



Handbook on good practices

Gender equality in sports

Access for Girls and Women to Sport Practices

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Good practices Handbooks, No. 2

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Foreword

Improving equality in sport has been a key objective of the Council of Europe from the very outset of its programme in the field of sport. The importance attached to “sport for all” policies is reflected in the European Sport for All Charter, adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 1975. The Charter, along with a number of recommendations, has since provided a reference for governmental policies in sport and enabled individuals to exercise their “right to participate in sport”.

Despite the many and diverse efforts by public authorities to promote equality, obstacles in every day life remain. As the Ministers responsible for Equality between women and men pointed out at the 7th Ministerial Conference held in Baku in 2010: equality exists *de jure* but it does not always exist *de facto*.

This is no less true in the field of sport, oftentimes considered to be an area dominated by “masculine” values. Despite commendable initiatives and relevant recommendations by the Council of Europe’s bodies,¹ public authorities and the sports movement, the status quo of gender equality in sport needs to be improved through firm commitments at all levels, across all age groups, and by both sexes.

1. Recommendation on the Discrimination against women and girls in sport (Parliamentary Assembly Res 2005/12) and Resolution on the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of women, young people and children in sport (3/2000) adopted at the 9th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport in Bratislava on 30-31 May 2000.

Examples of good practices exist – they can be of practical use to policy makers and practitioners on the ground. At the same time, they can illustrate that sports are not inherently “masculine”. Indeed, these examples show how, if problems of access are finally curtailed, women around the world will willingly (and increasingly) want to reap the many benefits which come from practicing sport, such as bettering one’s physical and mental well-being.

Sport *can* make a positive contribution to society: the practice of sport promotes mutual respect, tolerance and understanding by pulling together people of different genders, races, religions, ages and economic backgrounds. Sport activities, correctly governed, can be a tool to fight against discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes.

If the positive contribution of sport to society is universally accepted, the fact that women and girls are still less likely to participate in sport or physical activities is a serious concern. Phrased differently, society has yet to harvest the full potential of sport. It is time we do so, and improving the access of women and girls to practice sport is only one of many necessary steps.

Stanislas FROSSARD
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The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) seeks to facilitate discussion between various stakeholders, such as public authorities, policy-makers, researchers, non governmental organisations, sport clubs and associations in disseminating a collection of handbooks on good practices.

This handbook is the second number of a collection on good practices. It addresses the issue of gender equality in sport, focusing on the access of girls and women to the practice of sport. The first part assesses the discrepancies in female and male sport practices and identifies gender-specific obstacles. The second chapter outlines

best practices and positive experiences from across Europe. The last part of the handbook presents a set of recommendations, drawn from the analysis of the best practices, that shall enable practitioners and policy makers to improve gender equality in sport.

This activity is wholly in keeping with the remit of the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport, which is to foster the sharing of experiences and develop standards that will help to unlock the potential of sport, not least as an instrument for promoting the Council of Europe's core values.

Introduction

“Women’s sport is an expression of the right to equality and the freedom of all women to take control of their bodies and participate in sports publicly, regardless of nationality, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion”.

Declaration by the European Parliament following the report on “Women and sport” (2003)

In recent decades, there has been a substantial growth in physical and sporting activities in Europe as the nature, purposes and forms of these activities have diversified. If we include every possible form of physical exercise, a clear majority of EU citizens say that they are physically active at least once a week. However, this mass interest in sport has not been matched by real democratisation. Disparities and inequalities continue to affect the physical and sporting activities of women, including those in the youngest age groups. Girls and women generally engage in sport less frequently than men, and not all are equally likely to have access to such activities. In view of the social, educational and cultural role of sport and its potential benefits for European citizens, this unequal access is a genuine problem.

Progressively, the European institutions have taken up the issue of gender in physical activities and sport. In its white paper on sport published in 2007, the European Commission identified improved access for girls and women to physical education and sport as one of its policy objectives. This echoes the concerns of the Council of Europe, and in particular its European Partial Agreement on Sport

(EPAS), in the context of its work on sport’s contribution to integration and intercultural dialogue.

This handbook is set against this background. It consists of a study on the participation of girls and women in Europe’s various sporting environments, focusing on access, obstacles and the activities involved.

It was decided from the outset to look solely into women’s involvement in the practice of sport. The supporter phenomenon and the issue of access to positions of responsibility in sports organisations will not be dealt with directly although they are particularly interesting topics for investigation. It was also decided to address the gender issue in all its aspects – we will be looking at the access of both girls and women to sport – and to discuss the whole diverse range of physical and sporting activities, from individual sports to team sport and from sport in voluntary clubs and schools to self-organised or non-structured sport. Thirteen experts from different European countries – Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Spain, France, the United Kingdom (hereafter the UK), Italy, Switzerland and Turkey – were asked to make contributions. Their knowledge of women’s access to sport and the “good practices” introduced in their own countries have enabled us to build up the best possible overview of the issues at stake.

This handbook is divided in three parts. In the first, we will describe the current situation as regards the participation of girls and women in sport in Europe. We will then present a range of good practices and then, having assessed the obstacles to sport and the lessons learnt from these good practices, we will make a series of recommendations.

I. Physical and sports activities and the gender issue in Europe²

Reviewing the access of girls and women to physical activities and sport means taking account both of those who practise sport and of those who do not and looking at the issue from the viewpoint of inequality between the sexes – i.e. between girls and boys and women and men – and within the same sex – i.e. among women themselves. Studying not only participation and motivation but also the obstacles to access will provide the basis for a diagnosis of the involvement of girls and women in Europe's various sporting environments.

This first part is based on data from quantitative and qualitative surveys, most of which were conducted at national level. The data vary in quality from country to country and cannot be compared directly. However, they do reveal some of the major trends in women's sport in Europe.

I.1. Girls/Boys and Women/Men: separate sporting worlds

Sport or physical activities?

The gender differences vary according to the definition of sport used to gauge European citizens' "sportiness" – sport as strictly defined or physical activities in the broadest sense.

2. This chapter is based on a number of academic sources and reference works. In order to make the handbook more readable and accessible for non-academics, we will not use the academic system of citation consistently. All sources consulted can be found in the literature section at the end of the handbook.

Significantly fewer women than men include sport among their leisure pursuits. According to the Eurobarometer survey of 2010, 43% of men say that they engage in sport at least once a week compared to only 37% of women. These results are borne out at national level although there are major variations from one country to another. For example, in Italy 36.9% of men take part in a sport more or less regularly compared to 23.9% of women. In the Czech Republic, the proportion of those not doing any sport is a particularly interesting statistic: 78% of women do not engage in sport compared to 61% of men.

