



# ATHLETE WELFARE IN SPORT CONFERENCE 2026 “PROTECTING OUR ATHLETES”



8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2026  
CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, DUBLIN AIRPORT



## INFORMATION BULLETIN



EUROPEAN AQUATICS IS PROUD TO CELEBRATE EUROPE DAY



## ANTÓNIO JOSÉ SILVA

### President Of The European Aquatics

It is my great pleasure to introduce this Information Bulletin for the Athlete Welfare in Sport Conference – “Protecting our Athletes”, which will take place on 8 May 2026 in Dublin, Ireland.

For European Aquatics, safeguarding and athlete welfare are fundamental priorities. Across all aquatic disciplines, from grassroots participation to elite competition, it is essential that every athlete can train, compete and develop in environments that are safe, respectful and supportive. Ensuring the protection and wellbeing of athletes is not only a regulatory responsibility but a shared commitment that underpins the integrity and sustainability of sport.

This Conference represents an important opportunity for the European aquatics community to come together and reflect on how we continue to strengthen safeguarding practices within our sport, while also learning from the broader sporting community. By bringing together national federations, safeguarding experts, athletes and institutional partners, the event will create a valuable platform to exchange experiences, share knowledge and reinforce our collective approach to athlete protection.

I would like to warmly thank Swim Ireland for hosting this important gathering in Dublin and for their commitment to promoting athlete welfare and safeguarding within aquatics and beyond. Their leadership in this area helps ensure that the conversation around safeguarding continues to evolve and translate into concrete action.

The programme addresses key themes that are highly relevant for aquatic sport today, including recognising and reporting concerns, improving investigative processes, supporting safeguarding officers, and ensuring that the voice and rights of athletes remain central to the systems we build around them. Strengthening these structures is essential to fostering a culture of trust, responsibility and protection throughout our aquatic community.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland, Sarah Keane, all speakers, partners and organisers whose expertise and dedication have made this conference possible. Their contributions are instrumental in helping us create safer sporting environments for present and future generations of athletes.

This Information Bulletin provides the practical information needed to prepare your participation. I look forward to welcoming you to Dublin for what promises to be an important and constructive discussion, and to continuing our joint efforts to ensure that aquatics remains a safe and positive space for all athletes.



António José Silva

President European Aquatics



## MARY MCMORROW

Interim Chief Executive Officer, Swim Ireland

Dear European Aquatics Family & Members of our National Sporting Federations,

Swim Ireland is delighted to welcome you to Dublin for the 2026 Athlete Welfare in Sport Conference.

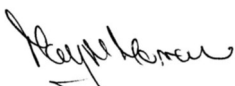
Ireland is honoured to host this important event, which brings together leaders, practitioners and advocates committed to ensuring sport is a safe, supportive and positive environment for all athletes. Athlete welfare is central to the integrity, sustainability and success of sport, and this Conference provides an invaluable opportunity to share knowledge, research and best practice across organisations and nations.

As a strong advocate for athlete-centred sport, I am particularly pleased that this Conference will create space for meaningful dialogue on safeguarding, wellbeing, ethical leadership and the systems required to support athletes throughout their sporting journeys. By learning from experts and from one another, we can continue to strengthen our collective approach to athlete welfare across all levels of sport.

We also hope that during your visit you will take time to enjoy Dublin—a vibrant city rich in history, culture and hospitality—and perhaps explore further afield to experience some of the many attractions Ireland has to offer.

Swim Ireland looks forward to welcoming national federation representatives to Dublin for this important global conversation on athlete welfare in sport.

Warm regards,



**Mary McMorrow**

**Interim Chief Executive Officer, Swim Ireland**

## INTRODUCTION

The Athlete Welfare in Sport Conference is a must-attend event for CEOs, Safeguarding Leads and Welfare Leads who are committed to shaping safer, more athlete-centred organisations.

This conference tackles the most pressing issues in duty of care today—from understanding the critical difference between a complaint and a concern, to exploring effective reporting models that empower athletes to speak up with confidence.

Delegates will gain practical insights into making investigations safer and more transparent, discover what it truly means to be an effective safeguarding lead, and learn how to create safe spaces where athletes feel protected, heard and supported.

With expert-led sessions, lived experience advocates and real-world guidance, this conference equips leaders with the knowledge, frameworks and confidence to set new standards in athlete welfare and organisational culture.



## HOST CITY - DUBLIN

Dublin, the capital city of Ireland, is a charming city with a history dating back to the Viking times.

Dublin is one of Europe’s most popular city breaks and no matter your reason for visiting our capital, you are guaranteed a “Céad míle fáilte”, a thousand welcomes in Irish. From the invasion of the Vikings in the 8th Century through 700 years of Norman occupation, English rule and the formation of the Republic of Ireland in the 1920’s, the city of Dublin has had a rich and varied history. Evidence of this can be found in every corner of the city. From a cultural point of view, that means plenty for visitors to see, from historic sites and landmarks to famous monuments and thought-provoking museums.

