

EWA - Empowering Women Athletes

EMPOWERING WOMEN ATHLETES

Report: Results of the online survey

Document produced by:
Çatalca District Directorate of National Education

GRANT AGREEMENT N. 623106-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-SPO-SCP

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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SUMMARY

Empowering Women Athletes (EWA) is a collaborative partnership project co-financed by the European Commission Erasmus+ program.

EWA aims to deal in-depth with some crucial aspects concerning the theme of discrimination and harassment towards women in sports. The project aims to develop a community of female athletes, professionals, sport managers and policy makers in Europe to actively prevent and counter violence, abuse, harassment, and discrimination against female athletes in key sports environments, providing them with knowledge, education, and practical tools specifically designed by the project.

The information you share with us in this survey and your identity will be kept strictly confidential. The data obtained will be used in the project reporting study and do not contain any numbers or signs that will indicate your identity. Your voluntary participation in the study is essential. You can withdraw from the study at any time.

The Empowering Women Athletes (EWA) survey aims to identify participants' perceptions and awareness regarding the theme of discrimination and harassment towards women in sports. For this aim, an online survey study was carried out in eight countries, *i.e.*, Bulgaria, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, and Turkey. In total of three hundred and sixty-one participants attended in the survey. Participants answered sets of questions regarding their (i) demographic information, (ii) institutional framework perceptions, and (iii) violence cases against women in sports.

Most of the participants were, female (61.2%), between 31-40 years old (24.9%), sport profession *i.e.* trainer, sport club operator or manager, referee (17.2%), engaged in individual sports (49.6%), amateur (58.7%), graduated from a university (43.8%), and they have been doing sports over than 10 years (49.0%).

Participants answers to the questions related to institutional framework perception were determined as the lack of female representatives in ruling bodies in both public and private sport institutions, lack of strong laws to prevent violence/discrimination towards women in sports, positive and strong influence of media in coping with discrimination against women athletes, inequality of reaching opportunities in sport between men and women, lack of properly trained trainers and coaches to promote gender equality, unawareness to gender discrimination in sports by policy makers. It was observed that most of the participants didn't attend any vocational training to promote equal participation of both sexes in sport. Also, they stated that they need further training to cope with the challenges girls/women face in sports.

The results showed that being insulted was the mostly stated violence case by female participants which was followed by being exposed to below belt jokes



containing abusive language. Many of the female respondents stated that they don't know the procedure regarding to how to report in case of any violence or derogatory behavior towards their gender as well as they stated that their institution/sport club/faculty/federation have not been clearly explained the related procedure. Even though female participants stated that their governing body supports them equally, but they also stated that their financial rewards are less than their men colleagues.

In conclusion, the violence and harassment cases are experienced in different frequencies by women in sports. However, participants are not well trained to report and manage these cases. Training programs related to deal with challenges that girls/women in sport are experiencing, the concepts of gender equality, and procedures to apply in any case of violence would be conducted. These cases would also point the fact that there might be policy gaps and procedural failures to promote gender equality which should be considered.



METHODOLOGY

After forming the EWA survey in English, each collaborator of the project translated the survey into their language and created an online version by using google forms. The survey information was circulated in December 2021 to provincial directorate of national education, sport clubs, relevant stakeholders and individuals. The survey was open for participation until December, 2022 and the reminder message was sent at each month after June, 2022. Participants were asked to respond voluntarily to the survey which was kept anonymous. A total of three hundred and sixty-one participants' responses were used for the further analysis.

The survey consisted of three parts. In part one, respondents were asked to fill questions related to their demographics. In part two, respondents rated their opinions/perceptions on policies towards preventing harassment, violence, and gender-based discrimination against women athletes and the role of media in a five-point scale in which participants specified their level of agreement, i.e. Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree. Furthermore, they specified whether they attended any vocational training program and whether they need further training to cope with the challenges girls/women face in sports. Part three was only open for women participation. In this part participants were asked to rate the frequency of violence or harassment cases if they had ever faced in a five-point scale, as well as their knowledge on the procedures to be applied in a violence and/or harassment cases by yes/no questions. The full version of the survey can be found in Annex 1.

In order to determine the number of occurrences of each response chosen by the participants, frequency analysis was performed by using SPSS 21.0 Programme (SPSS Inc., IBM, NY, USA).



RESULTS

Majority of the participants were female (61.2%), between 31-40 years old (24.9%), engaged in individual sports (49.6%), amateur (58.7%), graduated from a university (43.8%), and they have been doing sports over than 10 years (49.0%).

Participants' answers to the questions related to their views on the policies towards preventing harassment, violence and gender-based discrimination as well as the role of media can be found in figure 1, figure 2, and figure 3.

Figure 1 shows the results for the questions between 1 and 4. Participants mostly disagreed on "There are strong preventive laws/sanctions/rules at governmental level for violence/discrimination towards women" in sports by 27.7% as well as 11.9% of the participants stated that they strongly disagree with that statement. 17.7% of the participants strongly agreed and 16.6% agreed on that question while 25.8% of them were neutral. Females were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree (49.4%) than males (36.3%) with this statement. Males were more likely to agree or strongly agree (23.9%) than females (13.2%) with this statement.

Most of the participants were neutral for the question "There are strong preventive sanctions/rules in my institution/Federation/sport club against violence/discrimination towards women in sports by 27.7%. In contrast to the first questions, most of the participants rated this question positively (21.3% agreed, 19.1% strongly agreed, 19.1% disagreed and 12.5% strongly disagreed). Females were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree (37.1%) than males (27.3%) with this statement. Males were more likely to agree or strongly agree (23.9%) than females (14.5%) with this statement.

Participants mostly disagreed on "There is enough female representation at ruling bodies of public and private sports institutions" by 29.6% which was followed by strongly disagreed by 20.2%. In total of 30.8% of the participants stated positive opinion for this question (17.5% agree and 13.3% strongly disagree) while 19.1% were neutral. Females were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree (51.3%) than males (44.8%) with this statement. Males were more likely to agree or strongly agree (18.8%) than females (13.2%) with this statement.

