

Activity Report 2025



**Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport,
Council of Europe**

ENLARGED PARTIAL AGREEMENT ON SPORT (EPAS)

Activity Report 2025

United around our values

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

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Forewords



Solène Charuau

Chair of the EPAS Governing Board

With over seven years' experience as Head of International Relations at the French Ministry of Sport, I have had the opportunity to work with a number of international institutions and organisations active in the sports sector. This experience has convinced me that EPAS plays a unique role in this ecosystem, and it was that which prompted me to stand for election as Chair of the EPAS Governing Board in 2025.

In my view, this unique role is based on several factors.

The first is the way in which EPAS is firmly rooted in the Council of Europe's priorities and values and is underpinned by the organisation's Sport Conventions, which provide it with a clear framework and a level of technical and legal expertise that has no real equivalent elsewhere.

The second is linked to EPAS's unique structure, combining an intergovernmental co-operation body with a vast network of European non-governmental organisations representing the sports movement and civil society. This creates a structured and enduring forum for dialogue, which is EPAS's real strength and helps to ensure its vitality. This platform for dialogue ensures that EPAS's work combines both policy guidance and a practical approach to the issues, for the benefit of public sports policies in Europe.

The European Sports Charter, on which EPAS's work is based, reflects this complementary relationship, embodying a shared political vision for European sport, grounded in values, combined with more practical common standards that guide member states in developing safe, ethical and inclusive sport.

In 2025, EPAS sought to highlight one of its founding principles, namely diversity, by organising several high-level events and projects to expand access to physical exercise and sport for groups who, for various reasons, are less likely to participate: persons with disabilities, with the launch of the *Sport for All* joint project in May; young people and older persons, with the Diversity Conference in October; and women, at the Forum on Sport and Human Rights in December.

2026 looks set to be just as eventful and engaging, with the launch of the *Active and Equal* joint project with the European Union and the Ministerial Conference in Monaco in November, which will focus on the issue of protecting children in sport.

The very positive momentum in terms of accessions to EPAS is a very strong and encouraging sign of support for EPAS's mission and work, which I very much welcome.

This applies, firstly, to the EPAS Governing Board, because following Ireland and Denmark in 2024, Spain joined the EPAS Board at the very beginning of 2026. The EPAS Governing Board now therefore has 42 member states. Every new member brings with it the promise of EPAS's continued growth and recognition of its relevance. So, welcome Spain!

At the Consultative Committee, the momentum is even greater. Given the high level of interest reflected in a large number of applications for membership, the Governing Board recently decided to expand the Consultative Committee from 30 to 35 members to enable new members to join. The Governing Board will take particular care to ensure that the committee is as balanced and representative as possible and that the new members are able to promote the Council of Europe's values as widely as possible in and through sport.



Charlotte Girard Fabre

Chair of the EPAS Consultative Committee

The Consultative Committee occupies a specific role within EPAS as a forum for dialogue where real-world experiences inform the policies set at institutional level.

Made up of sports organisations, NGOs and civil society bodies, it is above all a network of sports experts working in a variety of settings. It therefore reflects the challenges currently facing the sector: integrity, governance, access to sport and the fair distribution of resources. These are all issues that go beyond the realm of sport itself and tie in closely with the concerns of our societies.

In this context, the CC's role is not to put forward a competing vision but to contribute to shared understanding by providing insights drawn from practical experience and observations on the ground.

Its value lies in its ability to establish links:

- ▶ between people from different backgrounds;
- ▶ between levels of intervention, from local to international;
- ▶ and, above all, between the principles set out in the European Sports Charter and their practical implementation.

Complementarity with the Governing Board is vital here. It enables different approaches to be combined and ensures that the work of EPAS is part of a truly collaborative process, in which public policies and realities on the ground feed into one another.

It is within this balance that the CC really comes into its own: not on the sidelines, but at the heart of an ongoing dialogue between expertise and decision making.

This interlinkage is reflected in practical terms in all the activities carried out throughout the year. The CC plays a key part in the major events in the work of EPAS: thematic conferences, round table discussions, joint projects with the European Union and European Sports Charter support and follow-up visits. In each of these contexts, the members offer their expertise, share feedback and help to disseminate the principles and tools developed.

Through this input, the CC helps to bring the Charter's goals to life, ensuring safer, healthier and more diverse sport that is accessible to all and based on respect for human dignity, equal opportunities and democratic values. In so doing, it helps translate these principles into practical measures tailored to a wide range of contexts.

Through its role in terms of co-ordination and implementation, the secretariat provides vital support for this joint effort, working for both the Governing Board and the Consultative Committee.

Partnerships follow the same approach. Co-operation with other international organisations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, ensures greater consistency in the various measures and embeds the work of EPAS in a broader ecosystem.

In an environment in which sport is increasingly called upon to address complex social challenges, the ability to combine expertise, dialogue and action is vital.

The CC therefore performs its role as a platform for liaison and input, working towards the common goal of using sport as a lever for promoting the Council of Europe's fundamental values.



Stanislas Frossard

Executive Secretary of EPAS and Head of the Sport Division of the Council of Europe

The year 2025 has undeniably unfolded within a context of adversity. Against a European and global backdrop marked by democratic backsliding, sport continues to stand at the intersection of major social, cultural and political currents. The principles of equality – in particular gender equality – together with the fight against corruption, the defence of LGBTI rights, and the protection of children, have all come under renewed challenge in many spheres. The autonomy of the sports movement is at times diminished, and sport itself is sometimes diverted in support of totalitarian or discriminatory agendas.

