

# Research on the LGBTIQ+ Sports Movement in Europe

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LGBTQI+ Policy and Leadership in Sport and Society – PLUS



# PLUSS Research (01/2024 – 12/2024)



## Aim of Research

- Understand structures and processes of the development of LGBTQI+ clubs across Europe
- Identify what works to help improve inclusion of LGBTQI+ people in and through sport in Europe
- Conducting of two empirical studies:

### **Qualitative written interviews**

5 LGBTQI+ sport clubs (partners)

### **Quantitative online survey**

84 LGBTQI+ sports clubs/groups

*Qualitative findings guided questionnaire development*



# PLUSS Research (01/2024 – 12/2024)



## Main topics of interviews & online survey:

- **Development of the club:** openness towards certain groups, reasons for founding the club/groups and barriers at the beginning
- **Governance:** strategies to tackle barriers and important milestones in development
- **Present mindset and orientations**
- **Future:** relevant strategies for the future and need for LGBTQI+ sports clubs

# Survey Sample



## Type of LGBTQI+ organisation

- Club: 73
- Group: 11

## Ø Number of members

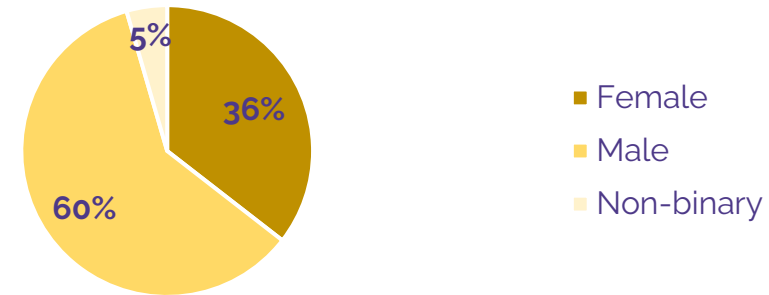
- Club: 343
- Group: 57

## Ø Founding year

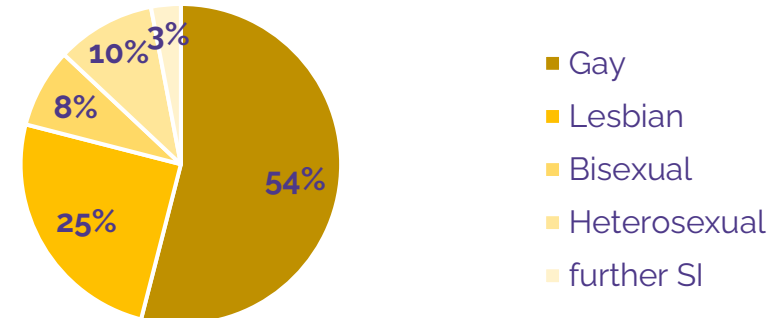
2005 (1980-2024)

**Members of EGLSF** 72%

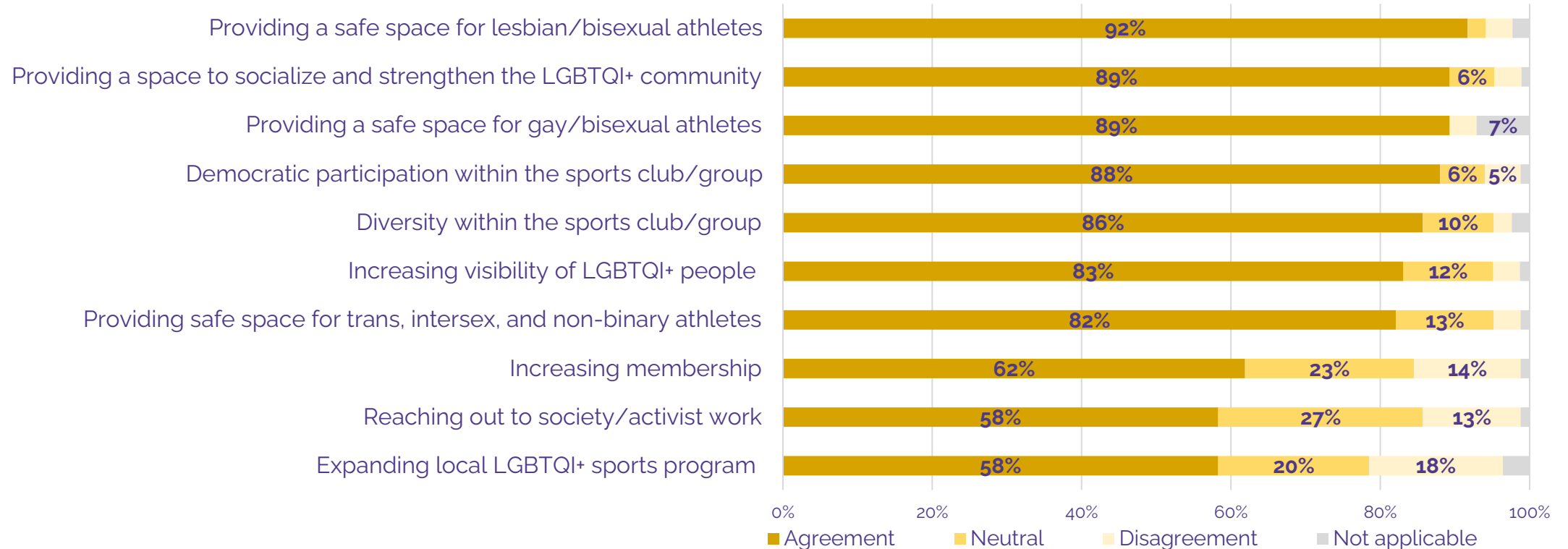
## Gender Identity - Ø Membership composition (n=82)



