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*WINS*  
**EVERYBODY WINS**

# Policy Recommendations for increasing women's equality and equity in Basketball

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de Basketball



Basketball  
Ireland



LITHUANIAN  
BASKETBALL  
FEDERATION



UNIVERSITAT  
RAMON  
LLULL





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The **PROMISE** (steP foRward fOr woMen In baSkEtball) project aims to increase the inclusion and participation of girls and women in basketball at all levels. Including more girls and women in sports at all levels is crucial for equality, empowerment, and diversity. It promotes physical and mental well-being, builds confidence and leadership skills, and creates role models for future generations. Ensuring their participation in both playing and leadership roles enhances representation, decision-making, and inclusivity in sports. Moreover, it helps combat discrimination and gender stereotypes, making sports a more fair and welcoming space for everyone. The key insights and conclusions of the **PROMISE** project are compiled into this policy recommendation report. This report serves three

main purposes:

- Inform and engage European policymakers about the issue.
- Encourage institutions to establish better support systems for clubs promoting inclusion in sports.
- Increase awareness among sports clubs, local authorities, federations, schools, and social services across Europe that may wish to implement similar initiatives.







# 1. The Project and its General Objective

The **PROMISE** project seeks to enhance the involvement and representation of girls and women in basketball across all roles and levels through the holistic intervention PROMISE Pilot Programme, a structured initiative focused on promoting gender equality and equity in the sport.

Aligned with Erasmus+ Sport priorities, the project combats violence, discrimination, and intolerance, while also contributing to digital transformation.

It distinguishes between:

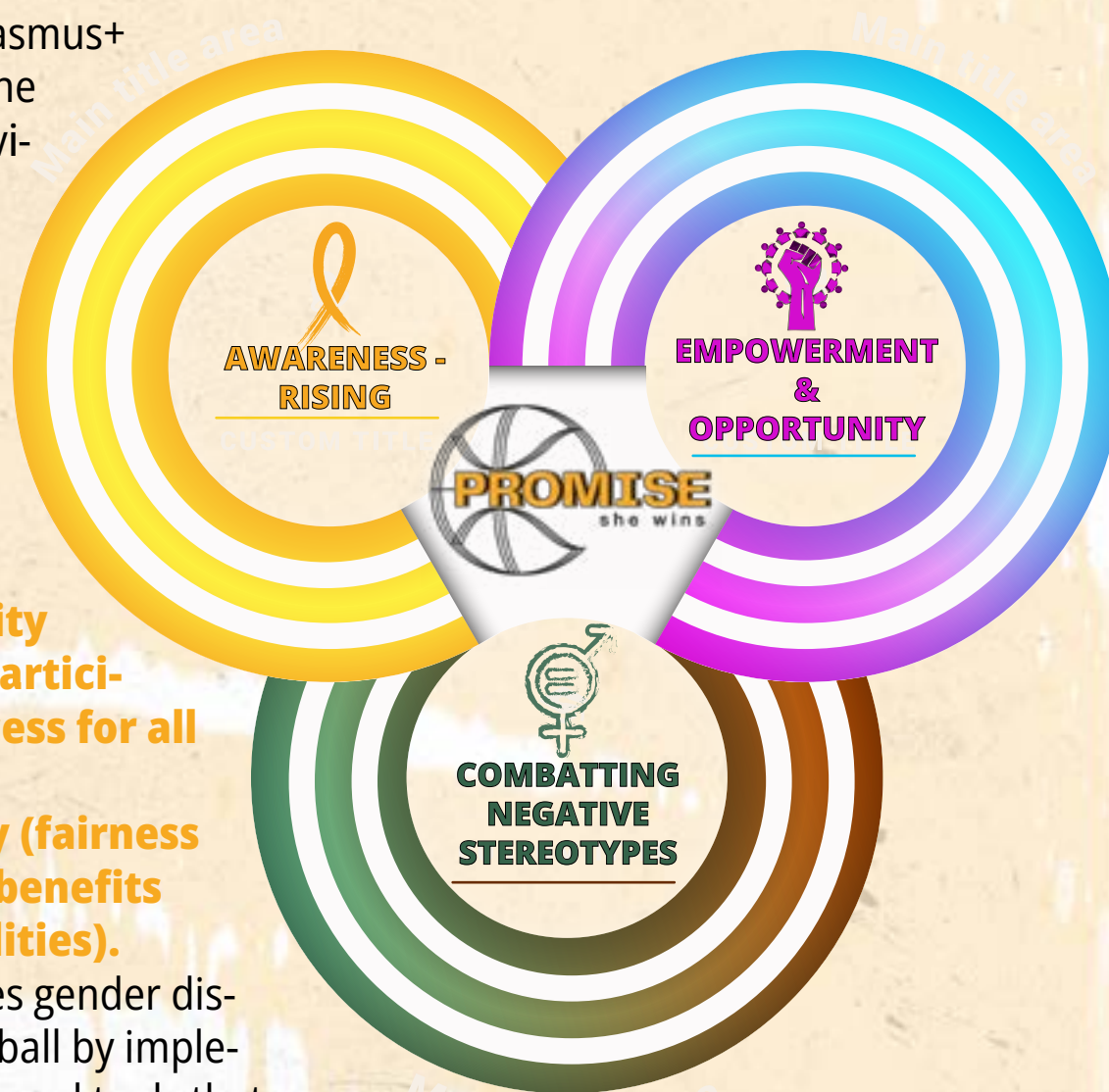
**Gender equality (equal rights, participation, and access for all genders).**