Participation rates are significantly different when it comes to physical exercise in the broader sense (including cycling, walking, dance and other informal physical recreation). A large majority of European citizens say that they engage in some form of physical activity at least once a week. In France, women now account for 48% of practitioners of a physical activity or sport, a figure almost commensurate with their share of the population. In Denmark, which has one of Europe's highest levels of sporting activity, 80% of the inhabitants, including a majority of women, say they are physically active.

However, it must be stressed that the gap between men and women where physical exercise is concerned varies according to age. Whereas, in general, young people are most heavily involved in physical or sports activities, it is in these age categories that the gap between the sexes is widest. In France, there are more girls aged between 12 and 17 than boys who have never done any sport outside their compulsory physical education classes at school (14% compared to 8%) and who have abandoned other sports activities without taking up another one (26% of girls, 15% of boys).

Similar disparities have been noted in Denmark. Whereas 23% of boys between the ages of 16 and 20 take part in competitive sport and 39% in other physical recreation, the corresponding figures for girls are 12 and 29% respectively. In Europe, therefore, boys engage in sport much more frequently than girls.

Partially overlapping motivations

The reasons given by women for practising a sport or a physical activity in European countries are broadly convergent but can be distinguished to a degree from those of men. Most EU citizens exercise for the sake of their health but women seem to attach more significance to this aspect than men. For men in the EU, the main motivation for physical activity is often a desire to excel, to pit themselves against others or to experience thrills. Women are more interested in keeping fit, improving their physical appearance, controlling their weight and preserving their health. There are no great differences between women and girls in this respect. A study carried out in Switzerland on the social significance of sport among young people shows that girls particularly appreciate the virtues of good health and teamwork. In their view, sport is a way of forging social ties and togetherness and an efficient means of controlling their appearance and drawing closer to the ideal body image of a slim body without overdeveloped muscles (Barker-Ruchti & al.).

These sexually distinct motivations have direct effects on the way people practise sport. Men, and boys in particular, take part in competitive sport more frequently than their female counterparts. In the UK, only 12.5% of sportswomen aged between 16 and 34 compete in organised competitions compared to 30% of men. This rate

decreases gradually for both sexes throughout their sporting career. In Spain, the number of women registered with sports clubs declined considerably between 2000 and 2006 in a trend which seems to indicate an increasing preference for recreational or health-oriented activities.

Gender-differentiated sporting practices

Besides motivation, one of the most obvious and enduring differences between women and men is the type of sport they choose. The division of activities along gender lines still applies today although all the prohibitive rules have been lifted and in theory all sports disciplines are open to all women and men (Louveau, 2006). Whereas women are particularly attracted to sports in which major emphasis is placed on physical expression (dance, gymnastics and ice skating), men are still found in a very large majority in close combat sports, team sports played on large grounds (football, rugby), motor sport, extreme sports and endurance sports. This pattern is repeated in many European countries. In Turkey for example, the most popular leisure activities for women are aerobics, walking and fitness activities using special equipment (exercise bikes, treadmills, and apparatus to increase muscle tone). These results differ slightly when the age of the participants is taken into account. Like boys, girls seem to have a somewhat broader range of sports activities than their elders.

However, some girls and women do cross the lines of these gender-based categories and practise weightlifting, football, motor racing and climbing in structured settings or even in competition. These sports-women may be seen as groundbreakers for new cultural models (as emancipated or modern women) but they also risk being categorised

as “tomboys” whose sexual identity is regarded as doubtful as such practices do not equate with the spontaneous categories on the basis of which men and women decide what is suitable for a woman.

Different modes of organisation

Physical activities or sport can be carried out in different settings: in school, as a compulsory activity or an option; in a voluntary sports club; in a commercially-run sports facility; or as a self-organised activity (in a public space or at home). These different modes of organisation cover a whole range of actual arrangements which vary according to the age and gender of the participants.

• Voluntary sports clubs

Practising a sport in a voluntary club does not seem to be a very popular approach with women, particularly older women. In Switzerland, many more men are members of clubs than women (30.6% compared to 18.9%). Girls are generally more likely to be members than their elders but they do not attain the membership rates of boys (at the age of 14, 68% for boys and 54% for girls). However, these figures vary considerably from country to country. In Denmark, where sports clubs are regarded as an important institution, 37% of women, 46% of men and 84% of children between the ages of 10 and 12 are club members.

• Commercially-run sports facilities

Girls and women show a great enthusiasm for sport in commercially-run facilities and, in particular, fitness centres. An Italian study shows that women are more inclined to join fitness centres, accounting for

as many as 61% of their members. Various reasons for this trend have been suggested, including the type of services on offer, the reduced emphasis on competition, the increased involvement of women customers, and activities which are more in keeping with women's interests (preserving health and appearance, etc.) (AcNielsen, 2002).

• Physical education in school

Physical education in school is a key part of both boys' and girls' education. It fosters their physical and mental development and helps them to learn about the attitudes they will need for all aspects of life in society (such as acceptance of rules, respect for others and self-respect). Physical education also addresses major issues. Because it covers all the boys and girls in the same age group, it is regarded more than ever as a sphere of equal opportunities and a key means of democratising sport. Yet, what happens in practice does not always live up to these intentions and major gender inequalities can be seen both in access to physical education and in the way it is practised.

In general, girls are less interested in the subject than boys. Only 45% of German girls say that it is their favourite subject (compared to 70% of German boys). Girls and boys also have differing attitudes and ways of behaving in their physical education classes. A European study highlights the fact that girls tend to take part less intensively in exercises and games, to avoid the more physically taxing and competitive situations, to participate less in lessons and, generally speaking, to be absent more often from physical education classes than boys (particularly from swimming classes) (With-Nielsen & al., 2010).

Girls and boys and women and men do not have the same degree of enthusiasm for sport, do not engage in the same activities, do not do sport in the same settings and do not have the same motivations. Like other individual attributes, gender considerably influences people's involvement in physical activities or sport.

1.2. Disparities and inequalities among girls and women

Occupation and income level

Economic inactivity or a low income are factors which inhibit access to physical or sports activities, whether organised by a voluntary club, a commercial establishment or the persons concerned themselves. In France, economic inactivity is a particular source of disparities among women. Whereas on average 22% of French women do not engage in any physical activity, this rate rises to 42% for jobless women. However, having a job does not automatically prompt people to engage in a physical or sports activity. There are differences according to occupational categories. In 2000, those who engaged in no physical activity at all included 44% of women farm workers, 27% of women labourers but only 4% of women in management positions and higher intellectual professions. Likewise, the probability of practising a sport increases along with women's incomes. In the UK, women whose annual household incomes are £52 000 or more are three times more likely to be physically active than women earning less than £15 600.

