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European Sports Charter Support and Follow up

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Report

Table of Contents

A.	Information provided by the authorities of Ireland.....	2
1	Overview of state structures and sports organisations	2
2	Main objectives and priorities of the sport sector in Ireland	2
3	Financing model of sport.....	5
B.	Report on the implementation of the European Sports Charter (ESC).....	6
4	Introduction.....	6
5	Article 1 - Aim of the Charter	6
6	Article 2 – Definition of “sport” and scope of the Charter	7
7	Article 3 – Public authorities	9
8	Article 4 – The sports movement	11
9	Article 5 – Corporate and professional sectors.....	13
10	Article 6 – Human rights.....	16
11	Article 7 – Education in values through sports ethics	20
12	Article 8 – Integrity.....	22
13	Article 9 – Sustainability	24
14	Article 10 – The right to sport	26
15	Article 11 – Building the foundations for the practice of sport	29
16	Article 12 – Developing participation.....	30
17	Article 13 – Improving performance	32
18	Article 14 – Supporting top-level and professional sport	34
19	Article 15 – Facilities and activities	36
20	Article 16 – Human resources	37
21	Article 17 – Information and research	39
22	Article 18 – Finance	40
23	Article 19 – Domestic and international co-operation	40
24	Article 20 – Support and follow-up to the implementation of the Charter.....	43
C.	Summary of findings and recommendations.....	44
D.	Appendices.....	46
25	Appendix I - Act on Sports	46
	Appendix II - Sports Policy	47
	Appendix III - Implementation Team.....	48
26	Appendix IV - Programme	49
	Acknowledgements	53

A. Information provided by the authorities of Ireland

1 Overview of state structures and sports organisations

Sport funding and policy in Ireland comes under the remit of the government Department of Culture, Communications and Sport (DCCS)¹. The statutory agency, Sport Ireland², is responsible for the development of sport. Sport Ireland is not a regulatory body and has limits to its legal powers, which are defined in legislation. National sports federations, known as National Governing Bodies (NGBs), are independent and autonomous bodies responsible for their own governance procedures and operational arrangements. Sport Ireland recognises 65 NGBs.

Ireland is a common law country with no specific sports law. Various statutes are applicable to the field of sport, even where it is not expressly directed at the sporting sector.

2 Main objectives and priorities of the sport sector in Ireland

The main objectives and priorities of the sport sector can be identified in the table below.

Sports practice target/audience	High priority	Somewhat a priority	Low priority
High-performance sport	x		
Professional sport		x	
Overall population	x		
Sport for all (including all member of society)	x		
Physical education and school sport	x		
Physical activity and health	x		
Paralympic sports	x		
Sport career			
Conciliation of academic and sporting success (dual careers)	x		

¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-culture-communications-and-sport/>

² <https://www.sportireland.ie/>

Sports practice target/audience	High priority	Somewhat a priority	Low priority
Support mechanisms after the end of sporting career	X		
Ethics			
Combat all forms of violent behaviours including, racism, xenophobia and intolerance in sporting contexts	X		
Sports integrity	X		
Ethics	X		
Inclusion			
Inclusion of people with a disability	X		
Social inclusion	X		
Equality, diversity, inclusion, accessibility	X		
Universally inclusive design of sport competition (eligibility regulations, competition formats & sport presentation)		X	
Non-discrimination			
Grassroots sports	X		
Non-discrimination and social justice	X		
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults (impacted by Mega Sport Events)	X		
Harnessing opportunities in high-risk hosting environments			
Gender			
Gender equality in sport	X		
Gender mainstreaming	X		
Sustainability			
Sustainability at sport events	X		
Sustainable development, urbanisation, and human rights/child rights friendly cities	X		
Sustainability in the sport industry		X	
Sports facilities			
Sustainability	X		

Sports practice target/audience	High priority	Somewhat a priority	Low priority
Environment	X		
Inclusive	X		
Access	X		
Events			
Responsible event hosting	X		
Broadcasting and event coverage	X		
Protecting people and communities (at all phases of the mega sporting events lifecycle)	X		
Athlete well-being			
Athlete advocacy and activism		X	
Athlete health, safety, and wellbeing	X		
Adult athlete rights	X		
Child athlete rights	X		
Organisation			
Professional services and standards	X		
Public sector regulations and investment	X		
Engagement and support	X		
Social justice, reconciliation and decolonisation	X		
Sponsorship and commercial investment		X	
Grievances and remedy mechanisms and standards	X		
Others			
Sport body leadership, culture and governance	X		
News access and journalism		X	
Pandemic recovery	X		
E-sports			X
Other (specify) _____			

3 Financing model of sport

In the Budget 2025, the funding allocation for sport in Ireland for 2025 was agreed at over €230 million. When the National Sports Policy³ was published in 2018, it set a commitment to double investment in sport to more than €220 million by 2027. The targeted figure has therefore been exceeded two years ahead of schedule. This figure is made up of €124,316 million in current funding and €106,365 million in capital funding.

A number of funding streams exist, primarily managed by Sport Ireland (figures are for 2025):

- Sport Ireland NGB (Core) Investment: €18.3m
- Sport Ireland High Performance Investment: €13.8m
- Sport Ireland Women in Sport: €4m (dedicated projects – not all of the funding for women in sport)
- Community Sports Facilities Allocations: €230.3m (2024)
- Dormant Accounts Fund: €6m (2024)

There is some funding from local authorities in Ireland and from EU support programmes but most funding for sport comes from the government department.

³ <https://assets.gov.ie/15979/04e0f52cee5f47ee9c01003cf559e98d.pdf>

B. Report of the implementation team on the European Sports Charter (ESC)

4 Introduction

An ESC support and follow-up visit took place in Dublin on 24-25 March 2025, providing an opportunity for the EPAS team to exchange with relevant counterparts and further its understanding of the implementation of the ESC in Ireland. The programme and list of participants are included in Appendices III and IV.

With regard to the implementation of the ESC, the current situation led to the following findings, structured by Article of the ESC.

5 Article 1 - Aim of the Charter

The aim of this Charter is to guide governments in the design and implementation of legal and policy frameworks for sport which highlight its multiple individual and social benefits (in particular for health, inclusion and education) and abide by and promote the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as enshrined in the Council of Europe's applicable standards. To achieve this aim, governments should take the steps necessary to:

1. *enable every individual to participate in sport and notably ensure that:*
 - a. *all young people receive physical education instruction at educational institutions and have access to opportunities to develop physical literacy, physical fitness and acquire fundamental movement skills;*
 - b. *everyone has the opportunity to take part in sport in a safe, secure and healthy environment;*
 - c. *the development of sport is inclusive, evaluated and monitored on a regular basis; and*
 - d. *everyone has the opportunity to improve their standard of performance in sport beyond its practice for recreational purpose and reach levels of personal achievement and/or levels of excellence in an ethical, fair and responsible way;*
2. *protect and develop values-based sport, which is a precondition for maximising the individual and social benefits of sport, and notably ensure that:*
 - a. *the human rights of those involved in or exposed to sport-related activities are protected;*
 - b. *sporting activities contribute to strengthening ethical conduct and behaviour among those involved in sport;*

- c. *the integrity of sports organisations, sports competitions and those involved in or exposed to sport-related activities is safeguarded;*
- d. *sports activities are in line with the principles of sustainable development.*

Findings

The National Sports Policy 2018-27 sets out the following vision for sport in Ireland in 2027:

People will be inspired, their lives enriched, their enjoyment enhanced, and their quality of life improved as a result of their own active or social participation in sport, and as a result of success by our top sports people in competition. All entities in our sporting community will be highly regarded for the quality of their staff and volunteers, their standards of governance, ethics and accountability, and their spirit of collaboration including with partners beyond the sporting sector.

High-level goals include increasing participation in sport, enabling more Irish athletes and teams to achieve international success, building capacity within Irish sporting bodies through strong leadership, ethics, and governance at all levels, and fostering greater co-operation both within and across the sporting sector.

Recommendations:

- 1.1 Begin work on preparation of the planned next edition of the National Sports Policy to be implemented from 2027, including a review of successes and areas for improvement in delivering the current edition, consulting with a wide range of stakeholders.
- 1.2 For the new National Sports Policy, consider an increased focus on the inclusion of people with a disability, people in rural areas, immigrant communities and older people.
- 1.3 Embed sport as a cross-cutting priority in national health, education, and community development policies, ensuring that its contribution to physical and mental well-being, social cohesion, and lifelong learning is fully recognised and supported across government departments and agencies.
- 1.4 Develop a national framework to promote the values of sport – including fair play, inclusion, sustainability, and respect for human rights – within all sporting programmes, with specific measures to engage youth and foster citizenship through sport

6 Article 2 – Definition of “sport” and scope of the Charter

1. *For the purpose of this Charter, “sport” means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, are aimed at maintaining or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.*

2. *This Charter highlights the common features of a framework for European sport and its organisation, understood by the sports movement as the European sport model, and provides*

general guidance to the Council of Europe's member States to refine existing legislation or other policies and to develop a comprehensive framework for sport. It has been specified and complemented by legally binding standards addressing critical issues in the field of sport, such as:

- a. the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches (ETS No. 120);*
 - b. the Anti-Doping Convention (ETS No. 135);*
 - c. the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (CETS No. 215); and*
 - d. the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No. 218).*
- 3. The implementation of some of the provisions of this Charter may be entrusted to governmental or non-governmental sports authorities or sports organisations.*

Findings

The National Sports Policy 2018–2027, drawing on the Sport Ireland Act 2015, reflects Ireland's alignment with the Council of Europe's broad definition of sport, while also introducing an adaptation that divides sport into "recreational" and "competitive" strands.

Ireland has signed and ratified the Council of Europe Anti-Doping Convention (ETS No. 135).

There is ongoing dialogue between and the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport and the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration regarding progressing with the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (CETS No. 215).

During the visit, the EPAS team heard that Ireland does comply with the Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No. 218) but any potential ratification would be the responsibility of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.

