

## NOC Survey Report

# Building European Safe Sport Together: Assessment of safeguarding status amongst European National Olympic Committees

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Published on 05 July 2024

Visit the project website: [besst-safesport.eu](https://besst-safesport.eu)

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

## Table of contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary .....  | 4  |
| 1. Project introduction.....   | 7  |
| 2. Methodology .....   | 8  |
| 3. Survey results .....  | 10 |
| 3.1. Organisation status.....  | 10 |
| 3.2. NOCs with safeguarding processes and procedures in place .....        | 11 |
| 3.2.1. Focus on national safeguarding strategy .....                       | 11 |
| 3.2.2. Target group for the policies and procedures.....                   | 12 |
| 3.2.3. Type of safeguarding initiatives offered .....                      | 13 |
| 3.2.4. Reporting.....  | 15 |
| 3.2.5. Investigation and adjudication .....                                | 19 |
| 3.2.6. Future of safeguarding in the NOCs with safeguarding in place ..... | 20 |
| 3.3. NOCs without safeguarding in place .....                              | 21 |
| 3.3.1. Resources workload and number of resources .....                    | 23 |
| 3.3.2. IOC Safeguarding Officer .....                                      | 23 |
| 3.3.3. Specific safeguarding knowledge .....                               | 24 |
| 3.3.4. Government regulations .....  | 25 |
| 3.3.5. Leadership support and clear roles and responsibilities .....       | 25 |
| 4. Conclusion .....  | 26 |
| Appendix.....  | 27 |

## Executive Summary

This report presents the quantitative and qualitative results from the questionnaire and interview methodologies conducted with the National Olympic Committees (NOC) in Europe between August and October of 2023 with the objectives of:

- comprehending the level status from each organisation regarding systematising safeguarding,
- enquiring about processes implemented and under development,
- identifying specific needs of the organisations.

## Organisation status

The results have been organised in two large groups based on the status of the organisations:

- The NOCs with some sort of safeguarding in place, and
- the NOCs without any safeguarding implemented.

The survey identifies a little over two fifths of the respondents do not have any implemented safeguarding policies and procedures in place in their NOCs. In the NOCs with safeguarding in place, the vast majority does not believe these policies and procedures to be effective in protecting the sports community yet. During the interviews, it became clear that each NOC perceives their level according to their reality and cultural assumptions.

## NOCs with safeguarding in place

An extremely low number of NOCs with safeguarding in place consider their processes and procedures to be effective. The NOCs also indicate that from the countries that participate, less than a third have a National Safeguarding Strategy implemented.

These NOCs target groups for their policies are:

- entourage (coaches, technicians and officials),
- athletes,
- National Federations (NF) and staff (NOCs administrative employees).

The groups with lowest priorities are:

- clubs/leagues,
- volunteers,
- children.

These policies and procedures are only enforced all the time by 60% of the NOCs as many only have a valid safeguarding policy or procedure during specific events such as Olympic Games and local/national/international events.

The most prominent safeguarding processes and procedures in place are:

- education and awareness campaigns,
- policies,
- disciplinary procedures.

Very few NOCs have an organisation statute with clear safeguarding and a formal department. Considering this last fact, the organisations have been resourceful and were able to integrate an array of personnel to their structures (paid or volunteered), such as safeguarding officer/ombudsman/compliance officer. No organisation is providing social services.

Through the interviews, it has been made clear that in many cases safeguarding is a responsibility that has been added to a previously existing job description.

70% of NOCs that responded have a reporting mechanism in place and all of them offer a possibility to report an incident anonymously protecting the identity of the whistleblower.

The most common reporting mechanisms available for an incident to be reported are:

- email,
- hotline/phone number,
- in-person.

No NOC provides an in-loco reporting channel during events.

The incident report will arrive in more than half of the NOCs to the Ethics, Integrity of Safeguarding Commission/Committee, followed by the HR department or head of personnel. During the interviews it appeared the desire for the reporting system to be independent from the NOC.

The reporting mechanism is perceived by the respondents as confidential, accessible and widely communicated to stakeholders but still leaves room for improvement.

All NOCs with reporting mechanisms in place offer protective measures for victims, however less than half extend this protection to whistleblowers.

Also 100% of NOCs are obliged to report to public authorities if they become aware of a child abuse case. It is not the same in the case of sexual and physical abuse or sexual harassment, where only 85.7% of the NOCs are required to report.

Adjudication, which refers to the organisation proceeding with their own formal judgement or decision in a particular case, it involves weighing the evidence presented by both the

prosecution and defence and deciding on the guilt or innocence of the accused. There is a considerable drop from the NOCs with reporting in place that continues through to the next stages of the safeguarding process, which are investigation and adjudication. The drop is so severe that the sample of NOCs is insufficient to produce reliable insights about these topics.

The only output that can be considered from this set of data is that from the few NOCs that do conduct an investigation of the incident report received, all of them also continue to the adjudication phase of the safeguarding process.

All NOCs with safeguarding in place responded about the future of safeguarding in their organisations. NOCs indicate a high likelihood of the organisation continuing in the development of the area, expressing the importance of policies and procedures.

As of these NOCs are at different levels of development with their plans and implementations, there has not been a conclusive indication of the areas that require the most support for continuous development of safeguarding policies and procedures in the questionnaire and interviews as each of them reflect their own priority at the moment.

However, one area to highlight from the interview discussions is the need for budget since the NOCs with safeguarding implemented today have done their initiatives without any new source of revenue for the purpose. It is a new line of expense without any new revenue source associated with it.

## NOCs without safeguarding in place

85% of the NOCs that answered the survey and do not have yet any safeguarding policy in place indicated a high likelihood of implementing it in the near future.

The barriers for not having yet implemented safeguarding in the NOC were grouped in the following themes according to the questionnaire and the interviews answered:

- issue with resources workload and number of resources at the NOCs,
- importance of the certified International Olympic Committee Safeguarding Officer to advance the process,
- lack of knowledge from the current staff,
- need for state-wide safeguarding regulations,
- shortage of leadership support combined with clear roles and responsibilities.

## 1. Project introduction

The Building European Safe Sport Together (BESST) project aims:

1. to develop a modern definition of harassment and abuse in sport, with an extensive literature review of the most recent studies.
2. to equip and educate sports organisations on their role in the battle against harassment and abuse in sport.
3. to provide the sports organisations in Europe with an awareness and education tool kit, facilitating the entities to use their communications channels to educate their communities about harassment and abuse.
4. to develop a legal framework and policies and procedures proposal for European sports events organisers.

The project is divided into different work packages. This report is integral part of the Work Package 2 (WP2), which presents 2 main objectives:

1. *to build an integrated legal framework for European sports organisations taking into consideration their different particularities and capabilities.*

The 3 different levels of stakeholders that will be studied are:

- National Olympic Committees/Umbrella National Governing Body (i.e., NOC\*NSF, Swiss Olympic), hereinafter referred to “National Olympic Committee” or “NOC”
  - National Federations
  - Clubs
2. *to develop a detailed and comprehensive legal framework to facilitate the introduction of safeguarding strategies by European sport organisations within these three client categories.*

This report is one of the deliverables of WP2, the NOC Survey Report.

The goal of the survey report is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the state of sports safeguarding in Europe across all organisational levels. By collecting data and insights from various stakeholders involved in sports organisations, the survey aims to assess current practices, identify areas for improvement, and gather valuable perspectives on safeguarding measures. Ultimately, the report seeks to provide valuable information and recommendations that can contribute to the enhancement of safeguarding efforts throughout the European sports community.

## 2. Methodology

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the state of sports safeguarding in Europe across all organisational levels, two different methods of survey were used: a questionnaire and interviews.