Lastly, household incomes generally affect the sports activities of children, particularly girls. In Germany, the probability of not engaging

in any physical activity is four times higher among girls living in insecure social circumstances.

Level of education

Another important factor is educational achievement. Research conducted in France shows that the level of education is the most discriminating factor where women's access to sport is concerned, even ahead of income levels. Participation rates increase along with the length of studies and the level attained (Louveau, 2004).

Among the youngest girls in France, the parents' level of education also considerably influences whether they do sport and how much they do. Of those that do, 57% do so at least once a week when their parents have no educational qualification, compared with 87% of those whose parents have a higher education qualification.

Ethnic and cultural aspects

Currently, we have very little quantitative and qualitative data on the sports activities of girls and women from an immigrant background and the information that we do have cannot be easily compared between one country and another. Research on this matter is still in its infancy and nationality laws – and, more generally, ways of integrating people from immigrant backgrounds – vary considerably from country to country. In France, for example, the republican integration model does not recognise people as belonging to ethnic minorities and hence does not allow any census of these communities to be made. Only the occasional qualitative study makes it possible to suggest certain hypothesis.

In the main, women from an immigrant background participate less in physical activities than other women. In Denmark, whereas over 80% of women are physically active, only 50% of immigrant women engaged in a physical activity in 2000. However, these results do not reflect the more subtle distinctions between different minority groups. A Swiss survey reveals that women from the southern European countries, the Balkans, Turkey and Eastern Europe have the highest levels of physical inactivity (45% as opposed to 25% among immigrants from western and northern Europe) (Fischer & al., 2010). Girls from an immigrant background do not escape this trend. In Germany for example, only 21% of them engage in a physical activity or a sport with a club whereas the figure is 58% for other girls between 5 and 11.

It must be stressed here that ethnic background interacts with other factors such as religion, class and other aspects which influence people's identities, cultures and lifestyles. People from immigrant backgrounds often live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, have a low average level of education, are at high risk of becoming unemployed and have low incomes compared to the rest of the population. These combined handicaps put real obstacles in the way of girls and women wishing to take in part in physical activities and sport.

However, despite a much lower participation level than the national average, girls and women from immigrant backgrounds do not show any particular lack of interest in sport. British, Norwegian and Belgian studies show that a large proportion of women from ethnic minorities would be willing to get involved in sports activities if they had the opportunity. This would suggest that the inequalities in access to

physical activities are linked to the way in which they are organised (Walseth & al., 2004).

Although the information on this subject is varied and somewhat scarce, the growth of physical and sports activities in Europe does not seem to have benefited all women. Occupation, level of education, income and ethnic and cultural characteristics are factors which contribute to particularly pronounced inequalities among girls and women. More so than among men, these factors combine to determine the probability of taking up a sport, the type of sport chosen, the setting and the purpose of the activity.

1.3. The main obstacles to participating in sport

A study of the conditions in which sport is practised and the reasons given by women to justify their attitude and their decision whether or not to take part in a physical or sports activity is a particularly useful way of identifying other potential obstacles. First of all, contrary to commonly held views, neither the cost of sport (subscriptions, kit, equipment) nor the remoteness of sports facilities seem to be major obstacles to sports participation in Europe.

Conditions of sports participation in Europe

- *A limited range of sports on offer*

If we look at the sports on offer in some European countries, it is clear that little account is taken of women's and girls' specific

requirements. In Germany for example, municipal sports clubs mostly offer traditional sports which place the emphasis on improving performance and excelling oneself. In addition, because adjustments are necessary to cater for girls and women (in terms of facilities, supervision, teaching methods, kit and equipment, etc.), some sports organisers refuse on the grounds that women are not their target audience (Deydier, 2004).

The problems are the same from one sports environment to another. In Denmark, a narrow view is taken of physical education. Whereas children should be experimenting with different types of activity, 70% of the syllabus is taken up with ball games while only 10% is given over to dance and gymnastics. In most cases, pupils are also assessed according to their technical and tactical abilities (With-Nielsen & al., 2010).

Lastly, open sports facilities designed for self-organised sport do not seem to offer the same opportunities for boys and girls. In France, local sports facilities built in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods (such as team sports areas and skate parks) are used almost exclusively by boys. They do not seem to be intended to encourage female or mixed-gender participation.

Under these circumstances, the various systems of physical exercise provision – whether offered by sports clubs or schools or organised by individuals – can have unintended adverse effects on women's sport. By overlooking women's and girls' tastes and aspirations, they can lead inadvertently to a form of exclusion.

- ***Problems relating to the accessibility and quality of sports facilities***

Although, generally speaking, the nature of the activity is the main reason why girls give up sport, they are also particularly concerned about practical aspects. For instance, 18% of French girls between the ages of 12 and 17 say that they gave up sport because they had no transport. A lack of transport combined with late hours and the emergence of fears concerning their safety significantly deters girls from taking part in a physical activity or sport (Hills, 2007).

- ***A lack of gender segregated time slots for girls and women***

It is particularly difficult for Muslim women to reconcile the rules, values and practices of their religion and culture with the lifestyle of western countries, particularly the way in which they organise physical activities and sport. The lack of gender segregated time slots can be a major drawback for many girls and women from ethnic minorities. If sessions are mixed, they may choose to stay out of sports of their own accord or be prohibited from participating by their parents (Walseth & al., 2004). Participation in mixed sports may violate their own integrity and that of their families.

- ***Under-representation of women in technical and administrative teams***

In many European countries, the proportion of women holding technical or administrative responsibilities in sports organisations

of any type (associations, federations, etc.) is extremely small. In Switzerland, women account for only 36% of trainers and managers. This proportion decreases the higher up the sports hierarchy one goes, reaching 19% in elite sports. It is very likely that this situation has an impact on the development of women's sport although we do not yet have any precise data on this link. On the one hand, the under-representation of women in sport's managing bodies may mean that it is considered less necessary to implement policies designed specifically to increase women's and girls' involvement in sport (Koca & al., 2010). Secondly, the woman trainer represents a model with which many girls identify when they take up organised sports such as football, basketball or rugby. As a result, the over-representation of men among trainers may prevent girls from starting such activities.