68.2% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed (35.5% agreed, 32.7% strongly agreed) on "Increasing female representation both at public and private sports institutions will sustain gender balance in sports. However, 13.8% of the participants stated negative opinion (8.3% agreed, 5.5% strongly disagreed) and 18.0% of them preferred to remain neutral for this question. Females were more likely to agree or strongly agree (56.1%) than males (45.3%) with this statement. Males were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree (36.4%) than females (28.7%) with this statement.



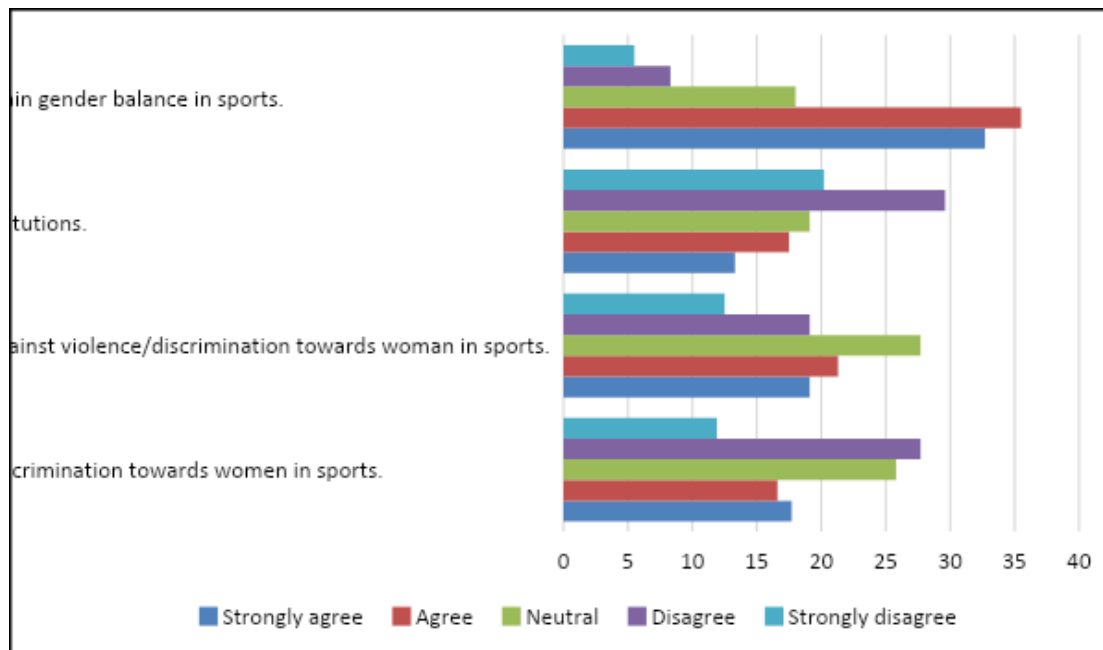


Figure 1. Percentages of the participants' answers to questions related to their institutional framework perceptions (Question 1 – Question 4).

Figure 2 shows the results of questions between 5 and 8. In total of 64.2% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed on the statement “There is difference between men and women in terms of reaching opportunities in sports”. A smaller proportion of male respondents agreed or strongly agreed (28.13%) than female respondents (37.14%). Furthermore, 20.8% of the participants strongly disagreed and disagreed (59.38% of male respondents and 54.29% of female respondents) while 15.0% of them were neutral. The results were consistent across all age groups, with the exception of the 51 and above age group where the majority of respondents were neutral on the issue.

Most of the participants (%29.6) were neutral for the statement “Media takes gender equity into consideration and avoid using sexist language while broadcasting sport news”. Participants who rated this statement positively were slightly higher by 37.7% than those who rated negatively by 32.7% (11.9% strongly disagreed, 20.8% disagreed, 24.7% agreed and 13.0 % strongly agreed). A larger percentage of female respondents agreed or strongly agreed (22.86%) than male respondents (15.63%). The results were consistent across all age groups, with the exception of the 51 and above age group where the majority of respondents were negative on the issue.

An interesting result was observed for the statement “Media gives enough attention to the success of women athletes” in where participants revealed similar results. 39.9% of the participants had positive opinion while 39.7% of the participants had negative opinion (15% strongly disagreed, 24.7% disagreed, 20.5 neutral, 28% agreed and 11.9% strongly disagreed). A smaller proportion of male respondents agreed or strongly agreed (23.44%) than female respondents (34.29%). The results



were consistent across all age groups, with the exception of the 51 and above age group where the majority of respondents were neutral on the issue.

In this section, participants gave the highest agreement rate for the statement “Media can have an affective role in coping with discrimination against women athletes” by 77.3% (39.9% strongly agreed and 37.4% agreed) among others. However, 3.9% of the participants strongly disagreed, 6.6% of them disagreed and 12.2% of the participants were neutral. the majority of both male and female respondents agreed or strongly agreed (79.69% of male respondents and 85.71% of female respondents). A smaller proportion of male respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (9.38%) than female respondents (5.71%). This trend was consistent across all age groups, with the exception of the 51 and above age group where the majority of respondents were neutral on the issue

