

MARCH, 2025



SAFELING

NEWSLETTER



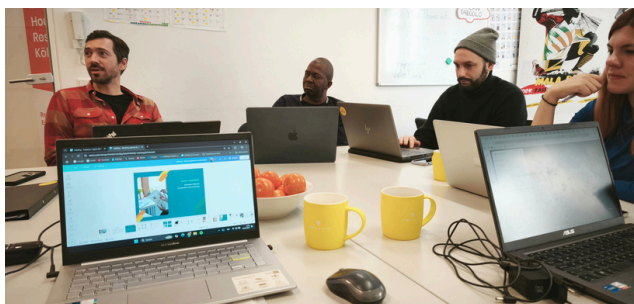
Written By : Jama Nyeta

Kick-Off Meeting in Cologne

The SAFELING Erasmus+ Sport project officially launched with a kick-off meeting in Cologne, bringing together all four partner organizations. The goal was to define common objectives, clarify responsibilities, and coordinate the first activities. The project focuses on preventing youth gambling addiction by promoting sports as a healthy alternative. All partners agreed on a cooperative approach using virtual tools for ongoing communication. The meeting included a presentation of the project background, highlighting alarming data on gambling across Europe and the participating countries. For example, Germany has over a million people affected by gambling disorders. The atmosphere was characterized by strong commitment and productive collaboration.

Project Goals and Methodology

SAFELING takes a holistic approach to gambling prevention by combining sports activities with educational content. The aim is to educate young people and offer them meaningful alternatives to gambling behavior. The partner organizations will create digital materials, including short educational videos and interactive social media campaigns. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram will be used to effectively reach younger audiences. In addition to working directly with youth, another key element is training professionals to incorporate sports into their prevention strategies. The project is based on empirical research, capacity building, and strong community involvement. This multi-layered methodology ensures both impact and sustainability.



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Division of Responsibilities

During the meeting, all partner responsibilities were clearly assigned. Navissos is in charge of developing digital outputs and leading the online campaign. Hellas for Us will coordinate the research phase, develop prevention guidelines, and evaluate the project’s impact. Jama Nyeta is responsible for inclusivity and overall dissemination, ensuring that marginalized groups are actively included. SS Caribrod will manage the project overall, host the youth camp in Serbia, and lead the pilot and community-based sports events. The clear division of tasks enables efficient workflows and prevents duplication. Each partner brings complementary expertise to the table, ensuring a well-rounded implementation. The professionalism of all teams was highly evident.



Digital collaboration and communication

The project runs for a total of 18 months. Early stages include youth surveys and expert focus groups to assess needs. This will be followed by the creation of educational content and digital materials. In months 9 and 10, a youth camp in Serbia and pilot events will take place. From months 12 to 16, capacity-building sessions and community sports events will be held. An online awareness campaign will also run in parallel. The final project evaluation and conclusion will occur in the last months. This structured timeline, discussed during the kick-off, was aligned with specific responsibilities.



Next steps and Outlook

Next, the project website will be developed, starting with a brainstorming session on its key features. At the same time, research activities will begin, including defining target groups and launching surveys. Initial ideas for educational videos were discussed, focusing on topics like gambling risks and the myth of easy money. Quality assurance will be guided by clear KPIs and feedback mechanisms. Guidelines for professionals will be created, followed by the first capacity-building workshops. With coordinated planning and active engagement, SAFELING has the potential to gain wide recognition across Europe. All partners are optimistic about the impact the project will achieve.

MAY, 2025



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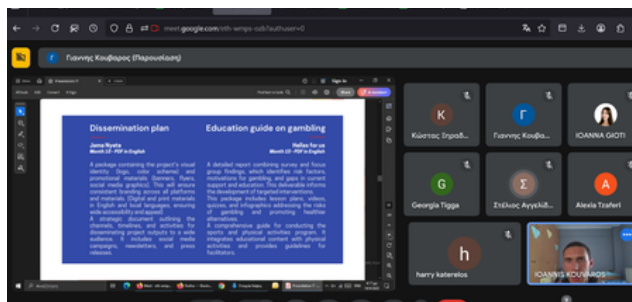
Written By : Jama Nyeta

Report about Focus group

As part of the SAFELING project, focus groups were held in Germany, Greece, and Serbia. More than 60 professionals from youth work, education, health, and sports took part. Their mission: to discuss how sports can help prevent gambling among young people. All three sessions confirmed: youth gambling is widespread and starts at an early age—sometimes as early as 11 years old. Experts agreed that families and schools often miss the early signs. Many young people see gambling as normal or even cool. Influencers, sports ads, and peer pressure were identified as major factors. All countries shared the same concern: society has been too slow to act.