• *Manifestations of racism and discrimination*

In the various sports environments, people from immigrant backgrounds can be targets for exclusion, discrimination or even racism. Very little data concerning women is available, but these problems cannot be overlooked. Cases of racism involving women have occurred in various countries (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania), mainly at football, basketball and handball matches. But discrimination is not only found in competitive sport. Lovell shows that physical education teachers generally pay less attention to girls from East European immigrant families as they consider them less motivated and skilful than other girls (Walseth & al., 2004). These stereotyped and racist attitudes represent major obstacles. They can affect ethnic minorities' enthusiasm for and involvement in physical activities and sport.

• *The rules of national sports institutions*

Some rules and standards governing the organisation of sport in western European countries – with varying degrees of institutionalisation – can act as obstacles to participation, particularly for girls and women from an immigrant background or a Muslim culture.

Many national sports federations have introduced quotas limiting access for persons who do not have the nationality of their host country to amateur and professional competitions. When combined with restrictive legislation on immigration and naturalisation, these quotas can have an adverse effect on the participation and representation of foreign nationals in sport, particularly competitive sport.

With regard to women in particular, the ban on wearing veils in most sports competitions and more general rules on clothing can create considerable obstacles. In Turkey, the ban on the *hijab* and the mixed-gender environments in competitive and recreational sports lead to the exclusion of Muslim girls and women who are not willing – or allowed – to practise sport without covering their heads. They are not able to reconcile their cultural and religious identity with the sports bodies' rules.

Other more implicit rules govern voluntary associations. People from an immigrant background do not necessarily have the tools and knowledge to adapt to the voluntary organisational model for sport. In Denmark, these people often have difficulty getting involved in sport run by associations because they are familiar neither with Danish sporting traditions nor with sports clubs and their often unwritten rules (Pfister, 2010). Other obstacles may stem from

sports organisations which have difficulty managing multiculturalism and integrating people from ethnic minorities.

Individual obstacles to sport practices

- *Lack of time – an obstacle which conceals another*

The first and main reason given by non-practitioners to justify their attitude is lack of time. In Europe, 45% of those who answered the Eurobarometer survey, a slight majority of whom were women, complained that they could not find the time to engage in a physical activity or sport.

However, this is an unsatisfactory reason. The main issue is not so much women's lack of free time as the time they allow themselves to do what they want. Their interest or lack of interest is actually what determines how much time they devote to a physical activity or sport. Most physically inactive women feel neither the desire nor the need to engage in an activity. In France, 40% of non-participating women say that they "have other interests" and 36% say that "they do not like or have never liked sport". This lack of interest is closely tied up with the family obligations and responsibilities which have been regarded for decades as women's duties. Women who do not participate in physical activities or sport are generally extremely taken up with family and domestic matters (Louveau, 2004). Taking care of the 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 among women from working class backgrounds

or ethnic minorities, where the gender-based division of domestic tasks is particularly pronounced (Walseth & al., 2004).

More or less the same obstacles can be discerned among girls. Lack of interest in sport combined with school and family obligations can have an adverse effect on girls' access to physical and sports activities.

- *Low level of relationship*

The extent of their circle of friends and the quality of their social relations can also act as obstacles to the participation of girls and women in sport. Generally, it should be noted that, among young people, the decision to participate in a sport is heavily influenced by friends. British studies show clearly that peers play a key role in young girls' decisions to take up a physical activity or continue with it. Positive relationships with their fellow participants or teammates increase the pleasure they take from participating, help them to develop their skills and add to their self-confidence (Hills, 2007).

Conversely, a lack of friends in the sporting community seems to have a particularly adverse effect on the involvement of women, particularly women from ethnic minorities. They have no personal contacts to support them or give them advice and information on the opportunities available (Walseth & al., 2004).

- *The influence of families*

Families, and parents in particular, play a crucial role in their children's initiation and continued involvement in sport. Because children lack financial independence and have transport difficulties, parents have

to help. In France, 25% of young people from a working class background say that they gave up sport because nobody could take them.

Likewise, if there is a “sporting atmosphere” in the home and the parents are particularly aware of the benefits of physical exercise, this can have clear beneficial effects on the involvement of girls and boys. For example, having a parent – particularly a mother – who is physically active considerably increases children’s participation and even reduces inequalities linked to the family’s social circumstances.

• *Problems of adolescence and the issue of mixed sport*

During adolescence, puberty, physical changes and the search for sexual identity are generally obstacles to girls’ involvement sport and, more specifically, the learning of physical education at school. Girls can experience embarrassment, shyness or even shame when they are asked to perform in front of other pupils, particularly boys (Biddle & al., 2005). The display of gendered bodies during adolescence may be disturbing for girls and deter them from getting involved to the degree that the teachers wish. The issue of whether physical education classes should be mixed or separate is regularly discussed by national education institutions.

Communication, images and icons

The inadequate dissemination of sports information and images can be another potential obstacle to girls’ and women’s access to physical activities and sport. A study financed by “Sporting Equals” has revealed a link between the lack of information on opportunities to take up a sport and physical inactivity. It shows that 59% of

non-participants do not know how to gain access to the different systems of physical exercise provision and 56% are not comfortable with membership procedures. However, this is only a minor obstacle. If they are really interested in taking part in sport, both boys and girls and women and men will seek out information on what is available themselves. Current information retrieval and communication tools are sufficiently advanced and diversified to permit rapid access to the information required.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that there is little coverage of women’s sport and of sportswomen in the various media outlets (television, the press, radio and the Internet). The relative “invisibility” of top-level sportswomen in the media does not give girls any models with which they can identify and which might encourage them to take up a physical activity or a sport. Boys have many sporting “heroes”, but there are relatively few female icons in elite sport.

All these individual obstacles of varying status and level can affect girls and women to different degrees and help to explain why they do not take up – or decide to give up – physical exercise.

2. Overview of good practices in Europe

National and European institutions believe that substantial progress can be made in the sphere of sport and physical activities by identifying good practices and disseminating them in the various states and organisations.

The overview presented in this part of the report is made up of eight examples of good practices identified by the associate experts which are aimed at enhancing girls' and women's participation in physical activities and sport. The schemes were set up by public bodies – local authorities, universities, etc. – or by civil society organisations – sports clubs or associations – and they represent neither the full range of activities carried out in this field nor solutions which can be reproduced without thinking first about the way in which they should be adjusted to the local context. They are described here to encourage people involved in the sports sector to be more creative and prompt them to devise ground-breaking schemes of their own to promote the development of women's sport.

“Midnight Sports” and “Open Sunday”: opening up sports facilities to young people at the week-end (Switzerland)

Project leaders: *Idée Sport* Foundation and local authorities

Venue: Switzerland

Involved partners: Local councils, private foundations, public authorities (governmental and cantonal level)

Project period: since 1991

Target group: socially disadvantaged young people

Sports: team sports, table tennis, dancing, circus, etc.