## Sexual Identity - Ø Membership composition (n=82)



# Present Mindset of Sports Clubs/Groups (n=83-84)



*"One of the challenges of our organisation is that a large part of our community is not disclosed and/or is not willing to highlight it. Activities and their promotion are therefore often limited to ensure a safe environment and to protect users." (OIS, 37)*

# Need for LGBTQI+ Sports Clubs/Groups (n=82-83)



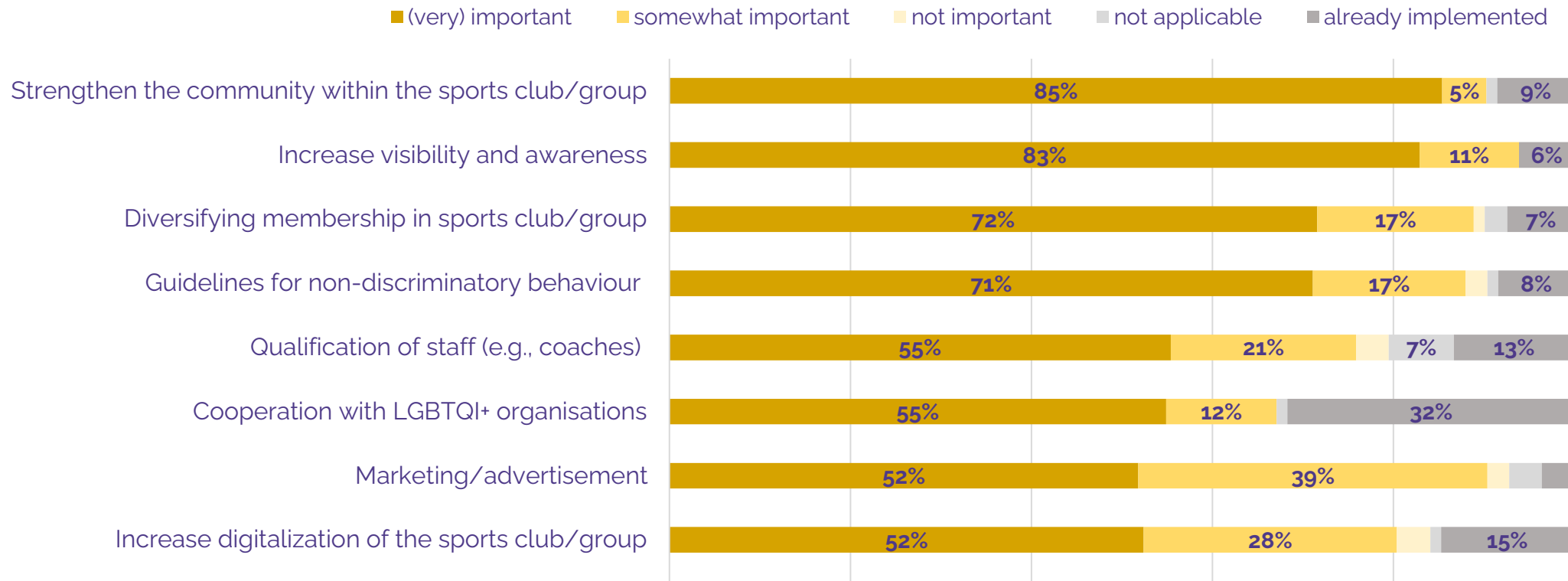
**99% agree on the need for LGBTQI+ sport clubs/groups**

