

Gender  
Equality  
in Coaching



# D2.3

## Recommendations report to address knowledge gaps in gender mainstreaming

Work Package 2

Task 2.1, Task 2.2  
Lead partner: Symplexis



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# Document information

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<b>Dissemination level</b>	Public
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>This report, in the form of an e-publication (D2.3), a) summarises the main findings of the primary research conducted in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain, as presented in four corresponding SheCOACH national reports (D2.2), and b) provides recommendations for actions and measures to be taken by (basketball) coaching education and qualification providers to address the gaps in awareness and knowledge for gender mainstreaming in coaching curricula and training programmes.</p> <p>The project's primary research was implemented from April to June 2024. An online questionnaire was distributed to all partners' members and networks in the respective countries and a total of 413 responses were collected. In addition, all implementing partners conducted a total of 20 in-depth interviews - 5 each - with relevant sport stakeholders.</p> <p>The report's conclusions and suggestions at transnational level will form the basis for WP3, which will include the development of the SheCOACH Capacity Building Programme for coaching education providers on gender mainstreaming in curricula (Task 3.1) and the piloting and evaluation of this training programme (Task 3.2). The training programme will be delivered through a dedicated e-learning platform, providing specialised modules and training materials (D3.1, D3.2).</p>
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# 1. Brief overview of the SheCOACH project

## 1.1 Implementation period and consortium

**SheCOACH: Gender Equality in Coaching** is an **Erasmus Sport project**, under the agreement number **101133095 - SheCOACH - ERASMUS-SPORT-2023**, implemented in **Cyprus, Greece, Italy** and **Spain** from **02/01/2024** to **30/10/2026** (34 months duration).

SheCOACH is a multi-stakeholder initiative, involving Basketball Federations, a Coaches' Association, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), a Higher Education Institution, and expert organizations in the field of sports coaching, sports education and technology. Specifically, the SheCOACH consortium consists of the following 9 members from 7 countries:

Project coordinator:

- 1) CYPRUS BASKETBALL FEDERATION (CBF), Cyprus ([basketball.org.cy](http://basketball.org.cy))

Partners:

- 2) SYMPLEXIS, Greece ([symplexis.eu](http://symplexis.eu))
- 3) GREEK BASKETBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION (GBCA or SEPK), Greece ([sepk.gr](http://sepk.gr))
- 4) UNIVERSIDAD DE MURCIA (UMU), Spain ([um.es](http://um.es))
- 5) FEDERACIÓN DE BALONCESTO DE CASTILLA-LA MANCHA (FBCLM), Spain ([fbclm.net](http://fbclm.net))
- 6) L'ORMA SSD ARL, Italy ([ormainternational.eu](http://ormainternational.eu))
- 7) SPORT COACHING EUROPE (SCE), Malta ([sportcoachingeurope.org](http://sportcoachingeurope.org))
- 8) EUROPEAN NETWORK OF SPORT EDUCATION (ENSE), Austria ([sporteducation.eu](http://sporteducation.eu))
- 9) HUB FOR INNOVATION POLICY S.R.L (HIP), Romania ([hubinno.eu](http://hubinno.eu)).

## 1.2 Project aim and objectives

SheCOACH is a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to **contribute to gender equality in sport coaching** by **promoting the participation of women in (basketball) coaching education** in Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Spain.

The SheCOACH objectives are the following:

- To improve the mainstreaming of gender issues in sports coaching curricula/ training
  - "Mainstreaming" refers to the process of incorporating gender or gender issues into the core elements of sports coaching curricula or training seminars;
  - The project seeks to make gender considerations an integral and essential part of the overall education and training of sport coaches, rather than treating them as separate or marginalized components;
  - SheCOACH wants to ensure that gender perspectives, concerns and issues are consistently addressed and integrated throughout the curriculum or related educational programs.
- To develop the awareness and skills of providers of coaching education and qualifications to include gender-related elements in their curricula and systems.

- To increase the awareness of national/regional/local education and/or sport authorities to develop/implement gender mainstreaming policies in coaching education systems.
- To raise the awareness among sports clubs, academies and schools of the benefits of including female coaches and encouraging women’s participation, especially in traditionally “male” sports.
- To increase the participation of women in basketball coaching education/training.

### 1.3 Clusters of activities, target groups and main results with KPIs

The SheCOACH objectives will be achieved through the implementation of the following clusters of activities:

- Recommendations for coaching education and qualification providers on mainstreaming gender issues in coaching courses and curricula
- Online capacity building programme to train coaching education providers in gender mainstreaming
- Framework for gender mainstreaming in coaching education
- Dissemination and awareness raising.

The primary target groups of the SheCOACH project are:

- National/regional basketball (and other sports) federations
- Associations of coaches
- Coaching education providers (Higher Education Institutions/HEIs, Vocational Education and Training/VET centres, colleges etc.)
- Local, regional and national sports and education policy-makers.

Additionally, the project targets: other sports governing bodies at all levels; international basketball -and other sports- federations; sports clubs/academies/schools; networks of sports associations, stakeholders, education providers at EU/international level; researchers in relevant fields, and the general public.

The main results expected from the implementation of the SheCOACH project are the following, which also reflect the project’s main Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the project:

- Approximately **80-100 staff** from coaching education providers with new skills in gender mainstreaming;
- At least **15 sports coaching curricula/programmes**, with gender mainstreaming/new gender equality modules;
- At least **50 national/regional/local education & sports authorities** with awareness with awareness of implementing gender mainstreaming policies in coaching education;
- At least **130 sports clubs/academies staff/executives/members** with new awareness of the benefits of including women coaches and promoting women's participation;
- At least **30000 people** reached through dissemination and awareness-raising activities.