Information/contacts: www.ideesport.ch and www.mb-network.ch/content

The main aim of Midnight Sports and Open Sunday is to encourage children and young people to take part in a physical activity or sport. The idea is simple. It is to provide young people with places to meet and, in those places, to organise physical activities and sporting events.

Every weekend, various activities – such as table tennis, dancing, ball games and circus activities – are proposed in school sports halls. On Saturday evenings these are called “Midnight Sports” and on Sunday during the day they are called “Open Sunday”. The project is aimed more particularly at children and young people from disadvantaged social categories or those not covered by health promotion campaigns. The activities are open to everyone. There is no need to register in advance and participation is free of charge. Girls are an integral part of the project. They are given the opportunity to do sport in separate areas and help to devise and organise activities.

Depending on the scale of the event, two or three adults are appointed as activity leaders. Several trainers are also present to organise activities and ensure that events proceed safely and in a positive atmosphere. They make up the teams for team sports and may also run practice sessions. Instead of placing anyone under any pressure to perform, “Midnight Sports” and “Open Sunday” put the emphasis on self-organised recreational activities and the opportunity to socialise.

In 2009, 1 707 events were held in 94 venues and there were around 69 000 visits from over 22 000 children and young people. Most of the girls who take part in these schemes do not usually engage in any physical activity or sport and belong to families with a low socio-economic standing and/or immigrant background. Girls take part in practically all the activities on offer, but basketball, volleyball, table football and dancing are most popular.

For some years, participation by girls has been increasing significantly. In 2009, they accounted for 30.6% of those attending “Midnight Sports” and 37.8% of the participants in “Open Sunday”. Among the factors accounting for the increase is a new project entitled “Sport and movement require space” dedicated to creating spaces specially reserved for female participants.

A guide to gender mainstreaming for local sports policies (Spain)

Project leader: Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)

Venue: Spain

Involved partners: sports and gender equality experts, technical staff of local sports bodies

Project period: 2009

Target groups: Spanish municipalities and provinces

Sports: a wide range of sports

Information/contacts: www.aventoconsultoria.com

In 2009, aware that sports grounds are among society's most male-oriented settings, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces decided to produce a guide to help local sports bodies to take into account gender issues. Its aims are to describe instances of discrimination in various sports at local level, provide tools to identify such cases and give advice on the development of public sports policies based on gender and gender equality issues. In the opinion of the project initiators, five aspects need to be taken into account when assessing discriminatory practices:

- *Local sports organisations and their structure:* sports policies, presence of women on governing bodies and organisations, budget level and allocation, communication, etc.
- *Local sports provision:* profile of local sports centre users, review of activities on offer, use of material resources, survey of activities practised freely in urban and/or natural settings, etc.

- *Sports associations or clubs:* activities on offer, numbers of members, motivations, drop-out rates, use of public or private funding, human resources management, allocation of facilities and equipment, communication, etc.
- *Sport at school:* activities on offer, participation and drop-out rates, teachers' qualifications, allocation of state subsidies, link between school sports provision and sports provision by associations, etc.
- *Sports facilities:* location of sports centres, access, quality of services on offer, breakdown of groups of participants by gender, etc.

This methodology for the incorporation of gender issues in local sports bodies is accompanied by a monitoring system which enables administrators to pinpoint deficiencies and introduce suitable remedies. The project initiators believe that women's participation in sport can be increased through the provision of non-discriminatory sports facilities and fair distribution of material resources and by promoting the involvement of women in local sports bodies.

The association *Elan sportif*: promoting boxing for girls (France)

Project leader: *Elan sportif* association

Venue: Mulhouse, France

Involved partners: Departmental Youth and Sport Directorate, Fondation de France, Municipality of Mulhouse and private companies

Actions period: since 2006

Target group: girls from disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods

Sport: boxing

Information/contacts: www.elan-sportif.org

For two years running, the association *Elan sportif* has been supported by the national charitable institution *Fondation de France* in its call for projects entitled “Allez les filles!” (“Go on girls!”) rewarding successful schemes for the integration of girls in problem neighbourhoods or isolated communities through physical activity or sport. It has distinguished itself through its activities aimed at girls using boxing as a medium.

In 2010, sixty or so physically inactive girls, most of whom came from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Mulhouse, took part regularly in boxing exercises. To meet the need for the girls to be among themselves, the association set up a “gender segregated” time slot for girls only and “mixed” sessions, during which boys and girls boxed side by side. Sessions are held with small groups formed according to their motivations (recreation, competition, etc.) and run by instructors from sports federations.

The managers have also set up a participatory board to enable girls to take part in the life of the club (by organising events, taking part

in meetings, etc). This board is a channel for passing information upwards and a forum for discussing the best ways of adapting to the girls’ needs and solving problems in real time. Furthermore, under an instructor’s supervision, girls are invited to manage the sports activities at neighbourhood events or to take charge of warming up exercises during training.

Every year, there is an evaluation procedure involving the girls and their parents. A questionnaire is sent out and group meetings are held. The goal is to find out more precisely how the sport is helping these young girls, to take stock of the year just ended and to make plans for the following one. Managing diversity and multiculturalism is a recurring issue in the life of the club. Keeping up regular contacts with parents and applying certain rules makes it possible to solve many of the problems that arise.

The association is shortly intending to extend its activities to women between the ages of 25 and 50. It will test out various arrangements to reduce constraints linked to domestic work (such as help with homework and physical activities for children while their mothers are training).

The Kick for Girls – football (Der Kick für Mädchen – Fußball) school project (Germany)

Project leaders: German Children and Youth Foundation (Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung), STEP Foundation, University of Freiburg (Institute of Sport and Sport Sciences)

Venue: Freiburg, Germany

Project period: since 2009

Target group: “Hauptschule” students

Sport: football

Information/contacts: Prof. Dr. Petra GIEß-STÜBER, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Institut für Sport und Sportwissenschaft, www.sport.uni-freiburg.de

The Kick for Girls project is aimed specifically at girls attending “Hauptschulen”, which are secondary schools reserved for less academically able pupils, providing a vocational education. Many of these girls live in disadvantaged social circumstances.

Once a week they meet in a familiar, “protected” setting – the school sports hall or playing grounds – to play football. They are supervised by a woman trainer, who has attended a special training course on diversity, social inequalities and gender issues. During training sessions, the girls are taught not only technical and tactical aspects but also social skills (such as co-operation, compliance with rules, a taste for hard work, etc.) that are essential for their success at school and at work. By experiencing social diversity, they learn to position themselves in a multicultural environment and manage the conflicts which may arise from this.