In this environment, our collective mission and responsibility become all the more crucial and pressing.

In the face of these challenges, EPAS has, throughout 2025, drawn upon its strengths and reinforced its resolve. Beyond its committees and the Sport Conventions of the Council of Europe, EPAS has fostered networks with key sectors such as justice, public health, and the fight against economic crime, as well as through effective co-operation with the European Court of Human Rights. This cross-sectoral approach is a defining feature of EPAS, bringing together diverse expertise and institutions in service of a common aim: making sport more ethical, more inclusive, and safer.

To this end, EPAS has provided a platform for intergovernmental co-operation in sport between the public authorities of its member states, and has encouraged dialogue among public authorities, sports federations, and NGOs. The active support and commitment of our Secretary General, as well as the political momentum generated by our ministerial conferences and our ongoing engagement with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, have ensured that sport integrity remains firmly placed on the highest political agenda.

This annual report reflects the engagement of our member states, our partners and civil society, including sports organisations and NGOs involved in sport. Their expertise, flexibility and creativity remain essential for the success of our mission. By continuing to act collectively, drawing upon the strengths of our diverse networks, we can most effectively meet the challenges of our times.

I hope that this report will serve as testimony to our steadfast commitment, and equally as a call to continue and amplify, everywhere and always, the defence of sport integrity – essential for enabling sport to fulfil its promise and deliver wide-ranging benefits in terms of education, social cohesion, and health.

Member states

LIST OF EPAS MEMBER STATES

	Albania		Latvia
	Andorra		Liechtenstein
	Armenia		Lithuania
	Austria		Luxembourg
	Azerbaijan		Malta
	Belgium		Monaco
	Bosnia and Herzegovina		Montenegro
	Bulgaria		Morocco
	Croatia		Netherlands
	Cyprus		North Macedonia
	Denmark		Norway
	Estonia		Poland
	Finland		Portugal
	France		San Marino
	Georgia		Serbia
	Greece		Slovak Republic
	Hungary		Slovenia
	Iceland		Switzerland
	Ireland		Türkiye
	Israel		Ukraine
	Italy		

Highlights

DIVERSITY CONFERENCE 2025: SPORT AND INTERGENERATIONAL CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND OLDER PERSONS – STRASBOURG, 21 OCTOBER

The 2025 EPAS Diversity Conference brought together policy makers, sports organisations, civil society actors and practitioners around a shared question that is becoming increasingly central to European societies: **how can sport respond to the needs of both young people and older persons, and serve as a space where generations meet, learn from one another and remain active throughout life?** Held in hybrid format, the conference focused on “Sport and intergenerational challenges for young people and older persons” and reflected EPAS’s commitment to inclusive sport policies that leave no age group behind.

Set against a rapidly changing demographic landscape, discussions highlighted the dual challenge faced by many countries: declining participation in sport among young people on the one hand, and increasing isolation and barriers to physical activity among older adults on the other. Participants explored how sport can address these challenges simultaneously by promoting age-friendly environments, accessible infrastructure and programmes designed to foster interaction and solidarity between generations. Throughout the day, sport emerged not only as a tool for physical health, but as a powerful means to strengthen social bonds, combat loneliness and support personal empowerment at all stages of life.

Opening the conference, **Hanne Juncher**, Director of Security, Integrity and Rule of Law at the Council of Europe, and **Solène Charuau**, Chair of the EPAS Governing Board, underlined the importance of embedding intergenerational perspectives into sport policy and practice. The Spotlight session brought a human dimension to the debate through the testimonies of **Jean-Michel Oprendek**, senior sport expert and former Technical Director of the French Fencing Federation, and **Ana Japaridze**, Paralympic medallist and European Youth Games champion, who shared how sport has shaped their lives, careers and sense of belonging across generations.

Three thematic panels structured the discussions, focusing respectively on youth engagement in sport, active ageing and the potential of intergenerational initiatives to connect young and older participants through shared activity. Concrete examples from national authorities, grassroots programmes and international organisations illustrated how inclusive design, adapted physical activity and community-based approaches can help overcome age-related barriers. A walking football demonstration on the lawn of the Palais de l’Europe during the lunch break offered a tangible illustration of these principles in practice, showing how adapted sport can create inclusive spaces where participation, enjoyment and social interaction take precedence over performance.



FORUM ON SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS 2025 – PARIS, 16 DECEMBER

The Fourth edition of the Forum on Sport and Human Rights took place in hybrid format at the Council of Europe Office in Paris and online. As a key annual platform for dialogue on emerging human rights challenges in sport, this year's Forum placed **health and well-being** at the centre of discussions, reflecting growing awareness of the physical and mental pressures faced by athletes and participants at all levels.

Against a backdrop of increasing testimonies from athletes and practitioners, the Forum explored the relationship between sport and the right to health through two lenses: **women's health and mental health in sport**. Participants examined how sports systems have historically overlooked women's physiological specificities, contributing to persistent gender gaps in participation and well-being. Discussions highlighted the need to move beyond generic approaches and to design physical activity, training environments and policies that respond to women's health needs throughout their lives. This reflection builds on EPAS's long-standing work on gender equality and will be further strengthened through the upcoming joint Council of Europe – European Union project *Active and Equal*, aimed at systematically integrating women's health considerations into sport systems.