Recommendations:

- 2.1 Continue dialogue with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration regarding progressing with ratification of the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (CETS No. 215).
- 2.2 Continue dialogue with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration regarding progressing with ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No. 218).
- 2.3 Promote a holistic understanding of sport in national laws and policies by ensuring that future legislative or policy measures explicitly reflect the Council of Europe's broad definition of sport, encompassing both recreational and competitive activities, and recognising its social, educational, cultural and health dimensions.

7 Article 3 – Public authorities

1. *The role of the public authorities is primarily complementary to the action of the sports movement and corporate sector. Public authorities are responsible for setting framework conditions and, where appropriate, legal requirements which are necessary for the development of sport. In the development and administration of sports policies, public authorities should pursue the aims of this Charter and demonstrate that they place a high priority on respecting the rule of law and the principles of good governance.*

2. *Horizontal coordination should be ensured between the policies and actions of all the public authorities concerned with sport, for example authorities in charge of sport, education, health, social services, urban and regional planning, culture, justice, monitoring of human rights and child protection, law enforcement, betting regulation, environment and development. Vertical coordination should be ensured between national authorities and the regional and local authorities, which play a key role in the provision of sports activities at grassroots level.*

Findings

The Sports Action Plan 2024-27⁴ provides a roadmap for the implementation of the National Sports Policy 2018-27 in areas such as overall sports participation, promoting greater equality, diversity and inclusion in sport, and facility investment. It also reports on progress made from 2021-23. The Sports Action Plan 2024-27 identifies the separate roles of the DCCS, Department of Education and Youth, Sport Ireland and other stakeholder bodies.

⁴ <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2025-02/Sports%20Action%20Plan%20%28English%29.pdf>

Governance and building the capacity of the sporting sector are focus areas. Sport Ireland oversees implementation of the Governance Code for Sport, which sets standards for organisations that receive public funding.

The Sports Leadership Group (SLG), consisting of 15 key stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, was established to drive implementation of the National Sports Policy 2018-27. Members include the Minister for Sport, senior civil servants responsible for sport, health, tourism, education, disability inclusion, equality, anti-doping, representatives from the fitness sector, local authorities and civil society.

There is also a Cross-Departmental Committee in place between the Department of Education and Youth and DCCS to promote linkages and develop solutions to promote physical activity around and through schools.

This has included promoting procedures on the use of school property and school sports facilities outside of school hours.

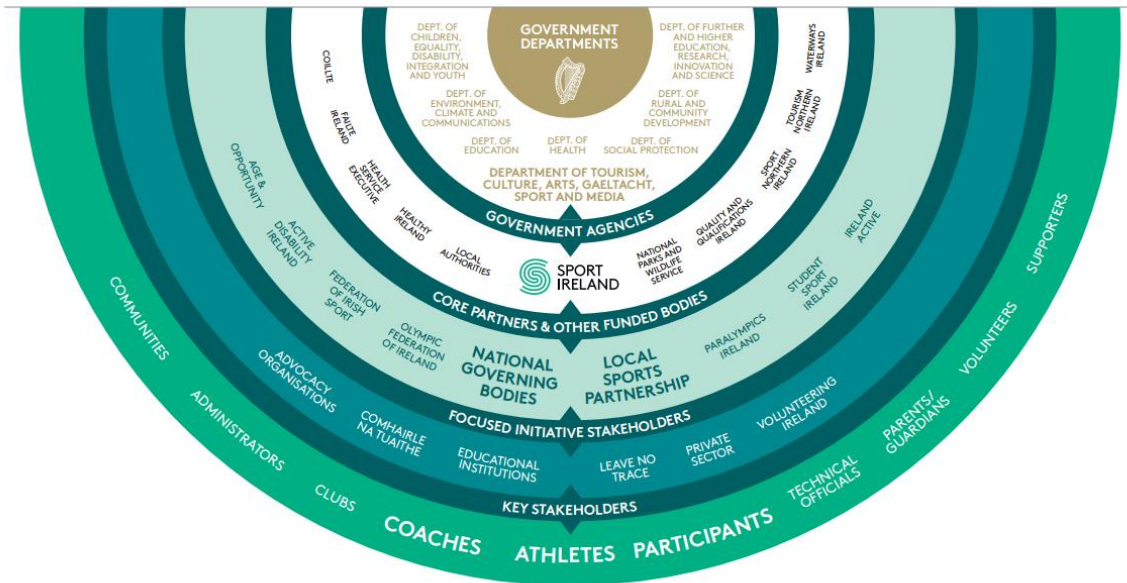
In addition to the sports policy and action plan, Ireland has a National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP)⁵. The implementation of the NPAP is overseen by NPAP IG, a Cross-sectoral Implementation Group co-chaired by the Departments of Health, and the DCCS with representation from various other departments, plus academics and other stakeholders.

An observation of the visiting EPAS team was that there appeared to be very good co-ordination on sports policy between different levels of government and between the public authorities and the sports sector.

The Sport Ecosystem in Ireland:

⁵ <https://www.gov.ie/en/healthy-ireland/policy-information/national-physical-activity-plan/>

Graphical illustration of the sport ecosystem in Ireland highlighting that sport is the product of, and influenced by many different players – not-for-profit, public, private and at local, regional and national levels*



*This is a representative illustration of the sport ecosystem in Ireland and as such does not include an exhaustive list of all involved but an overview of the different departments, agencies, organisations and individuals that contribute to a more active Ireland.

Source: Sport Ireland Strategy 2023-2027

Recommendations:

- 3.1 Begin work on preparation of the planned next edition of the National Sports Policy to be implemented from 2027, including a review of successes and areas for improvement in delivering the current edition, plus a consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.
- 3.2 For the new National Sports Policy, in the context of demographic changes, consider an increased focus on the inclusion of people with a disability, people in rural areas, immigrant communities and older people.
- 3.3 Review the composition and functioning of the Sports Leadership Group as one way of ensuring that good co-ordination continues between the different authorities and delivery bodies in Irish sport.

8 Article 4 – The sports movement

1. *The sports movement, which comprises non-governmental, non-profit sports organisations, is the main partner of public authorities for the implementation of sports policies. Its organisations are bound by the requirements and limits imposed on them by legislation in accordance with international standards.*

2. *The development of the voluntary ethos and movement in sport should be further encouraged, particularly through support for the work of voluntary sports organisations. To this end, public authorities and the sports movement should maintain framework conditions that favour the active involvement of volunteers in sport.*

3. *Sports movement organisations fully enjoy the freedom of association enshrined in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. They enjoy autonomous decision-making processes and should choose their leaders democratically in accordance with good governance principles. Both governments and sports organisations should recognise the need for mutual respect for their decisions.*

4. *Sports movement organisations earning revenue from the sports entertainment market should be committed to financial solidarity between high-level sport and grassroots sport, among different sports and across all regions of the world.*

Findings

Statutory agency Sport Ireland has the role of recognising, funding and overseeing 65 autonomous national sport federations, which comprise the core of the sports movement in Ireland. The federations generally take the form of autonomous, not-for-profit membership organisations. Many are incorporated as companies limited by guarantee (not-for-profit), in which case they are subject to company law.

Boards of national sports federations comprise a mix of individuals democratically elected from among the membership, independent directors (almost always voluntary) recruited for specific skills and executive directors (such as employed chief executives).

Larger federations employ staff but there is a heavy reliance on volunteers. We heard during the visit that there is a 12% volunteering rate in Ireland, which is commendably high. As in other countries, the pandemic resulted in a decline in volunteering, which sports are currently trying to reverse. Support and recognition for volunteers is provided in a variety of ways, including training, vetting procedures, and award schemes.

The Federation of Irish Sport⁶ is the representative body for 81 national federations and 29 Local Sport Partnerships, which advocates for the sector on topics such as tax policy.

Sport Ireland oversees the Governance Code for Sport⁷, which sets requirements for national federations and other funded bodies in areas ranging from the composition of boards to policies for athlete welfare.

⁶ <https://www.irishsport.ie/>

⁷ <https://www.sportireland.ie/GovernanceCode>

A few of the more commercially successful sports have financial solidarity programmes. For example, the Irish Rugby Football Union operates an Inclusive Facilities Grant Scheme⁸, offering funding to clubs to upgrade their facilities.

Recommendations:

- 4.1 Continue implementation of the Sport Ireland Volunteering in Sport Policy, with its focus on recruitment and retention, recognition and diversifying the volunteer base. Seek to provide centralised guidance and resources.
- 4.2 Strengthen child safeguarding frameworks across all levels of sport by supporting national federations and local clubs to fully implement robust child protection policies, ensuring regular training for staff and volunteers, and monitoring compliance with safeguarding standards through Sport Ireland oversight.
- 4.3 Enhance financial and technical support mechanisms for smaller federations and community-based clubs to improve governance, promote inclusivity, and expand access to sport for underrepresented groups, ensuring the societal benefits of sport are equitably distributed.

9 Article 5 – Corporate and professional sectors

1. *The corporate and professional sectors play an important role in the development of sport. Dialogue and co-operation should be undertaken with representatives of companies and occupational categories involved in sport in sectors such as the organisation of activities, events or competitions; the manufacturing of sports goods; sports nutrition; construction of facilities; service provision; and the media.*

2. *When engaging with representatives of these sectors, governments should:*

a. *acknowledge them as drivers of innovation that can serve the development of sport;*

b. *make sure that they abide by the relevant regulations, for example on economic and social rights, safety, qualifications, anti-discrimination, sports integrity, corporate governance and anti-corruption;*

c. *promote endorsement of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on human rights and business;*

d. *encourage them to co-operate with the sports movement and encourage their participation in solidarity schemes when they benefit from activities conducted and financed by the sports movement.*

⁸ <https://www.irishrugby.ie/running-your-club/facilities-upgrade-scheme/>

Findings

Ireland Active⁹ is the representative body for the leisure, health and fitness sector, providing a national quality standard and a vetting service for instructors. There are over 500 facilities in Ireland, counting swimming pools, sports halls, private gyms and others. They are owned by a mix of public and private sectors. About 15,000 people are employed in the leisure and fitness industry. The total value of the sector to the economy was estimated at €435m.