## 2. Overview of the SheCOACH primary research in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain

### 2.1 Research objectives and methodology

The SheCOACH **primary research**<sup>1</sup> in **Cyprus, Greece, Italy** and **Spain** was conducted between **April and June 2024** as part of the project's Work Package 2: "Recommendations for coach education and qualifications providers on mainstreaming gender issues in coaching courses and curricula". More specifically it was designed and implemented under Task 2.1: "Assessment of the level of knowledge of providers of (basketball) coaching education and qualifications" & Task 2.2: "Elaboration of Report with recommendations on addressing gaps in knowledge on gender mainstreaming".

The SheCOACH WP2 has focused on primary research in the form of **an online survey** and **structured interviews** conducted in the four countries mentioned above, targeting in total:

- at least **200 staff/professionals (minimum 50 per country) from national/regional basketball and/or other sport federations, associations** and **coaching education providers** (universities, vocational training, private) [online survey].
- at least **20 executives (minimum 5 per country) from national/regional basketball and/or other sports federations, associations** and **coaching education providers** (higher education, vocational, private) [structured interviews].

The objective of Task 2.1 was to assess, in all of the above countries, the extent of knowledge and gaps among providers of coaching education and qualifications regarding gender equality in coaching and the integration of gender issues into coaching courses and curricula.

The objective of Task 2.2 is to develop **a report -this e-publication (D2.3)-** that: a) summarises the main findings of the research conducted in the four countries as they were presented in four equivalent SheCOACH national reports (D2.2) and b) provides recommendations for actions and measures to be taken by (basketball) coaching education and qualification providers to address the gaps in awareness and knowledge for gender mainstreaming in coaching curricula and training programmes.

As the WP2 leader, Symplexis developed research guidelines (D2.1) in collaboration with all project partners. These guidelines included guidance for the implementation of the SheCOACH online survey and interview questions for one-to-one interview sessions. The SheCOACH primary research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Murcia (Spain).

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<sup>1</sup> Primary research involves collecting data that has not been collected before, i.e. first-hand research, rather than using information and data that has been collected by someone else and found in a book, database, journal, etc. (secondary research).

The SheCOACH **online survey** was conducted in all implementing countries from **April to June 2024**. Specifically, in Italy from 20 April to 1 June, in Greece from 22 April to 3 June 2024, in Cyprus from 23 April to 27 May and in Spain from 28 April to 9 June 2024.

The questionnaire under the title “Gender Equality in Coaching and Mainstreaming Gender Issues in Coaching Courses & Curricula” was translated and adapted into Greek, Italian and Spanish and subsequently published via Google Forms.

The survey targeted: a) staff/professionals from national/regional basketball and/or other sport federations, associations & sport clubs; b) staff/educators/professionals from coaching education providers (universities, vocational training, private colleges etc.).

The online survey comprised eight sections, with 21 questions (the majority of which were multiple choice and some optional) and required approximately 7 to 9 minutes to complete. Respondents were given the option to complete the questionnaire anonymously or to provide their email address for the purpose of receiving project updates. In all cases, all responses were kept confidential.

The questionnaire was emailed to all partners' members and networks in the respective countries and a total of **413 responses** were collected. More specifically: 253 responses were received from **Greece**, 50 responses were received from **Cyprus**, 53 from **Spain** and 57 from **Italy**.

In addition, all implementing partners conducted a total of **20 in-depth interviews - 5 each** - with relevant sport stakeholders between **May and June 2024**. More specifically, Symplexis and GBCA conducted interviews with 5 relevant stakeholders between 23 May and 3 June 2024, CBF between 15 June and 23 June, UMU and FBCLM between 20 May and 6 June and L'ORMA between 22 and 31 May 2024.

The interviews were conducted with a diverse group of participants **-13 women and 5 men-** from different sectors within sport. The interviewees were executives from national and regional basketball and other sports federations and coaches' associations such as football, volleyball, handball, gymnastics and cycling. The targeted sample also contained university professors, vocational trainers and basketball trainers and coaches, including professionals working with women's national teams. It is worth noting that many of the interviewees had multiple roles, with some also having experience in sports marketing and administration, which all together provided a well-rounded understanding of the sports coaching landscape.

The SheCOACH structured interview questions followed the themes used for the questionnaires, with the aim of enabling participants to reflect on their actual experiences, to provide insight into the phenomenon of gender equality in coaching, and to discuss ideas and effective ways of mainstreaming gender equality in coaching programmes and educational frameworks.

## 2.2 Limitations and recommendations for future research

The research methodology, which, as already mentioned, combined an online questionnaire and in-depth interviews, used a non-random recruitment method to select participants mainly from the members and networks of the project partners involved, as well as from key stakeholders in basketball coaching, sports education & training and other related sports organisations in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain.



This approach, which focused on specific criteria such as professional involvement in basketball or other sports, coaching education, affiliation to national or regional sports federations or associations and, in some cases, experience with gender issues, should be considered as exploratory in nature. As a result, it is underlined that the sample is not representative of the whole relevant population, and the findings are not intended to be generalised due to the non-random sampling and sample sizes in each country.

It is also important to recognise the possible biases and limitations of this methodology, including the potential under-representation of individuals who are less active in research or less visible within existing networks, but whose role and work in the field may be important. Additionally, the collection of self-reported data may introduce response bias, where some participants may provide “socially acceptable answers” rather than their true opinions. These factors suggest that the findings, while insightful, may not reflect the full range of experiences and perspectives on gender equality in sports coaching.

However, the purposive selection of participants combined with convenience sampling has provided valuable quantitative and qualitative research findings which, particularly when reported at a transnational level, can provide rich insights into the relevant aspects of the issues discussed and should be interpreted accordingly.

Future research could build on the findings of this SheCOACH report and use a more random sampling approach to improve representativeness. The following suggestions for future research can contribute to a deeper understanding of how to effectively promote gender equality in sports coaching:

- Cross-cultural comparative research to assess the level of knowledge of basketball coaching education and qualification providers in other countries, e.g. Northern Europe or even other continents.
- Cross-sports comparative research to explore gender mainstreaming efforts in different sports and identify specific challenges and good practices tailored to each sport.
- Targeted research on barriers to women's participation in basketball - or other sports - coaching to better understand the specific barriers and challenges that prevent women from entering or progressing in coaching roles.
- Targeted research into the effectiveness of mentoring and/or support programmes and/or training courses for female coaches, focusing on capacity building and their career growth.
- Intersectional research to explore the intersectionality of gender with other social classifications (e.g. race, age, socio-economic status) to better understand the diverse experiences of women coaches.
- Focused research on how media representation of female coaches affects their self-image, self-esteem, as well as the public perceptions and attitudes towards gender equality in sports coaching.

