

WOMEN IN SPORTS GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

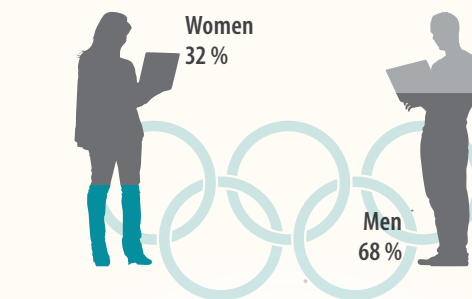
Strongly associated with masculinity, sport is one of the most gender unequal social institutions in modern society and has traditionally been dominated by men in terms of both participation and governance. Women were excluded from the first modern Olympic Games, held in Athens in 1896, and were only allowed to gradually start joining in four years later. Even though women's presence and involvement in the Olympic Movement have progressively evolved, girls and women across the world still get fewer opportunities and less investment, training and corporate and media attention when they play sport.

Today, despite a clear trend towards increased female presence, there is still ample room for improvement when it comes to women's participation in sports governance structures. The International Olympic Committee currently **numbers** just one third female members and honorary members – 47 out of a total of 147. In the EU, only 4 of the 27 presidents of national Olympic committees were women in 2023. Also in 2023, only 22 % of all top decision-making positions in the national EU federations of the 10 most popular sports were held by women, ranging from 7 % in Slovenia to 51 % in Sweden. Sweden aside, all the other countries had a share of under 40 % women, although women's presence has been rising over the years.

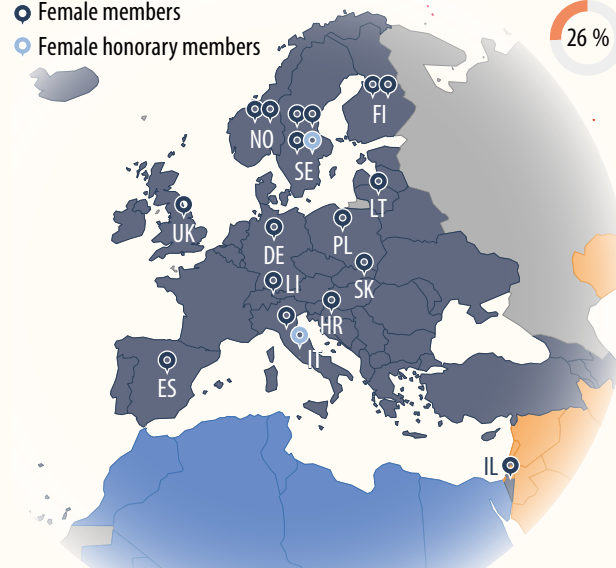
WOMEN AS COACHES AND ROLE MODELS

Although the number of women actively involved in sport has increased dramatically over the past 50 years, female

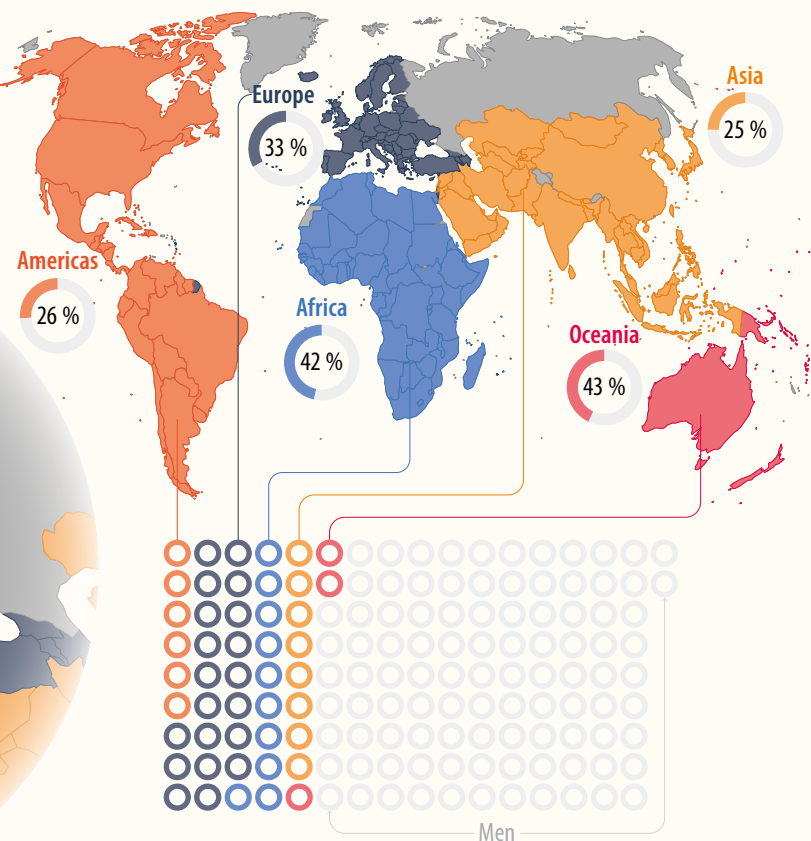
Women on the International Olympic Committee



- Female members
- Female honorary members



Number of women among IOC members/honorary members per continent



Data source: [International Olympic Committee](#), 2024.

coaches across the globe are a statistical minority in nearly all sports, at all performance levels. In Europe, only **31 %** of all sports **coaches** were women in 2019, based on a sample of 18 European countries surveyed, with significant differences between countries. The share of women coaches ranged between 9 % in Portugal and 77 % in Montenegro. Researchers **highlight** the importance of having strong female **role models** in sport, particularly in coaching, to inspire others to pursue and realise similar achievements or to offer insight and advice on how to navigate a difficult environment and **challenge** negative stereotypes.

