus on establishing CSOs. The roadmap also sets out a timeline for progressing through the milestones towards the achievement of the roadmap’s goal: the establishment of a more effective child safeguarding in sports policy in Bulgaria.

1. “Start to Talk” national campaigns have been launched in eleven countries since 2018: Spain, The Netherlands, Portugal, Norway, Finland, France, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Australia and Cyprus.

METHODOLOGY

A roadmap is a strategic document that defines desired aims and identifies the key steps or milestones required to achieve them. A roadmap should be concise, easy to read, consistent and provide a schematic visualisation of the process and structure to be developed.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Bulgaria's roadmap for the development of effective child safeguarding in sport policies is structured around a framework of building blocks. These building blocks serve as the foundational components to establish and form the conceptual and operational core of the roadmap's structure and methodology. The building blocks are informed by international guidance, the International Safeguards for Children in Sport², further adapted within the European Union - Council of Europe's joint project "Child Safeguarding in Sport (CSiS)"³. The building blocks describe the measures to be taken to ensure the safety of children in the sport context.

The roadmap for Bulgaria identifies five priority building blocks:

1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport
2. Partnerships
3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people
4. Advice and support
5. Education and training framework

Although the project does not elaborate on them, partners are encouraged to consider advancing the following additional building blocks:

6. Minimum operating standards/quality assurance frameworks
7. Guidelines for ethics and behaviour
8. Safe recruitment system
9. Monitoring and evaluation

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Safeguarding children is not the sole responsibility of a single system (e.g. the sports system) or organisation (e.g. a sports club) but is a collective effort involving a wide range of stakeholders who must be mobilised to achieve the common goal of creating safe sports environments for children. The roadmap is developed through a participatory approach involving all key stakeholders with a role to play in preventing the abuse and harassment of children. These include public authorities responsible for sport and child protection, sports organisations, child protection agencies, key NGOs, child participation organisations, academia, etc.

The development of Bulgaria's roadmap for the implementation of effective child safeguarding in sport policies with a focus on the implementation of CSO roles was led by Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Bulgaria (MYS), with Petya Koseva, a State Expert at MYS, acting as the project national co-ordinator. The Ministry was supported by Bruno Avelar Rosa and Miguel Nery, international consultants from Qantara Sports and national consultant, Petya Dimitrova an independent child protection expert. Following the collaborative approach, two entities were established in Bulgaria: the Steering Committee and the Core Group as described in the following table.

2. Available at <https://www.unicef.org.uk/sport-for-development/safeguarding-in-sport/>.

3. Available at <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/home>.

	Steering Committee	Core Group
Description	The Steering Committee is led by the national co-ordinator, as one of the key stakeholders. This is a multi-agency and interdisciplinary forum that collaborates with the Council of Europe, MYS, the international and national consultants in the design of the roadmap. Ideally, it should evolve into a permanent co-ordinating body, fostering the country's sustained commitment to implementing and further strengthening child safeguarding in sport.	The Core Group is made up of those key members of the Steering Committee more closely engaged in the roadmap's drafting process consulting regularly with the steering committee. The "Start to Talk" Secretariat and the international consultants will discuss progress of the roadmap development with the national co-ordinator and national consultant on a regular basis and provide support and guidance for the work of the Core Group.
Members	▶ Ministry of Youth and Sport ▶ Agency for Social Assistance ▶ Bulgarian Basketball Federation ▶ Bulgarian Children and Youth Parliament ▶ Bulgarian Football Union ▶ Bulgarian Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation ▶ Bulgarian Sports Development Association ▶ Ministry of Education and Science ▶ Ministry of Interior ▶ Ministry of Labour and Social Policy ▶ National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski" ▶ National Network for Children ▶ National Youth Forum ▶ Special Olympics Bulgaria ▶ State Agency for Child Protection ▶ UNICEF Bulgaria (Observer)	▶ Ministry of Interior ▶ Bulgarian Football Union ▶ Bulgaria Basketball Federation ▶ Bulgarian Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation ▶ National Network for Children ▶ State Agency for Child Protection ▶ Special Olympics ▶ "Vasil Levski" National Sports Academy ▶ UNICEF Bulgaria (Observer)

PROJECT PHASES

The process of designing the Bulgarian roadmap for the development of effective child safeguarding in sport policies was developed along the four phases described below.

A. Preparation: The initial gaps and needs assessment started with desk research⁴ conducted by Qantara Sports in collaboration with the national consultant and national co-ordinator to identify the country's strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats in terms of developing a strategy for child safeguarding in sport. Analysis and recommendations were made concerning all nine building blocks, with priority given to building blocks from one to five. Petya Vasileva Dimitrova, national consultant, prepared a map of relevant stakeholders in the fields of sport and child protection⁵. The preparatory work helped identify the organisations that were invited to join the Steering Committee and Core Group. A **first roundtable** was held in Sofia on 22 November 2022, where the desk research results and recommendations and the SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats) analysis were presented to the Steering Committee as an important basis for the development of the roadmap. The Child Protection in Sport Unit of the UK National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children gave a presentation on CSOs in UK sport.

B. Foundations: The Core Group was set up and held two meetings on 24 January and 29 June 2023. The national consultant, national co-ordinator and Core Group members worked on a planning document

4. Please see desk research in Appendix I. A summary of findings and a SWOT analysis are presented in the roadmap as background elements. Expectations and recommendations are provided for each building block.

5. Please see stakeholders mapping in Appendix II.

called “Stages of the Journey Towards the Roadmap” (Working Document)⁶ a description of the steps to be completed. These included:

- Agreeing on values and principles
- Mapping stakeholders
- Setting the aims for each building block
- Agreeing who the key partners are
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Setting priorities for the short, medium and long term
- Creating an action plan.

The views of the Children’s Council members on the roadmap work, which had been gathered at the Child Consultation on 30 May 2023 were presented and discussed with the Core Group during the second Core Group meeting. More information about the Child Consultation is provided in the following section. During the Foundation phase, the national consultant prepared the mapping of stakeholders (Appendix II).

C. Developing the roadmap: Based on information provided in the Working Document the first draft roadmap was prepared. The draft roadmap incorporated the objectives for each building block, milestones and actions, timeline and the stakeholders to be involved, their respective roles and responsibilities. Also included was the identification of possible obstacles and proposed solutions that would help structure the final version of the roadmap.

D. Final roadmap: The draft roadmap was presented to the Steering Committee during a second roundtable held in Sofia on 19 September 2023. Discussions took place on the process for finalising the model for CSO roles, its scope in relevant organisations, the prerequisite competencies and skills and support needed. The roadmap was finalised after the second roundtable taking account of additional comments and it was approved by the Steering Committee.

CHILD CONSULTATION

The Council of Europe has a rich tradition of promoting and advocating for children’s rights (see Council of Europe, 2005, 2011, 2016, 2021; Fernandes Guerreiro & Sedletzki, 2016) as well as actively engaging children and young people in the development of policies and strategies that relate to their lives (see Parodi, C. & Costella, P. Defence for Children International Italy, 2022; Verweijen-Slamnescu, 2023). The Council of Europe’s standards for child/youth participation were established in 2012 in its [Recommendation on participation of children and young people under the age of 18](#). EPAS in the “Start to Talk” project was keen to continue the Council’s approach of involving children and young people in the development of the roadmap and incorporating their views on what could be done to prevent violence against children in sport.

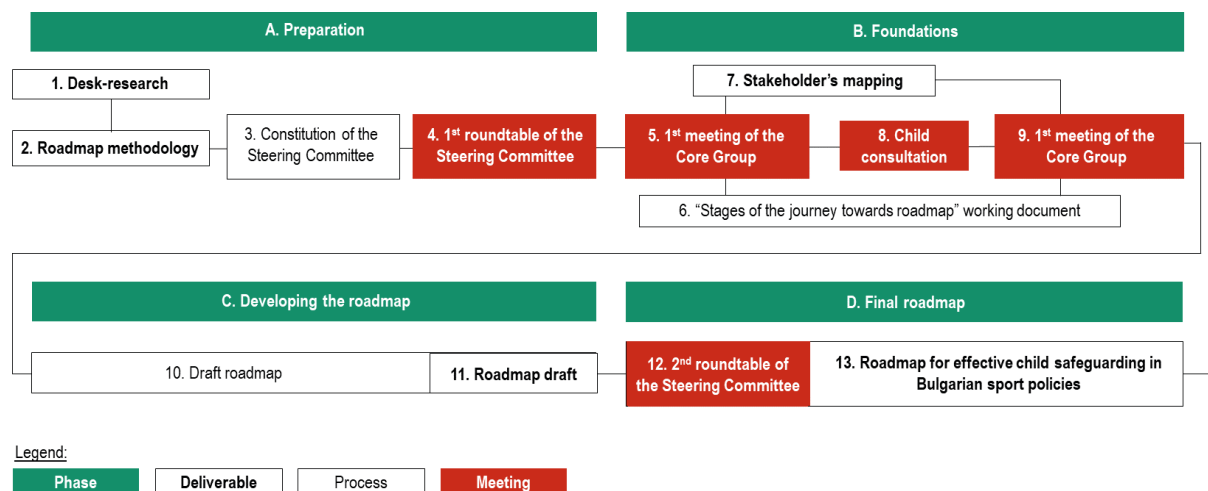
The consultation was organised in collaboration with the Bulgarian State Agency for Child Protection, a member of the Steering Committee. The State Agency for Child Protection has a well-established Children’s Council, which was formed in 2003 to “promote children and young people’s participation in policy-making and decision-making processes in matters that affect them”. Members of the Children’s Council regularly take part in consultations and interact with state and non-governmental organisations at national and regional level in Bulgaria. The EPAS Secretariat hired Dr Melanie Lang, a child participation in sport expert at the Centre for Child Protection and Safeguarding in Sport (CPSS) Edge Hill University, UK.

Two approaches were taken to gathering views from children and young people: an online focus group and a self-administered online survey using the web-based platform Padlet. The online focus group took place on 30 May 2023, with six Children’s Council members participating. The focus group was facilitated by Petya Vasileva Dimitrova, an expert in child protection at the Children’s Council and the national consultant for the roadmap work. The results of the consultation were anonymised, shared with the members of the Steering Committee and discussed during the second Core Group meeting. In addition, the “Start to Talk” Secretariat provided feedback to the Chair of State Agency for Child Protection Children’s Council on how the children and young people’s views were used in the development of the roadmap on violence prevention in sport in Bulgaria. This was then reported back to Children’s Council members.

6. The standardised planning document “Stages of the Journey Towards the Roadmap” was created within the European Union - Council of Europe joint project “Child Safeguarding in Sport”.

Further information on the Child Consultation can be found on the “Start to Talk” [webpage](#).

PROJECT SUMMARY



BACKGROUND ELEMENTS

This section outlines the main findings of the desk research carried out by Qantara Sports, in collaboration with national consultant Petya Vasileva Dimitrova in 2021 and updated in 2022⁷. Each of the five priority building blocks for the development of child safeguarding in sport policies together with the SWOT analysis, led to a number of recommendations. Following those recommendations and the expectations defined for each building block, the Core Group assessed the current situation in Bulgaria.

A summary of the desk research findings and the SWOT analysis can be found below. The state of play and recommendations can be found in the next section 'Strategy for safeguarding children in sport'.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE DESK RESEARCH

- ▶ In Bulgaria, the State plays a central role in sport. The MYS is responsible for the development and implementation of public policy on the development of the sport activity, implemented through sports federations and sports clubs. Sport in Bulgaria is mainly funded from the State budget, local budgets and funding from international programmes. The (2020) Physical Education and Sports Act provides for fair sport, prevention of doping, safety of sports facilities, tackling violence in sport and the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity.
- ▶ There is no national legislation that specifically regulates child safeguarding in sport. Accordingly, no explicit links have been established between safeguarding laws/regulations at national level and the sport framework. However, general laws cover some aspects of safeguarding in sports.
- ▶ The (2000) Child Protection Act sets out the national system on child protection. The State Agency for Child Protection (Council of Ministries) has adopted the 2023-2026 Programme on Protection of Children Against Violence that includes some references to the use of sport for the prevention of violence (Ministry of Youth and Sport programmes).
- ▶ There is a lack of data on child violence in sport in Bulgaria. The above-mentioned Programme on Protection of Children Against Violence provides data on cases of violence in six public sport schools between 2019 and 2021.
- ▶ There are no national standards for safeguarding and protecting children in sport. The existing case management systems are not sport related.
- ▶ Currently there are no sport safeguarding officer roles at any level. The whole framework of CSO roles needs to be developed with clear job descriptions, skills and competencies.
- ▶ There are no specific modules on safeguarding within existing bachelor's and master's degrees syllabus or coach education training courses.
- ▶ Most of the sport associations lack codes of conduct and other safeguarding tools.
- ▶ Coaches on a labour contract are subject to safe recruitment procedures such as criminal records check. However, coaches are often hired on civil contracts, which have less strict requirements. Volunteers are not subject to safe recruitment procedures.

7. For more information, see the outcomes of the desk research in Appendix II.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
▶ Existence of a legislative framework on child protection. ▶ A national strategy for both child protection and sport are under development. ▶ Existence of several organisations who work with children and sport. ▶ Existence of reporting and management procedures in cases of child abuse. ▶ Existence of coach education. ▶ Existence of the 24/7 phone helpline 116 111 to the State Agency for Child Protection for children to talk about their worries, ask questions and seek psychological support. Existence of the hotline and consultative line 124 123 for a safe internet environment.	▶ Lack of specific legal framework on safeguarding in sport. ▶ Lack of safeguarding policies in sport. ▶ Lack of specific sport guidelines and codes of conduct in many sports. ▶ Lack of child safeguarding measures in sport. ▶ Non-existence of safeguarding officers or similar profile. ▶ Lack of general and specific safeguarding contents in coach education courses. ▶ Lack of defined minimum quality standards on safeguarding in sport.
Opportunities	Threats
▶ The MYS's initiative to develop a roadmap for the implementation of child safeguarding in sport has created a momentum for other relevant stakeholders to engage in the process and increase their commitment to child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Bulgaria is a member to the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport of the Council of Europe (EPAS). ▶ Possibility to benefit from EPAS expertise and from previous experience on the development of safeguarding policies by other EPAS member states. ▶ Bulgaria is a member to the European Union with access to EU-funds (particularly Erasmus+) as a programme country.	▶ Lack of awareness about child specific safeguarding in sport (possible negative attitudes towards prevention). ▶ Lack of data/indicators to support the development of solid safeguarding policies.

STRATEGY FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN SPORT

This section sets out the strategy for consolidating each building block in the roadmap. Each sub-section begins with the expectations for each building block, the self-assessment of Bulgaria carried out by the Core Group and a set of recommendations made by Qantara Sports. An action-oriented strategy based on the expectations, self-assessment and recommendations is then presented. This strategy reflects the following main aspects:

- ▶ What is needed to fully meet the requirements of the key elements of each building block.
- ▶ The aims and objectives of the child safeguarding in sport strategy.
- ▶ The key milestones.
- ▶ The stakeholders that should be involved.
- ▶ The possible obstacles to the implementation and proposed solutions.

BUILDING BLOCK 1 NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN IN SPORT

“Building Block 1 – National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport” focuses on the creation of a national policy framework to unite the country’s stakeholders around a common goal and implementation plan to ensure the safety of all children and young people in sport. The policy should clearly define objectives, roles and procedures, involve all relevant stakeholders and be applied across the whole sporting system. It should represent a commitment to safeguarding children in sport from abuse and harassment and serve as the basis for developing the necessary procedures to ensure a safe sporting environment. Achieving this goal requires an effective, collaborative, multi-agency, multi-level and multi-disciplinary approach.

Expectations:

A policy framework is in place to ensure that all children and young people are safeguarded in and through sport. This should include:

- ▶ Agreed national values and principles based on a children’s rights approach.
- ▶ A written policy document that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children and sets out expectations of key stakeholders.
- ▶ A multi-stakeholder approach supported by government departments and organisations with devolved responsibility for child protection and sport.
- ▶ An agreed action plan which sets out clear roles and responsibilities for implementation. Safeguarding children is everyone’s business and no agency or organisation can provide effective safeguards on their own.

A multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approach is essential for successful outcomes for children.

Note: please cross reference with Building Block 2: Partnerships

Self-assessment from the Core Group (June 2023)

Legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria provides a good basis for the development of a child safeguarding policy in sport. There is a well-developed legislative framework in both child protection and sport. However, better implementation is needed in each sector and across sectors. One shortcoming identified was the lack of awareness among coaches, sports clubs and federations about child protection regulation (e.g. reporting obligations). In addition the staff of child protection bodies are not sufficiently aware of the specific work and legislation in sport.

The relevant policy documents for the protection of children in sport are the National Strategy for Children (which expired in 2018), the new National Strategy for Children (2024-2030) which is currently being prepared; the National Programme for the Prevention of Violence and Abuse against Children (2023-2026) and the National Strategy for the Development of Physical Education and Sport in the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2022) (the new one is currently being prepared). The current operational document is the National Programme for the Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities (a new programme is being prepared). Both the National Programme for the Prevention of Violence and Abuse against Children (2023-2026) and the National Strategy for Development of Physical Education and Sports in the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2022) refer to the use of sport for the prevention of violence. The members of the Core Group agreed that the initiative for the protection of children in sport in Bulgaria should be led by the Ministry of Youth and Sport and that planning and implementation of the current roadmap should be included in the strategic and operational documents of the sport sector.

The Ministry of Youth and Sport is not a child protection body, but they are legally obliged to participate in the development and implementation of the child protection policy in Bulgaria. The Ministry of Youth and Sport has a limited scope to cooperate more effectively with sports federations and sports clubs, as these are independent non-governmental organisations. In addition, there are sports clubs owned by municipalities or private entities, such as yoga or fitness centres, where children and adults engage in sport activities. These clubs and entities are not members of any federation.

The Core Group identified ways in which cooperation from sports organisations and clubs could be encouraged, for instance, through licencing systems that require organisations and clubs to implement child safeguarding policies and coach registration systems requiring coaches to be trained on child safeguarding as a prerequisite for registration. Requiring sports organisations and clubs to develop and implement a child safeguarding policy as a condition for access to funding from the Ministry of Youth and Sport would also be a way of encouraging better implementation of protection measures.

There is a legal definition of “violence” in both the Bulgarian legislation⁸ and international legislation⁹. The sports movement in Bulgaria is not very familiar with the legal definition and reporting procedures. According to the UNICEF’s Study on Violence against children (2021)¹⁰, there is a high level of tolerance for violence in Bulgarian society which should be considered in the development and implementation of any public policy dealing with violence.

Since 1991, the Republic of Bulgaria is a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention). The country joined the Council of Europe’s Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport on 7 April 2008.

Recommendations made by Qantara Sports

- ▶ There is a need for closer co-ordination and collaboration between the governmental child protection system and the sport sector on safeguarding. Co-ordination can be ensured by establishing a Steering Committee on Child Safeguarding in Sport to implement the roadmap.
- ▶ There is a need to implement a child safeguarding approach in sport. There should be a legal requirement for sports clubs to adopt and implement safeguarding policies. Clear roles and actions need to be defined.
- ▶ The next national strategy for the development of physical education and sport in the Republic of Bulgaria should include and promote child safeguarding in sport, in line with the child protection system operating in the country.