The project is constructed around the girls’ sporting, social and cultural interests. For it to succeed various educational precautions need to be taken. It is necessary to establish good interpersonal relations within the group and with the trainer, allow the girls to contribute to decision making, discover new playing venues with the girls, tailor the educational content of the sessions to the girls’ abilities and place emphasis on personal development and improvement.

At each session, the trainers enter their objectives and results in a training diary, which is regularly reviewed by the project’s experts. As a result, any difficulties can be very rapidly addressed. Some sessions are also analysed on video to try to understand more about the interactions among the girls and between the girls and their trainer. Participants are interviewed to assess their degree of socialisation in and through sport, to find out about their motivations and to hear their views on the project. The acquisition of key skills is gauged using a longitudinal survey based on a questionnaire.

One year into the project, the girls have taken pleasure from participating in it and have improved their motor skills. Some now take part in training sessions and matches for the school league.

The SheZone association: combining sport and social activities for women (Denmark)

Project leader: SheZone association

Venue: Copenhagen, Denmark

Involved partners: Integration and Leisure Department of the municipality of Copenhagen, Danish Ministry of Integration

Actions period: since 2004

Target groups: girls and women of Muslim culture and/or religion

Sports: swimming, aquagym, yoga, Pilates, gymnastics, dance classes, art and discovery classes

Information/contacts: www.shezone.dk

SheZone is an association which was set up in Copenhagen in 2004 and offers a broad range of sports for girls and women, particularly those from ethnic minorities (nearly 80% of the members are first to third generation immigrants). The organisers offer and guarantee optimum conditions for girls and women of Muslim culture and/or religion to participate in sport. No men or boys are allowed to take part in its activities. Sessions are supervised exclusively by women trainers and take place in closed sports halls.

The project leaders make constant efforts to be in tune with women's interests and desires. This means that at the beginning of each sports season, the association's programme changes and new activities are added while other less popular ones are discontinued. Currently, SheZone offers swimming, aquagym, yoga, Pilates, gymnastics, dance classes, a mother and daughter art class and discovery classes for young children.

Because a dense and diversified social network is a genuine resource which can be put to use in various aspects of everyday life (such as education and jobseeking), the club is also seeking to create a sports-based community in which women can forge ties with one another. To this end, festive events are organised throughout the year: meals, end-of-year shows, games, etc. SheZone also encourages its members to adopt healthy lifestyles through information evenings on subjects such as food and diets.

For some years, the organisers of SheZone have been running an educational campaign to alert members to how the club operates and the key role played by volunteers. They have also been trying to motivate members to take part in the decision-making process by holding informal meetings and providing the women with an Intranet site, where they can make suggestions and express their views.

In six years, the membership of the association has grown from 40 to 500 and new sports sections have been set up in other neighbourhoods in Copenhagen. A very broad and diverse range of activities is on offer.

The “Widening Access through Sport (WATS)” programme (UK)

Project leader: University of Loughborough

Venue: Loughborough, United Kingdom

Involved partners: local partners (organisations dealing with education, gender and ethnic minorities)

Project period: since 2003

Target group: girls from ethnic minorities

Sports: football, badminton, martial arts, netball and walking trips

Information/contacts: www.lboro.ac.uk

WATS was established in 2003 and is aimed in particular at girls from ethnic minorities in the town of Loughborough. Its main goal is to encourage them to study for longer at a higher level, as education is regarded as a key factor in the integration of ethnic minorities.

WATS is run by the university teaching staff and a consultative committee made up of representatives of local educational organisations, as well as, sport bodies and associations fighting against discrimination towards girls with a minority background. To attune the activities to the target group’s needs, a 24-year-old English second-generation immigrant woman from a Muslim background has been recruited as a development officer and member of the management team. She devises the programme and supervises most of the recreational and educational activities on offer, which include football, badminton, martial arts, netball and walking trips but also classes in communication and developing self-assurance and self-confidence, visits to universities and discussions about higher education. These activities are held in places and time slots reserved exclusively for women.

WATS has been a great success. Girls regularly take part in the sports and educational activities and derive great pleasure and satisfaction from them. They even encourage other members of their community to join the scheme. They acquire sporting skills and some have even decided to train as sports trainers. Five years into the project, sport now seems to be part of these young Muslim girls’ lives.

The success of the programme is dependent, however, on the following prerequisites:

- working together with the ethnic community;
- delegating the planning of the project to the development officer;
- paying particular attention to families;
- offering a programme of activities tailored to girls’ needs and desires;
- providing access to community sport in its broadest sense;
- informing the institution of girls’ specific demands such as gender segregated spaces and time slots.

Participation in organised physical activities – a means for women to fight stress (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Project leader: University of Sarajevo

Venue: Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Involved partner: NGO *Nahla*

Project's starting date: September 2011

Target group: middle-aged women

Sports: various types of physical activity (breathing and relaxation exercises, exercises to enhance suppleness and muscle strength), dancing, folk dancing and outdoor activities

Information/contacts: www.unsa.ba

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 had a major impact on Bosnian women's health. In 1998, a survey by the University of Sarajevo revealed that only 13% of middle-aged women (around the age of 50) engaged in a physical activity or a sport. As a result, the university decided to set up a sports programme designed specifically for women. Under the project, which is still in the process of development, activities will probably be run by *Nahla*, a Sarajevo-based NGO. *Nahla* is an education centre, one of whose aims is to improve the quality of life of women and families. The wish of the project leaders is to create a space dedicated to women, where they can feel safe, socialise, improve their knowledge and acquire the necessary skills to find work and take an active part in the life of the community.

The project has three goals:

- get women involved in physical activities suited to their age and abilities;
- help women who were traumatised by the war to relax physically and mentally;
- alleviate stress and give practical advice on ways of relaxing during individual or team sports.

A sample of about 90 women aged around 50 is to be formed on a voluntary basis. The project will take place over two three-month periods during which the women will engage in a physical activity three times a week, supervised by trained and experienced instructors.

Following a health check-up, the women will take part in various types of physical activity including simple rhythmic exercises performed to music (breathing and relaxation exercises, and exercises to enhance suppleness and muscle strength), an introduction to dance and folk dancing and outdoor activities.

This ground-breaking project will have been fully successful if, when it comes to the final assessment, the participants express positive attitudes about physical activity and their test results show that there has been progress in their motor skills and well-being.