### Questionnaire

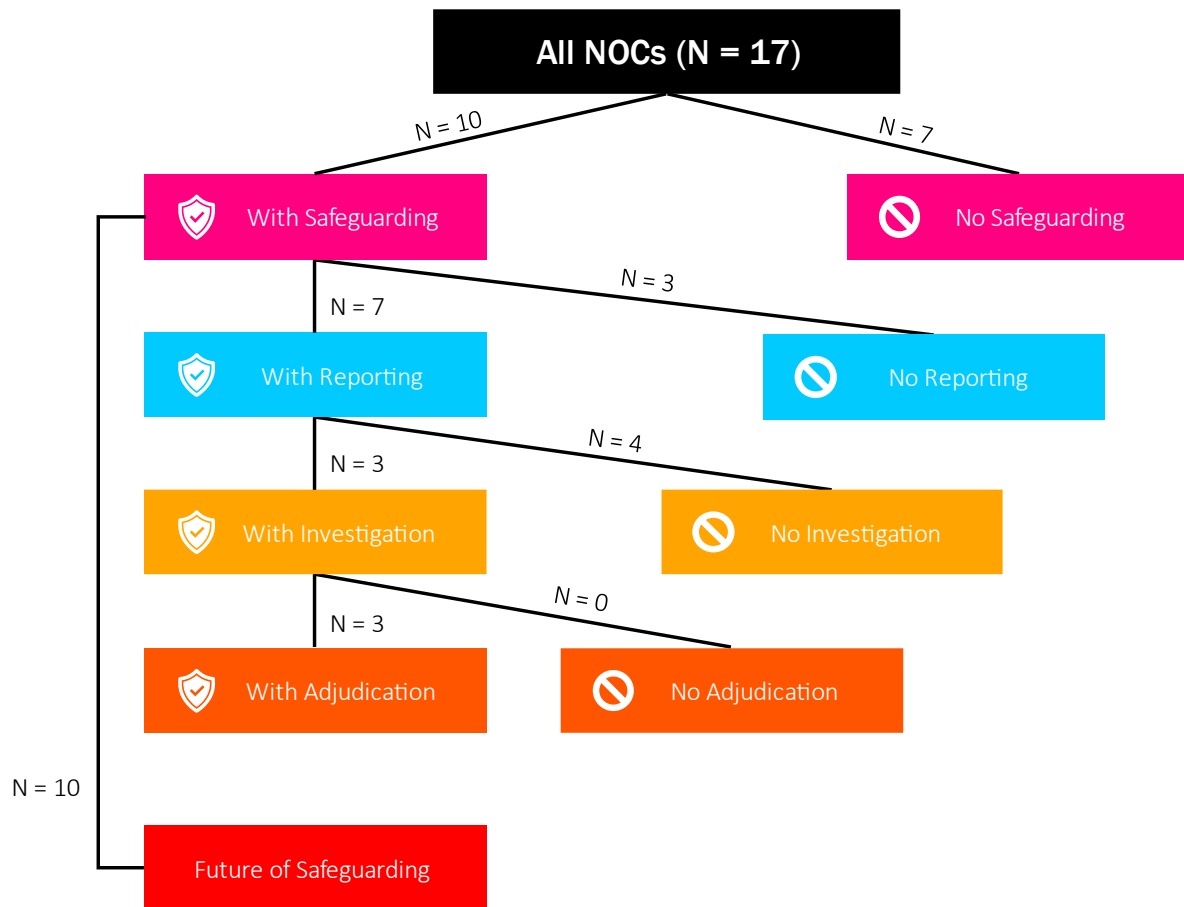
The objectives of the questionnaire were:

1. to comprehend the level status from each organisation regarding systematising safeguarding,
2. to enquire about processes implemented or under development that consider safeguarding,
3. to register reporting and adjudicating systems on cases,
4. to understand the needs from each organisation considering education, awareness, marketing campaign and legal framework for safeguarding effective implementation.

The procedure adopted was that during August and September of 2023, employees of NOCs with direct or indirect responsibility for implementing and managing safeguarding measures were sent an email with an invitation to participate in filling out the questionnaire online. Spending a maximum of 20 minutes, the respondents answered mostly quantitative questions in English. Of all 50 countries of the European continent, the sample gathered by the questionnaire consisted of 17 responses from National Olympic Committees (response rate = 34%).

The 17 respondents were divided through the questionnaire according to their status regarding safeguarding initiatives. The path of responses and the number of respondents are demonstrated in the figure 1 below:





**Figure 1.** Path and number of respondents of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire description is available on Appendix A.

## Interview

The objectives of the interview were:

1. to understand in depth the organisation's systematisation of safeguarding,
2. to uncover the plans for the process under development,
3. to discuss reporting and adjudicating systems and cases,
4. to identify the specific and detailed needs of the organisations regarding education, awareness, marketing campaign and framework for safeguarding implementation.

The procedure adopted was that in October of 2023, the employees of NOCs who filled in the questionnaire were invited to participate in a 45-minute interview. The interviews were conducted online and in English collecting mostly qualitative data. Of the 17 responses gathered by the questionnaire, 7 interviews were conducted (response rate = 41,2%).

The semi-structured interview guide in its integrity is available on Appendix B.

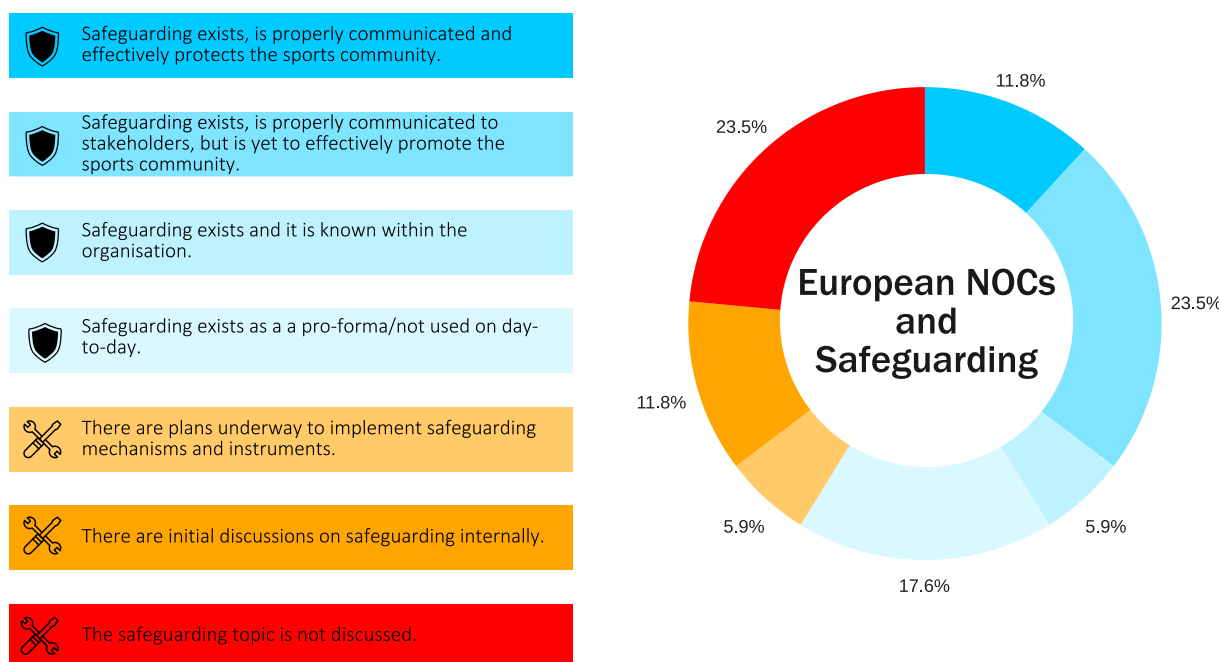
### 3. Survey results

The results of the survey are based in the European National Olympic Committees responses. It has been organised in two large groups based on the status of the organisations.

