

# MONTHLY REPORT

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July 2025



EUROPEAN  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEES



EU  
Office

### FIGURES OF THE MONTH

**WHO Europe report: insufficient physical activity remains a key challenge in non-communicable diseases prevention**



#### Physical inactivity

Between 2010 and 2022, 25% of the population of the WHO European Region was insufficiently active. While rates varied considerably between countries (from 8.4% to 51.6%), 17 countries (mostly in the EU14) achieved the target of a 15% reduction by 2030 early. In 35 countries women were less active than men.



#### Risk factors are on the decline but not fast enough to meet most targets

While levels of most risk factors have been declining in the WHO European Region since 2010, they remain high and declines are too slow to meet the targets. Notable exceptions to this are rising rates of obesity and diabetes, and insufficient physical activity, which has stagnated.

Fig. 9. Overview of findings

	Mortality		Risk factors							
	Premature NCD mortality		Self-harm	Alcohol	Tobacco	Physical activity	Obesity	Raised blood pressure	Diabetes	Air pollution
	EPW	SDG								
On target/on track	No ✗	No ✗	Yes ✓	Yes ✓	No ✗	No ✗	No ✗	No ✗	No ✗	No timebound target
Trend	Down ↓	Down ↓	Down ↓	Down ↓	Down ↓	No change —	Up ↑	Down ↓	Up ↑	Down ↓
Regional delay (years) or % from baseline	0.7	2.1	-1.2	-0.5	4.8	11.1	13.4%	4.5	26.1%	Not applicable
Countries on track	26/51	22/49	30/49	14/54	12/49	23/52	3/51 2 statistically significant	4/51	9/51 2 statistically significant	No country meeting AQG
Inequalities	Decreased ↓	Decreased ↓	Decreased ↓	No change —	Increased ↑	No change —	Increased ↑	Increased ↑	Increased ↑	Decreased ↓

Source: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/381744/WHO-EURO-2025-12445-52219-80271-eng.pdf?sequence=2>

- **Editorial** **4**



### EU SPORT POLICY AND FUNDING NEWS

- **European Commission presents MFF 2028–2034: preliminary insights and implications for the sport sector** **5**
- **Arbitration in sport taking centre stage at the European Court of Human Rights** **6**
- **Denmark assumes the Presidency of the Council of the EU** **8**
- **Erasmus+ Evaluation highlights: key opportunities and recommendations for sport** **9**
- **SHARE 2.0: Leveraging sport for physical and mental well-being** **10**



### PARTNERS' CORNER

- **SAFE HARBOUR project celebrates its first six months of implementation** **11**
- **Upcoming events** **13**

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### EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

A few days ago, the European Commission presented its proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034, which immediately triggered heated controversies both within and outside EU institutions. The reasons for the criticism vary and are reminiscent of the debates that arise every seven years around the multiannual budget.

To be fair, it must be acknowledged that the different expectations placed on the European Commission are mutually incompatible. On the one hand, the budget is expected to be modernized and address current challenges, such as a more closely integrated defense policy; on the other hand, all major beneficiaries of agricultural and cohesion policies expect at least the same level of funding as before. But if no one is willing to give anything up, how are new tasks to be financed within a reduced or unchanged budget framework?

With regard to the Erasmus+ program, the Commission's proposal includes an increase of around €14 billion, from which sport would also benefit. However, it is still too early to celebrate, as significant changes to the figures are expected during the two years of budget negotiations ahead. What remains clear, though, is that all EU institutions want to preserve the identity-shaping significance of Erasmus+ for the European Union.

One year after the impressive Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris, discussions are ongoing in France about the legacy the Games have left behind. For future hosts of major sporting events, it is important that the political leadership of the host country sticks to the promises made during the bidding process and thus maintains credibility.

The recently concluded European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) in Skopje showed how important youth games at the highest level are for the continued personal and athletic development of young athletes. It is to be hoped that the financing of such sporting events will be secured through public funds and, in the future, even more through sponsors. The European Commission also aims to contribute in the future through Erasmus+, as for the first time, support for larger non-commercial sporting events is to be included in the regularly funding line of the sport chapter. It is to be hoped that this approach will survive the upcoming two-year budget negotiations.

Our next edition of the monthly report will not reach you until end of September. The entire team at the EOC EU Office wishes you relaxing holidays and a good restart after the summer break.

