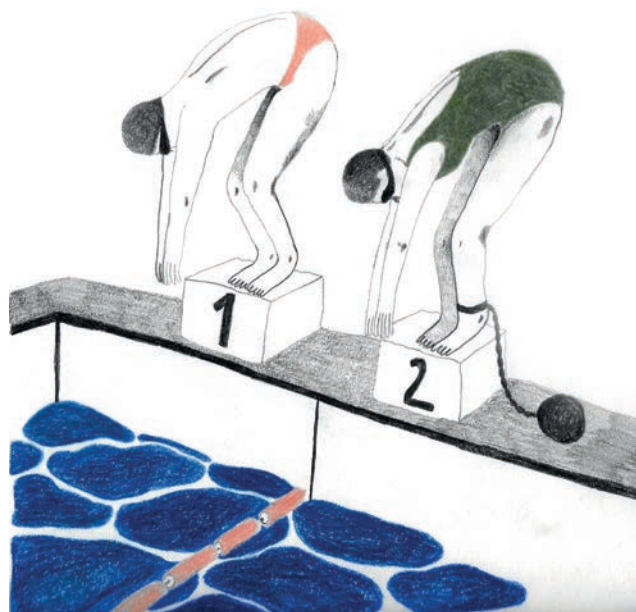


1 Facts and figures on gender (in)equalities and differences

Although more and more women are involved in the field of sport in Europe and worldwide, gender inequalities still persist and are entrenched in many domains in overt ways (for example, in participation) or more subtly (such as in the portrayal of female and male athletes).



Gender inequalities in sport roughly concern: access to and practice of sport, physical education and physical activity; access to responsibilities, participation in sports governing bodies and decision-making roles; access to resources, salaries, financial incentives and sports facilities; media coverage of women athletes and of women's sport; reintegration into the labour market after the end of an athletic career; gender-based violence including harassment and abuse.

The right environment in which women and girls can safely, freely and equally participate in sport often remains hard to find.

This factsheet is composed of five sections presenting facts and figures relating to gender inequalities and differences in participation (from grass-roots to elite sport), coaching, leadership and the media and to the prevalence of gender-based violence in sports.¹

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AT GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL

Gender differences in frequency and setting

In general, men tend to practise sports or other physical activities² more often than women in the European Union.³ For instance, 44% of men exercise or play sport at least once a week, whereas 36% of women do so. The frequency of playing sport or engaging in other physical activity significantly differs according to age. The biggest difference is noticed in the younger group (15-24 years old): 59% of young men compared to 47% of young women practise sport or some other physical activity at least once a week, while 12% of young men compared to 6% of young women engage in sport or other physical activity at least five times per week. This gap tends to narrow for older age groups.

¹ This 1st factsheet is an update of the factsheets compiled by Yellow Window within the framework of the European Union and Council of Europe's joint project "Balance in sport. Tools to implement gender equality" run in 2016.

² Other physical activities such as walking, cycling, dancing, gardening, etc.

³ Source: European Commission (2018). Special Eurobarometer 472 "Sport and physical activity".

Gender differences can be noticed in relation to the setting where sport or other physical activities¹ are practised. Men are more likely to engage in physical activities at a sports club or at work, and women at home or on the way between home and school, work or the shops. In line with this observation, more men than women believe that local sports clubs and other local providers offer many opportunities to be physically active. These differences may be connected to the traditional gender roles attributed to women and men: for instance, women commonly take up caregiving roles which may explain the settings where they mostly practise sport or other physical activities. Men are twice as more likely than women to be members of a sports club (16% vs 8%).²

What motivates girls/women and boys/men to practise sport?

Both men and women are motivated to practise sport or other physical activity to improve their health (53% and 55%, respectively) and fitness (48% and 47%). Although the differences are lessening for many of the indicators, slight gender differences can still be identified in relation to what motivates people to engage in sport or other physical activities. Whereas men are more likely to engage in sport or physical activity to have fun (33%), to be with friends (22%) or to improve physical performance (29%), women are concerned with controlling their weight (24%), improving their physical appearance (21%) or counteracting the effects of ageing (15%).³ These differences may be explained by a need to comply with gender stereotypes: men are expected to be strong and athletic, and women are expected to look pretty, slim and young.