The following pages provide a summary of the main findings of the primary research in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain. For more insight into the results of each country, you can read the full national reports, which are available online in EN and in the national language of each country on the project website at <https://shecoach.eu> (“Resources” section).

### 3. Statistics and gender in basketball coaching in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain

The data on gender statistics and basketball coaching presented in the SheCOACH national reports indicate that **basketball coaching is male-dominated in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain** and that, despite progress, male coaches still occupy the majority of leadership positions even in women's leagues. As of the 2023-2024 season, the Cyprus Basketball Coaches' Association reported having 140 active coaches<sup>2</sup>. Of these, 25 (18%) are women. In Greece, the number of active coaches reported by the Greek Basketball Coaches' Association (GBCA) is 3290. Of these, only 282 are women (around 8%)<sup>3</sup>. In Spain, according to the Federación Española de Baloncesto (FEB), there were around 6000 registered basketball coaches in 2022. However, only around 12% of these were women<sup>4</sup>. In Italy, although no detailed statistics could be included, it is mentioned that the representation of female basketball coaches in the country remains relatively low compared to their male counterparts.

Regarding the **presence of female coaches in national leagues (2023-24)**, in Cyprus, 3 out of 12 teams in the women's first division (25%) and 6 out of 20 in the women's second division (30%) had female coaches, while there were no female head coaches in the men's leagues. In Greece, only 2 out of 11 teams in the women's A1 division (18%) had female coaches and 9 out of 26 in the women's A2 division (35%). Again, there were no female head coaches in the men's leagues. In Spain, only 3 out of 16 teams in the Liga Femenina Endesa (the top women's basketball league) had female head coaches in 2022-23.

In Greece, graduates from the coaching schools of the General Secretariat of Sports in 2022-23 showed a low percentage of women: 12% at level C (31 women out of 271 graduates), 5% at level B (9 women out of 169 graduates) and 12% at level A (2 women out of 17 graduated coaches). In the Cypriot coaching schools for the same period there were 12 graduates at level C of which 5 (42%) were women and 8 graduates at level B of which 2 (25%) were women. For the period 2023-24, at the C level school were 10 graduates, of which only 1 woman (10%) and at the A level 7 graduates, of which again only 1 woman (14%). In Spain, the General Secretariat for Sport reported that in 2023 only 20% of participants in coaching certification courses were women. The representation of women decreases as the level of training increases, which also seems to be the case in Italy.

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<sup>2</sup> Coaches licensed by the CBF to participate in official CBF championships. In Cyprus, to qualify for a professional license, individuals need a degree in physical education and sports science, or equivalent experience in the sport, along with completion of specific coaching seminars and certification programs.

<sup>3</sup> In Greece, professional basketball coaching licenses are issued by the General Secretariat for Sport of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport. The coaching schools of the General Secretariat offer the opportunity for individuals to obtain a basketball coaching license without the need to have graduated from the Departments of Physical Education and Sports Science of Greek Universities.

<sup>4</sup> In Spain, the pathways to becoming a basketball coach are a) coaching courses offered by the FEB (levels 0-3) and b) courses offered by the Autonomous Communities (from introductory to specialisation courses).

## 4. Presentation and discussion of online survey results in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain

Gender Equality in Coaching and Mainstreaming Gender Issues in Coaching Courses & Curricula

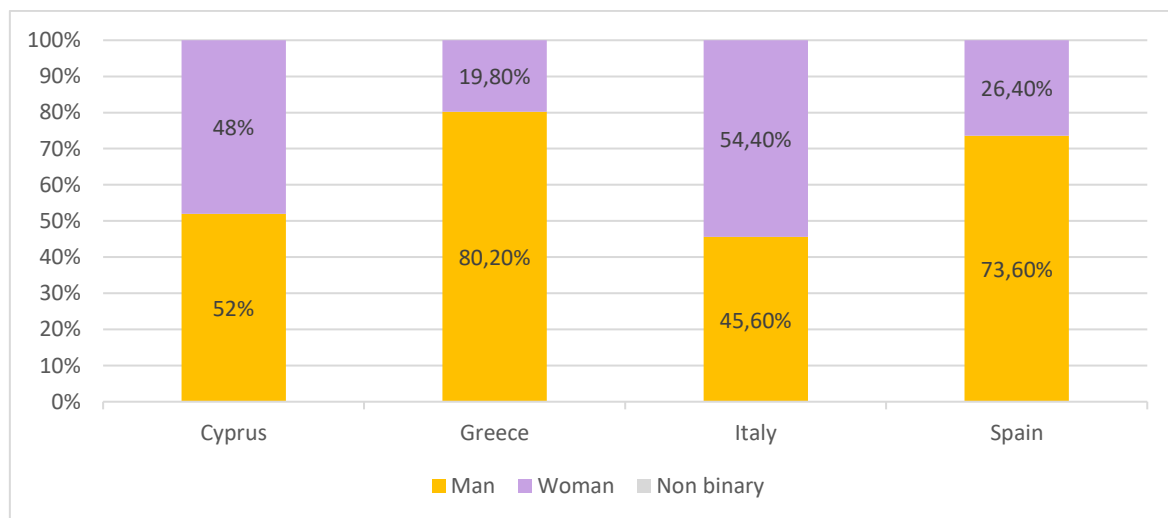
### 4.1 Demographic Information

#### 4.1.1 Gender

The SheCOACH online survey in Cyprus had a total of 50 participants, of whom 26 (52%) identified their gender as men and 24 (48%) as women. In Greece, the vast majority of the 253 participants, 80.2%, were men (203 individuals), while 19.8% (50 individuals) were women. In Italy, of the 57 participants, 54.4% were women (31 individuals) and the remaining 45.6% were men (26 individuals). In Spain, most of the 53 participants were men (73.6%, 39 participants), while 26.4% (14 participants) were women.