Kind regards,



Folker Hellmund  
Director EOC EU Office



### EU SPORT POLICY AND FUNDING NEWS

## European Commission presents MFF 2028–2034: preliminary insights and implications for the sport sector

On 16 July 2025, the European Commission presented its proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034, outlining the EU's long-term budgetary direction.

The proposed MFF introduces a redesigned structure and simplification effort aimed at making the EU more competitive and better prepared to face security and climate challenges. With a total budget of almost €2 trillion, the proposed new framework would reduce the number of programmes from 52 to 16 and introduce harmonised rules and a single access portal to streamline participation.

### Key budgetary pillars

- National and Regional Partnership Plans: €865 billion is earmarked for Member State-driven initiatives in cohesion, social policy, agriculture, and migration. This approach has been sharply criticised by the European Parliament, which fears a weakening of European ideals and increased national disparities.
- European Competitiveness Fund: A €409 billion fund is proposed to support EU-wide priorities including research, innovation, defence, space, and decarbonisation.

### Erasmus+ and proposals relevant to sport

Erasmus+ is confirmed to remain a standalone flagship programme - under the Competitiveness Fund, with a proposed budget increase from €26.5 billion to €40.8 billion. The larger Erasmus+ programme aims to support high-quality lifelong learning, Union values, inclusion, and equal opportunities. The integration of activities from the current European Solidarity Corps further broadens its scope.

Although no sport-specific budget line has been earmarked at this stage, our team has identified the below proposals relevant for sport:

- New initiatives: The introduction of the "Sport Collaborative Alliance" under "Partnerships for excellence and innovation" - the potential of this new funding opportunity is still to be clarified.
- Continuation of existing actions: Ongoing support for Partnerships for Cooperation, including small-scale partnerships.
- Expanded mobility opportunities for new target groups: Mobility opportunities (currently under Key Action 1) are set to extend beyond sport staff to include athletes and coaches, particularly in grassroots sport - a notable evolution from the current MFF.
- Simplified access: The Commission pledged to reduce administrative burdens and improve access to funding for civil society and sport organisations.

### Other relevant programmes

The new AgoraEU programme will merge the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) and Creative Europe programmes, thereby supporting media, culture, and civil society through a broader funding envelope.

### Next steps

The proposal marks the beginning of what is expected to be a two-year negotiation process. The European Parliament has already voiced opposition to the Commission's central proposals, particularly the National and Regional Partnership Plans. The overall size of the seven-year budget and its financing mechanisms are also critical points of discussion, specifically among Member States. Major debates are anticipated after the summer break.

In the meantime, the EOC EU Office will seek further information regarding the budget line dedicated to sport organisations and closely engage in the negotiations to ensure that sport continues to be recognised as a strategic element within the EU's future budgetary priorities.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- [European Commission Press Release: An ambitious budget for a stronger Europe: 2028-2034](#)
- [Questions and answers on the next long-term budget](#)
- [First reaction of the European Parliament: Budget proposal “simply not enough” to meet Europe's challenges, lead MEPs say | News | European Parliament](#)
- [Joint statement by group majority leaders of the European Parliament Statement by group majority leaders on the EU long-term budget](#)

## Arbitration in sport taking centre stage at the European Court of Human Rights



Picture: Africa Legal

On 10 July 2025, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) issued its ruling in *Semenya v. Switzerland*, a case that could reshape how international sport arbitration is approached from a human rights perspective.

### About the case

The case concerned Caster Semenya, a South African elite middle-distance runner and Olympic gold medallist, who challenged regulations introduced by World Athletics (formerly the IAAF). These rules require athletes with differences of sex development (DSD) and naturally higher testosterone levels to undergo medical interventions to lower their hormone levels in order to compete in women's events. After the athlete's challenges to these rules were dismissed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and later by the Swiss Federal Supreme Court, Semenya took her case to the ECHR - claiming that her human rights had been violated.

### ECHR ruling: violation of the right to a fair hearing

Semenya's case before the ECHR focused not primarily on the legitimacy of the regulations themselves, but rather on whether her right to a fair legal process had been respected.

The athlete invoked the following rights under the European Convention on Human Rights:

Articles 8, 13, and 14 – respectively covering:

- Right to respect for private life
- Right to an effective remedy
- Prohibition of discrimination

And Article 6, protecting the right to a fair hearing before an impartial and competent tribunal.