Mental health was the second major focus of the Forum, addressing an issue that has increasingly come to the forefront across the sports world. Panellists discussed the cumulative impact of performance pressure, media exposure, social media, gambling-related risks and career uncertainty on athletes' mental well-being. Through exchanges between athletes with lived experience, medical experts, sports organisations and public authorities, the Forum provided a space to acknowledge vulnerabilities that have long remained invisible, while sharing concrete practices to better prevent harm and support well-being in sports environments.

The Forum combined a public morning seminar with two parallel afternoon workshops, allowing participants to move from reflection to action. The workshops offered a dedicated space to identify how the Council of Europe, through EPAS and its wider human rights framework, can add value in both areas, informing future guidance, tools and policy development. The outcomes of these discussions will also feed into the preparatory work for the 19th Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport, which will address the health benefits and risks of sport for children and young people.



Implementation of the European Sports Charter (ESC)

SUPPORT AND FOLLOW-UP VISITS TO IRELAND AND GREECE

The **European Sports Charter** is the Council of Europe standard which lays down the basic principles for national sports policies, allowing governments to support and provide opportunities for the practice of sport for all under well-defined conditions.

As part of the EPAS mandate, European Sports Charter support and follow-up visits are carried out each year in its member states by an EPAS team.

The **findings, recommendations and best practices** identified during each visit are compiled in a report that EPAS sends to the host country. The adopted reports are made available to the public on the [Sport website](#).

ESC SUPPORT AND FOLLOW-UP VISIT TO IRELAND – DUBLIN, 24-25 MARCH

An EPAS team carried out a support and follow-up visit to Dublin to further the implementation of the European Sports Charter within Irish policies and practices. The visit focused on strengthening values-based, inclusive and good governance approaches to sport for all in Ireland.

The team met with the key stakeholders driving a values-based sport in Ireland, including **Patrick O'Donovan**, Minister for Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport, **Charlie McConalogue**, Minister of State with responsibility for Sport and Postal Policy, and **Úna May**, CEO of Sport Ireland, as well as representatives of the sports and Para sports movement, education, athletes, the private sector, the media and others.

The delegation consisted of **Alexandre Husting** (Luxembourg), **Antonio Parrilla** (Italy), **Charlotte Girard Fabre** (France), alongside members of the EPAS Secretariat. Meetings were complemented by visits to major facilities and community sport initiatives, helping to ground discussions in operational practices.



ESC SUPPORT AND FOLLOW-UP VISIT TO GREECE – ATHENS, 25-26 JUNE

An EPAS team conducted a support and follow-up visit to Athens to further the implementation of the European Sports Charter within Greek policies and practices.

The team met key stakeholders advancing values-based sport in Greece, including **Ioannis Vrotsis**, Alternate Minister of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport, **Marios Themistokleousas**, Deputy Minister of Health, and **George Mavrotas**, Secretary General of Sport, as well as representatives of the Olympic and Paralympic movement, sports federations, athletes, the private sector, the media and others. Meetings were complemented by visits to major facilities, notably the Athens Olympic Stadium.

The delegation included **Satu Heikkinen** (Finland), **Michael Landau** (Monaco), **Jens Sejer Andersen** (Play the Game), **Diana Santos** (University Leiria) and members of the EPAS Secretariat.

On 27 June, a half-day sport governance workshop co-organised with the International Olympic Committee and hosted by the Hellenic Olympic Committee with support from the Greek Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport promoted the IPACS benchmark, encouraging its uptake across the Greek sports community.



The three pillars of EPAS

1ST PILLAR – ETHICAL SPORT

Fourth meeting of the MARS Network – Strasbourg, 1-2 July

The Network of Magistrates/Prosecutors Responsible for Sports, set up under the authority of EPAS, aims to strengthen international judicial co-operation and information exchange to protect sport integrity.

The MARS Network held its Fourth annual meeting in Strasbourg, France. Discussions focused on the **involvement of organised crime in sport**, with experts examining criminal methods, evidence gathering and co-operation with law enforcement, alongside sessions on competition manipulation, anti-doping and safety frameworks for major events. On 2 July, the network held an extended exchange with representatives of sports organisations, reinforcing operational bridges between the judiciary and the sports movement in the protection of sport integrity.

The meeting reaffirmed the MARS Network's role as a platform for co-ordinated judicial action against corruption and criminal threats to sport integrity.

MARS Network Bureau

Chair

- Jean-Yves Lourguilloux (France), Deputy Public Prosecutor, Judicial Court of Marseille

Vice-Chair

- Ann Lukowiak (Belgium), Federal Magistrate, Federal Public Prosecutor's Office

Bureau members

- Konstantinos Spyropoulos (Greece), Prosecutor, First Instance Court of Athens
- Mikolaj Tybirczy (Poland), Prosecutor, National Prosecutor's Office
- Igor Ćorluka (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Expert Adviser, Agency for the prevention of corruption and co-ordination of the fight against corruption



Fourth meeting on the Mapping of Sports Facilities – Strasbourg, 12 September

Social sustainability and sports facilities are a growing priority within the work of EPAS, which seeks to promote inclusive, accessible and sustainable sport infrastructure across its member states.

