GUARD

GUARD FINAL CONFERENCE

From Commitment to Action in Safeguarding Children in Sport

Co-funded by the European Union

After almost three years of cooperation, development, testing and learning across Europe, the **GUARD – Safeguarding Children in Sport** project is approaching one of its most important milestones: its **Final Conference,** taking place on **24 November 2026 in Zagreb, Croatia,** with the possibility to participate **in person or online.**

The conference will bring together representatives of the Olympic and sports movement, National Federations, safeguarding experts, policymakers and other stakeholders to present what GUARD has achieved – and, most importantly, to share the practical resources developed to support safer environments for children in sport.





THREE YEARS OF COOPERATION FOR SAFER SPORT

GUARD was created with a clear ambition: to help sport organisations move **from safeguarding policies and strategies to practical implementation.**

Coordinated by the **Croatian Olympic Committee,** the project brings together the Ministry of Tourism and Sport of the Republic of Croatia and National Olympic Committees from **Croatia, Greece, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania and Slovenia.**

At the heart of GUARD is the development of a sustainable structure of competent **Child Safeguarding Officers (CSOs)** within national sport systems – professionals equipped not only with theoretical knowledge, but also with practical guidance, procedures, training materials and tools that can support them in their everyday work.

Over the course of the project, the consortium has worked on two closely connected areas:

System and structure, advice and support, including guidance and procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns, case response and case management, and practical resources for CSOs;

Education and training, including the definition of the CSO role and competences, training standards and materials, and a model education and training framework that can continue to be used beyond the lifetime of GUARD.













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FROM MATERIALS TO PRACTICE: THE GUARD EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

A major milestone of GUARD has been the implementation and testing of its **three-module educational programme for Child Safeguarding Officers,** combining national training, international exchange and practical application.

Module 1 – Building the foundations was delivered at national level, introducing participants to the key responsibilities, knowledge and competences of Child Safeguarding Officers and allowing them to explore safeguarding within their national sport contexts.

Module 2 – Learning across borders brought participants together at transnational level. The main session, held in **Zagreb on 14 October 2025, gathered more than 170 participants,** complemented by an additional session in **Vilnius, Lithuania,** and provided an important space for international learning, exchange and networking.

Module 3 – Turning knowledge into practice focused on practical application through case-based learning, scenarios and applied exercises reflecting situations that safeguarding professionals may encounter in sport.

Experience and participant feedback from all three modules have helped **review, refine and strengthen the final GUARD educational framework and materials.** Importantly, partners are already looking at ways to integrate these resources into future national activities, extending the impact of GUARD beyond the project itself.



THE NEXT MILESTONE: SHARING THE GUARD TOOLS

The Final Conference will mark an important transition: **from developing and testing the GUARD approach to sharing its results with the wider European sport community.**

Some of the project's most important outputs are now entering their final stage following implementation, consortium review and an additional external review process.

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During the Final Conference, participants will be introduced to the key GUARD results, including:

- **Guidance and procedures to safeguard and protect children in sport organisations**
- **Set of resources for Child Safeguarding Officers in sport organisations**
- **Training standards and training materials for Child Safeguarding Officers**
- **The GUARD model of education and training framework**

These resources were developed with one central principle in mind: safeguarding materials need to be **practical, understandable and usable by sport organisations.**

The ambition is therefore not for GUARD's results to remain within the project consortium. The project was designed to share its knowledge and results, enabling other sport organisations to use and multiply them and contributing to stronger safeguarding structures in sport beyond the participating countries.







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GUARD FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 24 November 2026
13:00–16:30
Zagreb, Croatia | Hybrid event

Join us in Zagreb or online

13:00 | Opening and Welcome

Welcome addresses and opening of the GUARD Final Conference.

13:15 | GUARD: From Commitment to Action

A short journey through the GUARD project – its objectives, partnership, activities and the challenge it set out to address.

13:30 | Building the System: GUARD Tools for Safeguarding in Sport

Presentation of the results developed under WP2, including the guidance, procedures and practical resources designed to support Child Safeguarding Officers and sport organisations.

14:00 | Building Competences: The GUARD Education and Training Framework

Presentation of the educational journey, the three-module pilot programme, lessons learned from implementation and the final education and training framework.

14:30 | Break

15:00 | From Results to Practice: National Experiences

Representatives from participating countries and sport organisations share how GUARD has been translated into practice at national level and what comes next.

15:30 | Panel Discussion: From Developing the Tools to Using Them

A discussion bringing together members of the GUARD consortium and external experts to reflect on the development, review and practical application of safeguarding resources.

16:00 | European Synergies: Building the Future of Safeguarding in Sport

A discussion connecting GUARD with other European initiatives and exploring how cooperation, knowledge-sharing and existing networks can strengthen safeguarding structures across Europe.

16:30 | Closing & Networking

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JOIN US IN ZAGREB – OR ONLINE

Participation in the GUARD Final Conference is **free of charge,** but registration is required.

Participants can choose between:

IN-PERSON PARTICIPATION

Zagreb, Croatia

Join us at the conference venue and take part in the discussions and networking activities in person.

ONLINE PARTICIPATION

Follow the conference remotely through the dedicated live stream. Access information will be provided to registered online participants ahead of the event.

REGISTER FOR THE GUARD FINAL CONFERENCE HERE

Important information for in-person participants:

The number of places available for **physical attendance is limited.**

If you select in-person participation, we kindly ask you to register **only if you genuinely intend to attend the conference in Zagreb.** This will help us make the best possible use of the available capacity and ensure that places are available to participants who are able to join us.

If you are unable to travel to Zagreb, we would be delighted to welcome you online.

GUARD

ONE PROJECT. SEVEN COUNTRIES. A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.

GUARD started from a simple but important premise: **children should be able to participate in sport in an environment in which they are safe, respected and protected.**

Achieving this requires more than policies. It requires people who know what to do, organisations with clear procedures, accessible resources, appropriate education and networks through which professionals can continue to learn from and support one another.

Join us on **24 November 2026** as we share the results, tools, experiences and lessons developed through GUARD – and continue working together towards safer sport for every child.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

PROJECT WEBSITE

PROJECT SOCIALS

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