The Court dismissed the plaintiff's claims made under Articles 8, 13, and 14 on the basis of territorial jurisdiction. Indeed, while the CAS operates under Swiss law, the regulations challenged by Caster Semenya originated from World Athletics, an organisation based in Monaco. As a result, the ECHR determined that Switzerland could not be held responsible for possible violations of the European Convention on Human Rights in relation to the content of those regulations. The rules in question were not created or directly enforced by Swiss authorities, limiting Switzerland's accountability under these specific articles.

However, the Court reached a different conclusion with regard to Article 6, which protects the right to a fair hearing. Because international athletes such as Semenya are required to resolve disputes exclusively through CAS, and because the Swiss Federal Supreme Court is the only avenue for appeal, Switzerland bears the responsibility of ensuring that this legal process meets the standards of fairness required by the Convention.

In this case, the Court found that the Swiss Federal Supreme Court failed to conduct a sufficiently rigorous review of the issues raised. The Court emphasised that the arbitration process was imposed as the only option available by the federation. Furthermore, the dispute concerned issues that touch on fundamental civil rights under national and international law. In light of these factors, the Court concluded that the review conducted by the Swiss Federal Supreme Court was too limited and superficial, compared to the gravity of the issue. As a result, Semenya's right to a fair trial had been violated. The ECHR ruled in her favour and ordered Switzerland to pay compensation.

### **Structural imbalance between sport organisations and athlete**

Beyond the individual circumstances of the case, the Court also highlighted a wider structural concern: the structural power imbalance between athletes and the sport's governing bodies. Sports federations are in a position to unilaterally set the terms of their relationships with athletes. They not only regulate eligibility and competition rules at the international level but also impose arbitration through CAS as the exclusive forum for resolving disputes. Crucially, they also exercise a degree of structural influence over the arbitration process itself, the Court found.

### **Next steps**

Following the ruling, it is expected that Swiss authorities will be required to reassess the case in line with the ECHR's findings. This decision may not only affect the legal outcome for Caster Semenya but could also set a precedent for how other sports-related legal disputes are reviewed in future.

Coinciding with this development, the issue of access to justice in sport is also being addressed by the European Court of Justice (CJEU). On 1 August, the CJEU is due to deliver its ruling in the [RFC Seraing v. FIFA](#) case, which questions whether the enforcement of CAS decisions can prevent athletes or clubs from challenging sport rules under EU law. In her opinion, the Advocate General of the CJEU has already stated that athletes and other parties must be able to turn to national courts when fundamental legal principles are at stake - even when CAS has issued a final ruling and the Swiss Supreme Court has upheld it. Should the CJEU follow this reasoning, CAS decisions could be subject to judicial review in EU Member States when they relate to questions of EU law.

Both cases show that while arbitration cannot come at the expense of fairness, transparency, and individual rights. For sports federations, legal institutions, and athletes alike, the message from Courts is unambiguous: the process must respect fundamental legal safeguards, especially when the consequences reach beyond sport and into the core of human dignity and equality.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

[ECHR Press Release](#)

[Questions & Answers](#)

[ECHR Judgment](#)

[Legal Summary](#)

### Denmark assumes the Presidency of the Council of the EU



On 1 July, Denmark took over the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Poland, as part of the Trio Presidency together with Cyprus. Guided by the motto “A Strong Europe in a Changing World”, the Danish Presidency has set two overarching priorities: a secure Europe and a competitive and green Europe. These reflect the EU’s current political context marked by heightened geopolitical tensions, climate urgency, and the need for enhanced economic resilience.

The Presidency programme outlines key objectives across policy areas such as climate neutrality, defence, competitiveness, and cohesion. On 8 July, Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen addressed the European Parliament, presenting the Presidency’s programme and calling for an “ambitious and responsible course” for Europe. She emphasised support for Ukraine and Moldova’s EU paths, institutional reforms, and advancing the EU’s green and digital transitions. The Presidency also aims to promote a flexible and modern EU budget framework, as discussions around the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034 have already kicked off.