The Fourth meeting on the Mapping of Sports Facilities took place in hybrid format. The meeting focused on the **social sustainability of sports facilities**, addressing their role in fostering social cohesion, ensuring equal access, supporting healthy communities and developing sustainable funding models. Participants exchanged information on current mapping work, key indicators, best practices and policy approaches, in light of the recent **White Paper on Social Sustainability and Sports Facilities** developed jointly by EPAS and the **Mulier Institute**.

The meeting brought together researchers, national policy makers and representatives of the sports movement to identify concrete solutions to keep sports facilities affordable and inclusive, in line with the principle of sport for all set out in the European Sports Charter. The topic will remain high on the EPAS agenda, with the next Mapping of Sports Facilities meeting in 2026 set to focus on equal access to sports facilities.



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2ND PILLAR – INCLUSIVE SPORT

Breakfast Round table on women's health and sport – Strasbourg, 7 March

Ahead of International Women's Day, EPAS organised its annual Breakfast Round table on women's health and sport in hybrid format. The event brought together athletes, medical doctors, researchers, representatives of athletes' unions and sports organisations to address a dimension of gender equality in sport that remains critically underrepresented in policies, research and practice. Discussions focused on how women's health is too often marginalised within training systems and institutional frameworks, and on the **urgent need to integrate gender-specific health considerations into sport governance, education and performance environments across Europe**.

Opening the event, **Gianluca Esposito** highlighted EPAS's long-standing leadership in advancing equality in sport, while stressing the persistence of deep-rooted structural inequalities. He emphasised that women's health in sport has remained largely invisible at pan-European level and called for sustained political and institutional commitment to transform awareness into concrete policy and operational change.

Two panel discussions structured the debate. The first focused on athletes' lived experiences and the impact of high-performance environments on women's physical and mental health. The second panel shifted the focus to solutions, awareness-raising and education at pan-European level.

Across the discussions, participants examined key health challenges linked to over-training, eating disorders, menstruation, maternity, perimenopause, menopause and mental health, while also addressing the cultural taboos and institutional silences that continue to surround these issues in sport. The exchanges highlighted the need for better education of coaches and support staff, stronger data collection, and dedicated policies to protect and promote women's health throughout sports careers at all levels.



North-South Dialogues – Strasbourg, 21 May

The 2025 edition of the North-South Dialogues, entitled “From competition to co-operation: the power of sport as a tool for development and inclusion”, was organised by the Council of Europe’s North-South Centre in co-operation with EPAS. Held in hybrid format, the round table brought together representatives of international institutions, the sports movement and athletes to reflect on values-based sport as a driver of development, inclusion and human rights.

Building on the work of the 2024 North-South Prize laureates, discussions focused on **inclusion in and through sport**, particularly for vulnerable groups such as migrants and refugees. Speakers highlighted the capacity of sport to promote social cohesion, education and resilience, while also addressing integrity, safeguarding and governance challenges that must be tackled to ensure that sport remains a safe and rights-respecting space. Contributions from high-level representatives of the Olympic Movement, EPAS and regional sports bodies underlined the need for stronger co-operation between public authorities, sports organisations and civil society.

In this context, the Dialogues also marked the launch of the new **Human Rights Education for Youth (HEY)** online course “Towards responsible, safe, inclusive and ethical sport”. Developed by the North-South Centre in close co-operation with EPAS, the **African Union Sports Council** and the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, the course targets young people aged 18-30 from Europe, Africa and the Middle East. It aims to strengthen understanding of human rights frameworks in sport, the structure and governance of the sports ecosystem, and emerging integrity challenges. The first edition took place online in French from 30 June to 27 July 2025, with follow-up Trainings of Tutors planned for 2026 to support cascade training at national and local level.



3RD PILLAR – SAFE SPORT

Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport

The Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport is the single-entry point to a unique source of multi-disciplinary expertise covering all forms of violence and abuse against children in sport. The Pool builds on the previously established pool of European experts on sexual violence in sport which has existed since 2017. It brings together policy makers, researchers and academics, Specialists supporting people with lived experience, as well as three new categories: (child) safeguarding officers, trainers/consultants and agents of change. The Pool is a means for peer-learning, capacity building and fostering exchanges between all those who have a role to play in preventing and combating any form of violence and abuse against children in the field of sport.

Annual meeting of the Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport: focus on safer environments for children in sports associations – Paris, 13-14 November

The Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport held its Fourth annual meeting in hybrid format. The meeting brought together experts, policy makers and practitioners to reflect on current safeguarding challenges and to advance practical solutions for safer sports environments.

As part of the annual meeting, an extended seminar entitled “Creating safer environments for children in sports associations” was organised in co-operation with the **French National Olympic and Sports Committee (CNOSF)**. The seminar provided a dedicated space for child safeguarding officers and staff of sports associations to engage directly with international experts on how safeguarding principles can be translated into daily practice within clubs and federations. Discussions focused on concrete operational challenges faced by sports organisations working with children and young people, and on strengthening their capacity to prevent, detect and respond to risks.