Germany - We See It too Late

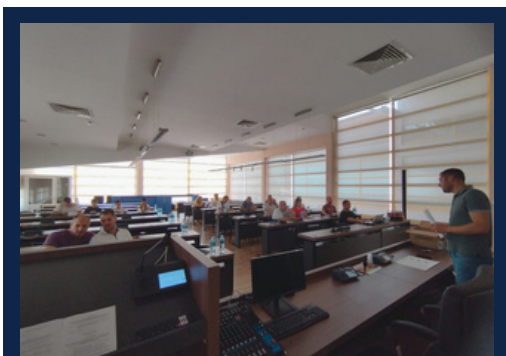
In Cologne, 20 experts from sports clubs, schools, and universities met for a deep discussion. They stressed that gambling is often underestimated. Sports betting, in particular, is seen as a “normal part of youth culture.” Many participants shared stories of teens skipping class to gamble or using apps without their parents knowing. A key topic was the blurred line between gaming and gambling—like loot boxes or betting on e-sports. Teachers and coaches asked for tools to explain these hidden risks to parents and students. Legal changes were welcomed, but enforcement was questioned. The group called for a stronger role of sport in prevention—more than just games, but spaces for values, discipline, and dialogue.



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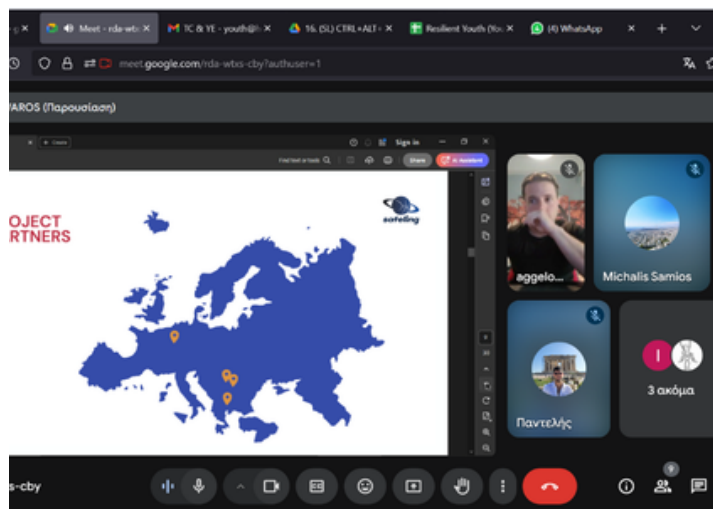
Greece – Youth at Risks, Families left out

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Key Takeaways and next steps

Across all three countries, a shared message emerged: Prevention must go beyond rules—it needs education, connection, and safe spaces. Sport offers structure, belonging, and purpose—making it a strong counterweight to gambling. All professionals asked for tools that are short, creative, and teen-friendly. Videos, guides, games, and simple parent manuals were top suggestions. Stakeholders showed strong support for SAFELING’s goals and are ready to contribute. Next steps include turning these insights into real materials—co-created with youth. Together, we are building a prevention strategy that speaks their language.



Serbia – Culture and Law Gaps

In Serbia, 19 professionals gathered in Dimitrovgrad. They described gambling as “just part of the culture” among boys. Betting slips, influencer ads, and lack of regulation all normalize risky behavior. Participants welcomed new national laws but doubted they’re enforced. They emphasized that sport can be a safe alternative, if done right. Coaches, teachers, and psychologists shared ideas like peer-led workshops, youth-led campaigns, and training camps with reflection activities. They called for a toolkit with videos, games, and personal stories. One key message: prevention must be active, engaging, and community-based—especially for at-risk youth.



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JULY, 2025



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Report about Fokusgroup

As part of the SAFELING project, focus groups were held in Germany, Greece, and Serbia. More than 60 professionals from youth work, education, health, and sports took part. Their mission: to discuss how sports can help prevent gambling among young people. All three sessions confirmed: youth gambling is widespread and starts at an early age—sometimes as early as 11 years old. Experts agreed that families and schools often miss the early signs. Many young people see gambling as normal or even cool. Influencers, sports ads, and peer pressure were identified as major factors. All countries shared the same concern: society has been too slow to act.