Overall, 63% of participants were men and the remaining 37% women, with no non-binary respondents. Graph 1 highlights a men's majority in the survey, particularly in Greece and Spain, contrasting with a more balanced gender representation in Cyprus and a female majority in Italy.

Graph 1: Participants' gender (%) per country



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

#### 4.1.2 Age

In Cyprus, the age of the 50 participants ranged from 23 to 84 years, with a mean age of 43.28 years (the average age of all respondents) and a median age of 43.5 years (which indicates that half of the participants are younger than 43.5 years and half are older). In Greece, the age of the 253 participants ranged from 23 to 70 years, with an average age of 45.65 years and a median age of 45 years. In Italy, the age of the 57 respondents ranged from 21 to 70 years. The mean age was 38.96 years and the median age was 39 years. In Spain, the 53 participants ranged in age from 21 to 69 years, with a mean age of around 40 years and a median age of 38 years.

Table 1: Participants' age range, mean & median age per country

	Age range	Mean age	Median Age
<b>Cyprus</b>	23 to 84 years	~43	43,5
<b>Greece</b>	23 to 70 years	~45,6	45
<b>Italy</b>	21 to 70 years	~39	39
<b>Spain</b>	21 to 69 years	~40	38

Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

The data show a wide age range of participants in all four countries and a relatively symmetrical age distribution per each country, as indicated by the close proximity of the mean and median ages. Cyprus and Greece have slightly older populations on average -around the mid-40s- compared to Italy and Spain -around the late 30s.

#### 4.1.3 Profession/role/position

In terms of the professions, roles and positions of the respondents, the SheCOACH research target groups are fully represented and the diversity between countries is interesting: Greece has the highest concentration of basketball club professionals, Cyprus and Spain have significant representation in national/regional basketball federations, associations and basketball clubs respectively, while Italy has a more balanced distribution between the different professional categories. Participants in all countries have a variety of professional activities and experience, ranging from a few years to decades, contributing to the development of basketball and sport at different levels and in different environments. In more detail:

In Cyprus, the largest group of respondents (32.0%), are professionals in national/regional basketball associations/federations, followed by “other cases” (24.0%), and professionals in basketball clubs (20.0%). Those in educational providers offering coaching courses account for 12.0%, while staff in other sports federations/associations/clubs make up 10.0%. A small percentage, 2.0%, are categorised as professionals without further specification.

In Greece, the majority of respondents, 64.4%, are professionals in basketball clubs, mainly coaches. A further 17.4% are professionals from national or regional basketball associations/federations. In addition, 4.3% are professionals from educational providers offering coaching courses, such as universities, vocational centres, colleges etc., including faculty members, trainers/ instructors and administrative staff. There was also one respondent (0.4%) who was a staff/professional from other (non-basketball) sports federation/association/club, while 13.4% selected “other” (e.g. Physical education teachers, personal trainers etc.).

In Italy, 29.8% are professionals from other federations/associations/sports clubs (other than basketball), 28.1% are professionals from a basketball club, 17.5% are professionals from a national/regional basketball association/federation, 15.8% are professionals from an educational institution offering coaching courses, while 8.8% selected “other”.

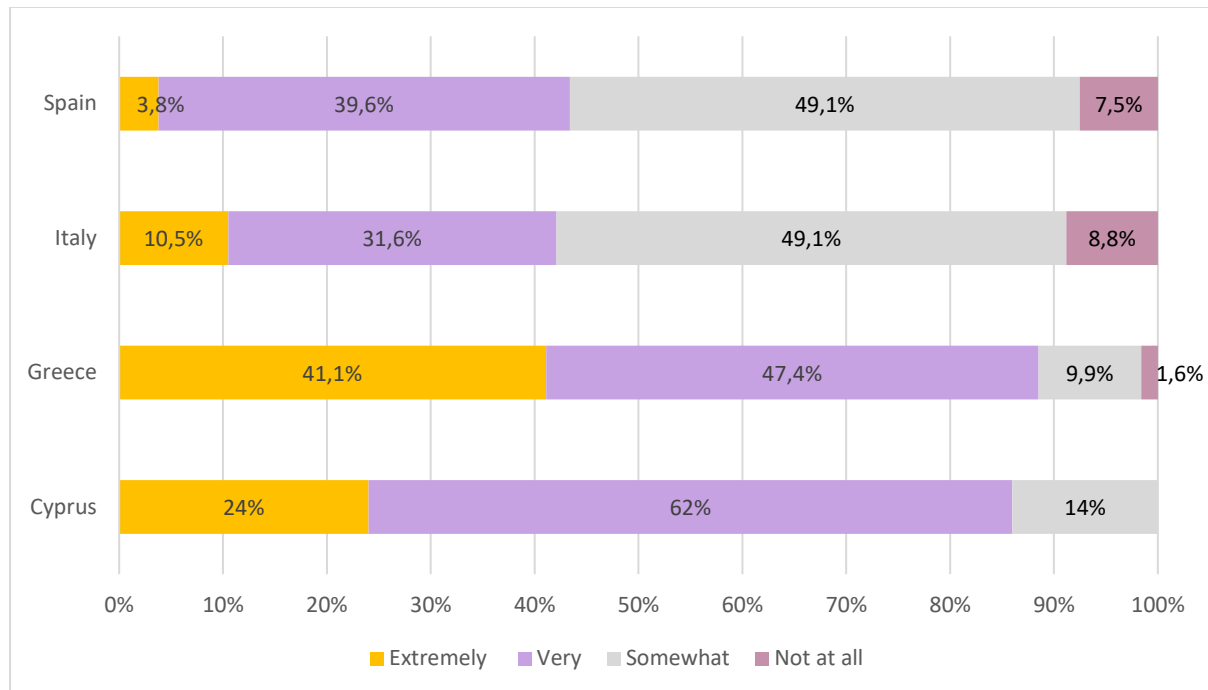
In Spain, 47.2% are basketball club professionals. A further 26.4% are professionals from national/regional basketball associations/federations, including coaching, administrative & management staff. In addition, 11.3% are professionals from educational institutions offering coaching courses. Another 13.2% are professionals from non-basketball sports federations/associations/clubs. Finally, 1.9% selected “other”.