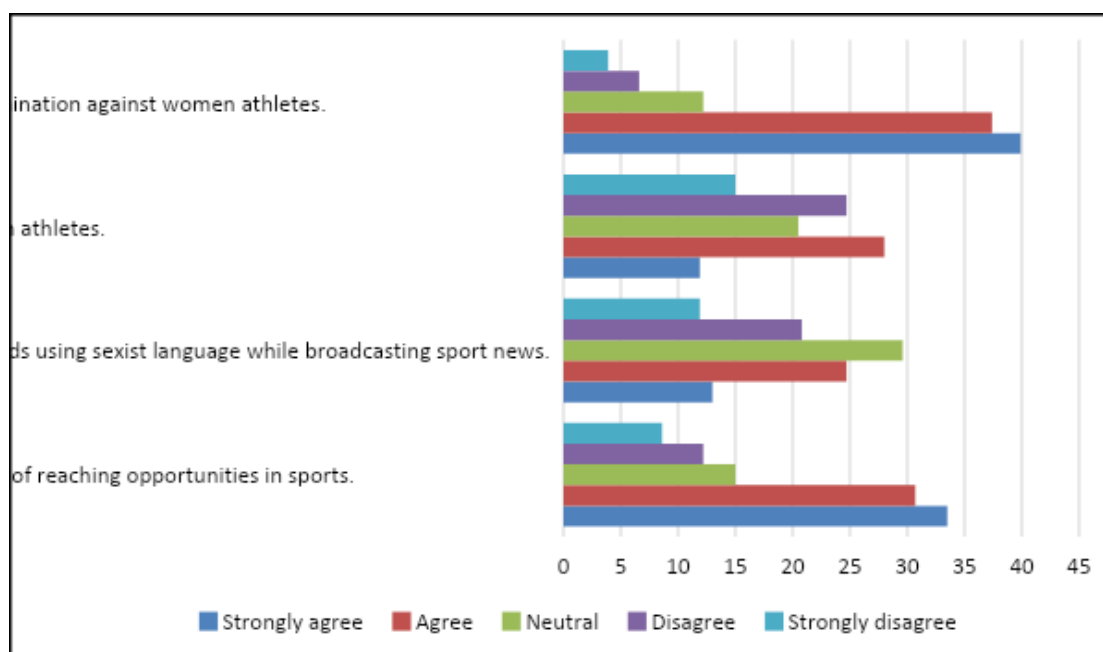


Figure 2. Percentages of the participants' answers to questions related to their institutional framework perceptions (Question 5 – Question 8).

Figure 3 shows the results of questions between 9 and 11. 46.5% of the participants rated negatively on “Policy makers are aware of the gender discrimination in sports and takes necessary measures to cope with this issue” as well as 25.2% of the respondents rated this statement positively (16.6% strongly disagreed, 29.9% disagreed, 15.5% agreed, 9.7% strongly agreed). Furthermore, 28.5% of the participants were neutral for this statement.60% of male participants and 44% of female participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. 20% of male participants and 33% of female participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while the remaining participants chose a neutral response. It is interesting



to note that respondents in age group 18-24 seem to be more optimistic, with about 48% of them either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

Participants gave the highest neutral rate for the statement “Public administration gives enough importance to cope with gender discrimination against women athletes” by 30.2%. Participants mostly rated negatively for this statement by 40.4% while the positively rated percentage was 29.3 (14.1% strongly disagreed, 26.3% disagreed, 21.3% agreed, 8.0% strongly agreed). Only 21.3% of male participants and 8% of female participants strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Again, respondents in age group 1 18-24 seem to be more optimistic, with about 44% of them either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

The percentage of respondents who rated negatively on “Trainers/coaches are properly trained to promote gender equality in sports” were higher than those who rated positively (11.6% strongly disagreed, 28.3% disagreed, 21.9% agreed, 11.9% strongly agreed). The percentage of the neutral participants were determined by 26.3%. 36% of male participants and 24% of female participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, while 20% of male participants and 34% of female participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. There are no significant differences across age groups in the responses to this question.

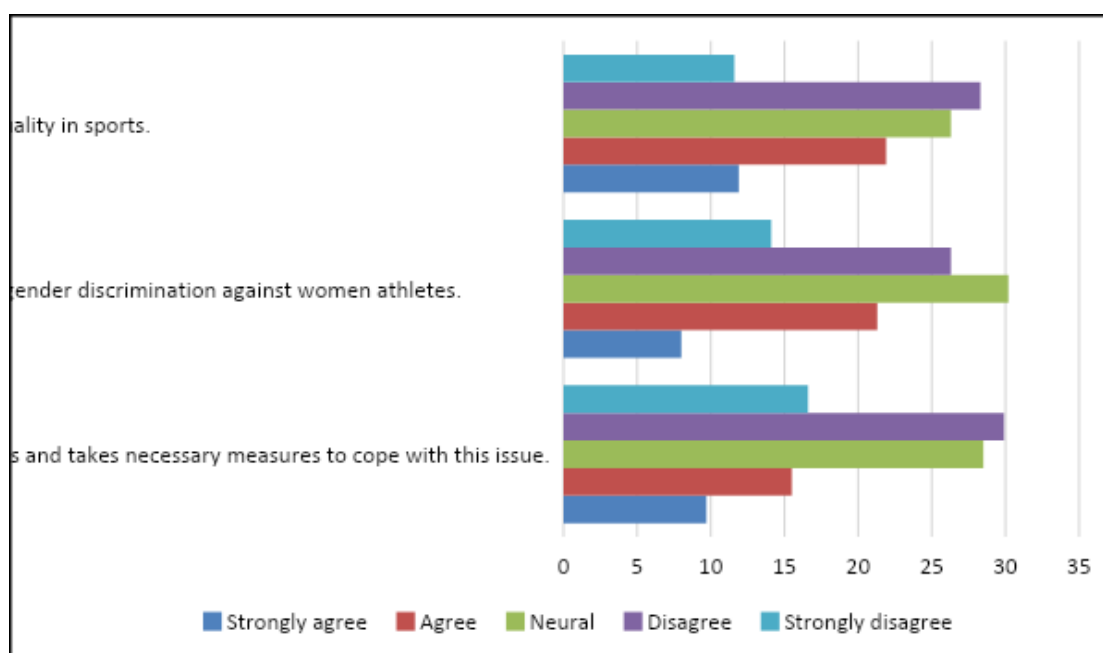


Figure 3. Percentages of the participants' answers to questions related to their institutional framework perceptions (Question 9 – Question 11).