## HOST ORGANISATIONS

The host of the Conference is Swim Ireland in collaboration with European Aquatics and Sport Ireland.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### EVENT ORGANISER

Adam Cox (LOC): [adamcox@swimireland.ie](mailto:adamcox@swimireland.ie)

### EA STAFF

Sílvia Costa (ASR Project Manager): [silviacosta@europeanaquatics.org](mailto:silviacosta@europeanaquatics.org)

## EVENT DATES

Arrival Date	Thursday 7th May 2026 or Friday 8th May 2026
Conference Date	Friday 8th May 2026
Departure Date	Friday 8th May or Saturday 9th May 2026

## GETTING TO DUBLIN

Dublin is served by one airport – Dublin Airport (DUB) close to the city centre and in close proximity to the official hotel. Transfers will be provided to and from the official hotel.

## APPLICATIONS FOR VISA/PRECLARANCE

You do not have to apply for an Irish visa/preclearance if you are:

- ~ A national from an EU member state
- ~ A national from an EEA member state

## VENUE

The Athlete Welfare in Sport Conference will take place in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dublin Airport.



The Crowne Plaza Dublin Airport is an elegant hotel with bistro dining and superb conference facilities. Overlooking a leafy park, Crowne Plaza Dublin Airport hotel is only 5 minutes by shuttle bus from Dublin Airport (DUB). You'll find us just off the M50 and M1 motorways, only a 15-minute drive from Dublin City Centre.

### **Crowne Plaza, Dublin Airport** ★ ★ ★ ★

Northwood Park, Santry Demesne, Dublin, D09 KN66

Distance from Dublin Airport: 4.4km, 9 minutes

## MANDATORY REGISTRATION

All participants must register and book via the <https://www.eaacademy.eu/lms/courses/child-protection-in-sport-conference-2026>

### **REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT DEADLINE**

Deadline for registration is **30 April 2026**.

Payment will be made at the time of registration.

### **REGISTRATION FEES**

Includes full participation at conference, lunch and evening networking drinks reception with finger food immediately following the conference.

European Aquatics will cover the cost of one participant from each federation who has signed up to the EA DEI Statement and wishes to attend, each additional person will be charged at the appropriate rate.

**EARLY BIRD (Up until the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026): €50 per person**

**From the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2026: €75 per person**

## ACCOMMODATION AND RATES

Official Hotel - Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dublin Airport. ★ ★ ★ ★

### BOOKINGS

Participants must book directly with the hotel.

Discounted room rate will be available up until the 6th of April after which rooms will be subject to availability and best available rate will be offered.

Please contact [reservations@crowneplazadublin.ie](mailto:reservations@crowneplazadublin.ie) and quote safeguarding conference to make a reservation.

### Room Rates (Conference Rate)

Single Room	€189 per person per night
Twin Room	€199 per room per night

### ACCOMMODATION PACKAGE INCLUDES:

Bed & Breakfast and airport transfers.

## DRAFT AGENDA

### Athlete Welfare in Sport Conference – Protecting our athletes.

**FRIDAY – 8TH May 2026**

TIMINGS	TOPICS	SPEAKERS TBC
<b>09h00 10h00</b>	Tea and Coffee Welcome – Networking & Exhibitor space	
<b>10h00 10h15</b>	Introduction – Opening Address	EA/organisation committee representative
<b>10h15 10h25</b>	Welcome & European Perspective Welcome - Highlighting the EU role in European sport, including safeguarding and athlete protection.	Paola Ottonello, Team Leader – European Commission DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
<b>10h25 10h55</b>	Complaint v Concern – Identifying what comes first in protecting athletes. This speaker will examine the need to recognise a complaint/concern as a potential investigation.	Adam Pennock Sport Radar
<b>10h55 11h25</b>	Beyond the investigation – how we make investigations safer for athletes. This speaker will examine the safety of any investigation from a victim perspective, having concentrated on reporting concerns, this will look at the next steps	Mhairi MacLennan Kyniska Advocacy
<b>11h25 11h55</b>	COFFEE BREAK	
<b>11h55 12h15</b>	Being a Safeguarding lead – exploring the role of a safeguarding lead in a federation. This speaker will examine the role of a safeguarding lead, identify skills and qualifications required and the supports required from an NGB/Federation; the presenter will also look at reporting models that federations can adopt.	Kate Hills Swim Ireland
<b>12h15 12h30</b>	EOC Safe Harbour Project Contribution	EOC Safe Harbour Project Representative
<b>12h30 13h30</b>	BUFFET LUNCH IN RESTAURANT	

<b>13h30 13h35</b>	Overview – Afternoon explores the lives of athletes who inhabit the spaces we create for them to perform and how that impacts on their ability to participate.	Host
<b>13h35 14h15</b>	Input from athletes – recognising the rights of athletes, pressures of being an athlete and how we, as federations acknowledge the athlete identity	EA Athlete Committee Speaker TBC
<b>14h15 14h45</b>	What are the considerations for creating a safe space at events for athletes to compete or participate? – how do we provide and implement Athlete Welfare & Protection at an event(s).	LOC French Federation
<b>14h45 15h00</b>	SIGA: Presentation of Universal Standards on Youth Development and Child Protection, developed by an international task force to safeguard children and youth in sport	SIGA representative
<b>15h00 15h45</b>	Panel discussion - Bringing together am and pm sessions	All Speakers
<b>15h45 16h00</b>	Closing Remarks	Host and EA
<b>16h00 17h30</b>	NETWORKING EVENT DRINKS & FINGER FOOD RECEPTION	