**Gender equity (fairness in distributing benefits and responsibilities).**

**PROMISE** tackles gender disparities in basketball by implementing activities and tools that enhance women's representation, visibility, and empowerment. The

program expands across different federations and clubs, supported by FIBA's network.

It is structured around three main pillars, engaging both women and men as key agents of change.



# 2. The dimensions of the PROMISE project and its General Objective

## 2.1. PARTNERSHIP

» 4 national basketball federations: Basketball Ireland, Bulgarian Basketball Federation, Kosovo Basketball Federation and Federação Portuguesa de Basquetebol;

» 2 regional basketball federations: Catalan Basketball Federation and Nouvelle-Aquitaine Basketball League;

» 1 University/Academic partner: Universitat Ramon Llull;

» External support from FIBA.







## 2. The dimensions of the PROMISE project and its General Objective

### 2.2. KEY TARGET GROUPS

- » Female and male basketball players;
- » Female athletes' parents;
- » Female and male managers, coaches, referees of all levels;
- » Sports clubs;
- » Sports federations;
- » Sport's Media.

### 2.3. MAIN OUTPUTS



- » New interventional methodology:

[VIEW DOCUMENT](#)



- » Best practice Guidebook for Gender Equity and Equality in sport:

[VIEW DOCUMENT](#)

- » MOOC with training specialized for each role:



[VISIT SITE](#)

- » Awareness-raising campaigns.



## 2. The dimensions of the PROMISE project and its General Objective

### 2.4. MAIN OUTCOMES

- » More Girls and women are empowered;
- » Increased number of female players, coaches, referees and staff ;
- » Increased awareness among the general public and basketball actors about stereotypes of women in sport;
- » Increased transnational cooperation between the partners regarding gender inclusion in basketball.