In this survey, majority of the participants stated that they have not attended any training program that promotes equal participation of both sexes in sports by 76.0%. 70.37% were female and 29.63% were male Only 24.0% stated that they attended



such a training program. 78.95% were female and 21.05% were male. In addition, the

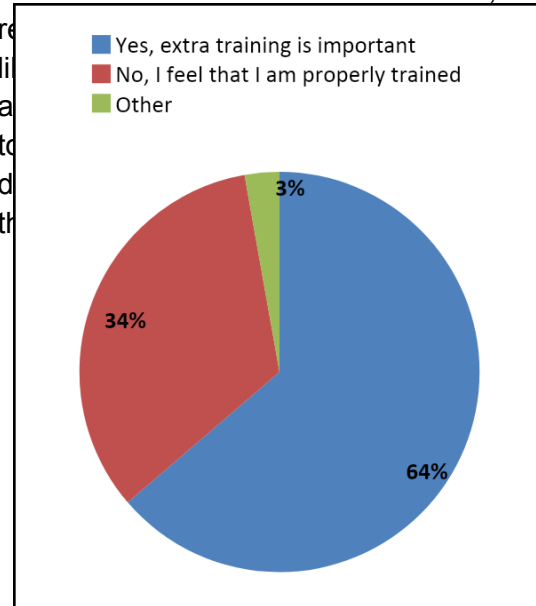
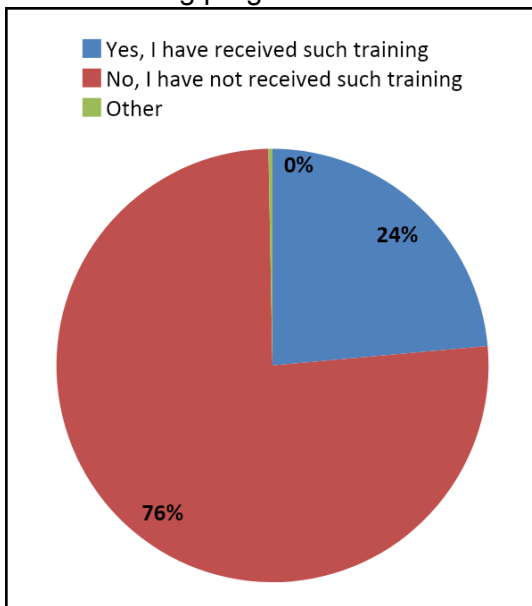


Figure 4. Have you attended some kind of vocational training program (such as seminars, lectures) or university courses that promote equal participation of both sexes in sports?

Figure 5. Do you personally need further training to cope with the challenges girls/women face in sports?

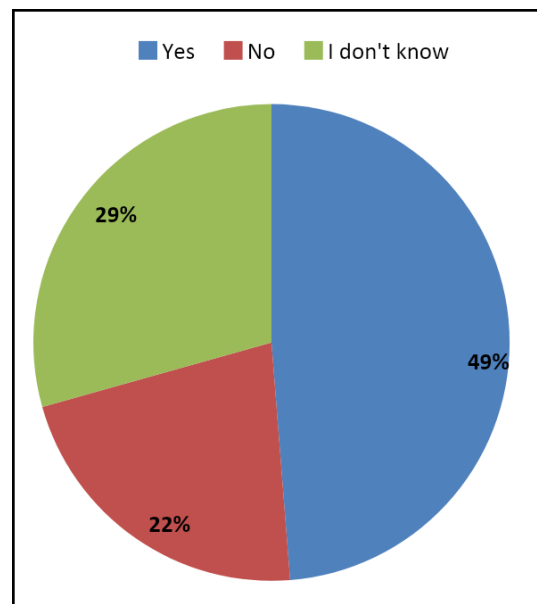
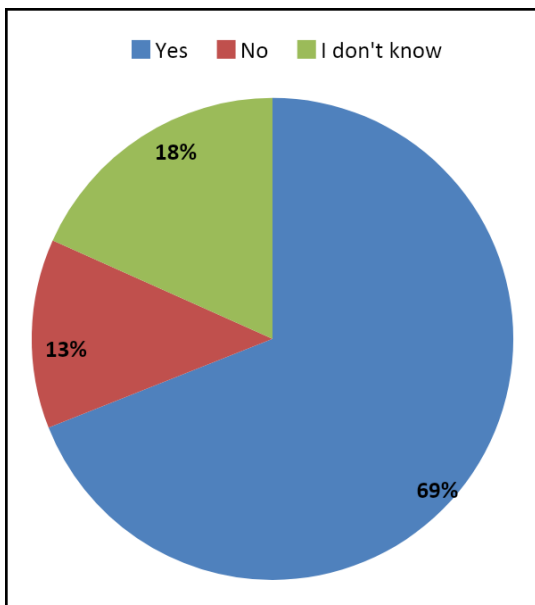


Figure 6. Do you think that violence against women athletes occurs more frequently at workplaces where women are traditionally underrepresented? Participants required additional training programs in sports by 64.0%. 72% were female and 28% were male. There are no significant differences across the age groups in the responses to this question (Figure 5.)

Most of the participants thought violence against women athletes occurs more frequently at workplaces where women are traditionally underrepresented by 49%. 78.95% were female and 21.05% were male. However, 22% of the participants didn't agree on that statement while 29% of them stated that they don't know (Figure 6). There are no significant differences across age groups in the responses to this question.

Majority of the participants agreed on national policies/national action plans for gender equality or for combating gender-based violence will support increasing the welfare of women and girls in sport by 69% (75% were female and 25% were male). The percentage of the participants who didn't agree on this statement was 13 while the percentage of the participants who stated they don't know was 18. The respondents in age group 18-24 seem to be more optimistic, with about 48% of them either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. (Figure 7).

The results of the cases of violence against women in sport are presented in figure 8, figure 9 and figure 10.

In figure 8, participants experienced all cases at different frequencies. Even though majority of the respondents had never experienced many of the cases, participants had experienced thrown objects at them by 32.3%, being kicked, punched, slapped, or hit with an object by 27.3%, being insulted by 66.7% and being prevented from getting health services by 35.3%. The results showed that 9.1% of the participants experienced being insulted at least once a week, 15.2% of the respondents experienced this at least once a month and 23.2% of the respondents experienced this at least once a year.