#### 3.1. Organisation status

There are different possible levels of status regarding the implementation of safeguarding in a National Olympic Committee. Of the 17 NOCs that filled out the questionnaire, 41.2% (N = 7) have been grouped as NOCs that do not have safeguarding processes and procedures in place. The remaining 58.8% (N = 10) were grouped as NOCs with safeguarding processes and procedures in place. From the latter group, 80% (N = 8) indicated that the effectiveness of safeguarding processes and procedures in place is not optimal in protecting the sports community (figure 2).

**Select the statement that best describes the status of your organisation in relation to safeguarding processes and procedures:**



**Figure 2.** Status of NOC in relation to safeguarding processes and procedures implementation.

During the interviews, it became clear that each NOC perceives their level according to their reality and cultural assumptions. Some NOCs that indicated the existence of safeguarding with proper communication in place, fail to demonstrate a robust body of process and procedures. While some NOCs that indicated plans underway, already had a few safeguarding activities implemented such as a dedicated commission, reporting channel or IOC Officer in training.

A comprehensive evaluation of the actual status compared to the perceived status will only be achievable in the future once a basic framework is established. This framework will serve as a provisional checklist of initiatives that have been both undertaken and implemented by each NOC. It will provide a clear benchmark for assessing progress and identifying areas for improvement in safeguarding measures across NOCs.

### 3.2. NOCs with safeguarding processes and procedures in place

This section of the report relates exclusively to findings pertaining to National Olympic Committees that have some form of safeguarding initiative, policies or procedures in place as per their answer on the questionnaire.

#### 3.2.1. Focus on national safeguarding strategy

From the universe of NOCs with safeguarding in place, only 20% (N = 2) consider them to be effective in protecting the sports community. This observation can be related to the stage of development of the countries regarding safeguarding in sports.

#### Select all statements that apply to your organisation's country:



**Figure 3.** Country status on safeguarding program.

The NOCs have been asked about the content of their countries current safeguarding processes and procedures in place. Three out of 10 NOCS have a national strategy to address safeguarding in sports, conduct a background check when hiring a service provider or an employee in sports, and obligate all individuals involved in sports to be certified or trained. Furthermore, 2 out of

10 NOCs have a specific private organisation and 1 NOC has a specific public organisation delegated to address safeguarding in sports (figure 3).

The 2 NOCs that indicated the effectiveness of their policies and procedures, also signalled the existence of a National Strategy in place.

### 3.2.2. Target group for the policies and procedures

All NOCs have policies and procedures established for entourage (coaches, technicians and officials), 90% (N = 9) for athletes and National Federations, 80% (N = 8) for staff (NOC administrative employees). However, only 50% (N = 5) have policies and procedures for volunteers and 40% (N = 4) for clubs/leagues and children (figure 4).

#### Select all the stakeholders to which the existing processes and procedures apply:

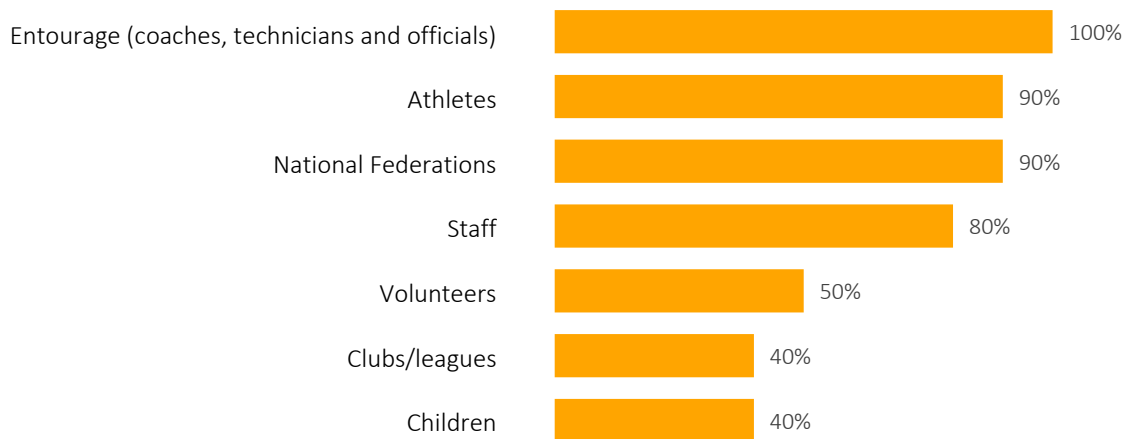


Figure 4. Stakeholders that processes and procedures apply.

#### Select all the periods that the existing processes and procedures are valid/operational/enforced:

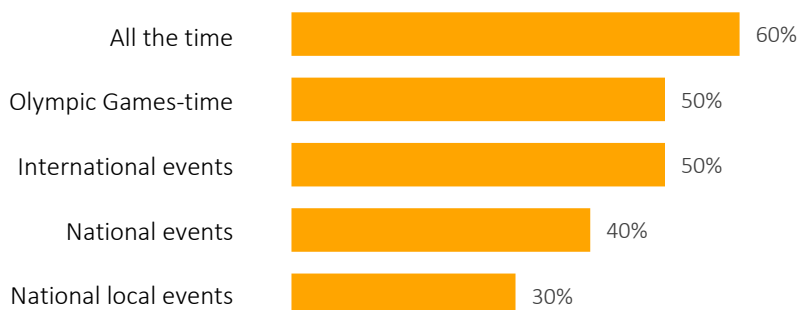


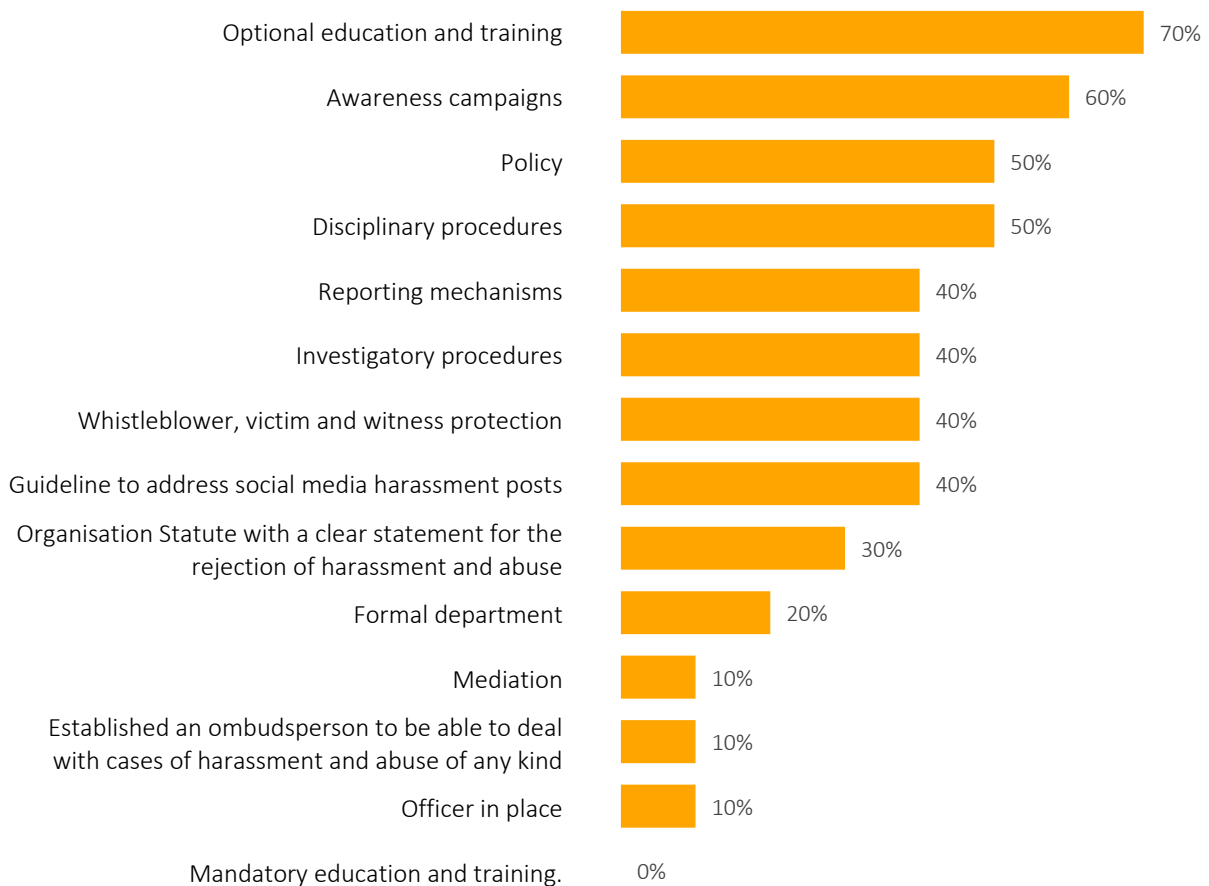
Figure 5. Period which processes and procedures are in effect.

