

LAUNCH OF THE “START TO TALK” NATIONAL CAMPAIGN IN CYPRUS

SPEAKERS’ BIOGRAPHIES

Yiannis Ioannou

President, Cyprus Sport Organisation



Born in Nicosia, holder of a BsC in Business Administration, and an entrepreneur, Yiannis Ioannou has a rich contribution to public service, having served in the following roles:

- President of FPK Protoporia
- President of NEDISY
- President of APOEL
- Board Member of the Cyprus Youth Organisation (ONEK)
- Board Member of the Cyprus Electricity Authority (EAC)
- Municipal Councilor of Engomi
- Deputy Mayor of the Engomi Municipal Council

Since January 29, 2024, he has been the Chairman of the Board of the Cyprus Sports Organisation.

Bjørn Berge

Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe



Mr Bjørn Berge serves as the Council of Europe’s [Deputy Secretary General](#) since 1 March 2021.

As the Deputy Secretary General he is involved in a number of key areas of the work of the Organisation, including advising and overseeing the implementation of the Secretary General’s reform agenda, in line with the decisions and priorities of the Committee of Ministers.

His priorities include shaping the Programme and Budget, while ensuring that the Organisation’s activities have maximum impact in advancing democracy, human rights and the rule of law. He also oversees the Council of Europe’s staff policy, as well as other key areas of the work of the Organisation.

Before taking up his post, Mr Berge was for a period of four years Director General and Secretary to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Between 2009-2017, he served as Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General, helping to prepare, co-ordinate and implement a number of comprehensive reforms of the Organisation.

Mr Berge has over thirty years of international professional experience.

As a former Norwegian diplomat, he served as International Adviser to the Prime Minister and as Deputy Director of the Foreign Minister's Cabinet responsible for all matters related to Parliament. He also served as speechwriter to three Norwegian Foreign Ministers.

Mr Berge has published several books on a range of issues relating to speech writing and speeches, as well as articles on the Council of Europe's mandate and work.

He was a Fulbright Scholar and holds a M.A. in International Relations from the Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C., USA.

[Curriculum Vitae](#)

Marina Ioannou Hasapi

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth



Dr. Marina Ioannou Hasapi has been the Director General of the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth since July 1, 2023. She holds a PhD in the field of Labor Relations. She also holds postgraduate degrees in Public Sector Management (MPSM) and Business Administration (MBA), as well as a bachelor's degree in Accounting and Finance. She previously served as Deputy Director General of the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare from 2021-2023, and for over 27 years, in various leadership roles in the Department of Labor Relations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance.

Dr. Marina Ioannou Hasapi has been a member of various Boards of Directors, including the Board of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, the Board of the Cyprus Organisation for the Hallmarking of Precious Metals (ASSAY), and the Board of the Cyprus Human Resource Management Association. Dr. Hasapi has also taught Labor Relations for many years at the University of Cyprus and the Mediterranean Institute of Management.

Clea Hadjistephanou-Papaellina

Chair, Foni Council, Cyprus



Clea Hadjistephanou Papaellina is a permanent member of the Special Teaching Staff in the Department of Education Sciences at the University of Cyprus, specializing in Physical Education.

She completed her undergraduate studies (B.A.) in Physical Education at the University of California, Berkeley. She earned her Master of Arts (M.A.) in Physical Education with distinction from California State University, Chico. Her thesis focused on "Sports in Ancient Cyprus and the Greek Tradition". As a scholarship recipient from the Greek State Scholarships Foundation, she completed her Ph.D. with honors at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Athens, with a dissertation titled: "The Teaching of Physical Education in Cypriot Education Since British Rule and Modern Trends".

She has had a distinguished and long-standing involvement in issues related to Olympism, Olympic Education, and Sports Administration, with extensive voluntary contributions and participation in significant committees in Cyprus and abroad.