Ireland Active is able to influence at a high level through having a place on the Sports Leadership Group, which consists of 15 key stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. It was established to drive implementation of the National Sports Policy 2018-27. Ireland Active was consulted in the development of the first National Swimming Strategy 2024-27, whose vision is to provide everyone in the country with an opportunity to swim. One task for Ireland Active arising from the strategy is to help develop tailored resources and toolkits to assist swimming facilities to improve accessibility and inclusion.

In the context of national legislation on equality and human rights, the business sector in Ireland is used to scrutiny on areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion and environmental sustainability. When committing to sponsorship or other partnerships with sport, businesses therefore look for compatibility in terms of values as well as marketing objectives.

There is ongoing dialogue about a potential tax rebate for companies that sponsor sport that is not professional/commercial.

Major events hosted in Ireland usually involve a significant role for the private sector. For example, contractors will contribute to the construction of a new road and railway station for the 2027 Ryder Cup.

Recommendations:

- 5.1 Introduce measures that incentivise businesses involved in sport to commit to safety, anti-discrimination, integrity, and anti-corruption standards, ensuring compliance with both national and international regulations.
- 5.2 Recognise companies actively engaged in sport to foster broader private sector involvement in promoting inclusivity and diversity in sport.
- 5.3 Explore further the potential tax rebate for companies that sponsor sport that is not professional/commercial in order to promote closer collaboration between business and the sports movement.

⁹ <https://irelandactive.ie/>

10 Article 6 – Human rights

1. *All stakeholders shall respect and protect internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms and they should observe the general framework established for their implementation in business and other activities.*

2. *The human rights due diligence approach in sport requires respect for the human rights of those involved in or exposed to sport-related activities and should therefore:*
 - a. *ensure that the human rights of athletes and everyone involved in sport are respected, protected and promoted;*

 - b. *fight arbitrariness and other abuses in sport so as to ensure full respect for the rule of law in sports activities, including access to remedies, justice and a fair trial in line with the applicable human rights standards;*

 - c. *work towards gender equality in and through sport, in particular by implementing the strategy of gender mainstreaming in sport;*

 - d. *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;*

 - e. *work towards the inclusion of a clear commitment to human rights in the respective policy and/or regulatory frameworks;*

 - f. *uphold human rights in the context of the organisation of sports events and introduce human rights considerations and objectives into the whole life cycle of major sporting events, starting with the bidding process and including planning for a lasting positive legacy;*

 - g. *further invest in the effective implementation of human rights standards in and through sport, in particular by developing governmental/non-governmental partnerships and using multistakeholder platforms to identify and promote measures to prevent and respond to human rights violations in sport.*

Findings

The Constitution of Ireland, specifically Article 40, recognises the equality of all citizens before the law and guarantees their personal rights. The Constitution forms the basis for all Irish primary and secondary legislation. In addition, as a Member State of the European Union, Ireland is obliged to comply with EU Directives relating to human rights, equality, and anti-discrimination.

Ireland has enacted a number of key pieces of legislation that explicitly protect human rights and equality across a variety of contexts, including the Equality Act 2004¹⁰. The Act also gave effect to a number of EU Directives relating to equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, established a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation and implemented the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions.

Ireland is a party to the European Convention on Human Rights and has enacted legislative recognition in the European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003¹¹.

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission¹² is a statutory body established to protect and promote human rights and equality in Ireland. IHREC works at a policy level to review the effectiveness of human rights and equality law within the State, as well as enforcing the compliance of public bodies with the Public Sector Duty to human rights and equality.

Ireland has also ratified a number of relevant UN Conventions: Ireland signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985. In so doing, Ireland committed itself to achieving equality between men and women in Ireland. Ireland signed and ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1989 and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. More recently, Ireland signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) in 2007 and ratified it in March 2018. This means that Ireland is committed to promoting and protecting the full enjoyment of all human rights by people with disabilities. As parties to these Conventions, the State submits regular reports to the UN Committees.

Consistent with this broader commitment to human rights and equality, the National Sports Policy 2018-2027 pledges to engage with international organisations, particularly at the EU, Council of Europe and UNESCO level in order to be aware of, and to influence, developments in the area of human rights and equality.

One of the core values of the National Sports Policy 2018 – 27 is the promotion of inclusion: *“Sport must be welcoming and inclusive, offering appropriate opportunities for participation and improvement to all. We will promote inclusion to deliver our desired outcomes with a focus on addressing social, disability, gender, ethnic and other gradients.”*

Reflecting the importance of international work in measuring the contribution of sport, physical education and physical activity to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sport Ireland completed an extensive piece of research and report mapping of the National Sports Policy to the UN Sustainable Development Goals in line with a commitment in the Sports Action Plan 2021-2024. This reflects the importance of international work in measuring the contribution of sport, physical education and physical activity to the UN

¹⁰ <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/24/enacted/en/html>

¹¹ <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/20/enacted/en/html>

¹² <https://www.ihrec.ie>

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and keeping the human rights dimension of sport to the forefront.

The Sports Action Plan 2024-27 commits to a number of key actions in relation to human rights, diversity and inclusion. In particular, the Department will review the current approach to the provision of disability sport to develop enhanced measures and incentives to promote more local participation opportunities. The Department will also ensure that 40% gender representation on the boards of national sports organisations is both achieved and maintained with 50% of State funding (excluding Women in Sport funding) to be withheld from National Governing Bodies and Local Sports Partnerships until such a time as 40% gender representation is achieved.

A summary of protective human rights mechanisms in sport in Ireland is in the table below.

Mechanism in place to report actions to prevent and respond to human rights violations in and through sport	
Legislation – specific for sport	
General legislation (e.g. – labour legislation)	X
National campaigns	X
Specific criteria for funding allocation	X
Implementation of Start to Talk Campaign (CoE)	
Implementation of Child Safeguarding in Sport (CoE)	
Protection of whistle-blowers	X
The right to appeal to court	X
Co-operation and articulation between public organisations in charge of sport and those responsible for human rights	
Specific actions for the sports context in National Strategies in collaboration with civil society / plans that are related to the protection of human rights	X
Specific actions for the sports context in National Strategies in collaboration with civil society / plans that are related to Prevention and Fight Against the Human Trafficking	
Specific actions for the sports context in National Strategies in collaboration with civil society / plans for the Rights of Children	X
National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights	
Other (specify) _____	

Implementation of the "All In Plus" joint EU-CoE project Promoting greater gender equality in sport	
Specific plan for gender equality in sport	X
Mandatory gender quotas for governing bodies of sports-related organisations	X
Training courses	X
Dissemination of best practices	X
Legislation	
Campaigns	X
Guidelines	X
Regular co-operation / dialogue with sports organisations	X
Specific criteria for funding allocation	X
Special maternity leave for athletes (more time)	X
Awards	X

Through school sports	X
Through media	X
Adopt codes of conduct to prevent and combat gender-based violence	X
Reporting mechanisms for gender-based violence	X
Training for sport agents	
Other (specify) _____	

Sport Ireland has a Women in Sport Policy¹³ and a range of associated programmes, with current funding of €4 million per year, separate from the mainstream budgets allocated to national federations. The policy focuses on several key areas, including leadership and governance, where funded organisations are required to have a minimum quota of 40% female representation at board level. Other areas of work include promoting active participation, increasing the visibility of women in sport—particularly in addressing the very low proportion of women’s sport featured in sports media coverage—and supporting the development of coaching and officiating opportunities for women.

The gender gap in participation between men and women has decreased over a period of years from 15% in 2007 to 3% now. A much larger gap remains in coaching, particularly at high performance level. A maternity policy for funded athletes was introduced in 2021 with support continued for 12 months after pregnancy.

Ireland’s Major International Sports Events Policy and Strategy Framework sets out a number of guiding principles for determining whether or not to bid to host major events. These principles are designed to ensure that any proposed bid aligns with national priorities, delivers tangible economic, social, and sporting benefits, and supports long-term legacy objectives. The framework also emphasises the importance of sustainability, stakeholder collaboration, and Ireland’s capacity to successfully stage world-class events.

In order to be prioritised for support, events should ensure respect for human rights in line with Ireland’s legal obligations under domestic, EU and international law.

¹³ <https://www.sportireland.ie/women-in-sport/women-in-sport-policy>

Recommendations:

- 6.1 In the planned update of the National Sports Policy, consider prioritising areas where there is known to be room for improvement, such as gender balance in coaching.
- 6.2 When updating the Governance Code for Sport, consider explicit references to human rights requirements.
- 6.3 In the planned update of the National Sports Policy, consider prioritising areas where there is known to be room for improvement, such as gender balance in coaching.
- 6.4 When updating the Governance Code for Sport, consider explicit references to human rights requirements.
- 6.5 Develop a dedicated Human Rights and Sport Action Plan to provide clear guidance to sports organisations on embedding human rights principles across all levels, with measurable targets and timelines.
- 6.6 Introduce mandatory human rights and equality training for all board members and senior staff in national sports organisations to strengthen awareness, accountability, and compliance with Ireland's obligations under domestic and international law.

11 Article 7 – Education in values through sports ethics

1. *“Sports ethics” is a positive concept that guides human behaviour. It is defined as a way of thinking and not just a way of acting. It underpins sports integrity, equality, honesty, excellence, commitment, courage, team spirit, respect for rules and laws, respect for the environment, respect for self and others and a spirit of community, tolerance and solidarity. It also includes respect for human rights and sustainability.*
2. *Sports ethics shall be promoted in all activities in sport, via relevant policies and programmes. Appropriate steps shall be taken to raise awareness of sports ethics and to provide continued learning opportunities in this sphere.*
3. *Being educated about how to choose the ethical course of action inside and outside sport is an integral part of the competences that should be acquired through sport. Practising values-based sport can empower people and teach fairness, teamwork, equality, discipline, inclusion, respect and integrity.*

Findings

Part of the vision in the National Sports Policy 2018-27 states:

“All entities in our sporting community will be highly regarded for the quality of their staff and volunteers, their standards of governance, ethics and accountability, and their spirit of collaboration including with partners beyond the sporting sector.”

Sport Ireland, which has a major role in implementing the National Sports Policy, incentivises national federations and other funded organisations to promote sporting values and ethics through a range of standards and requirements. Sport Ireland has created a template Code of Conduct, which sports bodies can adopt if they do not already have one in place. At the time of the visit, Sport Ireland was working on a Values Charter for Sport that would be applicable to the bodies it funds, and also relevant to the wider sport sector.