60% (N = 6) of the NOCs enforce the above-mentioned policies all the time. Half of the NOCs enforce these during the time surrounding the Olympic Games and during international events. Lastly, 40% (N = 4) NOCs enforce these during national events and only 30% (N = 3) NOCs during local events (figure 5).

### 3.2.3. Type of safeguarding initiatives offered

The NOCs that have safeguarding processes and procedures in place have different initiatives currently offered to their target groups. The most often offered initiative by NOCs is optional education and training (N = 7) followed by awareness campaigns (N = 6), and safeguarding policy and disciplinary procedures (both N = 5). Only 30% (N = 3) and 20% (N = 2) respectively indicated to have an organisation statute with clear safeguarding mention and a formal department. From the respondents, there is not a single NOC with mandatory training and education in place today (figure 6).

**Select all the processes and procedures for safeguarding that your organisation is already offering:**



**Figure 6.** NOCs' policies and procedures in place.

Despite the fact that only 20% (N = 2) of the NOCs have a formal department to deal with safeguarding, the organisations have been resourceful and were able to integrate an array of personnel to their structures, even if not directly managed internally. More than half of the NOCs either have a safeguarding officer, ombudsman or compliance officer in place (N = 6) and half of the NOCs have a legal assistant/lawyer. Moreover, 4 out of 10 NOCs have a disciplinary commission or a case analyst/manager in place, followed by a counsellor/psychologist (N = 3). Only a few NOCs have a children protection specialist, moderator or project manager in place (all N = 1) and none provide social services (figure 7).

**Select all the personnel roles related to safeguarding that are performed/provided somehow by your organisation (even if not directly by employees):**



**Figure 7.** Existing personnel roles related to Safeguarding in NOCs.

Through the interviews, it has been made clear that in many cases safeguarding is a responsibility that has been added to a previously existing job description. Sometimes the addition had happened as the role has some relation and it was the most natural fit. Other times, the responsibility has been assigned to someone that demonstrated interest in the subject and was willing to add it to his/her existing workload. NOC respondents informed:

“I am the Deputy Secretary General and Head of the International Relations Department. Our NOC is small so, I’m acting as a Safeguarding Officer as well... Regarding the safeguarding officer role line, I am in the training, passing the IOC course. I will be certified April of next year.”

Quote 1

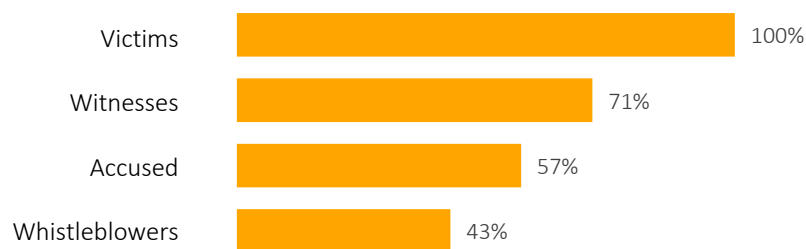
“... we have a commission in place for Agenda 2020+5. We work for clean sport, safe sport. Despite other problems, we focus on integrity of sport. So, it was a collective decision from the commission to whom it would be passed the safeguarding responsibility.”

Quote 2

### 3.2.4. Reporting

From the NOCs with safeguarding program, 70% (N = 7) has an established reporting mechanism and 100% (N = 10) of these offer the possibility to report an incident anonymously protecting the identity of the whistleblower. All NOCs offer protective mechanisms to the victims, 71.4% (N = 5) to witnesses, 57.1% (N = 4) to the accused individual and 42.9% (N = 3) to whistleblowers (figure 8).

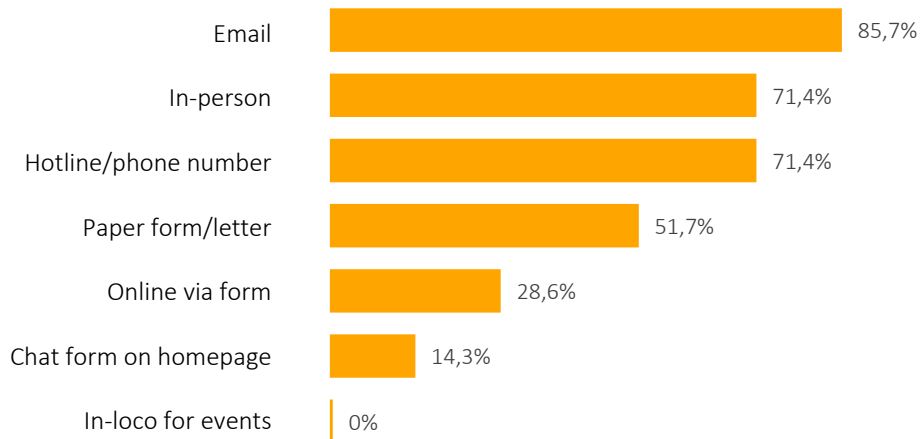
**Select all groups for which your organisation offers protective mechanisms:**



