

# SPORT AND GENDER EQUALITY

An Awareness Guide for Young Sport Professionals



Funded by the  
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# Leveraging Sport to Tackle Gender Inequalities (Sport Egal)

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## Foreword

Improving equality in sport has been a key objective of the Council of Europe from the very outset of its programme in the field of sport. The importance attached to “sport for all” policies is reflected in the European Sport for All Charter, adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 1975. The Charter, along with a number of recommendations, has since provided a reference for governmental policies in sport and enabled individuals to exercise their “right to participate in sport”.

Despite the many and diverse efforts by public authorities to promote equality, obstacles in every day life remain. As the Ministers responsible for Equality between women and men pointed out at the 7th Ministerial Conference held in Baku in 2010: equality exists *de jure* but it does not always exist *de facto*.

This is no less true in the field of sport, oftentimes considered to be an area dominated by “masculine” values. Despite commendable initiatives and relevant recommendations by the Council of Europe’s bodies,<sup>1</sup> public authorities and the sports movement, the status quo of gender equality in sport needs to be improved through firm commitments at all levels, across all age groups, and by both sexes.

1. Recommendation on the Discrimination against women and girls in sport (Parliamentary Assembly Res 2005/12) and Resolution on the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of women, young people and children in sport (3/2000) adopted at the 9th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport in Bratislava on 30-31 May 2000.

Examples of good practices exist – they can be of practical use to policy makers and practitioners on the ground. At the same time, they can illustrate that sports are not inherently “masculine”. Indeed, these examples show how, if problems of access are finally curtailed, women around the world will willingly (and increasingly) want to reap the many benefits which come from practicing sport, such as bettering one’s physical and mental well-being.

Sport *can* make a positive contribution to society: the practice of sport promotes mutual respect, tolerance and understanding by pulling together people of different genders, races, religions, ages and economic backgrounds. Sport activities, correctly governed, can be a tool to fight against discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes.

If the positive contribution of sport to society is universally accepted, the fact that women and girls are still less likely to participate in sport or physical activities is a serious concern. Phrased differently, society has yet to harvest the full potential of sport. It is time we do so, and improving the access of women and girls to practice sport is only one of many necessary steps.

Stanislas FROSSARD  
Executive Secretary  
of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)  
Directorate of Youth and Sport  
Council of Europe



# Gender Equality Definition

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys. It implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.

Gender equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making, and when the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favored.



## How Gender Equality is measured

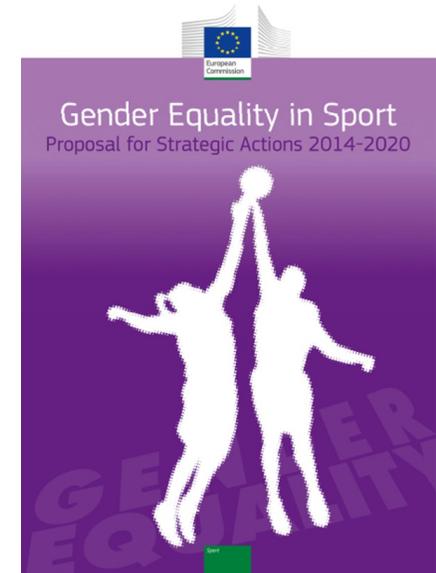
Gender equality is measured by looking at the representation of men and of women in a range of roles.

The European Union statistical office, **Eurostat**, publishes an overview of gender statistics for the European Union from fields such as education, the labor market, earnings and health, important for showing differences in the situations of women and men.



## SPORT & Gender Equality – 5 identified areas:

1. increasing women's participation in sports activities
2. attaining equal representation and gender sensitivity in decision-making
3. achieving gender equality in sports coaching and teaching
4. eradicating gender-based violence in and through sport
5. eliminating gender stereotypes in sport and in media coverage of sport.