These gender differences are stronger in the age group 15-24, where boys seem to attach more importance than girls to having fun (respectively 48% and 38%), to being with friends (41% vs 23%) and to the spirit of competition (17% vs 5%). Physical appearance is equally important for both sexes (29% for boys and 30% for girls) but girls tend to attach more importance to weight control (24% vs 20%) while boys prioritise improving fitness (55% vs 48%).⁴

What prevents them from practising sport?

In the EU, the first and main reason for the non-practice of sport is the lack of time, followed by a lack of interest or motivation, having a disability or illness and the cost. In fact, 40% of those who answered the Eurobarometer survey replied that they could not find the time to engage in a sport or physical activity. While the lack of time is considered as a barrier by both men (40%) and women (39%), aspects such as a lack of interest or motivation appear to be more common among women than men (22% compared to 19%).

These results show that most physically inactive women feel neither the desire nor the need to engage in an activity. This lack of interest is closely linked to family obligations and responsibilities that have been regarded for decades as women's duties. Women who do not participate in physical activities or sport are generally very busy with family and domestic matters. Taking care of children, seeing to the upkeep of the house and the management of the household are regarded as women's prime activities during their free time. These family responsibilities are particularly significant obstacles to the participation in sports among women from working-class backgrounds or ethnic minorities, where the gender-based division of domestic tasks is particularly pronounced.⁵

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 "Gender equality in sports. Access for Girls and Women to Sport Practices", Council of Europe Publishing, 2011, <https://edoc.coe.int/en/gender-equality/6957-gender-equality-in-sports.html>.

PARTICIPATION IN ELITE SPORT

The gap in the participation in the Olympic Games narrows...

The participation rate of women in Olympic Games has been constantly increasing. Recent figures from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) show that with 45% of those competing in the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro being women, there is now a broad gender-balanced level of participation.

Share of female participants in Summer Olympic Games from 1992 to 2016						
1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
28.8%	34.0%	38.2%	40.7%	42.4%	44.2%	45.0%

In Rio, six countries out of 206 (3%) had a delegation with a majority of women, three of which (New Zealand, Australia and USA) achieved a gender balance¹.

- ▶ New Zealand, 50% women (99 women, 98 men)
- ▶ Australia, 51% (213 women, 208 men)
- ▶ United States, 53% (292 women, 264 men)
- ▶ Canada, 59% (183 women, 127 men)
- ▶ China, 62% (243 women, 151 men)
- ▶ Puerto Rico, 68% (27 women, 13 men)

Participation in Winter Olympic Games is slightly lower, with 41% of those participating in the latest edition in PyeongChang being women, but nonetheless the level has been increasing since 1992, with the exception of a slight dip in 2014.

Share of female participants in Winter Olympic Games from 1992 to 2018							
1992	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2018
27.1%	30.0%	36.2%	36.9%	38.2%	40.7%	40.3%	41.2%

The gap in participation has been further reduced at the Youth Olympic Games, where the participation of women was 46.5% in Lillehammer for the 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games and 49.7% in the 2018 Summer Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires.

... but the gender pay gap in elite sport doesn't

Despite this increase in the number of female athletes participating in the Olympic Games, there is evidence of a gender pay gap in elite sport, including athletes' contractual earnings, sponsorships, endorsements and prize money. Even though the gender pay gap in sport is seldom estimated² Forbes publishes every year a list of the World's Highest-Paid Athletes.³ In 2019, Serena Williams is the only woman to break into Forbes' list of the world's highest-paid athletes, coming in at #63.

According to a BBC study carried out in 2015,⁴ 10 out of 35 sports that award prize money do not pay the same amount to sportswomen and sportsmen. For example, the total prize money for the 2015 Women's Football World Cup was US\$15 million, compared to US\$791 million for the 2018 Men's Football World Cup.⁵

¹ The participation of women and men at the Olympic Games cannot be fully considered as a gender equality indicator, considering that there is a selection process (based on performance) mostly independent from the country.

² Source: Women on Boards (2016). Gender Balance in Global Sport Report.

³ Source: Forbes (2019), "The World's Highest-Paid Athletes", available at www.forbes.com/athletes/#507939b155ae and "Why Is Serena Williams The Only Woman On The List Of The 100 Highest-Paid Athletes?", available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kimlessler/2019/06/14/why-is-serena-williams-the-only-woman-on-the-list-of-100-highest-paid-athletes/#332b875ffa98>.

