

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

Continental Federation	Women (%)	Men (%)
European Olympic Committees	20.5	79.5
International Olympic Committee	20.5	79.5
International Association of Athletics Federations	20.5	79.5
International Union of Basketball	20.5	79.5
IFAF	20.5	79.5

Source: Data collected by EIGE in the framework of the project 'Gender Equality in Sport' (2013-2015)

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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