Throughout the seminar, speakers addressed a wide range of **safeguarding issues**, including how to support survivors of abuse and whistle-blowers, how investigations can be conducted in a child-sensitive and rights-compliant manner, and how sport can be protected from exploitation and trafficking. Particular attention was paid to the responsibility of sports organisations to create environments where children feel safe, heard and protected, and where safeguarding is embedded in the organisational culture rather than treated as a formal requirement alone. The exchange of experiences and practices highlighted the importance of co-operation between public authorities, sports bodies and specialised organisations at national and international level.



@CNOSF

During the meeting, the Pool presented its key deliverable for 2025: the **Guidelines on Safer Recruitment in Sport**. The Guidelines provide guidance to states and sports organisations on how to develop effective recruitment and screening processes for professionals and volunteers working with children, in line with international human rights standards. They aim to support sports bodies in strengthening prevention at the earliest stage by ensuring that recruitment practices reduce risks and promote a culture of safety and accountability.

The annual in camera session of the Pool allowed members to reflect on future priorities, including the preparation of the 19th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport, to be held in Monaco in 2026, which will focus on “Safer and healthier sport for all children”. These discussions underscored the continuity between the Pool’s expert work, EPAS policy development and Ministerial-level dialogue, reinforcing a long-term commitment to safeguarding children’s rights and well-being in sport.

Start to Talk

Start to Talk assists national authorities responsible for sport in the production of country-specific roadmaps for the effective development and implementation of child safeguarding in sport policies, including concrete steps to set up child safeguarding officer (CSO) roles in sport.

Start to Talk Round table – Nicosia, Cyprus, 21 November

Child safeguarding in sport is one of the priorities of EPAS, implemented in particular in the framework of the *Start to Talk* project.

Following the successful implementation of a national *Start to Talk* project in Cyprus in 2024, EPAS continued to support the **Cyprus Sports Organisation** in 2025 with the practical implementation of the country’s child safeguarding legislative and policy framework. This follow-up phase focused on translating national standards into operational practice within four pilot sports associations: football, swimming, gymnastics and triathlon.

A first technical round table brought together child safeguarding officers from the four pilot sports associations, representatives of the Cyprus Sports Organisation and the **Foni Council**, which is responsible for implementing the national strategy to combat child sexual abuse and exploitation. The meeting also benefited from the participation of representatives from **UEFA**, the **Aquatics Integrity Unit** and members of the *Start to Talk* working group. Discussions focused on core safeguarding elements, including governance arrangements, reporting mechanisms, roles and responsibilities, and alignment with national and international standards.



The round table provided targeted technical guidance tailored to the specific contexts of each sport and enabled a shared understanding of safeguarding requirements among all stakeholders involved. The exchanges directly informed the development of the project's main deliverables, consisting of bespoke child safeguarding policies and procedures adapted to the needs and risk profiles of each of the four pilot sports associations.

A second round table is planned for 2026 and will present the final safeguarding frameworks to the pilot organisations, as well as to relevant public authorities and sport stakeholders. This next step will support broader dissemination and uptake, contributing to the sustainable integration of child safeguarding standards across the Cypriot sports sector.

Safe sport as a space for human rights education: event on the sidelines of the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council – Geneva, Switzerland, 12 March

EPAS organised a side event entitled “Safe sport as a space for human rights education”, on the margins of the **58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council** in Geneva. Held in hybrid format, the event was organised within the framework of the *Start to Talk* project, which aims to protect children and young people from all forms of violence and abuse in sport.

The event was co-organised with the **Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the United Nations Office in Geneva**, the **Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the Council of Europe** and the **Permanent Mission of Monaco to the United Nations Office in Geneva**, and co-sponsored by several Permanent Missions as well as **UNICEF**. Discussions brought together experts in children's rights, education and sport to explore how safe, inclusive and rights-respecting sports environments can serve as spaces for human rights education. Speakers highlighted the role of safeguarding, ethical coaching and participation in enabling children to enjoy, understand and exercise their rights through sport.



Statutory matters

THE THREE STATUTORY BODIES OF EPAS

Governing Board

The EPAS Governing Board and Consultative Committee held their annual **joint plenary meeting** on 14-15 May in Strasbourg. The meeting provided an opportunity to take stock of ongoing work and to set priorities for the coming period, bringing together governmental representatives and stakeholders from the European sports movement.

Discussions focused on the promotion and implementation of the **European Sports Charter**, the progress of the EPAS programme of activities and key upcoming milestones, including the 2025 Diversity Conference and the 19th Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport to be hosted by Monaco in November 2026. Members also reviewed the implementation of the **EPAS Strategy 2024-2025** and examined the **draft Strategy for 2026-2027**, alongside ongoing work on **safer recruitment in sport** and on the **autonomy of sport and good governance**, following up on the Resolution on collaborative governing in sport.

A dedicated exchange was held following a presentation by the **Ukrainian delegation**, which outlined the impact of the war on sport in Ukraine, including damage to infrastructure and the challenges faced by athletes and sports organisations. The intervention called for further reflection within EPAS on sport in emergency situations and post-crisis recovery.

During its in camera session, the Governing Board elected its new Bureau. **Solène Charuau** (France) and **Ioanna Paraskevopoulou** (Cyprus) were elected as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. **Antonio Parrilla** (Italy), **Simon De Coster** (Belgium), **Marija Jurčević** (Croatia) and **Elnur Mammadov** (Azerbaijan) were elected as regional representatives, and **Solène Charuau** was also appointed Gender Equality Rapporteur.