⁴ Source: BBC (2015), "Men get more prize money than women in 30% of sports". Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/29789953. Last accessed on 27 June 2019.

⁵ Source: Forbes (2018), "The Evolution of FIFA World Cup Prize Money". Available at www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2018/06/05/the-evolution-of-fifa-world-cup-prize-money-infographic/#29dfb11a6ca5.

Another important aspect to take into consideration is the large discrepancies between professional and non-professional sport. For example, in Italy, six national sport federations (football, basketball, cycling, motorcycling, boxing and golf) do not recognise professional sport status for women.¹ Salary differentials persist in non-professional sports, with women athletes rarely entering national or international sport and sport-related markets.²

Employment and voluntary positions in sport

Slightly more men than women are employed in sport (55% vs 45%),³ either working in sport-related occupations in the sport sector (for example professional athletes, professional coaches) and outside the sport sector (for example school sports instructors), or in non-sport occupations in the sport sector (for example receptionists in fitness centres). The same trend applies to men and women who engage in voluntary work that supports sporting activities (8% vs 4%).⁴

Roles occupied by men and women in sport tend to be different. In the voluntary sector,^{5,6} men are more likely than women to occupy the role of coach/trainer (30% vs 23%) or referee or official (12% vs 10%). Conversely, more men than women tend to be responsible for administrative tasks (19% vs 17%), while both sexes are equally involved in supporting day-to-day club activities (20%) and in providing transport (10% of men and 11% of women).

Some of these differences tend to be reversed when age comes into play. In fact, more young women than men aged 15 to 24 are coaches/trainers (31% vs 26%) and are involved in the organisation of sporting events (42% vs 33%), while both sexes are equally represented in the role of referee or official (18%).

COACHING

Although there is a general lack of centralised gender-disaggregated data regarding accredited coaches at European level, it is generally acknowledged that there is a significant under-representation of female coaches across all fields and levels of sports. As concluded in a report commissioned by the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (2011):⁷

- ▶ women represent a small minority of the coaches employed in elite sports;
- ▶ the percentage of female coaches tends to decrease the higher the level of performance;
- ▶ female coaches are more likely to train athletes enrolled in typical women's sports rather than in traditional men's sports;
- ▶ female coaches are almost exclusively training either women, young people or children.

1 Source: Laura Capranica et al., (2013), "The Gender Gap in Sport Performance: Equity Influences Equality", International journal of sports physiology and performance 8(1):99-103.

2 Source: Ibid.

3 Source: Eurostat (2018). Eurostat Compact Guides: Sport statistics – 2018 edition.

4 Source: European Commission (2018). Special Eurobarometer 472 "Sport and physical activity".

5 Source: Ibid

6 No data broken down by sport-related occupation could be found for the paid employment sector.

7 Source: Pfister G. (2011). "Gender equality and (elite) sport". A report compiled for the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport.

To illustrate these points, two examples are provided. First, only 11% of the European-accredited coaches participating at the 2012 London Olympic Games were women.¹ Second, a recent report on Head Coaches of Women's Collegiate Teams² shows that male head coaches tend to be over-represented in women's teams, particularly in those sports that are traditionally played by men. Examples include Alpine skiing (90.9%), track and field (82.3%), swimming (82.1%), water polo (78.1%), diving (77.1%) and ice hockey (70.8%). Conversely, female head coaches are leading women's teams in field hockey (84.2%), lacrosse (91.2%), equestrianism (76.5%) and rugby (85.7%). These figures may indicate that female coaches refrain or are excluded from training teams of sports that are traditionally perceived as masculine.

This acute unbalance may be explained by stereotypical perceptions about coaching being a male (professional) occupation requiring traditional masculine traits and by a prevailing hegemonic masculinity in sport settings. Indeed, research³ indicates that the masculinist culture of sport is segregating female coaches. Consequently, their motivation and self-assurance are reduced. Research⁴ also shows that organisational factors are affecting female coaching career development. Systemic barriers alienating female coaches from public sports organisations include male-dominated workplaces setting masculinised standards for recruitment and career progression, family-unfriendly working environments, the prominence of male-dominated networks and the lack of female role models. In fact, the over-representation of men throughout decades in sport results in what is called "homologous reproduction", whereby male coaches tend to hire those who look most like them, i.e. other men. Moreover, there seems to be a connection between the gender proportion of athletes and the men-women ratio among coaches as former (male) athletes became (male) coaches.⁵

It is thus not surprising that literature on the subject⁶ suggests that it is very unlikely that female students of coaching will eventually become coaches. Therefore, measures need to be put in place to combat multidimensional barriers (crossing the individual, interpersonal, organisational and cultural levels) that are discouraging and preventing women from becoming or progressing as coaches.

