



**MINISTÈRE
DES SPORTS,
DE LA JEUNESSE
ET DE LA VIE ASSOCIATIVE**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ACTIVE AND EQUAL : WOMEN'S HEALTH IN SPORT ACROSS GENERATIONS PROJECT

National Coordinators Second Meeting : France case study

Sylvain CHEVREL, Bilateral Cooperation Officer – Office of European and International Affairs - Sports Direction - Ministry of Sports, Youth and Community Life



**MINISTÈRE
DES SPORTS,
DE LA JEUNESSE
ET DE LA VIE ASSOCIATIVE**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

PART 1: FRENCH PUBLIC POLICIES SUPPORTING WOMEN'S SPORTS

1. Overview of the Ministry's key priorities



Public policy including certain initiatives on gender equality

Sustainable sport

Reduction in carbon footprint

Adaptation to the effects of global warming

Access to sports throughout life

Sports, health, and sedentary lifestyle prevention

Women's sports and gender equality

Disability sports

Sports in schools

Workplace sports

Encouraging volunteering

National programs for teaching basic sports skills (swimming, cycling)

Ethics and Integrity

Prevention of violence and discrimination

Safeguarding participants

Anti-doping and competition manipulation

Promotion of good governance in institutions

Structuring of the sports sector

Sports Training, Degrees, and Careers

Supporting French companies in innovation and international export of their expertise

Elite level

Support for athletes through cross-cutting policies

Oversight of federations and high-performance centers, and relations with the National Sports Agency

2. Combating violence and discrimination and protecting participants

2 main axes:

1) Training and awareness-raising for sports stakeholders

- **Law of March 2, 2022 aimed at democratizing sport in France:** in the training of sports educators it is mandatory to have teaching on the prevention of violence, the fight against discrimination, particularly sexual and sexist discrimination.
- > Strong Ministry Involvement in Developing Training Resources: [the Lilia Toolkit](#) and Educational Resources

2) Protection of Sport Participants

- **Creation in 2019 of the Signal-Sports Unit :** centralised reporting and case management for violence in sport in coordination with the sport movement and judicial authorities
 - 20 May 2025 Order: mandatory display of Signal-Sports in all sports facilities
 - In 2025, 872 reports led to the opening of administrative investigations by the Signal-Sports unit (+64% vs 2024; +140% vs 2023).
- **Honorability checks** (introduced in 2021 and extended to all accredited federations since April 2025): 1.4 million checks in 2025, resulting in 981 individuals being removed from coaching/supervisory roles.



Growing engagement of sports federations

In 2024, 65% of sports federations had already adopted their own action plans to prevent and combat gender-based violence in sport.

3. Better governance by promoting women's access to leadership roles

- Law of March 2, 2022** aimed at democratizing sport in France: mandatory gender parity in the governing bodies of accredited sports federations, effective at national level from 2024 and at regional level from 2028.



- CNOSF "Club des 300"** : leadership programme supporting two cohorts of 150 women for governance roles in sport
- Several regional Olympic committees and national sports federations (basket) have launched their own leadership programmes ahead of the 2028 elections



Retex sur les élections fédérales 2024 | sports.gouv.fr

Limited impact on president positions (20% women), but stronger progress in other governance roles (board members, secretaries general and treasurers)

4. Broadcasting of women's sports

Context

- 2014: only 14% of sports programming on television was dedicated to women's sport
- **ARCOM Study January 2024**: 53% of French people already consume women's sports content; **64% would watch more if TV coverage increased.**

Actions

- **ANS audiovisual support fund** : since 2023, €1.5m/year dedicated to increasing the visibility of women's sport (+45% compared to 2022)
- **Major events decree updated** : free TV coverage of key women's sports events (Tour de France Women, France women's football)

Good practises

- The french basketball federation has chosen to sell the TV rights to the French men's and women's teams together, to guarantee the same representation.