## **Main arguments:**

- Connecting/Socializing with LGBTQI+ people (87%)
- Lack of welcoming structures (81% ) and of safe spaces (80%) in mainstream sports
- Increasing visibility in sports (76%)
- Social support outside of sports (66%)
- Reach inactive LGBTQI+ people (health/wellbeing) (65%)

*"In Slovenia, the situation of the real LGB community is improving and progress has been visible in recent years. Unfortunately, for the TIQ+ part of the community, progress has been less. The consequences of the rise of right-wing, religious and anti-LGBTQI+ movements are reflected globally in sport, including in Slovenia, and directly and indirectly in Out in Slovenia." (OIS, 35)*

# Future Strategies (n=80-83)



*"However, it is difficult to motivate new members to take an active part in the association. The danger that the management level will "die out" and there will be no successors is real. The cohesion and identification with Team Munich seems to me to be less than at the local traditional clubs due to the various sports departments." (Team München, 38)*

# Future Strategies (n=80-83)



## **Further important strategies (40-50% (very) important)**

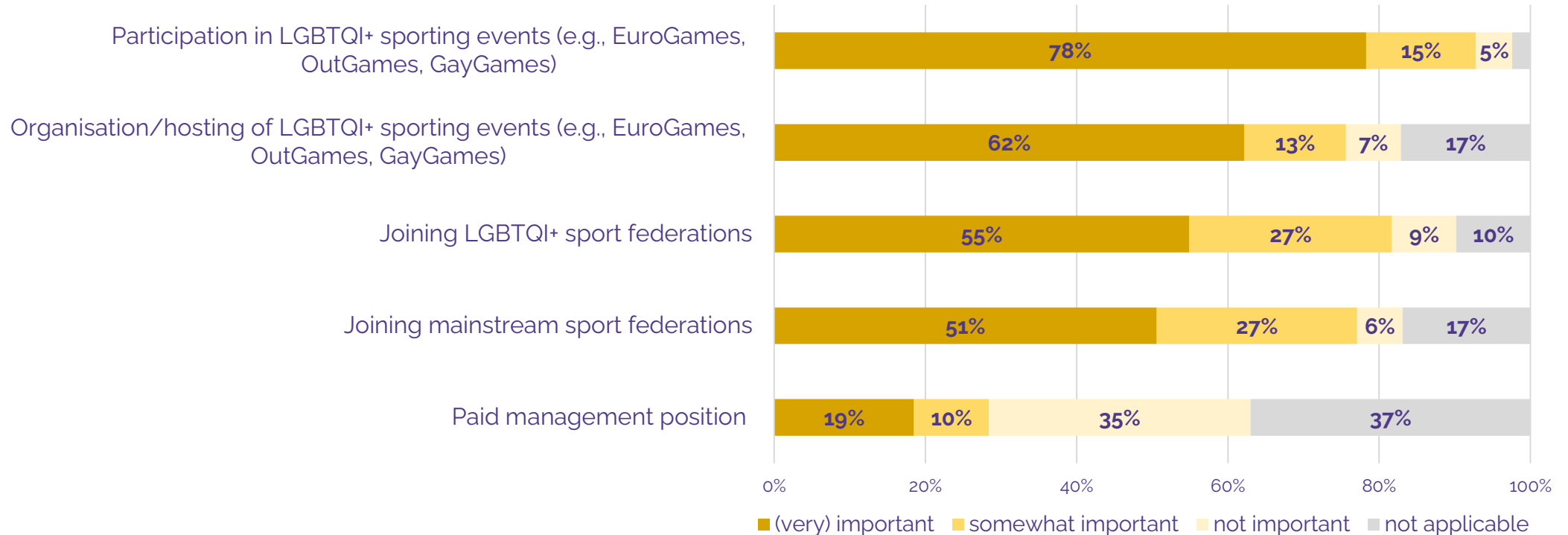
Education, fundraising, binding policies, professionalisation of administrative structures, integration into local mainstream sports structures, cooperation with mainstream sports organisations

*"Cooperation is not usually easy, at least in our environment. In the past, we have had to invest a lot of energy in explaining the needs and wants if we want to address the issues of equality, visibility and inclusion of LGBTQI+ people in sport. With some of the organisations and institutions we have worked with, such cooperation is now easier; but we have not yet reached a consensus for a broader strategy of inclusion also for the LGBTQI+ community." (OIS, para 22)*

