

“Sexual Violence against Women and Children in Sports”: international conference in Helsinki

Strasbourg, 23.04.2019 – Sport has been confronted with many cases of sexual violence against women and children in recent years. Public authorities, sports movement and stakeholder organisations are determined to tackle sexual violence against women and children in sport and to strengthen its prevention with the [Expert Conference on “Sexual Violence against Women and Children in Sports”](#) (National Museum of Finland – Mannerheimintie 34, Helsinki, on 29-30 April), organised in the framework of the [Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers](#).

The event will be opened by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Anita Lehtikoinen, together with the Head of the Children’s Rights and Sport Values Department of the Council of Europe, Elda Moreno, with a focus on several areas /contexts:

- 1) Mapping the field: how big is the problem?
- 2) Prevention: how to prevent incidents successfully
- 3) Protection: which policies/measures to take
- 4) Prosecution/sanction: how to sanction behaviour

The conference will offer the opportunity for participants to receive hands-on information to address and deal with sexual violence against women and children in sport effectively via workshop sessions on protection strategies, support systems and case management, educational programmes, codes of conduct and codes of ethics, and minimising risks.

The event will be webcast live in English: <https://live.kansallismuseo.fi/?live=starttotalk>

Focus

Sport is the most popular cultural practice of millions of Europeans including women and children. The important role sport plays for European societies might be overshadowed by cases of sexual violence against women and children.

Background

Despite the efforts undertaken by decision makers to create safer sport environments such as the [European Sport Charter](#) of the Council of Europe or the [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2015\)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender mainstreaming in sport](#), sexual violence still happens - as shown in the context of the #metoo movement - against women and children.

“Sexual assault against children is an urgent human rights issue and fighting it should be a political priority”. (Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, 2011)

The [Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#), also known as “the Lanzarote Convention”, requires criminalisation of all kinds of sexual offences against children. It sets out that states in Europe and beyond shall adopt specific legislation and take measures to prevent sexual violence, to protect child victims and to prosecute perpetrators.

[The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) is based on the understanding that violence against women is a form of gender-based violence that is committed against women because they are women. It is the obligation of the state to fully address it in all its forms and to take measures to prevent violence against women, protect its victims and prosecute the perpetrators.

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