## Area 1: Women's participation in sport

According to the Eurobarometer survey of 2014, men are more likely than women to exercise or play sport: **45% of men do so at least once a week, compared with 37% of women.** Meanwhile, the survey found that **37% of men never exercise or play sport, compared with 47% of women.**

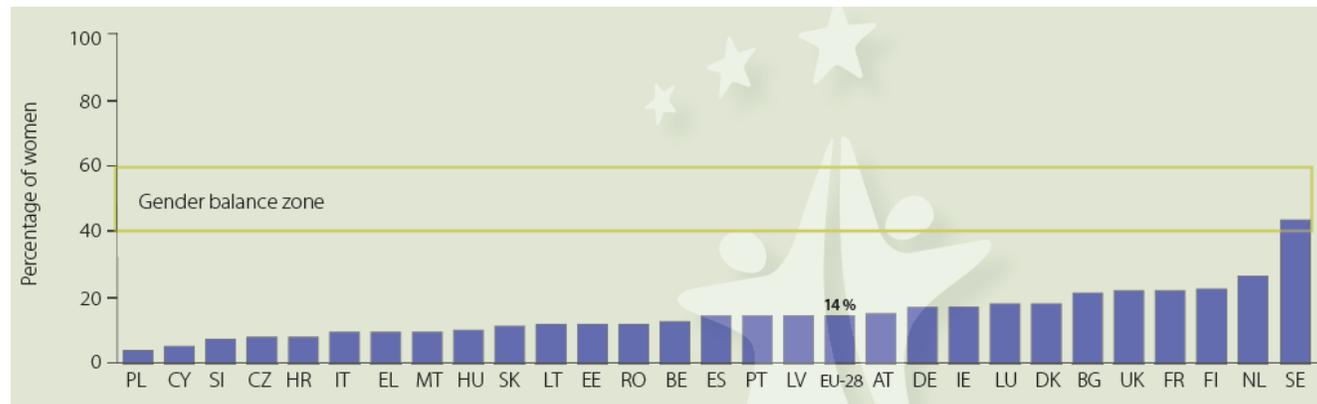
The difference between women and men is strongest in the younger age groups: **74 % of men aged 15-24 exercise or play sport at least once a week, compared with 55 % of women in the same age group.**

Generally speaking, **citizens in the Northern part of the EU are the most physically active.** The proportion that exercises or plays sport at least once a week is 70% in Sweden, 68% in Denmark, 66% in Finland, 58% in the Netherlands and 54% in Luxembourg. **The lowest levels of participation are clustered in the Southern EU Member States.** Most respondents who never exercise or play sport can be found in Bulgaria (78%), Malta (75%), Portugal (64%), Romania (60%) and Italy (60%).



## Area 2: Attaining equal representation in decision-making

On average in 2015, **only 14% of all top decision-making positions in sports federations in Member States were occupied by women**, ranging from 3% in Poland to 43% in Sweden. In the majority of countries the share of **women in decision-making positions was below 20%**.



- The number of women in elite governing bodies of the Olympic movement is below 30 per cent.
- Female representation on National Olympic Committees is at 16.5 per cent.
- Female representation on International Sports Federations is close to 18 per cent. (2016 data)



## Area 3: Achieving gender equality in coaching and teaching

As a profession, sports coaching is dominated by men. Based on figures in 7 EU Member States, it is estimated that **only 20% to 30% of all sports coaches in Europe are women.**

At the elite level, the number of women coaches is very low and typically occupying **assistant coaching positions**, supporting male head coaches.

Female coaches are almost exclusively training either women, youth or children.



## Area 4: Eradicating gender-based violence in sport

Forms of gender-based violence in sport include sexual harassment and abuse, rape, physical or emotional violence and LGBT-violence.

Prevalence data for **gender and sexual harassment in sport vary between 14% and 73% in 9 European countries** that have undertaken empirical studies in this area.

It is thought that gender and sexual harassment occur in **all sports** from the recreational to the elite level and affect not only women but all athletes who may be in a vulnerable position in terms of their age, their sexual orientation, their position in the group, their function, their physical ability or their gender.



