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Protecting human rights in and through sport: obligations and shared responsibilities

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 2297 (2025)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2297 (2025) "Protecting human rights in and through sport: obligations and shared responsibilities" and forwarded it to the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), for information and possible comments.

2. The Committee of Ministers shares the Parliamentary Assembly's concerns about the persistent reports of abuse, discrimination and human rights violations in sport, especially involving children, women and marginalised groups, and underscores the unique role of the Council of Europe, through EPAS and the Sport conventions, in promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law in and through sport. The articulation and complementary relevance of the work of the conventional bodies of the Anti-Doping Convention (ETS No. 135), the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (Macolin Convention, CETS No. 215) and the Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (Saint-Denis Convention, CETS No. 218), together with EPAS, is particularly important for strengthening human rights, integrity and governance in sport.

3. The Committee also recalls that the 18th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport (Porto, Portugal, 8-10 October 2024) adopted the Resolution on "Collaborative governing and good governance in sport: supporting a fresh approach to match its societal importance". The Resolution stresses that such an approach notably requires States and sports organisations to sustain continuous dialogue with athletes, local clubs, concerned youth representatives and civil society, recognising them as essential partners in promoting values-based sport. The 19th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport will be held in Monaco (3-4 November 2026) and will mark a further step in the ongoing discussions on good governance in sport.

4. The EPAS 2026–2027 Strategy aligns with Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2297, as it envisions sport being accessible to all and calls for promoting and implementing the Revised European Sports Charter (ESC), as well as increasing EPAS membership and visibility. Therefore, the Committee of Ministers calls on the remaining Council of Europe member States to join EPAS.

5. The Committee of Ministers highlights that EPAS contributes to the development of national legislation and sports regulations aimed at preventing abuse, ensuring safe sporting environments and supporting victims, for instance through its Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport. The Pool serves as a single entry point to a unique source of multidisciplinary expertise covering all forms of violence and abuse against children in sport, and prepared the "Guidelines on safer recruitment in sport: human rights-compliant screening of professionals and volunteers in contact with children."

6. EPAS continues to support its member States in monitoring compliance with international human rights and gender-equality standards across all levels of sport through the implementation of the ESC, in particular through visits and follow-up reports. The analytical reports, factsheets and other resources developed by the

1. Adopted at the 1548th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (21 January 2026).

All In Plus joint project of the Council of Europe and the European Union reveal persistent gender gaps in sport and underscore the urgent need for policy implementation, financial investment and coordinated efforts across the sport sector.

7. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers notes that, through the implementation of the ESC, EPAS provides assistance to member States and sports bodies in conducting human rights risk assessments related to major sports events. EPAS looks forward to the reinforcement and systematisation of the promising initiatives of the Human Rights Declarations and Human Rights Boards of UEFA EURO 2024 (Germany) and UEFA Women's EURO 2025 (Switzerland), and calls for its involvement in future processes, as was the case with the Swiss exercise for the Women's EURO 2025. The Committee further observes that additional ratifications of the Saint-Denis Convention, the only international legally binding instrument addressing the organisation of sports events, will also be instrumental in ensuring welcoming events and greater inclusivity through the safety and service pillars of the Convention.

8. Finally, the Committee of Ministers highlights that EPAS actively contributes to UNESCO's Safe Sport Taskforce, and that the EPAS Secretariat organised an inter-institutional meeting on 19 June 2025 with international organisations working on sport governance and policies to further explore synergies and reinforce initiatives, including with the European Union and United Nations' agencies.