



#StandUp4Equality

Sport and LGBTQI+

EQUALITY IN SPORT



Participation of LGBTQI+ people in sport

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The rate of LGBTQI+ people participating in organised sport activities is lower compared to the rest of the population (1). One survey, conducted in 2018, revealed that 16% of LGBTQI+ have never been active in sport, apart from obligatory physical education at school (1) and that 1 out of 5 respondents has dropped out of a sport activity at least once because they felt excluded due to their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. The percentage of these drop-outs due to gender identity and/or sexual orientation is even higher in people with a sexual orientation other than gay/lesbian/bisexual (1). Another survey revealed that 53% of trans women feel excluded from particular sports as a result of their sexual orientation and gender identity and that 62% of trans people never participated in sports other than mandatory PE in school (2). Lower participation rates of women, regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation is deeply rooted in history, as sport was and still is a place of sexism and misogyny (2). Women boxing, for example, was only accepted in 2012 in the Olympics (3). Other practical barriers of women participating in sport include lack of personal safety, lack of money and less access to sport facilities compared to men. Besides, the personal, social and cultural barriers women face add to the lower participation rates of women in sport (3).

To promote participation of LGBTQI+, good practice examples deliver solutions and guide clubs and sport organisations to create LGBTQI+ inclusive sport environments (4, chapter 6). “We create sport haters, especially between the ages 13-18” and “we need to investigate what they want”, said Richard Karper, NOC Netherlands, in his presentation during the ESP 2022.

Participating in sport competitions, specifically trans athletes face huge barriers for which there is not yet a suitable solution (5). Not being allowed to compete, or facing huge disadvantages when competing, impacts negatively on the sport participation numbers of LGBTQI+, too. There are a lot of personality types, for which competition plays a major role in sport. “I want to win. That’s why I do competitions”, one non-binary athlete shared with the audience during the European Sport Platform 2022, when they shared their sport experiences with the audience during a workshop.

Literature:

1 Menzel et al. (2019): THE RELEVANCE OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY IN SPORT IN EUROPE. FINDINGS FROM THE OUTSPORT SURVEY

2 EGLSF et al (2021): LBTI WOMEN IN SPORT VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, & LIVED EXPERIENCES

3 sportscotland (2008): BARRIERS TO WOMEN AND GIRLS’ PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

4 Földi et al. (2019): OUTSPORT TOOLKIT SUPPORTING SPORT EDUCATORS IN CREATING AND MAINTAINING AN INCLUSIVE SPORT COMMUNITY BASED ON DIVERSITY OF GENDER IDENTITIES AND SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS

5 Erikainen et al (2021): HUMAN RIGHTS, TRANS ATHLETES AND INTERSEX ATHLETES IN SPORT



The following data derives from two online questionnaire surveys (one for coaches, one for athletes) and from structured interviews (with athletes) that ENGSO's EWS committee conducted in July - August 2022. The questionnaire was distributed in 13 languages (Albania, English, French, Finnish, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish). 186 athletes and 42 coaches filled out the online questionnaire, respectively, and 6 interviews were conducted with athletes during the EuroGames 2022 as well as online. Sample characteristics are displayed in the appendices of this factsheet.