The key role of journalists

- Sports journalism remains highly gendered: **female commentators accounted for only 19% of airtime during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games broadcasts, compared to 81% for men**
- **The sector remains marked by sexism**



"10 women among 150 journalists at the FIFA World Cup: 'You have to tell us if we're a problem'" - Opinion article published by Marie Portolano on June 8, 2026

5. The need for a women's sports strategy has led to an institutional reorganization (1/2)

The obligation for sports federations to build a genuine strategy for women's sport

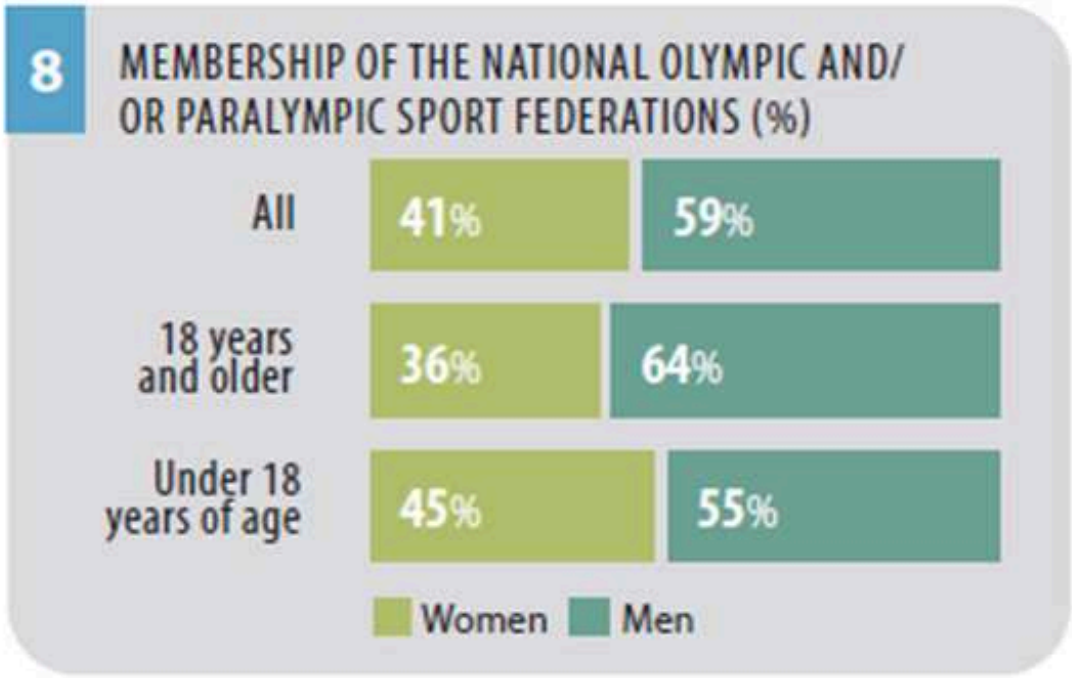
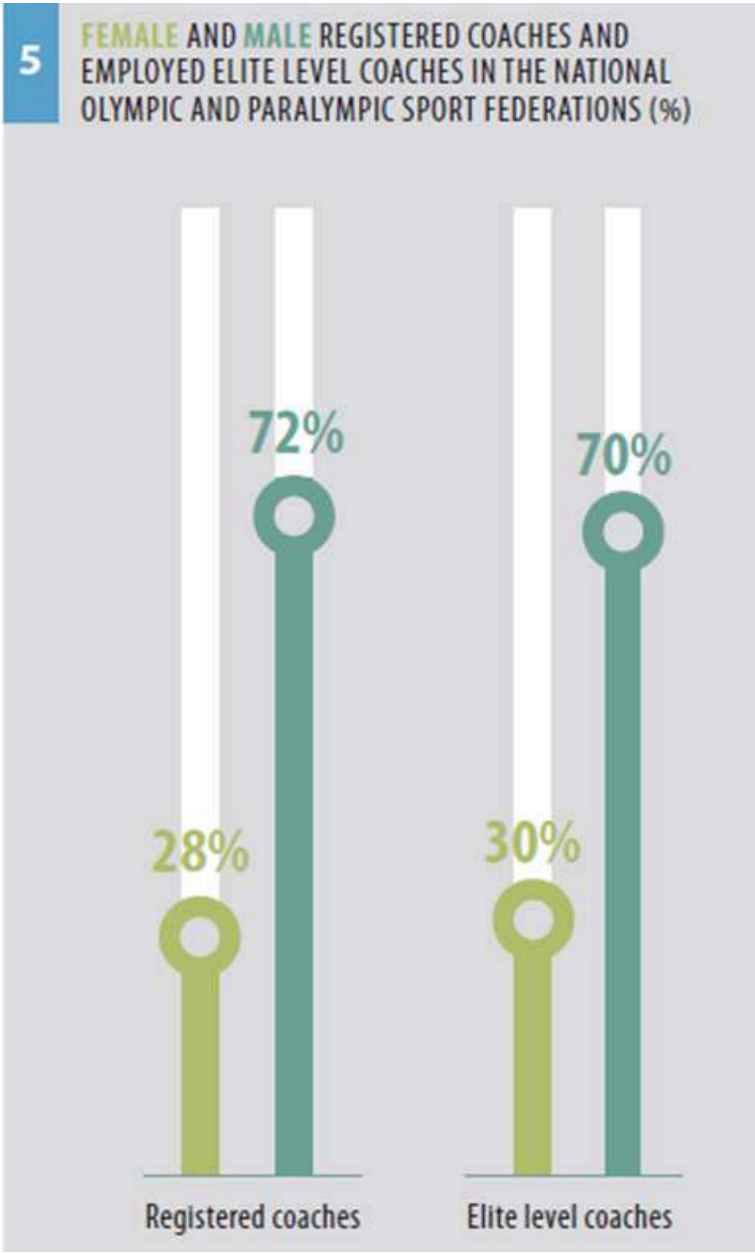
- Since 2014, as part of the three-year objective agreements that bind them to the State, all sports federations are now required to develop a gender equality plan covering sports participation, coaching, training, and officiating.
- In 2024, 12.9% of the Agence nationale du Sport (ANS) "Projet Sportif Fédéral" (PSF) funding was allocated to actions benefiting women. In 2025, this share increased to 20% for all sports federation.

