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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

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To: Delegations

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Subject: Draft Council conclusions on woman and equality in the field of sport  
- *Examination of the text*

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**DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (24.11.2023)**

In preparation for the meeting of the Working Party on Sport on 27 September 2023, delegations will find attached the draft Council conclusions on the abovementioned subject as prepared by the Presidency.

Changes compared to 11201/23 are in **bold** for new text and in square brackets [...] for deletions.

Any written comment from delegations should be sent to the Presidency (**DELETED**) and to the General Secretariat of the Council (**DELETED**) by **27 September 2023**.

Draft conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on women and equality in the field of sport

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

RECALLING THAT:

1. As stated in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, the values on which the Union is founded ‘are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail’, and that, as stated in Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), an aim of the **European** Union in all its activities is ‘to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women’.
2. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates in Article 23 that ‘equality between women and men must be ensured in all areas’.
3. The Council conclusions on gender equality in sport<sup>1</sup> **invite the Member States, in close cooperation with the sport movement**, to develop general agreements or strategies on gender equality in sport.

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<sup>1</sup> Council conclusions of 21 May 2014 on gender equality in sport, [...]OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p.39.

4. **The resolution of the Council Resolution on the key features of a European Sport Model recognises that the organisation of sport in Europe is based on values, among others, gender equality.<sup>2</sup>**
5. **The Council of Europe’s Revised European Sports Charter<sup>3</sup> involves stakeholders in the defence of human rights, and promotes gender equality ‘in and through sport, in particular by implementing the strategy of gender mainstreaming in sport’.**
6. The Committee of Ministers’ **of the Council of Europe** recommendation to the Member States on gender mainstreaming in sport (CM/Rec (2015)2) endorses the promotion of policies aimed at ensuring gender mainstreaming in all fields and at all levels of sport.
7. The resolution of the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport<sup>4</sup> identifies gender equality as a key topic within the priority area of protecting integrity and values in sport.
8. The Commission’s Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 is an important step towards achieving a **European Union of Equality**.

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<sup>2</sup> **Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the key features of a European Sport Model, OJ C 501, 13.12.2021, p. 1.**

<sup>3</sup> **Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)5 on the Revised European Sports Charter adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 13 October 2021 at the 1414th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies.**

<sup>4</sup> Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (1 January 2021-30 June 2024), [...]OJ C 419, 4.12.2020, p. 1.

9. The Council conclusions<sup>5</sup> on the role of sport as a source of, and a driver for, active social inclusion **recognise gender equality as one of the common priorities in need of stronger support across the European Union, including in sport, and** encourage gender equality in sport, especially [...] **in relation to** access to sport and representation in decision-making bodies and including active measures against gender stereotyping.
10. The Council conclusions on promoting the common values of the EU through sport<sup>6</sup> recognise that, since sport is a universal language understood by all, it can contribute to preventing intolerance, social exclusion, including gender stereotyping and misogyny, racism, xenophobia and marginalisation.
11. **The Council conclusions on sport innovation<sup>7</sup>, recognise that innovative technological and digital methods of communication and broadcasting, as well as non-formal and informal learning can assist sport organisations to raise awareness of and prevent, among others, gender stereotyping, misogyny, homophobia, harassment, abuse and violence, including sexual violence and any form of discrimination.**
12. The 2022 High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport<sup>8</sup> puts forward an action plan and recommendations to the European Commission, Member States, national and international sports bodies and grassroots organisations to improve gender balance in sport, **highlighting six key thematic areas of engagement (participation; coaching and officiating; leadership; social and economic aspects of sport; media coverage; and gender-based violence).**

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<sup>5</sup> Council conclusions of 18 November 2010 on the role of sport as a source of and a driver for active social inclusion, [...] **OJ C 326, 3.12. 2010, p. 5.**

<sup>6</sup> Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on promoting the common values of the EU through sport, [...] **OJ C 196, 8.6.2018, p. 23.**

<sup>7</sup> **OJ C 212, 4.6.2021, p. 2–9.**

<sup>8</sup> European Commission, Towards more gender equality in sport, Recommendations and action plan from the High-Level Group on Gender Equality in sport, 2022.

