

CONFERENCE

PROMOTING SAFETY, INTEGRITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IN SPORT

Organised by the Parliamentary Assembly
of the Council of Europe
and the Hellenic Parliament

Athens, Greece,
4-5 November 2024
Hellenic Parliament
Senate Hall



CONFERENCE REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

I. VALUING SPORT

- a. Sport at its best:
Sport benefits for individuals and society
- b. The worst in sport
Human rights violations
Breaches to sport integrity and ethics
- c. Reasons why threats are not effectively addressed

II. DEFENDING VALUES IN AND THROUGH SPORT

- a. Embedding human rights and good governance in sport
- b. Investing in prevention and protection
- c. Enhancing accountability
- d. Achieving effective multistakeholder cooperation

I. VALUING SPORT

Sport at its best

Sport brings multiple benefits to individuals and society

At its best, sport boosts **personal well-being and social development**. Physical exercise is good for the mind, body and spirit. Through sport, children can learn healthy habits, self-discipline, teamwork and respect for diversity. They socialise, increase their self-esteem and gain problem-solving and leadership skills. The benefits of sport are even more important for people with disabilities, people who need to overcome trauma and socially excluded people. Sport can also boost sustainable development and economic growth. It is a source of joy but also teaches to deal with frustration.

The worst in sport

Sport mirrors society, including its darkest side.

Threats to sport include:

- Physical, psychological and sexual violence
- Gender-based violence
- Trafficking in human beings
- Discrimination, gender imbalance
- Hate speech and hate crimes
- Manipulation of sports competitions
- Illegal betting
- Corruption
- Doping
- Abuse of power

Sport vulnerability to threats

- 1) Sport organisations have not yet embraced **a culture of human rights and good governance**.
- 2) **States are not meeting their obligations** to secure respect for human rights and rule of law in sport.
- 3) Sport is a very **complex ecosystem**.
- 4) Despite being the most popular human activity, sport is **not yet universally accessible**.
- 5) Sports **can generate huge profits and status** for organisations and individuals. This attracts criminals, cheaters, greedy and power-driven people.
- 6) In sport, children, women and vulnerable adults are particularly exposed to discrimination and violence because some **risk factors are not effectively addressed**.
- 7) Victims denounce the **normalization of abuse**, the **omerta** around the incidents, and the **lack of a trauma-informed and victim-centered approach** to cases.
- 8) Standards are **poorly enforced**, and breaches rarely result in sanctions. The **lack of accountability** contributes to a culture of impunity and feeds distrust.
- 9) Many sports **lack resources and protocols** to effectively investigate and respond to breaches to their own ethics and disciplinary rules.
- 10) **Absence of an effective multistakeholder cooperation**.

II. DEFENDING VALUES IN AND THROUGH SPORT



*Many are daring .
And they are making
good progress!*

*The threats to sport are like the snakes in the Medusa's head.
Will we dare to look at them, really look?*

- ✓ Intergovernmental Organisations including the Council of Europe, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC, UNHCR and UN Women are engaging with States, sport organisations and other actors to develop standards and policies, monitor implementation and offering support.
- ✓ Sports Organisations, including the International Olympic and Paralympic Committees, FIFA, UEFA, World Athletics, some national Sports Federations and sports clubs. Many have developed gender equality and safeguarding programmes, policies to fight discrimination, doping and match fixing. Some sports have considerably enhanced their disciplinary and ethics codes and rules.
- ✓ Some States are leading the fight against corruption, doping and violence in sport. Many have ratified critical treaties, adopted laws and enforced incentives to make sport safer and more ethical.
- ✓ Parliaments are holding debates, improving legislation and holding States accountable.
- ✓ Athletes, athletes' unions and survivors-led organisations are denouncing shortcomings, engaging in policy and law reforms, launching movements and campaigns.
- ✓ NGOs such as the Centre for Sports and Human Rights, Global, Play the Game, Safeguarding International, The Army of Survivors or the Sports and Rights Alliance, are denouncing cases, supporting victims, exposing shortcomings, proposing solutions and offering expertise.
- ✓ Multistakeholder alliances such as the International Partnership Against Corruption in Sport (IPACS) are proposing benchmarks and guidance to fight corruption.