The joint plenary meeting concluded with the launch of the joint European Union – Council of Europe project “Sport For All: Promoting Inclusion and Combating Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities”.



Governing Board Bureau

- ▶ Solène Charuau (France), Chair
- ▶ Ioanna Paraskevopoulou (Cyprus), Vice-Chair
- ▶ Antonio Parrilla (Italy), Region 1
- ▶ Simon De Coster (Belgium), Region 2
- ▶ Marija Jurčević (Croatia), Region 3
- ▶ Elnur Mammadov (Azerbaijan), Region 4
- ▶ Florian Botto, Catherine Farneti and Michael Landau (Monaco), Host State of the 2026 Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport
- ▶ Charlotte Girard Fabre (International Federation of Sport Officials), Chair of the Consultative Committee
- ▶ Mogens Kirkeby (International Sport and Culture Association), Vice-Chair of the Consultative Committee

Gender Equality Rapporteur:

- ▶ Solène Charuau (France)



Consultative Committee

During its in camera plenary meeting on 14 May, the EPAS Consultative Committee elected one new Bureau member: Guido Battaglia (Centre for Sport and Human Rights – CSHR). The next Bureau elections will take place in May 2026.

Consultative Committee Bureau

- ▶ **Charlotte Girard Fabre** (International Federation of Sport Officials – IFSO), Chair
- ▶ **Mogens Kirkeby** (International Sport and Culture Association – ISCA), Vice-Chair
- ▶ **Andrej Pisl** (European University Sports Association – EUSA)
- ▶ **Annamarie Phelps** (European Olympic Committees – EOC)
- ▶ **Guido Battaglia** (Centre for Sport and Human Rights – CSHR)
- ▶ **Patrik Perosa** (International Dance Organization – IDO)

Gender Equality Rapporteur:

- ▶ **Marie Denitton** (European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation – ENGSO).



Statutory Committee

The Statutory Committee is made up of representatives to the Committee of Ministers of the member states of the Council of Europe which are members of EPAS, and of representatives specifically designated by states which are not Council of Europe members but which participate in EPAS. Each year, it adopts the budget on expenditure relating to the implementation of the programme of activities.

The EPAS Statutory Committee held its 20th meeting on 12 November 2025 under the Presidency of the Monégasque authorities, represented by **H.E. Mr Gabriel Revel**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Monaco to the Council of Europe. During the restricted session the Committee took note of the scale of contributions to the 2026 budget of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), which was submitted to them for approval. It also took note of the programme for 2024-2027 and the accompanying budget for the period 1 January 2026 – 31 December 2026. During a subsequent extended session, two presentations were delivered focusing on mental health and sport. One from a Strasbourg-based University lecturer, **Marie Agostinucci**, and one reflecting an athlete's perspective, namely, **Ann-Sophie Duyck**, a Belgian former professional cyclist and current co-lead at United Athletes. The Committee then had a lively **questions and answers session** with the speakers followed by a reception offered by the Monégasque authorities.



BUDGET

The EPAS budget for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2025 amounted to 1321,8 K€.

The breakdown of the **member states' compulsory contributions** to this 2025 budget can be seen in the corresponding table below.

Contributions of member states to the budget of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) for the financial year 2025

MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE	% contribution	Amount payable in €
ALBANIA	0,7440	9 834,19
ANDORRA	0,7440	9 834,19
ARMENIA	0,7440	9 834,19
AUSTRIA	3,0771	40 673,11
AZERBAIJAN	0,7440	9 834,19
BELGIUM	3,7965	50 182,14
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	0,7440	9 834,19
BULGARIA	0,7440	9 834,19
CROATIA	0,7440	9 834,19
CYPRUS	0,7440	9 834,19
DENMARK	2,5158	33 253,85
ESTONIA	0,7440	9 834,19
FINLAND	1,8901	24 983,34
FRANCE	15,7200	207 786,96
GEORGIA	0,7440	9 834,19
GREECE	1,5824	20 916,17
HUNGARY	1,3482	17 820,51
ICELAND	0,7440	9 834,19
IRELAND	3,1105	41 114,59
ITALY	15,7200	207 786,96
LATVIA	0,7440	9 834,19
LIECHTENSTEIN	0,7440	9 834,19
LITHUANIA	0,7440	9 834,19
LUXEMBOURG	0,7440	9 834,19
MALTA	0,7440	9 834,19
MONACO	0,7440	9 834,19
MONTENEGRO	0,7440	9 834,19
NETHERLANDS	6,4751	85 587,87
NORTH MACEDONIA	0,7440	9 834,19
NORWAY	3,0468	40 272,61
POLAND	5,1853	68 539,30
PORTUGAL	1,8116	23 945,73
SAN MARINO	0,7440	9 834,19
SERBIA	0,7440	9 834,19
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	0,8545	11 294,78
SLOVENIA	0,7440	9 834,19
SWITZERLAND	5,0876	67 247,90
TÜRKIYE	7,6132	100 631,28
UKRAINE	2,3762	31 408,61
NON-MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE		
ISRAEL	1,4910	19 708,04
MOROCCO	0,9301	12 294,07
TOTAL	100,0000	1 321 800,00

External action

PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS

Youth Perspectives in action: Council of Europe's Partial Agreements after the Reykjavik Summit – Strasbourg, 11-12 March

A workshop on “Youth Perspectives in action: Council of Europe's Partial Agreements after the Reykjavik Summit” was held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, in line with the commitment of the Council of Europe to integrate a youth perspective into its intergovernmental work following the **Reykjavik Declaration**.