A new institutional organization to better achieve these objectives

- Federations: creation of new positions such as women's sport project officers and gender equality commissions.
- Ministry : same trend + nomination of an inter-federation technical advisor supporting federations in women's sport strategies and the implementation of Ministry public policies

5. The need for a women’s sports strategy has led to an institutional reorganization (2/2)

Progress has been made, but significant challenges remain



If parity has not yet been reached in the female licensing rate (41%), there has nevertheless been **a significant improvement compared to 2019 (29%)**.



Charlotte and Julie Bonaventura were the first women to referee at a men’s Handball World Championship, during the 2017 World Championship in France

6. Major sporting events in France: translating public policies into action

Some good practises from Paris 2024

- First Olympic Games with 50/50 gender parity among athletes (5 250 athletes each)
- For the first time, the women's marathon was held on the final day of the Games, with its medal ceremony taking place during the Closing Ceremony, making it the final medal awarded of the Olympiad.
- Marathon pour Tous open to the public, with a 50/50 split between male and female participants.



Games legacy

- As part of the French Government's Paris 2024 Legacy Plan, the ["Terrain d'Égalité"](#) label was created with a [Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Response Guide](#). It aims to promote gender equality and to prevent and combat discrimination, as well as sexist and sexual violence, in the field of sporting events.





**MINISTÈRE
DES SPORTS,
DE LA JEUNESSE
ET DE LA VIE ASSOCIATIVE**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

PART 2: IMPROVING THE CONSIDERATION OF WOMEN'S HEALTH IN SPORTS POLICIES

1. A favorable context with growing recognition of these issues in France

Two key drivers of the Ministry's changing approach

1) Lower physical fitness levels and increased sedentary lifestyles among young people, especially girls

- In 2025, school-based physical fitness tests showed that **only 21.6% of girls aged 11–12 achieved a satisfactory level in endurance**, compared with 46.3% of boys.
- MGEN study “Teenage Girls and Sport: The Great Drop-Off” (2026): **55% of girls aged 13–20 have stopped participating in sport because of their periods**, and 53% feel that sports programmes do not adequately meet their specific needs.

