



Strasbourg, 29 June 2022

EPAS(2022)45

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)

**First meeting of the pool of international experts on safe sport**

Wednesday, 4 May 2022

**Report**

## **1. Opening of the meeting**

Sophie Kwasny (SK), Head of the Sport Division of the Council of Europe, opened the first meeting of the Pool of international experts on safe sport. She recalled the Council of Europe's long standing experience in the protection of children's rights and sport policies and referenced the [Revised European Sports Charter](#), adopted in October 2021, that calls upon governments to take the steps necessary to enable every individual to participate in sport and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to take part in sport in a safe, secure and healthy environment.

SK welcomed the experts and their contributions to the development of child safeguarding policies, mentioning that the pool has been established as a means for peer-learning, capacity building and fostering exchanges between all those who have a role to play in preventing and combating any form of violence and abuse against children in the field of sport. She highlighted the importance of protection and development of a values-based sport. She emphasised the necessity of including the expertise deriving from different roles and especially the voices of people with lived experiences of violence and abuse in sport.

## **2. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda of the meeting (Appendix I) was adopted. The list of participants is appended in Appendix II.

## **3. Mandate of the pool of international experts on safe sport**

Adela Cujko (AC) introduced the mandate of the Pool of international experts on safe sport, as well as the benefits and responsibilities pertaining to membership in the Pool, which is based on voluntary participation. The pool will be regularly updated, and members will be asked to provide their most recent information. Members will be asked to provide a short annual summary of their activities in relation to safe sport and, in particular, the themes covered by the pool, as a way of expressing the commitment to the pool and interest in membership. These reports will also provide an insight into activities carried out in different countries and organisations, as well as priorities, trends and concerns in this field.

Members are invited to contribute to the work of the Council of Europe in the field of safe sport and to participate as speakers in relevant events, conferences, seminars: to share knowledge and experience on safe sport; to take part in the meetings and actively contribute to the development of topical outputs, to provide advice and support to the Council of Europe, member states and partner organisations when developing their strategies, projects or activities on safe sport and to disseminate information and expertise on safe sport.

## **4. CoE work relevant to safeguarding in sport**

- *Child Safeguarding in Sport*

AC introduced the EU and COE joint project "Child Safeguarding in Sport" (CSiS) and its main aim, which is to guide and accompany partner countries towards developing more effective child safeguarding policies to ensure safe, positive and empowering sport environments for all children. It is achieved through the provision of nation-tailored roadmaps to develop and implement child safeguarding policies.

AC presented the main components of the CSiS project, namely country-specific roadmaps, the Pool of international experts on safe sport, and an Online Resource Centre. She noted that country-specific roadmaps were based on a collaborative approach between various stakeholders playing a role in protecting children and preventing child abuse in sport. In each partner country, a steering committee led by the CSiS national coordinator, and a core group made up of the key members of the steering committee were set up. AC stressed that the steering committee should become a permanent forum for long-term commitment to strengthening of child safeguarding in sport in the partner countries.

The Online Resource Centre was initially established in 2017 under the EU-CoE joint project “Pro Safe Sport+” designed to prevent and combat sexual violence towards children in the context of sport. Under the CSiS project it has been extended to cover all forms of violence and abuse. It includes a wide variety of resources and practices, notably strategy and policy frameworks, educational programmes, awareness-raising initiatives, codes of conduct and codes of ethics, minimising risk measures, support systems and case management, studies research and reports and systems of child safeguarding officers. AC stressed the importance of sharing experience, good practices and resources within the pool, and promoting the methodology and the work done under the CSiS project.

- *Start to Talk*

Elena Casero (EC) presented the “Start to Talk” project, whose objectives are the prevention and remedy of all forms of violence, harassment and abuse against children in sport, from grassroots to the professional practice, as well as supporting and protecting children experiencing violence. The project also assists its stakeholders with the rolling out of a Start to Talk national campaign, for which the COE Secretariat provides technical support and safe sport materials. EC mentioned that Start to Talk promoted the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (The Lanzarote Convention) and the Council of Europe revised European Sports Charter. Article 8 of the Charter specifically encourages the implementation of legal and policy frameworks protecting all people, particularly the young, from violence, harassment and abuse.

EC noted that since the establishment of the Start to Talk project in 2018, nine countries have launched a national campaign, which has proven to be an effective tool to raise awareness and build synergies with further child protection actions at the national level, such as the introduction of victim helplines and reporting protocols. Additionally, Start to Talk assists its stakeholders in the development of roadmaps for the implementation of comprehensive child safeguarding policies and capacity building activities.