8. In Bulgaria, according to the Implementing Regulation of the Child Protection Act (Supplementary provisions, para 1, l 1), “Violence is any act of physical, mental or sexual abuse, neglect, commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to health, life, development or dignity of the child, which can be done in a family, school and social environment”

9. According to article 19, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, “violence” is understood to mean “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”.

10. UNICEF’s Study on Violence against children (2021) available at <https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/en/documents/study-violence-against-children-bulgaria>.

Values and principles

The Core Group agreed on the key values and principles to be included in the child safeguarding policy in sport. The Core Group agreed the values and principles guiding the policy framework should be in line with the principles and philosophy of the international standards mentioned on the previous page.

- ▶ Child-centred and participatory approaches should be used, including in the development of the roadmap.
- ▶ All activities should be in line with the best interests of the child.
- ▶ The child safeguarding policy of each sports club and federation should be respectful of all stakeholders involved, including coaches, children and parents.
- ▶ Welfare and safety should be paramount.

Principles:

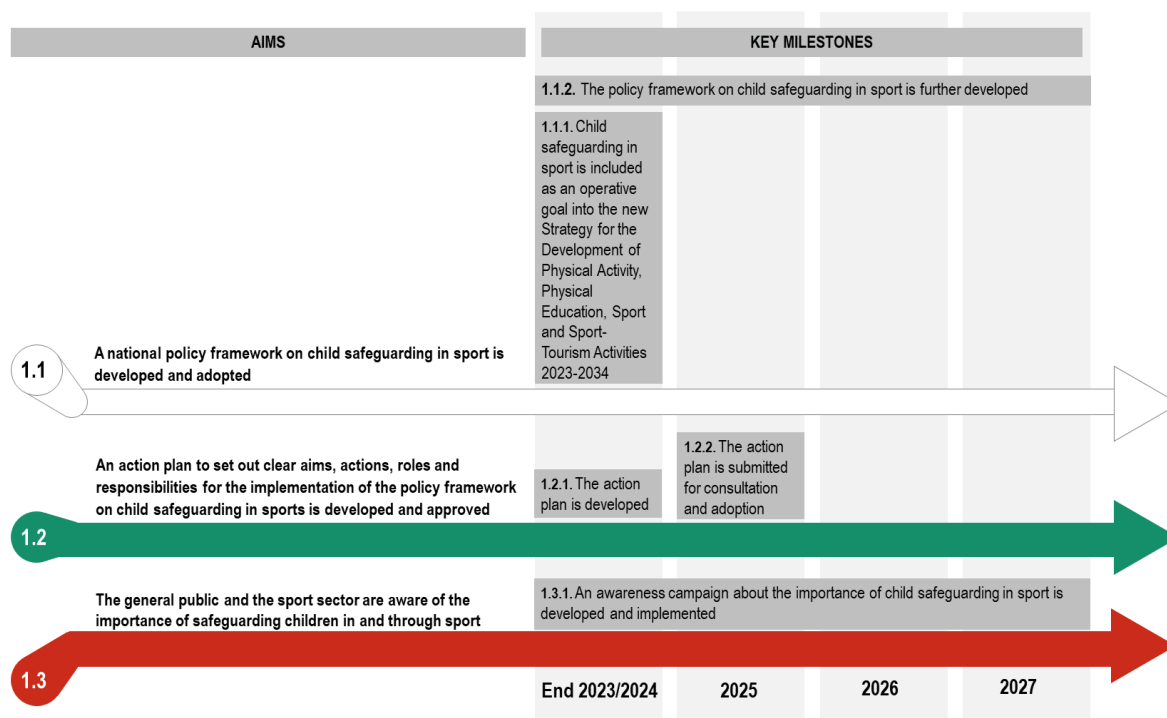
- ▶ The principle of “do no harm” should be applied and be a primary consideration when working with children and young athletes.
- ▶ Sports organisations have a responsibility to care for children and young people who participate in their activities.

Aims and priorities

- 1.1. A national policy framework on child safeguarding in sport is developed and adopted.
- 1.2. An action plan to set out clear aims, actions, roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the policy framework on child safeguarding in sports is developed and approved.
- 1.3. The public and sport sector are aware of the importance of safeguarding children in and through sport.

Key milestones and actions needed

In line with the aims and priorities of the building block the following key milestones and timelines have been identified.



To achieve and complete each of the defined key milestones the following actions have been identified with timelines.

Aim	Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
			End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
1.1.	1.1.1. Child safeguarding in sport is included as an operative goal into the new Strategy for the Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sport and Sport-Tourism Activities 2023-2034.	1.1.1.1. Submitting the draft strategy for consultation of relevant Ministries.				
		1.1.1.2. Submitting the draft strategy for final approval by the Council of Ministers.				
	1.1.2. The policy framework on child safeguarding in sport is further developed.	1.1.2.1. Establishing a working group.				
		1.1.2.2. Designing the national policy framework. These actions should include: ▶ Reviewing the existing analyses of legislation on sports and child protection. ▶ Planning measures to spread the definition of violence in compliance with the national and international definitions of violence (principle of do no harm) in the sport sector. ▶ Conducting baseline research about violence and abuse against children in sport and physical education and analyse the information. ▶ Recommending priority areas and activities based on the outcomes of the analysis and research above.				
		1.1.2.3. Delivering the national policy framework.				
1.2.	1.2.1. The action plan is developed.	1.2.1.1. Establishing a working group.				
		1.2.1.2. Designing the action plan.				
	1.2.2. The action plan is submitted for consultation and adoption.	1.2.2.1. Submitting the action plan for public consultation.				
		1.2.2.2. Submitting the action plan for approval by the relevant Ministries.				
		1.2.2.3. Submitting the action plan for adoption by the Council of Ministries.				
1.3.	1.3.1. An awareness campaign about the importance of child safeguarding in sport is developed and implemented.	1.3.1.1. Designing terms of reference for the development and implementation of the awareness campaign.				
		1.3.1.2. Selecting an external consultant through a public tender procedure for the development and implementation of the campaign.				
		1.3.1.3. Developing necessary materials and resources.				

Aim	Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
			End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
		1.3.1.4. Implementing the awareness campaign.				
		1.3.1.5. Monitoring the implementation of the awareness campaign.				
		1.3.1.6. Evaluating the results of the awareness raising campaign.				

Stakeholders to be involved and their role and responsibilities

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the achievement of the goals
Ministry of Youth and Sport	<u>Leader</u> of the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Developing the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 in partnership with relevant stakeholders; adopting and implementing the strategy. The strategy shall include an operative goal on child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Developing and implementing the action plan in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. ▶ Developing regulations in the field of sport. ▶ Organising and coordinating the design of the national policy framework on child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Developing and implementing the awareness campaign.
State Agency for Child Protection	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.
Agency for Social Assistance	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.
Federations	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the action plan. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the achievement of the goals
Sports clubs	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the action plan. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.
National Sports Academy	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the elaboration of a research and analysis methodology. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.
Children/young athletes	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Providing views and insights on the different elements of the policy framework.
Parent associations	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.
Academic institutions	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the elaboration of a research and analysis methodology. ▶ Collaboration in the implementation of the awareness campaign.
National child and youth organisations	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.
Ministry of Education and Science	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the achievement of the goals
Ministry of Interior	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.
Municipalities / National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.

Possible obstacles and proposed solutions

Aim	Key milestone	Obstacles and solutions
1.1.	1.1.1. Child safeguarding in sport is included as an operative goal into the new Strategy for the Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sport and Sport-Tourism Activities 2023-2034.	Frequent changes of the national government may lead to delays. <u>Solution:</u> Once adopted, the roadmap shall be followed by the next governments to assure smooth transition.
	1.1.2. The policy framework on child safeguarding in sport is further developed.	Disagreement about the definition of violence. There is misunderstanding around the definition of violence in society and different definitions in the child protection and sports sector. <u>Solution:</u> Professionals from both child protection and sports sector take part in all stages of the process and reach agreement on key concepts and principles.
		Frequent changes of the national government may lead to delays. <u>Solution:</u> Once adopted, the roadmap shall be followed by the next government to assure smooth transition.
		Conservative parent organisations' reluctance to introduce child safeguarding policy in sport. <u>Solution:</u> The roadmap envisages parents and caregivers involvement in the process of developing all strategic and operational documents.
1.2.	1.2.1. The action plan is developed.	Limited powers of the Ministry of Youth and Sport over federations and clubs. <u>Solution:</u> Federations are involved and take ownership over the development and implementation of the roadmap and the policy framework.
	1.2.2. The action plan is submitted for consultation and adoption.	The involvement of multiple stakeholders may affect the duration of the process and lead to delays. <u>Solution:</u> The Ministry of Youth and Sport shall appoint a focal point to manage and coordinate the process.

Aim	Key milestone	Obstacles and solutions
1.3.	1.3.1. The awareness campaign about the importance of child safeguarding in sport is developed and implemented.	Fear among coaches of the potential misuse of child safeguarding provisions, e.g. report of fake cases. <u>Solution:</u> The awareness campaign will be aimed at ensuring a better understanding of the philosophy of child safeguarding in sport. The multidisciplinary guidelines shall contain a definition of violence.
		Difficulty in finding an external consultant with the relevant skills to develop the campaign. <u>Solution:</u> The Ministry of Youth and Sport can seek the cooperation of expert organisations on child safeguarding in sport to identify candidates through their professional networks.
		Complexity of administrative budget planning requirements at the Ministry level. <u>Solution:</u> The necessary funds shall be allocated to the Ministry of Youth and Sport budget in due course.

BUILDING BLOCK 2 PARTNERSHIPS

“Building Block 2 – Partnerships” focuses on developing alliances and cooperation to safeguard children and young people in sport, obtaining expertise, ensuring the availability of resources and promoting protection activities. In line with the objectives of Building Block 1, key national stakeholders (including public authorities responsible for sport, sports organisations, children’s rights organisations, etc.) need to establish links to strengthen local commitment, broaden communication efforts and ensure the safeguarding of children in sport.

Expectations

Key stakeholders at national level (public authorities responsible for sport, sports organisations, children’s rights organisations, etc.) take action to develop partnerships to ensure children are protected in and through sport and to promote and influence development in the field of safeguarding. This should include:

- ▶ Inter-sectoral sport safeguarding partnership agreements at national strategic level and at relevant regional/provincial/local levels.
- ▶ Partnership agreements include safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Partnership and funding agreements contain safeguarding criteria.
- ▶ Partnerships provide written guidance to their stakeholders on safeguarding expectations.

Note: please cross reference with Building Block 1: National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport.

Self-assessment from the Core Group (June 2023)

The Core Group identified some formal horizontal structures that promote cooperation between all relevant stakeholders in the field of children’s rights. One example is the National Council for Child Protection, which is responsible for the national coordination of policies on children’s rights, including the fight against violence. At the local level, each municipality has a Commission for the Protection of Children which has advisory and coordination functions. The Core Group discussed the possibility of assigning responsibility for the follow-up of the national policy on child safeguarding in sport to one of the existing councils or committees. The Core Group agreed the Ministry of Youth and Sport should lead the process and the new cooperation and implementation mechanism should be developed under the auspices of the Minister of Youth and Sport in accordance with national legislation.

When establishing partnerships between the different stakeholders involved in child protection in sport the specificity of the sport organisation must be considered as sports clubs and organisations are private non-profit organisations registered in the Register of Licensed Sports Organisations. Sports clubs and organisations are members of regional and international federations which may impose their own child protection obligations on them.

The Core Group also highlighted the importance of involving parent and children’s associations in the implementation of the roadmap. The Steering Committee and the children consulted suggested the involvement of mayors of municipalities as they are child protection bodies and closer to the needs of children at the local level. Mayors also have powers in relation to security and safety in the municipality.

Recommendations made by Qantara Sports

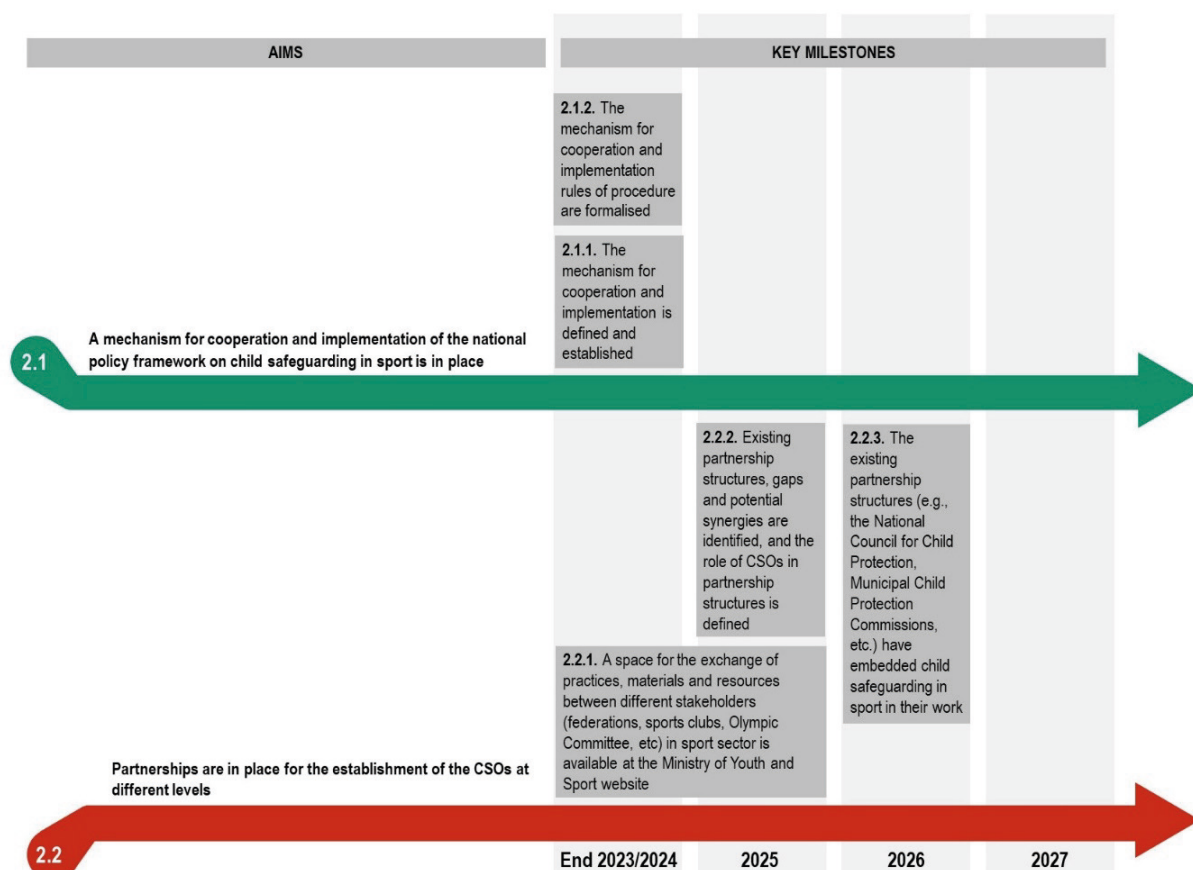
- ▶ Raise public awareness of children’s rights and the principles and measures of child protection especially in the field of sport and at the local level (municipalities and grassroots sport).
- ▶ It is important to strengthen the relationship between the organisations involved in the child protection system under the Child Protection Act (2000) and the Ministry of Youth and Sport.
- ▶ The Bulgarian Steering Committee should be established and take responsibility for developing and ensuring a long-term strategy that stimulates the implementation and dissemination of the child safeguarding agenda in sport.
- ▶ At the local level, local commissions for child protection in each municipality should work with sports clubs and its representatives. It is important to reinforce the participation and the role of sport within the local commissions.

Aims and priorities

- 2.1.** A mechanism for cooperation and implementation of the national policy framework on child safeguarding in sport is in place.
- 2.2.** Partnerships are in place for the establishment of the CSOs at different levels.

Key milestones and actions needed

In line with the aims and priorities of the building block the following key milestones with timelines are identified.



To achieve and complete each of the defined key milestones the following actions have been identified with timelines.

Aim	Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
			End 2023/2024	2025	2026	2027
2.1.	2.1.1. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation is defined and established.	2.1.1.1. Initiating the procedure to establish the mechanism for cooperation and implementation.				
		2.1.1.2. Issuing of an ordinance on the establishment and functioning of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation.				
		2.1.1.3. Nominating a focal point for each relevant authority.				

Aim	Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
			End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
2.2.	2.1.2. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation rules of procedure are formalised.	2.1.2.1. Discussing the mechanism for cooperation and implementation rules of procedure.				
		2.1.2.2. Submitting draft rules of procedure for approval by the mechanism for cooperation and implementation members.				
	2.2.1 A space for the exchange of practices, materials and resources between different stakeholders (federations, sports clubs, Olympic Committee, etc.) in sport sector is available at the Ministry of Youth and Sport website.	2.2.1.1. Collecting practices, materials and resources on child safeguarding in sport.				
		2.1.1.2. Publishing the collected practices, materials and resources on a dedicated section/microsite of the Ministry's website.				
		2.1.1.3. The microsite is launched and promoted among federations and sports clubs.				
	2.2.2. Existing partnership structures, gaps and potential synergies are identified, and the role of CSOs in partnership structures is defined.	2.2.2.1. Mapping of existing partnerships by the mechanism for cooperation and implementation.				
		2.2.2.2. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation establishes communication channels with different actors and partnerships.				
		2.2.2.3. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation defines the role of CSOs in partnerships.				
	2.2.3. The existing partnership structures (e.g. the National Council for Child Protection, Municipal Child Protection Commissions, etc.) have embedded child safeguarding in sport in their work.	2.2.3.1. Existing partnerships review the strategy and action plan and incorporate relevant parts in their guideline documents and work.				
		2.2.3.2. Establishing a CSO role in each partnership.				

Stakeholders to be involved and their role and responsibilities

Partnerships to be built/ improved	Role and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the achievement of the goals
Ministry of Youth and Sport	<u>Leader</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Coordinating the process for the establishment of a mechanism for cooperation and implementation of the Bulgaria roadmap on child safeguarding in sport and the national policy framework on child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Mapping existing partnerships and establishing efficient communication channels with them. ▶ Collecting practices, materials and resources on child safeguarding in sport and publishing it on a special section/microsite on their website.

Partnerships to be built/ improved	Role and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the achievement of the goals
Federations	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Supporting the establishment of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation. ▶ Keeping abreast of the existing resources available through the dedicated section on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.
National Sports Academy	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Supporting the establishment of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation. ▶ Keeping abreast of the existing resources available through the dedicated section on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.
Child protection bodies	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Supporting the establishment of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation. ▶ Incorporating relevant sections on child safeguarding in sport, in their guiding documents and work. ▶ Keeping abreast of existing resources available through the dedicated section on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.
Children/young athletes	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Supporting the establishment of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation.
Parent associations	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Supporting the establishment of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation. ▶ Keeping abreast of the existing resources available through the dedicated section on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Possible obstacles and proposed solutions

Aim	Key milestone	Obstacles and solutions
2.1.	2.1.1. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation is defined and established.	There are many different cooperation mechanisms in Bulgaria and an additional one could be considered unnecessary. <u>Solution:</u> The mechanism will be time-bound and synergies with relevant existing mechanisms will be established.
	2.1.2. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation rules of procedure are formalised.	The number and range of stakeholders that may need to be involved can lead to delays in the process. <u>Solution:</u> Representatives of existing multidisciplinary mechanisms can share their experience to maximise stakeholder involvement.
2.2.	2.2.1. Existing partnership structures, gaps and potential synergies are identified, and the role of CSOs in partnership structures is defined.	Slow process with hard negotiations. <u>Solution:</u> This obstacle will be mitigated by setting up of a mechanism for cooperation and implementation (aim 2.1) and the rules of procedures (key milestone 2.1.2).