## Area 5: eliminating gender stereotypes in sport and in media

Whereas **women** are particularly attracted to sports in which major emphasis is placed on physical expression (**dance, gymnastics and ice skating**), **men** are still found in a very large majority in **close combat** sports, team sports played on large grounds (**football, rugby**), **motor sport**, and **extreme sports**. Like boys, girls seem to have a somewhat broader range of sports activities than their elders.

This pattern is repeated in many European countries. Results differ slightly when the age of the participants is taken into account.

*However, some girls and women do cross the lines of these gender-based categories and practise weightlifting, football, motor racing and climbing in structured settings or even in competition. These sportswomen may be seen as groundbreakers for new cultural models (as emancipated or modern women) but they also risk being categorized as "tomboys" whose sexual identity is regarded as doubtful as such practices do not equate with the spontaneous categories on the basis of which men and women decide what is suitable for a woman.*

A further aspect that needs to be considered is the **lack of women in sports journalism**. Internationally, women represent only 10 % of positions in print media and media production. At the 2012 London Olympics, only 15% of the journalists and photographers were women.



## Sport as a tool to achieve gender equality

Through the establishment of general values such as fair play, non-discrimination and teamwork, **sport can be used as a tool to achieve gender equality** .

It can also be used to increase opportunities for women and girls to develop new skills, gain support from others and enjoy freedom of expression and movement.

It can promote education, communication, negotiation skills and leadership, all of which are essential to women's empowerment.

Sport can also increase women's and girls' self-esteem and enable them to make choices about their lives.

**« Sport is a tool to improve gender equality in society, as it has the potential to educate people for leadership, contribute to the skills needed for a profession. »**

Androulla Vassiliou  
EU Commissioner for  
Education, Youth and Sport



# Member States, European Commission and Sport organizations are called for:

- >> developing and maintaining national action plans or strategy on gender equality in sport;
- >> mainstreaming the gender perspective in all aspects of sport policy and promoting the elimination of gender stereotypes at all levels;
- >> highlighting the value of diversity and gender balance in sport administration and promoting gender equality in decision-making at all levels and in all fields of sport;
- >> increasing gender balance on executive boards and committees in the area of sports, as well as in management and coaching;
- >> developing educational materials for the training of decision-makers and coaches in sport to promote gender equality at all levels of education and sport training;
- >> including gender equality objectives as a condition for the granting of public funding to sport organizations.



# UK: women's march for equal rights

1928 – women gain the same voting rights as men

1956 – first equal pay legislation, although just for teachers and civil servants

1970 – the Equal Pay Act makes it illegal to pay a woman less than a man doing the same job

1975 – the first Sex Discrimination Act makes it illegal to treat men and women differently

1975 – the UK has its first female prime minister, Margaret Thatcher. There wouldn't be another elected until 2017



## UK: women and sport

31.9% of the people playing sport at least once a week are women

Around 7 million of the 15 million of women playing sport in UK take part in a gym-based activity or class

Women dominate participation in gymnastics, netball, swimming and dance

In 2015, 23% of national sport governing bodies' Chief Executive were female

Women's sport makes 7% of all sports media coverage in UK

Just over 10% of televised sport coverage is dedicated to women's sport

Between September 2011 and December 2013, women's sport received only 0.4% of reported UK sponsorship deals in sport



## Olympism and Gender – steps to remember

On April 6<sup>th</sup> 2016, we celebrated **120 years since the opening of the first modern Olympic Games**, in Athens, Greece (April 6-15, 1896)

The first competition featured **241 athletes** from **14 countries** who competed in **43 contests of nine sports**: athletics, cycling, fencing, gymnastics, shooting, swimming, tennis, weightlifting and wrestling. **Women were not admitted.**

“Women's sports are against the laws of nature.” said Pierre de Coubertin

In the Olympic Games of 1900, in Paris, France, the rule was changed. From a total of 997 participants, there were **22 women**, representing **approximately 2%**

The **first female Olympic Games gold medalist**: Hélène de Pourtalès, in sailing



# Olympism and Gender – steps to remember

Introduction of women sports in Olympic competitions:

YEAR	SPORTS
1900	Tennis, Golf
1904	Archery
1908	Tennis*, Skating
1912	Aquatics
1924	Fencing
1928	Athletics, Gymnastics
1936	Skiing
1948	Canoe-Kayak
1952	Equestrian
1964	Volleyball, Luge
1976	Rowing, Basketball, Handball

1980	Hockey
1984	Shooting, Cycling
1988	Tennis*, Table Tennis, Sailing
1992	Badminton, Judo, Biathlon
1996	Football, Softball
1998	Curling, Ice Hockey
2000	Weightlifting, Modern Pentathlon, Taekwondo, Triathlon
2002	Bobsleigh
2004	Wrestling
2012	Boxing
2016	Golf*, Rugby



# Olympism and Gender – steps to remember

Olympic Games in 2012, the first time **all participating countries** without exception **are represented** also **by women**.

This premiere includes countries like **Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Brunei**, who have sent **women participants**, without giving up some of their own traditions, regarding the outfit.

In the same year, women's boxing was introduced, resulting in **no remaining sports that do not include events for women**.

Now there are two sporting disciplines that are **solely for women: synchronized swimming and rhythmic gymnastics**.



## Sport and Gender – where to?

**None of the world's women's records ever exceeded the masculine ones, but the interval that separates them is always decreasing.**

Women are improving at a faster rate than men. If this rate of improvement continues at the current pace, there will soon be a time when women will be overtaking men, at least in sports competitions.

The prediction for this achievement is for 2035 in most sports and even earlier for the marathon.

But will the rate be maintained? Some authors explain the rapid rhythm of female performance through the fact that women have entered the sport world relatively late and thus the benefits of interval training, top training, psychological training and specific nutrition have been condensed in a short period of time.



# GE action areas for sport professionals

## 1. Give equal opportunities for female and male players

*to play*

*to take leadership roles, team captain positions*

*to assisting the coach or to have trainings for referee*

## 2. Address barriers for women and girls' participation

*change the time slots of practice sessions so women and girls accommodate their own responsibilities at home*

*try to acquire parental support for girls participation*

*ensure privacy for female players when changing into sport gear*

*ensure a safe way home for female players*



# GE Action areas for sport professionals

## 3. Provide equal resources

*have equal training time*

*have equal practice facilities*

*have similar prizes at tournaments*

## 4. Use the potential of sport to empower women and girls

*demonstrate males and females have equal rights to practice sport and play matches*

*work with male players on the topic of gender equality*

*promote education, communication, negotiation skills and leadership*

*encourage transfer of acquired skills to other life situations*



# The role of the youth and sport instructor specialized in Gender Equality promotion:

The youth and Sport Instructor specialised in Gender Equality promotion will be able to integrate gender diversity into sports activities by deconstructing gender stereotypes of young people.

S/he will be able to enhance the soft skills taught through sports activities, which are crucial in working life (e.g. leadership, self-confidence etc.), promoting Gender Equality in the access to them.

S/he will be able to disseminate his/her gender equality approach throughout the organisation.

In this framework, the project "Leveraging sport to tackle gender inequalities" and in particular the present document, offer a panorama of the knowledge, skills and competences required by Youth and Sport instructors in order to implement Gender Equality in their daily professional life.



## **Abilities required to the youth and sport instructor specialized in Gender Equality promotion:**

>Plan services and activities in a view of promoting Gender Equality among young people engaged in sport activities;

>Define strategies to improve Gender Equality responsibility in the group members;

>Devise creative solutions for the implementation of concepts, ideas, activities in line with Gender Equality promotion;

>Respond to learners requests and issues related to gender-related choices in sport;

>Detect individual and group competences, identifying skill needs and skill gaps in line with Gender Equality issues;

>Identify and solve individual needs in terms of Gender Equality;

>Define risk identification processes about gender Equality within an organisation.