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)¹⁴ and Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA)¹⁵ place a significant focus on values-based, inclusive sport with the GAA having the strapline, “Where we all belong.”

One example of a relevant initiative is the Meaningful Playing Time Charter created by the Camogie Association¹⁶. Clubs that adopt the Charter commit to ensuring that all players are fully involved in training and matches throughout the season. The aim is to create a

¹⁴ <https://www.gaa.ie/>

¹⁵ <https://ladiesgaelic.ie/>

¹⁶ <https://camogie.ie/development/meaningful-playing-time-club-charter-camogie/#:~:text=The%20Club%20Playing%20Time%20Charter%20is%20an%20ethos%20or%20philosophy,has%20the%20chance%20to%20thrive.>

welcoming environment for players of all abilities and reduce the number of girls and women who drop out.

Recommendations:

7.1 Continue development and implementation of the planned Values Charter for Sport in Ireland.

7.2 Consider creating a national reporting system for ethical violations in sport, linked to awareness campaigns that encourage athletes and personnel to speak up against unethical practices.

7.3 After an appropriate period, review the effectiveness of Sport Ireland’s template Code of Conduct.

12 Article 8 – Integrity

1. *“Sport integrity” encompasses the components of personal, competitive and organisational integrity. Threats to sports integrity include criminal offences such as corruption, fraud and coercion, but also violations of statutory and disciplinary regulations and unethical behaviour. The pursuit of sport integrity should thus commit all stakeholders and:*

a. *protect all people, particularly the young, from violence, harassment and abuse, ensure the safety and security of individuals and foster respect for and protection of internationally recognised human rights, including social rights;*

b. *support fair play, which is much more than playing within the rules. Fair play incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and a sense of fellowship. It includes issues concerned with cheating, the use of unfair strategies while respecting the rules, manipulation of sports competitions and doping;*

c. *inspire a governance of sport that is compliant with the principles of transparency, integrity, democracy, development and solidarity, which should be secured by checks and balances and control mechanisms.*

2. *Sport integrity policies should rely on multistakeholder initiatives; encourage and co-operate with whistle-blowers and free media; pay attention to compliance with human rights; invest in education, prevention and awareness raising; be monitored, including through the use of remedies; and use gender and youth mainstreaming.*

Findings

Sport Ireland has implemented a Governance Code for funded sports organisations since 2019. The deadline for compliance, based on self-assessment with a public assurance statement, was set at the end of 2021 with an implementation period for newly-funded organisations.

The Code is based on five principles (broad topics):

- Leading the organisation
- Exercising control over the organisation
- Being transparent and accountable
- Working effectively
- Behaving with integrity

Requirements are proportionate, based on three levels of organisation:

- A – all-voluntary organisations, where the board members tend to carry out the operational work
- B – board governs with 1-2 professional staff to do operational work
- C – fully professional (40 or more of the 100 funded organisation)

The Governance Code will be revised as one component of the Sports Action Plan 2024-27.

About 95 out of 100 funded organisations were fully compliant as at March 2025.

Sport Ireland is a development agency, not a regulatory body, but compliance with the Governance Code is among the conditions of the investments it makes in 65 national federations, 29 Local Sports Partnerships, the Sport Ireland Institute, and other organisations. As such, the Governance Code is effectively applicable across the large majority of the voluntary sports movement in Ireland.

There is also the National Code of Conduct Template¹⁷ developed by Sport Ireland for Irish sports, which launched in August 2023. Sport Ireland partnered with representatives from the Irish sports sector, including referees and officials, to develop this template code of conduct. The initiative aims to foster a culture of respect, integrity, and fairness within the sporting community by addressing and eliminating abuse towards referees, officials, coaches, players, and all participants involved. The template outlines a set of guidelines and principles that promotes the behaviour and conduct expected from athletes, coaches, parents/guardians, supporters, referees/officials, and club members, regardless of the sporting environment.

Another area of work for Sport Ireland is helping develop safeguarding practice among funded sports bodies, providing capacity building, advocacy, training and policy templates.

Another key area of work for Sport Ireland is the development and strengthening of safeguarding practices across funded sports bodies. This may involve providing comprehensive support through capacity building initiatives, delivering targeted training programmes, offering advocacy to promote a culture of child protection and welfare, and supplying policy templates and practical guidance to assist organisations in implementing robust safeguarding frameworks. These efforts are aimed at ensuring that all sports environments are safe, inclusive, and fully compliant with national safeguarding standards.

¹⁷ <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2023-08/Sport%20Ireland%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20Template.pdf>

The Federation of Irish Sport oversees Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI)¹⁸, a not-for-profit dispute resolution service for Irish Sport offering mediation and arbitration. 64 national federations have rules to refer disputes and appeals to SDSI.

Recommendations:

8.1 Update the Governance Code for Sport, taking account of learnings from implementation since 2019, and put in place a proportionate process to monitor compliance.

8.2 Maintain Sport Ireland's focus on safeguarding, including the new workstream on adults, and explore centralised systems to reduce duplication and ease the burden on smaller organisations.

8.3 Consider creating a national reporting system for ethical violations in sport, linked to awareness campaigns that encourages athletes and personnel to speak up against unethical practices.

8.4 After an appropriate period, review the effectiveness of Sport Ireland's template Code of Conduct.

13 Article 9 – Sustainability

1. *The principle of sustainability in sport requires all activities to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, in particular:*

a. *when planning, implementing and evaluating their activities, organisers of sports activities and events should pay due consideration to sustainability, be it economic, social or environmental;*

b. *whereas the growing consumption of sporting goods can generate a positive impact on the global economy, the industry should take responsibility for developing and integrating practices that are satisfactory in social terms and are environmentally friendly;*

c. *indoor and outdoor activities should be carried out responsibly, in other words the precautionary principle (resource conservation and risk prevention) should be implemented. Owners of sports infrastructure have to act proactively to identify the effects and consequences of their facilities, avoid potential damage to nature and, where necessary, take counter- and protective measures against such risks;*

d. *the organisation of major sports events should ensure a sustainable legacy for the hosting communities with regard to their economic, social and environmental impact, in particular to balance the financial cost of the infrastructure with its post-event use and the effect on participation in sport.*

¹⁸ <https://sportdisputesolutions.ie/>

2. *All stakeholders should take responsibility to reduce their carbon footprint and pursue commitments and partnerships for climate action in recognition of the increasingly negative impact of climate change on society and on sport.*

Findings

Ireland regularly hosts major sports events, ranging from the Ryder Cup in golf (hosted previously and planned again for 2027) to international football and rugby matches attracting large crowds. In 2025 Ireland will host NFL matches for the first time and in 2030 Ireland will co-host the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup.

A new Major International Sports Events Policy and Strategy Framework, launched in 2024, identifies guiding principles in determining support for bids for events. Priorities include:

- Events that ensure an economic return
- Events that maximise investment in existing infrastructure
- Events that ensure a sporting benefit, at high-performance level and in terms of boosting participation levels
- Events that have the potential to project Ireland on the international stage
- Events that have potential to deliver on government policy objectives, such as:
 - Climate impact and sustainability
 - North-South co-operation
 - Diversity (including gender, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation)

The GAA has been running a Green Clubs Programme¹⁹ for several years, linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Focus areas include energy efficiency, water use, bio-diversity and sustainable travel. There has been a related Erasmus+ project in partnership with the national football associations from Denmark and Wales, plus a university and a professional football club, which involved collecting good practice examples from the project partners and creating a Green Goals Charter²⁰.

¹⁹ <https://www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/community-and-health/green-clubs-sustainability>

²⁰ <https://access-cc.eu/charter/>

Recommendations:

9.1 Environmental sustainability:

- Consider establishing environmental sustainability guidance and requirements for sports bodies funded by Sport Ireland
- Consider implementing grant funding programmes to make sports venues more environmentally sustainable, for example through improved insulation and installation of solar panels
- Formalise guidance on environmental sustainability for major events hosted in Ireland

9.2 Social sustainability:

- Continue to develop tailored sports programmes for specific demographic groups, such as pre-school children, older adults, immigrant communities, people in rural areas and people with disabilities, ensuring their unique needs are met.
- Collaborate with Local Sports Partnerships and other stakeholders to make sports facilities more accessible and inclusive, including adaptations for individuals with physical or cognitive impairments.

9.3 Economic sustainability:

- Seek to diversify revenue sources for sport so that the Sport Ireland Institute, national federations and other bodies in the sport ecosystem become less reliant on public funding and more economically sustainable.

14 Article 10 – The right to sport

1. *Access to sport for all is considered to be a fundamental right. All human beings have an inalienable right of access to sport in a safe environment, both inside and outside school settings, which is essential for their personal development and instrumental in the exercise of the rights to health, education, culture and participation in the life of the community.*

2. *No discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, language, religion, gender or sexual orientation, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status, shall be permitted in the access to sports facilities or to sports activities.*

3. *To safeguard and promote this right, it is necessary to:*

a. *ensure that access to the development of physical, intellectual and ethical competences through physical education and sport is guaranteed, both within the educational system and in other aspects of social life;*

- b. make sure that everyone has ample opportunities to benefit from physical education and practise sport, develop physical literacy and physical fitness, acquire fundamental movement skills and attain a level of achievement in sport which corresponds to their abilities;*
- c. 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;*
- d. ensure that all members of a local community have opportunities to take part in sport and that, where necessary, additional measures are taken aimed at enabling disadvantaged individuals or groups and people with disabilities to make effective use of such opportunities;*
- e. guarantee that local sports clubs have a suitable legal status and framework conditions to offer affordable access to sport for all.*

Findings

Sport Ireland has a specific Policy on Diversity and Inclusion in Sport²¹, published in May 2022. The policy expresses a vision for a sport sector that celebrates diversity, promotes inclusion, and is proactive in providing opportunities for lifelong participation for everyone.

Both DCCS and Sport Ireland are committed to developing a strong and diverse set of national sports federations that deliver for the sporting community in Ireland. A key focus in this regard is to assist federations to develop sustainable and effective structures to facilitate increased numbers of participants and volunteers in sport.

