



# **ATHLETICS FEDERATION OF MONTENEGRO**

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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### 1) Introduction

is responsible for promoting athletics within Montenegro and for making it a safe environment for children and adults to develop their talents and achieve their goals;

MAF goals:

1. development of athletic sports, that is, athletic activities and activities in the Montenegro;
2. cooperation and participation in international athletic activities, WA, European and Balkan Athletic Federation, activities of the Olympic Movement and international sports regional organizations;
3. ensuring the participation of the athletics national team of Montenegro, as well as clubs and individuals on that basis, in international competitions;
4. regulation of the organization of national athletic competitions and the status of athletes,
5. regulating the performance of sports activities and activities through the adoption of athletic sports rules.
6. realization of goals in the field of tourism - Organization and promotion of sports tourism in cities, spas and mountains on the territory of Montenegro.

This Safeguarding Policy ("this Policy") establishes the responsibilities of MAF and all licensed clubs and registered athletes and coaches to ensure that children and adults are able to participate in athletics safely and that their human rights will be respected.

With this policy MAF will provide and create safe and inspiring environments for their communities to enjoy and participate in athletics.

Abuse may be carried out by men or women, or children. It happens in every area of the world, in every sport and organization. Abuse, harassment and exploitation occur when there are power imbalances between individuals. When one individual is in a more powerful position, they can take advantage of that and abuse, harassment or exploitation may occur. The more vulnerable an individual, whether because of age, disability, finance, or status the more likely they are to be subject to abuse, harassment or exploitation.

## 2) Policy Statement of Commitment and Principles

MAF believes that everyone in athletics should be treated with respect and dignity and has the right to participate free from any abuse, harassment, or exploitation. MAF protects everyone within the scope of this Policy from such behavior. MAF is committed to preventing abuse, harassment, or exploitation. Athletes, coaches (by which term we include all athlete support staff), officials, volunteers and board members are all protected by this Policy; they must all understand their rights as well as their duties in this arena.

The principles on which this Policy is based are:

- i. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be free from discrimination whether it is based on sex, race, age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, beliefs, religious or political affiliation.

- ii. Everyone has the right to participate, enjoy and develop personally through athletics in a safe environment free from all forms of abuse, harassment or exploitation;
- iii. Everyone, both children and adults, has the right to have their voices heard
- iv. Everyone should know who to ask for help when they have a concern about an individual's behavior;

The key principles underpinning the work of the Safeguarding Officers at the MAF are:

1. Objectivity
2. Accountability
3. Empowerment
4. Prevention
5. Protection
6. Partnership

The aims of this Policy are to:

- Prevent harm and reduce, wherever possible, the likelihood of abuse or neglect.
- Investigate the cases with the help from the local and governmental authorities.
- Have the capacity to resolve cases “in house” – qualified person within the federation. If that possible include local and governmental authorities to resolve the cases.
- Raise awareness of the importance of Safeguarding- everyone should know how to play their part in preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse and neglect.

To achieve this, MAF will:

- appoints Safeguarding officer who will be working with cases and following all Safeguarding procedures, including the involvement of authorities and/or local agencies and NGOs when necessary.

- ensures everyone knows that these officers are the individuals that they can turn to if they are worried or have a concern about another person and their behavior;
- launches a 24-hour hotline and web platform for reporting of abuse, harassment, or exploitation, and ensures that it is available and known to the public (on federation website).
- ensures that everyone is aware of their rights and the process that will be followed if a concern is raised.
- produces and implements policies and procedures including code of conduct, rules and disciplinary procedures and keeps them up to date as appropriate.
- provides support and guidance to anyone who needs it
- educates and trains all members of staff and volunteers about how to deal with concerns and complaints and what are the procedures following a concern/complaint.
- deals with all concerns, allegations and complaints in a fair, transparent, timely and efficient manner ensuring all complainants are updated regularly.
- carries out all investigations and adjudications in a manner that ensures an appropriate level
- deals with all information about concerns, complaints or allegations confidentially and secured.
- works with institutions, ministry of sport, Olympic committee, local agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations and community groups providing support and guidance for social services to ensure that everyone is kept informed, supported and safe.

### 3) Definitions

#### Abuse, harassment, and exploitation

Abuse, harassment, and exploitation are described below. They can be perpetrated by both men and women and is often where one party is in a position of power over the other. Where one individual has power over another in a relationship it can lead to situations where abuse is easier to occur. Vulnerable individuals need to be protected and those in

authority should ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are put in place. It is also important to understand that coaches, officials, or volunteers may be abused by others.