*"Working with mainstream sports clubs and national sports organisations has always been part of the strategy and continues to be. Being visible and contributing to increased acceptance and inclusion in the world of sports is part of our purpose." (Pan Idræt, para. 18)*



# Milestones in Development of Clubs/Groups (n=81-83)



*"The organisation of the EuroGames 2004 was a milestone in the history of the association. Through the necessary co-operation, the relationship between lesbians and gays, the visibility of trans people and the cohesion in the Munich community improved considerably. The success of these games has led to a large number of long-standing friendships and close networks." (Team München, 26)*

# Summary



*The historical experiences of LGBTQI+ sports clubs and groups across Europe illustrate a significant narrative of resilience and advocacy for inclusion that is also shaped by societal and cultural change.*

Increasing openness towards all groups

Substantial barriers, e.g. lack of acceptance, social/political climate

Personal commitment, activist work and cooperation

Past

Central mindsets reflected in future strategies

Safe spaces, strengthening community, visibility

NEED for LGBTQI+ sports clubs/groups

Present

Thank you for your attention!

*Illustrated Story of LGBTQI Sports Movement in Europe*



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the European Union

From an illustrated story to the  
evolution of LGBTQI+ sport

**PLUS**

February '23

January '26



**Our goal:** to enhance the inclusion and participation of athletes with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics in European grassroots sport through combatting discrimination & addressing intolerance against sex and gender diverse athletes and establishing an inclusive sport culture where all can participate



Deutsche  
Sporthochschule Köln  
German Sport University Cologne

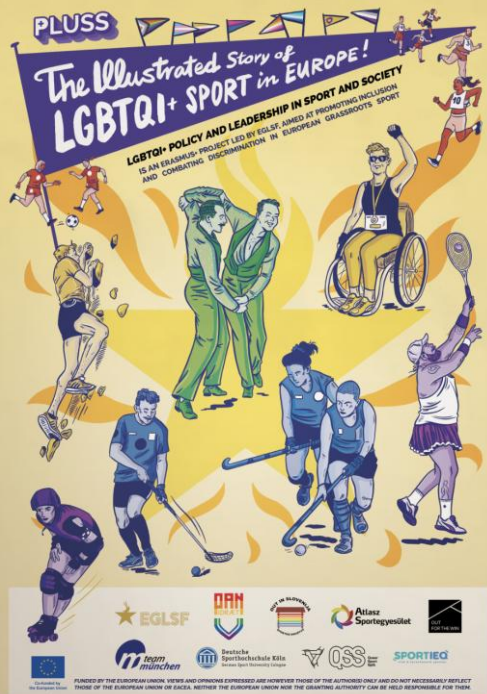


“LGBTQI+ Policy and Leadership in Sport and Society”, funded by the Erasmus+ Sport programme



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# PLUSS

## The Illustrated Story of LGBTQI+ Sport in Europe

<https://www.eglsf.info/projects/pluss-project/research-report/>



TORCG



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# FLINTA PROJECTS



## PARTNERS:



Deutsche  
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Thank you!

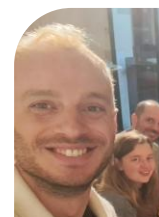
Michele Mommi, EGLSF European Projects

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## Challenges to overcome



- Lack of access to appropriate sport facilities
- Hostile social environment
- Lack of acceptance by mainstream sport organisations
- Little financial and human resources as well as public funding

**Increase capacity** of LGBTQI+ sport leaders and clubs so that these clubs can continue to **exist and grow** to provide inclusive and safe environments for people who are excluded from existing sport structures, and to increase their ability to cooperate with mainstream sport.

# A GAME PLAN TO START



## Governance

- Achieve goals and uphold integrity  
Facilitates a positive culture within your club

## Advocacy

- Connect and strengthen your work  
As a way to gain access to resources, recognition and a solid place in the mainstream sport world.