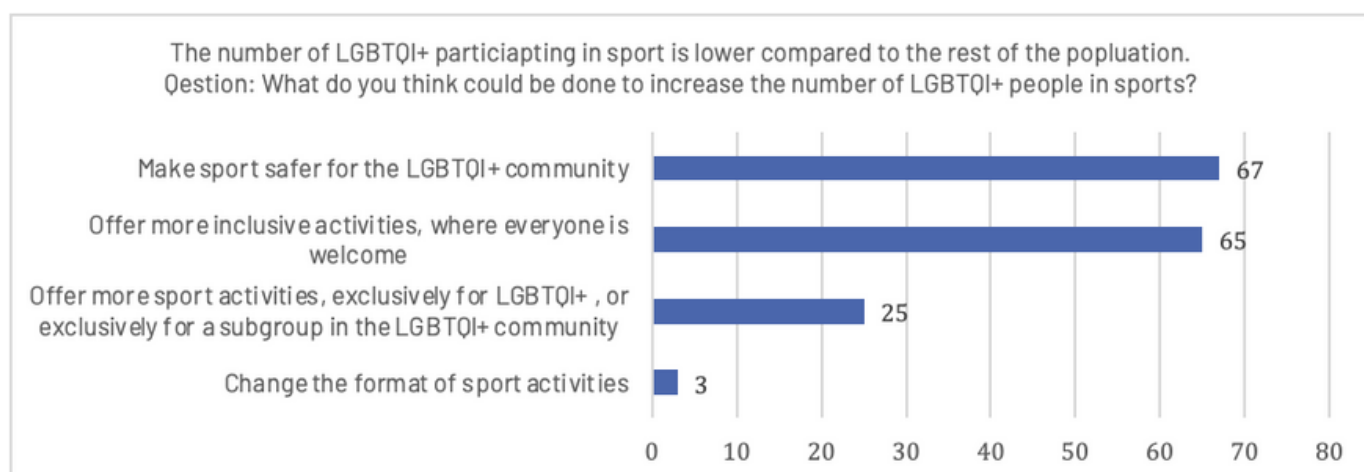


Figure 1. Answers of Athlete Questionnaire. Numbers are displayed in absolute numbers. Just one answer could be chosen, and it was optional to also answer in a free-text field.

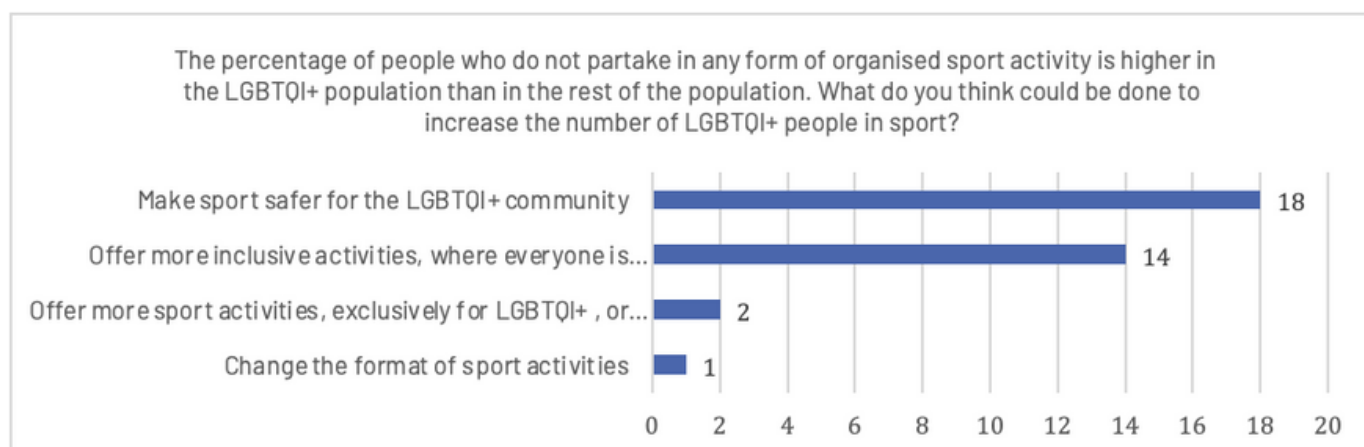


Figure 2. Answers of Coach Questionnaire. Numbers are displayed in absolute numbers. Just one answer could be chosen, and it was optional to also answer in a free-text field.



Table 1. Athlete answers from the optional free text field

| |
|---|
| The number of LGBTQI+ participating in sport is lower compared to the rest of the population. What do you think could be done to increase the number of LGBTQI+ people in sport? |
| Efficient implementation of a clear Code of Conduct |
| This stems from a wider problem - that of exclusion at earlier ages. The problem isn't with LGBTQI+ sport, it's with broader society. So, I'm not sure any changes to our activities, which are already very inclusive, could increase participation. |
| Take away competitiveness in lower levels of sports |
| More possibilities for mixed teams (m/f/x/whatever), including mixed dressing rooms |
| Provide the money to create free halls and equipment to kickstart, visit youth groups to promote sport |
| Unfortunately, we have not yet reached a point in the evolution of society where there no longer needs to be organised entities to defend LGBTQI+ people for their individual reasons and characteristics. |
| Role models in sport clubs |
| There is no need to create special services. You have to stop judging or seeing people based on their sexual orientation and treat everyone the way you want to be treated and promoted. |
| Changing the mindset in organised sport, what makes "us" as an association tick? |