Aim	Key milestone	Obstacles and solutions
	2.2.2. The existing partnership structures (e.g. the National Council for Child Protection, Municipal Child Protection Commissions, etc.) have embedded child safeguarding in sport in their work.	Involvement of the local level can be a potential obstacle as there is no direct hierarchy between the different and independent structures. <u>Solution:</u> The involvement of the National Association of the Municipalities of the Republic of Bulgaria in the implementation of the activities of Building block 1 and in the mechanism for cooperation and implementation.
	2.2.3. A space on the Ministry for Youth and Sports' website for resources on safeguarding in sport freely available for the sport movement.	The platform is not well known / broadly used by sports organisations in Bulgaria. <u>Solution:</u> The Ministry of Youth and Sport ensures dissemination of the microsite through communication actions and involvement in the mechanism for cooperation and implementation members, etc.

BUILDING BLOCK 3

SYSTEM AND STRUCTURE FOR RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

“Building Block 3 – System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people” focuses on the establishment of a case response and management system. This includes step-by-step procedures to ensure effective responses to concerns about the safety and well-being of children, whether reported by children or by other sport stakeholders. These responses include reporting guidelines, stakeholder roles, flow charts, case management standards and protocols. The credibility of these procedures is essential for the successful protection of children. Effective systems with transparent processes for examining complaints, concerns and providing support to child victims of violence are essential.

Expectations

A case response/management structure and system with step-by-step procedures helps ensure a prompt response to concerns about a child’s safety or well-being. This should include:

- ▶ National guidance on the systems and procedures that need to be in place in sports organisations to safeguard and protect children when there are concerns about their safety and well-being. This should include and cover:
 - The roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies and sports bodies and how they should work together when there are concerns about a child.
 - Cases of complaints against staff or volunteers (particularly where the adult is in a position of trust) shall be handled by either statutory or sports organisations.
- ▶ Minimum operating standards for case management systems.
- ▶ Sports bodies receiving public funding to have clear written procedures and step-by-step guidance on what action to take when there are concerns about the welfare of a child. The guidance should be available to all stakeholders and provided in formats accessible to all.
- ▶ There is a single point of contact within each organisation for reporting concerns and signposting to sources of external help, advice (this may be the national CSO, but could also be part of an existing role dealing with the organisation’s response to integrity complaints) and guidance for whistleblowers.
- ▶ Children and young people are provided with information about what will happen if they or their parents report their concerns.
- ▶ Procedures are fair and transparent. Arrangements are in place to provide support to children, parents, volunteers and staff during and after an incident, reported concern/allegation and at the end of disciplinary/statutory procedures.

Self-assessment from the Core Group (June 2023)

There is a general system for reporting and responding to cases of violence against children including those reported by sports organisations.

Children can report a case directly to the police, child protection units and/or the State Agency for Child Protection. Initiatives exist to promote the National Child Helpline 116 111, which is free of charge and available 24/7. In addition, a person who becomes aware that a child needs protection is legally obliged to immediately inform the Directorate of Social Assistance or State Agency for Child Protection or the Ministry of Interior (Art. 7 of the Children Protection Act).

The Core Group noted that there are two official mechanisms for dealing with cases of violence against children: the Coordination Mechanism against Violence which includes the participation of NGOs and the Ministry of Education and Science’s Mechanism for Counteracting Bullying and Violence in institutions in pre-school and school education system. These mechanisms are in place but not used widely as there is evidence to suggest most cases are unreported. Delays have also been observed between when a case is reported and when the police open an investigation. In the sport sector, there is a lack of awareness of the existing mechanisms among coaches and other staff members and a general lack of case management systems in sports associations and clubs. The Core Group stated that sports associations and clubs should develop internal case management systems that allow for efficient reporting to the relevant body when a case requires the intervention of the police and/or child protection services.

The lack of data on violence in sport was highlighted by the Core Group. The UNICEF (2021) Study on Violence against children in Bulgaria¹¹ referred to three cases in sports schools (education sector). It was pointed out that the Mechanism for Prevention of School Bullying is a comprehensive document that could serve as an instructive source for the development of a policy for the protection of children in sport.

It was noted that the promising practice of some federations is the development of some embryonic child safeguarding policies. For example the Special Olympics encourages the implementation of its child safeguarding provisions in its member associations.

In Bulgaria, sports organisations (even the largest ones) may struggle to find the resources to implement a CSO role in their structures. A first step towards implementation of this role would be for staff and volunteers to take on safeguarding responsibilities. Coordination between grassroots organisations and federations is paramount to enable the implementation of safeguarding measures at the local level. CSOs in federations should be available to assist member clubs in developing their own safeguarding policies and implementing them (e.g. with case management) when the club does not have a CSO.

Recommendations made by Qantara Sports

- ▶ The current system for identifying and managing cases of violence against children should take into consideration the specificities of sport.
- ▶ Specific tools should be developed to respond efficiently to cases of child abuse and violence in sport. The multidisciplinary team dealing with cases in social assistance directorates should include a sport expert.
- ▶ Clear and specific procedural guidelines focusing on identifying, reporting and responding to concerns should be available to sports organisations and clubs.

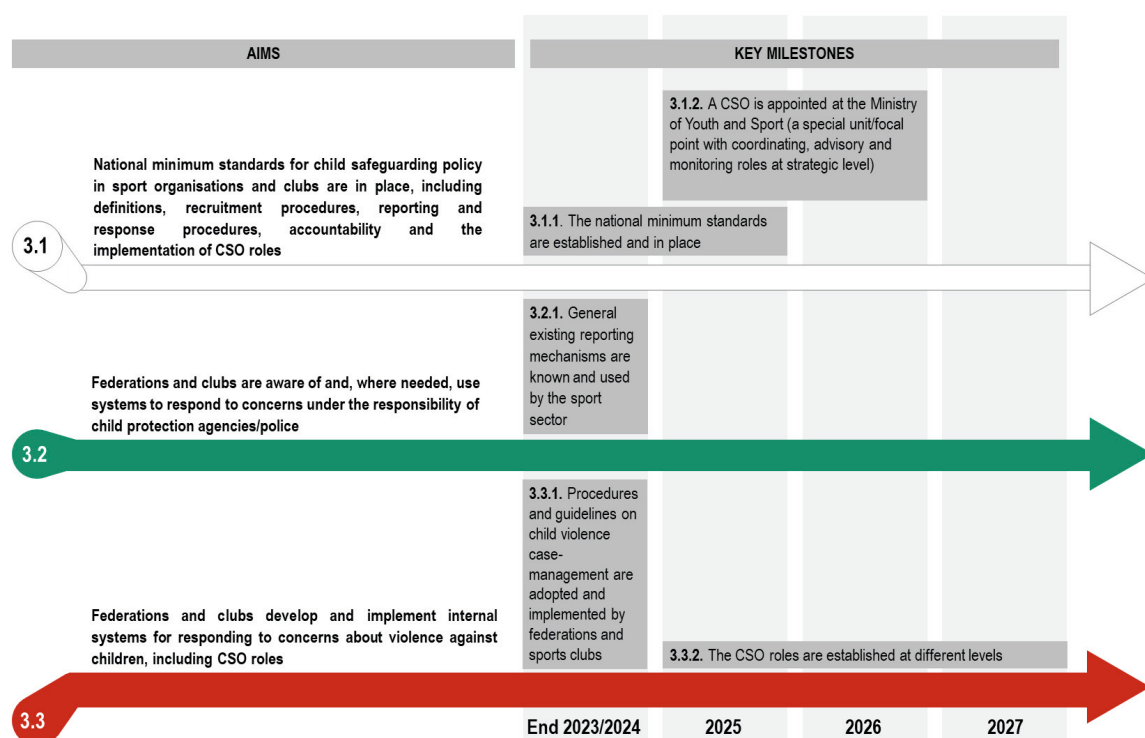
Aims and priorities

- 3.1.** National minimum standards for child safeguarding policy in sports organisations and clubs are in place, including definitions, recruitment procedures, reporting and response procedures, accountability and the implementation of CSO roles.
- 3.2.** Federations and clubs are aware of, and where needed, use systems to respond to concerns that fall under the responsibility of child protection agencies/police.
- 3.3.** Federations and clubs develop and implement internal systems for responding to concerns about violence against children which includes CSO roles.

11. UNICEF (2021) Study on Violence against children in Bulgaria available [here](#).

Key milestones and actions needed

In line with the aims and priorities of the building block the following key milestones with timelines have been identified.



To achieve and complete each of the defined key milestones the following actions have been identified with timelines.

Aim	Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
			End 2023/2024	2025	2026	2027
3.1.	3.1.1. The national minimum standards are established and in place.	3.1.1.1. Establishing a working group.				
		3.1.1.2. Designing terms of reference for the development of the national minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport, including identification of national and/or international good practices.				
		3.1.1.3. Selecting an external expert (if needed) for the development of the national minimum standard through a public call for tenders.				
		3.1.1.4. Running a consultation on the draft national minimum standards with children and young athletes.				
		3.1.1.5. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation approves and validates the minimum standards.				

Aim	Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
			End 2023/2024	2025	2026	2027
	3.1.2. A CSO is appointed at the Ministry of Youth and Sport (a special unit/focal point with coordinating, advisory and monitoring roles at strategic level).	3.1.2.1. The Ministry of Youth and Sport nominates experts to act as a national focal point/unit.				
		3.1.2.2. The Ministry of Youth and Sport provides training to the national focal point/unit, including international training and guidance.				
		3.1.2.3. The Ministry of Youth and Sport delegates the responsibility to assess compliance to the national focal point/unit expert.				
3.2.	3.2.1. General existing reporting mechanisms are known and used by the sport sector.	3.2.1.1. The Ministry of Youth and Sport informs national sport federations, sports clubs and all sports organisations about existing reporting mechanisms and tools for victim support managed by child protection bodies.				
		3.2.1.2. Disseminating the existing reporting mechanisms, requirements and tools for victim support available to all sports organisations (including children and young people and their parents or caregivers).				
3.3.	3.3.1. Procedures and guidelines on child violence case management are adopted and implemented by federations and sports clubs.	3.3.3.1. Federations and sports clubs adopt procedures with clear guidelines on case management.				
		3.3.1.2. Federations and sports clubs implement procedures with clear guidelines on case management.				
		3.3.1.3. Federations and sports clubs inform children and young people and their parents or caregivers about the case management procedures.				
	3.3.2. The CSO roles are established at different levels.	3.3.2.1. Establishing a CSO role per national sport federation (responsible for children and adults).				
		3.3.2.2. Establishing a volunteer CSO role per sports club (considering differences in roles at different levels and the capacities of smaller sports clubs).				
		3.3.2.3. Mayors of cities, as child protection bodies, appoint a local CSO responsible for the clubs owned by cities or for private entities who provide sport activities for children on the territory of respective municipality.				

Stakeholders to be involved and their role and responsibilities

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the achievement of the goals
Ministry of Youth and Sport	<u>Leader</u> of the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Setting up an expert working group to develop minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Informing federations and sports clubs about existing reporting mechanisms and requirements in addition to existing victim support tools managed by child protection bodies. ▶ Establishing a national focal point/unit to assess the compliance of federations and clubs' child safeguarding policies with the adopted minimum standards. ▶ Setting up a CSO role at national level.
Federations	<u>Partners</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Participating in the expert working group for the development of minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Informing their members about existing reporting mechanisms and requirements in addition to existing victim support tools managed by child protection bodies. ▶ Adopting, implementing and informing procedures for case management of child violence cases. ▶ Developing and adopting their own child safeguarding policy in compliance with the national minimum standards. ▶ Establishing CSO roles.
Sports clubs	<u>Partners</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Informing their members about existing reporting mechanisms and requirements in addition to existing victim support tool managed by child protection bodies. ▶ Adopting, implementing and informing procedures with clear guidelines on case management of child violence cases. ▶ Developing and adopting their own child safeguarding policy in compliance with the national minimum standards.
National Sports Academy	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Participating in the working group for the development of minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Developing and adopting a child safeguarding policy in compliance with the national minimum standards.
Child protection bodies	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Participate in the working group for the development of minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport.
Parents associations	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Participate in the working group for the development of minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport.

Possible obstacles and proposed solutions (June 2023)

Aim	Key milestone	Obstacles and solutions
3.1.	3.1.1. The national minimum standards are established and in place.	Lack of sufficient knowledge and experience on child safeguarding in sport. It is a developing concept in Bulgaria and therefore sports clubs may face difficulties in developing and implementing their own child safeguarding policies. <u>Solution:</u> An external expert must be integrated into the working group responsible for developing the standards.
		Not all sports clubs will have equal capacity to implement the standards. Therefore establishing standards applicable to all may be challenging. <u>Solution:</u> Levels of implementation must be defined.
		Some federations and clubs already have child safeguarding policies/ measures in place with different content and levels of development. <u>Solution:</u> It will be necessary that individual practices align with the national standards.
	3.1.2. A national focal point/ unit to assess the compliance of federations and clubs' child safeguarding policies with the adopted minimum standards is established at the Ministry of Youth and Sport.	The sports sector lacks awareness of the existing reporting and response mechanisms managed by child protection bodies. <u>Solution:</u> The involvement of child protection bodies is required in the development of the roadmap.
3.2.	3.2.1. General existing reporting mechanisms are known and used by the sport sector.	Reaching all relevant stakeholders is a challenge. <u>Solution:</u> The Ministry of Youth and Sport will use its coach and club networks to disseminate the information.
		Sports clubs staff and coaches may be reluctant to participate in disseminating information to children and their parents/carers if it increases their workload. <u>Solution:</u> Different communication channels need to be used for spreading the information such as posters, discussions, social media, apps, (these were proposed by the children during the child consultation).
3.3.	3.3.1. Procedures and guidelines on child violence case management are adopted and implemented by federations and sports clubs.	It is possible some sports clubs need more internal expertise to draft their own procedures due to the specific nature of the document. <u>Solution:</u> The exchange of practices, materials and resources could be used as a trusted source of information. <u>Solution:</u> The Ministry's CSO can provide guidance (3.1.2).
		Sports clubs and coaches are reluctant to take up additional responsibility to share the information with children and young people and their parents/carers. <u>Solution:</u> Various communication channels need to be used to disseminate information. Federations can also support the process.

Aim	Key milestone	Obstacles and solutions
	3.3.2. The CSO roles are established at different levels.	Possible lack of interest – child safeguarding is seen as a bureaucratic burden. <u>Solution:</u> Organise an information campaign on the importance and philosophy of child safeguarding. Lack of sensitivity of the sports organisations to the role of the CSOs. <u>Solution:</u> Organise an information campaign on the importance and philosophy of child safeguarding. Lack of capacity – most sports clubs and even some federations are very small and have limited capacity to work on the issue. <u>Solution:</u> A CSO is a club's volunteer or support is provided by federations with CSOs. Lack of budget – sports organisations work with limited financial resources and may not be able to afford a CSO. <u>Solution:</u> A CSO is a club's volunteer or support is provided by federations with CSOs.

BUILDING BLOCK 4 ADVICE AND SUPPORT

“Building Block 4 – Advice and Support” focuses on establishing the necessary arrangements to provide advice and support to children and young people, their parents/carers, as well as to CSOs and other relevant stakeholders in sport. These arrangements include the existence of a structure and resources to provide advice and support to children who have experienced violence or abuse, their families and the professionals responsible for the protection of the victim and management of the case. Information on advice and support procedures should be clear, tailored to the target audience (including children, parents/carers, and other relevant stakeholders) and widely disseminated. In addition, those responsible for child safeguarding should have access to ongoing professional and expert support and supervision.

Expectations

Arrangements are in place to provide children and young people with advice and support, including information on how to report a case or a concern. CSOs and other staff responsible for safeguarding should have access to expert support and supervision.

This should include:

- ▶ Providing children and young people with information about their rights and how to report a case or a concern using relevant media.
- ▶ Designating safeguarding responsibilities and roles at appropriate levels within government and the sport sector – including CSO roles in sports organisations.
- ▶ Providing access to support and advice for those responsible for child safeguarding in the broadest sense (adults, coaches, sports leaders, etc.).
- ▶ Providing support and advice for people in CSO roles.

Note: Education and training are addressed in Building Block 5.

Self-assessment from the Core Group (June 2023)

Core Group members noted that there are insufficient rules and codes of ethics in the sports sector in Bulgaria and that they tend to focus on fair play and anti-doping. Limited attention has been paid to violence other than hooliganism and security at sports events. The CSO role does not exist and no safeguarding structures or support mechanisms have been developed in most of the sport federations. Children and parents lack information about their rights and safeguarding procedures. However, some organisations have already started working on their own child safeguarding policies.

A child safeguarding policy in sport should include the following elements:

- ▶ Developing a system for responding to concerns.
- ▶ Establishing an advice and support system within the organisation.
- ▶ Developing guidelines on ethical conduct.
- ▶ Implementing safe recruitment and vetting procedures.
- ▶ Establishing internal monitoring systems so sports clubs can monitor the implementation of their own procedures.
- ▶ Clearly defining each organisation's responsibilities for responding to concerns and when necessary, reporting to the appropriate authority.
- ▶ Promoting knowledge on how to respond to concerns.
- ▶ Raising awareness of the importance of safeguarding policies.

Adequate psychological support should be provided to young athletes who have experienced abuse. However, few clubs can afford specialist psychologists in the prevention and intervention of abuse and the Core Group suggested exploring existing social service resources. Sport psychologists tend to specialise in motivating athletes to pursue a sporting career. The use of social funding to support the implementation of safeguarding measures was suggested during the Core Group meetings.

Recommendations made by Qantara Sports

- ▶ Sports organisations should set up a CSO role within their structures.
- ▶ The CSO should be responsible for case management, reporting to relevant organisations (child protection units, State Agency for Child Protection and Police), and disseminating information.
- ▶ There should be close cooperation between local, national and cross-sectoral structures for child protection and CSOs in the sports sector.
- ▶ The Steering Committee should define the role and structure of national and local CSOs and their requirements and competencies.