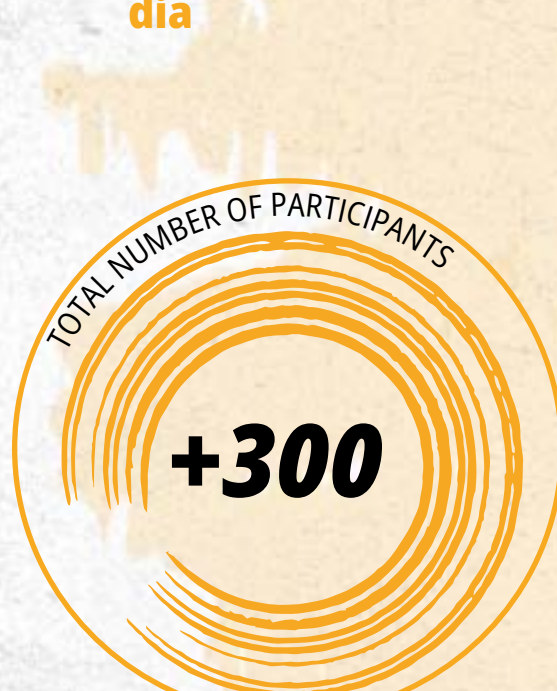






### 3. PROMISE Pilot Programme

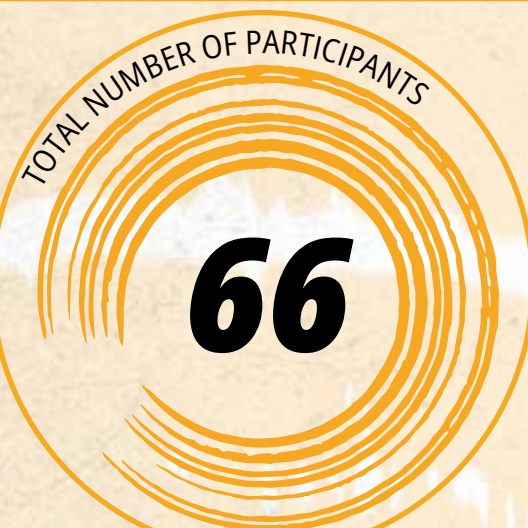
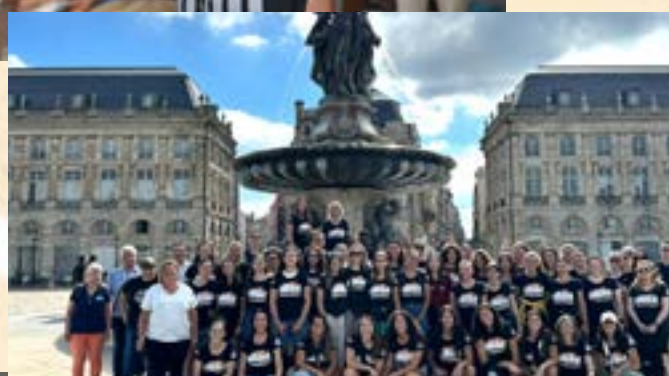
#### 3.1. TRANSFORM athletes, coaches, referees, staff, media



» Capacity-building (coaches, referees, management, and staff)



» Stereotype-challenging activities



» Transnational mobility exchange – International Campus in Bordeaux, France (athletes, coaches & referees)



### 3. PROMISE Pilot Programme

#### 3.2. TRIGGER a change of mindset

» Cartoon & Comics

[DOWNLOAD COMICS](#)



» “Women in Basketball” documentary

[WATCH VIDEO](#)







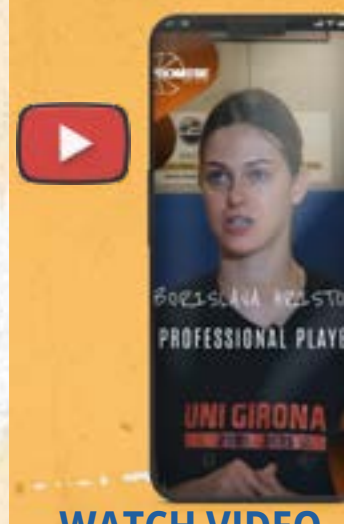
### 3. PROMISE Pilot Programme

#### 3.2. TRIGGER a change of mindset

» Short inspirational videos portraying role models

[WATCH VIDEOS](#)

