

Strasbourg, 30 November 2021

EPAS(2021)51

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport

Start to Talk – the next level

To prevent and respond to sexual abuse of children in Sport

Information for the Permanent Representations of Council of Europe Member States

ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

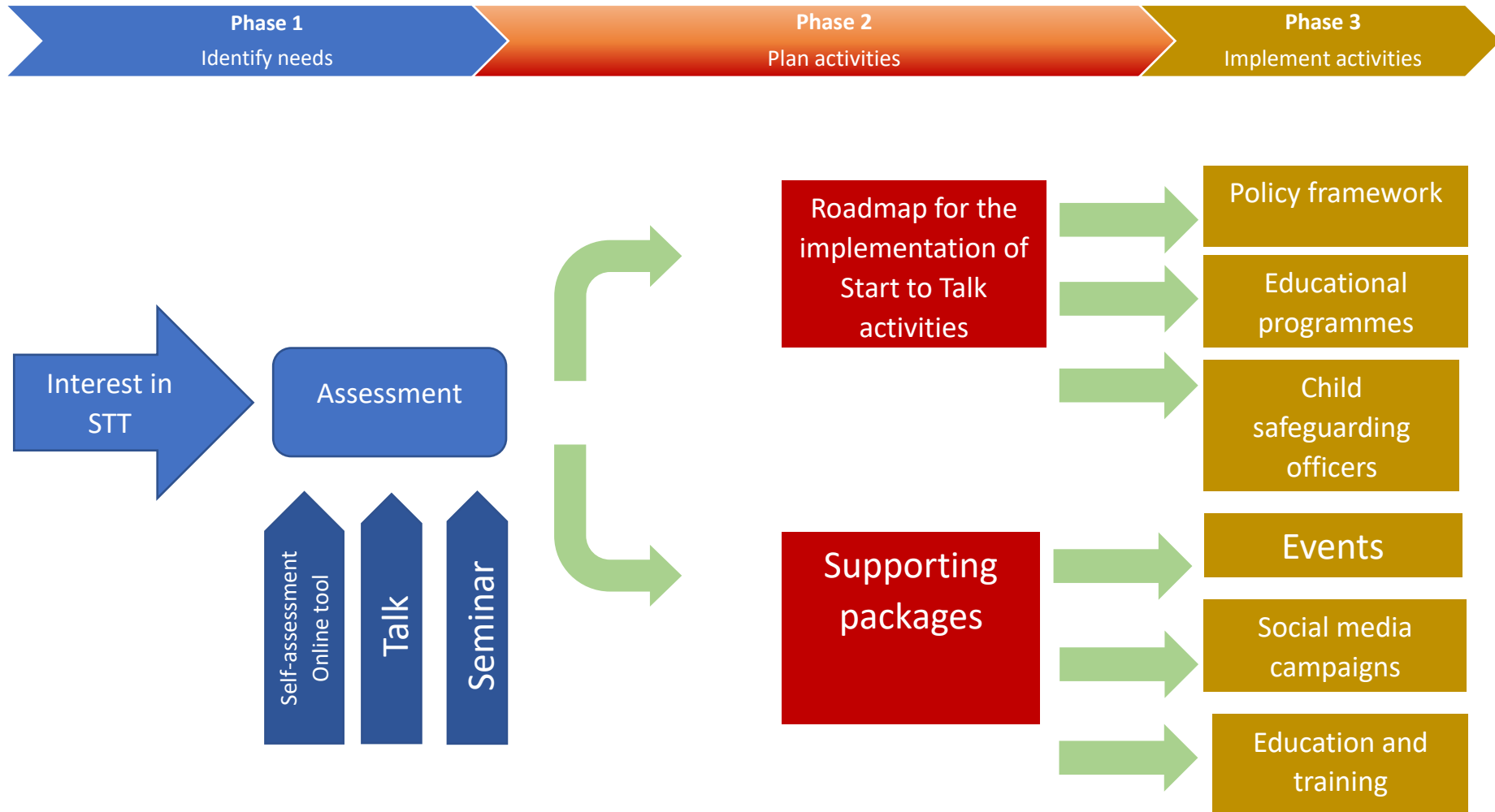
It can take a long time for victims of child sexual abuse to disclose what happened to them, if at all. Research shows that one in three victims will never tell anyone. It also shows that sexual violence affects around 1 in 5 children in Europe and that about 80% of abusers are within the child's circle of trust. The impact of sexual abuse can be devastating and last a lifetime. Sexual abuse happens in sport too and is compounded by specific risk factors, such as authoritarian leadership, scandal avoidance, a male-dominated gender ratio and the existence of reward structures. The good news is that sexual abuse can be prevented.

THE START TO TALK INITIATIVE

Start to Talk is a Council of Europe call for action to public authorities, the sport movement and other stakeholders to take the necessary prevention and protection measures to stop child sexual abuse. By joining this call, governments, sports clubs, associations and federations, as well as athletes and coaches, pledge to take concrete measures to prevent and respond to abuse. Start to Talk is about adults breaking the silence and lending children a voice.

Start to Talk aims at promoting the implementation, in the field of sport, of the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual exploitation and Sexual Abuse (The Lanzarote Convention). Start to Talk was launched by the Council of Europe in 2018 as a follow-up to the two successful Pro Safe Sport projects co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe, and run by the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS).

HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN START TO TALK



START TO TALK – GET ACTIVE!

