

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

IMPACT OF SPORTS ON CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING: NORDIC EXPERIENCE

11 May 2022

Constitution Hall, Building 1 of the Seimas, 3rd floor

PROGRAMME

■ Moderator: Mr Aidas Puklevičius, writer and publicist

13.00–13.15

Opening and welcome addresses

H.E. Ms Viktorija ČMILYTĖ-NIELSEN, Speaker of the Seimas

Ms Helén NILSSON, Director of the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania

H.E. Mr Ole Terje HORPESTAD, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Lithuania

13.15–14.45

Keynote speeches (Part I)

- **93% of children joyfully participate in sports in Norway: how do we achieve that?**

Mr Mads ANDREASSEN, Head of Sports Activity within the Sport for All and Development Department, Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports

- **Children's organised sports in Oslo: children empowerment and community strength**

Mr Thor-Erik STENSBERG, CEO of KFUM-Kameratene Oslo, Norway

- **Impact of sports on children's well-being: parental volunteering in sports**

Mr Donatas TVARIJONAS, Director of the Football Club 'Ataka'

14.45–15.00

Coffee break

15.00–16.00

Keynote speeches (Part II)

- **Role of parental volunteers in Danish children's sports**

Mr Aurelijus SKARBALIUS, Manager of HB Koge, Denmark

- **Added value of physical literacy for increasing the involvement of children in sports**

Mr Kasparas ŠILEIKIS, Head of Olympic Education Programmes at the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania

- **Empowering children and young people through sports in rural areas**

Mr Arminas VAREIKA, Manager of the programme 'Youth Can'



16.00–17.00

Panel discussion

How to involve more children in sports in Lithuania and to ensure their well-being through sports?

Mr Virgilijus ALEKNA, Chair of the Commission for Youth and Sport Affairs of the Seimas

Mr Linas OBCARSKAS, Vice-Minister of Education, Science and Sport

Mr Valdas BENKUNSKAS, Deputy Mayor at Vilnius City Municipality

Prof. Rimantas KĖVALAS, Head of the Pediatric Department, Hospital of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences 'Kauno klinikos'

Representative of the academic community (tbc).

DESCRIPTION

The conference aims to present the best practice of the Nordic countries on how organised sports affect children's well-being and prevent children from early smoking, alcohol and drug abuse with great success. In the Nordic countries, about 90 % of children attend sports clubs, while in Lithuania the proportion stands at less than 30 %. The Nordic experience shows how children's sports effectively strengthen families and communities, promote volunteering, and build social capital. Active involvement of parental volunteers in children's sports strongly motivates children and their parents to engage in sports even more keenly. Children's participation in grassroots sports in communities take on particular importance in the aftermath of the pandemic due to its harmful effects on children's health, including overweight, reduced social contacts, and increased dependency on screens.

The conference will cover the following topics: what benefits do children's sports bring to children and society? How can we ensure that all children remain as healthy as possible, which is one of the tenets of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child? How can we ensure a safe and friendly environment in children's sports? How should the national authorities, sports clubs, NGOs and other stakeholders cooperate among themselves? During the conference, the public entity Football Club *Ataka* and parental volunteers will present the initiative *Community Sports Leaders Training*, the first project on children's sports following the Nordic lead in Lithuania. The Nordic partners will tell us about their multi-annual activities and their effect on children, parents and communities. The project is supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania.

During the discussion, Lithuanian politicians and sports representatives will consider the following questions: what direction should children's sports take? What experiences of the Nordic countries would be beneficial for Lithuania? What instruments would create better conditions for more children to engage in sports and enjoy improved well-being.

The Nordic countries are globally acknowledged as the best region for raising children, and, according to the ambitious programme *Nordic Vision*, the region will be the most sustainable and socially integrated in the world by 2030. We have an excellent opportunity to make use of the best practices of the Nordic countries in creating the well-being and future for Lithuanian children.