The workshop brought together representatives of member states, youth organisations and several Partial Agreements, including EPAS, to explore concrete avenues for co-operation and to strengthen dialogue with young people. Discussions focused in particular on the use of the **European Youth Card** as a communication tool between governments, young people and Partial Agreements, and identified practical ideas for joint action in the short and longer term.

Humans of Sport – Strasbourg, 14-17 April

Humans of Sport organised a **Bootcamp** at the European Youth Centre which received support from EPAS. The initiative offered the opportunity for a group of intersex athletes to attend a training course in Strasbourg. It also afforded them the opportunity to meet a restricted group of Permanent Representatives to the Committee of Ministers.

Inter-institutional meeting – Paris, 19 June

EPAS convened an inter-institutional meeting in Paris, bringing together representatives from **UNESCO**, **WHO**, the **European Commission**, the **African Union**, the **Commonwealth**, **OECD**, **UNICEF** and **UNHCR** to strengthen collaboration on global sport policy. Participants exchanged updates on their current priorities and held focused discussions on sport and health, inclusive sport, safe sport and ethical sport. The meeting highlighted shared commitments to safeguarding, gender equality, integrity and improved physical activity systems, and concluded with an agreement to develop a joint calendar of upcoming initiatives and explore co-ordinated actions in policy implementation and capacity-building.

Annual Conference of the Global Observatory for Gender Equality & Sport – Lausanne, Switzerland, 30 September

EPAS participated in the **Gender Equality & Sport+ Conference 2025 – Connecting for Change**, held at IMD in Lausanne. The annual conference of the Global Observatory for Gender Equality & Sport brought together academics, international organisations, UN agencies, international sports federations and civil society to foster dialogue, share experiences and identify concrete strategies to advance gender equality in sport.

EPAS participation provided an opportunity to strengthen co-operation with key international stakeholders and to contribute to discussions on evidence-based and policy-oriented approaches to gender equality. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of data, monitoring and accountability, including the promotion of the indicators developed under the **All In Plus joint European Union–Council of Europe project** as a reference framework for assessing progress. Exchanges throughout the conference highlighted the value of connecting research, policy and practice to support sustainable change in sport systems at all levels.

Play the Game, Conference on “Driving dialogue for democracy in sport” – Tampere, Finland, 5-8 October

More than 500 participants gathered in Tampere, for *Play the Game 2025 – “Driving dialogue for democracy in sport”*, a global conference bringing together journalists, researchers, athletes, whistleblowers and decision makers to examine how democratic principles can be upheld in sport, even when debate is challenging or uncomfortable.

Addressing the conference, Deputy Secretary General **Bjørn Berge** welcomed *Play the Game*'s contribution to strengthening integrity in sport, and in particular its focus on the enforcement of existing rules and the protection of whistleblowers. He underlined the Council of Europe's commitment to placing human rights, the rule of law and the fight against corruption at the heart of sport policy, stressing the need for fair and equal opportunities for athletes, free from exploitation and abuse of power.

Discussions throughout the conference covered a wide range of themes related to democracy in sport, including freedom of expression, accountability, corruption and child safeguarding. The Council of Europe contributed to sessions on fighting corruption in sport and on *Start to Talk*, highlighting the importance of safe recruitment and protection of children in sports environments.

Meeting between the City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg, Local Sports Clubs and the Council of Europe – Strasbourg, 14 October

A meeting held at the Council of Europe brought together representatives of **the City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg**, local sports clubs and the Council of Europe. Chaired by **Owusu Tufuor**, Deputy Mayor in charge of Sport, the meeting provided an opportunity to review the start of the sports season, present the support schemes available to sports clubs and highlight the activities of the *Office des Sports*.

Organised in the context of *Strasbourg, European Capital of Sport 2025*, the meeting was followed by an exchange on the Council of Europe's work on ethics, integrity and the prevention of violence in sport. This session offered an overview of ongoing European initiatives and standards, and highlighted the relevance of these frameworks for local sports actors.

The meeting also marked a renewed dialogue with the Eurometropolis and local sport stakeholders, in view of the partnership agreement between the City of Strasbourg and the Council of Europe. Several avenues for future co-operation were discussed, including initiatives to promote Para sport and capacity-building for sports actors through the joint European Union – Council of Europe project *Sport For All*, the closing event of the joint project *Balance S4 – Strengthening the Safety and Service pillars of the Saint-Denis Convention*, and the forthcoming joint project *Active and Equal* focusing on women's health and participation in sport.

Annual IPACS conference and 5th IFSI Forum – Lausanne, Switzerland, 23-24 October

The Executive Secretary of EPAS attended the annual IPACS conference in Lausanne, followed by the IFSI Forum. This provided an opportunity to showcase the Council of Europe's collaboration with the IOC in co-ordinating the preparation of the Good Governance Benchmark. The Deputy Secretary General, **Bjørn Berge**, participated in the IFSI Forum reiterating the strong collaboration between the two organisations and the ongoing commitment to good governance in sport.