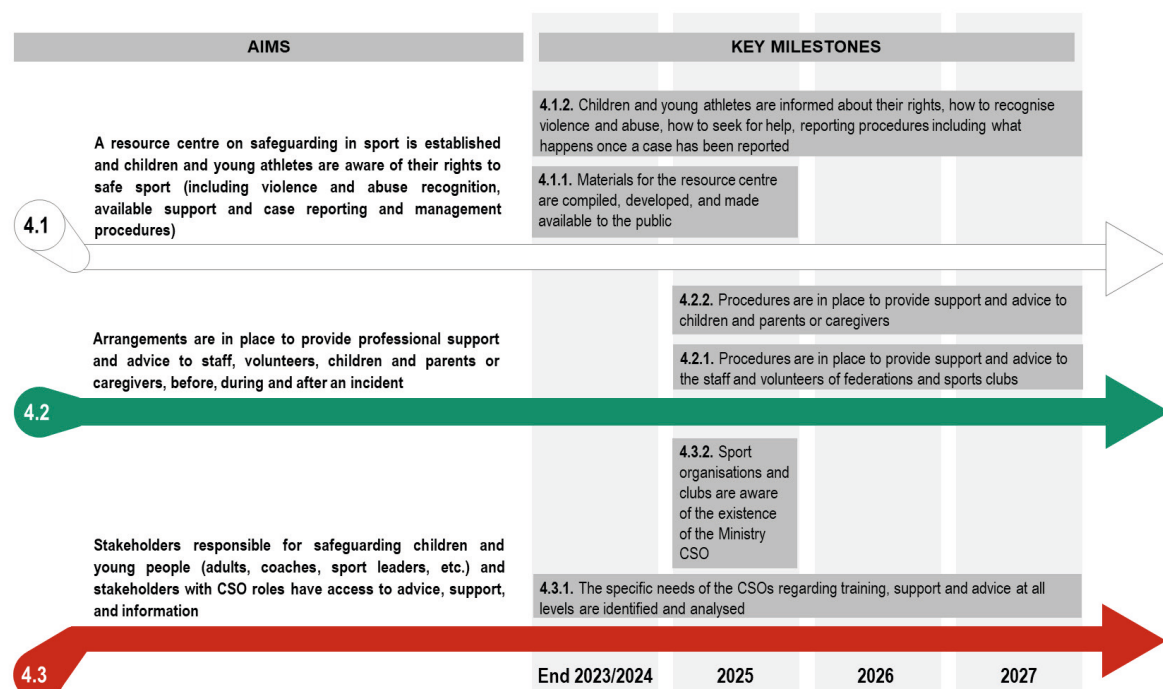
Necessary measures (including legislative) should be taken to promote awareness of children's rights and child protection among children, parents/carers and staff with regular contact with children in sports organisations. Necessary measures (including legislative) should be taken to ensure persons in regular contact with children have an adequate knowledge of harassment and abuse of children and the means to identify them. Tools produced by the "Start to Talk" project of the Council of Europe, UNICEF Bulgaria and the State Agency for Child Protection can be used for awareness and training purposes.

Aims and priorities

- 4.1.** A resource centre on safeguarding in sport is established and children and young athletes are aware of their rights to safe sport (including the recognition of violence and abuse, available support and procedures for reporting and managing cases).
- 4.2.** Arrangements are in place to provide professional support and advice to staff, volunteers, children and parents or carers, before, during and after an incident.
- 4.3.** Stakeholders responsible for safeguarding children and young people (adults, coaches, sports leaders, etc.) and stakeholders with CSO roles have access to advice, support, and information.

Key milestones and actions needed

In line with the aims and priorities of the building block, the following key milestones with timelines have been identified.



To achieve and complete each of the defined key milestones the following actions have been identified with timelines.

Aim	Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
			End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
4.1.	4.1.1. Materials for the resource centre are compiled, developed, and made available to the public.	4.1.1.1. Reviewing and compiling resources on safeguarding in sport.				
		4.1.1.2. Adapting and/or translating existing resources.				
		4.1.1.3. Developing new safeguarding resources according to national, local and target audience specificities.				
		4.1.1.4. Launching the resource centre (i.e., a repository section in the Ministry's website).				
	4.1.2. Children and young athletes are informed about their rights, how to recognise violence and abuse, how to seek help and reporting procedures, including what happens after a case has been reported.	4.1.2.1. Designing terms of reference for the development of various information and dissemination resources (in 2 stages moments).				
		4.1.2.2. Opening a public call for tenders for role as external consultant for the preparation and dissemination of information materials (in 2 stages moments).				
		4.1.2.3. Developing or adapting different dissemination strategies, communication channels, content, audio-visual materials, etc., to help federations and sports clubs organise their own information campaigns (in 2 stages moments).				
		4.1.2.4. Informing children and young athletes about support and reporting systems (e.g. National Child helpline 116 111).				
	4.2.1. Procedures are in place to provide support and advice to the staff and volunteers of federations and sports clubs.	4.2.1.1. Processes are designed and implemented to provide support and advice to federations and clubs staff and volunteers.				
		4.2.1.2. Monitoring procedures regarding support and advice for federations and clubs' staff and volunteers are designed and implemented over time.				
4.2.	4.2.2. Procedures are in place to provide support and advice to children and parents or caregivers.	4.2.2.1. Processes are designed and implemented to provide support and advice to children and parents or caregivers.				
		4.2.2.2. Monitoring procedures regarding sports clubs' support and advice to children and parents or caregivers are designed and implemented.				

Aim	Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
			End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
4.3.	4.3.1. The specific needs of the CSOs regarding training, support and advice at all levels are identified and analysed.	4.3.1.1. A research methodology to identify the needs of CSOs regarding training, support and advice is designed.				
		4.3.1.2. CSOs needs regarding training, support and advice are identified and analysed for further improvements.				
	4.3.2. Sports organisations and clubs are aware of the existence of the Ministry's CSO.	4.3.2.1. The existence of the Ministry's CSO role is disseminated through the Ministry of Youth and Sport website.				
		4.3.2.2. Informing sports organisations and clubs about the Ministry's CSO responsibilities including supporting them in the implementation of child safeguarding in sport policies.				

Stakeholders to be involved and their role and responsibilities

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the achievement of the goals
Ministry of Youth and Sport	<u>Leader</u> of the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Creating and maintaining a resource centre on safeguarding in sport. ▶ Coordinating the organisation and delivery of information dissemination activities in the country. ▶ Creating and maintaining a list of potential providers of support and advice to children and parents or caregivers. ▶ Conducting regular assessment of the needs of CSOs. ▶ Organising regular meetings of CSOs.
Federations	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Organising and delivering the dissemination activities among their members. ▶ Creating and maintaining a list of available supervisors for staff and volunteers. ▶ Ongoing dissemination of resources and activities. ▶ Informing children and young athletes about support and reporting systems (e.g. National Child helpline 116 111).
Sports clubs	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Participating in the dissemination activities. ▶ Ongoing dissemination of resources and activities. ▶ Informing children and young athletes about support and reporting systems (e.g. National Child helpline 116 111).
Academic Institutions	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Providing resources for the repository with resources dedicated to safeguarding in sport.

Possible obstacles and proposed solutions

Aim	Key milestone	Obstacles and solutions
4.1.	4.1.1. Materials for the resource centre are compiled, developed and made available to the public.	The materials are not well adapted to the maturity and development needs of different children and young athletes. <u>Solution:</u> Children and youth organisations with expertise in preparing child friendly materials can assist with relevant know-how and experience.
	4.1.2. Children and young athletes are informed about their rights, how to recognise violence and abuse, how to seek help and reporting procedures, including what happens after a case has been reported.	Federations, sports clubs, coaches, parents and other stakeholders are reluctant to take up additional responsibility regarding safeguarding. <u>Solution:</u> Different communication channels are used for disseminating the resource centre materials (e.g. website, newsletters, social media, awareness campaigns and resources specifically designed to be used at the start of new season's first meeting, internal club meetings, internal federation meetings, coach-parents' meetings, etc.). <u>Solution:</u> CSOs encourage federations, sports clubs, coaches, parents and other stakeholders to help them actively share the information.
		Underreporting of cases. <u>Solution:</u> Children shall be encouraged to use other channels of reporting such as the National Child helpline 116 111.
4.2.	4.2.1. Procedures are in place to provide support and advice to the staff and volunteers of federations and sports clubs.	Possible reluctance of CSOs to receive supervision or advice as this could be seen as a sign of weakness or lack of competence. <u>Solution:</u> The nature and benefits of supervision should be included in the CSO training programme at all levels. Moreover, different actions can be taken to stimulate the intervention and satisfaction of CSOs with their roles (e.g. the creation and sharing of resources showing the relevance of violence prevention in sport, the need for enjoyment in sport which they are also responsible for, being a messenger of the benefits of being engaged in sport, the possibility of participating in working groups, sharing experiences and learning from others, etc.).
	4.2.2. Procedures are in place to provide support and advice to children and parents or caregivers.	Lack of resources, especially in the small clubs <u>Solution:</u> Engagement of the sport club community with resources like those available from social services.
4.3.	4.3.1. The specific needs of the CSOs regarding support and advice at all levels are identified and analysed.	Not enough resources in the Ministry of Youth and Sport. <u>Solution:</u> Planning the resources needed, including budget requirements. Adjusting the workload and objectives, as well as providing the necessary training to a Ministry staff member so that the CSO's tasks are performed by a professional whose salary is already covered by the Ministry budget.
	4.3.2. Sports organisations and clubs are aware of the existence of the Ministry's CSO.	Not enough resources in the Ministry of Youth and Sport. <u>Solution:</u> Planning the resources needed and including it in the Ministry budget.

BUILDING BLOCK 5

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FRAMEWORK

“Building Block 5 – Education and Training Framework” is dedicated to enhancing the competencies and skills of those working with children and young people in sport through the creation and implementation of an education and training system. This system aims to help individuals assume roles in the protection of children in sport and to acquire knowledge about the processes involved. The establishment of an education and training framework with different levels of implementation offered in a range of formats, such as, programmes, courses, workshops, and webinars and tailored to different target groups is essential to create a network of safeguarding experts within different sports organisations, across the country. Furthermore, the high levels of responsibility of CSOs requires a more comprehensive training approach to ensure their effective competence in their specific roles.

Expectations

All those with responsibilities for children and young people in sport (coaches, sport leaders, managers, volunteers, etc.) have access to information, education, and training to support them in their safeguarding duties. CSOs need a deeper level of understanding and consequently, more training. This should include:

- ▶ Agree core competencies from which training curricula can be developed for all roles.
- ▶ Training courses made available to all who need them through approved providers.
- ▶ Training providers (organisations and trainers) meet the core competencies.
- ▶ A specific training framework for CSOs is in place.

Self-assessment from the Core Group (June 2023)

There is a well-established system for the education and training of coaches in Bulgaria and there is a register of coaches managed by the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The Regulation on coaches (Ordinance no. 1 / 04.02.2019) adopted by the Minister of Youth and Sport lists the coaching certification levels: 1) instructor, 2) assistant coach, 3) coach, 4) senior coach and 5) head coach. The current curriculum for coaches at the National Sport Academy, Vasil Levski, includes training on the prevention and management of cases of abuse. This course has been a recent addition and consequently senior coaches did not have it in their syllabus.

The concept of child safeguarding has developed rapidly in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Football Union, for example, requires football clubs to have a CSO in place to obtain a license. Some federations, such as the Basketball Federation, require their member clubs to provide ongoing training for coaches, which could be a way of keeping coaches up to date on child safeguarding. The Basketball Federation plans to set up a case reporting system on their website.

The Core Group considered that the coaching status regulation should provide for associations and clubs to train coaches on the prevention, identification and response to violence. Some members of the Core Group stressed that such a requirement should apply not only to coaches, but to all employees of sports organisations, especially in clubs.

The tolerance that still seems to exist in Bulgaria towards certain manifestations of violence suggests the need for a campaign to prevent violence and abuse, targeting the public and sports stakeholders.

Monitoring of volunteers in contact with children in sport is currently limited. To encourage sports organisations to implement more comprehensive monitoring of volunteers in contact with children in sport the Ministry of Youth and Sport should require they develop vetting procedures as part of the licensing process.

Recommendations made by Qantara Sports

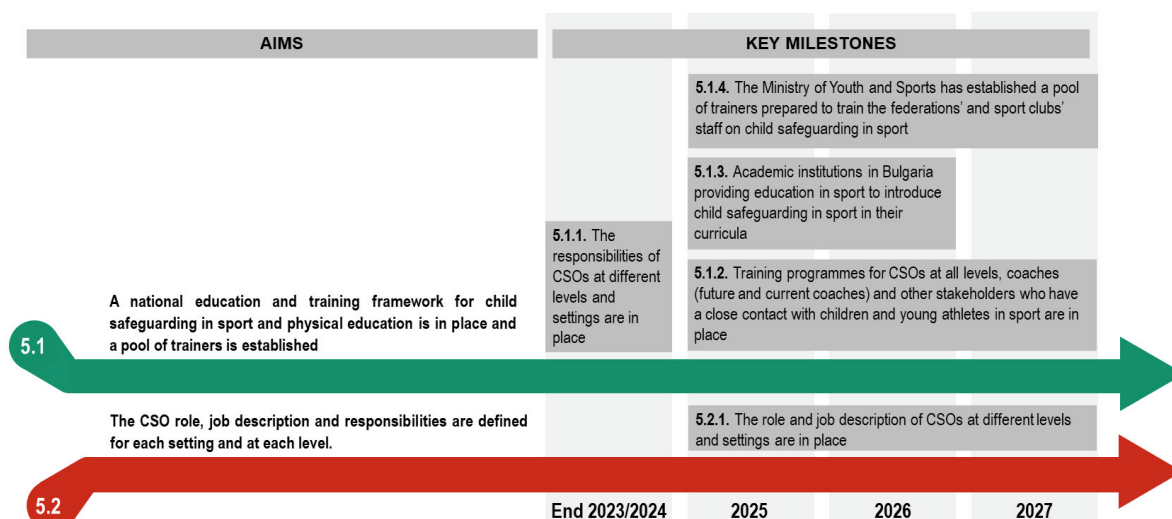
- ▶ An education and training framework focusing on child safeguarding in sport should be developed for different stakeholders (e.g. student coaches, managers, parents, etc.).
- ▶ CSOs at national and local levels should receive appropriate training in accordance with the responsibilities and competencies they assume in their organisation.
- ▶ Ongoing training should be provided for CSOs and other stakeholders (at all levels) to improve and stimulate their development in terms of competencies and responsibilities regarding the protection of children in sport.

Aims and priorities

- 5.1.** A national education and training framework for child safeguarding in sport and physical education is in place and a pool of trainers is established.
- 5.2.** The CSO role, job description and responsibilities are defined for each setting and at each level.

Key milestones and actions needed

In line with the aims and priorities of the building block the following key milestones with timelines have been identified.



To achieve and complete each of the defined key milestones the following actions have been identified with timelines.

Aim	Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
			End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
5.1.	5.1.1. The competency framework and responsibilities of CSOs at different levels and settings are established (which should be the ground for development of education and training content).	5.1.1.1. Designing terms of reference for the development of a CSO competency/ responsibility framework at different levels and settings.				
		5.1.1.2. Selecting an external consultant through tender process for the preparation of a CSO competency/ responsibility framework at different levels and settings.				
		5.1.1.3. Developing a CSO competency/ responsibility framework at different levels and settings.				
		5.1.1.4. Validating the CSO competency/ responsibility framework using the mechanism for cooperation and implementation.				

Aim	Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
			End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
	5.1.2. Training programmes for CSOs at all levels, coaches (also students) and other stakeholders in contact with children and young athletes are in place.	5.1.2.1. Designing terms of reference for the development of training programmes for coaches and CSOs at different levels.				
		5.1.2.2. Opening a public tender and select an external consultant to develop training programmes for CSOs at all levels, coaches, and other stakeholders.				
		5.1.2.3. Developing training programmes for coaches and other stakeholders.				
		5.1.2.4. Developing training programmes for CSO roles at different levels.				
		5.1.2.5. Validating all training programmes using the mechanism for cooperation and implementation and making them widely available.				
	5.1.3. Academic institutions in Bulgaria providing sports education to introduce child safeguarding in sport into their curricula.	5.1.3.1. The National Sports Academy introduces the training programme for child safeguarding in sport into its curricula.				
		5.1.3.2. Higher Education Institutions that offer programmes on physical education and sport, introduce child safeguarding in sport as a topic in their curricula.				
	5.1.4. The Ministry of Youth and Sport establishes a pool of trainers prepared to train the federations and sports clubs staff on child safeguarding in sport.	5.1.4.1. Defining criteria and identifying potential trainers to integrate the pool of trainers.				
		5.1.4.2. Launching the pool of trainers.				
		5.1.4.3. Start providing education and training to the members of the pool of trainers (using a train the trainers approach).				
		5.1.4.4. Start providing regular upgraded trainings to the pool of trainers.				
5.2.	5.2.1. The role and job description of CSOs at different levels and settings are available (so that the CSO becomes an official occupation under the National Classification of Occupations).	5.2.1.1. Designing terms of reference for the preparation of the CSOs' job descriptions at different levels and settings.				
		5.2.1.2. Opening a public tender and select an external consultant to develop job descriptions for CSOs at different levels and settings.				
		5.2.1.3. Preparing the CSOs' job descriptions at different levels and settings.				
		5.2.1.4. Validating the job descriptions using the mechanism for cooperation and implementation.				

Stakeholders to be involved and their role and responsibilities

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the achievement of the goals
Ministry of Youth and Sport	<u>Co-leader</u> of the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Designing the terms of reference for the public tender regarding the development of a competency framework, job description for CSOs at different levels and training programmes for CSOs and coaches. ▶ Defining CSO roles, job description and competencies at all levels. ▶ Running the process of defining the CSO training standards for all levels and development of training programmes. ▶ Creating and maintain a pool of trainers.
State Agency for Child Protection	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Providing guidance/methodological support in the development of training standards and programmes.
Federations	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Providing guidance/methodological support in the development of training standards and programmes. ▶ Implementing training courses in their field of activity.
Sports clubs	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Training their staff and ensure their compliance with their child safeguarding policy. ▶ Providing ongoing child safeguarding training for coaches. ▶ Regularly assessing and identifying training needs.
National Sports Academy	<u>Co-leader</u> of the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Continuously developing their violence prevention programmes and introducing the topic of child safeguarding to students, current coaches, sport managers and other stakeholders. ▶ Providing guidance and expertise in the development of training programmes. ▶ Train and educating coaches, sport managers and other stakeholders. ▶ Supporting the Ministry of Youth and Sport in the creation of training standards, content/programmes, establishment of a pool of trainers and provision of trainings – both to Academy students and current coaches. ▶ Supporting the Ministry of Youth and Sport in defining the responsibilities, roles and job descriptions of CSOs at all levels.
Children/young athletes	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Providing guidance/methodological support in the process of designing training standards and programmes.
Academic institutions	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Continuously developing their programmes for prevention of violence and introducing the topic of child safeguarding to students, future and current coaches, in-service coaches and other stakeholders. ▶ Providing guidance and expertise in the development of the training programmes.

Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the achievement of the goals
	▶ Training and educate coaches and other stakeholders. ▶ Supporting the Ministry of Youth and Sport in the creation of training standards, content/programmes, establishment of a pool of trainers and provision of trainings – both to their students and current coaches. ▶ Supporting the Ministry of Youth and Sport in defining the competencies, roles and job descriptions of CSOs at each level.