EPAS invites the Council of Europe member states, the members of the EPAS Governing Board and Consultative Committee, as well as other interested stakeholder organisations, to join this effort towards a safer sport for children. EPAS provides specialised advice and the Start to Talk support packages that can be used by stakeholders to identify needs, plan and implement activities throughout the process outlined in the above table:

- Assessment on safe sport

The EPAS Secretariat assists national authorities, sporting associations and other stakeholders to assess their situation on safe sport by

- using a self-assessment online tool¹ designed for sporting associations to assess their own organisational capacity to provide a safe and healthy sport environment for young athletes and/ or
- discussing the stakeholder's specific situation and needs with experts from the EPAS secretariat and/ or
- organising a seminar with experts to assess the needs and design a plan to combat abuse and harassment in sport

- Developing a strategy/planning activities

- The EPAS Secretariat assists national authorities and other stakeholders in developing a roadmap which lays out a long-term and sustainable strategy to implement Start to Talk activities. The roadmap is designed with the support of international and local experts in child safeguarding in sport
- The EPAS Secretariat assists its stakeholders to plan Start to Talk activities through the Start to Talk supporting packages that include expert advice, a collection of good practices, training materials, the Start to Talk action page and video clip, etc.

- Implementation of activities at national level

The EPAS Secretariat assists its stakeholders to implement:

- National campaigns to raise awareness and empower parents and young athletes through the production of materials and other initiatives (Events, TV spots, videos, web pages, brochures, social media, celebrities engagement, communication during sport events, etc.);
- National policy frameworks for safeguarding and protecting children in sport;
- Guidelines for ethics and codes of conduct in sport
- Case management systems;
- Educational programmes (coaches, managers and policy makers);
- Information systems for child and young athletes and their parents;
- Sharing of good practices in the field of child safeguarding;

¹ The self-assessment tool developed within the Pro Safe Sport project and available on <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/self-assessment> will be redesigned and updated soon

- Setting up of Child Safeguarding Officers
- Other activities

WHERE DO I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON THE START TO TALK SERVICES?

Further information on the products and support packages can be found in the [Start to Talk/EPAS website](#).

Using the CoE logo and existing materials incurs no cost for our partners, but member states are expected to identify the necessary funds to implement the actions that they wish to undertake.

The materials developed by the Council of Europe present the following key advantages:

- They take into account relevant standards and research;
- They have been developed by leading European experts in co-operation with governments, the sport movement and persons with lived experience of sexual abuse in sport;
- They are designed to be easily adapted to the national context. In addition to translating the texts into the national language/s, partners are encouraged to add country-relevant information such as legislation, existing policies and services, helplines and websites. They can also add their logos to the material subject to previous approval by the EPAS Secretariat.

WHAT ARE YOUR BENEFITS OF GETTING INVOLVED IN START TO TALK?

Many countries and stakeholders are interested to implement Start to Talk activities.

In cooperation with its partners and with the support of stakeholders, EPAS is ready to:

- Identify specific needs to fight abuse and harassment in sport
- Develop a strategic and sustainable approach/ system including activities to tackle abuse and harassment in sport
- Provide advice and support in the review and elaboration of policies and legislation
- Collect and update [good practices on child safeguarding in sport](#), including relevant policies and procedures, educational programmes, case management, etc
- Support campaigning and training events
- Coordinate the translation of materials into a maximum of languages and promote their optimal dissemination
- **Identify and mobilise partners and supporters, including “silence breakers” and “game changers”.** Silence breakers are athletes, coaches, opinion leaders and other individuals who commit to take and promote concrete measures to stop sexual abuse of children in sport. Game changers are governments, organisations, institutions, federations, clubs and teams who are partnering with EPAS to introduce the changes needed to make sport a safe and empowering environment for all children
- Involve our [pool of experts on sexual violence in sport](#) in the development of new materials targeting specific groups of stakeholders and issues

- Provide technical assistance in setting up a system of child safeguarding officers
- Evaluate with our member states the impact of the actions and enhance the support offered

The members of the EPAS Governing Board and Consultative Committee are key stakeholders to support these goals as they have specific expertise and experience in their fields of action.

WHAT KIND OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT ARE WE SEEKING?

As a key stakeholder, you are invited to also promote the Start to Talk activities through the following actions:

- Identify and mobilise silence breakers and game changers in your country(-ies) and/or field(s) of action. Athletes, coaches, opinion leaders and sport organisations acting as silence breakers and game changers can be found on the Start to Talk action page below
- Disseminate information on Start to Talk activities, such as campaigning and training events on your webpage and social media

FURTHER INFORMATION AND LINKS OF START TO TALK ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PORTAL

Start to Talk Action page: <http://www.starttotalk.org>

Start to Talk on EPAS: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/start-to-talk>

FACTS AND FIGURES ON START TO TALK (updated on 30 November 2021)

- 20 countries are committed to use the Start to Talk offer.
- The video was already dubbed in 22 languages (Azeri, Bulgarian, Croatian, Dutch, English, Estonian, French, German, Georgian, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Maltese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Spanish, Turkish)
- Training kit: Available in English, French, Greek and Portuguese
- 9 countries launched a national campaign (Spain 5 April 2018, The Netherlands 6 November 2018, Portugal 22 November 2018, Norway 29 November 2018, Finland 29 April 2019, France 18 November 2019, Croatia 13 December 2019, Georgia, 10 December 2020, Greece 14 January 2021)
- Deputies of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from 42 countries have adopted a declaration inviting all countries to join the Start to Talk initiative
- Start to Talk action page is available in 13 languages (Bulgarian, Croatian, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Georgian, Greek, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovenian, Spanish)
- More than 12 Silence breakers (including Roberto Carlos, Gloria Viseras e.a.) and game changers (including Council of Europe member states, IOC, FIFA and UEFA) are online on the action page.
- 18 countries have identified a Start to Talk contact point
- 2 countries provide Voluntary Contributions to Start to Talk