Table 2. Coach answers from the optional free text field

| |
|---|
| The percentage of people who do not partake in any form of organised sport activity is higher in the LGBTQI+ population than in the rest of the population. What do you think could be done to increase the number of LGBTQI+ people in sport? |
| Softening the binary sports system (increasingly expanding male/female categorization through new formats); Inclusive activities instead of exclusive for LGBTQI+. |
| Ask them |
| I do not have the impression that there are less LGBTQI in sport clubs |
| the rules for competitions e.g., athletics should be further adapted. A competition open for all, how should that go? Man against woman and diverse? The genetic characteristics are decisive. The system needs a solid base. What does this look like? |
| Talk/educate about it, logo for LGBTQI+ friendly clubs |
| Diverse distribution of management positions |
| Accept other people as they are |
| That everyone should be involved. Sports should be shown more in schools. Test activities. |
| Have those in charge never use anti LGBTQI+ insults and jokes when things go south, as that sets a precedent for kids to behave that way with teammates thereby making the community feel unwelcome |



We also asked the athletes in the interviews about sport participation for LGBTQI+.
Below are some exemplary statements (direct quotations).

Question: We know that the percentage of LGBTQI+ people participating in organised sport activities is lower compared to the rest of the population. Did you hear from friends or so within the LGBTQI+ community why they do not partake in organised sport activities?

"I would say that I am the typical example: If you were traumatised in childhood by negative sport experience, that is bad. And in my country, it is so typical to play football which is very homophobic. Football players & fans were known for their violence towards queer people. Beating them on the streets and stuff. You need a homo-friendly atmosphere!"

"The reason is complete bullying. Like for me in high school. Then you drop out. For trans athletes there is always this scary moment " how will they accept me?" Sometimes we do not have enough courage to go. We do not know if we will fit and if we will be good enough for the team sport."

"I think belonging to LGBTQI+ is a difficulty in life in general and that this could limit one to do things like sport. You are not as free as others in your choices. To be LGBTQI+ in a hetero world is not that easy. You have to explain yourself in the sport club. The changing room situation is not easy for some LGBTQI. Changing room situation and set up is proof of our hetero world."

Question: What could be done to increase participation rates of LGBTQI+ people in sport?

"Existence like this LGBTQI+ tournament are very helpful (EuroGames). Like the taxi driver today said, "this is the best week of my life as a driver because everyone is so friendly." It is more about education in society to be less homophobic. It is a long path, but progress has been made. Having role models, like pro-athletes having the courage of coming out."

"To make sport more secure and safe."

"Create more safe spaces in sport in general. Not just EuroGames and Gay Games in Europe. Listen to the expectations of people."

"Sport clubs should actively welcome LGBTQI. I asked the swimming hall to put on the rainbow flag in front of their building so that when you walk past, you at least see that those issues have been talked about and that I am not excluded with my profile. Actively show that you work with LGBTQI. Building communities would bring more people in because of previous bad experiences in competitive sport in a lot of LGBTQI, they tend to stay away. That would be another way, another entry. Also, pride marches. If all sport clubs go to pride parades, not just LGBTQI sport clubs. Everyone could walk in pride and show we are open."