In this regard, Danish Minister for European Affairs Marie Bjerre stressed the need to avoid delays and welcomed the proposal as a “solid basis for negotiations.”, during the debate on the Commission’s MFF proposal at the General Affairs Council on 18 July. Under Denmark’s leadership, regular budget discussions are expected to continue, including an in-depth exchange scheduled for October.

#### Sport-specific objectives

In the field of sport, the Danish Presidency places emphasis on upholding democratic principles in international sport governance, advocating for enhanced transparency, inclusiveness, and rule of law across global sports institutions.

The EOC EU Office will continue monitoring developments and engaging with the Danish Presidency to ensure that sport remains recognised as a cross-cutting policy priority, particularly in the context of the budget negotiations.

Programme of sport-related events under the Danish Presidency

- 23 September 2025: Opening of the European Week of Sport (Copenhagen, Denmark)
- 24 October 2025 (Copenhagen, Denmark): [EU Directors General for Sport meeting](#)
- 28 November 2025 (Brussels, Belgium): [Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council \(Culture and sport\)](#)

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

[18-month Programme of the Council \(1 January 2025 - 30 June 2026\)](#)

[Website of the Danish EU Presidency](#)

[Priorities of the Danish EU Presidency](#)

[Programme of the Danish EU Presidency](#)

### Erasmus+ Evaluation highlights: key opportunities and recommendations for sport

#### Erasmus+ Impact 2014-2020 & 2021-2027

Key figures and insights from the Erasmus+ evaluations

2014-2020	2021-2023 (interim 2021-2027)
160,000 funded projects	72,000 funded projects
6.2 million mobility participants	1.6 million mobility participants
10% participants with fewer opportunities	15% participants with fewer opportunities (2023)
136,000 participating organisations	77,000 participating organisations
Total budget: €17.5 billion	Total budget: €9.8 billion
+40% budget compared to previous programmes	+76.5% budget increase compared to 2014-2020



On 15 July, the European Commission published [the final evaluation of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 and the interim evaluation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027](#), confirming the programme's strong impact and offering insights for future improvements.

The Erasmus+ 2021-2027 is described as instrumental for strengthening the European dimension of sport, advancing policy cooperation and supporting the professional development of sport staff.

The Erasmus+ programme continues to deliver significant benefits for individuals and organisations in the sport and youth sectors - particularly grassroots and smaller organisations, which often benefit from improvements in practices, partnerships, and international reach. It is mentioned that without Erasmus+, internationalisation efforts in the sport sector would be reduced to nearly inexistent in some Member States.

#### Recommendations for the future

Notably, the inclusion strategy has been most effectively implemented in the youth and sport sectors. To build on this, the Commission recommends reviewing the current inclusion framework, clarifying definitions of "people with fewer opportunities," and expanding support measures to enhance access, particularly in underrepresented regions.

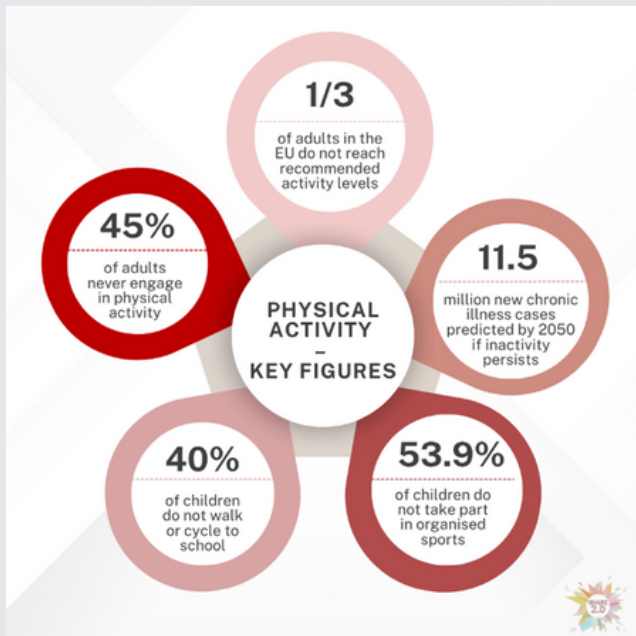
Furthermore, moving forward, the sport sector is also encouraged to align with the programme's growing focus on green and digital transitions. In this regard, the Commission recommends greater investment in green and digital skills, broader promotion of sustainable behaviours, and incentives for low-carbon travel - all of which have clear relevance for sport organisations and their operations.