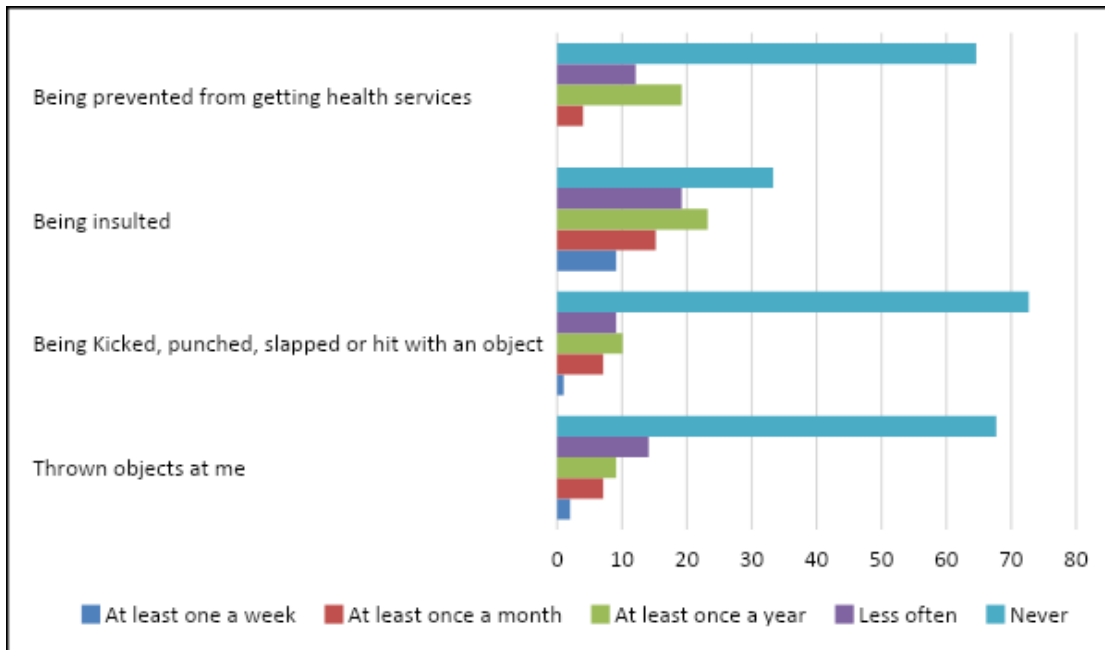


Figure 8. Cases of violence against women in sports (Question 1- Question 4).

In figure 9, participants experienced being exposed to persistent dating proposals, body touch without consent, and relationship offer for some benefits, if accepted, or else, sport life damage by 57.6%, 49.5% and 36.4%, respectively. 2% of the participants stated that they have being exposed to persistent dating proposals at least once a week, 18.2% of the respondents stated that they have experienced this at least once a month, 18.2% of the participants stated that they experienced this at least once a year.

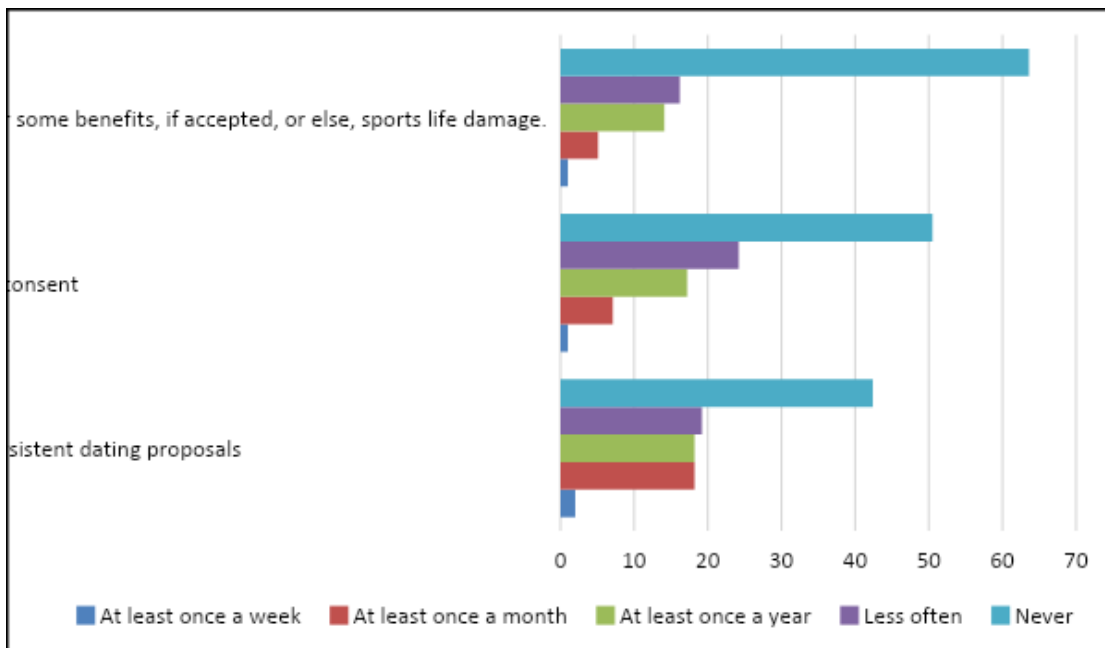


Figure 9. Cases of violence against women in sports (Question 5 – Question 7).



In figure 10, being exposed to below belt jokes containing abusive language was the most frequently stated case among others (by 63.8%). It was found that, 5.1% of the participants stated they experienced this at least once a week, 15.2% of the participants experienced this at least once a month and 26.3% of the participants experienced it at least once a year. This case was followed by being forced to do errands for others by 57.6%. Being refused payment were experienced by 33.3% of the participants as well as grabbing bank cards or money experienced by 26.3% of them.