Through the Dormant Accounts fund, Sport Ireland received a number of applications for support from national federations to strengthen their work in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion in sport, and to support the implementation of the Sport Ireland Policy on Diversity and Inclusion in Sport.

Sport Ireland developed a Sport 4 Empowerment programme²² co-funded through Erasmus+ using sport and physical activity to foster social inclusion and enhance the wellbeing of people at risk of social exclusion.

The network of 29 Local Sports Partnerships²³, with a total workforce of around 300 people, engages communities across the country to deliver inclusive, impactful and sustainable opportunities tailored to local needs, getting Ireland more physically active, involved in sport and improving the mental and physical health of the nation.

²¹ <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2023-05/Sport%20Ireland%20Policy%20on%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20in%20Sport%20%281%29.pdf>

²² <https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics/esf-programme>

²³ <https://www.sportireland.ie/participation/local-sports-partnerships>

Target groups include those who are typically under-represented in sport and physical activity, including:

- Women and girls
- People with a disability
- Young people
- Older adults
- Disadvantaged areas
- Unemployed people
- Ethnic minorities

At the time of the visit in March 2025, 15 out of 29 Local Sports Partnerships employed a lead officer as part of this programme with the remainder to follow before the end of the year.

As an example of a local programme to encourage physical activity, we heard that in the County of Carlow, a social walking group called Wednesday Wanderers has been successful in attracting participants in a rural area. There is a small, voluntary fee to join the walks. The activity also brings social benefits.

The provision of physical education is compulsory in schools.

Ireland is one of the countries participating in the European Union–Council of Europe joint project, “Sport For All: Promoting Inclusion and Combating Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities”²⁴, which runs from 2025 to 2026. The project builds on ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive sports culture by tackling the social and systemic obstacles that continue to prevent persons with disabilities from participating fully in sport.

Recommendations:

- 10.1 Continue active involvement in Sport For All: Promoting Inclusion and Combating Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities.
- 10.2 Develop a coordinated, well-funded programme to expand opportunities for people with disabilities at all levels of sport, with clear accountability.
- 10.3 Consider increased support for Paralympics Ireland to strengthen its role and enhance para-athlete success.
- 10.4 Expand tailored sports programmes for groups such as pre-school children, older adults, immigrant communities, rural populations, and people with disabilities.
- 10.5 Work with Local Sports Partnerships to improve accessibility and inclusivity of facilities and programmes.

²⁴ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/council-europe/%E2%80%9Csport-all%E2%80%9D-european-union-and-council-europe-champion-inclusion-and-ability-over-disability_en

15 Article 11 – Building the foundations for the practice of sport

1. *All appropriate steps should be taken to develop physical literacy and physical fitness among young people, enabling them to acquire fundamental movement skills and to encourage them to practise sport, notably by:*
 - a. *ensuring that all students have access to sports, recreation and physical education programmes and facilities and that appropriate time slots are set aside for these activities;*
 - b. *ensuring the training of qualified teachers in this area in all schools;*
 - c. *ensuring that appropriate opportunities exist for continuing the practice of sport after compulsory education;*
 - d. *encouraging the development of appropriate links between schools or other educational institutions, school sports clubs and local sports clubs;*
 - e. *facilitating and developing the use of sports facilities by schools, local sports clubs and the local community;*
 - f. *encouraging an environment in which parents, teachers, coaches and leaders motivate young people to take regular physical exercise;*
 - g. *providing education in sports ethics for pupils from primary school onwards.*

Findings

Sport is very popular among children in Ireland with many participating in more than one sport. However, research indicates that a large majority of school children do not reach recommended levels of physical activity, despite school curriculum time for physical education. A range of programmes and measures have been developed that aim to increase levels of activity.

During the visit, we heard about the national Active School Flag²⁵ scheme, which is an accreditation programme for schools funded by the Department of Education and Youth that incentivises promotion of physical activity by school children by setting standards across a range of areas:

- Physical education – schools should deliver a broad and balanced curriculum
- Physical activity – schools should promote inclusive physical activity throughout the school day (not just in physical education lessons)
- Partnerships – schools should work in partnership with others (such as sports clubs) to promote a physically active school culture

²⁵ <https://activeschoolflag.ie/>

- Active School Week – schools should organise a designated week every year

In a visit to Scoil Áine, which is a primary school for girls in Dublin, we heard about innovative attempts to increase sports participation among pupils, such as having a table tennis table in the school yard, focusing on athletics relays in 2024 following Irish success in international athletics championships, and promoting skipping as an accessible, inclusive and healthy activity.

The school has partnerships with local clubs in Gaelic sports, boxing, athletics, cycling, dance and others.

School staff stressed the importance of seeking and listening to feedback from the children to ensure that activity meets their needs and interests, consistent with the Lundy Model of Child Participation²⁶. Over 80% of pupils in a survey said that they enjoyed physical education lessons and parents were also very supportive.

The visiting EPAS team was highly impressed by the enthusiasm and confidence of the young girls from the primary school who spoke about their experiences of sport.

We also received a presentation from pupils who attend Coláiste Bride secondary school in Dublin, another school that has achieved the Active School Flag accreditation. They spoke about creative ideas they had developed within a students' committee to increase levels of physical activity. One popular initiative was a "colour run", in which pupils ran or walked in the school grounds while being sprayed with multi-coloured paint.

Programmes were developed in recognition of the fact that school sport had traditionally focused on the most talented students, particularly in team sports, an approach which risks alienating pupils who preferred to be less competitive or enjoyed other types of sporting activities.

The pupils from Coláiste Bride impressed us with their enthusiasm and passion for motivating their fellow students to become more active.

In primary schools in Ireland, pupils generally stay with the same teacher all day. Teachers receive training in physical education but are not usually specialists.

In secondary schools there are qualified teachers for physical education, as for other subjects. At least one hour per week is timetabled for physical education.

We heard during the visit how the GAA and LGFA have very active school sport programmes. For example, the Gaelic Time initiative involves about 2,500 primary schools and over 140,000 children aged 6-12 participated in summer camps.

²⁶ <https://participationpeople.com/how-to-implement-the-lundy-model-of-participation-across-your-organisation-a-checklist/>

Recommendations:

- 11.1 Protect the status of physical education on the school curriculum to ensure that high quality provision by qualified teachers continues to be available to all school children.
- 11.2 Review the Active School Flag initiative and similar programmes to ensure that it continues to provide effective support and incentives to drive increases in physical activity and sport among young people.

16 Article 12 – Developing participation

1. *The practice of sport, whether for the purpose of leisure and recreation, health promotion or improving performance, shall be promoted across the whole population through the provision of appropriate facilities and programmes of all kinds and of access to qualified coaches, instructors and staff, whether volunteers or professionals.*
2. *Encouraging the provision of opportunities to participate in sport at workplaces shall be regarded as an integral part of a balanced sports policy.*

Findings

Sport Ireland’s surveys show personal exercise, swimming and running are the largest participation activities among adults. There are 65 recognised national sports federations and over 12,000 clubs, providing a broad range of opportunities for participants ranging from fully recreational to highly competitive sport.

We heard from the GAA and LGFA that they have more than 750,000 members in over 2,300 clubs, which equates to around 10% of the entire population of the country with a broad geographic spread. Members comprise both sports participants and those involved in other ways, from coaches to referees and other club volunteers.

There are campaigns designed to appeal to sections of the population who have been under-represented. For example, the “Gaelic4Mothers&Others”²⁷ initiative has helped increase recreational participation in Ladies Gaelic Football.

According to the 2022 Eurobarometer survey²⁸, 5% of the Irish population aged 15 and over participated in sport in a work setting, below the European Union average of 11%. However, the Irish population was more likely to be active in a sports club than the European average (20% in Ireland compared to 12% across the European Union) and also more likely to participate at a health or fitness centre (20% compared to 12%).

²⁷ <https://ladiesgaelic.ie/lgfa-hub/games-development/gaelic4mothersothers/>

²⁸ <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/api/deliverable/download/file?deliverableId=83628>

The provision of sport in the workplace does not appear to feature prominently in the Irish policy documents.

One challenge for many sports is demographic change. In common with most European countries, the population is aging overall (although there is a demographic “bulge” currently among teenagers). There is an ongoing population shift from rural to urban, also seen in other countries. In the specific case of Ireland, population density is declining in the west and increasing near the east coast. One consequence is that established sports infrastructure in small towns and villages in more rural areas struggles with depopulation at the same time as clubs in urban centres near the east coast lack sufficient facilities to cater for the demand.

Recommendations:

- 12.1 At a strategic level, consider how the sport sector can adapt to demographic changes in terms of facility provision, programming, coach development and in other aspects.
- 12.2 Encourage more workplaces to adopt physical activity initiatives as part of their wellness programmes by offering tax incentives or subsidies for employer-sponsored sports and fitness activities.
- 12.3 Provide guidelines and support for companies to design inclusive programmes that cater to employees of all fitness levels, promoting long-term physical and mental health benefits.

17 Article 13 – Improving performance

1. The practice of sport at higher levels shall be supported and encouraged in appropriate and specific ways. The support shall cover such areas as talent identification and counselling, the provision of suitable facilities, developing care and support for athletes using sports medicine and sports science in line with sports ethical standards, encouraging scientific coaching and providing training for coaches and others with leadership functions and helping clubs to provide appropriate structures and competitive outlets.

Findings

In Ireland, the national sports federations have lead responsibility for developing high-level sport, much of which is funded via Sport Ireland.

The majority of sports have their high-level base in Dublin, particularly at the Sport Ireland Institute²⁹ campus, but there are exceptions, such as rowing, which is located near Cork.

²⁹ <https://www.sportireland.ie/institute>

Golf, rugby union and Gaelic sports are examples of sports where high-performance activity is dispersed.

The Sport Ireland Institute campus, based on a site of over 200 hectares (520 acres), provides centralised services for Olympic and Paralympic athletes, such as training facilities with several indoor arenas, outdoor pitches, sports science and medicine and a variable environment chamber. Facilities are constantly under development with a 20-year masterplan. Athlete accommodation and a hotel are planned, which will help increase access for athletes who live beyond commuting distance from Dublin.