CO-OPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

Joint EU-CoE project “All In Plus: Promoting greater gender equality in sport”

The closing event of the European Union – Council of Europe joint project “All In Plus: Promoting Greater Gender Equality in Sport” was held on 12-13 February in Luxembourg, in hybrid format at the *Centre National Sportif et Culturel (La Coque)* and online. Organised under the **Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers**, the event marked the conclusion of two years of research, data collection and policy development aimed at strengthening gender equality in sport across Europe.

The event brought together representatives of the **European Commission** and the Council of Europe, national public authorities, international experts, athletes and sports organisations. It provided a moment to reflect on the project's achievements and to present its key outputs, notably a comprehensive analytical report and a set of evidence-based recommendations assessing the state of gender equality in sport across 21 jurisdictions.

The report examined six core areas: leadership, coaching and officiating, participation from grassroots to elite level, the prevention of gender-based violence, media and communication, and gender equality policies and programmes in sport.

Discussions highlighted both areas of progress and persistent structural gaps. While many sports organisations have taken steps to address gender inequalities, the findings revealed **continued underrepresentation of women in leadership and decision-making positions**, uneven participation rates, limited access to coaching and officiating roles, and gaps between political commitments and concrete implementation. Particular attention was given to the **need for stronger monitoring mechanisms, dedicated funding and institutional accountability** to ensure that gender equality policies translate into measurable change.

Throughout the two days, exchanges also focused on sharing best practices, situating the *All In Plus* indicators within a global context and exploring how the project's tools can continue to support policy making beyond its formal conclusion. The closing event underscored the importance of sustaining momentum beyond the project's lifecycle, with participants emphasising the continued use of the *All In Plus* findings, indicators and recommendations as a basis for future policy development, dialogue and action at European and national level.



Joint EU-CoE project “Sport For All: Promoting inclusion and combating discrimination against persons with disabilities in sport”

EPAS launched the new joint European Union – Council of Europe project “Sport For All: Promoting inclusion and combating discrimination against persons with disabilities in sport” (March 2025 – August 2026). The project addresses persistent barriers faced by persons with disabilities in accessing sport, including physical, social and systemic obstacles, as well as online discrimination such as hate speech and cyberbullying. Rooted in the principles of the European Sports Charter and aligned with the broader “**sport for all**” philosophy, the project aims to support sports organisations and public authorities in creating safe, welcoming and inclusive sports environments.

The project's official launch event took place in Strasbourg on 15 May and brought together representatives of EPAS member states and sports organisations, alongside the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Discussions highlighted the need to shift perspectives towards recognising “**ability over disability**”, and featured testimonies from athletes sharing lived experience. The launch also included a practical demonstration of blind football, reinforcing the project's focus on accessibility and inclusion in practice.

Building its first year of implementation, the project advanced work under its awareness-raising and best-practice exchange pillars. In the framework of its outreach activities, the ***Sport for All* podcast** was launched to spotlight conversations with Para sport practitioners and to promote inclusive approaches at grassroots and elite levels. The first episode, recorded during the European Para Youth Games 2025 in Istanbul, featured

Portuguese Paracanoe coach and sports manager **Ivo Quendera**, who reflected on developments in Para sport and on the importance of openness and inclusion within sports systems.

A key milestone was the project's **first thematic webinar**, held online on 14 October, focusing on the **training and development of Para sport coaches, referees and managers**. The webinar formed part of Pillar 2 on the exchange of best practices and aimed to strengthen professional capacity to foster inclusive environments. It provided a platform to share innovative education pathways and national approaches, linking grassroots realities with European standards and international frameworks. Presentations covered, among others, Para sport coaching in Ireland, national approaches to Para coach education, education models for coaches and PE teachers working with athletes with intellectual impairments, and the ParaManager project led by the European Paralympic Committee. A concluding round table discussion further examined evolving professional roles, current training systems and ways to scale up effective approaches, with a view to identifying practical recommendations to be shared through the project.



COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Social media

The LinkedIn account “**Sport at the Council of Europe**”, which encompasses the activities of the Sport Division and therefore of EPAS, was inaugurated in March and constantly updated throughout the year. By the end of 2025, the account had gained 1 920 new followers. Its posts generated 92 965 impressions, 2 178 reactions, 61 comments and 86 reposts throughout the year.

The Council of Europe's LinkedIn, BlueSky, X, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube accounts have also helped to increase EPAS's visibility by sharing or creating content highlighting its events, projects and initiatives.

Website

Throughout 2025, the Sport Division's website www.coe.int/sport was constantly updated with news items on EPAS activities, in particular. The site recorded 78 058 total visits over the year.

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) provides a platform for intergovernmental co-operation between the public authorities of its member states. It also enables dialogue between public authorities, sports federations and NGOs. This collaboration contributes to better governance, with the aim to make sport more ethical, more inclusive and safer.

The annual activity report provides an overview of the highlights of the year in question. In this activity report, you will find the main events and activities organised or co-organised by EPAS in 2025, including meetings, conferences and other activities which contribute to the development of sport for all and the implementation of the values and principles of sport set out in the European Sports Charter.



www.coe.int/sport

www.coe.int

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.