BORISLAVA HRISTOVA



[WATCH VIDEO](#)

EMER BUCKLEY



[WATCH VIDEO](#)

MARTA PEDRIGÃO



[WATCH VIDEO](#)

SALOMÉ OREJAS



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JÚLIA SOLER



[WATCH VIDEO](#)

ULPIANA EMRE



[WATCH VIDEO](#)



### 3. PROMISE Pilot Programme

#### 3.2. TRIGGER a change of mindset

» Top players and referees as social media influencers

[WATCH VIDEOS](#)



#### 3.3. BROADEN the impact

» Set of policy recommendations to increase women's equality and equity in sport

» Wide online communication campaign



## 4. HACKATHON

In preparing these policy recommendations, the project consortium organized a large brainstorming event - a Hackathon, with a **total participation of 162 persons**. It consisted of two stages: a local stage in each partner country, involving referees, coaches, staff, and athletes, and an international stage,

where representatives from all partners shared their experiences, conclusions, and suggestions. The following policy recommendations result from in-depth Hackathon discussions on the main obstacles to achieving equal opportunities for male and female stakeholders in basketball.



## 4. HACKATHON







## 5. Policy Recommendations

### 5.1. Stereotypes and Body Image Challenges in Female Athletes

Key Issues: Female athletes face body image concerns due to stereotypes about strength training, with fears that it will make them “too strong” or “unattractive.” These pressures are rooted in societal norms that influence how women perceive their physical appearance in relation to sports.

#### Actions/Recommendations:

- » **Create Education Campaigns:** Use social media and athlete role models to challenge body image stereotypes. Highlight the benefits of strength training for athletic performance rather than appearance.
- » **Promote Positive Representation:** Showcase female athletes who defy traditional beauty standards and excel in strength-based environments.
- » **Build a Supportive Team Environment:** Encourage players to focus on fitness and strength as tools for performance, not as a

means to conform to beauty standards.

- » **Integrate Gender Perspective in Coaching:** Coaches should integrate discussions about body image into training, making it clear that physical strength is essential for success in sports.



## 5. Policy Recommendations

### 5.2. Mental Health in Players and reaction to adversity

Key Issues: Female athletes may struggle with perfectionism and have emotional reactions when mistakes are made. These tendencies are often exacerbated by societal expectations placed on women to be flawless and “perfect.”

#### Actions/Recommendations:

- » **Implement Mental Health Training:** Coaches should integrate mental toughness and emotional resilience training into their programs to help players manage mistakes and setbacks.
- » **Supportive Coaching Environment:** Coaches need to create an atmosphere where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities, rather than failures, to reduce anxiety.
- » **Promote Open Communication:** Encourage athletes to discuss their emotional challenges openly, creating a safe space where vulnerability is seen

as a strength.

- » **Provide Resources for Mental Health:** Clubs should offer access to sports psychologists or counselling services for players struggling with emotional stress and perfectionism.