**Figure 8.** Stakeholder groups that NOCs offer protective mechanism.

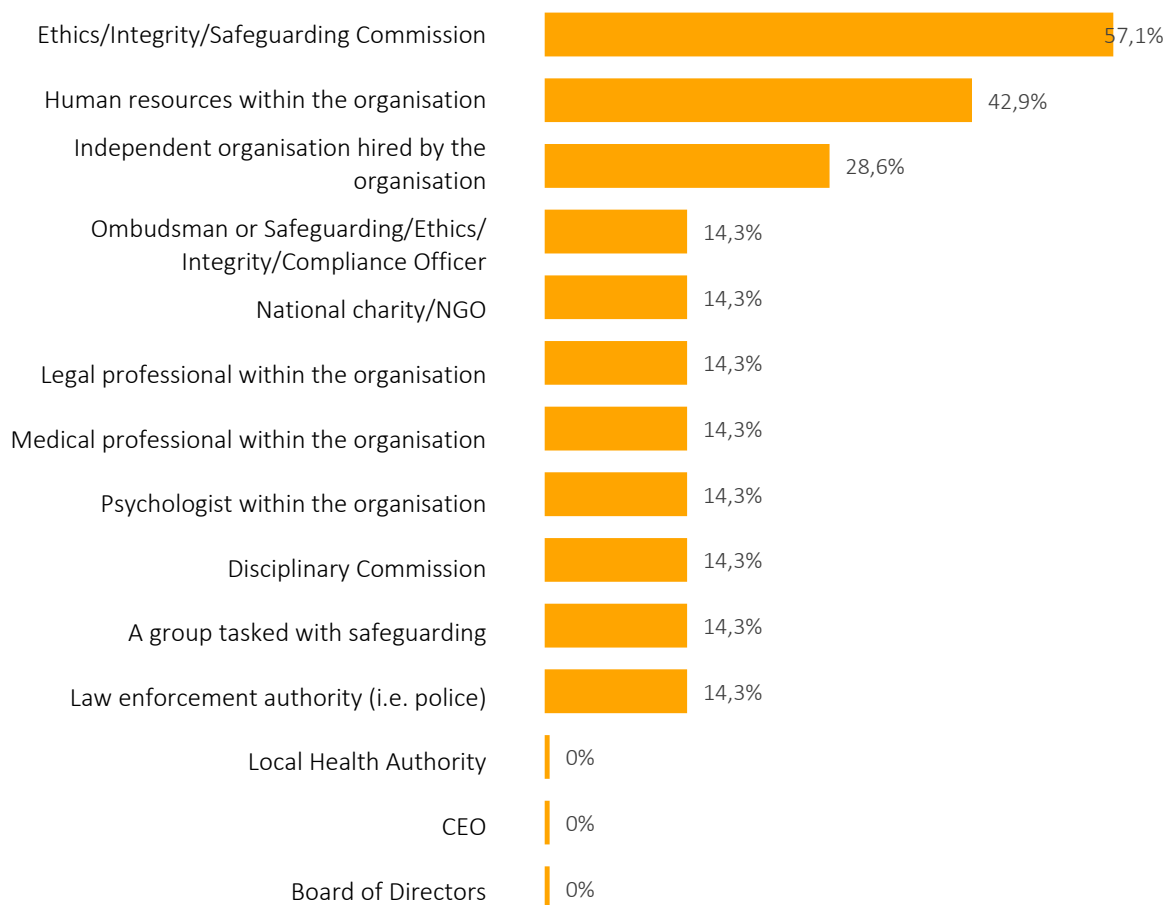
There is a variety in the form of reporting incidents among the NOCs. The most common reporting mechanism available for an incident to be reported is via email, with 85.7% (N = 6) of the NOCs with reporting mechanism in place offering this option to whistleblowers. A hotline/phone number together with the in-person options are also very common and are present in more than 71.4% (N = 5) of NOCs. No NOC provides an in-loco for events channel for reporting a safeguarding incident until this moment (figure 9).

**Select all the existing report mechanism channels:**



**Figure 9.** Existing channels to report and incident.

**Indicate who is the main report receiver:**



**Figure 10.** Main recipient of an incident report.



A similar variety is seen in the receiver of the reports through these mechanisms. More than half of the NOCs established the Ethics/Integrity/Safeguarding Commission to be the receiver of incident reports (N = 4), followed by human resources (N = 3) and an independent organisation hired by the NOC (N = 2) (figure 10).

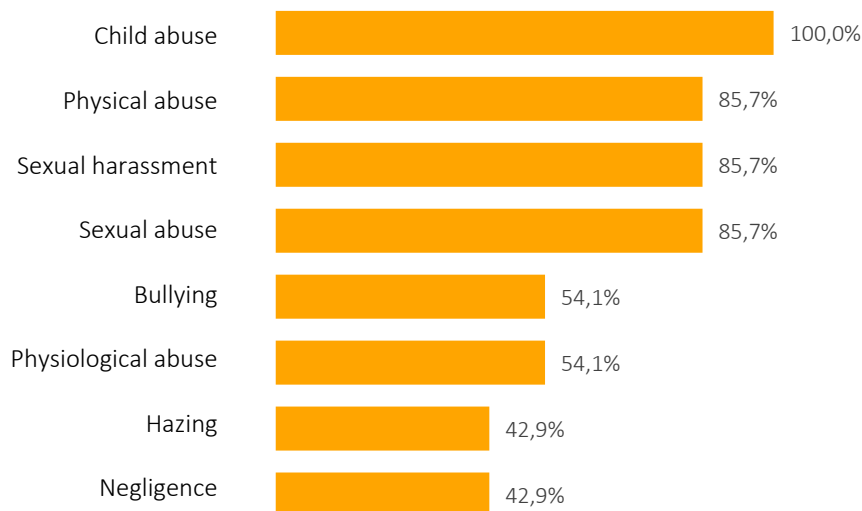
One item that appeared during the interviews is the need to have the safeguarding reporting system separated and independent from the organisation. One of the interviewees said:

“We are now in a process that because we think it's important that it's gonna be a completely independent body. And that's the debate that is going on. Also, with the ministry and we're looking at several examples in foreign countries, how they arrange... because they're already having independent centres.”

Quote 3

Regarding the forms of transgressive behaviours, 100% of the NOCs (N = 7) are obliged to report if they are aware of child abuse. Followed by 85.7% (all N = 6) of them for physical abuse, sexual harassment and abuse. Forms of bullying and psychological abuse (N = 4), hazing and negligence (N = 3) are less often obliged to report (figure 11).

