



**CYPRUS SPORT  
ORGANISATION**  
The Highest Sport Authority in Cyprus



**start to talk**

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport  
**epas**  
Accord partiel élargi sur le sport



Strasbourg, 28 August 2024

EPAS(2024)47

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

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## CONFERENCE: FOR BETTER PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN SPORT DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

18 September 2024

9.00 am to 2.30 pm

**VENUE:**

Cyprus Teachers Association (POED), Kyrenia Avenue 184, 2112 Platy Aglantzias, Nicosia

**Working languages:**

Greek and English (simultaneous interpretation will be provided).



## Background

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Sport is the most popular cultural practice for millions of Europeans including children. However, the important role sport plays in European societies is overshadowed by cases of sexual, physical and emotional abuse in sport against children and young athletes. For victims, the consequences of violence can be devastating and long-lasting. In extreme cases, abuse can lead to death (including suicide). Victims are often forced or compelled to stop practicing their sport. For sport organisations, violence may result in criminal and other sanctions, expose poor governance and seriously damage their reputation. It can also lead to a loss of talent and income due to people's lack of trust in the sport organisation's ability and willingness to create a safe environment for all participants. States who fail to address violence in sport are accountable for human rights violations that weaken the rule of law and result in enormous individual, social and economic costs.

Articles 6 and 8 of the Council of Europe's [European Sport Charter](#) establishes that public authorities and the sport movement should apply a policy of zero tolerance towards violence and all forms of discrimination, paying particular attention to children. They should protect all people, particularly the young, from violence, harassment and abuse, ensure the safety and security of individuals and foster respect for human rights.

The [Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#), also known as "the Lanzarote Convention", requires criminalisation of all types of sexual offences against children. It sets out that states in Europe and beyond shall adopt specific legislation and take measures to prevent sexual violence, to protect child victims and to prosecute perpetrators.

Public authorities and sports organisations are increasingly taking meaningful action to create safer and healthier environments for children and young athletes. To support this often challenging process, the project ["Start to Talk"](#) provides technical support for the development of child safeguarding policies, the organisation of awareness raising campaigns and the training of relevant stakeholders.

Cyprus has responded to the "Start to Talk" call for action by launching a national "Start to Talk" campaign on 18 September 2024. This launch will bring together the Cypriot authorities responsible for sport and child protection, representatives of sports organisations and clubs, NGOs specialising in child protection and experts on child protection in sport. They will exchange views on the current major challenges in child protection in sport. The launch is a unique opportunity for capacity building, networking and the exchange of practices. The launch has been organised together with a training course on child protection for representatives of sports organisations on 16-17 September.

The project "Start to Talk" is run by the [Enlarged Partial Agreement of Sport](#) of the Council of Europe (EPAS).

## Objective

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The launch will foster dialogue between public authorities, sport movement and relevant stakeholders such as victim support organisations, to tackle violence and abuse against children in sport, in concrete ways. It will offer the opportunity to receive practical information to address and deal with violence and sport effectively.

## Organisers

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The conference is co-organised by EPAS and the Cyprus Sport Organisation within the context of the "Start to Talk" project of the Council of Europe.

**Dates**

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Wednesday, 18 September from 9.00 am to 2.30pm.

**Conference venue**

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Cyprus Teachers Association (POED), Kyrenia Avenue 184, 2112 Platy Aglantzias, Nicosia

**Participants**

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The launch will be attended by:

Representatives of Cyprus public authorities responsible for sport and child protection

Representatives of civil society:

- Sport organisations
- National, regional and local sports associations and clubs
- Relevant NGOs and humanitarian institutions in the field of child protection
- Youth organisations

The launch will be open to the press.

**Terms of participation**

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Participation is free of charge.

Travel and accommodation costs are the participants' own responsibility.

A standing buffet will be offered at the end of the conference.

**Working languages**

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Greek and English (simultaneous interpretation will be provided).