## 4.2 Knowledge and Awareness

### 4.2.1 Familiarity with the concept of gender equality in coaching

In summary, the responses to the question “How familiar are you with the concept of gender equality in coaching?” indicate a generally high level of awareness and familiarity in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Spain, despite differences between the countries (Graph 2).

Graph 2: Responses to the question  
“How familiar are you with the concept of gender equality in coaching?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

The majority of respondents in Cyprus (62%) and Greece (47.4%) say they are “very familiar” with the concept, while the majority in Italy and Spain (both 49.1%) say they are “somewhat familiar”. In Cyprus and Greece, 86% and 88.5% respectively are “very” or “extremely” familiar with the concept, while in Italy (42.1%) and Spain (43.4%) these percentages are less than half. In all countries the percentage of people who said they are “not at all familiar” is very low (from 0 in Cyprus to 8.8% in Italy).

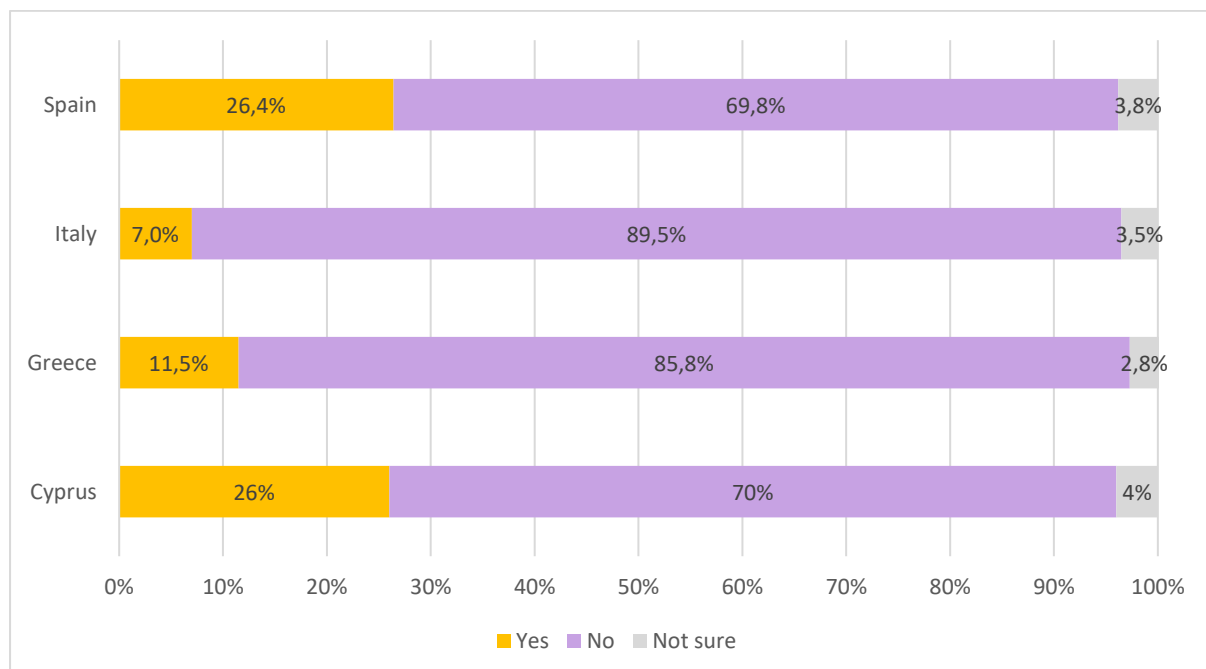
It is important to emphasise that the responses reflect individuals’ “self-perceived familiarity” with the concept of gender equality in coaching and therefore do not necessarily demonstrate their actual understanding of the term. The results presented may suggest that the concept of gender equality in coaching is more popular or emphasised in Greece and Cyprus than in Italy and Spain, but may also indicate a higher tendency of respondents in Cyprus and Greece to answer the question in a way that will be viewed favourably by others (the so-called “social desirability bias” that is often in social science research). In other words, while a significant percentage in Cyprus and Greece, as well as Italy and Spain, claim to be very or extremely familiar with the concept, these statements cannot be confirmed without further objective measurement and validation.

Despite limitations, the self-reported levels of familiarity across the four countries are positive, suggesting widespread recognition and acknowledgement of gender equality issues in coaching contexts. The differences in levels of knowledge and awareness between respondents at national and transnational levels highlight potential areas for targeted educational initiatives to further increase understanding of gender equality in coaching and related fields.

#### 4.2.2 Formal training or education on gender equality in coaching

The responses to the next question show a rather complex situation in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain, because when asked “Have you attended any course/seminar/training related to gender equality and specifically gender equality in coaching?”, the vast majority in all countries (89,5% in Italy, 85,8% in Greece, 70% in Cyprus and 69,8% in Spain) answered “no” (Graph 3).

Graph 3: Responses to the question “Have you attended any course/seminar/training related to gender equality and specifically gender equality in coaching?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

The obvious gap between the high level of self-reported familiarity with the concept of gender equality in coaching -already discussed in the previous section- and the level of participation in related training raises some doubts about the actual level of knowledge and awareness of participants. It also highlights the critical need for more and specialised training and awareness-raising opportunities that support and deepen the understanding of the concept of gender equality in coaching.