**Select all the safeguarding cases that your organisation is obliged to report to a public authority if aware:**

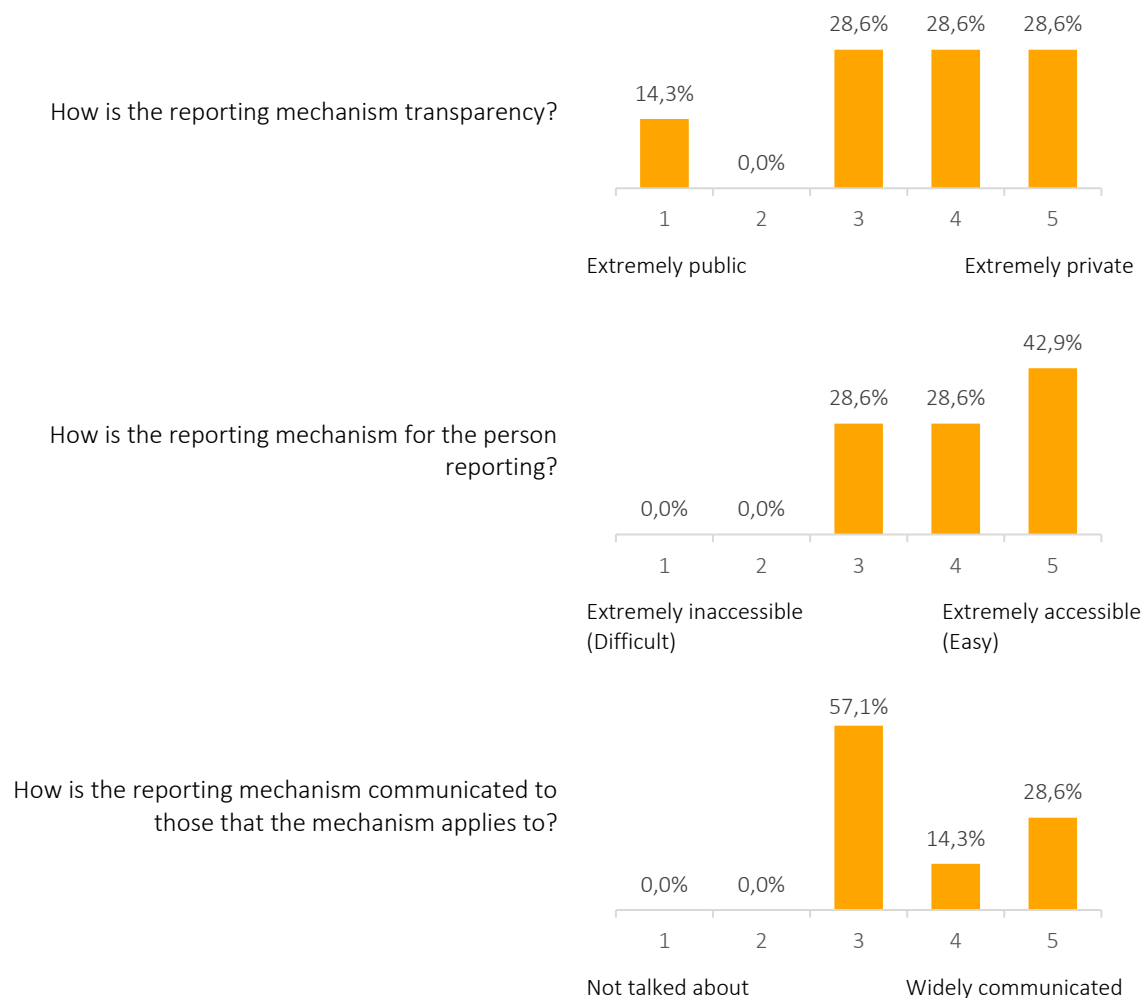


**Figure 11.** Safeguarding cases that NOCs are obliged to report to public authorities.

Inquiry on the perception of the reporting mechanism in place, the NOCs shared their view on the confidentiality, accessibility and communication method of the reporting mechanism. Less

than 30% (N = 2) have an extremely private process, with almost 15% (N = 1) still having an extremely public process. Furthermore, the accessibility of the reporting mechanism to anyone who would want to report an incident is viewed as accessible. The answers provided ranged from neither inaccessible nor accessible (N = 2), accessible (N = 2) and extremely accessible (N = 3). As for the communication, more than 57% (N = 4) conveyed that the reporting mechanism is neither widely communicating nor not talking about their reporting mechanism (figure 12).

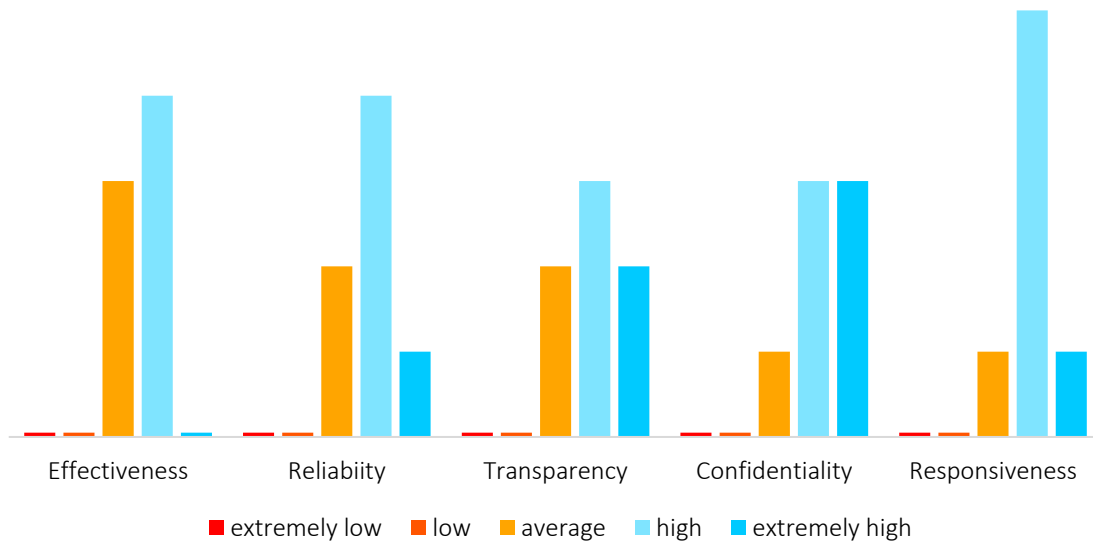
**Answer the following questions on a scale from 1 to 5.**



**Figure 12.** Perception of the NOC's reporting mechanisms.

Lastly, the NOCs were asked about their view on the benefits for stakeholders obtained by their safeguarding processes and procedures in place. For all aspects, the NOCs scored between an average amount to an extremely high number of benefits for stakeholders. The NOCs rated the confidentiality of their reporting mechanism as providing the greatest benefits to stakeholders as opposed to the effectiveness. Moreover, the reliability, transparency and responsiveness are positively seen by the NOCs for stakeholders to benefit from their reporting mechanism (figure 13).

If you were to do a survey with the stakeholders that are benefiting from the processes and procedures on safeguarding, how do you believe they would rate it in the following criteria:



**Figure 13.** Perception of stakeholders regarding the reporting mechanism.

### 3.2.5. Investigation and adjudication

This section shows the investigation and adjudicating systems that NOCs have in place. Before discussing the results of this topic, the adjudication term needs to be defined in the context of this study to allow a correct understanding. Adjudication refers to the organisation proceeding with their own formal judgement or decision in a particular case. It involves weighing the evidence presented by both the prosecution and defence and deciding on the guilt or innocence of the accused.

From the reporting mechanism part of the process to the phase of investigating incidents reported during the safeguarding procedure, there is a considerable drop. Only 17.6% (N = 3) of all NOCs conduct their own safeguarding related investigations, meaning that they gather information and evidence in-house for the incident reported.

From these NOCs that pursue the safeguarding process over to the investigation phase, 100% (N = 3) also follow through to the subsequent phase of the process, which is the adjudication.

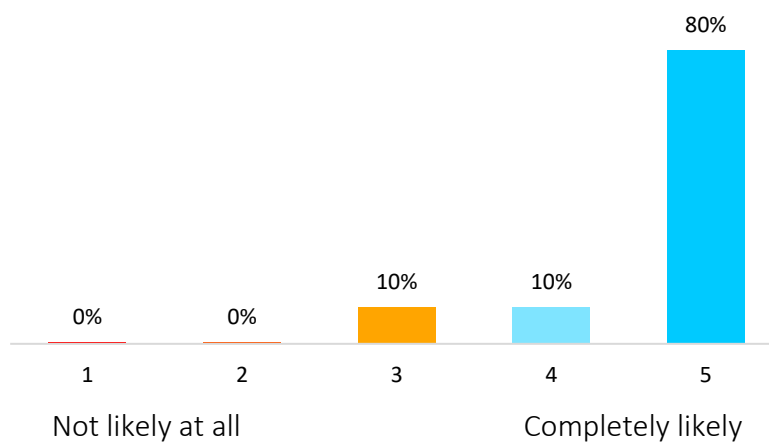
As the sample for this part of the questionnaire is unfortunately too small, no further analysis is conclusive from the remainder of the questionnaire regarding the topic of investigation and adjudication.

### 3.2.6. Future of safeguarding in the NOCs with safeguarding in place

All NOCs with some safeguarding implementation in place answered the section regarding the future of safeguarding in the organisation independently if they had or not reporting, investigation or adjudication procedures in place (N = 10).

The safeguarding policies and procedures topic is important for National Olympic Committees. NOCs indicate a high likelihood of the organisation continuing in the development of the area. 80% (N = 8) of the respondents revealed an extreme likelihood for the continuous development of safeguarding in their NOCs (figure 14).

**Please indicate how likely is your organisation to continue the development of safeguarding processes and procedures:**



**Figure 14.** Likelihood of NOCs with safeguarding in place to continue the safeguarding development.

As NOCs are at different levels of development with their plans and implementations, there has not been a conclusive indication of the areas that require the most support for continuous development of safeguarding policies and procedures when inquired. All topics had an indication of medium to high priority. This is the list researched:

- Financial support
- Human resources
- Operational autonomy
- Leadership support
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Education and training
- Risk analysis
- Guidelines
- Toolkits
- Marketing/awareness campaigns
- Materials to host own training

In the interviews, the NOCs indicated a diversity in the needs they face day-to-day. One of the topics discussed out of the scope of our questionnaire is the financial part. The respondents indicated that currently safeguarding initiatives are managed and sourced by their own budget.