# Core audience for Sport Egal project outcomes

Organizers of multi-sport activities for young people:

Coaches, Sports instructors, Physical education teachers

Sport professionals can make a meaningful contribution to enhancing gender equality in sport, if they have appropriate knowledge and tools:

**Define**

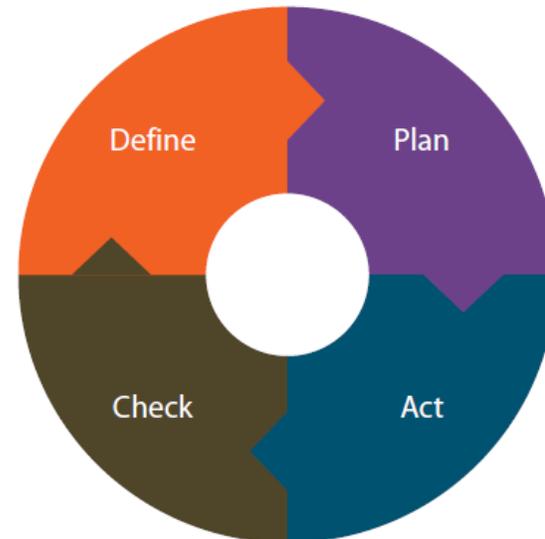
Methods and tools

- Gender statistics
- Gender analysis
- Gender impact assessment
- Gender stakeholders consultation

**Plan**

Methods and tools

- Gender budgeting
- Gender procurement
- Gender indicators



**Check**

Methods and tools

- Gender monitoring
- Gender evaluation

**Act**

Methods and tools

- Gender equality training
- Gender-sensitive Institutional Transformation
- Gender awareness-raising



# A. Define

## Capabilities

>Knows policies/regulations at European and national levels for sport activities, as well as for gender equity

>Is able to analyse the implications and the impacts of the different regulatory and political orientations.

>Is aware of main differences between girls and boys in the selection of education, career and sport pathways.

>Is able to define and to evaluate Key Performance Indicators for Gender Equality.

>Is able to analyse the influence of a sport practice on gender equality between boys and girls.

>Exploits specialist knowledge to foster connections between gender equality and sport practice.

>Demonstrates agility to adapt and refine strategy in accordance with medium/long term targets of training, and to support Gender Equality at all levels of training implementation.



## B. Plan

### Capabilities

>Analyses the current and target status of gender equity in the group the professional is in charge of.

>Analyses strengths and weaknesses with an objective view of the situation of each participant.

>Creates plans in coherence with other sport practices.

>Establishes milestones to support the progress of each participant, integrating the group approach. Defines and evaluates progresses according to pre-defined milestones.

> Is able to analyse the characteristics of the public and the working conditions to prepare more effective motor educational activities, taking into account the identified resources and constraints and avoiding risk situations and behaviours.

>Devises creative solutions for the implementation of concepts, ideas, activities to respect Gender Equality issues in all sports.



# C. Act

## Capabilities

>Identifies the origins of the obstacles to gender equality between boys and girls related to cultural representations: education (families, schools, toys, books), culture (traditions, customs), social norms (friends, media, video games).

>Analyses symptoms of difficulty against Gender Equality issues even if at first look it is not expressed to be.

>Knows the informal skills fostered by the different sports activities (such as leadership, discipline, empathy, teamwork, self-confidence, etc.).

>Is able to explain what the obstacles to gender equality are.

>Clearly communicates with learners and provides explanations taking in account formal and non formal feedback.

>Assures resolution of incidents with support of mutual respect of participants.



## D. Check

### Capabilities

- >Maintains regular communication with learners, and addresses needs through empathy with their environment and cultures.
- >Establishes and maintains positive relationships between participants.
- >Ensures that needs, concerns or complaints are understood and addressed in accordance with each personality.
- >Deploys empathy to students needs.
- >Identifies potential win-win opportunities.
- >Provides leadership to anticipate/solve difficulties generated by Gender Equality issues on individuals, taking into account constraints and environment
- >Identifies the emergence of risks manifestation and their potential impacts and reacts accordingly.



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# Reader's notes



**We encouraged Coaches and Sport Instructors  
to use the**



**e-learning platform in enhancing their  
gender equality skills.**