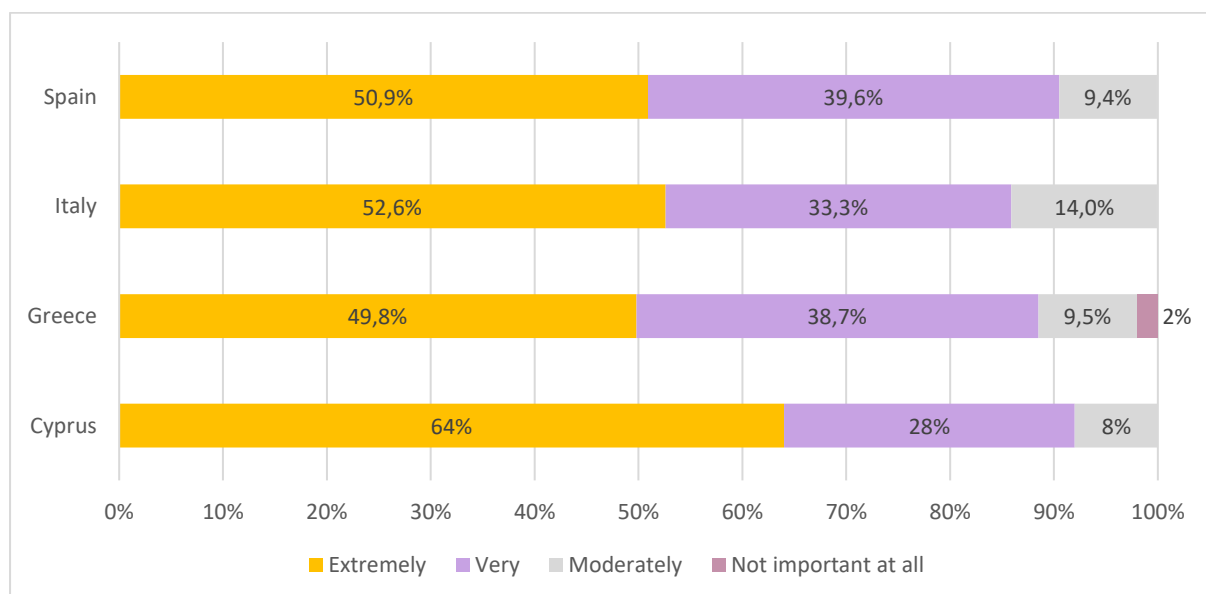
### 4.3 Current situation

#### 4.3.1 The importance of promoting gender equality in basketball coaching

At this point, the questionnaire presented the interpretation of “gender equality in coaching” as perceived in the context of the SheCOACH: *Gender equality in coaching is about the fair and equal treatment of individuals, regardless of gender, within the coaching profession. The SheCOACH project focuses on gender equality for women - female coaches. Gender equality in coaching includes aspects related to equal opportunities, support and inclusion, equal pay and resources, equal representation and media coverage and the elimination of bias, stereotypes and discrimination (sexism).*

The SheCOACH responses in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Spain to the question “How important do you think it is to promote gender equality in coaching?” reveal a strong consensus on the importance of gender equality in sports coaching. Graph 4 shows that the vast majority of respondents in each country consider the promotion of gender equality in coaching to be “very” or “extremely” important. This consensus suggests strong support for initiatives in this area which is positive for the project’s next steps.

Graph 4: Responses to the question “How important do you think it is to promote gender equality in coaching?” (% per country)



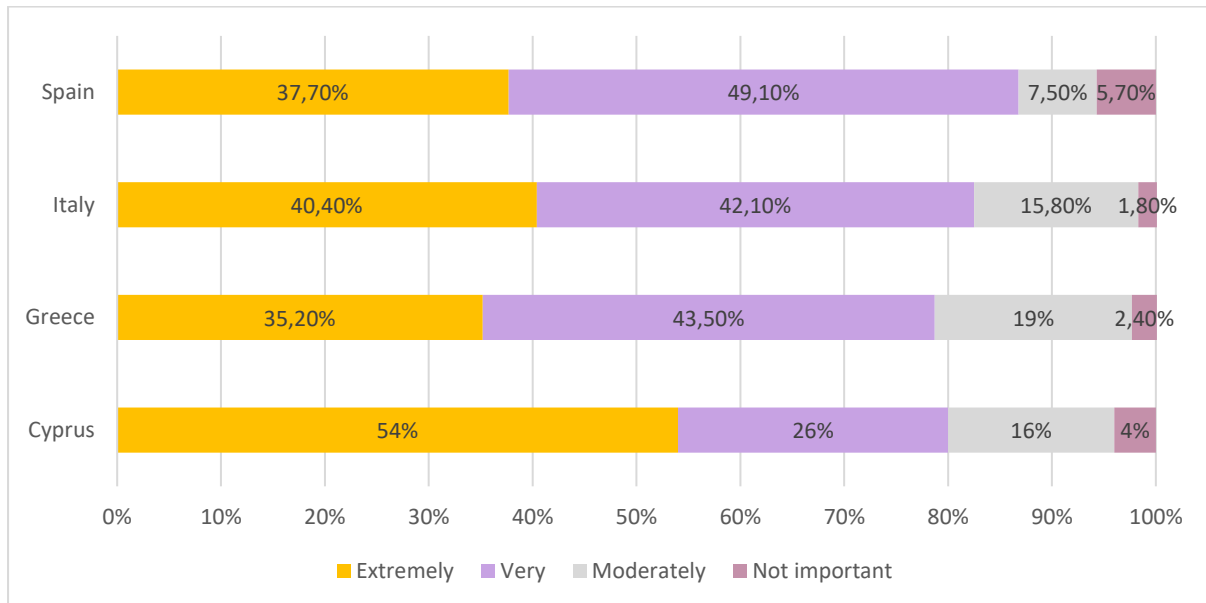
Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

This consensus also underscores the strong commitment of participants to achieving fairness, equity and inclusivity within the coaching profession, particularly in basketball. The findings highlight a growing awareness and commitment to addressing gender inequalities, promoting diversity and fostering an environment where all individuals, regardless of gender, can succeed and contribute equally.