It is recognised that the high-performance system tends to be male dominated, especially coaching, although steps have been taken to address the imbalance. Sport Ireland funding conditions generally require national sports federations to have equal numbers of male and female athletes in supported programmes. Among athletes supported through the 2025 International Carding Scheme for those with potential to achieve success at top international level, 56% were men and 44% were women³⁰.

The Olympic Federation of Ireland³¹ is the National Olympic Committee and Paralympics Ireland³² is the National Paralympic Committee. They work in partnership with Sport Ireland and are responsible for leading the teams at the Olympic and Paralympic Games respectively, as well as promoting Olympic and Paralympic values throughout the country.

The Irish team at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris won the most medals in the country's history and was also the most numerous in terms of qualified athletes. While the Paralympic performance was highly creditable, there has been a decline in terms of medals won since the peak at London 2012.

During the visit, the evaluation team heard from GAA and LGFA about talent development programmes. There is a well-defined player pathway from schools and local clubs through to junior county squads and ultimately to elite level, for those with the requisite ability. One rare characteristic of Gaelic team sports is that elite players continue to compete for their local clubs as well as playing in representative teams. There are corresponding coach development programmes.

³⁰ https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2025-03/HP_invest_UPDATED.pdf

³¹ <https://olympics.ie/>

³² <https://paralympics.ie/>

Recommendations:

- 13.1 Consider options for increasing the number of employment opportunities for coaches,
- 13.2 Ensure that recruitment is carried out in an equitable way while taking into consideration a need for gender balance.
- 13.3 Until accommodation for athletes and coaches becomes available at the Sport Ireland Institute campus, seek ways to increase opportunities for all individuals in high-level sport regardless of their distance from Dublin.
- 13.4 Seek to diversify revenue sources for sport so that the Sport Ireland Institute, national federations and other bodies in the sport ecosystem become less reliant on public funding and more economically sustainable.

18 Article 14 – Supporting top-level and professional sport

1. *Methods of providing appropriate direct or indirect support for athletes who demonstrate exceptional sporting qualities shall be devised in order to give them opportunities to fully develop their sporting and human abilities, while ensuring full respect for their individual personality and physical and moral integrity. Such support should include aspects relating to the identification of talent, to the dual careers of athletes, to balanced education while in training institutes, and to a smooth integration into society through the development of career prospects during and after involvement in high-level sport.*
2. *The organisation and management of professionally organised sport, including by the sports entertainment industry, shall be conducted through competent and well-governed bodies, supportive of appropriate social dialogue with athletes' representatives and of the regulatory role of the relevant international governing bodies as regards ensuring harmonised rules of the game, safeguarding the integrity of sport and co-ordinating competition calendars. People engaging professionally in sport should have appropriate social status, ethical safeguards against all forms of exploitation and the enjoyment of economic and social rights.*
3. *The organisation of top-level and professional sports competitions should be in compliance with the principle of openness in sporting competitions, giving priority to sporting merit. Competition organisers should work to reconcile the needs and interests of individual/local team competitions and those of national teams.*

Findings

Government funding for high-level sport, which started ahead of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Beijing in 2008, has increased substantially in recent years and will exceed €100m

EUR over the current four-year cycle. About sixteen sports are supported for elite programmes.

We visited the Sport Ireland Institute and saw the impressive training centre that provides services to the funded programmes. Facilities include indoor arenas for football, rugby, gymnastics, athletics, a swimming pool and others. National federations have priority access but schools and clubs are able to hire the facilities in the evenings.

Sport Ireland has a performance life skills programme for funded athletes. One objective is to enable competitive athletes to continue in their education while training.

At the 2024 Games, about 72% of Olympic athletes and 60% of Paralympic athletes in Ireland were university graduates with 20% being current students. Seven universities so far have gained accreditation as being athlete-friendly with arrangements such as flexibility in academic learning and appointed co-ordinators for athletes to contact.

Other relevant activity includes funding for athlete career transition with 50% of the financial support for competing athletes remaining available immediately after retirement and access to support services for three years.

We heard during the visit that Paralympics Ireland is making a case for increased public funding. One challenge is a lack of clarity on the overall level of support for disability sport in Ireland versus that of women in sport.

In particular, there is insufficient support for young people with a disability to become involved in sport and progress through the levels from community to club, leading up to top-level athlete programmes. The elite segment is funded but not the pathway. There is also a shortage of qualified coaches for disability sport and coaches who have a disability themselves. Barriers to participating and competing for athletes with a disability include increased costs, transport challenges, a shortage of suitable facilities, plus the need for support from family and coaches, among others.

Furthermore, Gaelic sports, which are a unique and prominent feature of sport and cultural life in Ireland (and included on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity³³) are fully amateur. Elite players play for the club close to where they were born, without a transfer system. There are commercial opportunities for a few, high-profile players with the biggest matches at Croke Park in Dublin attended by over 80,000 spectators and broadcast on major channels. The amateur-only model, without transfers between clubs, is unusual but may suit the specific characteristics of Gaelic sports, with a strong focus on community. A consultation on this matter is underway.

³³ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/hurling-01263>

Recommendations:

- 14.1 Enhance the dual career system by expanding partnerships between sports bodies, educational institutions, and private sector employers.
- 14.2 Develop mentorship and career counselling programmes for athletes to ensure seamless integration into society post-retirement, focusing on transferable skills and career development opportunities.
- 14.3 Increase funding to support athletes pursuing higher education while training at elite levels.
- 14.4 Increase targeted funding for para sport to strengthen athlete pathways from grassroots to elite levels, addressing gaps in community participation, coaching development, and accessible facilities to ensure sustained success at Paralympic level
- 14.5 Seek appropriate collaboration with the newly formed Irish Athletes Alliance and ensure that professional athletes' rights are upheld, including protections against exploitation, fair compensation, and equitable representation in decision-making processes.

19 Article 15 – Facilities and activities

1. *Since participation in sport is dependent in part on the extent, the variety and the accessibility of facilities, their overall planning should be a matter for the public authorities. The range of facilities to be provided should take account of the public and private facilities which are already available. Those responsible should take account of national, regional and local requirements, and take measures designed to ensure good management and the safe and full use of facilities.*

2. *Appropriate steps should be taken by the owners of sports facilities to enable persons from disadvantaged groups, including persons with physical or mental disabilities, to have access to such facilities.*

3. *A clear framework should be provided, and appropriate steps should be taken, to empower event organisers and owners of sporting facilities to fulfil their safety and security obligations effectively.*

Findings

Ireland has over 500 sports facilities, provided through a mix of public and private sector ownership and management. Municipal facilities, such as swimming pools and sports halls, are often managed by third-party operators under contract with local authorities. Many facilities are multi-use, accommodating diverse users throughout the week—for example, offering school swimming lessons during daytime hours, family open sessions at weekends, and access for competitive sports clubs during mornings or evenings. Specific sessions are

sometimes reserved for under-represented groups, such as older adults, women-only classes, or individuals with disabilities, as part of efforts to promote inclusion.

Despite these initiatives, barriers to participation for under-represented groups remain a concern, mirroring challenges seen in many other European countries. Affordability, transport access, lack of awareness about available services, and limited scheduling flexibility can prevent equitable use of facilities.

Ireland Active, the representative body for the leisure industry, is developing a comprehensive database of sports facilities and recreational spaces—including outdoor trails and natural environment areas—which will enable authorities to identify geographic or demographic gaps in provision and inform future investment decisions.

On safety and security, large sporting events in Ireland are regulated by a licensing system for gatherings exceeding 5,000 spectators. Licences are issued by local authorities in collaboration with An Garda Síochána (the national police service) and the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration. Ireland complies with the Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No. 218), though ratification of the convention remains under the remit of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.

Recommendations:

- 15.1 Enhance accessibility by expanding inclusive programming, subsidised access, and transport solutions for under-represented groups.
- 15.2 Fast-track a national facilities database and develop an investment strategy to address geographic and demographic gaps.
- 15.3 Ratify CETS No. 218 and issue clear safety and security guidelines for large sports events.
- 15.4 Promote sustainable facility management through incentives for energy-efficient upgrades and environmentally friendly operations.

20 Article 16 – Human resources

1. *The development, by appropriate bodies, of training courses leading to diplomas and qualifications covering all aspects of sport, including its compliance with human rights, ethics, integrity and sustainability, shall be encouraged. Such courses should be appropriate to the needs of participants of all backgrounds involved in different kinds and levels of sport and designed for those working both voluntarily and professionally (instructors, coaches, managers, officials, doctors, safety officers, architects, engineers, child safeguarding officers, etc.).*

2. *Those involved in the leadership or supervision of sports activities should have appropriate qualifications, with particular emphasis on the protection of ethical values,*

integrity and human rights, including the protection of the human dignity, safety and health of the people in their charge.

3. Special attention should be paid to volunteering. Voluntary personnel, if given appropriate training and supervision, can make an invaluable contribution to the development of sport as a whole and encourage the participation of everyone in the practice and organisation of sports activities. The recruitment, training and retention of volunteers should be encouraged through the recognition of voluntary work, support for the holistic training of volunteer coaches and other measures.

Findings

Sport Ireland put in place a Volunteering in Sport Policy³⁴ in 2024, focusing on recruitment and retention, recognition and diversifying the volunteer base. The volunteering rate in Ireland is about 12%, which is believed to be high, although it dipped as a result of the pandemic.

Several speakers during the visit highlighted the fact that coaching in Ireland is an almost entirely voluntary sector. There is a shortage of opportunities for career progression and for paid employment. In addition, coaching at higher levels is heavily male dominated.

National federations have placed considerable emphasis in recent years on safeguarding programmes, including training and reporting systems. It is recognised as essential work but requires significant investment in financial resources and senior staff time.

The GAA and LGFA offer extensive training for their volunteer network with over 100 modules available for club leaders, both in-person and online. There is an annual volunteer conference which attracts about 300 people. A new volunteer strategy will focus on recruitment and retention, plus volunteer recognition.

Recruitment, training and retention of referees is another priority for Gaelic sports. Related initiatives have included a referee respect day and research on the wellbeing of referees.