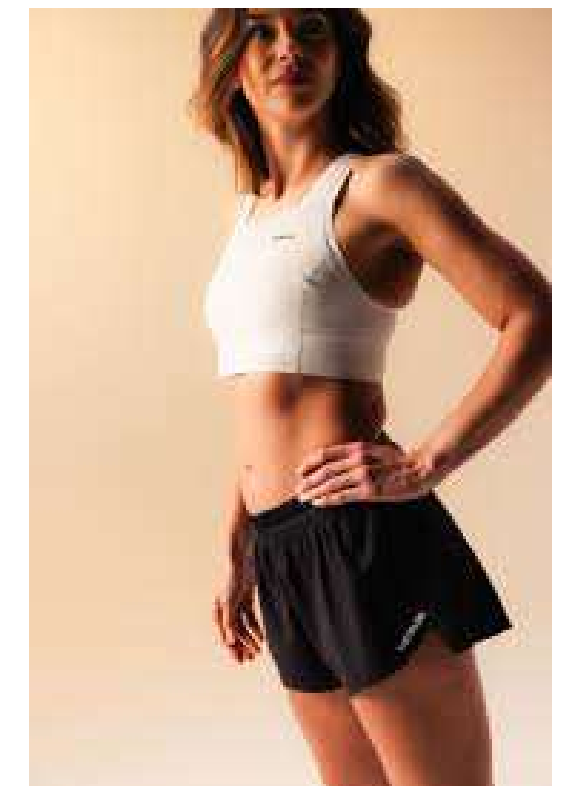
2) Less taboo and more open conversation in France society

- Many French athletes have spoken publicly about their pregnancies, during which they temporarily paused their sporting careers : Clarisse Agbegnenou, Elodie Clouvel, Manon Apithy Brunet
- A strong awareness campaign by Decathlon, supported by multiple ambassadors, for the launch of a menstrual running short.



“When you are a woman, it’s not easy every day. I had my period this morning. Two days ago I felt very good on the skis, and today I had no energy at all.”
Camille Bened, after the Biathlon World Cup in Oslo on 22 March 2026

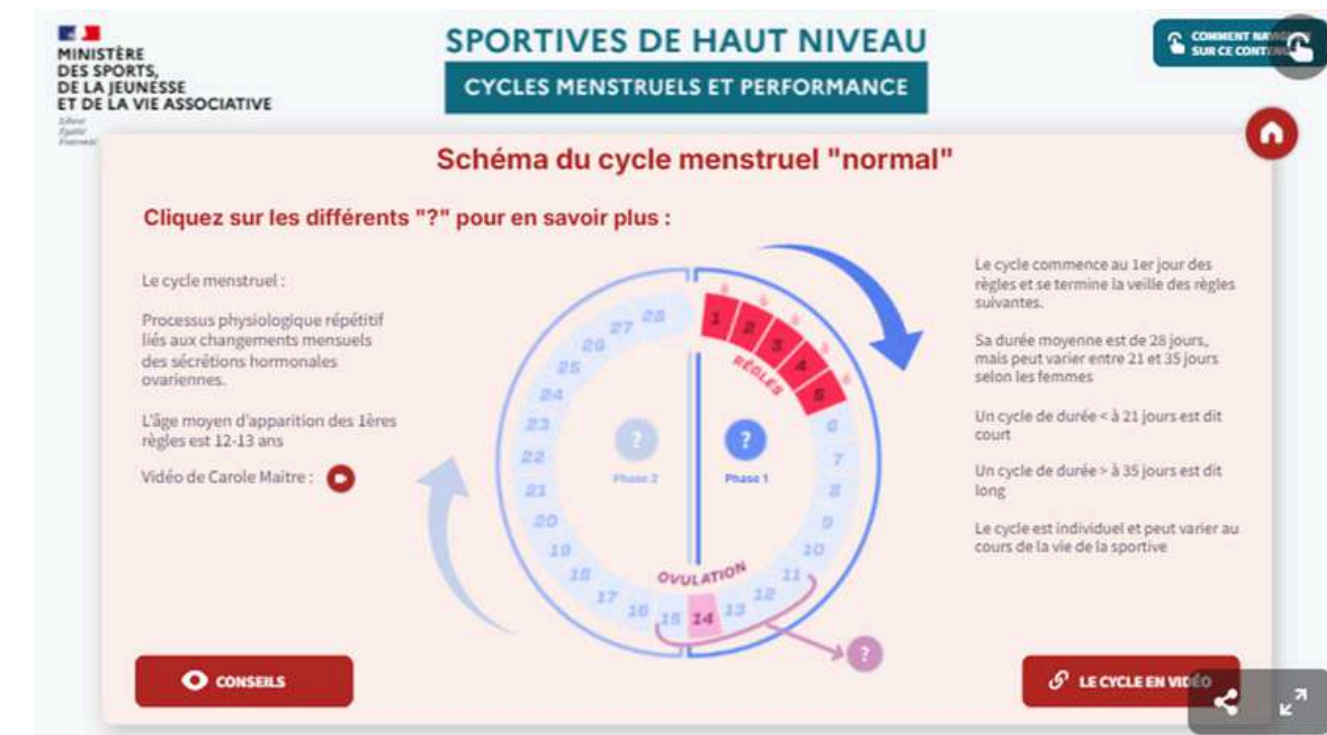
Decathlon campaign with Marine Lorphelin