## 5. Policy Recommendations

### 5.3. Addressing Gender-Specific Pressures and Coaching Challenges

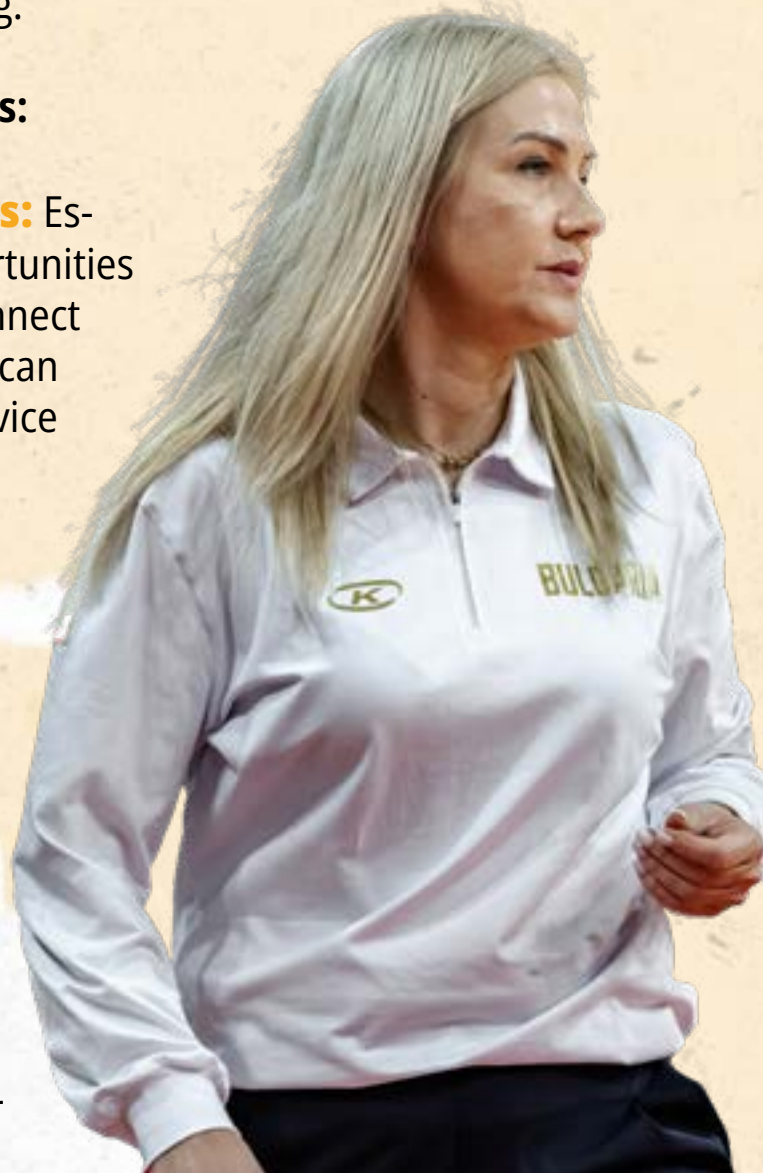
**Key Issues:** Female coaches often face challenges in gaining respect and credibility, with some experiencing additional pressure to prove themselves. Balancing family responsibilities with career aspirations is another significant challenge for women in coaching.

#### Actions/Recommendations:

- » **Mentorship Programs:** Establish mentorship opportunities for female coaches to connect with senior coaches who can provide guidance and advice on overcoming barriers.
- » **Work-Life Balance Support:** Offer flexible work arrangements and support for female coaches with children, including childcare during training sessions and events.
- » **Gender-Sensitive Leadership Training:** Include gender sensitivity in coaching ed-

ucation to help both male and female coaches better understand the specific challenges faced by women in leadership roles.

- » **Increase Female Representation in Coaching:** Actively seek to hire and promote female coaches to leadership positions to provide role models and challenge gender biases within clubs.



## 5. Policy Recommendations

### 5.4. Promoting Visibility and Support for Women's Basketball

**Key Issues:** Female athletes often lack visibility, with women's games not receiving the same media attention or sponsorship as men's. This lack of exposure undermines the growth of women's basketball.

#### Actions/Recommendations:

- » **Increase Media Coverage:** Work with media outlets to provide more coverage of women's basketball games, including broadcasts and online platforms.
- » **Social Media Campaigns:** Use social media platforms to highlight female players' achievements and personal stories to create a deeper connection with fans.
- » **Partner with Sponsors:** Encourage sponsors to support women's basketball by offering equal sponsorship deals for women's teams and players.
- » **Celebrate Women's**

**Achievements:** Publicly acknowledge and celebrate milestones achieved by female players and coaches to raise their profile.







## 5. Policy Recommendations

### 5.5. Gender Inequality in Coaching and Leadership Roles

Key Issues: Women often face challenges in attaining leadership roles within basketball organizations, and their contributions are frequently undervalued. Male-dominated boards and cultural norms exacerbate these barriers.

