

Strasbourg, 27 May 2021

EPAS(2021)18

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)

Checking criminal records as a tool to protect children in sport

Webinar
organised by the EPAS Consultative Committee

Thursday, 3 June 2021
4 pm – 6 pm

Venue:
Online via BlueJeansEvents

Webinar

The CC will organise a webinar on "Checking criminal records as a tool to protect children in sport" on 3 June 2021 from 4pm to 6pm to be streamed via the BlueJeansEvents virtual platform.

- Background

Child sexual abuse in sport is a very serious issue that unfortunately continues to take place. Authorities and sports organisations are becoming more aware of the need to put the necessary measures in place to provide a safe environment for young athletes and their parents. One of the questions they need to respond to is how to implement safer recruitment processes that ensure the suitability of people who work with children. In this regard, Article 5§3 of the [Council of Europe's Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#) (the Lanzarote Convention) provides that candidates must be screened prior to their taking up of professions involving regular contact with children, including in the area of sport, to ensure that they have not been convicted of acts of child sexual abuse.

The scope of protection of Article 5§3 was reinforced in 2018 by the Lanzarote Committee's [2nd implementation report on the protection of children against sexual abuse in the circle of trust](#). Chapter V of the implementation report urged those Parties that limited mandatory screening only to specific professionals to extend such screening to the recruitment of all professionals in regular contact with children. It also invited Parties to encourage continuous screening (not only during the recruitment process) and to extend it to voluntary activities. In the framework of screening processes, criminal record checks can help sport organisations make safe recruitment decisions by providing information about people who have a criminal record of sexual abuse. How does this tool work? Is it used widely throughout European countries? Are there any European standards in this area? All of these questions can help us explore the effectiveness of this tool to ensure safer sport.

This webinar has been jointly organised by the [Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport \(EPAS\)'s Consultative Committee](#) and the EPAS Secretariat as part of the ["Start to Talk"](#) activities. "Start to Talk" is a Council of Europe initiative to ensure children's protection in the field of sport.

- Objectives

The webinar will address the criminal record check as a tool to ensure safer recruitment decisions in the area of sport. Panellists will present the legal framework and give examples of how police record checks are used by sport organisations and police authorities and how collaboration procedures can be established at national and international level. They will also reflect on ongoing and new challenges pertaining to the protection of children in the field of sport.

Structure and practical arrangements of the webinar

The webinar is scheduled to last 2 hours. As a public webinar, participants will be invited to ask questions through the chat function of the BlueJeansEvents online platform which will be used for the webinar and presented to the speakers by the chair of the webinar.

The working language of the webinar will be English.

The webinar is open to the public and the press.

Speakers:

- Chair of the event - Kole GJELOSHAJ, Chair of the Consultative Committee and Deputy Secretary General of ISF
- Elda MORENO, Head of Children's Rights and Sport Values Department, Council of Europe
- Melanie LANG, Senior Lecturer in child protection in sport, Centre for Child Protection and Safeguarding in Sport, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom
- Vivien RIMMER, Head of Safeguarding, Rugby Football Union, United Kingdom
- Håvard B. ØVREGÅRD, Adviser, Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports, Norway
- Richard FEWKES, National Coordinator Non-recent Child sexual Abuse, NPCC – Operation Hydrant, United Kingdom
- Anton Toni KLANČNIK / Cathal DELANEY, EUROPOL - European Cyber Crime Centre
- Dieter BRAEKEVELD & Uri SADEH – INTERPOL

The webinar will be moderated by Laura CAPRANICA, CC Bureau member – President of European Athlete as Student network

EPAS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE VIRTUAL WEBINAR

Checking criminal records as a tool to protect children in sport

Thursday 3 June 2021 – 4:00pm-6:00pm
Blue Jeans Events, Video Conference – Remote access

PROGRAMME

- 4-4.05pm Opening by **Kolë Gjeloshaj** (Chair)
Chair of the EPAS Consultative Committee and Deputy Secretary General of ISF
- 4.05-4.10pm Introduction to the Lanzarote Convention by **Elda Moreno**
Head of Children's Rights and Sports Values Department, Council of Europe
- 4.10-4.15pm Presentation of event format and proceedings by **Laura Capranica**
(Moderator)
Member of the EPAS Consultative Committee bureau and President of the European Athlete as Student (EAS) network
- 4.15-4.25pm Presentation by **Melanie Lang** (followed by questions)
Senior Lecturer in Child Protection in Sport, Centre for Child Protection and Safeguarding in Sport, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom
- 4.25-4.35pm Presentation by **Vivien Rimmer** (followed by questions)
Head of Safeguarding, Rugby Football Union, United Kingdom
- 4.35-4.45pm Presentation by **Håvard B. Øvregård** (followed by questions)
Adviser, Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports, Norway
- 4.45-4.55pm Presentation by **Richard Fewkes** (followed by questions)
National Coordinator Non-recent Child sexual Abuse, NPCC – Operation Hydrant, United Kingdom
- 4.55-5.05pm Presentation by **Anton Toni Klančnik** or **Cathal Delaney** (followed by questions)
EUROPOL - European Cyber Crime Centre
- 5.05-5.15pm Presentation by **Dieter Braekeveld** and **Uri Sadeh** (followed by questions)
INTERPOL
- 5.15-5.5.45pm *Questions*
- 5.45-6.00pm *Closing remarks* by **Laura Capranica**

The Council of Europe (CoE) is strongly committed to the protection of children from sexual exploitation and abuse through its [legal frameworks, policies and recommendations](#). In the field of Sport, the CoE's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) currently runs a range of programmes and activities aimed at protecting young athletes, such as the ["Start to Talk"](#) initiative.

Through conferences and seminars, EPAS offers the opportunity for stakeholders to discuss topical and specific issues regarding child protection. It provides a platform to exchange information and share good practice.

The protection of children in the sports field is also a priority topic for the EPAS Consultative Committee (CC) which is currently made up of [25 sport NGOs](#). The CC was and is pivotal in providing input to EPAS on these topical issues.