Recommendations:

- 16.1 Consider options for increasing the number of employment opportunities for coaches, ensuring that recruitment is carried out in an equitable way.
- 16.2 Consider introducing a national framework for coaching and sports leadership qualifications to standardise training across all sports federations.
- 16.3 Ensure that this framework emphasises ethics, human rights, integrity, sustainability, and child safeguarding, ensuring consistency in education for both professionals and volunteers.

³⁴ https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2024-01/si-policy-on-volunteering-in-sport_english.pdf

21 Article 17 – Information and research

1. *Suitable structures and means for the collection and dissemination of pertinent information on sport at local, national and international levels should be maintained to the most up-to-date standards and developed further in line with relevant technological advances. This should notably include taking due account of digitisation and other important technological developments and of their use and application in the sporting context.*

2. *Scientific research into all aspects of sport, including its positive and negative effects on health, issues of ethics and governance, new trends and other central underlying principles, shall be further promoted and supported. Arrangements shall be made for disseminating and exchanging such information and the results of such research at the most appropriate level – locally, regionally, nationally or internationally – including as a basis for the further development of informed sports policies.*

Findings

A number of universities in Ireland are active across multiple, complementary sport-related research fields.

During the visit, we heard from a group of Irish academics who highlighted that universities in Ireland deliver high-quality research in a broad range of disciplines. However, they noted that stronger collaboration with sports bodies and government departments could help translate this research into meaningful change—potentially through the creation of a national platform to connect stakeholders.

Extensive research has already been conducted to understand barriers to physical activity and sport among marginalised groups, including people with a disability, Roma and Travellers, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Holistic policy changes could help address these challenges, such as tackling the high costs of childcare and improving transport options in rural areas.

Sports bodies themselves can also play a role in reducing barriers by increasing the visibility of marginalised groups in leadership positions and placing greater emphasis on the social aspects of sport to ensure that all participants feel welcome and included.

Ireland's significant levels of immigration in recent years present both opportunities and challenges for sport. Participation is likely to grow in sports that resonate with immigrant communities, such as cricket. However, survey findings indicate that teenagers with an immigrant background are currently less likely to engage in a range of sports.

Irish academics are also well represented in international bodies and initiatives, such as the UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab and various EU projects.

Sport Ireland, which has a statutory function to conduct research, adopted a research strategy for 2021–2027 to strengthen connections between the sport sector, universities, and enterprise. The agency provides research grants and has developed participation tracker studies for adults and young people, as well as funding evaluation projects in collaboration with European partners.

One notable project, conducted in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University in the UK, mapped Ireland’s National Sports Policy against the UN Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting the contribution of sport to broader societal development

Recommendations:

- 17.1 Establish a national sport research platform to strengthen collaboration between universities, sports bodies, and government departments, ensuring research informs policy and practice.
- 17.3 Prioritise research on barriers to participation for marginalised groups, including people with disabilities, Roma and Travellers, and immigrant communities, with a focus on actionable solutions.
- 17.2 Continue to develop international collaboration between academics in Ireland and in other countries, taking advantage of potential opportunities such as Ireland’s forthcoming Presidency of the European Union and the hosting of major events.

22 Article 18 – Finance

1. *Appropriate support and resources from public funds at national, regional and local levels, including, where appropriate, lottery contributions, adequate public budget provisions, tax exemptions, the lending of premises, etc. shall be made available for the fulfilment of the aims of this Charter.*

2. *Mixed public and private financial support for sport should be encouraged, including the capacity of the sports sector itself to generate and allocate appropriate resources for its further development, both in terms of its social and its high-level aspects.*

3. *Public measures of support for the organisation of sporting events should be granted in the light of the relevant environmental standards and sustainable economic and social benefits that such events can achieve, to realise the positive potential of sporting events and increase public acceptance.*

Findings

Ireland's 2025 sports budget surpasses expectations, with total funding exceeding €230 million, comprising €124.3 million in current funding and €106.4 million in capital funding. This marks a significant milestone, achieving the National Sports Policy's goal of doubling investment to over €220 million by 2027, two years ahead of schedule.

The majority of public funding comes from central government, primarily managed by Sport Ireland. Key funding streams include:

- Sport Ireland NGB (Core) Investment
- Sport Ireland High Performance Investment
- Sport Ireland Women in Sport
- Community Sports Facilities Allocations (2024)
- Dormant Accounts Fund

Local authorities also contribute, for example through subsidies enabling school swimming outings. In response to record investment, Sport Ireland has announced the largest Core investment package to date, supporting National Governing Bodies, the Local Sports Partnerships network, a new Disability in Sport stream, and the appointment of a Disability in Sport Lead. Meanwhile, the Community Sport Facilities Fund has been significantly expanded, with substantial grants allocated for community sports infrastructure

Recommendations:

- 18.1 Seek to diversify revenue sources for sport so that the Sport Ireland Institute, national federations and other bodies in the sport ecosystem become less reliant on public funding and more economically sustainable.
- 18.2 Consider implementing the tax credit scheme for sports facilities that has been under discussion.
- 18.3 Consider establishing environmental sustainability guidance and requirements for sports bodies funded by Sport Ireland.

23 Article 19 – Domestic and international co-operation

1. *Appropriate structures for the proper coordination of the development and promotion of sport between the various stakeholders should be put in place where they do not already exist at national, regional and local levels to achieve the aims of this Charter, thus ensuring that sport is a structural element of the well-being of our society.*

2. *International co-operation at both global and continental levels is also necessary for the fulfilment of the aims of this Charter. This can be achieved through the exchange of good practice, education programmes, capacity development, advocacy, pledges, as well as indicators and other monitoring and implementation tools.*

Findings

As a member of the European Union, Ireland actively contributes to shaping EU sports policy and initiatives. It participates in the Council Working Party on Sport, which convenes approximately every month to discuss developments in European sports policy, governance, and cooperation. Ireland also sends delegates to the annual European Sports Forum and takes part in peer-learning activities, workshops, and conferences across Europe, enabling the exchange of knowledge and best practices on issues such as inclusion, physical activity promotion, and good governance in sport.

Through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland engages bilaterally with other countries to foster international collaboration in sport. These relationships often focus on major events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games and include agreements with countries like Cuba and France to facilitate knowledge sharing, training exchanges, and mutual support for high-performance athletes and coaches.

Irish organisations have been proactive participants in Erasmus+ Sport projects, contributing to innovative initiatives that promote social inclusion, volunteering, gender equality, and the use of sport as a tool for education and health improvement. These EU-funded projects have enabled Irish sports bodies to develop transnational partnerships and benefit from European expertise in areas such as safeguarding and anti-doping.

Ireland is set to hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2026, which will provide an important platform to advance its work in sports diplomacy. This period presents a strategic opportunity to lead European discussions on key priorities such as equality, sustainability, and the role of sport in delivering on the EU's broader social and health objectives.

Recommendations:

- 19.1 Consider opportunities for increasing international collaboration arising from Ireland holding the Presidency of the European Union and in relation to hosting major events.
- 19.2 Review the composition and functioning of the Sports Leadership Group as one way of ensuring that good co-ordination continues between the different authorities and delivery bodies in Irish sport.
- 19.3 Promote deeper collaboration with international sports organisations, focusing on sharing best practices and implementing education programmes that align with global and continental objectives.
- 19.4 Strengthen partnerships with global entities such as the Council of Europe, EU, and United Nations bodies to enhance Ireland's influence and contribution to international sports development.

24 Article 20 – Support and follow-up to the implementation of the Charter

1. *The Council of Europe and other international organisations should be encouraged to use sport as a vehicle to promote values and to mainstream sport in strategies and action plans.*
2. *To facilitate the promotion and the implementation of this Charter, relevant stakeholders should be invited to pledge for the implementation of the Charter in their policies, strategies and programmes.*
3. *At European level, it is important to review progress and support the implementation of the Charter, in particular to guarantee the positive impact of sport on health, inclusion and education, to maximise its potential to promote a dynamic civil society as well as a culture of human rights, the rule of law, democratic governance and sustainability, and to fight threats to sports integrity. The Council of Europe’s Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport should be used to assess and promote progress in the implementation of the Charter, including by:*
 - a. *facilitating the exchange of information and good practices;*
 - b. *holding thematic exchanges on issues pertaining to the Charter;*
 - c. *collecting and publishing information to monitor the implementation of the Charter;*
 - d. *supporting the promotion and implementation of the Charter through regular multilateral and country-specific activities.*

Findings

Ireland became a member of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) in 2024, marking an important step in strengthening its engagement with the Council of Europe’s work on promoting human rights, democracy, and ethical standards in sport. While Ireland’s National Sports Policy 2018–2027 acknowledges the role of the Council of Europe in shaping good governance and inclusion in sport, there has so far been limited dissemination of the European Sports Charter (ESC) at national level. The ESC has not yet been widely shared through print materials or prominently featured on national websites, which limits its visibility among sports stakeholders.

Nevertheless, during our visit to Ireland, it was encouraging to see that many of the invited participants had taken the time to read the ESC in preparation for discussions. Their familiarity with its principles and content demonstrates a willingness within the sector to engage with European standards and to align national practices with the Charter’s values. This provides a strong foundation for future work to embed the ESC more systematically into Ireland’s sports policies and strategies

Recommendations:

- 20.1 Continue Ireland's active participation in EPAS to exchange best practices, monitor progress, and support the promotion of the European Sports Charter principles through dedicated multilateral and country-specific activities.
- 20.2 Consider how to continue to take account of the provisions of the European Sports Charter in the revised National Sports Policy.
- 20.3 Seek to increase awareness and understanding of the European Sports Charter among all stakeholders in Irish sport, including grassroots organisations and policymakers, by integrating its principles more explicitly into strategies, programmes, and training initiatives across sectors.

C. Summary of findings and recommendations

Based on the questionnaire, documents and other information provided by the hosts and gathered during the visit, the evaluation team is of the opinion that the Irish government has implemented the values of the European Sports Charter to an impressive degree within their policies and practices. Ireland seeks to ensure that every individual can participate in sport throughout their lives. Starting at schools, all young people receive physical education instruction, with access to opportunities to develop physical literacy, physical fitness, and fundamental movement skills.