### 4.3.2 The importance of integrating gender issues in coaching courses & curricula

The responses to the question “How important do you think it is to integrate gender issues in coaching courses & curricula?” also reveal a strong consensus in all four countries about the importance and necessity of including a gender dimension in coaching education and training. Graph 5 shows that the vast majority of respondents in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain consider this issue to be “very” or “extremely” important, which also indicates high interest and strong support for initiatives such as the SheCOACH project.

Graph 5: Responses to the question “How important do you think it is to integrate gender issues in coaching courses & curricula?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

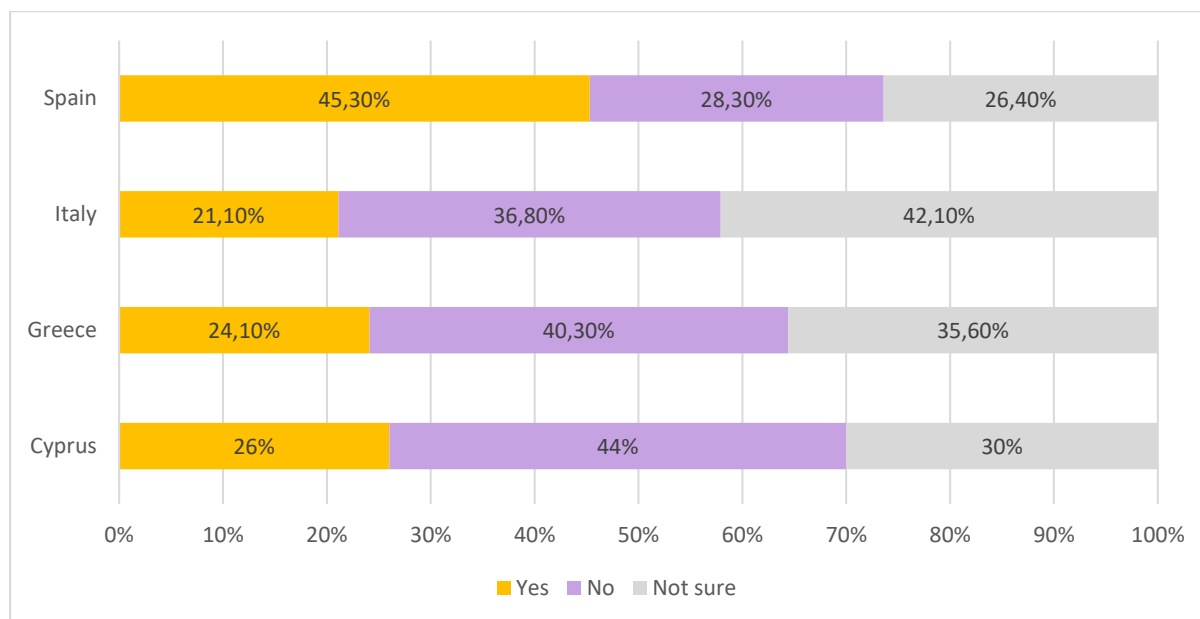
### 4.3.3 Assessing the promotion of gender equality in coaching in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain by sports federations/associations/clubs etc.

The participants’ responses to all four countries to the question “Do you believe that sports associations/federations/clubs etc. in *your* country promote gender equality in coaching?” indicate that the majority either don't know about such initiatives or don't see any effective actions to promote gender equality by relevant stakeholders.

Graph 6 shows that only in Spain is there a relatively high level (45,3%) of recognition of the efforts of sports federations, associations and clubs to promote gender equality compared to other countries, but even in this country there is room for improvement. In any case, the overall picture in all countries, especially the high level of uncertainty, suggests a need for increased action and visibility. Sports federations, associations and clubs should become more actively involved in promoting gender equality and, if they are already doing so, improve communication, transparency, consistency and promotion to ensure that their members (and the wider public) recognise their commitment.



Graph 6: Responses to the question “Do you believe that sports associations/federations/clubs etc. in your country promote gender equality in coaching?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

#### 4.3.4 The promotion of gender equality in coaching by the respondents own federation, association, club etc.

The responses to the following question of whether the participants’ own association, federation or sport club promotes gender equality in coaching reveal different perceptions in most countries but a generally positive view about existing efforts and initiatives.

Graph 7 shows that in Cyprus, Italy and then Greece, while the majority of respondents recognise the gender equality efforts of their own sports federation, association or club, a significant percentage remain unaware of these efforts. Spain has the highest level of recognition of the gender equality efforts of their own organisation. “Not applicable” was chosen by respondents who don't work for a sports federation/association/club.

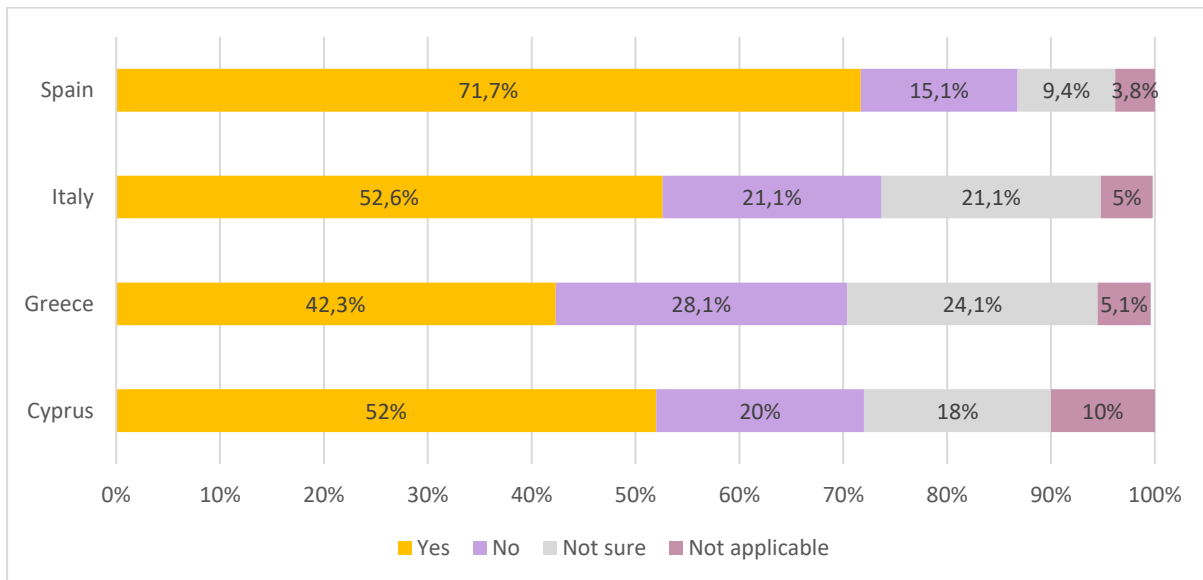
In any case, while there is recognition of efforts in some areas, there is also considerable scepticism, suggesting once again the need for more initiatives and greater effectiveness and visibility. Sport organisations need to implement consistent gender equality policies and plans and improve the communication of their efforts in order to increase awareness and perceived effectiveness.

