

Executive Diploma in Sports Diplomacy

Multilateral Diplomacy

Deadline: 5 Jan 2026

Type:	Course
Location:	Geneva, Switzerland
Date:	26 Jan 2026 to 30 Jan 2026
Duration:	5 Days
Programme Area:	Multilateral Diplomacy
Website:	https://unitar.org/sustainable-development-goals/multilateral-diplomacy/our-por...
Price:	\$2,700.00
Event Focal Point Email:	diplomacy@unitar.org
Contact Number:	+41 (0) 22 917 88 10

BACKGROUND

In February 2026, the Winter Olympic Games will take place in Italy (Milano-Cortina), followed by the Winter Paralympic Games in March. As one of the largest and most prestigious sport events in the world, the Games are expected to attract thousands, if not millions of spectators to Italy, and likely close to two billion viewers worldwide.

The previous two editions of the Winter Olympic Games, Beijing 2022 and Pyeongchang 2018, have demonstrated that these mega sporting events no longer centre purely on the sports themselves; they also highlight the potential for sports to become a conduit for diplomatic promotion, acting as an extension of other foreign policy and soft power strategies. With increasing attention on the nexus between sports and diplomacy, the 2026 Winter Olympics once again underline the rising demand for professionals who possess the cultural sensitivity and leadership skills to adeptly harness the power of sports as a tool for multilateral relations.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

By the end of the programme, participants will be able to:

- Define different types of leadership in international sports fields;
- Explain the crucial role of sports in public and cultural diplomacy;
- Evaluate the role of major sports bodies and initiatives in shaping national, regional, and international collaboration;
- Analyse how sports initiatives support multilateralism, and influence peacebuilding and social development outcomes;
- Critically assess roadmaps for delivering mega sporting events that maximise their long-term soft power benefits.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The Executive Diploma in Sports Diplomacy is designed to take place over five days in total, combining approximately three day-long workshops and two days of field visits to relevant international organisations or sporting associations in the Lake Léman Region. The workshops will equip the participants with an introductory toolkit into sports diplomacy, with the envisioned workshops being:

- Sports Diplomacy: Theory and Practice;
- Leadership Skills in International Sports Fields;
- Mega Sporting Event Legacy.

Organisations or sporting associations potentially featured in the programme may include:

- The Centre for Sport and Human Rights (CSHR), based in Geneva;
- The International Olympic Committee (IOC), based in Lausanne;
- The Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS), based in Lausanne;
- The International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (IBSF), based in Lausanne;
- The International Skating Union (ISU), based in Lausanne;
- The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), based in Nyon;
- International Boxing Association (IBA), based in Lausanne;
- International Basketball Federation (FIBA), based in Mies;
- International Canoe Federation (ICF), based in Lausanne.

METHODOLOGY

The Executive Diploma in Sports Diplomacy is designed to be interactive and participatory, with case studies, interactive exercises including simulations, and group discussions during the training workshops. Participants will actively engage in problem-solving activities, share insights, and apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios. The interactive approach fosters collaboration, critical thinking, and practical skill acquisition for participants' engagement in the field of sports diplomacy.

The workshops are complemented by visits and curated introductions to the work of key sporting organisations and federations. Field visits allow participants to interact with these organisations and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts.

This holistic approach, incorporating concept learning, experiential activities, and reflective exercises, ensures participants acquire both theoretical knowledge, and practical skills to excel in sports diplomacy.

TARGETED AUDIENCE

The Executive Diploma in Sports Diplomacy addresses the needs of a group of maximum 20 participants, welcoming:

- Students (minimum Master-level) and academics;

- Working professionals in national or international sporting federations or associations;
- (Former) sports players and officials;
- Local, regional and national Government officials;
- International civil servants;
- NGO representatives;
- Private sector professionals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Insurance Waiver:

By applying to the Executive Diploma in Sports Diplomacy, all participants confirm that they are aware that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) does not insure participants for this course. All participants are advised to arrange at their own expense insurance against sickness, accident, permanent or temporary disability, death, and third-party risk for the period of the diploma including travel time.

Certificate:

Participants who have attended all the sessions will receive an Executive Diploma awarded by UNITAR.

Note 1: The dates are provisional and are subject to change. Participation is on a first-come, first-served basis, and registration will be closed once we have reached the maximum number of participants. Please note that the programme is subject to cancellation or postponement if the minimum number of participants is not met.

Note 2: The costs for coffee breaks and transfers in the Lake Léman Region during the programme will be covered by UNITAR. Lunch costs are however not included and will be at the participants' expense. On Thursday, 29 January, a closing dinner will be provided by UNITAR.

Disclaimer: By submitting an application to this Executive Diploma, applicants acknowledge and confirm their commitment to upholding the principles and values of the United Nations and UNITAR. UNITAR maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding conduct that is incompatible with its mission, including but not limited to abuse of authority, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, and all forms of discrimination.