She is the Vice President of the "Culture and Education" Committee of the European Olympic Committees (EOC), a Member of the Executive Board of the European Olympic Academies (EOA), a Member of the Culture and Education Committee of the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC), and a Member of the Development Committee of the International Federation of Sports Medicine (FIMS).

She is the Dean of the Cyprus National Olympic Academy, a Member of the Executive Board of the Cyprus Olympic and Paralympic Committee, and Vice President of the Cyprus Equestrian Federation.

She has also served as a Member and President of the Board of Directors of the Cyprus Sports Organisation and as a Member of the Cyprus Gaming and Casino Supervision Authority.

On April 22, 2024, she was appointed by the President of the Republic as President of the Council for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Combating Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and Child Pornography (Voice).

She is also the President of the Central Council of the Pan-Cyprian Association of Friends of Kidney Patients (PSFN).

Annita Demetriou

President of the House of Representatives, Cyprus



Mrs Annita Demetriou, is the first woman and the youngest person to serve as President of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus. In 2016 she was first elected as a member of parliament and re-elected in 2021. She was also elected as President of the Democratic Rally (DISY) party of Cyprus on March 2023.

She holds a university degree on Social and Political Sciences as well as a postgraduate title in International Relations and European Studies.

She is an Ambassador of the global network of women politicians - Women Political Leaders (WPL) and represents Cyprus in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

She participates in the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments (EUSC), in the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament of the Council of Europe, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth as well as in the Conference of Presidents of Parliaments of Small European States.

She aims for and strives towards the advancement of parliamentary work, the modernisation and digital transformation of the functioning of the House of Representatives as well as the strengthening of the communication with the citizens, within an interactive framework. Her priorities include, among other issues, the promotion of human rights, the eradication of gender stereotypes, the protection of the environment and the strengthening of parliamentary diplomacy.

Mathilde Grenet
Founder, En Garde



Mathilde Grenet is a Safe Sport specialist and founder of the safeguarding consultancy [EN GARDE](#) whose mission is to eradicate interpersonal violence in sport. EN GARDE works with several international and national sports governing bodies (FIFA, European Athletics, UCI, FIS, Imoca Class, Play International, etc..) on their safeguarding programmes and initiatives.

Mathilde is passionate about sport and has a strong athletic background having formerly been a NCAA tennis player for the University of South Carolina.

Child Safeguarding in Sport is a topic which resonates very profoundly with her as she is a survivor of sexual abuse having been abused by her tennis coach in her youth.

While she was going through a legal battle against this coach from 2014 to 2021, together with three other victims, she created the association Rebond aimed at preventing sexual violence in sports and providing holistic support to victims. Rebond is now partnered with the French Tennis Federation (FFT) in its drive towards safeguarding in tennis.

Mathilde Grenet is also a member of the [Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport](#) at the Council of Europe and certified IOC Safeguarding Officer in Sport.

Karolina Pelendritou
Paralympic Champion



Karolina Pelendritou was born in Limassol in 1986. She has been involved in swimming since childhood. At the age of 15, she became a member of the National Team and competed in the Games of the Small States of Europe in 2001 and the Commonwealth Games in 2002. That same year, she swam for the first time as a para-athlete, as she had already begun experiencing vision problems. She participated in five Paralympic Games, from Athens 2004 to Paris 2024, winning a total of eight medals, three of which were gold! She has won 13 medals at World Championships and 7 at European Championships. She is a member of the Athletes' Council of the European Paralympic Committee (EPC). She has been actively involved in promoting equality in sports and society and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities.

Stephanie Wheeler

Appointed Safeguarding Officer, Cyprus Sport Organisation



Stephanie Wheeler completed her studies in Physical Education and Sports Science and then earned a Master's Degree in Communication and Media. She has been working at the Cyprus Sports Organization (CSO) since 2010 and has been involved in various departments within the organization. Since 2018, she is the appointed Officer responsible for child welfare and protection in sports, as assigned by the CSO Board of Directors.