ACCESS TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Gender-unbalanced representation in decision-making positions in sports organisations

Recent statistics⁷ show that, despite the gradually increasing rates of women's participation in sport, there are still very few women in leadership positions on the Olympic and Paralympic Committees, in European and national sports governing bodies, and in national sports federations. Data from the IOC shows that women constitute only 6.3% of National Olympic Committees (NOC) presidents (13 out of 205) and 15.2% of NOC secretaries general (31 out of 205).⁸

According to data provided by the European Olympic Committees and collected in 22 European countries, Norway is leading the way and close to gender parity with women taking up 43% of leadership positions while in 13 countries out of 22 less than 30% of the leadership positions are held by women.⁹

1 Source: International Council for Coach Education and Leeds Metropolitan University (2014). Presentation at the 6th IWG World Conference on Women and Sport: "Gender & Coaching Report Card: London 2012 Olympics". Last accessed on 6 July 2019 at: https://www.icce.ws/_assets/files/news/IWG/Leanne_Norman-Gender_Coaching_Report_Card.pdf.

2 Source: LaVoi N. (2018), "Head Coaches of Women's Collegiate Teams – A comprehensive report on select NCAA division-I institutions 2017-2018", Tucker Centre for Research on Girls & Women in Sport and the Alliance of Women Coaches.

3 Source: Norman L. (2012), "A crisis of confidence: women coaches' responses to their engagement in resistance", *Sport, Education and Society*, Vol. 19, Issue 5, pp. 532-551.

4 Source: Greenhill J., Auld C., Cuskelly G. and Hooper S. (2009), "The impact of organisations factors on career pathways for female coaches", *Sport Management Review*, 12, pp. 229-240.

5 Source: Pfister G. (2011), "Gender equality and (elite) sport", a report compiled for the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport.

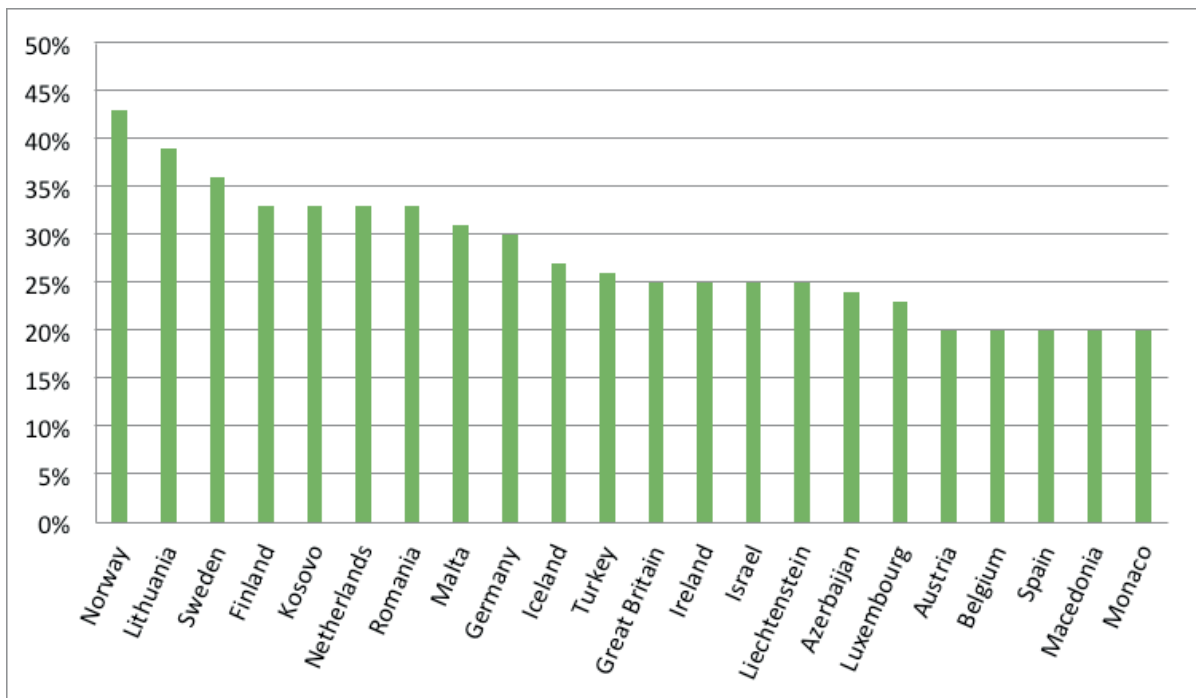
6 Source: Fasting K., Svela Sand T. and Knorre N. (2013), "European female sport students as future coaches?", *European Journal for Sport and Society*, Vol. 10, Issue 4, pp. 307-323.