Possible obstacles and proposed solutions

Aim	Key milestone	Obstacles and solutions
5.1.	5.1.1. The responsibilities of CSOs at different levels are established.	The needs of the different levels and settings are expected to be diverse and heterogeneous. <u>Solution:</u> The needs are assessed within the process of developing the competencies framework (i.e. 5.1.1.3).
	5.1.2. Training programmes for CSOs at all levels, coaches (also students) and other stakeholders in contact with children and young athletes are in place.	The relationship built on trust between the athletes, coach and other human resources in the sport organisation should not be broken. <u>Solution:</u> The roles and responsibilities of the CSOs are clarified and coaches, children, young athletes and other stakeholders are aware of their role. Lack of expertise in the Ministry of Youth and Sport for development of the training programmes. <u>Solution:</u> External consultancy (e.g. National Sports Academy) will be requested.
	5.1.3. Academic institutions in Bulgaria providing sports education introduce child safeguarding in sport into their curricula.	Bulgarian Higher Education Institutions have academic autonomy to choose the topics and contents of courses and degrees. <u>Solution:</u> The involvement of the National Sports Academy in the development of the roadmap and the strategic and operational documents should encourage the commitment of other higher-education institutions in the field. Moreover, the expertise of the Academy will be sought in the development of all learning outcomes and training programmes. No legal requirement for additional or upgraded training after the completion of a higher education degree for the coaches. <u>Solution:</u> An amendment to the Ordinance for the coaching staff is envisaged. Federations are committed to the child safeguarding roadmap and they have internal mechanisms to compel sports clubs.
	5.1.4. The Ministry of Youth and Sport establishes a pool of trainers prepared to train the federations and sports clubs staff on child safeguarding in sport.	Low interest and availability of suitable trainers to join the pool. Limited funding. <u>Solution:</u> Budget shall be planned by the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The trainers are identified among the staff of the National Sports Academy and the Ministry of Youth and Sport.
5.2.	5.2.1. The role and job description of CSOs at different levels and settings are in place.	The roles and job descriptions of the different levels and settings can be too diverse and heterogeneous making it difficult for CSO candidates to understand what their actual role is. <u>Solution:</u> Target audiences are identified and relevant framework descriptions are prepared in advance, including the definition of a communication strategy to engage each of the stakeholders and settings according to their level, expected role and institutional positioning.

SETTING UP CHILD SAFEGUARDING OFFICER ROLES

A CROSS-SECTORAL PROCESS DEVELOPED ACROSS BUILDING BLOCKS

The role of CSOs in sport is well established in countries with mature safeguarding systems, such as Ireland, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, and United Kingdom. International sports bodies such as the International Olympic Committee and international federations have acknowledged the need for CSOs and have actively promoted their implementation, such as the FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Sport educational programme¹². In the context of the European Union - Council of Europe joint project "Child Safeguarding in Sport", six roadmaps were prepared for the implementation of a child safeguarding policy in sport through the establishing of CSO positions.

The CSO is not yet a formally recognised profession requiring specific academic qualifications. However, the responsibilities of the position are becoming more robust as safeguarding systems are developed and implemented within the context of sport. CSOs are *"often considered as key players in the development and implementation of effective child safeguarding policies and strategies, they are appointed by a sport organisation or public authority and contribute to preventing all forms of abuse and violence, including against children and to responding to concerns in sport settings"* (Council of Europe webpage). CSOs have, among other responsibilities, the promotion of children's well-being protecting them from harm or abuse, while at the same time being the focal point of their own organisation for responding to and managing concerns.

In Bulgaria, the establishment of CSO position is a cross-sectoral process that involves the following milestones:

- ▶ **2.2.** Partnerships are in place for the establishment of the CSOs at different levels.
- ▶ **3.1.** National minimum standards for quantitative, qualitative and a meaningful child safeguarding policy for sports organisations and clubs are in place, including definitions, vetting procedures, reporting and response procedures, accountability and CSOs.
- ▶ **3.3.** Federations and clubs develop and implement internal systems for responding to concerns about violence against children, including CSO roles.
- ▶ **4.3.** Stakeholders responsible for safeguarding children and young people (adults, coaches, sport leaders, etc.) and stakeholders with CSO roles have access to advice, support, and information.
- ▶ **5.1.** The competency framework and responsibilities of CSOs at different levels and settings are established.
- ▶ **5.2.** The CSO role, job description and responsibilities are defined for each setting and at each level.

The roadmap proposes a timeline for the implementation of the abovementioned milestones and following actions towards the setting up of CSO roles in Bulgaria:

By the end of 2023 and in 2024:

- ▶ To collect practices, materials, and resources on child safeguarding in sport (Action 2.2.1.1) with the purpose of creating a space for the exchange of practices, materials and resources among different stakeholders (federations, sports clubs, Olympic Committee, etc.) in the sports sector, which will be available on the Ministry of Youth and Sport website (Milestone 2.2.1).
- ▶ To create national minimum standards for child safeguarding (Milestone 3.1.1), a working group will be established (Action 3.1.1.1), terms of reference for the development of the national minimum standards, including the identification of national and/or international best practices (Action 3.1.1.1), and, if needed, the selection of an external expert through a public call for tenders (Action 3.1.1.3).
- ▶ To design a research methodology for identifying the needs of CSOs regarding training, support and advice (Action 4.3.1.1) to be analysed at all levels (Milestone 4.3.1).

12. Available at <https://safeguardinginfootball.fifa.com>.

In 2025:

- ▶ To create a space for the exchange of practices, materials and resources between different stakeholders in the sport sector, including federations, sports clubs and the Olympic Committee and make these available on the Ministry of Youth and Sport website (Milestone 2.2.1). This involves publishing the collected child safeguarding practices, materials and resources on a dedicated section/microsite of the Ministry's website (Action 2.2.1.2) and launching and promoting these resources among federations and sports clubs (Action 2.2.1.3).
- ▶ To identify existing partnership structures, gaps and potential synergies and define the role of CSOs in these partnership structures (Milestone 2.2.2) by mapping existing partnerships through the mechanism for cooperation and implementation (Action 2.2.2.1), establishing communication channels with different actors and partnerships (Action 2.2.2.2, and defining the role of CSOs in partnerships (Action 2.2.2.3).
- ▶ To develop national minimum standards for child safeguarding (Milestone 3.1.1) there will be a consultation on the draft with children and young athletes (Action 3.1.1.4) followed by the approval and validation of the minimum standards through the mechanism for cooperation and implementation (Action 3.1.1.5).
- ▶ To appoint a CSO at the Ministry of Youth and Sport, creating a special unit/focal point with coordinating, advisory and monitoring roles at a strategic level (Milestone 3.1.2). The Ministry of Youth and Sport will nominate experts to act as national focal point/unit (Action 3.1.2.1) and provide them with training including international training and guidance (Action 3.1.2.2).
- ▶ To implement clear procedures and guidelines for child violence case management in federations and sports clubs (Milestone 3.3.1) including the adoption of new procedures (Action 3.3.1.1), their implementation (Action 3.3.1.2) and informing children and young people and their parents or caregivers about these procedures (Action 3.3.1.3).
- ▶ To establish CSO roles at different levels (Milestone 3.3.2) specifically implementing a CSO role per national sport federation where the person may be responsible for both children and adults (Action 3.3.2.1).
- ▶ To identify and analyse the specific needs of CSOs (Milestone 4.3.1) building upon the research conducted in the previous year (Action 4.3.1.1) to identify and analyse the needs of CSOs regarding training, support and advice (Action 4.3.1.2).
- ▶ To ensure all sports organisations and clubs are aware of the existence of the Ministry's CSO (Milestone 4.3.2). This will involve disseminating information about the existence and role of the Ministry CSO through the Ministry of Youth and Sport website (Action 4.3.2.1) and informing stakeholders about the Ministry's CSO's responsibilities including supporting the implementation of child safeguarding in sport policies (Action 4.3.2.2).
- ▶ To design the terms of reference for the preparation of CSO job descriptions and initiate a public tender to select an external consultant to develop job descriptions for CSOs (Milestone 5.2.1).

In 2026:

- ▶ To embed child safeguarding in sport within existing partnership structures (e.g. National Council for Child Protection, Municipal Child Protection Commissions, etc.) (Milestone 2.2.3) where strategies and action plans will be reviewed and relevant components will be incorporated into their guideline documents and work (Action 2.2.3.1) including the establishment of a role for CSOs in each partnership (Action 2.2.3.2).
- ▶ To establish CSOs at the Ministry of Youth and Sport creating a special unit/focal point with coordinating, advisory and monitoring roles at a strategic level (Milestone 3.1.2). This will involve delegating the authority to assess compliance to the national focal point/unit expert (Action 3.1.2.3).
- ▶ To implement CSO roles at different levels (Milestone 3.3.2) including national sport federations where individuals may be responsible for both children and adults (Action 3.3.2.1). Additionally, a volunteer CSO role per sports club will be introduced which considers differences in roles at different levels and the limited capacity of smaller sports clubs (Action 3.3.2.2). Local CSOs responsible for clubs owned by cities or private entities providing sport activities for children within the respective municipality's territory will also be appointed (Action 3.3.2.3).
- ▶ To identify and analyse the specific needs of CSOs (Milestone 4.3.1) and build upon previous research conducted in preceding years (Action 4.3.1.1). The goal is to identify and analyse CSO needs regarding further training, support and advice (Action 4.3.1.2).
- ▶ To ensure the role and job descriptions of CSOs at different levels and settings are in place (Milestone 5.2.1) by preparing job descriptions (Action 5.2.1.3) and validating them through the mechanism for cooperation and implementation (Action 5.2.1.4).

In 2027:

- ▶ To establish CSO roles at different levels (Milestone 3.3.2) including a volunteer CSO role per sports club considering variations in roles at different levels and the limited capacity of smaller sports clubs (Action 3.3.2.2). Additionally, local CSOs responsible for clubs owned by cities or private entities offering sports activities for children within their respective municipality's territory will be appointed (Action 3.3.2.3).
- ▶ To identify and analyse the specific needs of CSOs (Milestone 4.3.1) building upon research conducted in previous years (Action 4.3.1.1). The focus will be on identifying and analysing CSO needs related to further training, support, and advice (Action 4.3.1.2).
- ▶ To ensure the role and job descriptions of CSOs at different levels and settings are in place (Milestone 5.2.1). This will involve the validation of job descriptions through the mechanism for cooperation and implementation (Action 5.2.1.4).

The abovementioned information is presented in the table below which is focused on the steps required to establish and implement the role of CSOs in Bulgaria.

Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
		End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
Aim 2.2. Partnerships are in place for the establishment of the CSOs at different levels.					
2.2.1. A space for the exchange of practices, materials and resources between different stakeholders (federations, sports clubs, Olympic Committee, etc.) in sport sector is available at the Ministry of Youth and Sport website.	2.2.1.1. Collecting practices, materials and resources on child safeguarding in sport.				
	2.2.1.2. Publishing the collected practices, materials and resources on a dedicated section/ microsite of the Ministry's website.				
	2.2.1.3. The microsite is launched and promoted among federations and sports clubs.				
2.2.2. Existing partnership structures, gaps and potential synergies are identified and the role of CSOs in partnership structures is defined.	2.2.2.1. Mapping of existing partnerships by the mechanism for cooperation and implementation.				
	2.2.2.2. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation establishes communication channels with different actors and partnerships.				
	2.2.2.3. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation defines the role of CSOs in partnerships.				
2.2.3. The existing partnership structures (e.g. National Council for Child Protection, Municipal Child Protection Commissions, etc.) have embedded child safeguarding in sport in their work.	2.2.3.1. Existing partnerships review the strategy and action plan and incorporate relevant parts in their guideline documents and work.				
	2.2.3.2. Establishing a CSO role in each partnership.				
Aim 3.1. National minimum standards for quantitative, qualitative and a meaningful child safeguarding policy for sports organisations and clubs are in place, including definitions, vetting procedures, reporting and response procedures, accountability and CSOs.					
3.1.1. The national minimum standards are established and in place.	3.1.1.1. Establishing a working group.				

Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
		End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
	3.1.1.2. Designing terms of reference for the development of the national minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport, including identification of national and/or international good practices.				
	3.1.1.3. Selecting an external expert (if needed) for the development of the national minimum standard through a public call for tenders.				
	3.1.1.4. Running a consultation on the draft national minimum standards with children and young athletes.				
	3.1.1.5. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation approves and validates the minimum standards.				
3.1.2. A CSO is appointed at the Ministry of Youth and Sport (a special unit/focal point with coordinating, advisory and monitoring roles at strategic level).	3.1.2.1. The Ministry of Youth and Sport nominates experts to act as national focal point/unit.				
	3.1.2.2. The Ministry of Youth and Sport provides training to the national focal point/unit including international training and guidance.				
	3.1.2.3. The Ministry of Youth and Sport delegates the responsibility to assess compliance of the national focal point/unit expert.				
Aim 3.3. Federations and clubs develop and implement internal systems for responding to concerns about violence against children, including CSO roles.					
3.3.1. Procedures and guidelines on child violence case management are adopted and implemented by federations and sports clubs.	3.3.3.1. Federations and sports clubs adopt procedures with clear guidelines on case management of child violence cases.				
	3.3.1.2. Federations and sports clubs implement procedures with clear guidelines on case management.				
	3.3.1.3. Federations and sports clubs inform children and young people and their parents or caregivers about the case management procedures.				
3.3.2. The CSO roles are established at different levels.	3.3.2.1. Establishing a CSO role per national sport federation (the person may be responsible for children and adults).				
	3.3.2.2. Establishing a volunteer CSO role per sports club (considering differences in roles at different levels, and the limited capacity of smaller sports clubs).				

Key milestone	Action needed	Timeline			
		End 2023/2024	2025	2026	2027
	3.3.2.3. Mayors of cities, as child protection bodies, appoint a local CSO responsible for the clubs owned by cities or for private entities who provide sport activities for children on the territory of respective municipality.				
Aim 4.3. Stakeholders responsible for safeguarding children and young people (adults, coaches, sport leaders, etc.) and stakeholders with CSO roles have access to advice, support and information.					
4.3.1. The specific needs of the CSOs regarding training, support and advice at all levels are identified and analysed.	4.3.1.1. A research methodology to identify the needs of CSOs regarding training, support and advice is designed.				
	4.3.1.2. CSO needs regarding training, support and advice are identified and analysed for further improvements.				
4.3.2. Sports organisations and clubs are aware of the existence of the Ministry's CSO.	4.3.2.1. The existence of the Ministry CSO role is disseminated through the Ministry of Youth and Sport website.				
	4.3.2.2. Informing sports organisations and clubs about the Ministry's CSO's responsibilities including supporting them in the implementation of child safeguarding in sport policies.				
Aim 5.2. The CSO role, job description and responsibilities are defined for each setting and at each level.					
5.2.1. The role and job description of CSOs at different levels and settings are in place.	5.2.1.1. Designing terms of reference for the preparation of CSO job descriptions at different levels and settings.				
	5.2.1.2. Opening a public tender and selecting an external consultant to develop job descriptions for CSOs at different levels and settings.				
	5.2.1.3. Preparing CSO job descriptions at different levels and settings.				
	5.2.1.4. Validating the job descriptions using the mechanism for cooperation and implementation.				

In the following section a preliminary proposal is presented regarding the definition of CSO roles at different levels and settings and the potential elements of the education and training processes for CSOs and other staff.

DEFINITION OF CHILD SAFEGUARDING OFFICER ROLES

As a preliminary approach the following CSO roles should be established.

Organisations/ authorities where CSO roles are needed	Role/ main missions of the CSOs (e.g. prevention vs response, strategic level vs operational level, etc.)	Technical knowledge and other skills required ¹³	Resources needed to set up CSO roles (e.g. human, financial, technical, etc.)	Partnerships to be built
Ministry of Youth and Sport	Methodological guidance and monitoring, strategic role, education and training responsibilities.	<u>Technical knowledge:</u> Children's rights, law, disclosure procedures, governance, complex management, education and training management. <u>Other skills:</u> group dynamics, collaboration, can do attitude, honesty.	Human, financial, technical	State agencies for child protection Academic institutions
Federations	Methodological guidance, strategic and operational roles, education and training responsibilities.	<u>Technical knowledge:</u> Children's rights, governance, management, education and training management. <u>Other skills:</u> group dynamics, collaboration, can do attitude, honesty.	Human, financial	State agencies for child protection Academic institutions Municipalities
Sports clubs	Operational roles, prevention and response to concerns responsibilities.	<u>Technical knowledge:</u> Children's rights, governance, psychology, communication. <u>Other skills:</u> discipline, awareness, group dynamics, collaboration, can do attitude, honesty, confidence.	Human	Local child protection NGOs, municipalities Managers, coaches, parents, other sports club staff

13. To be included in the job descriptions (as prerequisite) or developed through training.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF CHILD SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS AND OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

As a preliminary approach it is proposed to set up the education and training of CSOs and other relevant stakeholders according to the follow structure.

Target group(s) (based on the needed profiles in the previous section)	Headline content (based on the expected competencies/ knowledge/ attitudes identified previously)	Format (online/ face-to-face)	Planned duration (how long is the course and over how many months/ years)	Recognised qualification (will the course lead to a recognised qualification?)	Potential training provider(s)	Resources needed (human, financial, technical, etc.)	Stakeholders to be involved and partnerships to be built
Student coaches	Children's rights, violence, prevention, reaction, responding to cases of violence, interaction with the other institutions. Child safeguarding policies, standards, algorithms. Role of the CSOs.	Face-to-face	2 ECTS ¹⁴	1 subject within the Coach education course (equivalent to CSO diploma)	National Sports Academy	Human, financial, technical	Federations Child protection bodies Sports clubs
Certified coaches	Violence, prevention, reaction, responding to cases of violence, interaction with the other institutions. Child safeguarding policies, standards, algorithms. Role of the CSOs.	Complementary trainings Face-to-face	1 ECTS	CSO diploma	National Sports Academy Federations Academic institutions	Human, financial, technical	Child protection bodies Sports clubs
Staff involved in the sports organisations	Violence, prevention, reaction, responding to cases of violence, interaction with the other institutions. Child safeguarding policies, standards, algorithms. Role of the CSOs.	Awareness sessions Online	Seminars	CSO essentials	Municipalities, federations and sports clubs	Human, financial, technical	Child protection bodies
Young athletes and their parents or caregivers	To know when, how and whom to approach in cases of violence against young athlete.	Awareness sessions Face-to-face and online	Workshops	CSO essentials	Municipalities, federations and sports clubs	Human, financial, technical	Child protection bodies

14. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a metric used in European higher education to establish comparative learning outcomes and their associated workload. Typically, it is accepted that 1 ECTS corresponds to 25-30 hours of learning workload. However, the exact number of hours varies from country to country. More information is available at <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system>.

