

# WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SPORT ACROSS EUROPE

SPORT FOR EQUALITY



## 2023 research summary: background and motivation

### Introduction

Since 2022, the Equality Within Sport (EWS) of the European Non-Governmental Sport Organisation (ENGSO) has conducted research to collect up-to-date data regarding LGBTQI+<sup>1</sup> people in grassroots sport. The following findings are extracted from the 2023 report, which focused on women and adopted an intersectional<sup>2</sup> perspective, specifically taking into account six socio-demographic aspects: age, gender identity, sexual orientation, migrant background, disability and social status. This enabled a deeper look into the lived experiences of women, who belong to the LGBTQI+ community or not, who are marginalised by multiple structures of oppression.

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### Methodology

The study spanned a duration of 6 months. It started in April 2023 with the development of a theoretical framework which led to the creation of a survey, supported by interviews. The online survey was administered in six languages (English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish) and was disseminated through various communication channels, social media, newsletters, within sport organisations, sport federations, LGBTQI+ associations and amateur/professional sport clubs. Data collection began in June with the researcher attending four major sport events in the summer. The sample was representative of the women across key socio-demographics and the results are consistent with some previous studies.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, 6 survey respondents took part in a series of semi-structured interviews.

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<sup>1</sup> LGBTQI+: Lesbian, Gays, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex people and all others who identify in the community

<sup>2</sup> Intersectionality: first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is known as a powerful theoretical framework for examining how diverse patterns of identity-based inequality, such as sexism, racism, ableism, and nationalism are mutually constituted (Crenshaw, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> For examples: ILGA-Europe, EL\*G, TGEU, OIIE, & EGLSF. (2021). LGBTI women in sport: Violence, discrimination, and lived experiences. Link. Menzel, T., Braumüller, B., & Hartmann-Tews, I. (2018). OUTSPORT survey 2018: Basic results in comparative perspective. Internal report. German Sport University Cologne, Institute of Sociology and Gender Studies.

## Survey respondents

Answers to the survey came from 487 respondents over 18 years old who either fully or partially identified as women and have resided in a member state of the Council of Europe within the last 12 months.

**The results are presented with an intersectional perspective, considering six socio-demographic characteristics:**

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### Age

5 age groups were considered, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, +55.

Women are not a homogenous but a very diverse group,

**84%** identified themselves as totally woman, while

**16%** identified themselves as partially woman.

**11%** identified as transgender women and

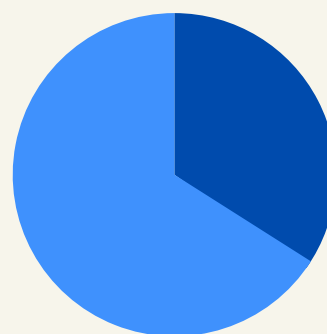
**3%** of women identified as intersex.

### Gender identity

### Sexual orientation:

The two main groups were heterosexual (34%) and non-heterosexual (66%).

Non-heterosexual  
66%



Heterosexual  
34%

Among the non-heterosexual group, the highest representation was lesbians (33%), followed by bisexual women (23%), with smaller percentages of pansexual women (3%), asexual women (2%), and queer women (2%).

## Migrant background

26%

identified themselves as migrant women.

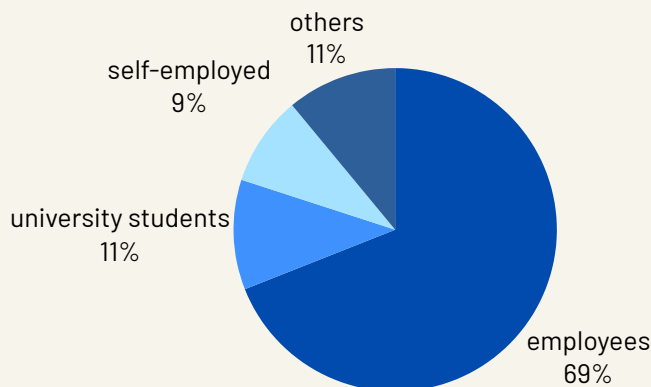
8% identified themselves as women with disabilities.

## Disability

## Social status



the majority of women worked as employees (69%), followed by university students (11%), and self-employed (9%).



## Results and conclusions

The full report is accessible on the [ENGSO Education website \(here\)](#). Results are also presented in three thematic factsheets: (1) Women's involvement and participation in sport and physical activity, (2) Women's experience in sport, (3) Women and the sporting environment. Based on the main findings a list of recommendations was also published as a call to action for actors of the European grassroots sports movement.

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