Germany - We See It to Late

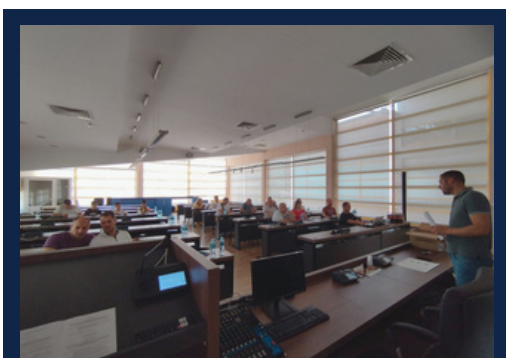
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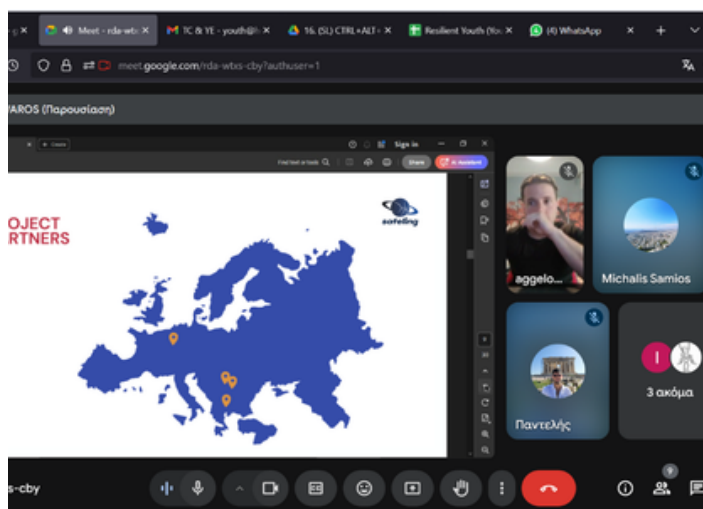
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Keys Takeaways and next steps

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NOVEMBER, 2025



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Written By : Jama Nyeta

Training camp in Niš

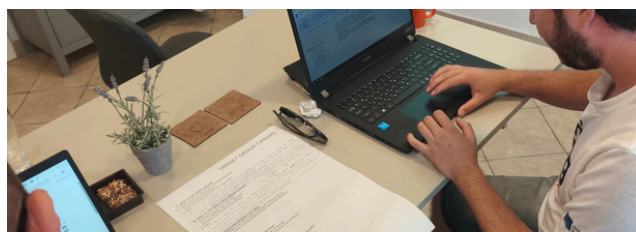
Last July, the Serbian partner Navissos organized a **SAFELing training camp** in Niš, in collaboration with the local sports association Caribrod. The camp brought together sports coaches and youth workers from partner organizations across Europe — **from Serbia, Greece, and Germany.**

This newsletter offers an opportunity to look back on the achievements of a particularly **fruitful week of exchange and collaboration.**

Over the course of five intensive days, 12 professionals working with young people **put into practice** the knowledge and insights gained during the earlier phases of the project.

Raise awareness, prevent and take action through sport!

After evaluating the results and deepening their understanding of **the risks and mechanisms behind gambling addiction**—particularly the growing issue of **online sports betting**—participants refined and implemented the SAFELing **action plan.** They worked with **Education Through Sport (ETS)** methods, demonstrating how physical activities can be turned into **meaningful learning experiences** that help young people reflect on risks and make informed choices. This hands-on phase enabled them to explore innovative ways to use **sport as an educational and preventive tool**, promoting awareness and resilience among youth through active engagement.



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Highlights from Our Training Camp

This year's camp brought together passionate participants eager to explore how education through sport can drive **real social change**. Through a series of dynamic and hands-on workshops, they discovered **how to turn prevention principles into meaningful, practical activities** in their everyday work.



A real milestone for all the partners

By the end of the camp, participants were **fully equipped** to lead Education Through Sport (ETS) workshops independently, facilitate peer-to-peer sessions, and organize meetings with parents and community events.