The activities of the Slovak Olympic Committee's "Women and Sport" Commission (Slovakia)

Project leader: Slovak Olympic Committee

Venue: Trenčín, Liptovský, Mikuláš and Bratislava, Slovakia

Actions period: since 1990

Target group: Women who are physically inactive or not members of a sports club

Sports: walking, stretching, muscle development and trainings on, Nordic walking

Information/contacts: www.olympic.sk

At the end of the 1990s, the Slovak Olympic Committee decided to set up a "Women and Sport" Commission, whose two aims were to measure precisely how many women there were in sports associations and in national teams, among participants, trainers and administrative staff, and to find ways of increasing women's involvement in sports at all levels and in all functions. For this purpose, the Commission offers various activities, which are organised on a voluntary basis in co-operation with civil society organisations (such as media bodies and NGOs).

Its "Women in Sport – Sport for Women" programme is aimed in particular at women not involved in sport (women who are physically inactive or not members of a sports club). It also proposes additional training for trainers and referees to alert them to gender issues.

Examples of activities:

- *theoretical and practical seminars on Nordic walking (2010)* provide training for trainers and instructors on the basic principles of this discipline, which is particularly popular among women;

- *the "Change Your Lifestyle" project (2005)* encourages women to look after their bodies and find time to engage in a physical activity. Women take part in 60 minutes of supervised, free-of-charge physical activity per day (walking, stretching and muscle development), for four days a week, over six weeks;
- *dissemination of educational and communication material* including an information and publicity leaflet on the benefits of regular physical exercise and a book describing a range of exercises.

For some years, the Slovak Olympic Committee has been noting a decline in parents' awareness about the benefits of physical and sports activities. Because participation by children can prompt parents to follow suit, the Committee recently started up the "Mum, let's go to sport" competition, which rewards schools offering a large number of mother-and-child activities.

3. Recommendations

Based on the review of women's participation in sport in Europe and the survey of good practices, a number of recommendations may be made. The EPAS and its member states, ministries of sport, public authorities and sports movement have various levers at their disposal to develop and improve access for girls and women to physical activities and sport of all kinds. These levers include training, proactive policies, measures to match supply to demand, communication, research and qualitative development of local action.

Gain a better understanding of the world of women's sport so that more effective action can be taken

Increased knowledge of girls' and women's relationship to physical and sporting activities (voluntary, school and self-organised activities) is a vital key to devising appropriate policies and promoting increased participation.

For this purpose, local and national authorities are encouraged to:

- conduct quantitative surveys on the participation of girls and women in sports in and outside school;
- set up qualitative research involving various experts (such as sociologists, educationalists and psychologists) to learn more about both obstacles to participation and women's needs and desires in the sphere of physical activity and sport;
- collect relevant information (on matters such as activities that are accessible to women, existing sports provision, venues and

equipment) in co-operation with sports organisations and federations;

- catalogue instances of discrimination and racism suffered by girls and women in the sports environment;
- pass on all the qualitative and quantitative data collected on women's sport to local decision-makers in order to persuade them to take appropriate action.

The Council of Europe is called on to co-operate with other European institutions to carry out the following activities:

- collect, analyse and disseminate data on girls' and women's sporting activities at European level and monitor developments in them;
- establish clear criteria by which to assess good practices in this sphere;
- carry out a complementary study on the involvement of women in positions of responsibility within sports organisations (such as management and training).

Promote the implementation of proactive policies to promote sport for girls and women

Political action is one of the keys to the development of equal access for women and men to physical activities and sport at all the stages in their lives, irrespective of their social circumstances and their ethnic and cultural background. In general therefore, the member states, public authorities and sports federations are encouraged to address the issue of women's access to sport and introduce relevant measures.

More specifically, bearing in mind that equal opportunities and free access to sport can only be guaranteed if the public sector is strongly involved, governments and other public authorities are asked to:

- provide effective backing for the work of civil society organisations promoting women's participation in sport and combating sexual, ethnic and cultural discrimination. Consideration might be given to the possibility of promoting such organisations through the award of grants, while respecting Community law;
- ensure consistency between the different policies designed to foster women's participation in sport. Emphasis should be placed on concerted action transcending the usual boundaries between the different public and private players involved in the development and organisation of sport, particularly when it comes to drawing up national action plans and implementing and assessing programmes;
- where necessary, take positive measures to eliminate the inequalities suffered by girls and women in access both to sport and to the positions of manager, instructor or teacher. Under certain circumstances, appropriate measures are needed to achieve full and effective equality between all girls and women regardless of their social circumstances and their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. However, it should be ensured that such measures are not in themselves discriminatory.

With regard to school physical education classes in particular, member states and the relevant authorities are urged to:

- give physical education a major role in school education (or restore it to that role) as it is generally easier for girls to practise sport in a safe setting with known instructors who are familiar

to the family and can be trusted. It has also been shown that the majority of people who develop the habit of doing physical exercise early on maintain that habit for the rest of their lives (Special Eurobarometer 334, 2010).

- establish links between schools and clubs so that pupils are encouraged to continue participating in sport after they leave school.

Tailor sports provision to women's requirements

To improve girls' and women's participation in physical activities and sport, all public and private provision systems must be aware of their expectations and legitimate demands and the obstacles in their way and be in a position to satisfy their wishes at every stage in their lives.

For this purpose, governments, state education services, sports associations and local authorities are asked to promote an integrated approach to gender equality in the field of physical activity and sport and to make a joint effort to:

- offer and promote a wide range of physical activities and sports;
- provide sports facilities that are well served by public transport and geared to their users' needs in terms of conviviality and comfort;
- improve recreational sports provision and establish time-slots for partly self-organised activities;
- possibly offer specific classes and time-slots reserved for women, while retaining the possibility of participating in mixed-gender activities;

- provide care facilities and activities for children while adults are participating in their chosen sport;
- take account of specific ethno-cultural and/or religious characteristics in line with national legislation and integration policies. In other words, look into the possibility of satisfying specific demands such as the provision of women-only areas and women trainers and the possibility of wearing veils;
- regularly consult residents, club members and young people in schools so that activities and the conditions in which they are practised can be tailored as closely as possible to their requirements.

Provide training in gender issues for all those involved in organising and supervising physical activities and sport

Because training is an important means of changing perceptions and everyday practices, the member states and the relevant authorities are asked to:

- guarantee that the content of initial training for sports instructors and trainers is of a high quality and incorporates the gender dimension. Courses should focus among other things on knowledge of women's participation in sport and the appropriate pedagogical approach to physical activities and sport;
- ensure that training for physical education teachers raises the issues of mixed sport and gender. Courses should include instruction in teaching strategies and working methods which

prepare teachers to manage problem situations caused by gender differences and intercultural issues;

- provide in-service training for administrative staff, sports club volunteers and journalists to alert them to the issue of gender differences and inequalities.