2. The Ministry's ongoing work on menstrual, pelvic health, and puberty

So far, the Ministry approach mainly relies on information-sharing and scientific evidence, rather than operational or practical measures.

- Publication of 3 guides in 2026 by the Ministry :
 - [Guide on Menstrual Cycle and Performance](#)
 - [Guide on Pelvic Floor Health and Exercise-Induced Urinary Incontinence](#)
 - [Guide on Puberty and Performance](#)
- Two additional interactive tools on the [menstrual cycle](#) and [the prevention of exercise-induced urinary incontinence](#)
- The CREPS Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur has also created a [MOOC called "Sport and Menstruation"](#) for the sport movement.



A more precise and individualized approach at elite level

- EMPOW'HER (Exploring Menstrual Periods Of Women athletes to Escalate Ranking) program led by INSEP → better understand how woman respond to training loads in relation to their physiology and menstrual cycle.

3. Better consideration of pregnancy for amateur and professional athletes

Increased support for professional female athletes

⚠ "Elite Sport and Maternity" survey (2021): 46% of athletes said that maternity is a topic that is "not discussed."

- In reaction, big work done by the Ministry, the CNOSF, and INSEP
 → in 2022, publication of the guide "Elite Sport and Motherhood: It Is Possible!" → A 100+ page guide designed to better support athletes in their decision to become mothers and during pregnancy, through medical, social, logistical, and administrative guidance.

- Additional support measures were also announced in 2025 :
 - 12 months of guaranteed salary during maternity leave in handball and basketball, through sector-specific agreements.
 - Extension of elite athlete status by two years in the event of pregnancy, also applied to elite referees and judges.
 - Individualized financial support provided by the National Sports Agency (ANS).

For the general public, greater emphasis on the benefits of physical activity during pregnancy.

- Guide: "I can be physically active during pregnancy and after childbirth" (2023)

Quelques exemples de mouvements (post-partum)

Dans la période qui suit l'accouchement, c'est la tonicité abdominale et celle du périnée (plancher du bassin) qui doivent être regagnées en priorité.

Ces quelques exercices ciblent particulièrement les muscles concernés.

Dans un premier temps, pour une durée de 5-6 semaines, il convient d'éviter les mouvements et activités comprenant des sauts et des impacts verticaux.

Mais progressivement, tous les exercices de renforcement musculaire vont pouvoir être repris, en augmentant régulièrement leur intensité et leur durée.

Il est également important de reprendre la marche, le pédalage doux ou la natation, en alternance avec les exercices de renforcement musculaire.

Gainage latéral

- Allongée sur le côté, prendre appui sur le coude (à la verticale de l'épaule)
- Bas de jambes repliés, dos bien droit, ventre serré
- Décoller le bassin pour faire « la planche », en gardant l'alignement épaules-hanches-genoux
- Maintenir la position 10 secondes puis reposer doucement
- Recommencer 10 fois

Abdominaux

- À genoux au sol, mains et genoux écartés, dos bien droit, contracter très progressivement les abdominaux, comme pour « aspirer le nombril », en profitant de chaque inspiration pour resserrer un peu le ventre
- C'est le muscle abdominal transverse (bas du ventre) qui est le plus sollicité