In response to high demand and low success rates (only 17% of cooperation projects were approved in 2023) the Commission suggests further simplifying programme rules, especially for small and newcomer organisations. Internationally, the programme's expanded outreach is set to continue. The Commission recommends strengthening the international dimension of Erasmus+, with particular attention to third countries, including those on the EU accession path.

These recommendations will guide the ongoing implementation of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and shape the design of the next programme, under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034.

The EOC EU Office will continue to monitor these developments, support sport stakeholders in navigating future opportunities, and advocate proactively to ensure that the specific needs and realities of the organised sport sector are taken into account in the future design of the next Erasmus+ programme.

### SHARE 2.0: Leveraging sport for physical and mental well-being



On 4 June, the SHARE 2.0 Community of Practice (CoP) on Health released two papers on how sport and physical activity contribute to healthy lifestyles and mental well-being. The papers provide a set of policy recommendations designed to guide local and regional authorities, decision-makers, and sport stakeholders in designing inclusive, effective, and health-focused sport strategies.

#### Promoting healthy lifestyles through physical activity and health-enabling environments

The [first paper](#) explores how sport and physical activity contribute to long-term health when integrated into daily life. It calls for the development of inclusive and enjoyable practice formats that can engage populations of all ages and backgrounds. This includes walking football, dance classes, age-friendly exercise programmes, and informal sport in parks.

The report emphasises the role of urban planning and local infrastructure in enabling these activities. Clean, safe, green, and accessible public spaces - such as parks, bike lanes, playgrounds, and open sport fields - can serve as physical enablers of movement, contributing to both health and sustainability.

This is especially relevant considering that by 2030, 80% of the European population is expected to live in urban areas. Designing cities that promote active lifestyles helps reduce sedentary behaviour.

A core message of the paper is the need for intersectoral cooperation. Public health, urban planning, sport, transport, and education policies must align to create health-enabling environments. This includes integrating physical activity into urban design and ensuring all communities have equitable access to safe spaces to move.

#### A growing concern: Youth mental health

The [second paper](#) addresses the deterioration of mental health among young people in Europe, a trend that has worsened significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns, school closures, reduced social interaction, and increased screen time have led to a surge in mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, loneliness, and loss of motivation. According to the report, nearly 9 million adolescents in the EU lived with some form of mental health disorder in 2021.

In this context, the paper highlights the protective benefits of sport. Regular physical activity improves mood, confidence, emotional regulation, and social connection. For many young people, especially those struggling with isolation or low self-esteem, team-based or non-competitive sport can be a safe outlet for expression and reconnection.

#### Recommendations

To turn findings into action, the SHARE 2.0 CoP on Health offers several recommendations, including:

- Providing sport practices adapted to the needs of different age groups, physical capacities, and social backgrounds, ensuring no one is left out.

· Training coaches, physical education teachers, and youth workers in mental health literacy and early detection of signs of distress or isolation.

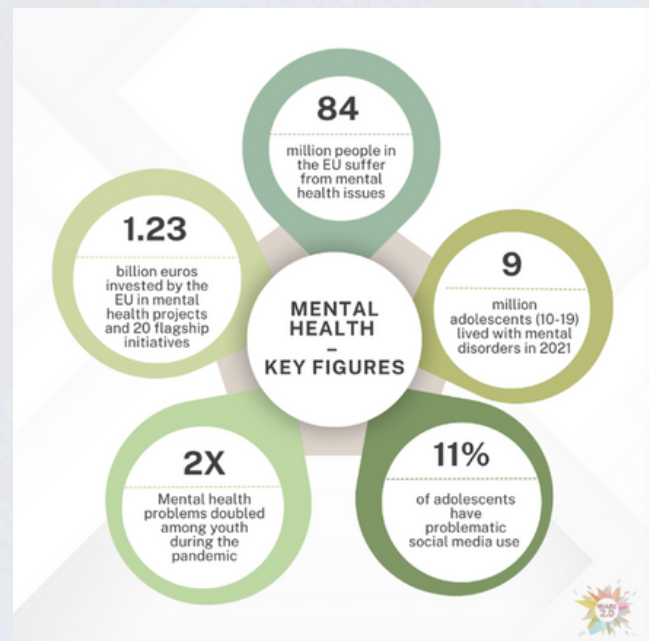
- Designing inclusive, safe, and welcoming environments where people feel secure and free from discrimination, harassment, or stigma.
- Establishing strong cooperation frameworks between schools, sport organisations, health services, and municipal authorities to build local networks of support.