EC reported on the findings of the independent interim evaluation presented in January 2021, according to which the Start to Talk project had generated significant awareness around child abuse in sport, had enabled governments to build synergies at national level, and had supported capacity building for numerous individuals across Europe and beyond. She also outlined its recommendations, which called for the development of a benchmarking tool for national policy evaluation, connection of the Start to Talk project with other existing campaigns at both national and global levels, systematisation and further elaboration of the project materials, as well as creation of synergies with COE activities and sports events.

Finally, EC gave account of the new approach followed in the framework of the Start to Talk project, namely that the Secretariat assisted its stakeholders throughout the whole process starting with the identification of needs and following with the planning and implementation of activities. She also reported that the EPAS Secretariat had recently applied for the call for proposals to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children (CERV-2022-DAPHNE) in consortium with the European Sports NGO (ENGSO), with potential start in January 2023.

- *Lanzarote Convention*

Gioia Scappucci (GS) introduced the Lanzarote Convention, as a legally binding treaty which is opened not only to CoE members, but to any country interested in protecting children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

She reminded of the findings of the CoE studies since 2000, showing that about 1 in 5 children in Europe are victims of some form of sexual violence and that in 70% to 85% of cases, the abuser is somebody the child knows and trusts (including in the area of sport). She pointed out that following the entry into force of the Convention in 2010, a Council of Europe awareness-raising campaign called “One in Five Campaign” was launched to encourage countries to ratify the convention. In 2015 this was concluded and replaced by the establishment of a European Day on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (18 November).

She then highlighted that the Convention was built upon the principle of the “4Ps”: Prevention of sexual violence in all settings, Protection of the rights of child victims, Prosecution of the perpetrators, and Promotion of national and international co-operation.

GS also outlined the role of the Lanzarote Committee, encompassing the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention, including the adoption of opinions and declarations and the sharing of information and good practices through capacity building initiatives.

GS stressed that children’s voices should be taken into account in all matters concerning their protection against sexual violence, including when focusing on legislative changes. She highlighted the importance of having synergy with the pool of experts in particular in the forthcoming continued work of the Lanzarote Committee with regard to the protection of children against sexual abuse in the circle of trust. She suggested that the pool could bring to the Committee’s attention the successful practices as well as the limitations identified in the context of the EU-CoE joint project “Pro Safe Sport+” designed to prevent and combat sexual violence towards children in the context of sport.

## **5. Tour de table**

The experts – trainers and consultants, specialists supporting people with lived experience, policy-makers, researchers and academics, (child) safeguarding officers, and agents of change – introduced themselves, shared information on their backgrounds, professional capacities and activities in relation to child safeguarding in sport. Profiles of the experts can be found on the CSiS webpage: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/experts>.

## 6. Roundtable discussions

The experts were invited to reflect on following questions:

- *How can I contribute to the work of the pool of experts?*
- *What are my expectations from the Council of Europe and the pool of experts?*
- *Which priorities/areas should the pool of expert focus on in the next two years?*

The summary of discussions includes the views expressed at the meeting as well as written contributions of experts who were not available to participate at the meeting.

Participants expressed their readiness to support the further strengthening of safeguarding in sport and provide input to the work of the pool with their experience, knowledge and specific expertise.

A number of participants emphasised that it is crucial to identify the challenges in child safeguarding first in order to collectively address them, and to define priorities for the work of the pool of experts to infer what their contributions might be.

Several experts offered their assistance in examining existing scientific knowledge on child protection in sport and providing updates on the developments of evidence base in the field. They noted the possibility of identifying the needs and transforming them into scientific research, as well as their ability to conduct such research, provide methodological support and adapt research findings into educational programmes, practices and policies to ensure more effective child safeguarding in sport.

The experts conveyed their willingness to share experience and good practices in a range of areas, including the development and implementation of national roadmaps for child safeguarding in sport, the inclusion of child safeguarding in sport policies at the governmental level, drawing the attention of public authorities to the need to take concrete measures to prevent and respond to all forms of violence in sport and checking the feasibility of deliverables. The readiness to provide trainings on advocacy and trauma informed practices to the stakeholders was also expressed. They offered to contribute to the pool by raising awareness on child abuse and trafficking in and through sport as well as advocating at international level to encourage member states and sports organisations to develop strategic actions to prevent and combat violence towards children in sport. The participants emphasised the importance of peer-learning and expressed their willingness to assist other experts in their initiatives.