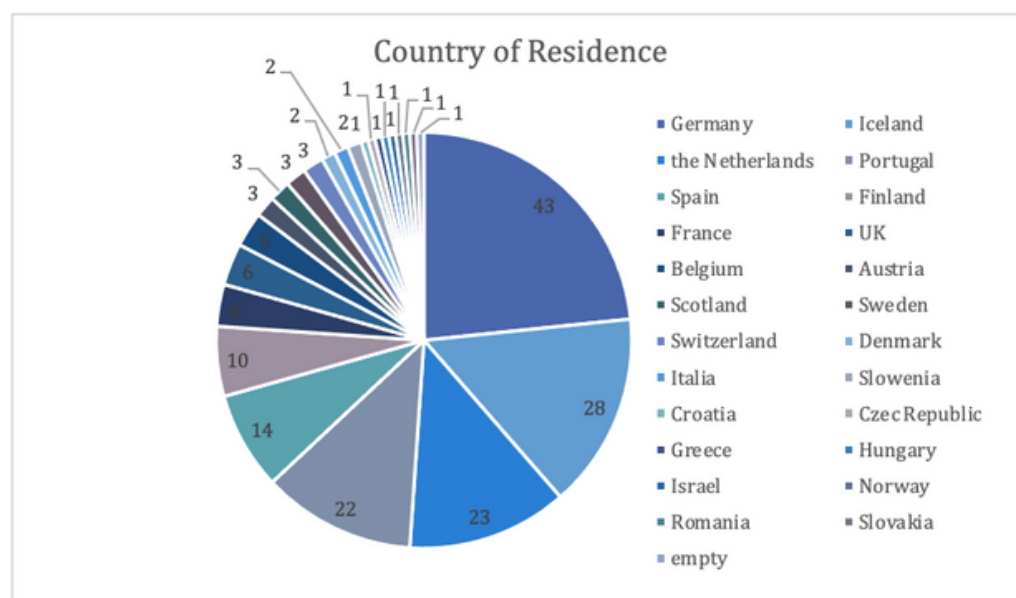


Appendices 1-3

1. Sample characteristics of Athlete Questionnaire
2. Sample characteristics of Coach Questionnaire
3. Characteristics of interview partners

1. Samples characteristics of Athlete Questionnaire

186 athletes from different countries (see figure) filled out the questionnaire. Their birth sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and whether they are intersex is displayed in tables below.



| Assigned sex at birth | Number of Answers |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Female | 99 |
| Male | 83 |
| I do not want to say | 2 |



| Gender Identity | Number of Answers |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Cisgender Female | 82 |
| Cisgender Male | 74 |
| Non-Binary | 10 |
| I define myself another way | 6 |
| I do not want to say | 5 |
| Transgender Female | 5 |

| Sexual Orientation | Number of Answers |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Heterosexual | 67 |
| Gay Man | 48 |
| Bisexual | 24 |
| Lesbian/Gay Woman | 24 |
| Other | 9 |
| I am not sure | 7 |
| I define myself another way | 3 |
| I do not want to say | 2 |

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| Heterosexual | 67 |
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| Lesbian/Gay Woman | 24 |
| Other | 9 |
| I am not sure | 7 |
| I define myself another way | 3 |
| I do not want to say | 2 |

| Are you intersex? | Number of Answers |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| No | 175 |
| Yes | 5 |
| I do not want to say | 4 |

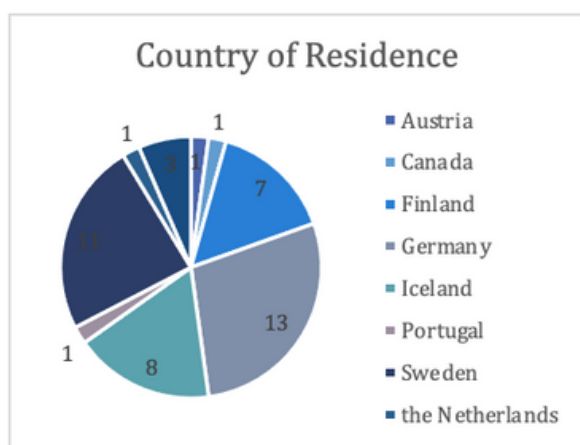


2. Sample characteristics of Coach Questionnaire participants

46 coaches from different countries (see figure) filled out the questionnaire. Their country of residence, age, birth sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and whether they are intersex is displayed in the tables below.

| Assigned sex at birth | Number of Answers |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Female | 27 |
| Male | 18 |
| I do not want to say | 1 |
| Are you intersex? | Number of Answers |
| Yes | 41 |
| No | 0 |
| I do not want to say | 3 |

| How do you describe yourself/your gender identity? | Number of Answers |
|--|-------------------|
| Cisgender Female | 21 |
| I define myself another way | 6 |
| I do not want to say | 4 |
| Cisgender Male | 14 |



| How do you describe yourself/your sexual orientation? | Number of Answers |
|---|-------------------|
| Heterosexual | 34 |
| Lesbian/Gay Women | 3 |
| Gay men | 3 |
| Bisexual | 3 |
| I define myself another way | 1 |
| I do not want to say | 2 |

3. Characteristics of interview partners.

The duration of the interviews was 28 ± 16 minutes (mean \pm standard deviation). The shortest interview took 10 minutes and the longest one took 55 minutes. Interviewees were aged between 30 and 61 years and the interviewees lived in the following countries: 2x Spain, 2x France, Slovenia and Croatia.



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