To kill the Medusa, Perseus received from Athena a mirrored shield.

*The Athens' Conference allowed participants to look at the monster.
It also unveiled four powerful elements to defeat it.*

ATHENS' CALL TO ACTION

↓
WATER

↓
EARTH

↓
FIRE

↓
WIND

Values and principles

1

Embedding human
rights and Good
Governance
Principles in Sport

People

2

Investing in
Prevention and
Protection

Rules

3

Enhancing
accountability

Community

4

Achieving effective
multistakeholder
co-operation

ACTION POINT 1: Promote the **ratification** of key Council of Europe treaties by a maximum of countries, including by States outside the Council of Europe.

ACTION POINT 2: Monitor respect of human rights obligations and good governance principles in the field of sports both by governments and sports organisations.

ACTION POINT 3: Promote the adoption of human rights, gender equality, **safeguarding and integrity policies** by international federations and make sure that the same is done at national federation level.

ACTION POINT 4: promote **harmonization** of terminology and understanding of human rights standards, good governance principles and rule of law requirements so that they are consistently reflected in sports codes, rules, policies and procedures.

ACTION POINT 5: Help sport to maintain its commitments to human rights also in the context of **major sport competitions, the election of host countries and sponsors.**

✓ The Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention)

✓ The Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the Lanzarote Convention)

✓ The Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

✓ The Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (the Macolin Convention)

✓ The Anti-Doping Convention

✓ The Saint Denis Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sport Events (the Saint-Denis Convention)

ACTION POINT 1: Promote a debate on concrete measures to include **education** about safe, ethical and inclusive sport at school and during the athletes' sporting career/practice.

ACTION POINT 2: Request measures and propose incentives to make sport more **inclusive and accessible**, including by facilitating access to leadership positions of underrepresented categories/groups of people.

ACTION POINT 3: convene experts to identify what must be done in your country to **progress towards gender equality** in sport, identifying incentives and removing obstacles to women's access to sport, including to coaching and leadership positions in sport.

ACTION POINT 4: promote the adoption of a legal provisions imposing the establishment of **safeguarding policies** in all federations and clubs, including the creation of the **safeguarding officer figure** to promote safety, detect violence and support the victims. The law should request safeguarding systems for all major sport competitions.

ACTION POINT 5: trigger a debate on the **prevention of young people's addictions** in the context of sport (betting, substance abuse, unhealthy practices).



ACTION POINT 1: At international level, promote a debate on **how to improve the sports' justice system** to make it human-rights compliant, efficient, transparent trauma-informed and to better ensure accountability. The justice system should also honor the victim's suffering and offer remedies

ACTION POINT 2: At national level, convene a round table with state authorities and sports organisations to **clarify roles and procedures**, and to foster collaboration on **data collection** and in the prevention, management and investigation of cases.

ACTION POINT 3: At national level, trigger a debate on the creation of an **independent multisport safe sport entity** with the resources and the mandate to promote prevention, support victims and investigate cases.

ACTION POINT 4: At national level, promote a regular **exchange of views between the key stakeholders** (including athletes and survivors) about enforcement and accountability.

ACTION POINT 5: At national level, trigger a discussion on how to secure that **staff and volunteers working in the field of sport are duly screened, and trained** on safety and integrity issues.



Photo: Régis Suhner/CoE



ACTION POINT 1: Support the **Parliamentary Alliance for Good Governance and Integrity in Sport** to elevate national parliaments' roles in shaping values-based sports policies and advocating for good sports governance at all levels.

ACTION POINT 2: At international level, host an exchange of views on the functioning of international **sport justice** and initiatives to reinforce accountability, such as the creation of independent safe sport entities at international federation level or the “Clearing Sport” initiative.

ACTION POINT 3: Make sure that **athletes, survivors and youth are included** in the discussions on the future of sport and that this is done in a trauma-informed way.

ACTION POINT 4: Within the Parliamentary Assembly, continue to **engage with the sport ecosystem and preparing reports** to expose shortcomings and promote good practices.

ACTION POINT 5: **Support countries' accession to EPAS** as a trusted platform, open to non-European States and sports organisations and with the capacity to mobilise all the expertise needed to achieve a safe, ethical and inclusive sport.