



## **Conference on Integrity in Sport**

**(6-7 December 2021)**

Organised by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)  
of the Council of Europe and the Italian Department for Sport  
within the framework of the Italian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe

### **Session 2 – Manipulation of sports competitions**

#### **Intervention by Sophie Kwasny, Head of the Sport Division**

It is a great honour for me to participate in this Conference. It is also a great pleasure, even if joining you remotely from Strasbourg, which I regret.

I would like to thank the Italian Department for Sport and the Italian presidency of the Council of Europe, together with the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport - EPAS – and my colleagues for organising this Conference on Integrity in Sport.

This second session of the Conference focuses on the manipulation of sports competitions, and most specifically the Macolin Convention.

The conference's factsheet spells out that "the integrity conference will provide an opportunity to address the key topic of information sharing and data protection under the Macolin Convention" which is an essential aspect of the effectiveness of the fight against the Manipulation of sports competitions.

But before we move to the specifics, let me recall the broader picture, and why today's discussion is essential.

In doing so, I would like to start by recalling:

- the uniqueness of the Macolin Convention
- the global dimension of the challenge, and of the needed response
- and having a forward-look at what awaits us, and what is expected from each of us.

I will thus end with a prospective look towards the future, but before that, it is important to take stock of where we are today.

Today, we are 7 years away from the adoption and opening for signature of the Macolin Convention. 7 years have passed, and this ground-breaking instrument only counts 7 Parties. I want to commend them as they are the front runners of this and are now stirring the work of its Committee: Greece, Italy, Moldova, Portugal, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine.

Aside those 7 countries that have ratified the Convention, over 30 others have signed it. This represents a Group of nearly 40 countries, engaged in the fight against the manipulation of sport competitions, inspired by the Convention and getting ready to seize the potential of this unique international legal framework.

### Unique

The Macolin Convention is the only international legally binding framework specifically targeting the manipulation of sports competitions.

It provides a common legal framework for efficient international co-operation, requesting public authorities to co-operate with sports organisations, betting operators and competition organisers to prevent, detect and punish the manipulation of sports competitions.

Certain important aspects of corruption in sport are covered by international conventions on corruption and organised crime, but unlike the Macolin Convention, these international legal instruments do not specifically deal with cases involving manipulation of sports competitions, which may occur outside any transnational crime network and without any acts falling within the definition of corruption having been committed.

The Convention promotes a risk- and evidence-based approach. It allows commonly agreed standards and principles to be set in order to prevent, detect and sanction the manipulation of sports competitions.

Let me pick two specific cornerstones of the Convention, there are many others:

- The national platforms (article 13) - this is the Macolin spirit: bringing together under one roof, in an atmosphere of cooperation and trust, the key stakeholders: public authorities, the sport movement and sports betting operators. This platform serves as information hub or framework of exchange, and it also stirs the national policies.

Dialogue and cooperation within each country, that is within each national platform – but also between countries are vital to achieve common objectives.

- Data protection: information sharing is at the heart of the fight against the manipulation of sport competitions. And, this information sharing is required to take place between wide variety of entities (public authorities, online betting operators, sports organisations at national, federal and international levels, and competition organisers). We will hear more on this specific topic in the panel discussion, but the existence in the Convention of a specific provision on data protection is both vital and highly valuable, when what is at stake is not only information sharing between stakeholders at national level, but also between countries. The phenomenon knows no national frontiers, no regional frontiers either, and needs to be tackled in a consistent and coordinated manner at global level.

### **A Global response to a global challenge**

The manipulation of sports competitions has the potential to affect all sports, but it also has the potential to affect all countries. It constitutes a worldwide threat to the integrity of sport and the latest trends and figures confirm that global dimension.

As the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe underlined it in his opening address, The Macolin Convention was made in Europe, but it was made for the world and is wide open to it: it proposes a common legal framework for efficient international co-operation that can respond effectively to this global threat. The phenomenon is global – an international instrument created to tackle it could only be effective if truly global and allowing the participation of all.

Very pleased to see that out of the 30 countries that have signed the Convention, Australia and more recently, Morocco have decided to join the Macolin community and seize the potential of the Convention.

And if we evidently need more countries to join, let me highlight an essential feature of the work of the Council of Europe: making the Macolin Convention the reference around the world, for countries to develop their national capacities, to adopt legislation inspired by the Convention, to set-up platforms. We are for instance currently working with Liberia in enhancing the applicable legal framework. This targeted work, carried out on the ground directly with the front-line actors is possible thanks to financial contributions received under our Keep Crime out of Sports project (KCOOS+). It enables us to cooperate with governments, in enhancing their national legislation, or to cooperate with the sport movement – for instance with the instrumental action of the IOC, in raising the awareness of national olympic committees on the Convention and its tools. We are also working with lotteries and actors of the betting industry, as well as with law enforcement, and I am very pleased that key law enforcement actors are here today to speak about their work and the importance of the Convention.

Another recent essential step forward: the formalisation of the Group of Copenhagen as an Advisory Group to the Follow-up Committee of the Convention. Corentin Segalen, Chair of the Group of Copenhagen will provide more details on the work of the Group but I would like to share my take on the work of this 'new' Group and how it will continue to expand. I had the pleasure to participate in the first meeting of this new Edition of the Group of Copenhagen which was held just two weeks ago. I was amazed by the broad participation from all regions of the world, by the dynamic contributions of the participants and their strong commitment to the Convention. What I see as an asset of this Group: new rules of procedure: membership for any country that has signed the Convention: some are still missing: Malta, Sweden, Turkey: while very active at operational level.

### **Why is today's discussion essential?**

We are at a turning point:

- Just ten years after the adoption of the first legal instrument on the promotion of the integrity of sport against manipulation of results, notably match-fixing (Recommendation adopted by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers on 28 September 2011)
- Stakes are high, the magnitude of the problem continues to strike us: urgent need to act, and increased willingness of several countries to move forward.

The train has now left the station: the Follow-up Committee has started its work, with a first meeting held a year ago, and two other meetings held this year, with fast progress being made.

The 7 Parties to the Convention have started stirring the work of the Committee, they have set the Committee's priorities for the 4 years to come:

- increase membership and ratifications of the Convention;
- support the implementation of the provisions and principles of the Convention (establishment of a monitoring mechanism and development of guidance to inform the application of the Convention);
- strengthen education and cooperation mechanisms at the national and international levels.

The Follow-up Committee has already adopted the list of sport organisations to be covered by the Convention

Faithful to the spirit of cooperation of the Convention, they have granted observer status to 5 organisations: the IOC, Interpol, GLMS, FIFA and UEFA, to ensure that multistakeholder richness is provided in the work of the Committee.

The role of this Committee, and its work, is essential and as more countries will ratify the Convention, the convention's implementation will continue to strengthen and expand.

### **To Conclude**

We all have a common objective and have a role to play in protecting the integrity of sport and securing fair and equal competitions. As an intergovernmental organisation, the Council of Europe has delivered a unique and powerful instrument to tackle the manipulation of sport competitions, which we continue to nurture, to support and to promote, accompanying its expansion and the work of its Committee.

But the value and benefits of this Treaty can only materialise with implementation, cooperation and promotion. We all have our role to play in protecting the beauty and magic of sport, and I am convinced that in the years to come, not too far away from now, the Convention's benefits will be eagerly seized in all regions of the world, starting by Europe, inspired by the example of Italy.

Thank you for your attention.