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18th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport

Porto, Portugal
8-10 October 2024

RESOLUTION

prepared by the EPAS Secretariat

Collaborative governing and good governance in sport: supporting a fresh approach to match its societal importance

The Ministers responsible for Sport, meeting in Porto, Portugal, for their 18th Council of Europe Conference on 9 October 2024:

1. recalling the Council of Europe's mission to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law across Europe and the importance of furthering this promotion beyond Europe;
2. bearing in mind the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe Conventions applicable to sport;
3. reaffirming the principles contained in the Council of Europe European Sports Charter and wishing to see sport – defined as “all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, are aimed at maintaining or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels“- develop according to its spirit;
4. recognising the importance of protecting and developing a values-based sport and its organisation, based on the common features of the European Sport Model as understood by the sports movement, ensuring the respect, protection and promotion of human rights and the principles of democracy, transparency, equality and inclusion, solidarity, integrity, and sustainability;
5. drawing attention to the social, educational, recreational and health functions of sport, while recognising that sport is also an important economic sector that must be taken into account when developing sports policies;
6. recalling their belief that the sports movement plays a key role in enabling the materialisation of such functions and other benefits expected from sport;
7. reiterating that access for all, including disabled ones and from disadvantaged backgrounds, to the development of physical, intellectual and ethical competences through physical education and sport should be guaranteed, both within the educational system (school sport) and in other aspects of social life and leisure activities;
8. welcoming the actions by the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) to further the promotion of the highest human rights, democracy and rule of law related standards for sport and the exploration of the challenges and opportunities affecting sport, with reference to the principles of transparency, integrity, democracy and solidarity, as set out in the “Council of Europe and Sport Strategic Priorities for 2022-2025”;

9. expressing their unwavering solidarity with Ukraine, condemning the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, considering that the Russian Federation and Belarus should not be represented in international sport as long as this aggression continues, and committing to enable Ukrainians to participate in sport.^{1 & 2}

The Ministers:

RECALL the unique and increasing importance of sport for societies and public health – making it a common resource – and its ability to unite people and communities;

REITERATE the key role, responsibilities and competencies of public authorities in protecting individuals and upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law, including in the context of sport;

ACKNOWLEDGE the sports movement, which comprises non-governmental, non-profit sports organisations, as the main partner of public authorities for the implementation of sports policies, in accordance with applicable legislation and international standards, including internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms;

RECOGNISE the contribution that sport can have on local development and the importance of leveraging sport events for sustainable economic social and environmental benefits;

ENCOURAGE a collaborative governing of sport and more inclusive dialogue, respectful of the freedom of association enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights and of autonomous decision-making processes within sports movement organisations, fostering good governance;

COMMIT to support the implementation of good governance principles and ENGAGE to cooperate with all key stakeholders and to consult national sports organisations when preparing national and international policies relating to sport;

INVITE the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to:

1. ensure that in light of the societal benefits of sport, public authorities and sports organisations promote it as a common resource, fostering its social, health and educational role and preserving it for future generations;

¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Hungary, Serbia and the Slovak Republic dissociate themselves from this paragraph of the Resolution.

² Türkiye's stance on this paragraph should be understood in line with its reservations to the Reykjavik Declaration adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (16-17 May 2023).

2. encourage Council of Europe Committees tasked with sport-related matters (CAHAMA, T-MC, T-S4, T-DO) to strengthen an inclusive dialogue between public authorities, including with the European Union, sports organisations, athletes, concerned youth representatives, the corporate sector and civil society in the definition of sports strategies and policies, taking into account the social and educational dimension of sport;
3. commend and further encourage the Council of Europe to assist and advise governments and sports organisations in order to advance human rights, democracy and the rule of law in and through sport, while acknowledging that the Council of Europe is also a platform for the development, monitoring and implementation of standards and policies for safe, ethical, and inclusive sport;
4. implement and promote in all activities of Council of Europe Committees tasked with sport-related matters (CAHAMA, T-MC, T-S4, T-DO) examples of best practice in good governance, including mechanisms that guarantee transparency and accountability within the sports movement, while safeguarding the rights of all involved in sport;
5. continue supporting greater gender equality in sport and empowering women in sport, notably through the All In Plus joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe, in respect of the measures it recommends regarding gender equality in leadership positions in particular, and by integrating gender mainstreaming across all levels of sport governance and policy-making;
6. encourage member States which have not yet done so to join EPAS;

INVITE EPAS, in all its activities (notably those of its Governing Board, Consultative Committee, International Network of Magistrates and Prosecutors Responsible for Sport, Pool of International Experts on Safe Sport) to:

1. engage with its member States, the sports movement, and other relevant stakeholders in supporting a fresh approach in the governing and governance of sport notably by:
 - a) promoting collaborative processes, and where appropriate a co-decision and co-responsibility in the implementation of sports policies, and in the protection of sport as a common resource;
 - b) encouraging States and sports organisations to carry out a continuous dialogue with athletes, local clubs, concerned youth representatives and civil society, recognising them as instrumental partners in promoting values-based sport, and including them in decision-making processes;
 - c) encouraging sport organisations to implement mechanisms to anticipate, mitigate and address the risks to values-based sport, including the evaluation of these initiatives;

- d) supporting States and sports organisations in the design and implementation of good governance policies, taking into account the implementation of the European Sports Charter;
2. further contribute to the work carried out by the International Partnership Against Corruption in Sport (IPACS), underlining the importance of the recommendations of its benchmark on good governance such as, for instance, the recommendation on term limits for elected officials;
3. examine whether the recommendation on the promotion of good governance in sport (CM/Rec(2018)12) and the recommendation on the principle of autonomy of sport in Europe (CM/rec(2011)3) could be revised, so as to ensure strong support for the standards and values of sport and to offer responses to new challenges;
4. foster a culture of good governance through educational initiatives, communication campaigns, exchange of best practices and preventive measures, integration of evaluation and impact assessment methodologies in sport investment strategies;
5. further explore intra- and inter-organisation initiatives, including within the Council of Europe and with the European Union, involving other sectoral areas, in order to maximise the knowledge and the tools to promote good governance in sport;
6. encourage member States to measure the economic impact of sport, in particular by using sport satellite accounts;
7. present a report to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2025, assessing progress in the implementation of the measures included in this Resolution;

EXPRESS their appreciation to the Portuguese authorities for the excellent organisation of the 18th Conference and for their kind hospitality;

NOTE with gratitude the invitation of the authorities of the Principality of Monaco to host the 19th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport in 2026.