ROADMAP OVERVIEW

STAKEHOLDERS TO BE INVOLVED IN EACH BUILDING BLOCK AND THEIR RESPONSABILITIES

Stakeholders involved	Building Blocks				
	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support	5. Education and training framework
Ministry of Youth and Sport	<u>Leader of the process.</u> <u>Responsibilities:</u> ▶ Developing the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 in partnership with relevant stakeholders; adopting and implementing the strategy. The strategy shall include an operative goal on child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Developing and implementing the action plan in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. ▶ Developing regulations in the field of sport. ▶ Organising and coordinating the design of the national policy framework on child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Developing and implementing the awareness campaign.	<u>Leader in the process.</u> <u>Responsibilities:</u> ▶ Coordinating the process for the establishment of a mechanism for cooperation and implementation of the Bulgaria roadmap on child safeguarding in sport and the national policy framework on child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Mapping existing partnerships and establishing efficient communication channels with them. ▶ Collecting practices, materials and resources on child safeguarding in sport and publishing them on a special section/microsite of their website.	<u>Leader of the process.</u> <u>Responsibilities:</u> ▶ Setting up an expert working group to develop minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Informing federations and sports clubs about existing reporting mechanisms and requirements as well as existing victim support tools managed by child protection bodies. ▶ Establishing a national focal point/unit to assess the compliance of federations and clubs' child safeguarding policies with the adopted minimum standards. ▶ Setting up a CSO role at national level.	<u>Leader of the process.</u> <u>Responsibilities:</u> ▶ Creating and maintaining a resource centre on safeguarding in sport. ▶ Coordinating the organisation and delivery of information dissemination activities in the country. ▶ Creating and maintaining a list of potential providers of support and advice to children and parents or caregivers. ▶ Conducting regular assessment of the needs of CSOs. ▶ Organising regular meetings of CSOs.	<u>Co-leader of the process.</u> <u>Responsibilities:</u> ▶ Designing the terms of reference for the public tender regarding the development of a competency framework, job descriptions for CSOs at different levels and training programmes for CSOs and coaches. ▶ Defining CSO roles, job descriptions and competencies at all levels. ▶ Running the process of defining the CSO training standards for all levels and development of training programmes. ▶ Creating and maintaining a pool of trainers.

Stakeholders involved	Building Blocks				
	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support	5. Education and training framework
State Agency for Child Protection	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.				<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Providing guidance/ methodological support in the development of training standards and programmes.
Agency for Social Assistance	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.				

Building Blocks				
Stakeholders involved	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support
Federations	<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the action plan. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.	<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Supporting the establishment of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation. ▶ Keeping abreast of the existing resources available in the dedicated section on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.	<u>Partners in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Participating in the expert working group for the development of minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Informing their members about existing reporting mechanisms and requirements as well as existing victim support tools managed by child protection bodies. ▶ Adopting, implementing and informing procedures for case management of child violence cases. ▶ Developing and adopting their own child safeguarding policy in compliance with the national minimum standards. ▶ Establishing CSO roles.	<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Organising and delivering the dissemination activities among their members. ▶ Creating and maintaining a list of available supervisors for staff and volunteers. ▶ Ongoing dissemination of resources and activities. ▶ Informing children and young athletes about support and reporting systems (e.g. National helpline 116 111).
				<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Providing guidance/methodological support in the development of training standards and programmes. ▶ Implementing training courses in their field of activity.

Stakeholders involved	Building Blocks			
	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support
Sports clubs	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the action plan. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.		<u>Partners</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Informing their members about existing reporting mechanisms and requirements as well as existing victim support tool managed by child protection bodies. ▶ Adopting, implementing and informing procedures with clear guidelines on case management of child violence cases. ▶ Developing and adopting their own child safeguarding policy in compliance with the national minimum standards.	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Participating in the dissemination activities. ▶ Ongoing dissemination of resources and activities. ▶ Informing children and young athletes about support and reporting systems (e.g. National helpline 116 111).
				<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Training their staff and ensure compliance with their child safeguarding policy. ▶ Providing ongoing child safeguarding training for coaches. ▶ Regularly assessing and identifying training needs.

Stakeholders involved	Building Blocks			
	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support
National Sports Academy	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the development of a research and analysis methodology. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Supporting the establishment of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation. ▶ Keeping abreast of the existing resources available on the dedicated section on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Participating in the working group for the development of minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport. ▶ Developing and adopting a child safeguarding policy in compliance with the national minimum standards.	<u>Co-leader</u> of the process: Responsibilities: ▶ Continuously developing their violence prevention programmes and introducing the topic of child safeguarding to students, current coaches, sport managers and other stakeholders. ▶ Providing guidance and expertise in the development of training programmes. ▶ Train and educating coaches, sport managers and other stakeholders. ▶ Supporting the Ministry of Youth and Sport in the creation of training standards, content/programme, establishment of a pool of trainers and provision of trainings – both to Academy students and current coaches. ▶ Supporting the Ministry of Youth and Sport in defining the responsibilities, roles and job descriptions of CSOs at all levels.

Stakeholders involved	Building Blocks			
	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support
Child protection bodies		<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Supporting the establishment of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation. ▶ Incorporating relevant parts on child safeguarding in sport in their guiding documents and work. ▶ Keeping abreast of existing resources available on the dedicated section on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.	<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Participate in the working group for the development of minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport.	

Building Blocks				
Stakeholders involved	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support
Children/ young athletes	Partner in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Providing their views and insights on the different elements of the policy framework.	Partner in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Supporting the establishment of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation.		5. Education and training framework Partner in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Continuously developing their programmes for prevention of violence and introducing the topic of child safeguarding to students, future and current coaches, in-service coaches and other stakeholders. ▶ Providing guidance and expertise in the development of the training programmes. ▶ Train and educate coaches and other stakeholders. ▶ Supporting the Ministry of Youth and Sport in the creation of training standards, content/programmes, establishment of a pool of trainers and provision of trainings – both to their students and current coaches. ▶ Supporting the Ministry of Youth and Sport in defining the competencies, roles and job descriptions of CSOs at each level.

Stakeholders involved	Building Blocks				
	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support	5. Education and training framework
Parents associations	<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport 2034 and its action plan. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.	<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Supporting the establishment of the mechanism for cooperation and implementation. ▶ Keeping abreast of the existing resources available on the dedicated section on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.	<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Participate in the working group for the development of minimum standards for child safeguarding in sport.		
Academic institutions	<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport 2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the development of a research and analysis methodology. ▶ Collaboration in the implementation of the awareness campaign.			<u>Partner in the process.</u> Responsibilities: ▶ Continuously developing their programmes for prevention of violence and introducing the topic of child safeguarding to students, future and current coaches, in-service coaches and other stakeholders. ▶ Providing guidance and expertise in the development of the training programmes. ▶ Train and educate coaches and other stakeholders.	

Stakeholders involved	Building Blocks				
	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support	5. Education and training framework
					▶ Supporting the Ministry of Youth and Sport in the creation of training standards, content/programmes, establishment of a pool of trainers and provision of trainings – both to their students and current coaches. ▶ Supporting the Ministry of Youth and Sport in defining the competencies, roles and job descriptions of CSOs at each level.
National child and youth organisations	Partner in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.				

Stakeholders involved	Building Blocks				
	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support	5. Education and training framework
Ministry of Education and Science	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.				
Ministry of Interior	<u>Partner</u> in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.				

Stakeholders involved	Building Blocks				
	1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	2. Partnerships	3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	4. Advice and support	5. Education and training framework
Municipalities / National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria	Partner in the process. Responsibilities: ▶ Collaborating in the development of the new National Strategy for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sport and Tourism Activities 2023-2034 and its action plan and providing technical support. ▶ Collaborating in the implementation of the awareness campaign.				

BUILDING BLOCKS, AIMS AND PRIORITIES, KEY MILESTONES AND TIMELINE

Building block	Aims and priorities	Key milestones	Timeline			
			End 2023/2024	2025	2026	2027
1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	1.1. A national policy framework on child safeguarding in sport is developed and adopted.	1.1.1. Child safeguarding in sport is included as an operative goal into the new Strategy for the Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sport and Sport-Tourism Activities 2023-2034.				
		1.1.2. The policy framework on child safeguarding in sport is further developed.				
	1.2. An action plan to set out clear aims, actions, roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the policy framework on child safeguarding in sports is developed and approved.	1.2.1 The action plan is developed.				
		1.2.2. The action plan is submitted for consultation and adoption.				
	1.3. The public and sport sector are aware of the importance of safeguarding children in and through sport.	1.3.1. An awareness campaign about the importance of child safeguarding in sport is developed and implemented.				
2. Partnerships	2.1. A mechanism for cooperation and implementation of the national policy framework on child safeguarding in sport is in place.	2.1.1. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation is defined and established.				
		2.1.2. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation rules of procedure are formalised.				
	2.2. Partnerships are in place for the establishment of the CSOs at different levels.	2.2.1. A space for the exchange of practices, materials and resources between different stakeholders (federations, sports clubs, Olympic Committee, etc.) in sport sector is available on the Ministry of Youth and Sport website.				
		2.2.2. Existing partnership structures, gaps and potential synergies are identified and the role of CSO in partnership structures is defined.				
		2.2.3. The existing partnership structures (e.g. National Council for Child Protection, Municipal Child Protection Commissions, etc.) have embedded child safeguarding in sport in their work.				

Building block	Aims and priorities	Key milestones	Timeline			
			End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	3.1. National minimum standards for child safeguarding policy in sports organisations and clubs are in place, including definitions, recruitment procedures, reporting and response procedures, accountability and the implementation of CSO roles.	3.1.1. The national minimum standards are established and in place.				
		3.1.2. A CSO is appointed at the Ministry of Youth and Sport (a special unit/focal point with coordinating, advisory and monitoring roles at strategic level).				
	3.2. Federations and clubs are aware of and where needed, use systems to respond to concerns that fall under the responsibility of child protection agencies/police.	3.2.1. General existing reporting mechanisms are known and used by the sport sector.				
	3.3. Federations and clubs develop and implement internal systems for responding to concerns about violence against children, including CSO roles.	3.3.1. Procedures and guidelines on child violence case management are adopted and implemented by federations and sports clubs.				
		3.3.2. The CSO roles are established at different levels.				
4. Advice and support	4.1. A resource centre on safeguarding in sport is established and children and young athletes are aware of their right to safe sport (including recognition of violence and abuse, available support and procedures for reporting and managing cases).	4.1.1. Materials for the resource centre are compiled, developed, and made available to the public				
		4.1.2. Children and young athletes are informed about their rights, how to recognise violence and abuse, how to seek help, and reporting procedures including what happens after a case has been reported.				
	4.2. Arrangements are in place to provide professional support and advice to staff, volunteers, children and parents or carers, before, during and after an incident.	4.2.1. Procedures are in place to provide support and advice to the staff and volunteers of federations and sports clubs.				
		4.2.2. Procedures are in place to provide support and advice to children and parents or caregivers.				
	4.3. Stakeholders responsible for safeguarding children and young people (adults, coaches, sports leaders, etc.) and stakeholders with CSO roles have access to advice, support and information.	4.3.1. The specific needs of the CSOs regarding training, support and advice at all levels are identified and analysed.				
		4.3.2. Sports organisations and clubs are aware of the existence of the Ministry's CSO.				

Building block	Aims and priorities	Key milestones	Timeline			
			End 2023/ 2024	2025	2026	2027
5. Education and training framework	5.1. A national education and training framework for child safeguarding in sport and physical education is in place and a pool of trainers is established.	5.1.1. The responsibilities of CSOs at different levels and settings are established.				
		5.1.2. Training programmes for CSOs at all levels, coaches (also students) and other stakeholders in contact with children and young athletes are in place.				
		5.1.3. Academic institutions in Bulgaria providing sport education introduce child safeguarding in sport into their curricula.				
		5.1.4. The Ministry of Youth and Sport establishes a pool of trainers prepared to train the federations and sports club staff on child safeguarding in sport.				
	5.2. The CSO role, job description and responsibilities are defined for each setting and at each level.	5.2.1. The role and job description of CSOs at different levels and settings are available.				

ROADMAP AT A GLANCE

Building blocks	Aims	Key milestones		
		End 2023 / 2024	2025	2026
1. National policy framework for safeguarding and protecting children in sport	1.1. A national policy framework on child safeguarding in sport is developed and adopted.	1.1.1. Child safeguarding in sport is included as an operative goal into the new Strategy for the Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sport and Sport-Tourism Activities 2023-2034.		
		1.1.2. The policy framework on child safeguarding in sport is further developed.		
	1.2. An action plan to set out clear aims, actions, roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the policy framework on child safeguarding in sports is developed and approved.	1.2.1 The action plan is developed.		
		1.2.2. The action plan is submitted for consultation and adoption.		
	1.3. The public and the sport sector are aware of the importance of safeguarding children in and through sport.	1.3.1. An awareness campaign about the importance of child safeguarding in sport is developed and implemented.		
2. Partnerships	2.1. A mechanism for cooperation and implementation of the national policy framework on child safeguarding in sport is in place.	2.1.1. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation is defined and established.		
		2.1.2. The mechanism for cooperation and implementation rules of procedure are formalised.		

Building blocks	Aims	Key milestones			
		End 2023 / 2024	2025	2026	2027
	2.2. Partnerships are in place for the establishment of the CSOs at different levels.		2.2.2. Existing partnership structures, gaps and potential synergies are identified, and the role of CSOs in partnership structures is defined.		
				2.2.3. The existing partnership structures (e.g. the National Council for Child Protection, Municipal Child Protection Commissions, etc.) have embedded child safeguarding in sport in their work.	
				2.2.1. A space for the exchange of practices, materials and resources between different stakeholders (federations, sport clubs, Olympic Committee, etc.) in sport sector is available at the Ministry of Youth and Sport website.	
3. System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people	3.1. National minimum standards for child safeguarding policy in sports organisations and clubs are in place, including definitions, recruitment procedures, reporting and response procedures, accountability and the implementation of CSO roles.		3.1.1. The national minimum standards are established and in place.		
			3.1.2. A CSO is appointed at the Ministry of Youth and Sport (a special unit/focal point with coordinating, advisory and monitoring roles at strategic level).		

Building blocks	Aims	Key milestones		
		End 2023 / 2024	2025	2026 2027
4. Advice and support	3.2. Federations and clubs are aware of and, where needed, use systems to respond to concerns under the responsibility of child protection agencies/police.	3.2.1. General existing reporting mechanisms are known and used by the sport sector.		
	3.3. Federations and clubs develop and implement internal systems for responding to concerns about violence against children, including CSO roles.		3.3.1. Procedures and guidelines on child violence case management are adopted and implemented by federations and sports clubs.	
			3.3.2. The CSO roles are established at different levels.	
	4.1. A resource centre on safeguarding in sport is established and children and young athletes are aware of their rights to safe sport (including recognition of violence and abuse, available support and procedures for reporting and managing cases).	4.1.1. Materials for the resource centre are compiled, developed, and made available to the public.		
	4.2. Arrangements are in place to provide professional support and advice to staff, volunteers, children and parents or carers, before, during and after an incident.		4.2.1. Procedures are in place to provide support and advice to the staff and volunteers of federations and sports clubs.	
	4.3. Stakeholders responsible for safeguarding children and young people (adults, coaches, sports leaders, etc.) and stakeholders with CSO roles have access to advice, support, and information.		4.2.2. Procedures are in place to provide support and advice to children and parents or caregivers.	
		4.3.1. The specific needs of the CSOs regarding training, support and advice at all levels are identified and analysed.		
			4.3.2. Sports organisations and clubs are aware of the existence of the Ministry's CSO.	

Building blocks	Aims	Key milestones			
		End 2023 / 2024	2025	2026	2027
5. Education and training framework	5.1. A national education and training framework for child safeguarding in sport and physical education is in place and a pool of trainers is established.	5.1.1. The responsibilities of CSOs at different levels and settings are established.			
			5.1.2. Training programmes for CSOs at all levels, coaches (also students) and other stakeholders in contact with children and young athletes are in place.		
			5.1.3. Academic institutions in Bulgaria providing sports education introduce child safeguarding in sport into their curricula.		
			5.1.4. The Ministry of Youth and Sport establishes a pool of trainers prepared to train the federations and sports clubs' staff on child safeguarding in sport.		
	5.2. The CSO role, job description and responsibilities are defined for each setting and at each level.		5.2.1. The role and job description of CSOs at different levels and settings are available.		

FINAL NOTES

As highlighted in the introduction to this roadmap, Bulgaria has taken the lead as the first partner country to initiate the roadmap preparation process as part of the “Start to Talk” project. The aim of this work is to promote more effective child safeguarding policies in sport in Bulgaria and to establish a safe, positive, and empowering sporting environment for all children.

The process of developing the roadmap has underscored the vital importance of ongoing collaboration across multiple agencies and disciplines to strengthen child safeguarding measures in sports. The agreement reached on the definition and establishment of shared values and principles has played a significant role in shaping Bulgaria’s vision for the future. It is important to recognise that safeguarding children is not the responsibility of a single system, such as the sports system, or of a single organisation, like a sports club. Rather, it demands a collective effort that involves a wide range of organisations and numerous stakeholders who must come together to achieve a common primary goal.

Based on the experiences gained during the roadmap building process, its implementation should also follow a participatory approach. Key stakeholders should play an essential role in various phases and steps following the building blocks outlined in the roadmap.

With the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the expertise of the Steering Committee, this roadmap represents a significant milestone in ensuring and enhancing an enjoyable and educational experience for every child engaged in sport in Bulgaria while guaranteeing their safety and well-being.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I **DESK RESEARCH** **Child Safeguarding in Sport in the Republic of Bulgaria**

Document prepared by Qantara Sports in collaboration of Petya Vasileva Dimitrova – 25 December 2021 (updated on May 2024)

The organisation and funding of sport in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, the state plays a central role in sport. The (2020) Physical Education and Sports Act sets out the legal framework for the delivery and organisation of physical activity, physical education and sports and tourism activities in the Republic of Bulgaria. The Act regulates sport in accordance with the powers vested in the State administration who collaborate with regional and local administrations and the sport movement.

The Council of Ministers of Bulgaria are responsible for setting the main guidelines for the development of state policy in physical activity, physical education and sport (Article 7). The Ministry of Youth and Sports is responsible for the design and implementation of public policy on the development of sport activity (Article 8). It is divided into directorates which include the Sport for Grassroots and Sport for Students, Sport for Excellence, Co-ordination and Control of Sports Training, Youth Policies, European Programmes, Projects and International Co-operation and Regional Co-ordination and Control. The Minister of Youth and Sport is supported in the exercise of their powers by their Deputy Ministers.

Sports policy is implemented through sports federations and sports clubs which are defined as sports organisations in Article 11. They are non-profit, private associations and the majority are registered for the public good. According to Article 27 the duties of sport federations include administrative functions related to the regulation of their sport either as standalone organisations or jointly with the Bulgarian Olympic Committee, representing the country at international competitions, organising and conducting championships and competitions, following anti-doping rules and implementing disciplinary actions imposed on athletes, coaches and officials. The duties of sport clubs include organising sport activities and competitions, holding the rights for advertising, TV and radio broadcasting of sporting events organised by them, following the procedures determined by the respective sport federation, carrying out other activities related to the development, awareness raising and promotion of physical activity, physical education and sport (Article 17).

The Bulgarian Olympic Committee is a member of the International Olympic Committee and organises the Bulgarian team's participation at the summer and winter Olympic games. It is a non-profit association for the development of the Olympic Movement and the dissemination of the Olympic ideals in the country. The Bulgarian Olympic Committee represents State and Bulgarian sports organisations before the International Olympic Committee on matters related to the organisation and conduct of the Olympic Games. There are two legally established independent bodies within the Bulgarian Olympic Committee; a disciplinary commission which functions as a first instance body in proceedings for establishing anti-doping rules violations and stipulating and imposing disciplinary actions and the Bulgarian Sports Arbitration which functions as an appellate body (Article 31).