7 For more detailed information about recent statistical data see, for example, the 2016 Women on Boards Report on Gender Balance in Global Sport, or the 2015 European Institute for Gender Equality Report on Gender Equality in Power and Decision-Making.

8 Source: International Olympic Committee.

9 European Olympic Committees, Gender Equality in Sport Commission, Newsletter, November 2017.

■ Percent of women in leadership positions of European National Olympic Committees



This under-representation of women in leadership positions in sport can be explained by prevailing masculinised sport settings and stereotypical gender roles, but also by gender-blind or biased institutional norms and procedures. Many executive members are elected by their peers, who often tend to elect new leaders that feature similar characteristics as themselves.

Initiatives in the sport movement

In order to ensure a more balanced representation of women and men in leadership positions in sport, several institutions are issuing policy recommendations, establishing targets or implementing initiatives. A number of examples are described below.

For instance, the International Olympic and Paralympic Committees are engaged in raising the number of women in leadership positions. Both international committees established targets (20% and 30%, respectively) to increase the number of decision-making positions for women (particularly in executive bodies) in the Olympic and Paralympic Movements. Both international committees are undertaking complementary initiatives to support the achievement of these targets.

Eleven sports federations in continental Europe¹ have decided to implement gender quotas to contribute to a balanced representation of women and men for their highest decision-making bodies (executive committee, praesidium and board of directors) and/or for councils, committees and commissions.

Although “Women in Sport” commissions or committees are becoming popular in sports organisations, they are still rather scarce. These structures can be found in the international and national Olympic and Paralympic Committees, as well as in five sports federations in continental Europe. Within their mandate, they propose policies to increase female participation in sport at all levels, including in leadership positions.

Governmental bodies responsible for the policy area of sport also play a role in promoting measures to increase the number of women in leadership positions in sport.

¹ United World Wrestling Europe, European Fencing Confederation, European Handball Federation, European Shooting Confederation, European Weightlifting Federation, Union of European Football Associations, European Hockey Federation, FIBA Europe, European Triathlon Union, European Table Tennis Union and the European Taekwondo Union. Source: European Institute for Gender Equality (2015), “Gender Equality in Power and Decision-Making – Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States”.

MEN AND WOMEN IN SPORTS MEDIA: A MEN'S WORLD

Men make the sports news

Sports media is a male-dominated setting around the globe giving more visibility to sports traditionally practised by men (like football) and reporting massively about male athletes and their performance.

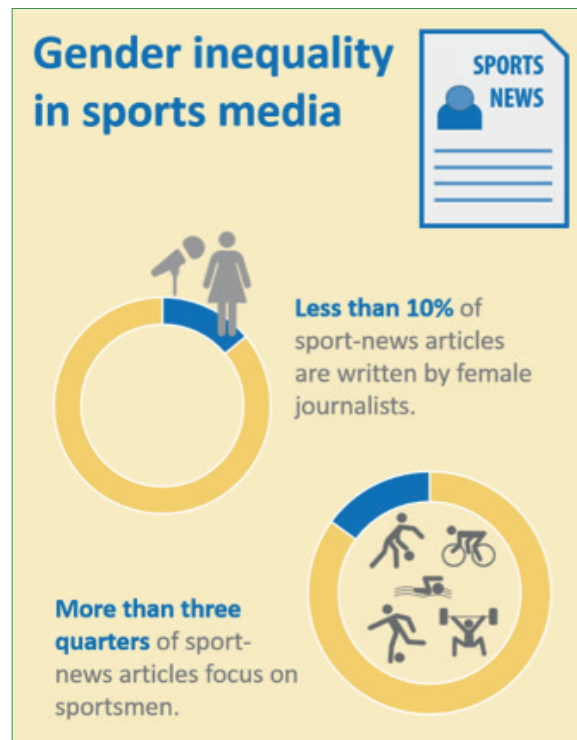
The International Sports Press Survey 2011¹ concluded that more than 90% of articles were written by male journalists and more than 85% of the articles focused on sportsmen. To be more precise, only 8% of the analysed sports articles were written by named female journalists.²

