



Sport and LGBTQI+

Background of the research work

The Equality Within Sport (EWS) Committee of the European Non-Governmental Sport Organisation (ENGSO) focused on the topic of LGBTQI+¹ inclusion during 2022. The aim was to collect up-to-date data that deals with meaningful and recent topics regarding LGBTQI+ community in the sport setting.

Recommendations

Based on the conducted research, the EWS committee recommends the following:

- Take into account the lived experience of LGBTQI+ people when making decisions about creating a welcoming sporting environment that offers a safe space for the practice of physical activity
- Choosing/electing boards and management positions in sport clubs carefully, recognising the importance of diverse representation and enabling equal opportunities for all who apply for election
- Involve the target groups (athletes and coaches) in decision-making and specifically in decisions that affect LGBTQI+ friendly sport activities
- Guarantee LGBTQI+ friendly sport activities and refuse those that are exclusionary in nature
- Regularly evaluate that sporting activities are LGBTQI+-friendly, and pay attention to gender balance in activities offered (trans, women, non-binary inclusion)
- Implement anti-discrimination measures and evaluate them regularly
- Work with media stakeholders to offer positive representation and promote participation of LGBTQI women in sport, and give voices to all genders equally

¹ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and others who identify in the community



- Include education about gender diversity and sexual orientation at an early age and decide on a frame (place and time) for such educational activities and clear responsibilities so that it is prioritised
- Make a deliberate effort to reach out to the LGBTQI+ sporting community, for example by walking in pride as a sport club during pride parades, putting up the rainbow flag in front of the sports hall, etc., to increase sport participation rates in the LGBTQI+ community and welcome everybody
- Evaluate the participation rate of LGBTQI+ people regularly and consider/implement (new) actions to welcome everybody if the evaluation reveals deficits
- Initiate dialogue to make gender identity and expression, as well as sexual orientation, a priority that can inspire and enable improvements for the community on all levels, knowing that, and because, Europe is not homogenous in its acceptance and treatment of the LGBTQI community.
- Use sport to counteract the social and physical distance created and the resulting sense of isolation that was reported by all communities and felt especially strongly in the the LGBTQI+ community, during and post COVID-19.

To identify these meaningful topics, an initial literature search was conducted in April 2022. The following 18 articles were considered relevant and were included in the background section(s) of the research output (factsheets):

Data Collection

To identify meaningful topics, an initial literature search was conducted in April 2022. The 18 articles presented at the end of this document were considered relevant and were included in the background section(s) of the research output (factsheets).

After scanning all relevant literature, the results were grouped in the following 11 broad topics (enumeration not related to priority):

- LGBTQI+ women;
- Involvement in sport jobs;
- Sport and mental health;



- Sport as a shelter;
- Impact of covid-19;
- Tackling verbal insults, structural discrimination, e-bullying, physical violence;
- Diversity training;
- Physical health improvements through sport;
- The power of role models;
- Integration of LGBTQI community in decision making;
- Physical closeness „after“the pandemic.

Development of the research focus

Taking these topics into consideration, the EWS committee discussed, during an in-person meeting in Athens in May 2022, which topics and sub-topics should be the focus of the research work. Next, interview guidelines and questionnaires for athletes and coaches, respectively, were designed. The data collection process started on 14th of July 2022 and the database was closed on 15th of August 2022. Data was mainly collected during the LGBTQI+ sport event EuroGames in July in Nijmegen, Netherlands, as well as online before and after the EuroGames.

Research focus

The research results were divided into four topics, namely:

- LGBTQI+ women in sport
- LGBTQI+ and sport participation
- LGBTQI+ and safe sport
- LGBTQI+ and the legacy of covid-19

Factsheets were created for all four topics and are accessible on ENGSO website ([link](#)). It was agreed to publish the results in the form of factsheets following the General Assembly of ENGSO, where ENGSO and its member organisations were asked for their opinion on helpful formats for the display and distribution of study results.



Resources

- ILGA-Europe, EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C), TGEU, Organisation Intersex International Europe (OII Europe), and European Gay & Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF) (2021): LBTI WOMEN IN SPORT. VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION & LIVED EXPERIENCES
- Sport Scotland (2008): BARRIERS TO WOMEN AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- E.Alliance (2022): TRANSGENDER WOMEN ATHLETES AND ELITE SPORT: A SCIENTIFIC REVIEW
- Menzel et al. (2019): THE RELEVANCE OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY IN SPORT IN EUROPE. FINDINGS FROM THE OUTSPORT SURVEY
- Földi et al. (2019): OUTSPORT TOOLKIT SUPPORTING SPORT EDUCATORS IN CREATING AND MAINTAINING AN INCLUSIVE SPORT COMMUNITY BASED ON DIVERSITY OF GENDER IDENTITIES AND SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS
- Erikainen et al (2021): HUMAN RIGHTS, TRANS ATHLETES AND INTERSEX ATHLETES IN SPORT
- Outsport working group, led by GSU (2019): SOGI DISCRIMINATION IN SPORT.
- European Union Agency for fundamental rights (2020): A LONG WAY TO GO FOR LGBTI EQUALITY.
- United Nations (2020): VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) PANDEMIC
- European Parliament (2014): REPORT ON THE EU ROADMAP AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY
- ILGA Europe: COVID-19 AND SPECIFIC IMPACT ON LGBTI PEOPLE AND WHAT AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE DOING TO MITIGATE IMPACT



- United Nations (2020): COVID-19 AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF LGBTI PEOPLE – WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LGBTI PEOPLE?
- UN independent expert (2020): REPORT TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF LGBT PERSONS
- LGBT foundation (2020): HIDDEN FIGURES – THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON LGBT COMMUNITIES IN THE UK
- LGBT foundation (2020): THE ESSENTIAL BRIEFING ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LGBT COMMUNITIES IN THE UK
- Kneale D (2021): DISCRIMINATION AS A PREDICTOR OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH AMONG LGBTQ+ PEOPLE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: CROSS-SECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE ONLINE QUEERANTINE STUDY