By recognising the multifaceted value of sport, the SHARE 2.0 initiative aims to underline that physical activity is not only about physical health - it is a powerful tool for inclusion and mental well-being.

### About SHARE 2.0

SHARE 2.0, introduced by the European Commission, builds on the foundation of the original SHARE initiative (2018-2023), which supported local and regional sport stakeholders in accessing EU funding. This new phase aims to strengthen collaboration and knowledge sharing on key sport-related topics.

Currently, SHARE 2.0 counts more than 400 members across four CoPs, a significant increase compared to the previous SHARE. The EOC EU Office is part of all CoPs and in the Steering Group of the CoPs on EU Funding and Green Sport. Interested parties can express their interest in joining [here](#).



### FURTHER INFORMATION

More information on the SHARE 2.0 initiative is available [here](#).



### PARTNERS' CORNER

## SAFE HARBOUR project celebrates its first six months of implementation



June 2025 marks the completion of the first six months of the SAFE HARBOUR project. Six months during which the consortium has already achieved significant progress across several key areas.

From the official launch of the project and its media channels, regular consortium and expert exchanges to the delivery of the first approved deliverable, the consortium demonstrates a shared commitment to constructive exchanges, open communication and positive cooperation to jointly strengthening safeguarding mechanisms in European sport.

The project officially started in January 2025 with the first in-person meeting held in Brussels (Belgium) on 28-29 January 2025.

This meeting provided a valuable opportunity for partners to meet face to face, align on project objectives, and begin collective reflection on safeguarding challenges in sport. Since then, experts exchanges and Monthly Consortium Meetings have been held regularly, allowing partners to stay aligned, clarify roles and responsibilities, track progress, and ensure continuous contribution and shared coordination throughout the implementation of the project.

Structured in three phases, the SAFE HARBOUR project begins by identifying gaps, key stakeholders, and patterns of safeguarding violations. It will then move towards the co-development of a European Response framework – a shared advisory tool aligned with the IOC’s global safeguarding standards but adapted to Europe’s legal and institutional context. In the final phase, each NOC will translate the framework into a tailored national strategy and deliver training to their leadership and National Federations.

The project is currently in its first phase. The consortium is advancing three key activities in parallel: a GAP questionnaire was launched to identify both good practices and existing gaps in the procedures and systems of European NOCs and Federations for responding to safeguarding concerns and violations. The responses are currently being analysed and will inform a comprehensive GAP report.

This analysis also complements the ongoing mapping of key stakeholders involved in safeguarding across sport and non-sport sectors, helping to clarify roles, responsibilities, and collaboration mechanisms within partner countries.

Besides, the consortium is conducting regular peer-to-peer exchanges, which serve as a preparatory step towards jointly developing a classification tool for safeguarding concerns and violations in sport.

The SAFE HARBOUR project has also successfully launched its website, social media platforms, and newsletter, marking a significant step forward in its outreach and visibility efforts.

In addition, SAFE HARBOUR has already achieved notable visibility with the project being featured at the [54th EOC General Assembly](#) in February 2025, and at the [Olympism365 Summit](#) in June 2025. These high-level engagements highlight the project’s pivotal role in providing concrete guidance and support to NOCs and Federations.

All in all, the first six months of the SAFE HARBOUR project have demonstrated the strength of a committed consortium and laid a solid foundation for the work ahead. The next in-person project meeting is scheduled to take place in October 2025 and will be complemented by regular online exchanges.

Moving forward, through continued collaboration, and the sharing of expertise, the consortium aims to strengthen safeguarding response mechanisms across Europe so fully integrated at every level, through athlete-centred, trauma-informed, and professionally supported approaches; accordingly, laying the groundwork for the establishment of the IOC Regional Safeguarding Hub.





### UPCOMING EVENTS

**11 September 2025**

SHARE 2.0 Annual conference (online)

**23 - 29 September 2025**

European Week of Sport (EWoS)

**02 October 2025**

EOC Executive Committee (Malta)

**02 - 04 October 2025**

EOC Seminar (Malta)



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