



## **UNESCO – MINEPS VI**

### **Preparations (Working Group)**

#### **ABSTRACT**

**MAIN POLICY AREA** (theme 3)

– *Protecting the Integrity of Sport, specific policy areas “Child Protection” and “Protection of participants, spectators and workers”*

#### **GAPS IDENTIFIED:**

– The need for good practices and holistic, action-oriented approach in the area of child protection in sport, youth development and empowerment in sport, multi-stakeholder partnership.

#### **PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL ACTION:**

– Through the Code of Best Practices for Youth Development and Protection of Young Players on the Pathway to Professional Football, ICSS and its partner organisations seek to disseminate successful experiences in the areas of the recruitment, training, education and protection of young players on their pathway to professional football. The Code is currently in a draft status as it has and continues to be the subject of consultation by interested sports organisations, public authorities and other key stakeholders.

#### **KEY WORDS**

– Code of Best Practices, Youth Protection, Youth Development, Youth Empowerment, Dual Career, Education & Training, Multi-Stakeholder Partnership, Countering Trafficking and Smuggling of Minors.

#### **SOURCE**

– ICSS EUROPE & LATIN AMERICA

#### **REGIONAL SCOPE**

– Global

#### **LANGUAGE**

– English

#### **Open data / URL**

– <http://www.theicss.org/en>



## **SYNOPSIS**

On 16-17 March 2015, senior representatives from leading sports and non-sports organisations gathered in Lisbon to attend the Inter-Regional Sports Policy Summit, an invitation-only high-level meeting organised by ICSS EUROPE (the Summit).

Those present included representatives from the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Organisation of Ibero-American States (OEI), the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States and the Arab League, along with several high-ranking government officials and senior representatives from UNESCO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Council of Europe and the European Commission, FIFA TMS, UEFA and the Commonwealth Games Federation, European Leagues and other key stakeholders.

During the Summit, participants agreed on the need for action, enhanced dialogue and effective collaboration at a global level in areas from sporting and financial integrity and good governance, to the impact of sport on socio-economic development, youth development and child protection.

As a result of the Summit, four multi-sector task forces were established for each of the policy areas, one of which being Sport & Youth Policy, chaired by UNESCO Director of Ethics, Youth and Sport Angela Melo.

Over the next 18 months the Task Force members met several times (in person and/or through conference calls) to lay the foundations of a Code of Best Practices for Youth Development and Protection on the Pathway to Professional Football (the "Code") as a means to identify and promote successful rules, procedures and policies in the recruitment, training, education and protection of minors on the pathway to professional football.

The broad objectives set to the Code are:

- To gather and disseminate best practices;
- To protect minors on the pathway to professional football from all forms of violence, abuse, harm, exploitation and discrimination of any nature; and
- To promote high sports ethical standards throughout child football and football training organisations.

The Code draws from international conventions, policy papers, sports regulations, as well as existing standards tackling youth development and child protection in sport in general and football in particular.

The Code is currently in a draft form and open to consultation with interested stakeholders in order to gather feedback and further case studies, including examples of policies and success policies that could be raised to the rank of best practices. Pilot projects in regions such as Portugal, Brazil, Cape Verde and US-Latin America will be developed as part of the implementation process.



## **MAIN POLICY AREA (theme 3) – Protecting the integrity of sport**

### **SPECIFIC POLICY AREAS**

III.4 Protection of participants, spectators and workers

III.5 Prevention education and awareness raising

(NB: at a lower level, the Code also answer specific policy areas I.2 “Multi-stakeholder partnership and governance” and II.3 “Youth empowerment”)

### **NORMS**

#### **(Berlin Declaration)**

*1.3 Emphasizing the need for Child Safeguarding in all physical education and sport programmes;*

*1.4 Recognizing that an inclusive environment free of violence, sexual harassment, racism and other forms of discrimination is fundamental to quality physical education and sport;*

#### **(International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport)**

*Article 10 of the Revised Charter: “Protection and promotion of the integrity and ethical values of physical education, physical activity and sport must be a constant concern for all”*

*10.1 All forms of physical education, physical activity and sport must be protected from abuse. Phenomena such as violence, doping, political exploitation, corruption and manipulation of sports competitions endanger the credibility and integrity of physical education, physical activity and sport and undermine their educational, developmental, and health promoting functions. Participants including referees, public authorities, law enforcement, sports organizations, betting operators, owners of sports-related rights, the media, non-governmental organizations, administrators, educators, families, the medical profession and other stakeholders must collaborate to ensure a coordinated response to integrity threats.*

*(...)*

*10.5 Any employer in the field of physical education, physical activity and sport or related areas must pay due consideration to the psychological and physical health of their employees, including professional athletes. International labour conventions and basic human rights must be respected, in particular to avoid child labour and human trafficking.*

**(SDG’s – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS – General Assembly resolution 70/1, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”)**

#### **Sustainable Development Goal 16**

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

*106. Peace, justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are at the core of sustainable development.*



- Reduce all forms of violence
- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against of children
- Reduce illicit financial flows and combat all forms of organized crime
- Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
- Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels
- Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance

**BACKGROUND: filling the gap for guidance and worldwide implementation of best practice on youth development and protection in sport**

Youth training and development are key features for the long-term success of any sport.