In 2019, she was selected by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for the one-year educational program "NEW LEADERS," becoming one of the 30 young advocates for promoting the IOC's recommendations on gender equality in sports and human rights. As part of the program, she attended seminars on strategic leadership, communication, public speaking, lobbying, and conflict management, all through the lenses of equality, sustainability, human rights, and ethics. She was also one of the four participants chosen to present her country's strategic plan before the leadership of the Olympic Movement and IOC President Thomas Bach at the program's final conference.

Additionally, she has attended various seminars and conferences and has participated as a speaker in presentations and roundtable discussions on the activities of the CSO and issues related to child welfare and protection in sports, both in Cyprus and internationally.

She has also been involved in Erasmus+ projects focusing on child welfare and protection in sports, including the "SAFE SPORT ALLIES" project, which developed educational materials for sports observers on the prevention, recognition, and handling of sexual abuse and other forms of violence. She also contributed to the "START TO TALK" program, which the CSO is participating in collaboration with EPAS and the Council of Europe.

In September 2024, she was accepted by the IOC into a one-year educational program titled "IOC Certificate: Safeguarding Officer in Sport." Upon completing the program, she will officially receive the diploma of "IOC Safeguarding Officer."

Panayiota Trifilli

Social Services Officer, Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, Cyprus and member of the Council of Europe's Lanzarote Committee for Cyprus



Panayiota Trifilli is a Social Welfare Officer at Cyprus Social Welfare Services of Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, since June 2001, specialising in the field of children and families.

She completed her undergraduate studies (B.A) in Social Work at the University of Western Attica in Athens.

She also holds a Master at public administration at Cyprus International Institute of Management (C.I.I.M).

Since June 2023, she is a representative of the Republic of Cyprus in the

Lanzarote Committee, which aims to monitor whether Parties effectively implement the Lanzarote Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Since January 2023, she is also a member of the European Guardianship Network (EGN), which aims to promote guardianship and improve guardianship services for unaccompanied and separated children in the EU Member States.

Elena Casero

Programme Manager, Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), Council of Europe



Elena Casero is a Senior Programme Manager at the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport ([EPAS](#)), an intergovernmental platform of co-operation of the Council of Europe on sports policies. EPAS currently counts 41 member states and up to 30 partner sports organisations.

At EPAS, Ms Casero is responsible for the “[Start to Talk](#)” project on child safeguarding in sport. She also coordinates the Council of Europe’s the Network of Magistrates / Prosecutors Responsible for Sports (the [MARS Network](#)) and the DACCS database on alleged cases of corruption in sport.

She is a qualified lawyer with six-year experience in private practice in Sport and Entertainment, Litigation and Arbitration at the Spanish law firm, Garrigues. She has also served as an assistant lawyer at the European Court of Human Rights.

Ms Casero has written articles on child safeguarding in sport, anti-doping, dispute resolution and commercial rights in the field of sport, and on the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights concerning the rights of persons with migrant and refugee backgrounds and persons with disabilities. She has participated as a speaker in numerous conferences and seminars and has taught Master’s level courses.

Ms Casero holds a Bachelor and Master of Laws and a BSc and Master of Management and Business Administration from the Carlos III University (Madrid, Spain).

Paul Bercea

International trainer and consultant on child safeguarding



My experience spreads over twenty years in Child Protection and Safeguarding vulnerable children and young people working for statutory agencies (Lincolnshire Children’s Services), national children’s charities (team manager at NSPCC, National Trainer and consultant at Barnardo’s) and international and regional humanitarian organisations (Europe Safeguarding Adviser at *Terre des hommes*).

In 2008, I gained my Enabling Others qualification, awarded by Nottingham Trent University as part of completing the Post Qualifying Child Care Award, which inspired me to start delivering training courses combining theory and practice in the field of child safeguarding and child wellbeing. In 2011, the UK Chartered Management Institute (CMI) recognised my knowledge and skills in leading teams and awarded me the CMI Level 5 Certificate in Leadership, Management and Performance. In 2013, I completed a 2-year accreditation Video

Interaction Guidance (VIG) and I became the first VIG practitioner in Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP).