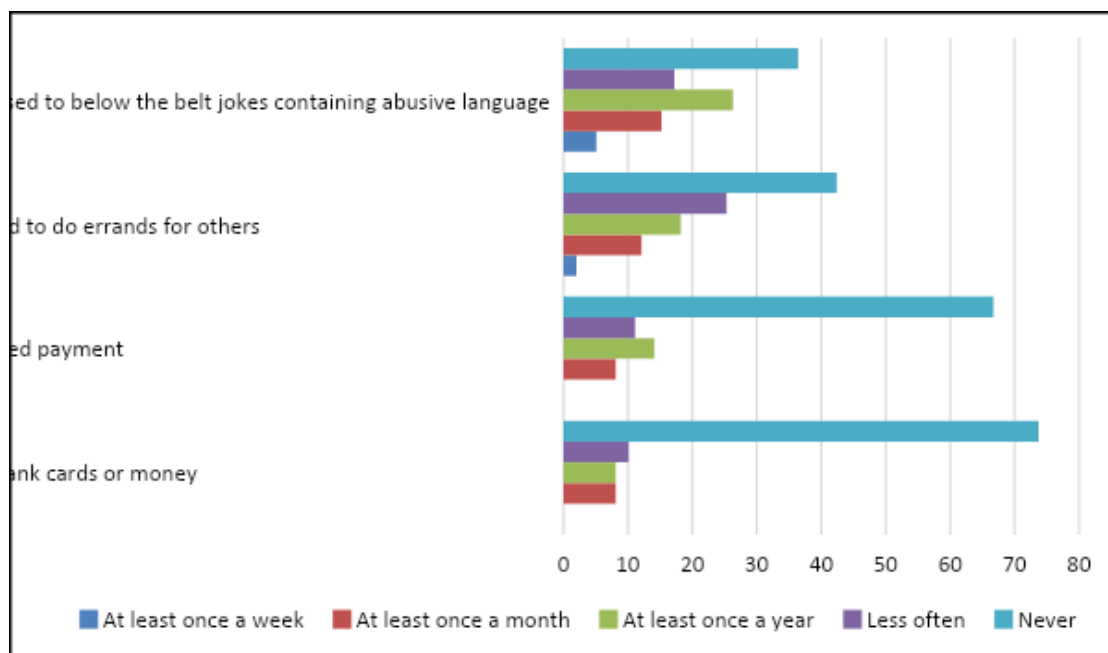


Figure 10. Cases of violence against women in sports (Question 8- Question 11).

In figure 11, 53% of the participants stated that they don't know the institutions and procedures where they can report if they experience violent or derogatory behavior towards their gender. Furthermore, 40% of the participants stated that they don't know even they forward these complaints, whether the managers or authorized people will solve it (Figure 12).



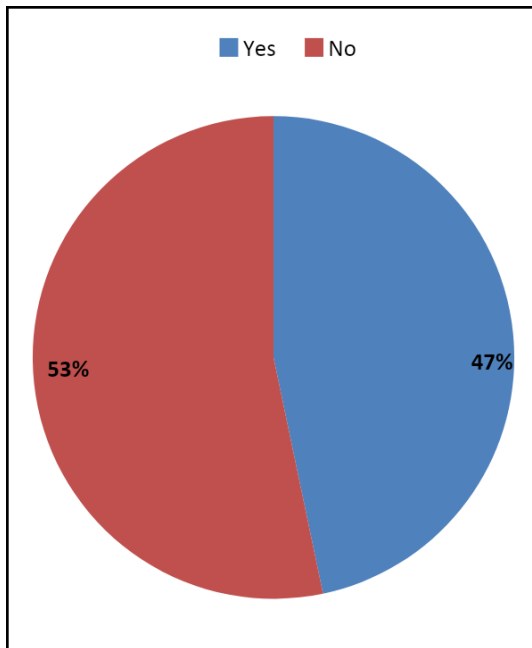


Figure 11. I know institutions and procedures where I can report if I experience violent or derogatory behavior towards my gender.

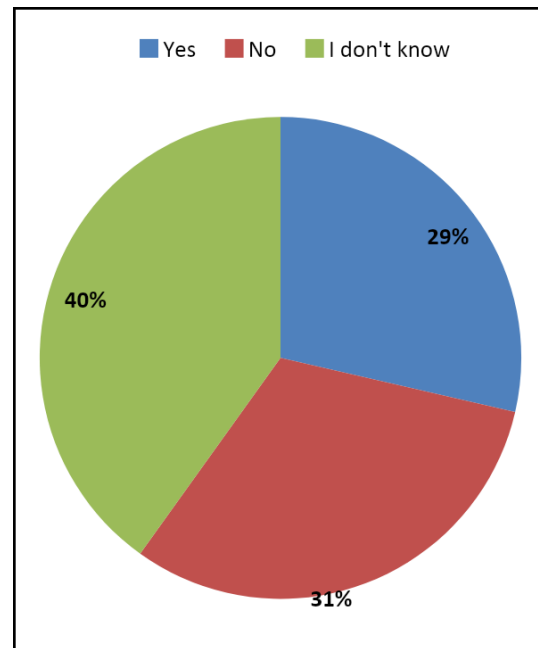


Figure 12. If I forward these complaints, the managers or authorized people will solve it.

In figure 13, participants showed similar results with regards to the statement “Making such a complaint will not affect my sports life in any way”. It was observed that 32% of the participants stated that making a complaint would possibly affect their sport life. On contrary, 32% of the participants stated that making a complaint would not possibly affect their sport life and most of the participants stated that they don’t know whether making such a complaint will not affect their sports life in any way.

In figure 14, almost half of the participants stated that they don’t know the procedures that they can follow if they are exposed to violence/harassment/inequity (by 51%). It was observed that 30% of the participants stated that they know how to follow procedures in case of experiencing violence, harassment and/or inequity.