Among topics falling within the broader safeguarding scope, it was suggested to deal with some specific issues, like the protection of minors and their health in the context of the fight against doping as well as the protection of minors from overtraining in sport.

The experts agreed that the pool should contribute to the development of indicators for national governmental work on safeguarding to enable comparable data and the development of tools for public authorities. Creating a toolkit to provide support for new organisations and to improve child safeguarding policies of already established bodies was proposed as well. It was suggested to narrow the scope of work and target the measures proven to be effective. In this regard, the evaluation of existing measures is needed to understand what the challenges in

different countries are, what are the gaps and how to fill them in. Among other priority areas to be addressed, the experts highlighted the monitoring of the implementation of safeguarding policies in sport and follow-up to decisions at European level, with a focus on criminal records checks. Participants were reminded of the Council of Europe webinar organised in June 2021: [Checking criminal records as a tool to protect children in sport](#).

The participants also endorsed greater global connectivity and encouraged the streamlining and exchange of best practices and resources between organisations on the local, national and international level, including the exchange of information between public authorities as well as the exchange of information with and between sports organisations. They suggested providing feedback to the Council of Europe and European Union initiatives to enhance their effectiveness and broad reach. Others advocated for strengthening children's voices in sport and producing educational materials for children and their carers to provide knowledge of their rights and a better understanding of what grooming, harassment and abuse mean.

### **7. Any other business**

No other item was raised.

### **8. Closing words**

The Secretariat thanked all attendees for their active participation and valuable input during the first meeting of the Pool of international experts on safe sport.

It was concluded that based on the experts' contributions and proposals, the Secretariat will explore the possible specific deliverables, including proposals on creating tools for actions at governmental level. The general direction of the future work of the pool will be considered as well. Based on ideas shared at the meeting the Secretariat will provide feedback and a clear roadmap for further work of the Pool.

The Secretariat expressed its intent to arrange the next meeting in hybrid format by the end of the year.

## APPENDIX I – Meeting Agenda

1.	<p><b>Opening of the meeting</b></p> <p><i>Sophie Kwasny, Head of the Sport Division, Council of Europe</i></p>	2.00pm – 2.10pm
2.	<p><b>Adoption of the agenda</b></p> <p><i>EPAS(2022)26_rev</i></p>	2.10pm – 2.15pm
3.	<p><b>Mandate of the pool of international experts on safe sport</b></p> <p><i>EPAS(2022)28</i></p>	2.15pm – 2.30pm
4.	<p><b>CoE work relevant to safeguarding in sport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Safeguarding in Sport <i>Adela Cujko, Senior Project Officer, CoE</i> <a href="https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/home">https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/home</a></li> <li>• Start to Talk <i>Elena Casero, Administrative Support Assistant, CoE</i> <a href="https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/start-to-talk">https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/start-to-talk</a></li> <li>• Lanzarote Convention <i>Gioia Scappucci, Executive Secretary to the Lanzarote Committee, CoE</i> <a href="https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/lanzarote-convention">https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/lanzarote-convention</a></li> </ul>	2.30pm – 3.00pm
5.	<p><b>Tour de table</b></p> <p>Experts briefly introduce themselves and present their work (maximum 1 minute)</p>	3.00pm – 3.35pm
	<p><b>Break</b></p>	3.35pm – 3.50pm
6.	<p><b>Roundtable discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can I contribute to the work of the pool of experts?</li> <li>• What are my expectations from the Council of Europe and the pool of experts?</li> <li>• Which priorities/areas should the pool of expert focus on in the next two years?</li> </ul>	3.50pm – 4.50pm
7.	<p><b>Any other business</b></p>	4.50pm – 4.55pm
8.	<p><b>Closing words</b></p>	4.55pm – 5.00pm

## APPENDIX II – List of participants

### TRAINERS / CONSULTANTS

- Mr Francisco Javier ROMEO BIEDMA, Psychologist and consultant in Child Protection, Spain
- Ms Anne TIIVAS OBE, Chair, Safe Sport International, United Kingdom
- Ms Katie FUDAKOWSKI, Partner Farrer & Co, United Kingdom
- Mr Paul BERCEA, Associate trainer and consultant, UK Barnardo's and Terre des Hommes, United Kingdom
- Ms Claudia KOLLER, Secretary General, 100% SPORT – the Austrian Center for gender competence and SAFE SPORT, Austria  
**Apologised / Excusée**
- Mr Kupakwashe Desmond MUKURUMBIRA, Head of Programs, Zimbabwe National Boxing and Wrestling Control Board, Zimbabwe