As in other fields, horizontal and vertical segregation can be observed in the media, meaning that women tend to be alienated from the sports media at all levels. Not only are women under-represented in media leadership positions, the topics that female journalists cover tend to be stereotypically associated with women's roles. For instance, as reported in the 2015 Women's Media Center (WMC) report,³ female journalists in the United States of America mainly covered topics like entertainment, education, lifestyle and health, whereas sport is still a predominantly masculine domain, regardless of the type of media. Only 10% of sports news in newspapers is attributed to women journalists, which increases to 21% for internet news and 14% for wire services.

Although some trends remain unchanged, the WMC report noticed a decrease in the overall disparity between women and men in the media (41% of news covered by women and 59% by men) compared to the previous report (38% vs 62%).⁴

Portrayal and coverage of women's sport are still gender-biased

At international level and over time, the realities of women's sporting performances have not been accurately represented in media images of sportswomen.⁵ There is a solid body of research analysing the



representation of sportswomen in different media channels, covering distinct periods of time, in multiple countries. In general, female athletes are far less represented in the sports media than male athletes. Moreover, sportswomen tend to be portrayed in stereotypical, comical, sexualised and sexist ways. Their physical appearance, femininity and/or sexuality are more often referred to than their athletic ability. For example, between 1997 and 2008, only 38 (5.6%) of the US magazine Sports Illustrated's 676 issues have featured women on the cover, 12 of which were not athletes, but models in a swimsuit.⁶

The media and sports use gender stereotypes to perpetuate gender inequality and accentuate gender differences.⁷ Women are not seen as "real athletes" because the media, on the one hand, objectifies women and highlights aspects of their bodies and, on the other hand, contributes to the reproduction of sport's hegemonic masculinity.⁸ Media gender-biased portrayals of sportswomen have an impact on female participation in sport and coaching, as well as on leadership positions in sport.

1 The International Sports Press Survey collected and analysed 17 777 articles about sport from 80 newspapers in 22 different countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Switzerland and USA.

2 Source: Horky T. and Nieland J-U. (2011), ISPS 2011 – First results of the International Sports Press Survey 2011. Presentation available at: www.playthegame.org/fileadmin/image/PTG2011/Presentation/PTG_Nieland-Horky_ISPS_2011_3.10.2011_final.pdf.

3 Source: Women's Media Center (2019), "The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2019".

4 Source: Ibid.

5 Source: Sherry E., Osborne A. and Nicholson M. (2016), Sex Roles, 74, Issue 7, pp. 299-309.

6 Source: Women's Sports and Fitness Facts and Statistics, Women's Sports Foundation, www.womenssportsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/wsf-facts-march-2009.pdf.

7 Source: Trolan E. J. (2013). "The impact of the media on gender inequality within sport", *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 91, pp. 215-227.

8 Source: Ibid.

The University of Cambridge¹ researched the use of language to refer to women and men in sport through multi-billion-word databases of written and spoken English from a vast range of media sources.² Men tend to be mentioned almost three times more often than women in relation to sport. The same online article highlights that, in comparison with men, women are disproportionately referred to regarding their appearance, clothes and personal lives and that women's aesthetics are largely emphasised over their athletic performance. The most common words associated or used for women in sport (but not men) are "aged", "older", "pregnant" and "married" or "unmarried". Conversely, the words most chosen to describe men in sport are "fastest", "strong", "big", "real" and "great". The choice of verbs also differs for sportswomen and sportsmen. Whereas the words "woman" or "women" are usually associated with verbs such as "compete", "participate" and "strive", the words "man" or "men" are commonly combined with "beat", "win", "dominate" and "battle".