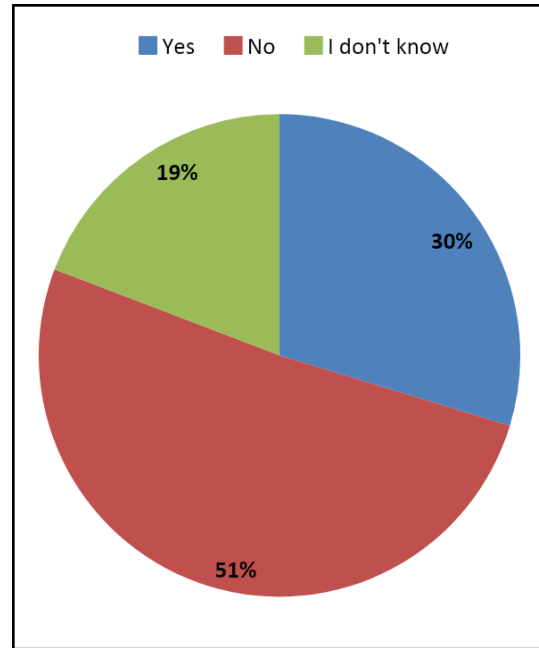
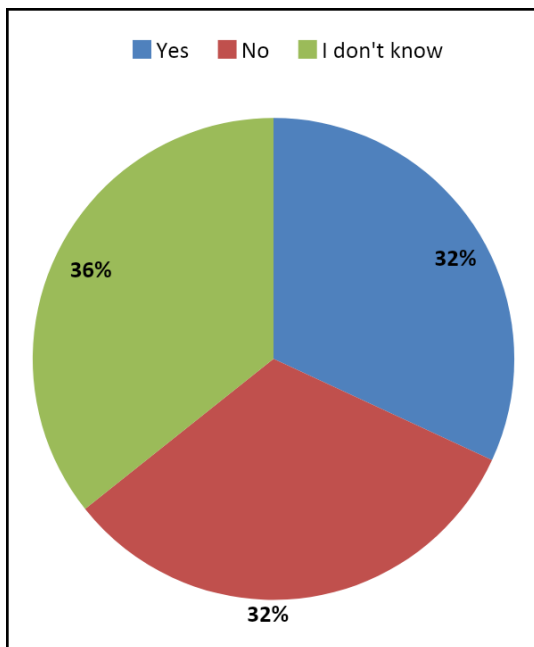


Figure 14. The procedures that I can follow if I am exposed to violence/harassment/inequity have been clearly presented to me by my faculty/institution/federation/sports club.

Figure 13. Making such a complaint will not affect my sports life in any way.



In figure 15, most of the participants believed that their governing body/federation/club supports them equally compared to their male colleagues by 45%. However, they most of them also stated that the financial rewards are less than male colleagues by 52% (Figure 16).

In figure 17, most of the participants stated that they have experienced discrimination as stereotypes and/or lack of support for a combination of sport and family life etc. by 53% while 37% of them haven't experienced this.



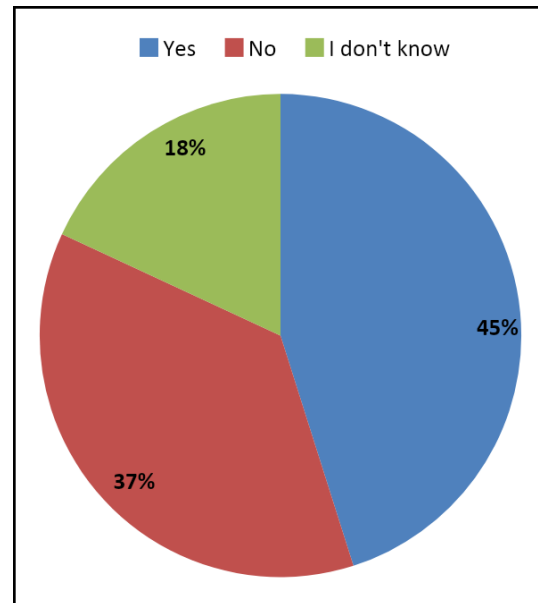
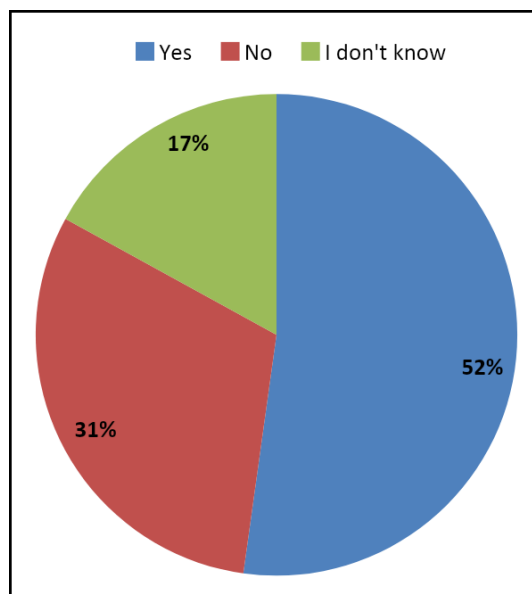


Figure 15. Do you believe your governing body/federation/club supports you equally, compared to male colleagues?

Figure 16. Do you think that the financial rewards are less than men colleagues?



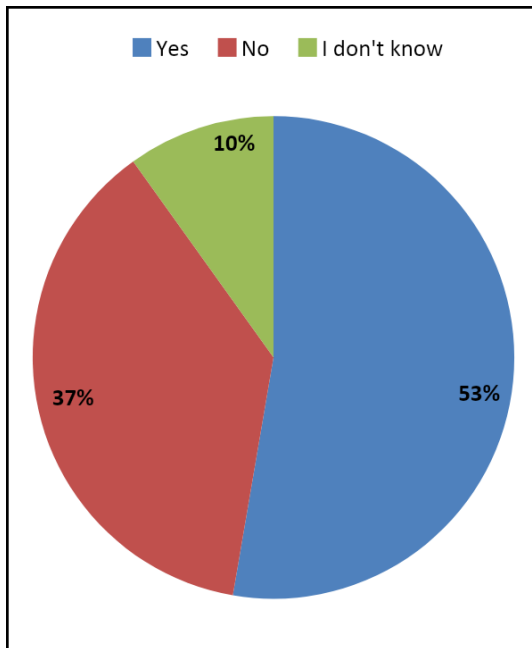


Figure 17. Have you ever experienced discrimination as stereotypes and/or lack of support for a combination of sports and family life, etc.?



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the number of female representatives in ruling bodies of both public and private sport institutions should be increased to promote gender equality.

Laws and sanctions should be restructured in order to prevent any violence, harassment and discrimination cases by institutional and governmental level.

The positive and strong effect of media should be considered while broadcasting sport news in order to promote gender equality.

Women in sport are not trained well nor to cope with the discrimination, neither they know the procedure how to manage the violence cases. Further training is required.