Improve the quality of local sports facilities

In addition to proactive policies, training and the adjustment of provision, other more local levers can be used to promote girls' and women's involvement in physical activities and sport.

Local sports clubs and schools are encouraged – the former through their managers, instructors and employer municipalities and the latter through physical education teachers and the relevant ministerial departments – to:

- appoint more women, on a paid or unpaid basis, to the staff of bodies organising physical activities and sport. It is easier for women instructors and teachers to discuss issues related to physical development and health with adolescent girls;
- establish systems to encourage participation by girls and women. Involve them in the implementation of projects, decision-making processes and, more generally, technical and administrative tasks;
- create conditions conducive to building self-confidence and a liking for sport. Encourage teachers and instructors to place more emphasis on self-improvement and skills development and less on comparison and competition;
- establish and nurture relationships of trust with parents. Alert them to the benefits of physical activity and sport and talk

regularly to them about what their child has been doing. Regular interaction and visits to sports venues can reassure parents and remove obstacles to sport for girls. In this connection, clubs and schools might also hold intergenerational events bringing parents and children together;

- experiment with and devise innovative pilot projects (in areas such as timetables, transport and the nature of activities) to promote access for girls and women to physical activities and sport.
- set up procedures to assess projects and activities using tools such as fitness tests, questionnaires, individual or group interviews and meetings. Systematically involve girls and women in these.

Disseminate messages, images and initiatives

Facilitate the exchange and dissemination of information and images at local and European level to raise the profile of women's sport and contribute to its development.

In this connection, the European institutions are encouraged to:

- co-ordinate the exchange of information and good practices between member states. Promote the pooling of information, know-how and practical experiences relating to the development of women's sport and measures to prevent discrimination against girls and women;
- set up a resource centre gathering together all the knowledge we have about women's sport (surveys, experiments in the field, advice and contacts).

Local authorities and sports clubs are encouraged to:

- improve communication at local level about the organised and self-organised activities on offer; the formalities involved and the financial support available for people on low incomes. Establish, for this purpose, a joint web platform bringing together all the information relating to a single location;
- go out and meet young people in schools, with the teachers' agreement, to inform them about their local sports clubs and describe to them what is currently on offer;
- run campaigns to publicise various sporting disciplines and the activities available for girls and women (through events such as discovery days, open days and "women and sport" days).

All media outlets are also asked to:

- highlight the successes of top-level sportswomen and hold up women who have succeeded in and through sport as examples;
- improve the dissemination of information on and images of women's sport;
- publicise "good practices" and report and condemn all instances of discrimination, sexism and racism affecting girls and women.

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Projects, initiatives and good practice examples

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Editorial team

Project leader

Clotilde Talleu: Consultant and Associate researcher at the Social Sciences Research Team on Sport of the University of Strasbourg, France. The scope of her work covers sport public policies and integration of people pertaining to vulnerable and minority groups. In 2010, she co-directed the publication “Sport and discrimination in Europe” (Council of Europe, EPAS). She is also member of the scientific committee of the European Think Tank “Sport and Citizenship”.

Associate experts

Ainhoa Azurmendi: Sports Consultant in *Avento Consultoria*, Spain. She has a Degree in Psychology, a Master’s degree in Equality between women and men (2003) and she is specialised in Psychology of sport (2006). Currently, she is working for public institutions running out projects regarding equality between men and women in sports at local, provincial, regional and at state level.

Natalie Barker-Ruchti: Senior lecturer at the Department of Food and Nutrition and Sport Science at the University of Gothenburg/ Göteborg, Sweden. Her research activities have covered gender, sport and sport coaching from a general perspective.

Romaine Didierjean: PhD Student at the Social Sciences Research Team on Sport of the University of Strasbourg, France. She is working on sport and physical activities of girls of Turkish origin in France (Alsace) and Germany (Baden-Württemberg).

Elke Grimminger: Research assistant at the Department of Sport Pedagogy of the Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg, Germany. Her main emphases in research are: intercultural learning in sport, intercultural competence of physical education teachers, professionalisation of physical education teachers, group processes in physical education, videography, mixed method studies, physical activity of preschool children.

Laura Hills: Senior lecturer in youth sport/sociology of sport at Brunel University, United Kingdom. Her research and teaching centres on gender, physicality, qualitative research methods, sports culture and social identities. Her recent publications have focused on social and embodied aspects of girls’ physical education experiences and gender, class, and body in mediated sport.

Fadila Ibrahimbegovic-Gavic: Associate professor at the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and member of its governing board since 2005. She has published about 40 professional and scientific papers on physical education. Her recent research focus on the impact of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina on physical activities of girls and women.

Tess Kay: Professor of Sport and Social Sciences at Brunel University, United Kingdom, and Director of BC.SHaW, the Brunel Centre for Sport Health and Wellbeing research. She has been researching sport, inclusion and diversity for more than 25 years in the UK, Europe, and in international development contexts.

Gertrud Pfister: Professor at the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. She conducted major international research projects on gender and

sport, women and football, sport and leadership and Muslim women and sport. She is also a consultant in the International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport and the International Sport Sociology Association.

Have also contributed to the data collection:

Antonio Borgogni: Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Sport Sciences, University of Cassino, Italy. His main research topics concern the relationship between the body and the city.

Simone Digennaro: Lecturer at the University of Cassino, got his PhD in sport sciences from the Universities of Rome and Strasbourg. He is cooperating with the European Observatoire of the Sport and Employment and the International Sport and Culture Association. Author of diverse monographs, books, and scientific articles.

Canan Koca: Associate professor at Hacettepe University, Turkey, and researcher at Edinburgh University, Scotland. She is an executive member of International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women and General Secretary of the Turkish Sport Sciences Association. She has several international publications on gender in physical education and sports.

Erika Vannini: Teaching and research assistant at the University of Cassino. Author of a monograph concerning immigration and several articles on sport and social intervention. She is engaged as project manager in volunteerism. Her research topics are among others gender issues.

Since the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) was set up in 2007, one of its major priorities has been the promotion of diversity in and through sport. To this end, the Council of Europe has developed a pan-European programme involving a variety of stakeholders from public authorities and the world of sport. All have an important role to play in reversing the discriminatory trends currently observed in sport and in promoting sport as a means of fostering diversity and social cohesion.

This collection of handbooks of good practices is an illustration of current policies and practices throughout Europe. Its aim is to disseminate and share positive experiences highlighting the potential of sport for promoting the Council of Europe's fundamental values of human rights.

<http://www.coe.int/epas>



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