The atmosphere throughout the camp was both **motivating and empowering**. Many professionals shared that they left feeling more **confident, inspired, and motivated** to put their new skills into practice. Several have already committed to launching pilot workshops and short awareness campaigns in the coming months.



- One of the most valuable parts of the experience focused on **understanding and reaching diverse audiences** — exploring how to adapt activities to different contexts, what inclusion truly means in practice, and how to design content that meets specific community needs.
- Participants also took the lead in facilitating sessions on **important themes** such as gambling and chance, media influence, impulse control, and informed decision-making, gaining confidence and creativity along the way.
- To put their learning into action, they designed mini **awareness campaigns and innovative support tools**, blending on-the-ground activities with online visibility to amplify their community impact and carry the camp's energy forward into their future initiatives.

The Journey Continues

To ensure lasting impact, we established a **post-camp support system** including online mentoring, shared templates, and collaborative working groups — all designed to help participants bring their **local initiatives** to life and continue growing together as a **community of practice**.

And this is just the beginning — more inspiring stories and community actions are on the way. **Stay connected!**



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Written By : Jama Nyeta

Our Safeling Guidebook is Finally Here!

After a full year of collaborative work, we are very proud to announce the publication of our Guidebook for professionals!

Developed during the first stages of the project, this handbook is grounded in the quantitative surveys carried out locally by all partner organisations, as well as in their analyses and field expertise.

Let's take a look together at the key findings and insights highlighted in this synthesis!

Key Takeaways from Our Survey Data

The responses collected through our questionnaire paint a concerning picture. In Greece and Serbia, 93% and 97% of respondents reported having already engaged in gambling activities. Even in Germany, where regulations are stricter, the numbers still reach 29% to 36%.

Another alarming element is the very early age of first gambling experiences across all three countries:

- In Germany, 58.5% gambled for the first time between ages 11 and 16.
- In Serbia, 58% reported trying it between 11 and 13.
- In Greece, 17.9% of respondents stated they gambled before the age of 10.



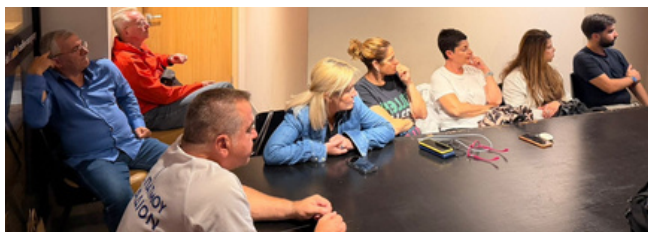
From Observations to Action: Why a Guidebook?

Safeling's goal is not simply to report alarming figures — but to create tools and solutions to address them.

This is why we have produced:

- a visualised research report, providing a factual overview;
- and now this Guidebook, designed as a practical resource

These two resources are available on our website and are intended for anyone interested in the topic — particularly youth workers, coaches, teachers, school counsellors, sports instructors, trainers, NGO staff and volunteers working in youth centres, community clubs, educational programmes or recreational spaces.



An Innovative Approach Grounded in Education Through Sport

Our approach is built on the expertise of partner organisations specialising in education through sport (ETS).

Safeling is not about saying “Don’t do it!” — it’s about saying “Here’s something better.” This Guidebook provides a wide range of creative workshop ideas designed to help young people stay active, develop new interests through sport, and understand the hidden mechanisms of gambling — odds, near wins, addictive patterns, and more.



Raising Awareness Among Professionals

Our mission is clear: to raise awareness and equip the professionals working with young people.

Knowledge gaps remain significant, both among young gamblers and the adults who accompany them — for instance:

- assuming underage gambling is negligible or “harmless fun”,
- overlooking newer forms of gambling such as loot boxes, online sports betting, online casinos, and more.

This Guidebook also offers tools to better address gambling-related addiction.

As we emphasise in the introduction: you do not need to be an expert in gambling prevention — what truly matters is the regular, meaningful contact you have with young people.

Conclusion — A Strong First Step Forward

We are proud to say this represents a strong and promising step. Our approach is designed to be inclusive and flexible, so it can adapt to: different group sizes, various age groups, diverse social and cultural backgrounds, etc.

But, this Guidebook is only the beginning; the workshop ideas it suggests will soon be developed, tested and refined, allowing us to better understand the next steps to take.