## Membership

- Attract, retain and engage members  
To develop intrinsic motivation and lasting relationships

## Events

- Showcase your organisation and what you stand for  
To recruit new members and volunteers

1. Knowledge

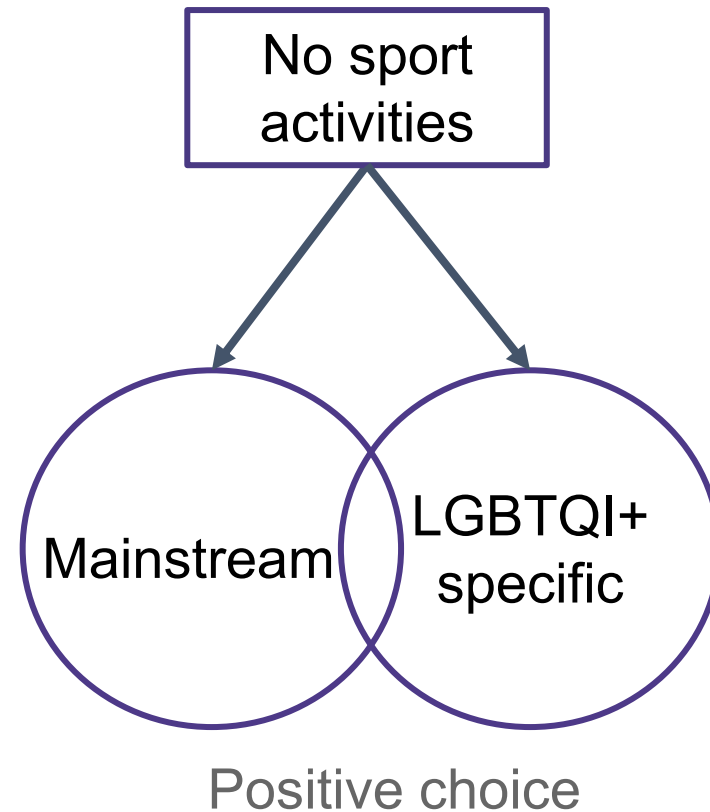
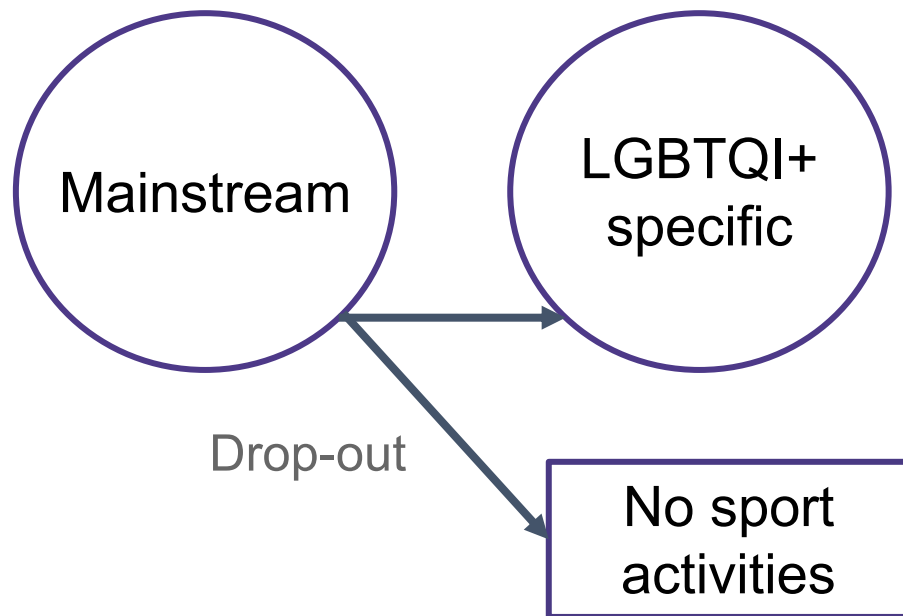
1. Tools

1. Examples

# A GAME PLAN TO START



## From compensatory to complementary ++++



# Policy recommendations



1. Guarantee equal access to public funding and facilities
2. Develop and facilitate good governance frameworks with attention to social responsibility
3. Improve the culture of inclusion within your organisation
4. Develop or support collaboration with LGBTQI+ clubs



## To keep in mind



- Keep working on inclusive spaces and LGBTQI+ inclusive clubs and events
- Pursue long term LGBTQI+ collaborations also embedding them in policy, practice and education
- Invest in and support leadership, advocacy and activism efforts within LGBTQI+ clubs
- Prioritise intersectional inclusion and support underrepresented groups
- Further embed and protect the right of LGBTQI+ athletes in EU policy documents
- Develop youth sport shaping the future of inclusive sport

## More information



Read the full  
research report and  
recommendations



Learn more about  
the guidelines



Read the policy  
paper







THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



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