Psychological abuse is an unwelcome act including vilification, belittling, rejection, confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation or any other behavior which may diminish an individual's sense of identity, dignity or self-worth. This is at the centre of most types of abuse as when these occur so does psychological abuse. This can often be seen as bullying or cyber-bullying.

Physical abuse is any intentional or unwanted act for example kicking, beating, biting or burning which causes injury or physical harm. It can include the forced consumption of alcohol or systematic doping practices. It can also be any forced or inappropriate physical activity such as training which is unsuitable for the age or physique of the athlete. Sexual abuse is any conduct of a sexual nature, either contact (penetrative or non-penetrative) or non-contact, where consent is not given, cannot be given, is coerced or manipulated. This can involve individuals looking at or making sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging others to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a person in preparation for abuse.

Grooming is the process (whether online or in person) whereby an individual builds a relationship with an athlete encouraging them to trust them so that the groomer can manipulate and exploit them for their own advantage. Grooming an athlete's family, entourage and friends often leads those individuals to believe that the groomer is dependable and trustworthy enabling the groomer to have access to the athlete. By manipulating the athlete and exploiting the relationship they will make the athlete believe they have to comply with the groomer's demands. The power a groomer has over the athlete is used to isolate them from friends and family who might otherwise warn or caution them from complying with the groomer's demands.

Harassment is unwanted or unwelcome behavior which offends or makes

the person feel humiliated or intimidated. Power harassment is where someone in a position of power over another individual, usually in a workplace, uses that power to harass another person physically or psychologically in a lower position. Power harassment can include exclusion, inappropriate work assignments (too little, too much or of a lower level that acceptable) as well as intrusive behavior.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Examples of verbal sexual harassment include unwanted or degrading intimate questions relating to body, clothes, or one's private life, jokes with a sexual innuendo and proposals or demands for non-consensual sexual acts. These may be unwanted text messages, telephone calls, letters, or other forms of communication with sexual content. Non-verbal examples may include staring, gesticulation, or sharing photographs or pictures with sexual allusions.

Exploitation is when someone exercises control over another person and/or their assets for their own "personal gain" and without the fully informed consent of the person. Personal gain may be psychological, reputational, or commercial and constitutes exploitation when the rights of a person are sold or negotiated without express and fully informed consent of the other person. Examples in athletics may be fraudulent misrepresentation of an athlete's age or nationality, acting on behalf of an athlete fraudulently or taking an unreasonable share of the proceeds of sponsorship or funding arrangements. Exploitation comes in many different guises. Examples include sexual exploitation, financial exploitation and signing up athletes to long term contracts while they are still children.

Neglect is the failure to provide a minimum level of care either physical or emotional which causes harm, allowing harm to be caused or creating an imminent danger of harm. This usually relates to the care given by parents or caregivers to children but is also relevant to other people who have a duty of care towards another person such as a coach or team leader towards an athlete. This can include the failure to provide

adequate water in high temperatures, adequate clothing in cold temperatures, suitable food, accommodation, or safe travel arrangements.

Abuse, harassment, and exploitation may be based on race, religion, color, beliefs, ethnic origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability or a combination of any of these characteristics. It can be a single isolated incident or a series of events, in person or online, deliberate, unsolicited or coercive. Bullying, hazing and negligence all other aspects of harassment, abuse or exploitation and should be treated in the same way under the terms of this Policy.

Any of these forms of abuse, harassment or exploitation may include an aspect of financial abuse. It may be that an individual may be coerced into signing contracts or agreements which benefit others financially but are not necessarily of financial benefit to themselves. Any element of coercion may be abuse, harassment or exploitation if the individual is a child, if the individual has not authorized someone to act on their behalf or if the individual has not been adequately advised by an independent professional such as an accountant or lawyer on the impact of the terms of the agreement.

Abuse, harassment, and exploitation often result from an abuse of authority by someone in a position of trust, meaning the improper use of power by someone in a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person. This is often when there is an age difference, but it can also happen between peers – people of similar ages. There can be abuse between athletes or indeed coaches, officials or any others involved in athletics. This is sometimes referred to as peer-on-peer abuse. It should be dealt with in the same way as any other type of concern. Abuse can also be perpetrated by family members such as parents, partners, and siblings.

Economic or financial abuse:

*Relevant to adults.*

Economic or financial abuse is an aspect of 'coercive control'. It involves



a perpetrator using or misusing money, which limits and controls the victim's current and future actions and their freedom of choice.

Examples include using credit cards without permission, putting contractual obligations in the victim's name or gambling with the person's assets. It also includes denying access to benefits and an individual not having any food in their home.

Financial abuse can include:

- Material exploitation.
- Personal exploitation.
- Theft.
- Fraud.