Women in sport are experiencing violence and harassment cases by different frequencies. Studies in order to identify the most vulnerable groups and their needs should be identified.

Pay inequality between women and men in sports is an issue that needs to be discussed. Determinants of the gender pay gap should be identified.



ANNEX

**Project Description**

Empowering Women Athletes (EWA) is a collaborative partnership project co-financed by the European Commission Erasmus+ program.

EWA aims to deal in-depth with some crucial aspects concerning the theme of discrimination and harassment towards women in sports. The project aims to develop a community of female athletes, professionals, sport managers and policy makers in Europe to actively prevent and counter violence, abuse, harassment, and discrimination against female athletes in key sports environments, providing them with knowledge, education, and practical tools specifically designed by the project.

The information you share with us in this survey and your identity will be kept strictly confidential. The data obtained will be used in the project reporting study and do not contain any numbers or signs that will indicate your identity. Your voluntary participation in the study is essential. You can withdraw from the study at any time.

Do you agree to participate in the study voluntarily?

- Yes
- No



A. Demographics

A.1 Gender:

- Female
- Male

A.2 Age:

- 18-24
- 25-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- >50

A.3 Country of residence:

- Bulgaria
- Belgium
- Cyprus
- Greece
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Turkey
- Other (please specify)

A.4 Occupation (you can choose more than one):

- Athlete
- Sport professional (coach, trainer, sport club operator and executive, referee, etc.)
- Health professional (nutritionist, psychologist, physiotherapist, etc.)
- Association dealing with gender and social equality
- Education professional (physical education teacher, etc.)
- Administrator
- Student
- Other (please specify)

A.5 Branch of Sports (you can choose more than one):

- Individual Sports
- Team Sports
- Other (please specify)



A.6 Your status in your branch (you can choose more than one):

- Amateur (League)
- Professional (League)
- National Team
- Other (please specify).....

A.7 Education

- Up to secondary education
- Diploma/Bachelor's
- Master's Degree
- Ph.D.
- Other (please specify _____)

A.8 How many years have you been exercising sports?

- Less than a year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 Years
- 7-9 years
- more than 10 years



B. Institutional framework perceptions		St ro ng ly A g r e e	Ag r e e	Ne u t r a l	Di s a g r e e	Str o ng ly Dis a g r e e
Dear participant, in this section, your views on the policies towards preventing harassment, violence and gender-based discrimination against women athletes are asked.						
Please tick the most appropriate option for you.						
B.1	There are strong preventive laws/sanctions/rules at governmental level for violence/discrimination towards women in sports.					
B.2	There are strong preventive sanctions/rules in my institution/Federation/sports club against violence/discrimination towards woman in sports.					
B.3	There is enough female representation at ruling bodies of public and private sports institutions.					
B.4	Increasing female representation both at public and private sports institutions will sustain gender balance in sports.					
B.5	There is difference between men and women in terms of reaching opportunities in sports.					
B.6	Media takes gender equity into consideration and avoids using sexist language while broadcasting sport news.					
B.7	Media gives enough attention to the success of women athletes.					
B.8	Media can have an effective role in coping with discrimination against women athletes.					
B.9	Policy makers are aware of the gender discrimination in sports and takes necessary measures to cope with this issue.					
B.10	Public administration gives enough importance to cope with gender discrimination against women athletes.					
B.11	Trainers/coaches are properly trained to promote gender equality in sports.					



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B.12 Have you attended some kind of vocational training program (such as seminars, lectures) or university courses that promote equal participation of both sexes in sports?

- Yes, I have received such training
- No, I have not received such training
- Other (please specify.....)

If yes, please specify.....

B.13. Do you personally need further training to cope with the challenges girls/women face in sports ?

- Yes, extra training is important
- No, I feel that I am properly trained

Other (please specify....)

B.14 Do you think that violence against women athletes occurs more frequently at workplaces where women are traditionally underrepresented?

- YES
- NO
- I DO NOT KNOW

B.15 Do you believe that national policies / national action plans for gender equality or for combatting gender-based violence will support increasing the welfare of women and girls in sports?

prevalence rates are highest in

- YES
- NO
- I DO NOT KNOW

Dear participant thanks for allocating your time and your precious contributions. Part C questions will be for women athletes. If you are a woman athlete, please tick yes. In any other occasion tick no.

Are you a woman athlete?

- YES
- NO

End of the questionnaire for respondents other than women.



C. Violence cases against Women in Sports		at lea st onc e a we ek	at lea st onc e a m on th	at lea st onc e a ye ar	Le ss Of te n	N ev er
(For Women in Sports) Please state your views on different types of violence that you may have experienced personally and/or you have witnessed by answering the questions below;						
C.1	Thrown objects at me					
C.2	Being Kicked, punched, slapped or hit with an object					
C.3	Being insulted					
C.4	Being prevented from getting health services					
C.5	Being exposed to persistent dating proposals					
C.6	Body touch without consent					
C.7	Relationship offer for some benefits, if accepted, or else, sports life damage.					
C.8	Grabbing bank cards or money					
C.9	Being refused payment					



C.10	Being forced to do errands for others					
C.11	Being exposed to below the belt jokes containing abusive language					



C.12 I know institutions and procedures where I can report if I experience violent or derogatory behaviour towards my gender

- YES
- NO

C.13 If I forward these complaints, the managers or authorized people will solve it.

- YES
- NO
- I DO NOT KNOW

C.14 Making such a complaint will not affect my sports life in any way.

- YES
- NO
- I DO NOT KNOW

C.15 The procedures that I can follow if I am exposed to violence/harassment/inequity have been clearly presented to me by my faculty/institution/federation/sports club

- YES
- NO
- I DO NOT KNOW

C.16 Do you believe your governing body/federation/club supports you equally, compared to male colleagues?

- YES
- NO
- I DO NOT KNOW

C.17 Do you think that the financial rewards are less than men colleagues?

- YES
- NO
- I DO NOT KNOW

C.18 Have you ever experienced discrimination as stereotypes and/or lack of support for a combination of sports and family life, etc.?

- YES
- NO
- I DO NOT KNOW

Thank you very much for your time!