

The mental, physical and psychological benefits of sport are well known, particularly for children. However, sport is also an environment where sexual abuse, harassment and violence towards children and vulnerable groups, in particular, exist, as hundreds of cases have been revealed in recent years. The consequences of violence can be devastating and long-lasting for those who experience it. It is therefore essential to build the capacity of sports organisations and governments to prevent such situations, and combat these different forms of violence.

THE EUROPEAN SPORTS CHARTER AND THE PROTECTION OF ATHLETES

The [European Sports Charter](#) (ESC) calls upon states to design their sports policies according to its guidelines, and stakeholders to take into consideration the principles enshrined therein. **Participation of athletes, including**

children, and protection of their personal integrity are key elements of the ESC and specific sport-related recommendations of the Council of Europe.

The ESC refers to children in relation to two specific aspects: human rights (Article 6) and the right to sport (Article 10).

Article 6.2(d) calls for stakeholders to “**apply a policy of zero tolerance for violence and all forms of discrimination, paying particular attention to individuals and groups in a situation of vulnerability, such as children, migrants and persons with disabilities.**”

Article 10.3(c) calls for stakeholders to “**make sure that specific opportunities are available for young people, including children of pre-school age, for older people and for people with disabilities to enjoy education and sports programmes suited to their requirements.**”

OTHER COUNCIL OF EUROPE STANDARDS RELEVANT TO (CHILD) SAFEGUARDING IN SPORT

The European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights’ case-law	The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the Lanzarote Convention)
The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention)	The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has adopted a [recommendation](#) on addressing child violence in sport in Europe.

SAFE SPORT: OUR ACTION

EPAS has been working on protection of children in sport since 2013. In a bid to make sport safer, EPAS offers a platform for discussion, information exchange and co-operation between public authorities, the sports movement, experts, child protection agencies, the European Union and other international organisations.

EPAS CO-OPERATION PROJECTS ON CHILD SAFEGUARDING

EPAS organises events and implements projects to raise awareness about safe and healthy sport environments and to promote the well-being of children who practise sport.



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Start to Talk

This Council of Europe project encourages public authorities and the sport movement to break the silence and stop child abuse. Its actions include:



Improving **legislation** and **policies**



Setting up **child safeguarding strategies** for sport structures, activities and events



Developing **codes of conduct**



Training sports professionals
(coaches, managers and policy makers)



Raising awareness to empower parents and children as well as the public at large through targeted resources



Disseminating **knowledge** and providing **expertise** by facilitating access to state of the art findings and practices, as well as to a network of experts

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESOURCES ON SAFE SPORT



Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport, including policy makers, researchers and academics, specialists supporting people with lived experience, (Child) Safeguarding Officers, trainers/consultants and agents of change



Online resource centre for child safeguarding in sport



Country-specific roadmaps with concrete steps for setting up CSO roles in sport



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