Domestic abuse:

*Relevant to both adults and children.*

Any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behavior, violence, or abuse. It usually occurs between partners or ex-partners, between family members or between individuals and their careers. It occurs between those aged 16 or over who are, or who have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of their gender or sexuality.

#### 4) Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to Athletics federation of Montenegro, its athletes, officials, staff, and any other person associated with Federation. This includes officials, volunteers, members of an athlete's entourage, parents, careers and anyone associated with athletics within Montenegro. All those to whom this Policy applies must comply with the Policy. Any breaches of this Policy by these individuals will be subject to potential disciplinary action. All outsourced individuals hired to work with the federation will be asked to sign a declaration and bear legal responsibility that they will abide by the Code of conduct and comply with this Policy.

## 5) Prevention

MAF respects the concept "Prevention is better than cure" and focuses on preventing the different types of abuse and harassment through the following actions:

Conducts one-week training in Safeguarding for all employees and board members at the federation every year- the training introduces WA and EA policies and their application in sport in general, in athletics and their accordance with the domestic legislation system;

Conducts seminars for clubs annually to support them in preparing/updating their Safeguarding policies in compliance with the federation's general policy –part of the Federation's communication strategy for raising awareness of Safeguarding policy.

The above-mentioned trainings and seminars include the following topics:

The long and complex road to abuse and harassment:

- non-verbal signs verbal communication
- emotional abuse in disguise
- augmenting reality
- building up trust
- physical contact

If those signs are recognized on time and action is taken immediately, a potential case can be prevented at an early stage;

Having the necessary knowledge about the different categories of abuse –physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, grooming, domestic, organizational, discriminatory, etc.;

Recognizing the signs in everyday life and realizing that a certain behavior is not appropriate;

Taking measures – reporting a concern;

Having the confidence that human rights will be protected - contacting the officer.

## 6) Reporting of concerns

Everyone is responsible for ensuring that no one suffers abuse, harassment or exploitation - the Federation, its officer and staff abide by the rules of this Policy. Therefore, if anyone has any suspicions that a child or adult may have been subject to abuse, harassment, or exploitation in some form or about the behavior of another person they must report these concerns to MAF Safeguarding officer so that they can be assessed and dealt with appropriately. It may also be necessary for the police or social services to be involved and Federation officer will do this and coordinate the actions required.

If an individual is at immediate risk of serious harm, there should be no delay in reporting a matter to the emergency services. There are occasions when the consent of the individual to report a matter should be sought, considering their age and mental capacity.

The SAF Safeguarding policy includes an exclusively designed system of resolving cases. The SGOs receive a complaint and use their expertise for the promptest, adequate and suitable for the specific case reaction. Possible scenarios are the following:

- 1) Case handled by the SGOs - preferable option, so the case stays within the federation and can be resolved "in-house". This concept is prioritized for the sake of protecting the reputation of the victim;
- 2) Case directed to a specialized national stakeholder (ministry of internal affairs/police)– can be done anytime, depending on the nature of the case, its complexity and urgency;
- 3) Case goes to court – an option for the most serious cases of abuse, harassment and/or exploitation, also depending on the preferences of the parties involved.

## 7) Ethical code and Code of Conduct

MAF has the following code of conduct applying to everyone associated with athletics:

- coaches;
- athletes;
- technical officials
- volunteers
- federation's staff
- medical staff
- Safeguarding officers
- Others

The Ethical code and code of conduct is part of this policy.

## 8) Training & Education

All staff members of the MAF, volunteers and officials are given Safeguarding training relevant to their role within the organization. Those working with children are given specialist training specifically relating to their responsibilities for the children in their care.

The Safeguarding officer conduct seminars for clubs to support them in preparing/ updating their safeguarding policies in compliance with the federation's general policy. This is part of the federation's communication strategy for raising awareness of the importance of Safeguarding.

Athletics Federation of Montenegro outsources a qualified psychologist to take part in cases upon need. The psychologist also contributes to the training and education through presentations and interactive games and exercises.

Safeguarding training will be undertaken and updated annually.

## 9) Disciplinary Process

Breaches of this Policy and MAF Safeguarding Rules will be dealt with under MAF Disciplinary Procedure which should be referred to for further guidance.

In the Federation Disciplinary rules described all the procedures, measures and penalty that will be taken if someone breach Safeguarding rule, and all other possible breaches of the Disciplinary rules.

The Disciplinary Procedure is explained in further detail in a separate document.

#### 10)Review

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

#### 11)Monitoring

The monitoring of this Policy and the implementation of it will be carried out regularly as appropriate by the SGOs of the Athletic Federation of Montenegro