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT:

13. Despite the progress made so far and taking into account the different situations in the Member States, women's participation in sport **and physical activity** is still lower than men's<sup>9</sup> due to practical, personal[.], sociocultural **and structural** barriers, negatively influencing their level of presence in coaching, officiating and leadership positions.
14. Women still face obstacles in the sport labour market in terms of, for example, equal access, equal pay **for equal work**, representation in decision-making positions, **gender stereotypes** and equal appreciation and recognition of their work.
15. There are notable differences between sports and between Member States, and that women's lack of equal access and involvement, participation in leadership positions and visibility in the field of sport tends to perpetuate discrimination and inequalities.
16. Abuse, sexual harassment, violence **against women and girls**, also in the digital space[.], **as well as** gender stereotyping, remain major concerns in the sport sector.
17. Discrimination on the grounds of sex, [...]ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, [...] disability, age, sexual orientation [.]**or** gender identity, can lead to the exclusion, in particular **of persons in** vulnerable and marginalised [...]positions, from participating in sports.
18. **Media coverage in sports tends to be focused on sports traditionally practiced by men, with women receiving significantly less coverage, being often portrayed in more stereotypical, sexualized, and sexist ways.**
19. Sport's potential to advance equality through self-empowerment, awareness-raising and the combating of prevailing **gender** stereotypes through active participation is important.

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<sup>9</sup> According to the 5<sup>th</sup> Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity published in September 2022.

NOTING THAT:

20. The European sense of belonging and the future prosperity of Europe depend on societies that actively prevent and combat **gender-based** discrimination, **bearing in mind the specific nature of sport**.
21. Sport plays an important role in the lives of the population [..]in the EU and that sporting activity makes an important social, educational, economic, cultural, and unifying contribution to society in the European Union, as well as to its strategic objectives and social values.
22. **While the benefits of access to and participation in sport to the individuals are well established, such as those pertaining to personal development, sense of identity and belonging, self-efficacy, self-confidence, physical and mental well-being, for their full attainment it is imperative that participants have access to a safe, inclusive and equal playing field, free from any form of inequality, discrimination or violence.**
23. Increased visibility and better-quality media coverage of women`s sports competitions could influence the public`s perception of the value of women`s sport and its importance in society.
24. Public investment in sport should be [...]fairly distributed between women and men.

UNDERLINING THAT:

25. The scope of these Council conclusions covers all sports policy measures.
26. Gender equality is a sport policy objective at EU level, as endorsed in the Work Plan for Sport (2021-2024).
27. Measures supporting and promoting gender equality reinforce compliance with international commitments referred to in the annex to these conclusions.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES, WITHIN THEIR AREAS OF COMPETENCES AND RESPECTING THE ROLE AND AUTONOMY OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS, TO:

28. Aim to ensure that everyone has equal access to and can fully participate in [...]sports **at all levels and functions** without **gender-based** discrimination.
29. Strengthen and mainstream gender equality in sport policy and promote positive role models through sport policy and other related policies.
30. Strengthen equal participation **of women and men** in professional sports by improving [...]**terms and conditions of employment**, ensuring equal pay and contract conditions for equal work **of equal value**, and promoting measures supporting an improved work-life balance.

31. Encourage and incentivise the sport sector to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions as well as the number of [...] **sport staff** and officials.
32. **Without prejudice to freedom of expression and information**, promote gender equality by **inviting the media, especially public service media**, to improve the visibility and media coverage of women`s sport competitions [...], **and by making use of the prerogative conferred by Article 14 of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive on events of major importance for society.**<sup>10</sup>
33. Encourage and actively support the sport sector to prevent and combat harassment [..., **sexist hate speech**, sexual abuse **and violence against women and girls, in particular persons in vulnerable [...]and marginalised positions**, [...]and minors at [...]all levels.
34. Improve the protection of victims of gender-based violence, witnesses and whistle-blowers.
35. Consider promoting research and studies into, statistics on, and analysis of gender equality in the field of sports, as well as the collection of **intersectional and** disaggregated data on men and women in the field of sport, including the effects of gender stereotypes.
36. **Consider making** the granting of public funds subject to compliance with the fundamental principles of good governance, including gender equality.
37. **Take into account the aspect of gender equality and the special needs of women and girls in the process of the construction and renovation of sports infrastructure.**

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<sup>10</sup> **Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive), OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p. 1.**

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, IN LINE WITH THE SUBSIDIARITY PRINCIPLE, AND WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE, TO:

38. Promote the regular exchange of good practices on measures to promote gender equality in the field of sport, e.g., through participation in the EU-CoE's joint 'All In Plus' project.
39. Foster the exchange of good practices and guidelines on how sport institutions could develop organisational structures and measures to prevent all forms of abuse, **sexist hate speech** and harassment, with a special focus on gender-based violence.
40. Encourage the exchange of information on all initiatives and practices that can contribute to increasing the participation of women in the sport sector in general and to combating **gender-based** discrimination and stereotypes.
41. **Promote the active cooperation between the relevant social partners in the framework of the social dialogue and with the sport movement in the framework of the structured dialogue, based on a multi-level, multi-actor and multi-disciplinary approach.**