Although some positive changes have been noticed in the last 25 years,³ media coverage of women's sports on TV is still expected to remain rather unchanged as indicated by a longitudinal study.⁴ On the other hand, evidence from research⁵ suggests that, when compared to traditional media, sports-news websites seem to be playing an important role in setting an agenda of inclusiveness for sports-media coverage (particularly for the Olympic Games) with regard to gender, nationality and different sports.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SPORT: IT DOES EXIST!

Defining and measuring gender-based violence

Despite the fact that sport promotes ethical values, fair play and integrity, violence also occurs in the sporting context. In some cases, violence is directed against a person because of their gender (including gender identity or expression). This phenomenon is understood as gender-based violence and may include sexual harassment and abuse, sexual assault, physical or emotional-psychological violence and LGBTQI⁶ violence. These forms of gender-based violence are not mutually exclusive; they actually overlap. In sport, gender-based violence usually stems from abuses of power relations facilitated by an organisational culture that ignores, denies or fails to prevent such behaviours.



The media has drawn attention to some cases of such violence that were taken to court, and a few organisations across the world are keeping records of cases of gender-based violence in sport. Recent examples like the USA Gymnastics or the English Football Association scandals can give an idea of the extent and complexity of the phenomenon.

1 See: www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/aesthetics-over-athletics-when-it-comes-to-women-in-sport.

2 More information about the Cambridge English Corpus and the Sports Corpus can be found at: www.cambridge.org/gb/about-us/what-we-do/cambridge-english-corpus.

3 Source: Cooky C., Messner M. A. and Musto M. (2015), *Communication & Sport*, Vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 261-287.

4 Source: Cooky C., Messner M. A. and Hextrum R. H. (2013), "Women Play Sport, But Not on TV: A Longitudinal Study of Televised News Media", *Communication & Sport*, Vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 203-230.

5 Source: Eagleman A., Burch L. M. and Vooris R. (2014), "A Unified Version of London 2012: New-Media Coverage of Gender, Nationality and Sport for Olympics Consumers in Six Countries", *Journal of Sport Management*, 28, pp. 457-470.

6 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, or Intersex.

Sixteen EU member states and two non-EU states¹ have attempted to estimate the magnitude of certain forms of gender-based violence in sport. However, an approximate and reliable figure translating the reality of the problem in Europe does not exist yet. The research carried out so far does not allow for comparability, mainly due to a lack of consensus of the definition of gender-based violence and what it encompasses.

None of the 38 existing studies use a definition that covers all forms of gender-based violence or use it as an underpinning principle,² and most studies focus on sexual violence, without taking into account the psychological and emotional aspects of gender-based violence. Moreover, most of the existing studies were conducted on children and young people.

How big is the problem?

Data from several studies,³ conducted in both European and non-European countries, allow us to say that gender-based violence in sport affects primarily women, as shown in the table below. Boys and men are also affected by sexual violence, but to a lesser extent, except in the context of Zambia, where 72% of men are affected by sexual harassment (in comparison to 66% of women).

Gender	Sexual harassment (UK) – Before 16		Sexual violence (Belgium and Netherlands) – Before 18		Sexual harassment (Zambia) – Average age 20 years		Sexual abuse (Quebec) – Average age 14-17 years		Sexual violence (Germany) – Average age 21.58 year		Sexual harassment and abuse by a male coach (Sweden) – Average age 25 years	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Female	1500	34	380	17	120	66	1426	13.8	411	48.1	18	7.0
Male	284	17	198	11	154	72	1281	3.2	170	25.3	8	3.6
Total No.	6124		4043		440		2707		1529		477	

Generally, people tend to associate gender-based violence with abuse by coaches or other personnel within the athletes' entourage, such as doctors, physiotherapists or managers. However, evidence shows that peer athletes are also often perpetrators. Data on sexual harassment and abuse on children and teenagers in sport from the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands show that harassment and abuse came mainly from other athletes. Perpetrators are also more often men but data from Norway⁴ and from the Czech Republic⁵ report cases of harassment from women (respectively 13% and 28%).

Sexual harassment and abuse	From athletes	From coaches	From other adults
Sexual harassment ⁶	66%	21%	20%
Sexual harm ⁷	88%	8%	6%
Sexual violence ⁸	33%	17%	41%

1 Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway (non-EU), Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey (non-EU) and the UK. Source: European Commission – Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2016), Study on gender-based violence in sport.