There is significant focus on inclusive sport in Ireland, with recognition that more needs to be done. Individuals have the opportunity to enhance their performance in sport beyond recreational purposes, achieving personal excellence in an ethical, fair, and responsible manner across a full range of sports, including some which play an important cultural role. The growing investment by the Irish government and sport movement in top-level sport and major events is particularly noteworthy.

Ireland is also committed to protecting and developing values-based sport, which is essential for maximising the individual and social benefits of sport. This commitment includes protecting the human rights of those involved in or exposed to sport-related activities and promoting ethical conduct and behaviour among all participants. Measures are in place to protect the integrity of sports organisations, competitions, and participants.

While Ireland demonstrates strong policies and practices in sports governance, the review identified several areas for improvement:

Preparation should begin for the next National Sports Policy (2027), with a review of achievements and gaps in the current strategy and broad stakeholder consultation. The updated policy could place greater emphasis on inclusion for people with disabilities, rural populations, immigrant communities, older adults, and address gender imbalance in coaching.

Sustainability in sport should remain a priority. Environmental measures could include guidance and grants to make venues more energy efficient and standards for major events. Social sustainability requires expanding tailored programmes for under-represented groups and developing a coordinated pathway for athletes with disabilities, supported by increased funding for Paralympics Ireland. Economic sustainability could focus on diversifying revenue streams and exploring tax incentives for companies sponsoring grassroots sport.

Governance and integrity efforts should include updating the Governance Code, maintaining a strong safeguarding focus, and introducing a national reporting system for ethical violations. Expanding equitable employment opportunities in coaching would strengthen capacity across the sector.

Finally, Ireland should continue progressing towards ratification of the Council of Europe Conventions on Sports Competitions Manipulation (CETS No. 215) and Safety and Security at Sports Events (CETS No. 218), reinforcing its alignment with European standards

D. Appendices

25 Appendix I - Act on Sports

The Irish government maintains the electronic Irish Statute Book³⁵.



Sport Ireland Act
2015.pdf

³⁵ <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/>

Appendix II - Sports Policy



National Sports
Policy 2018-27.pdf

Appendix III - Implementation Team

The implementation exercise on the ESC was co-organised by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) of the Council of Europe and the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport (DCCS).

Composition of the team:

1. Alexandre Husting (Luxembourg) - Chair of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport of the Council of Europe (EPAS) and Chair of the visit
2. Antonio Parrilla (Italy) - Member of the EPAS Governing Board
3. Charlotte Girard Fabre - Secretary General & CEO IFSO - Chair of the EPAS Consultative Committee
4. Rowland Jack (I Trust Sport) – Rapporteur of the visit

For the Council of Europe/EPAS:

1. Sophie Kwasny (EPAS Executive Secretary)
2. Cassandra Mactavish (EPAS Senior Project Officer)

26 Appendix IV - Programme

Monday 24 March 2025

8:45 – 9:00	Team to make way from Iveagh Garden Hotel (D02 Y282)	Walk through Stephens Green.
9:00 - 10:00	<p>Departmental Meeting Ciarán Shanley, Deirdre Bulman, Mark Reidy, Niall O'Brien (Sports Policy) Donal Hannigan, Major Events Colin O'Hehir, Health <i>ESC Article 3 Public authorities, ESC Article 19 Domestic and International co-operation etc</i></p>	<p>23 Kildare St D02 TD30</p>
10:00 - 10:45	Transfer from City Centre to Sport Ireland Campus	Taxi
10:45 - 12:00	<p>Sport Ireland Meeting Dr Úna May, CEO of Sport Ireland, welcome and introductions Presentations from the following: Nora Stapleton, Women in Sport Lead Helen McHugh, Director of Integrity and Ethics <i>ESC Article 6 Human rights + ESC Article 10 The right to sport (women in sport, disability)</i> Helen McHugh, Director of Integrity and Ethics <i>ESC Article 7 Education in values through sports ethics</i> Colm McGinty, Director of Governance, Risk, Compliance and Strategy Sinéad Gordon, Director of Governance & Strategy <i>ESC Article 8 Integrity (good governance)</i> Louise Burke, Director of Participation <i>ESC Article 12 Developing participation</i> <i>ESC Article 16 Human resources (volunteerism)</i> Benny Cullen, Director of Research & Innovation <i>ESC Article 17 Information and research</i></p>	<p>Venue: Boardroom, Sport Ireland Institute, Sport Ireland Campus. D15 Y52H</p>

12:00-12:30	Lunch Paul McDermott, Director of High Performance <i>ESC Article 13 Improving Performance</i> <i>ESC Article 14 Supporting top level and professional sport</i>	Lunch in Sport Ireland Institute (SII) Boardroom
12:30-13:00	Tour of SII from Liam Harbison , Director of Sport Ireland Institute and Paul McDermott , Director of High Performance Eoin Rheinisch – walkthrough on dual- careers/athlete perspective <i>ESC Article 13 Improving Performance</i> <i>ESC Article 14 Supporting Top Level Sport</i> <i>ESC Article 15 Facilities and Activities</i>	Sport Ireland Institute
13:00-13:10	Walk to NIA, IRFU Entrance	
13:10-13:50	Tour from Michael Murray , COO Sport Ireland Campus Walkthrough with Tony Lawless , Director of Campus Development <i>ESC Article 15 Facilities and Activities</i>	National Indoor Arena (NIA)
13:50-14:00	Walk to Irish Sport HQ for afternoon meetings	Irish Sport HQ
14:00-15:00	Peter Sharrard , CEO OFI and Steven McNamara , CEO Paralympics Ireland <i>ESC Article 8 Integrity</i> <i>ESC Article 10 The right to sport</i> <i>ESC Article 13 Improving performance</i> <i>ESC Article 14 Supporting top-level and professional sport</i>	Irish Sport HQ
15:00-15:30	Mary O'Connor , CEO Federation of Irish Sport	Irish Sport HQ
15:30-16:30	National Governing Bodies of Sport and Sporting Sector - Ciaran Gallagher , CEO Gymnastics Ireland - Michelle Carpenter , CEO Rowing Ireland - Moira Aston , CEO Canoeing Ireland - Thomas McDermott , Head of Sport and Recreation, Active South Dublin <i>ESC Article 4 The sports movement</i> <i>ESC Article 5 Corporate and professional sectors</i> <i>ESC Article 10 The right to sport</i>	Irish Sport HQ
16:30-17:00	Karl Dunne , CEO Ireland Active <i>ESC Article 4 The sports movement</i> <i>ESC Article 5 Corporate and professional sectors</i> <i>ESC Article 10 The right to sport</i>	
End of Day	Transfer back to Iveagh Garden Hotel	Taxi

Tuesday 25 March 2025

8:30 - 9:15	Collection from Iveagh hotel and transfer to School	Taxi (30-60 mins)
9:15 - 11:15	<p>School Visit and Education (see also detailed itinerary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of Active Schools Flag initiative - Site visit to Scoil Áine (<i>Skull Awn-ya</i>) <p><i>ESC Article 10 The right to sport</i> <i>ESC Article 11 Building the foundations for the practice of sport</i> <i>ESC Article 12 Developing participation</i> <i>ESC Article 15 Facilities and activities</i></p> <p>Niamh Cuthbert (<i>Principal</i>) Caitriona Cosgrave (<i>ASF Coordinator</i>) Karen Cotter (<i>ASF, National Coordinator</i>) Brian Kelly (<i>Primary Dev. Officer</i>) Carol O Donnell (<i>Post Primary Dev. Officer</i>) Eileen O Sullivan (<i>D/Edu, Primary Inspector and ASF Steering Committee Member</i>)</p>	Scoil Áine GNS, Raheny (primary school) D05 PD34
11:15 - 11:45	Transfer to Croke Park	Taxi (~20 mins)
11:45 - 14:30	<p>Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) (see also detailed itinerary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work of the GAA/LGFA/Camogie Association - Coach and Player Development - Playing Officials - Healthy Clubs and Inclusion - Tour of Croke Park - GAA Museum - Player Pathway Expo - Demographic Information - Working Lunch <p>Tom Ryan (GAA DG), Jarlath Burns (GAA President), Charlie Harrison, Colin Regan, Niamh McCoy, Alan Milton, Teresa Rehill, Joan Kinsella, Shane Flanagan, Ruari Harvey, Peter Horgan, Cian Murphy and others.</p> <p><i>Various Articles Including: 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19.</i></p>	Croke Park D03 P6K7
14:30-15:00	Transfer to 23 Kildare St	Taxi (~30 mins)
15:00-15:30	<p>Journalist – Rob Hartnett, CEO Sport for Business</p> <p><i>ESC Article 5 – Corporate and Professional Sectors</i></p>	23 Kildare St D02 TD30

15:30-15:45	<i>Break/Mini Debrief</i>	
16:00 (Indicative)	Ministerial Photo – Charlie McConologue , Minister of State for Sport	23 Kildare St
~15:00-17:00	Ministerial Photo – Patrick O'Donovan , Minister for Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport,	23 Kildare St
15:45-16:45	Catherine Carty , UNESCO Chair Manager, Munster Technological University (MTU) Catherine Woods , Chair of Physical Activity and Health, University of Limerick Ross Neville , Lecturer/Assistant Professor School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, University College Dublin (4:15pm, dialing in) <i>ESC Article 14 – Supporting Top Level and Professional Sport</i> <i>ESC Article 17 – Information and Research</i> <i>ESC Article 19 – Domestic and International Co-Operation</i>	23 Kildare St
16:45 –17:15	Debrief	
Evening	Transfer back to hotel	

Acknowledgements

The EPAS team was very grateful for the exceptional preparation and organisation of the visit by the Irish authorities. We were able to achieve a great deal in the two-day schedule. In particular, we would like to thank Deirdre Bulman and Mark Reidy at DCCS for their work on the visit.

We found all of the participants in the visit from various Irish sporting bodies and other organisations to be expert and enthusiastic about their areas of responsibility, and also knowledgeable about the ESC. In fact, some information was provided on all 20 of the Articles in the ESC during the two days, which is rarely managed.