“...We manage our initiatives from our general annual budget.”

Quote 4

“As you know, we have Olympic Solidarity, it's a fund that we can use. So, it will be co-financed.”

Quote 5

“We receive funds every year from the lottery, and we divide it.”

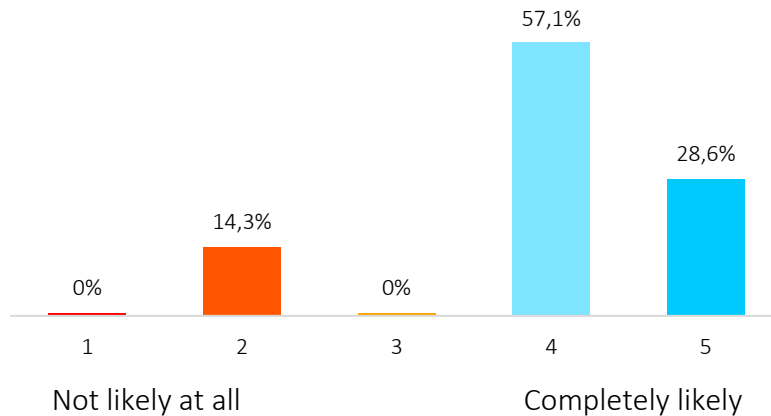
Quote 6

NOCs that have safeguarding implemented today have allocated funds from their current budget. It is a new expense line without any specific revenue source directed to this subject. The NOC general annual budget comes from different sources such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), partners, national lottery, Olympic Solidarity, broadcasters, among other sources of revenues. This budget is directed to all NOC expenses and activities which since the implementation of safeguarding initiative, also includes these.

### 3.3. NOCs without safeguarding in place

This section of the report focuses on the 41.2% (N = 7) of the NOC respondents that do not have any safeguarding policies and procedures in place as presented on the organisation status sections. These NOCs were asked about the likelihood of developing safeguarding processes and procedures in the near future. The vast majority indicated this as likely (N = 4) and extremely likely (N = 2), representing 85% of the sample. However, one NOC mentioned this not to be likely soon (figure 15).

Please indicate how likely is your organisation to develop safeguarding processes and procedures in the near future:



**Figure 15.** Likelihood of NOCs without safeguarding in place to implement it in near future.

To find out more about the barriers and needs for future implementation of to-be-developed safeguarding processes and procedures, the NOCs mentioned several factors influencing this. Figure 16 provides an overview of the importance of support in the areas of financial resources, human resources, operational autonomy, leadership support, clear roles and responsibilities, and education and training to develop safeguarding processes and procedures in the future.

Please rate the importance of support in the following areas for your organisation to develop safeguarding processes and procedures:



**Figure 16.** Areas of importance for NOCs without safeguarding in place to support the implementation locally.

Complementing the questionnaire findings, NOCs highlighted some areas of their needs also through the interviews. The findings were grouped in the following topics:

### 3.3.1. Resources workload and number of resources

In line with the output from the questionnaire, the NOCs mentioned the barrier of their limited number of resources and the workload to be able to advance the discussion and implementation of safeguarding in the interviews. For example:

“The main thing that we were discussing, we are staying even beyond our working hours to finish everything. Yeah. Like it's just the main limitation...”

Quote 7

“We are understaffed, we have a lot of things to do. Most of the NOCs are understaffed. And we have to cover all and somehow because of all these trends and recommendations... The IOC expects, more and more from us, but with few people and our role and mission, it's very limited ... So, we are trying. But it's not like we will be hiring people just to do safeguarding or mental health. And so on, in the conditions, in which we need more people to support the activity.”

Quote 8

### 3.3.2. IOC Safeguarding Officer

In many of the NOCs, there are currently individuals taking the course to become a certified International Olympic Committee Safeguarding Officer or there are plans for their certification in the next edition of the course. Notably, individuals themselves initiate the process rather than it being mandated by leadership within the NOC. Despite the added responsibility to their workload, personal interest drives their pursuit of certification, making it a welcomed edition. Respondents observed:

“So now we have one athlete at least who will attend [The IOC Safeguarding Officer Certification Course] ... And so, she will attend this and we agreed with the Olympic Solidarity to award her the scholarship. But as I told you, she's not going to start this semester...”

Quote 9

“I was pushing for it because even the management board said “You don't have the time to do everything we are doing already”, and I thought, because of our priority, or it should be a priority of ours.”

Quote 10

### 3.3.3. *Specific safeguarding knowledge*

Obtaining the IOC Safeguarding Officer certification is just one of the various informational requirements NOCs seek to fulfil. Additionally, there is a recognised need for specific and wide-spread Safeguarding knowledge within NOCs. The interviewees said:

“I think also the knowledge, they don't know the subject really well. So, they heard about safeguarding but don't know what it really is. Almost everybody talks about the sexual assault, but it's not only the sexual assault.”

Quote 11

“Sometimes the coaches know things and don't know how to manage them, about things that happen external from the training because we are not talking only in training.”

Quote 12

“Maybe also a lack of knowledge on the subject and so they don't know how to How they can put in a structure in place, what they have exactly to do. I think it's mostly that and maybe a lack of human resources also.”

Quote 13



### **3.3.4. Government regulations**

The interviewees discussed the necessity or anticipation for their country government to establish state-wide regulations that enforce and direct the sports institutions regarding safeguarding policies and procedures. Here are some examples:

“You have both sides, you have sports organizations, and you have state and laws and all the regulations that you need to have in order to conduct and to solve some issues when it comes. Because it's quite easy when you are doing something, and you put some framework to have for the NOC or sport organizations. But when you have a case in reality, you need to have all the procedures set and everything has to be in line with the with laws and all the regulations that should be in place.”

Quote 14

“The Ministry of Sport has taken the initiative, in collaboration with all the relevant stakeholders, to set up an independent structure covering all aspects of integrity in sports.”

Quote 15

### **3.3.5. Leadership support and clear roles and responsibilities**

Like the requirement for government backing, leadership support alongside roles and responsibilities is another crucial aspect underscored by the NOCs for the progression of safeguarding as observed on figure 16. These aspects were also the top two topics mentioned on the open-ended question when asked what would increase the likelihood of implementing safeguarding in their NOCs.

## 4. Conclusion

The NOC survey report demonstrated via qualitative and quantitative data that although there are advancements in the safeguarding processes and procedures amongst the sport organisations in the past few years, it became clear that there is still much work to be done from all stakeholders including the government level, the sport governing bodies and the institutions/organising where the practice of sport in the European countries happen.

This set of data is just a slice of the safeguarding universe in Europe as organisations have a perception of their level according to their reality and cultural assumptions. Many NOCs declined to answer the questionnaire and the interview, raising a concern on the real status of safeguarding in Europe.

From the ones that answered and that have safeguarding in place, just a few actually believe that their initiatives are effective to protecting the sport community yet.

This report reinforces the objective of the Building European Safe Sports Together (BESST) project in all its working packages, especially in what consist of the framework from Work Package 2. The NOCs need guidance, knowledge and support from leadership, both governmental as well as institutional, to continue to advance in the Safeguarding initiatives.

The lack of resources seems to be the largest of the barriers, with the current understaffed personnel in place in the NOCs. These are already overloaded, and safeguarding is an additional attribution.

Another important point is the lack of knowledge or expertise from the existing resources. This highlights the importance of initiatives such as the IOC Safeguarding Officer Certificate and the work being developed by Building European Safe Sports Together (BESST) project on the Working Package 3, developing toolkits and Working Package 5, disseminating them.

