

Dear Mr KASAPOĞLU, Honourable Minister of Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Türkiye,
Dear Ms PEJČINOVIĆ BURIĆ, Honourable Secretary General of the Council of Europe,
Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, and friends,

Thank you for the possibility to talk on this occasion as a member of the EPAS Consultative Committee. Much has been said by the previous speakers and we, ICSSPE, support the suggested resolutions. Still, kindly allow to us make some further comments:

Sport is a phenomenon that is full of contradiction: Sport means enjoyment, at the same time it is serious business and politics. During game time it gets attention from government leaders but many sport ministers and also sport federations demand in vain a budget growth to implement their *sport for all* programmes.

We claim that *sport for all* has a positive impact on health but during the COVID-19 related lockdowns sport **and** physical education were the first policy areas that were shut down.

Many of us and our children were confronted with closed facilities during the various lockdowns; gyms and pools were closed, many cases gyms were turned into classrooms. Additionally there was a ban of outdoor physical activities in many regions or physical activity was very restricted. Those responsible for the closings and restrictions were never tired of explaining why this had to be the case, despite

- (1) existing evidence of the importance of physical activity for mental, physical and social well-being,
- (2) sport being a fundamental human right, and
- (3) the right of the child stating that recreation and play are universal rights.

Using *sport for all* to create stronger societies requires accessible facilities and public space for everyone, no matter of gender, ability, age, faith, ethnicity, or socio-economic background at any time!

This also means that we have to look after all those who did not – due to the COVID-19 pandemic - return to sport after the re-opening of our sport clubs and facilities, especially children and youth. Studies show that in many countries there is a huge decline in organised sports within this age range. And additionally, we must also look at those who cannot participate in sports due to war and other crisis.

Theme 2 invites us to rethink sport for the benefit of a healthy and sustainable future. Again, I want to make two short proposals:

To be visible and effective, member states need strong partners in research, sport practice, education and policy development who jointly ensure an accessible sport system. Often, sport federations and their clubs have an important role in this system, which we appreciate. However, personal life concepts and a changing environment require ongoing structural responses. Not everybody wants or can join a club but wishes or is forced to organise physical activities on her or his own. If we are serious about thinking sport being a fundamental human right for all, we need to respond to these trends as well.

The members of the *International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education* who base their policy proposals on collected evidence, welcome every possibility to discuss this with you further and thus contribute to the overall topic of this conference: *"Rethinking sport!"*

Thank you!

Prof. Dr Annette R. Hofmann, ICSSPE Vice President
Dr Uri Schaefer, ICSSPE President

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