The National Paralympic Organisation is a non-profit association operating in the public interest and conforming with the International Paralympic Committee's statutes. It develops the Paralympic Movement, disseminates the Paralympic ideals in the country and organises and co-ordinates athlete participation in the Paralympic Games. It represents State and Bulgarian sports organisations before the International Paralympic Committee on matters related to the organisation and conduct of the Paralympic Games and all events organised by or with the participation of the International Paralympic Committee.

The Physical Education and Sports Act partially covers the safety and protection of young people in sport – it provides for fair sport, prevention of doping, safety of sports facilities, tackling violence and anti-social behaviour in sport and the promotion of healthy lifestyles and health-enhancing physical activity.

Sport in Bulgaria is mainly funded by the State budget, local budgets and resources provided while implementing international agreements and programmes (Article 123).

The sport sector in Bulgaria is illustrated in the figures in Appendix 1.

Legal and policy framework for child safeguarding¹⁵

The Bulgarian system of child protection is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Bulgaria is a party to the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention). According to Article 47 of the Bulgarian Constitution and Article 125 of the Family Code, families – and more specifically parents – are responsible for ensuring the proper upbringing and education of their children.

The (2017) Bulgarian Criminal Code criminalises bodily harm and child sex offences (Articles 128-135 and Articles 149-159) and insults (Article 146). Article 187 of the Criminal Code provides that “A person who abuses a child or adolescent under the age of majority in their care or whose upbringing has been entrusted to that person is subject to a prison sentence of up to three years or probation and to public censure, unless the act is a more serious offence.”

The (2000) Child Protection Act sets out the rights of the child, the principles and measures for child protection, the state and municipal relevant bodies and their interaction in the process of performing child protection activities and the participation of non-profit legal entities and individuals in these activities. Article 11 of the Child Protection Act establishes the right for children to be protected against: (a) all methods of upbringing that undermine their dignity; (b) physical, psychological or any other forms of violence and (c) all forms of influence contrary to a child’s interests.

A definition of violence against children is stated in the Regulations Implementing Child Protection Act (Supplementary provisions, para 1, l 1) “Violence is any act of physical, mental or sexual abuse, neglect, commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to health, life, development or dignity of the child, which can be done in a family, school and social environment.”

Article 6 of the Child Protection Act provides a list of those public child protection bodies that shall guarantee children’s enjoyment of their rights and intervene in cases where those rights are breached. The child protection bodies are; Chairperson of the State Agency of Child Protection, Social Assistance Directorates, Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Education and Science, Minister of Justice, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Culture, Minister of Health Care and the mayors of municipalities. The Ministry of Youth and Sport is not a child protection body but must participate in the development and implementation of child protection policies in Bulgaria.

The Child Protection Act does not specifically refer to sport but this sector falls within its scope.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy performs duties related to the Bulgarian social system. Social policies relevant to child protection established in 2001 are implemented by several agencies including the Agency for Social Assistance (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy), State Agency for Child Protection (Council of Ministers) and Quality of Social Services (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy).

The **Agency for Social Assistance** implements State policy for social assistance and social benefits. The Social Assistance Directorates located in municipalities have the powers to perform current practical activities for child protection within the municipality, to determine and bring into effect concrete measures for child protection, to control their implementation and to make checks relating to complaints and alerts of the violation of children’s rights as stipulated in Article 21 of the Child Protection Act.

The Agency for Social Assistance acts at the local level through the Social Assistance Directorates. According to Article 6, para. 2 of the Child Protection Act, Social Assistance Directorates are child protection bodies with competences to impose protection measures. The Child Protection Units are a substructure of these directorates. The Child Protection Units deal with cases of children at risk which include child victims of violence, disadvantaged children, homeless children and children lacking proper parental care. Social workers at Child Protection Units intervene when a child at risk alert is reported to the Social Assistance Directorate.

The **State Agency for Child Protection** develops and supervises – along with other authorities – the implementation of national and regional programmes for child protection. This includes monitoring and analysing the implementation of state policy for child protection, providing instructions to Child Protection Units at the Social Assistance Directorates and providing guidance on the compliance with child rights.

Other public bodies with child safeguarding competences under Article 6 of the Child Protection Act are the Chairperson of the State Agency for Child Protection, Minister of Interior, Minister of Education and Science, Minister

15. Child is any natural person, who has not reached the age of 18 as stipulated in Article 2 of the Child Protection Act.

of Justice, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Culture, Minister of Health and Mayors of the Municipalities. Although the Minister of Youth and Sport is not a child protection body, under Article 6 of the Child Protection Act they have a legal obligation to take part in the development and implementation of child protection policies in Bulgaria (Article 17a Child Protection Act).

Article 18 of the Child Protection Act established a National Council for Child Protection with consultative and co-ordinating functions within the State Agency for Child Protection. The Ministry of Youth and Sport is a member of the Council.

Every municipality shall organise a **Local Commission for the Protection of Children** with consultative and co-ordination functions in the implementation of national policies for child protection at the local level. The commission is composed of representatives of the local administration, Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, Regional Department of Education, Regional Health Inspection, Social Assistance Directorate, Local Commission for Juvenile Delinquency and non-profit legal organisations responsible for child protection (Article 20 (a) Child Protection Act). According to Article 7, para. 3 of the Regulations implementing the Child Protection Act, local commissions may invite relevant local stakeholders to their meetings which could include sports clubs.

Under Article 1 of the Child Protection Act, a state policy for child protection shall be implemented through a national child strategy adopted by the National Assembly on the proposal of the Council of Ministers. The National Strategy for the Child (2008-2018) established several measures on child safeguarding, including for sport. The National Strategy was implemented through the annual National Programmes on Child Protection. Under Article 17 (a) (1) of the Child Protection Act, the Minister of Youth and Sport shall participate in the development of both the strategy and annual programmes. Both documents are implemented by different ministries.

The National Strategy for the Child expired in 2018 and an updated version is currently being developed. The last version of the National Programme for Child Protection was also adopted in 2018 (with no further versions being developed). The programme contained measures regarding children's right to access sport activities and the improvement of grassroots sports. Topic 8 of the National Programme for Child Protection (Sports and Culture Leisure Activities) contained sub-topic 8.1. on the organisation of sport initiatives aimed at supporting children at risk (e.g. violence, social exclusion) and youth in general. These initiatives were implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sport through the programmes "Sport for Children at Risk", "Sport for Children in their Leisure Time" and "Development of Sport for Students". However, no specific measures for child safeguarding in sport were considered.

The National Programme for the Prevention of Violence and Abuse of Children (2023-2026) and the Action Plan for its implementation were adopted by Decision No. 51 of 23 January 2023 of the Council of Ministers.

The National Programme for the Prevention of Violence and Abuse of Children (2023-2026) is envisaged as a four-year strategic document that sets the national policy framework in the field of violence against children. It will be delivered through a mechanism for coordination and communication between state bodies, representatives of civil society and the non-governmental sector, with the support of the network of professionals working with children, providing support for parents, raising awareness of children's needs, improving the normative framework, protecting children against violence and exploitation based on their needs and supporting child victims of violence in recovery and rehabilitation. A landmark in sports policy was the National Strategy for Development of Physical Education and Sports in the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2022) which served as a framework for the development of sport. The strategy stated that government bodies shall comply with international standards on child safeguarding. The National Programme for Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Tourism Activities aims to promote physical activity and the practice of sport and sport-tourism activities by citizens as a factor for achieving a significant social impact and aims to support the development of sport for excellence. However, neither the strategy nor the programme contain any specific measures on child safeguarding.

The responsibility for the organisation of physical education and school sport and the protection of children in school settings falls within the scope of the Ministry of Education and Science. Nevertheless, if a sports club uses school facilities to provide an extra-curricular sport activity, the responsibility for child safeguarding is shared between the school and sports club.

There is no statutory obligation for sports clubs to adopt safeguarding policies. Sports organisations do not need to comply with safeguarding policies to receive state funding for the development of their activities. Notwithstanding the above mentioned and the lack of specific legislation on child safeguarding, no legal obstacles to the implementation of such policies and measures were found.

The public sector on the protection of children and young people in Bulgaria is illustrated in Appendix 2.

Child Safeguarding programmes and initiatives

State and non-governmental organisation initiatives on child protection

Several initiatives on child protection have been implemented in recent years by different ministries, state agencies, non-governmental organisations and media. These initiatives include:

- ▶ “Live without violence for all children” (2017-2020) run by the State Agency for Child Protection.
- ▶ National Programme “Police work in school” run annually by the Ministry of Interior.
- ▶ “Mechanism for counteracting bullying and violence in institutions in the pre-school and school educational system” (2017- present) run by the Ministry of Education.
- ▶ The national child helpline 116111 is popular among children and several initiatives have been conducted to enhance awareness of this resource. The helpline 116111 is run by the State Agency for Child Protection (Art. 17 a, para. 1, i. 17 Child Protection Act). It has national coverage, is operational 24/7 and is free of charge. It is a consultative helpline for children that enables them to talk about their worries, ask questions and seek psychological support. The helpline can also identify possible risks and cases of violence and abuse. If identified, the case is referred to the Social Assistance directorates for further procedures and case management. The “SafeNetApp” is also promoted, this tool focuses especially on the topic of online violence.
- ▶ The priority of the Hotline and Consultative Line 124 123 is for a safe Internet which includes stopping the dissemination of child pornographic images and other forms of online sexual abuse of children and to remove or restrict Internet content that is inappropriate or harmful to children. Any adult or minor who wants to report online content or behaviour that is illegal under Bulgarian law or may have a traumatic or harmful effect on minors can easily report it to www.safenet.bg with anonymity guaranteed. Special rules on how to behave safely online are developed and disseminated among children by the SACP. In addition, the Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre operate a Hotline receiving and acting upon reports of online child sexual exploitation and child abuse material, sexual grooming, cyberbullying and legal but harmful online content for children in co- operation with national LEA and Interpol. The helpline is targeted at children, young people, parents, teachers and other professionals and organises awareness-raising events aimed at making the Internet a safer place for children. The Centre has also developed in co-operation with national authorities a publication “Rules to be safe online”. The objective is to guarantee the right of the child to access appropriate information and materials online, to synthesise in one place information on the dangers on the Internet, to provide specific guidelines for child protection and safe behaviour on the computer networks at schools and to improve the coordination and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

Moreover, the Ministry of Youth and Sport promotes non-violent behaviour through its youth programme. The main strategic objectives are to promote connectivity, tolerance and European belonging, non-violence and the prevention of aggression among young people including in online spaces. Recently, the Bulgarian Social Activities and Practices Institute (SAPI) – whose mission is to enhance the social inclusion of vulnerable groups in the social life of Bulgaria – participated in the EU-funded project “Promise”, dedicated to the promotion of a specialised multi-disciplinary and inter- agency service to help child victims of violence through the “Barnahus” model¹⁶.

EU-Funded projects in the field of safeguarding children in sports

The “Sport and Dialogue Against Violence and Discrimination”¹⁷ project (implemented between January 2019 and June 2020) included partners from Bulgaria, Italy, Spain and Slovenia. The national organisation responsible for the implementation of the project in Bulgaria was the Bulgarian Sports Development Organisation¹⁸. The project aimed to address violence, discrimination and bullying in and around sporting events, between athletes, sport teams and their supporters. The project sought to counter violent behaviour through open dialogue, inclusion, tolerance and fair play in sport and to contribute to using sport to foster positive relationships.

16. Available at <https://www.barnahus.eu>.

17. Available at <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/603262-EPP-1-2018-1-RO-SPO-SSCP>.

18. See <https://en.bulsport.bg>.

Other initiatives at the European level

The Bulgarian Football Union benefits from UEFA's commitment to promote child safeguarding. The UEFA *Terre des Hommes* partnership¹⁹ aims to ensure that football offers a safe and positive environment for children by promoting the safeguarding and well-being of young athletes²⁰. The Bulgarian Football Union, like other European football associations, receive guidance and support from UEFA to foster safeguarding of children in football.

The 2022 Lanzarote Committee report on "The protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies" also identified the following international projects addressing child sexual exploitation and abuse online (not sport specific): INHOPE179, The PROMISE Barnahus Network, WeProtect Global Alliance, INSAFE and Safer Internet Centres, ECPAT185 and EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) and cybercrime CSE/CSA188.

System and structure for responding to concerns about children and young people

A system to identify and respond to cases of violence against children is in place. This system is not specific to the sport context but covers the management of cases reported by sports organisations. In Bulgaria, children can report episodes of violence and abuse directly to the police, Child Protection Units and the State Agency for Child Protection. As abovementioned, cases may also be reported to the national child helpline (116 111). This support system is advertised in metro stations, on the Ministry of Education's website and on children's school notebooks.

Those adults who become aware of the need for protection of a child are obliged to immediately notify the Social Assistance Directorate, State Agency for Child Protection, or Ministry of Interior (Child Protection Act, Article 7).

Furthermore, Article 205, para. 1 and par. 3 of the Criminal Procedure Code imposes the obligation for citizens and officials to report cases to the relevant state authority.

Once the case is reported to the State Agency for Child Protection, Social Assistance Directorates or the police a co-ordination mechanism (Article 36 d, Child Protection Act) is activated. In these situations, a multi-disciplinary team is summoned by a social worker, appointed by the director of the local Social Assistance Directorate. This team must include representatives from several organisations such as the regional administration of the Ministry of Interior, regional prosecutor's office, municipality where the episode took place and other relevant stakeholders. The local authorities should support the co-ordination of the activity of the multi-disciplinary team. Depending on whether the reported facts constitute a crime or not, the system responds differently. If there is no evidence of a crime but the social worker identifies a need for protection, appropriate measures may be imposed. If there is evidence of a crime, investigation proceedings must be initiated.

In 2022, the Lanzarote Committee, the Council of Europe committee monitoring the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention required that Bulgaria ensure that persons who have regular contact with children in areas that included sport, culture and leisure activities, are informed of the services responsible for child protection and where they have "reasonable grounds" for suspecting a child is a victim of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse to report their concerns.²¹

Advice and support

No child safeguarding structures (or other support mechanisms) have been found in the field of sport. Bulgaria has no employed safeguarding officers and as such there are no job descriptions for such positions. Few non-sports organisations have internal child safeguarding policies. These policies rely mostly on the efforts made by the OAK Foundation to organise training in child safeguarding policies for representatives of different non-profit organisations working with children. In those organisations, a staff member acts as a safeguarding focal point along with the rest of their responsibilities. The European Commission "Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme" (2014-2020) required all funding applicant organisations in contact with children to have child safeguarding policies and as a result a number of non-profit organisations have developed such policies.

UNICEF Bulgaria carries out awareness raising activities informing children, their parents and educators about their rights and existing tools on child safeguarding such as those produced by the State Agency for Child Protection.

19. More information available at <https://www.uefa-safeguarding.eu/taxonomy/term/32>.

20. More information available at <https://www.uefa-safeguarding.eu/about-us>.

21. Council of Europe, Implementation Report: The Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse facilitated by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs): addressing the challenges raised by child self-generated sexual images and/or videos (CSGIV), 2022, p. 191.

In regard to coach intervention and according to Ordinance No. 1 of 02/04/2019 for coaching staff, issued by the Minister of Youth and Sport, it is expected that coaches (at any level of the coach education hierarchy) apply measures for the safety of athletes during training and sport activities. Although not specified, the safety measures are strictly related to safeguarding procedures and general safety measures to protect children from injuries, taking non-legal substances or any other situation.

Education and training framework

The “Vasil Levski” National Sport Academy offers a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in Sports Management and different coach education training courses, as well as a Doctorate degree in Sport Science. The syllabus of the Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in sports science include the optional modules on “Violence in Sport” and “Ethics and Esthetics”. However, these are not specifically focused on safeguarding and their attendance is not mandatory to become a coach/manager.

In 2022, the Lanzarote Committee requested that Bulgaria ensure that persons who have regular contact with children i.e. in education, health and social protection sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities, have adequate knowledge, through education and training, of sexual exploitation and the sexual abuse of children. This should also include online abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies and is not optional.²²

Guidelines for ethics and behaviour

The State Agency for Child Protection in 2003 produced an Ethical Code for those who work with children (not specific to sport). According to the data provided by the project “National Sport Governance Observer”²³, that surveyed eight Bulgarian sports federations²⁴ from January to May 2020, only athletics, handball, swimming and skating federations have developed their own ethical codes that include provisions to address harassment of young athletes. Although the majority of sports federations lack guidelines and ethical codes, some do have disciplinary or ethical commissions (e.g. volleyball, basketball and karate federations and the Bulgarian Football Union). No obstacles were found to the adoption of child safeguarding policies by national sports organisations.

Safe recruitment system

Coaches must be registered in a specialised Register of Coaching Staff (Article 9 Physical Education and Sports Act). This database is managed by the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

According to Bulgarian labour legislation, coaches and other staff recruited on a labour contract are subject to recruitment and vetting procedures, such as the obligation to present a criminal record certificate. However, many sports clubs often hire their staff on civil contracts which have less strict legal recruitment requirements. The volunteers (and other stakeholders) may work directly with children in sports clubs. Sports club volunteers are not subject to preventive recruitment measures.

There is no public database of sexual offenders in Bulgaria. However, the criminal record certificate contains this information. The Research Institute of Forensic Science and Criminology (Ministry of Interior) is responsible for organising and storing data related to the identity and genetic profile (DNA) of persons convicted of sexual crimes against children. This information is shared with relevant authorities.