The conclusion is that safeguarding is still in its infancy in the world of sport in Europe. Some initiatives have started and there are some nations more advanced than others. One thing that all respondents agree on is the importance of such topic. In order to further develop this area, more region-wide and even global-wide investment is necessary.

## Appendix

### Appendix A – Questionnaire Description

In the questionnaire, the participants are asked what their current role is in their National Olympic Committee and what their responsibilities related to safe sports, safeguarding and/or sports integrity are. Additionally, they have to state the organisation's current status of safeguarding processes and procedures as this directs their route in the questionnaire. 2 paths can be followed based on the provided answer to this closed-ended question (see Appendix A):

- Path 1: National Olympic Committees that have safeguarding processes and procedures in place
- Path 2: National Olympic Committees that do not have safeguarding processes and procedures in place yet.

#### Path 1

In Path 1, participants are initially prompted to detail their current safeguarding processes and procedures (e.g., awareness campaigns, investigatory procedures, optional education and training), to specify the personnel roles currently in place (e.g., safeguarding officer, child protection specialist, legal assistant), and to whom these existing processes and procedures apply (e.g., entourage, clubs, athletes). Subsequently, participants are requested to indicate the target groups benefiting from these safeguarding measures (e.g., adults, people with disability, youth) as well as the periods during which these measures are implemented (e.g., all the time, (inter)national events). Finally, participants are invited to provide a brief description of the content of their safeguarding processes and procedures in an open-ended question.

The second segment of Path 1 delves into the reporting mechanism within participants' organisations. Here, participants are required to respond to 12 inquiries aimed at assessing the level of anonymity, confidentiality, and familiarity with the reporting mechanism. This includes detailing the current reporting mechanisms (e.g. e-mail, hotline, in-person) as well as identifying the primary reporting receiver (e.g., CEO, safeguarding commission, psychologist). Furthermore, participants are asked to specify the groups for whom reporting is mandatory if they are involved (e.g., bystander, victim, employee) and under which circumstances reporting is obligatory (e.g., sexual, physical or psychological forms). Lastly, participants are prompted to indicate the extent to which their safeguarding processes and procedures provide benefits based on their effectiveness, reliability, transparency, confidentiality, and responsiveness. Additionally, they are asked to identify the recipients of the organisation's protective mechanism (e.g., whistleblowers, victims, witnesses).

The third segment of Path 1 focuses on how participants' organisations handle reported cases. Participants are queried about their collaborations with other parties in investigating safeguarding-related cases (e.g., social services, federations, government). Furthermore, participants are presented with statements regarding the content of their investigatory

processes and procedures. They are asked to indicate their level of agreement with these statements (e.g., obligations to cooperate in investigations or access and inspection of personal data). Finally, participants are asked to assess the extent to which their investigatory processes and procedures promote effectiveness, reliability, transparency, confidentiality, and responsiveness.

The fourth segment of Path 1 concentrates on how the organisation handles adjudication of safeguarding-related cases. Participants are queried about the entity or individual responsible for adjudication (e.g., safeguarding commission, president, safeguarding officer) and the extent of power delegated to this party (e.g., recommending or sanctioning). Furthermore, participants are presented with statements regarding the content of their adjudicatory processes and procedures. They are asked to indicate their level of agreement with these statements (e.g., consequences of decisions, conditions of the adjudicators). Lastly, participants are prompted to specify the organisations to which an applied sanction must be communicated (e.g., federations, government, social services).

The final segment of Path 1 centres on the safeguarding processes and procedures of the organisation. Participants are allowed to upload a maximum of five documents related to safeguarding for analysis. Additionally, participants are once again presented with statements about the importance of support in developing further safeguarding processes and procedures, such as toolkits, guidelines, and financial resources. Subsequently, participants are thanked for their participation.

## **Path 2**

Path 2 is dedicated to identifying past and current obstacles and future requirements for the organisation's development of safeguarding processes and procedures. Participants are prompted to specify the primary challenges experienced that have hindered the organisation from implementing any safeguarding processes and procedures, using an open-ended question format. Additionally, participants are presented with statements regarding the significance of support in furthering the development of safeguarding processes and procedures, such as toolkits, guidelines, and financial resources. Subsequently, participants are thanked for their participation.

The full version of the questionnaire can be seen on the link:

<https://www.eoaolympic.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/NOC-BESST-QUESTIONNAIRE.pdf>

## Appendix B – Semi Structured Interview Guide

### *A - For those National Olympic Committees that have safeguarding in place.*

#### **Introduction:**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this follow-up interview regarding your role in safeguarding processes and procedures within your National Olympic Committee. Your input is invaluable to our research on safeguarding practices in sports organisations. Please be assured that all responses will be kept confidential and anonymized.

1. Could you please introduce yourself and briefly describe your role within your National Olympic Committee?
2. Can you provide an overview of your responsibilities related to Safe Sport, Safeguarding, and/or Sport Integrity in your organisation?
3. Based on the survey questionnaire results, could you elaborate on the current status of your organisation's Safeguarding processes and procedures?
4. How did the Safeguarding implementation action come about? Who was responsible for them? How were they put in place?
5. If you were to see the Safeguarding plan to be effective, in your opinion, what would need to be done or changed?
6. What is the largest barrier for Safeguarding to be effective within your organisation?
7. How does communication regarding Safeguarding happen in your organisation? What should be changed/improved?
8. How are the safeguarding initiatives funded? Would you feel comfortable sharing the funds available?
9. What are the Safeguarding areas that your organisation needs to put the most effort into for development/improvement? Why?
  1. Policies/Procedures
  2. Staffing
  3. Training and Education
  4. Communication
  5. Reporting

6. Case Management
7. Investigations
8. Disciplinary measures
10. If you could select one strength and one weakness in your organisation Safeguarding scheme, what would it be?
11. Does your organisation have had any experience with a case? Would you be able to comment about it?
12. Could you elaborate how independent the safeguarding personnel and structure is from the rest of the NOC team and procedures?
13. Could you elaborate on the interaction that your organisation has with other external players regarding Safeguarding?
14. How do you perceive the status of Safeguarding implementation among the National Olympic Committees in Europe?

**Closure:**

Is there any additional information that you would like to share or any file that you could send to us?

We thank you for your time and willingness to contribute to our project.

***B - For those National Olympic Committees that do not have any safeguarding in place yet.***

**Introduction:**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this follow-up interview regarding your role in safeguarding processes and procedures within your National Olympic Committee. Your input is invaluable to our research on safeguarding practices in sports organisations. Please be assured that all responses will be kept confidential and anonymized.

This meeting is being recorded so the researchers can go back for the analysis, but the images will not be used without a previous consent.

4. Could you please introduce yourself and briefly describe your role within your National Olympic Committee?
5. Can you provide an overview of your responsibilities related to Safe Sport, Safeguarding, and/or Sport Integrity in your organisation?
6. Based on the survey questionnaire results, could you elaborate on the current status of your organisation's Safeguarding processes and procedures?
7. Even though there isn't safeguarding in place, could you please describe if any discussions have taken place about the subject?
8. What is the largest barrier to implement Safeguarding within your organisation?
9. If you were to recommend starting/continuing the discussions to implement safeguarding, what would be the largest need of your organisation?
10. And which is the most urgent need of the stakeholders?
11. How could the sport community/authorities assist your organisation in the development of safeguarding?
12. Does your organisation have had any experience with a case? Would you be able to comment about it?
13. How do you perceive the status of Safeguarding implementation among the National Olympic Committees in Europe?

**Closure:**

Is there any additional information that you would like to share or any file that you could send to us?

We thank you for your time and willingness to contribute to our project.