INEQUALITY IN PAY AND MEDIA COVERAGE

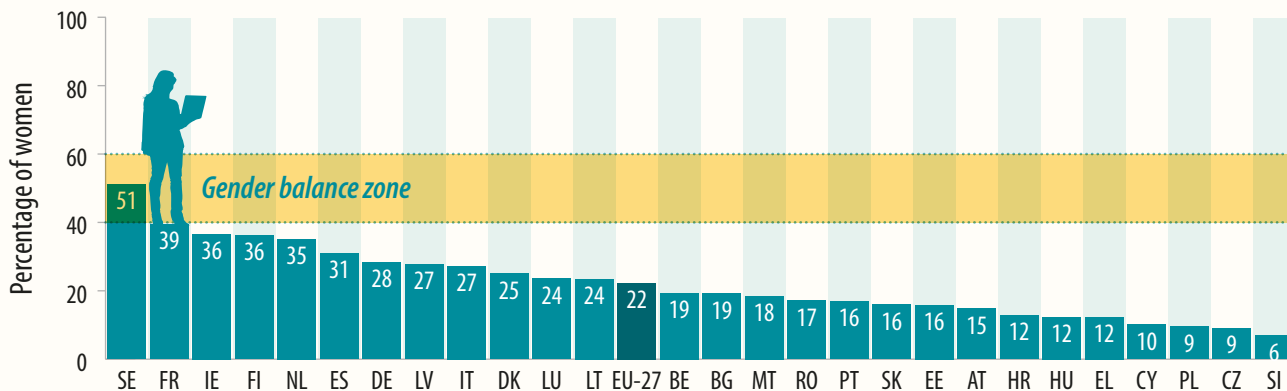
Most sports now award men and women equal prize **money**. Football, golf and basketball remain the sports with the biggest financial gaps in awards, but efforts are being made to eliminate the disparities. In **football**, in 2022, FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) launched a **Football Unites the World** campaign with a 'Unite for

Gender Equality' component. FIFA **tripled** its prize money for the women's world cup in 2023 compared to 2019, but this was still only a third of the prize fund for the men's similar competition. Several national football federations (England, Ireland, Norway, **Spain**, **Slovenia**, the United States) have decided to pay men and women footballers representing their countries equally. Nevertheless, the **gap** between men and women footballers' salaries remains enormous, and football is not unique. In 2023, there was not one woman among the **100 best paid athletes** in the world. While such disparities can be explained by **market forces** and customers' strong preferences for certain male sports, experts also point to other less visible factors that help to perpetuate this situation. These include gender **stereotypes** in the media, viewers' gender **bias** and the history of sports being **designed** specifically for men, with women as latecomers. In addition to the pay gap, women also face **difficulties** when it comes to their rights to maternity leave and pay.

Significant **differences** in media coverage of women's and men's sports play an important role in perpetuating inequality; a 2011 **international sports press survey** showed that sports journalism in the print media was a man's world. More recent **research** suggests however that the advent of digital and social media, as well as streaming, is contributing to an increase in coverage of women's sports.

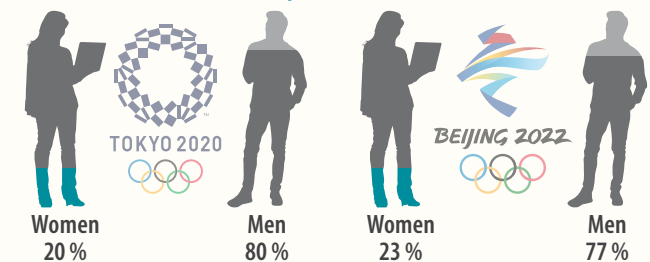
The European Commission actively **promotes** gender equality in sport. One way in which it does this is by supporting projects through the Erasmus+ programme, the main EU funding instrument for sport. The European Parliament has also advocated consistently for gender equality in sport, such as in its 2021 **resolution** on EU sports policy, where it called for equal pay and greater visibility for women.

Share of women in the highest decision-making body of the national sports federations (10 most popular Olympic sports), 2023



Source: European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender in sport*, 2023.

Gender breakdown of total press accreditations



Share of women coaches in European countries



Data sources: Tokyo 2020 Summer OG, Beijing 2022 Winter OG. Council of Europe, European Union, ALL IN project.

This is an update of an earlier **infographic** by Ivana Katsarova, published in March 2020.

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