2 Source: Ibid.

3 Sources: Alexander et al (2011), The Experiences of Children Participating in Organised Sport in the UK; Vertommen et al (2016), "Interpersonal violence against children in sport in the Netherlands and Belgium", Child Abuse and Neglect, 51, 223-236; Fasting et al (2015), Gender-based Violence in Zambian Sport: Prevalence and Prevention; Parent et al (2015), Sexual violence experienced in the sport context by a representative sample of Quebec adolescents, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 31(16), 2666-2686; Ohlert et al (2017), "Sexual violence in organized sport in Germany", German Journal of Exercise and Sport Research 48 (1), 59-68; Susanne Johansson and Carolina Lundqvist (2017), "Sexual harassment and abuse in coach-athlete relationships in Sweden", European Journal for Sport and Society, 14:2, 117-137, DOI: 10.1080/16138171.2017.1318106.

4 Fasting K., Brackenridge C. and Sundgot-Borgen J. (2003), "Experiences of Sexual Harassment and Abuse among Norwegian Elite Female Athletes and Nonathletes", Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 74:1, 84-97, DOI: 10.1080/02701367.2003.10609067.

5 Source: Ibid.

6 Source: Alexander et al (2011), "The Experiences of Children Participating in Organised Sport in the UK".

7 Source: Ibid.

8 Source: Vertommen et al (2016), "Interpersonal violence against children in sport in the Netherlands and Belgium", Child Abuse and Neglect, 51, 223-236.

Another aspect to take into consideration is that some groups appear to be more affected by gender-based violence. Particularly, according to a study conducted in Belgium and the Netherlands, these groups are elite athletes, LGBTI athletes, disabled athletes and athletes from ethnic minorities.¹

Type of violence	TOTAL SAMPLE % No = 4043	ETHNIC MINORITY % No=334	LGBT ATHLETES % No=308	ELITE ATHLETES % No = 112	DISABLED ATHLETES % No=183
Psychological Moderate or severe experiences	26.1	24.8	34.6	42.0	41.6
Physical Moderate or severe experiences	10.2	16.4	18.2	23.2	30.3
Sexual Moderate or severe experiences	12.8	17.6	24.4	25.9	31.4

How to combat and prevent it

Over the last 20 years, several policies have been introduced to address the problem.

Knowing that the general legal framework applies in cases of gender-based violence in sport is crucial to combating the problem. It is worth noting that the absence of specific legislation to prosecute cases of gender-based violence in sport, the lack of clarity in relation to what a “sexual act” pertains to, or the varied terminology used to refer to forms of gender-based violence across countries can pose some difficulties in handling cases of gender-based violence in sport. The Istanbul Convention² is an important initiative from the Council of Europe to protect women against all forms of violence and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women, including in sporting settings. This convention seeks to establish a pan-European legal framework to prevent and fight violence against women and girls. An independent expert body (GREVIO)³ was created to monitor the implementation of the convention by the parties.

The assessment of good repute of sport professionals is a very important measure for ensuring the protection of athletes. Checking the criminal background of both voluntary and employed sports staff (such as coaches, managers and therapeutic staff) can help protect potential (underage) victims from sexual violence (including sexual harassment and abuse, as well as rape).

Complementing the existing legislation, sports organisations have established internal measures, procedures, structures and resources to protect their athletes. Examples include guidelines on how to handle cases of sexual violence in sport (including support for victims), measures to protect potential victims of gender-based violence and procedures to report incidents, or registration systems to record cases of offenders who have a disciplinary conviction in sport.

Despite missing robust prevalence and incidence estimates, actions to eliminate gender-based violence in sport are being undertaken by different bodies across the world. Interestingly, stakeholders are teaming up to address gender-based violence in sport. In the European Union, partnerships combating gender-based violence in sport are multilevel, multi-actor and multidisciplinary. They include governmental, public, private and civil society organisations from different sectors, such as sport; health; education; children’s, young people’s, women’s and LGBTQI people’s rights; gender equality; the police; and child welfare.

¹ Source: Ibid.

² Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011), last accessed on 27 June 2019 at www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e.

³ More information about the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence can be found here: www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/grevio.

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