INVITE THE COMMISSION TO:

42. Consider including the sport sector in prospective gender equality strategies, while respecting the national competences of the Member States,
43. Regularly report to the Council on actions taken in relation to the promotion of gender equality that are relevant to the sport sector,
44. **Continue supporting** transnational initiatives on gender equality in the field of sport, such as awareness-raising, educational campaigns, exchange of good practices, studies, networks and projects, such as the ‘All In Plus’ joint EU-CoE project<sup>11</sup>.
45. Foster research on the role of the sport sector and industry in shaping the values, attitudes, needs and interests of women and men, analysing aspects such as equal access, visibility, and participation in the field of sport.
46. **Take into account the gender equality dimension in the assessment of the conditions required to qualify sport events as being of major importance for society under Article 14 of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.**

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<sup>11</sup> Council of Europe, All In Plus: Promoting greater gender equality in sport, March 2023.

INVITE THE SPORTS MOVEMENT AND OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS TO:

47. Make gender equality a cornerstone of good governance of sports organisations, **e.g., by promoting an equal and transparent funding system, equal funding opportunities and equal pay. In addition to promoting diversity at all levels, all relevant aspects should be analyzed with a special focus on intersectionality and structural discrimination.**
48. Mainstream [...] **equality between women and men** in all sports strategies, policies and actions, **for example**, by putting in place a coordinator for gender equality, [...] **fair** budgeting, as well as [...] **fostering gender equality** in all procedures and in the training of employees **and volunteers**.
49. **Take the necessary steps towards increasing** the proportion of women in leadership, **coaching and officiating** positions in sports organisations, institutions and clubs, [...] **specially by motivating and supporting women to take such positions.**
50. Set gender-equal participation targets in the training of [...] **sport staff** and officials, for instance by supporting a mentoring programme for young girls and women interested in coaching and refereeing.

51. Develop and make available educational and prevention programmes on gender equality and fight against harassment, **hate speech, all forms of abuse and gender-based violence** [...]providing better protection for victims, whistle-blowers and witnesses.
52. **Seek to engage women and girls from different socio-economic backgrounds to participate in sports.**
53. **Collect, disseminate and highlight good practices on gender equality in sport, while promoting and facilitating exchanges of experiences.**
54. **Ensure gender-balanced coverage in internal and external communication, including on social networks.**
55. **Ensure that women and girls participating in sports have access to appropriate equipment and attire to ensure their safe participation.**
56. **Ensure equal accessibility to sport infrastructure based on the needs and demand of all individuals and create adequate and safe facilities for women and girls.**

RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS:

- Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, [...]OJ C 306, 17.12. 2007, p. 1.
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, (2012/C 326/02).
- Council conclusions on sustainable and accessible sports infrastructure, [...]OJ C 494, 28.12.2022, p. 1.
- **Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the key features of a European Sport Model, OJ C 501, 13.12.2021, p. 1.**
- Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (1 January 2021-30 June 2024), [...]OJ C 419, 4.12.2020, p. 1.
- Council conclusions on Gender-Equal Economies in the EU: The Way Forward (14938/19).
- Council conclusions on closing the gender pay gap: key policies and measures (10349/19).
- Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on promoting the common values of the EU through sport, [...]OJ C 196, 8.6.2018, p.23.

- Council conclusions of 21 May 2014 on gender equality in sport, OJ C 183, 14.6.2014.
- Council conclusions of 18 November 2010 on the role of sport as a source of and a driver for active social inclusion, [...]OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 5.
- European Commission, Towards more gender equality in sport: Recommendations and action plan from the High-Level Group on Gender Equality in sport (2022).
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A Union of equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, COM/2020/152 final.
- **Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism of the CoE Committee of Ministers (2019).**
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)5 on the Revised European Sports Charter adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 13 October 2021 at the 1414th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2015) on gender mainstreaming in sport – adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 21 January 2015 at the 1217th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
- Resolution of the European Parliament on EU sports policy: assessment and possible ways forward, [...]OJ C 224, 8.6.2022, p.2.

- Report of the European Institute for Gender Equality on gender equality in power and decision-making, 2015.
  - **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Moving forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, BSP-2017/WS/1, 2017.**
  - **UNESCO, Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VI), Kazan Action Plan, 15 July 2017.**
  - **UNESCO, MINEPS V, Declaration of Berlin, 30 May 2013.**
  - **International Olympic Committee (IOC), Gender Equality and Inclusion Objectives 2021-2024, Gender Equality & Inclusion Report 2021.**
  - **IOC, Olympic Agenda 2020 +5: 15 Recommendations.**
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