### SPECIALISTS SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

- Ms Carla FERREIRA, Manager of CARE, APAV – Portuguese Association for Victim Support, Portugal  
**Apologised / Excusée**
- Ms Mathilde GRENET, Founder, REBOND association, International Hockey Federation, France/Switzerland

### POLICY-MAKERS

- Cristina MATOS ALMEIDA, Research and Project Department Director, Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth, NOC – the Olympic Committee of Portugal, Portugal
- Mr Alexandre HUSTING, Adviser, Ministry of Sport, Permanent representation to the EU, Luxemburg  
**Apologised / Excusé**
- Ms Kirsty BURROWS, Senior Manager Safe Sport, International Olympic Committee / Sports Rights, Switzerland/United Kingdom
- Ms Michelle NORTH, Service Head, NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit, United Kingdom
- Ms Jennifer SHUTE, Lead Welfare Officer, International Ski Federation (FIS), United Kingdom
- Ms Satu HEIKKINEN, Senior Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Education and Culture – Sports Division, Finland



## **RESEARCHERS / ACADEMICS**

- Ms Kari FASTING, Professor and Consultant, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Equal Rights in Sport, Norway
- Ms Maria PAPAEFSTATHIOU, Researcher, Center for Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE) – Pedagogical Institute, Cyprus
- Ms Melanie LANG, Reader (Associate Professor) in child protection in sport, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

### **Apologised / Excusée**

- Mr Miguel NERY, Professor and Researcher, Universidade Europeia, Portugal
- Ms Tine VERTOMMEN, Postdoc researcher and research coordinator, Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, Belgium
- Ms Montserrat MARTIN, Senior Lecturer in Sociology of Sport, University of Vic – Central University of Catalonia, Spain
- Ms Zrinka GREBLO JURAKIC, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia
- Mr George NIKOLAIDIS, Psychiatrist and Research Director of the Department of Mental Health and Social Welfare, Institute of Child Health, Greece
- Mr Mustafa Yasar SAHIN, Academic, Gazi University, Turkey

### **Apologised / Excusé**

## **(CHILD) SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS**

- Mr Simon DE VRIENDT, Case manager, Centre for Ethics in Sport, Belgium (Flanders)
- Mr Daragh KENNEDY, National Safeguarding Officer, Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA), Ireland
- Mr Gearóid Ó MAOILMHICHIL, Safeguarding Manager, Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), Ireland
- Mr Havard B. ØVREGÅRD, Senior Adviser, Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF), Norway
- Mr Ieuan WATKINS, Safeguarding Consultant, Sport Safeguarding Limited, Wales, United Kingdom
- Ms Constance POPINEAU, Legal Director, CNOSF – French National Olympic and Sport Committee, France
- Ms Laura SABATÉ, Project manager and Delegate for Child Protection, BARÇA Foundation, Spain

### **Apologised / Excusée**

## **AGENTS OF CHANGE**

- Mr Sylvain CROTEAU, Executive Director, Sport'Aide, Canada
- Ms Karen LEACH, Safe Sport Advocate, Expert by lived experience, Leading voice against Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Sport across the world, Ireland
- Ms Lerina BRIGHT, Executive Director, Mission 89, Switzerland

- Mr Andrew EPHGRAVE, Senior Investigator, International Cricket Council, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE)  
**Apologised / Excusé**

#### **COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S SECRETARIAT**

- Ms Gioia SCAPPUCCI, Executive Secretary to the Lanzarote Committee
- Ms Sophie KWASNY, Head of the Sport Division
- Ms Francine RAVENEY, EPAS Deputy Executive Secretary
- Mr Michael TRINKER, Programme Manager, responsible for EU projects
- Ms Adela CUJKO, Senior Project Officer, CSiS project
- Ms Maria-Elena CASERO, Administrative Support Assistant, STT project
- Ms Emma ZANICHELLI, Communication Officer
- Ms Despina TRAMOUNTANI, Assistant, EPAS Secretariat
- Ms Kateryna LAVRYK, Trainee, Sport Division