

Gender equality in sport



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Sport implies two different perspectives that are increasingly considered at EU level: professional sport and sport as a leisure activity. In both cases, sport represents a large and fast-growing sector of the economy and makes an important contribution to growth and jobs.

Sport encourages social interaction, which is important for both young and old, women and men, and promotes physical and mental health. It can also foster education, communication, negotiation skills and leadership, vital for women's empowerment.



Levelling the playing field

Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the European Union. The European Commission expressed its commitment, in both the Women's Charter and the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015), to address and eliminate the gender gap in decision-making.

Following the EU Conference on Gender Equality in Sport in 2013, the proposal for Strategic Action on Gender Equality in Sport 2014-2020 was approved. Recognising that there is still a lot to do, the actions and recommendations contained in the proposal encourage sports governing bodies and non-governmental organisations to develop and implement national and international strategies for action on gender equality in sport supported by coherent and concrete measures at EU level.

The Council conclusions on Gender Equality in Sport encourage sports organisations to increase gender balance in executive boards and committees, and in management and coaching. They also support the removal of non-legislative obstacles which prevent women from taking up such functions (20 May 2014).

Hurdles

Women side lined from decision-making

Despite the gradually increasing participation of women in sport, women remain underrepresented in the decision-making bodies of sporting institutions at local, national, European and global levels.

Data from the report on women in power and decision making, prepared by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) for the Luxembourg...

Figure 1 - Proportion of women and men in decision-making positions in continental federations of Olympic sports in Europe, 2013



Confederation	Women (%)	Men (%)
European Confederation of Badminton	25.0	75.0
European Confederation of Table Tennis	20.0	80.0
European Confederation of Volleyball	15.0	85.0
European Confederation of Basketball	10.0	90.0
FIEB	5.0	95.0

Source: Data collected by EIGE from the annual conferences of Olympic sports confederations (2013)

This fact sheet presents some of the key barriers preventing gender equality in decision-making in sports organisations, as well as obstacles to equal participation in sports and coaching, often due to gender stereotypes. Initiatives at the EU and national level to increase equality in sports are highlighted, along with EIGE's new tools, the online Gender Mainstreaming Platform and Gender Statistics Database, which can assist the integration of a gender perspective in sports policies and programmes.

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