- Tout en maintenant la contraction abdominale, décoller les genoux du sol et prendre appui sur les pieds, en faisant « la planche », dos bien droit, tête bien sortie des épaules, veillant à respirer normalement
- Maintenir la position 10 secondes et reposer doucement
- Recommencer 5 fois

4. The Ministry's work on other subjects (menopause, endometriosis)

Guide on endometriosis

- Introduction of a national strategy and publication in 2022 of the guide [“Moving with Endometriosis: the benefits of physical activity.”](#)

The guide primarily provides:

- A better understanding of the condition
- Practical advice on gradually incorporating physical activity
- Tailored exercises and inspiring testimonials



Former professional basketball player Sandrine Gruda, who lives with endometriosis, contributed to the guide. She also gave [an interview on the Ministry's website](#) to raise awareness of the condition and share her experience as an elite athlete

Guide on menopause and perimenopause

- Publication in 2026 by the Ministry of the guide [“Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Menopause: Understanding and Taking Action”](#)

- raise awareness and encourage regular physical activity among perimenopausal and menopausal women, providing practical advice to help manage symptoms and improve health and quality of life.
- incite women to go to Maison Sport Santé



5. Examples of good practices that have proven effective

The Maisons Sport-Santé

- In 2019, launch by the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Health of the “Maison Sport Santé”
- → Composed of health and sport professionals, these centres aim to support people in adopting long-term physical activity through personalised sport-health programmes.
- → Target groups: people returning to physical activity, individuals with chronic disease, people with disabilities, and those experiencing age-related loss of autonomy.
-
- Results:
 - - 550 Maisons Sport Santé in France, with more than 870,000 people already supported.
 - -70% of the people supported are women.

ICAPS project (Intervention with Middle School Students Focused on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour)

- Study with 1000 students near Strasbourg from 2002-2006
 - Goal : showing that considering young people within their living environment (socio-ecological model) can increase physical activity levels
 - 3 main components:
 - awareness-raising among children
 - awareness-raising among their surroundings (families, teachers, coaches, etc.)
 - changes to environmental conditions (physical, organisational, and institutional).
- Results: an increase of one hour of physical activity per week and a reduction of 20 minutes per day in time spent watching television.

More personalized approaches deliver real results

6. Several obstacles to progress on these issues

1) Lack of financial resources

The **“Sport” budget has fallen by nearly 30%** since the end of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, over a two-year period.

2) A focus on curative approaches over prevention

3) Growing difficulty for associations to retain volunteers

4) A shift in expectations: the sports movement is now expected to address all major societal issues

This requires a significant development of skills and expertise, which takes time.

5) A highly bureaucratic system slowing down implementation

In France, the highly bureaucratic and administrative structure makes processes slow and complex, and it takes time to connect the national Ministry with local clubs and practitioners.

Conclusion

Increasing focus on women's health, but still significant progress to be made

- Early-stage strategy, most documents published in 2026
- Awareness is well established; the focus must now shift to more operational solutions

The Active and Equal project as an opportunity

- The Ministry is likely to launch a new strategy for women's sport → an opportunity to **learn from international best practices through this project**
- The project also encourages better information gathering, stronger knowledge, and closer collaboration with our networks, which is highly valuable.

Other resources

- All In Plus project : [France factsheet](#) (in english)
- Women and Sport Podcast – Your Stories #7 – Marine Leleu – [The Menstrual Cycle: Between a Superpower and the Experience of Pain](#) (in french)
- Coaches' Secrets Podcast – Episode #31: Juliana Antero – [Coaching According to the Menstrual Cycle](#) (in french)
- About That Time of the Month: Periods - [Episode 1 #Women'sVoices with Maé-Bérénice Méité, Ashley CAIN-GRIBBLE, Youna DUFOURNET, Jessika GUEHASEIM, and Asma NIANG](#) (in french and english with subtitles)
- INSEP – ["Women in Sport, Elite Female Athletes: Menstrual Cycles, Periods, Contraception and Performance"](#) (in french)
- Direction des Sports – [Specific federation-led programmes adapted to women's participation in physical and sporting activities during pregnancy and after childbirth](#) (in french)
- ONAPS: [A survey on sedentary behaviors and physical activity during women's life transitions, identifying barriers and motivating factors for each life transition period](#) (in french)