While millions of children enjoy the pleasure of practising sport each day, for the most talented of them it has increasingly become a credible career path, the possibility for them to make their passion for sport their actual profession.

As a consequence of this, there has also been a greater demand for quality training and education for young sports persons. However, as in other fields of activity, expertise is not evenly spread across the industry.

At the same time, the parallel commercialisation of sport has also come with more pressure on athletes in general and has induced higher risks for young elite sports persons in particular. As a recent report from world football player union FIFPro has put it: young athletes are the most vulnerable to violence and discrimination<sup>1</sup>.

This situation is reinforced by the fact that some risks are specific to young athletes on their pathway to elite sport. This is due to the intensely physical and mentally-demanding training required from athletes at a young age in order to be successful at their chosen sport. As such, there is a real need to put in place specific structures to protect minors from any form of violence, harm, abuse or exploitation in the field of sport. The recent news coming from British Football involving the sexual exploitation of young British football players<sup>2</sup>, shows that sexual abuse, which to date, has largely been “covered up”, denied, or a threat that did not exist, is a genuine risk to child athletes. In addition, growing incidents related to trafficking of minors in sport demand firm action and proactive attitude, along the lines recommended by the Code.

**A collection of guidelines on developing and protecting young footballers: the Code**

Against this background, the Code is a practical response to this challenge and provides state-of-the-art recommendations on the recruitment, training, education and protection of young players on their

---

<sup>1</sup> 2016 FIFPro Global Employment Report – Working Conditions in Professional Football. Available at <https://www.fifpro.org/images/documents-pdf/2016-fifpro-global-employment-report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> ‘Football child abuse scandal: Number of claims tops 1,000’, BBC, 18 January 2017. Available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-38664696>



pathway to professional football. In that sense, it is aimed at protecting the integrity of sport in the specific policy area of youth development and child protection<sup>3</sup>.

Again, through this initiative, the ICSS EUROPE and its partner organisations in the drafting of the Code would help MINEPS meet one of the main objectives assigned to expert groups under the follow-up framework, namely “identifying gaps and proposing relevant international action”<sup>4</sup>.

The Code has been developed by a Task Force chaired by UNESCO Director of the Ethics, Youth and Sport Ângela Melo and made up of sports organisations (FIFPro, EPFL, Portuguese Olympic Committee, ESIC), governments (Portugal), international institutions (UNICEF, CPLP, UNESCO, OEI) and NGOs (ICSS EUROPE, NSPCC, Football Solidaire). The purpose of this document is to identify and disseminate rules, procedures and policies that have worked well in the areas of the recruitment, training, education and protection of young players on their pathway to professional football, so that interested football training organisations and governing bodies may adopt the Code as a template for success.

However, the Code is still a work in progress and should continue to integrate new best practices along the way in order to effectively meet future challenges.

It is currently open to consultation from sports organisations and public authorities active in the recruitment, training, educations and protection of minors on their pathway to professional football.

**Key Components that make the Code’s fit-for-purpose** Key best practices recommended in the Code will notably relate to:

- the establishment of limitations for training duration (e.g. with books of specifications established by football governing bodies);
- the setting of a minimum age for the practice of organised youth football and for taking intensive training for professional football;
- the organisation of quality professional education (with qualification diploma) and lifelong training for coaches and all staff (notably medical practitioners) interacting with child football players;
- the implementation of appropriate vetting and recruitment procedures to prevent any type of violence, harm or abuse towards minor footballers;
- the imposition of quality criteria related to training, match and accommodation facilities to ensure health, safety and security;
- the respect of local rules on compulsory education and the promotion of academic education besides the mandatory age (e.g. through the signature of education convention between the player and the club);
- the institution of significant dual-career arrangements with appropriate educational and vocational support and incentives;
- the transmission of ethical values in general and sports ethics to child athletes as part of their professional football career;
- the respect of regulations on the international movement of minors;
- the establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships and action-oriented, concerted, coordinated approaches, through enhanced international cooperation, to prevent trafficking and abuse of minors in sport (football).

---

<sup>3</sup> For the sake of precision, this corresponds to Theme 3 under MINEPS VI follow-up framework. Please have a look at *MINEPS VI - Briefing Note for Working Groups* (p.15) for more information.

<sup>4</sup> Please have a look at *MINEPS VI - Briefing Note for Working Groups* (p.8) for more information.



## **ANNEX**

Draft Code of Best Practice for Youth Development and Protection of Minors on the Pathway to Professional Football: Consultation Document