#### Actions/Recommendations:



- » **Create Leadership Pathways for Women:** Develop structured pathways for women to move into leadership roles, with mentorship and training to develop leadership skills.

- » **Promote Gender-Neutral Recruitment:** Ensure that hiring and promotion processes are based on merit rather than gender, focusing on qualifications and experience.
- » **Increase Female Representation in Decision-Making:** Advocate for women to be represented on boards and in key decision-making roles within federations and clubs.

- » **Support for Female Leaders:** Provide mentorship and visibility to women in leadership roles, allowing them to share their experiences and inspire others.



## 5. Policy Recommendations

### 5.6. Gender-Based Discrimination in Refereeing

Key Issues: Female referees face gender-based discrimination, including sexist remarks and challenges to their authority, especially from male players and spectators.

#### Actions/Recommendations:



- » **Zero Tolerance Policies:** Implement strict policies against sexism and gender-based discrimination, with immediate sanctions for those who engage in such behavior.
- » **Promote Female Referees:** Increase the representation of

female referees in higher-level games and provide training specifically designed to boost confidence and competence.

- » **Create a Supportive Community:** Establish networks or forums for female referees to share experiences, support one another, and seek advice on handling challenging situations.

- » **Gender Sensitivity Training:** Provide gender sensitivity and awareness training for both male and female referees, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and professional conduct.





## 5. Policy Recommendations

### 5.7. Addressing Systemic Issues and Promoting Structural Change

Key Issues: Gender inequalities in basketball federations and clubs remain entrenched, with female coaches, players, and referees often sidelined or underrepresented.

#### Actions/Recommendations:



- » **Institutionalize Gender Perspective Training:** Make gender equality a key component of coaching, refereeing, and administrative training programs.
- » **Develop Gender Equality Poli-**

**cies:** Federations should implement clear gender equality policies that guide recruitment, team selection, and leadership appointments.

- » **Increase Female Involvement in Governance:** Encourage federations and clubs to invite women to participate in leadership roles and governance, ensuring that women's voices are heard in decision-making processes.

- » **Monitor and Report Progress:** Develop a system for monitoring the gender balance within basketball organizations and hold stakeholders accountable for implementing changes.



## 5. Policy Recommendations

### 5.8. Safeguarding and Violence Prevention Protocols

Key Issues: Ensuring the safety of female athletes and staff from violence, harassment, and discrimination remains a challenge. Protocols are often inadequate, and reporting systems are not always effective.

#### Actions/Recommendations:



- » **Implement Clear Safeguarding Protocols:** Federations should develop and enforce clear safeguarding protocols, with specific focus on preventing gender-based violence and harassment.
- » **Create Anonymous Reporting Systems:** Develop user-friendly, anonymous platforms

for reporting incidents of discrimination or harassment to ensure that all parties feel safe to report issues.

- » **Promote Education on Gender-Based Violence:** Offer training for coaches, players, and staff on recognizing and addressing gender-based violence and harassment.

- » **Ensure Accountability:** Establish consequences for organizations or individuals who fail to implement or enforce safeguarding measures, and ensure that reports are taken seriously and acted upon.





## 6. Overall Conclusion and Recommendations

The discussion underscored the systemic barriers that women face in basketball, including gender stereotypes, lack of representation in leadership roles, and discrimination within coaching and officiating. To foster an environment of gender equality, basketball organizations must take comprehensive action across multiple fronts.

### Actions/Recommendations:

1. **Implement Gender Sensitivity Training:** Across coaching, officiating, and administration, to raise awareness and reduce biases.
2. **Increase Female Representation:** Actively seek to increase the number of women in leadership roles, both on the court and within the governance struc-

tures of federations.

3. **Create Supportive Systems:** Develop mentorship programs and flexible working conditions to help women balance personal and professional responsibilities.



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