Concluding remarks

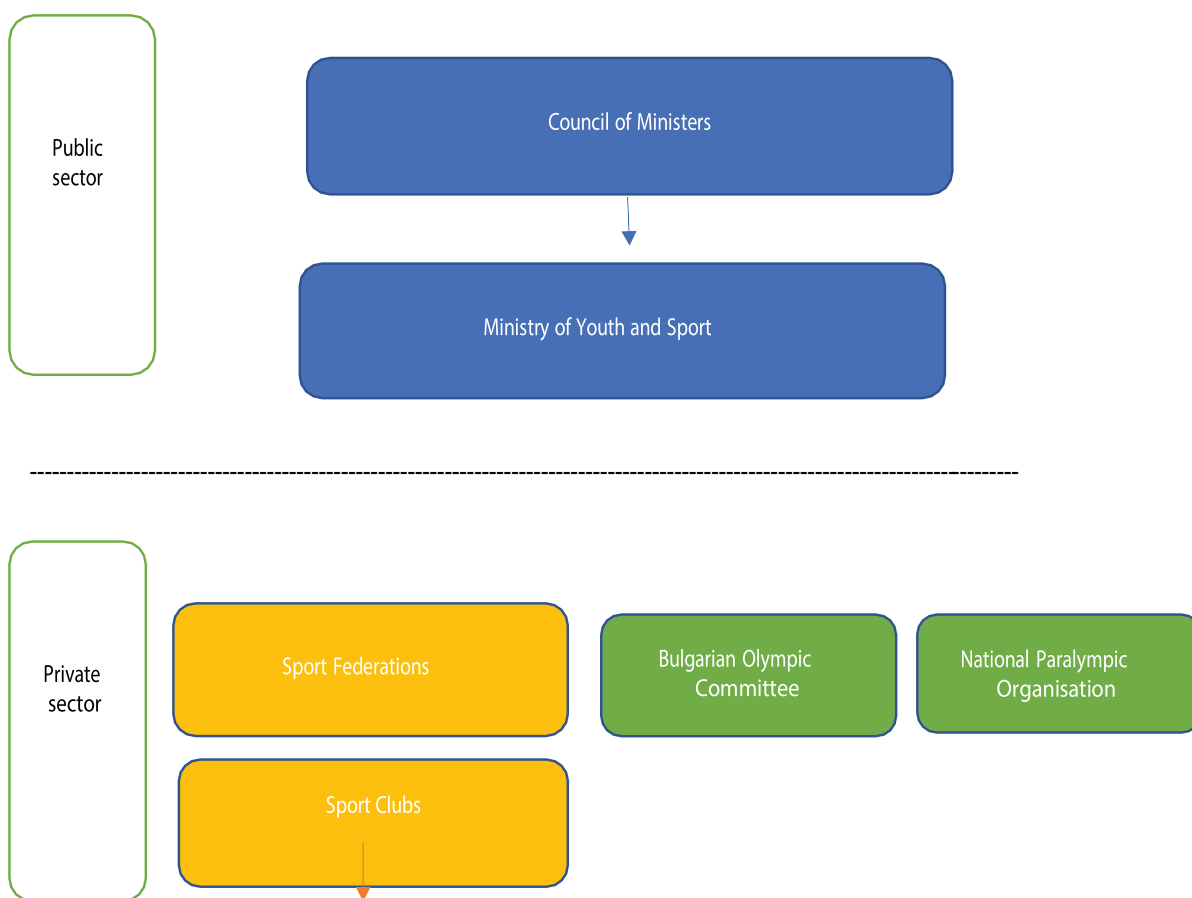
In Bulgaria, a legal system to protect children and young people is in place. This includes an alert system and management procedures for case reporting, responses, advice, support and the requirement for criminal record certification for those who work with children (which can include sport coaches and other sports staff). However, the system doesn’t recognise sport as a specific sector where safeguarding must be assured and therefore specific policies focused on safeguarding children in sports settings are not in place or under development despite the existence of some projects, initiatives, codes of ethics and codes of conduct that are being implemented in and by some sports organisations.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

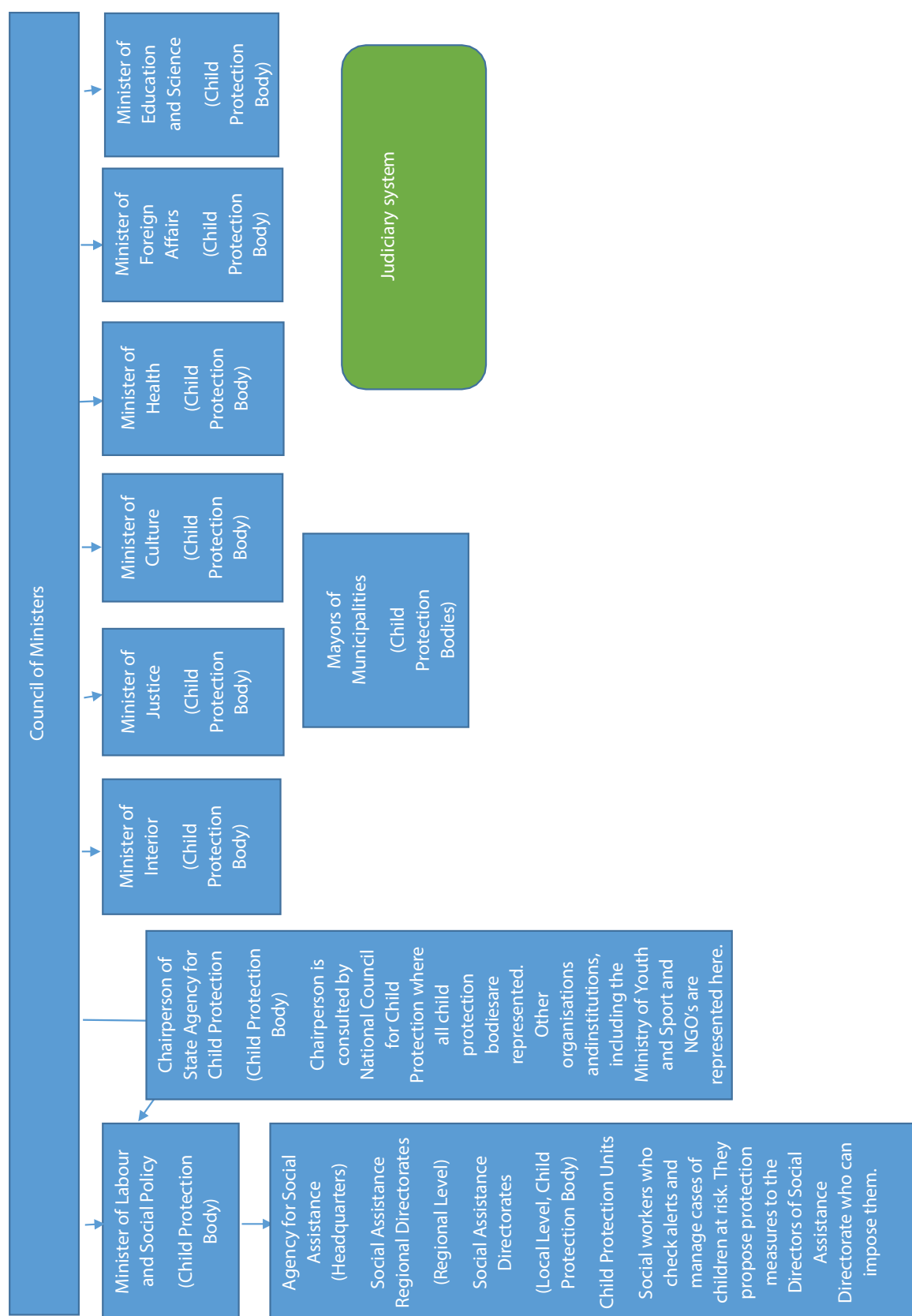
23. More information about the project available at <https://www.playthegame.org>.

24. Namely, the Bulgarian federations of athletics, swimming, rhythmic gymnastics, volleyball, boxing, handball, tennis, and football.

Appendix 1: The sport sector in Bulgaria



Appendix 2: Public sector on the protection of children and young people in Bulgaria



APPENDIX II

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Sector and level ²⁵	Stakeholder organisation	Type of organisation	Mandate relevant to sports and / or child safeguarding	Project influence	Potential level of involvement	Involvement expectations
Sport and Youth sectors <i>Macro level</i>	Ministry of Youth and Sport	National governmental administration	The Ministry of Youth and Sport is responsible for the development of sports activities in Bulgaria through sport federations and sport clubs. The Minister of Youth and Sport is not a child protection body, but they must participate in the development and implementation of the child protection policies in Bulgaria.	High	High	- Implementation of the roadmap - Creation of sound framework - Policy regulation - Dissemination among sports organisations (clubs and federations).
Educational Sector <i>Macro level</i>	Ministry of Education and Science	National governmental administration	The responsibility for the organisation of physical education and school sport and the protection of children in school fall within the scope of the Ministry of Education and Science. It also has its own initiatives, including "Mechanism for counteracting bullying and violence in institutions in the system of preschool and school education". It is a child protection body.	Medium	Low	- Policy framework - Contribution to syllabus validation
Social sector <i>Macro level</i>	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	National governmental administration	Runs, coordinates and controls the implementation of public policy in the field of social protection, social inclusion and children and family support. It is a child protection body.	High	High	- Policy framework - Contribution to syllabus validation
Law enforcement <i>Macro, meso and local levels</i>	Ministry of Interior	National governmental administration. It has regional and local structures.	It is responsible for the execution of prevention policies, combating crime, preserving public order, protecting national security, protecting citizens' rights and freedoms, border control, regulation of migration processes and fire safety and protection. It deals with all reports of crimes committed against children and participates in meetings of the Coordination Mechanism in cases of violence. It runs 112 helpline. It has special sector "Juvenile Delinquency". It is a child protection body.	Medium	High	- Policy framework - Contribution to syllabus validation - Execution of the roadmap at local level through its local departments and units

²⁵. Macro level refers to national coverage and powers; meso to regional/specific geographic dimension; local – to municipal coverage and powers.

Sector and level ²⁵	Stakeholder organisation	Type of organisation	Mandate relevant to sports and / or child safeguarding	Project influence	Potential level of involvement	Involvement expectations
Health sector <i>Macro level</i>	Ministry of Health	National governmental administration	It implements the national health policy, it runs, coordinates and controls activities to protect citizens' health, promote health and prevent diseases; it takes measures to protect health of children, physically disabled persons and persons with mental disorders. It is a child protection body.	Low	Low	► Policy framework ► Contribution to syllabus validation
Justice sector <i>Macro level</i>	Ministry of Justice	National governmental administration	It runs, coordinates and controls the implementation of state policy in the field of justice; it manages the interaction between the judiciary and executive powers; it supervises the drafting of legal acts relating to the judiciary and activities within its competence, as well as drafting opinions on draft legal acts drawn up by other central executive bodies; it participates in the organisation of the qualification of judges, prosecutors and investigators. It is a child protection body.	Low	Low	► Policy framework ► Contribution to syllabus validation
Public sector <i>Macro level</i>	Minister of Foreign Affairs	National governmental administration	It runs, coordinates and controls the execution of the Republic of Bulgaria's state policy in relation to other countries, ensuring the maintenance and development of foreign policy dialogue, security policy and bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation. It is a child protection body.	Low	Low	► Policy framework ► Contribution to syllabus validation
Cultural sector <i>Macro level</i>	Minister of Culture	National governmental administration	It runs, coordinates and controls the execution of the Republic of Bulgaria's state policy in the field of culture. It is a child protection body.	Low	Low	► Policy framework ► Contribution to syllabus validation

Sector and level ²⁵	Stakeholder organisation	Type of organisation	Mandate relevant to sports and / or child safeguarding	Project influence	Potential level of involvement	Involvement expectations
All sectors <i>Local level</i>	Mayors of municipalities ²⁶	Local administration	They run all executive activities of the municipality. Every municipality is obliged to organise a Commission for the Child with consultative and coordination functions in which representatives of the municipal administration, regional directorate of the Ministry of Interior, regional department of education, regional health inspection, social assistance directorate, local commission for combating anti-social behavior of minors and juveniles and non-profit legal entities and others who carry out child protection activities are involved. Every municipality runs social services and could fund sport activities. It is a child protection body.	High	High	▶ Dissemination and execution at local level
Social sector <i>Macro, meso and local levels</i>	Agency for Social Assistance	National governmental administration. It has regional and local structures.	It is an administration under the Minister of Labour and Social Policy for the implementation of state policy on social assistance. They provide social benefits and family benefits for children, they are responsible for child protection and ensuring the rights of people with disability; they plan and methodologically support the provision of social services. Child protection measures could be imposed by its Child Protection Units under the Directors of local Social Assistance Directorates. The Directors are child protection bodies.	High	High	▶ Policy framework ▶ Dissemination and execution at local level through their local departments and units ▶ Contribution to syllabus validation

²⁶ According to the National Statistical Institute there are 285 municipalities in Bulgaria in 2021. Therefore, we propose to invite their representative association – National Association of the Mayors of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Sector and level ²⁵	Stakeholder organisation	Type of organisation	Mandate relevant to sports and / or child safeguarding	Project influence	Potential level of involvement	Involvement expectations
Mainly social sector <i>Macro level</i>	State agency for Child Protection	National governmental administration	It runs, coordinates and controls the implementation of public policy on child protection in the Republic of Bulgaria. It runs 116 111 National Child Helpline and takes part in the National Coordination Mechanisms in Cases of Violence.	High	High	► Policy framework ► Dissemination and execution at local level through their local departments and units ► Contribution to syllabus validation
All sectors <i>Macro level</i>	Ombudsperson of Republic of Bulgaria	Independent national organisation, a public defender	It has the power to receive and deal with complaints and reports of violations of citizens' rights and freedoms, not only on the part of state and municipal authorities and their administrations, or by persons entrusted with the rendering of public services, but also by private entities. In exercising this power the Ombudsman can make proposals and recommendations for the promotion and protection of the endangered citizens' rights and freedoms.	High	High	► Policy framework ► Management of complaints in accordance with its powers
All sectors <i>Macro level</i>	Commission for Protection Against Discrimination	Independent specialised national body	It has the power to receive and deal with complaints and reports of acts of discrimination on grounds of sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, human genome, citizenship, origin, religion or belief, education, convictions, political affiliation, personal or social status, disability, age, sexual orientation, family or marital status, material status or any other grounds established by law or by an international treaty to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party.	Medium	Medium	► Policy framework ► Management of complaints in accordance with its powers
All sectors <i>Macro level</i>	National Council of Child Protection	Consultative and coordinating functions at the State Agency for Child Protection	Representatives of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Social Assistance Agency, National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, National Council on Narcotic Substances, National Statistical	High	High	► Policy Framework ► Dissemination of the information for the initiative "Start to Talk" among all members of the Council

Sector and level ²⁵	Stakeholder organisation	Type of organisation	Mandate relevant to sports and / or child safeguarding	Project influence	Potential level of involvement	Involvement expectations
			Institute, National Social Security Institute, Central Commission for Juvenile Delinquency and the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as non-profit legal entities that have the subject of child protection are the members of this Council.			
Sport sector <i>Local level</i>	Bulgarian Sports Development Organisation	Non-profit organisation	It implemented the Sport and Dialogue Against Violence and Discrimination project (an Erasmus+ project) focused on safe-guarding children in sport against violence, discrimination, and bullying and aims to target not only athletes and sport teams but all schoolchildren attending their compulsory physical education classes.	High	High	▶ Definition of the policy framework ▶ Organisation of trainings ▶ Policy implementation
Sport sector <i>Macro level</i>	Bulgarian Football Union	Sport federation	The largest and most popular federation in Bulgaria. It is involved in the UEFA child safeguarding initiative.	High	High	▶ Dissemination among football sport clubs ▶ Training implementation ▶ Policy implementation (reporting)
Sport sector <i>Macro level</i>	Handball Federation	Sport federation	It has an ethical code which includes requirements for harassment free sport for young athletes.	Medium	Low	▶ Dissemination among handball sport clubs ▶ Training implementation
Sport sector <i>Macro level</i>	Skating Federation	Sport federation	It has an ethical code which includes, requirements for harassment free sport for young athletes.	Medium	Low	▶ Dissemination among skating sport clubs ▶ Training implementation
Sport sector <i>Macro level</i>	Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation	Sport federation	Primarily young female athletes. High profile and multi-award winning sport in Bulgaria.	Medium	Low	▶ Dissemination among sports clubs ▶ Training implementation

Sector and level ²⁵	Stakeholder organisation	Type of organisation	Mandate relevant to sports and / or child safeguarding	Project influence	Potential level of involvement	Involvement expectations
Sport sector Macro level	Basketball Federation	Sport federation	Very popular sport in Bulgaria.	Medium	Low	▶ Dissemination among skating sport clubs ▶ Implement training
Educational Sector Macro level	National Sport Academy "Vasil Levski"	Academics	The academy has a bachelor's and master's degree in sport management and coaches on different types of sports, as well as doctoral degrees. "Violence in sport" is becoming more popular as a discipline option for 4 th grade students from the Sports Faculty, as is the discipline option "Ethics and Esthetics". However, these disciplines are not obligatory for students nor are they a requirement for becoming a coach/manager.	High	High	▶ Development of a training programme/ syllabus ▶ Training of coaches
Social sector Local level	Pulse Foundation	Non-profit organisation	Runs services for children who are victims of violence. It has its own child safeguarding policy.	High	High	▶ Contribution to policy definition
Social sector Macro level	Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre	Non-profit organisation	Operates the help and hotline 123 124 for alerting and reporting. It has its own child safeguarding policy.	Low	Medium	▶ Contribution to policy definition
Social sector Local level	Social Activities and Practice Institute	Non-profit organisation	Runs services for children who are victims of violence, including applying Barnahus standards. A founding member of Promise Barnahus Network. It has its own child safeguarding policy.	High	High	▶ Contribution to policy definition
Youth sector Macro level	National Youth Forum	Non-profit organisation	A national youth representative organisation covering the most diverse expressions of youth associations.	Medium	Medium	▶ Contribution to policy definition
Youth sector Macro level	National Child and Youth Parliament	Non-profit organisation	A national youth organisation focused on civic participation and education.	Medium	Medium	▶ Contribution to policy definition

Sector and level ²⁵	Stakeholder organisation	Type of organisation	Mandate relevant to sports and / or child safeguarding	Project influence	Potential level of involvement	Involvement expectations
All sectors referred to the rights of the child <i>Macro level</i>	National Network for Children	Non-profit organisation	A national umbrella organisation for organisations who work with children. They work for the full enjoyment of the rights of the child.			▶ Contribution to policy definition ▶ Dissemination of information to their members
All sectors referred to the rights of the child <i>Macro level</i>	UNICEF Bulgaria	Inter-governmental organisation	Committed to child safeguarding in Bulgaria.	High	High	▶ Contribution to policy definition
Sport Sector <i>Macro level</i>	Bulgarian Olympic Committee	Non-profit organisation	A member of International Olympic Committee. Major Bulgarian sport federations are members.	High	High	▶ Definition of the policy ▶ Contribution to syllabus validation ▶ General dissemination ▶ Training implementation ▶ Policy implementation (reporting)
Sport Sector <i>Macro level</i>	Olympics Athlete Commission	A commission	Represents athletes' views in Bulgarian Olympic Committee.	High	High	▶ Definition of the policy ▶ Contribution to syllabus validation ▶ General dissemination ▶ Training implementation ▶ Policy implementation (reporting)
Sport Sector <i>Macro level</i>	Special Olympics Bulgaria	Non-profit organisation	It provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with an intellectual disability, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.	High	High	▶ Definition of the policy ▶ Contribution to syllabus validation ▶ General dissemination ▶ Training implementation ▶ Policy implementation (reporting)

“Start to Talk” is run by the Council of Europe’s Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS). The project aims to protect children in sport by eliminating all forms of abuse and violence against them. It provides technical support, resources and materials to public authorities responsible for sport and sports organisations, to support their efforts to make sport safer. It assists stakeholders in the development and implementation of child safeguarding policies, awareness-raising campaigns and training for relevant stakeholders.

Among other activities, “Start to Talk” supports stakeholders in the creation of bespoke country-specific roadmaps as instruments for the effective development and implementation of policies on child safeguarding in sport. Each roadmap is designed with support from international and national experts in the field. Included in the roadmap are the concrete steps for establishing Child Safeguarding Officers (CSOs) in sport.

Bulgaria is the first partner country to create their roadmap within the “Start to Talk” project. Using a collaborative approach, Bulgaria’s roadmap is a tailor-made document presented in a step-by-step format. It outlines objectives, milestones and actions and defines the responsibilities of relevant stakeholders. It aims to clearly identify and describe the stages of development with a particular focus on establishing CSOs. The roadmap also sets out a timeline, with milestones, to ensure it meets its ultimate goal: to set up a more effective child safeguarding policy in sport in Bulgaria.



www.coe.int/start-to-talk

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The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.



start to talk

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport

Accord partiel élargi sur le sport

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