Since 2015, I led on eLearning modules on child safeguarding and wellbeing (e.g. UK Houses of Parliament, *Terre des hommes* Keeping Children Safe in Sports EU funded project) and I designed, planned and delivered trainings and facilitated learning and development events across Europe in countries such as England, Wales, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Greece, and Switzerland.

Tania Masia

Head of Children's House, "Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center



Tania Masia is a systemic psychotherapist and a family therapist, working as the Head of Children's House. Tania is responsible for the operation of Children's House and the daily coordination of services regarding children sexual abuse cases.

Graduating from Aristotle University Thessaloniki as a Psychologist in 2008, followed by her Masters in Psychotherapy at University of Kent in 2010, Tania continued to expand her academic expertise by continuing her education through Group Psychotherapy for 2 years and then participating in a 2 years program of Counselling and Therapy for Psychopathology Disorders, while she was undertaking personal therapy and supervision. Tania continued her training, following a 4 year professional education in Systemic Psychotherapy and Counselling in KE.PA.PSY., completed in 2019.

During her practicum, Tania has worked as co-instructor in group sessions, while she has worked in Mesogeios, Veresie's Clinic with groups with depression and drug or alcohol addictions. She was practicing psychotherapy in St. Martins Hospital at NHS with people suffering from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression and she has worked as a Counselor at Frederick University and as a trainee-psychologist at AHEPA (University General Hospital Thessaloniki) following up patients with various neurological diseases.

Under the auspice of HFC, Tania has been trained, specialized and certified in "Forensic Interviewing of Children" at National Children Advocacy Center (NCAC) in Alabama, US, Combined Parent-Child Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CPC-CBT) in Sweden, Trauma Focused CBT and many more. She has participated in series of study visits and peer trainings in specialized centers throughout Europe.

Before joining the Children's House she was the Psychology Department Coordinator at "Hope for Children" CRC Policy Center where she was responsible for the supervision of psychologists and other staff members working at the organisation. Tania was also providing psychological support to the shelter's residents and other cases referred to the organisation. Tania has curated and delivered workshops focusing on school violence to both teachers and children as well as the training of professionals working with unaccompanied minors. Furthermore, Tania is a certified instructor for children self-esteem and empowerment program accredited by the Ministry Of Education.

Since her position at the Childrens' House, Tania has conducted various workshops, presentations, speeches and trainings to professionals from the Multidisciplinary/Interagency team (Police, Social Welfare Services, Mental Health Services, Educational Psychology Services). She has also participated in boards of speakers regarding Child Friendly Justice and Vulnerable Witnesses at Supreme Court judges Training School, EUROPOL annual conference, Council of Europe, General Attorney's Office and many more.

George Nikolaidis (moderator)

Research Director, Department of Mental Health and Social Welfare, Institute of Child Health, Greece and member of Council of Europe's Pool of Experts on safe sport



George Nikolaidis's studies include a degree in Medicine and Psychiatry, a PhD in Epidemiology, an MSc in Philosophy of Mental Disorder and an MA in Psychoanalytic Studies. His scientific interest primarily lie in child abuse and neglect, child protection, public health sciences and epidemiology, with several published monographs and articles.

He was Scientific Coordinator/Principal Researcher in research, training & clinical national/international projects on child protection, violence & epidemiology. Since 2005, George is the Director of the Department of Mental Health and Social Welfare of the Institute of Child Health. In addition to his role in the ICH, he was also Scientific Coordinator of the Day Center of the NGO "The Smile of the Child", which provides treatment to children victims of abuse or neglect (2014-2020), and Advocacy and Networking Consultant of Lumos Deinstitutionalization program for Greece (2014-2019).

At the international level, George is Greece's national representative to the World Health Organisation for child abuse and neglect issues, and of the Council of Europe's Lanzarote Committee, in which he was elected Member of Bureau (2014-2016), Vice-Chair (2016-2018) and Chairperson (2018-2020).