Individuals who answered “yes” or even “not sure” were asked -optionally- to give more details, and some key-observations follow from the analysis and summary of responses in all countries:

- Existing equal opportunities for both male and female coaches were mentioned, such as equal pay and access to recourses.
- Training courses and development opportunities for female coaches were also highlighted as a positive measure, as well as the incorporation of gender equality topics into training seminars.

- Some sports federations, associations or clubs actively promote their female coaches at all levels, and also ensure that women occupy prominent positions within the organisation.

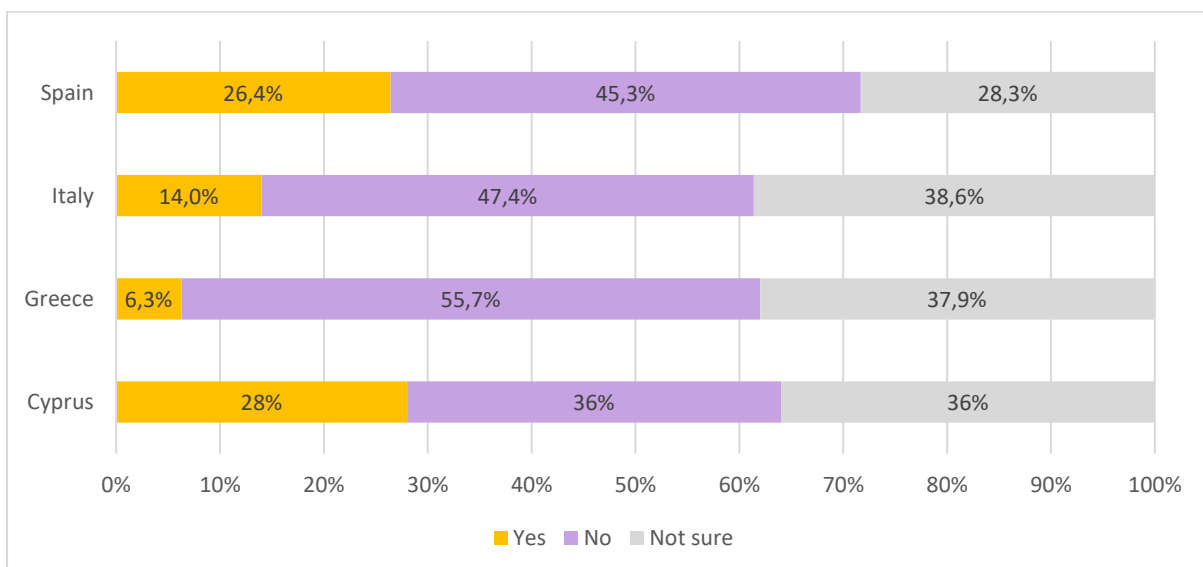
Graph 7: Responses to the question “Does your association/federation/club etc. promote gender equality in coaching?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

Despite the high level of recognition of gender equality efforts in their own sport organisations, the responses of participants in all countries to the question “Does your federation/association/sport club or educational institution has a gender equality plan or gender equality policy?”, reveal a lack of established policies and high levels of mixed awareness, indicating the need for policy development and enhanced communication actions.

Graph 8: Responses to the question “Does your federation/association/sport club or educational institution has a gender equality plan or gender equality policy?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

As shown in Figure 8, the majority of respondents in all countries note that their organisation or educational institution doesn't have any gender equality plans or policies. Cyprus (28%) and Spain (26.4%) have the highest percentages of respondents confirming the existence of such policies and plans, while Greece (6.3%) has the lowest. In all countries, the percentage of people who are unsure is significantly high (from 28.3% to 38.6%).

Participants who answered “yes” were asked -optionally- to provide more details or even a link but the responses received were just a few and not very specific.

In Greece, the only answers received were: “The Board of our sports club is mainly composed of women” and “My club follows the EU White Paper on Sport”. In Spain the only answers provided were: “Women's Project”, “Gender equality is achieved through scholarship programmes for more female trainers”, “Health Plan and Tutorial Action Plan - we do specific workshops”, while the only link provided was <http://xn--mujerymontaafedme-pxb.es><sup>5</sup>. No responses were given in Italy, while in Cyprus the two responses given were: “Memorandum of Understanding with the Commissioner for Gender Equality” and “The Cyprus Sports Organisation (Amendment) Law of 2023 ensures, provides for and promotes gender equality in sport, the fight against gender discrimination and the provision by federations of equal opportunities and equal benefits for men and women in national teams. The term ‘benefits’ means daily expenses, travel/travel expenses, expenses for participation in competitions, clothing and food expenses”.

#### **4.3.5 Assessing the integration of gender related issues in current coaching courses & curricula in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain**

The following question was “Do you think that current coaching courses & curricula in your country adequately address gender issues in general?”. As can be seen in Graph 9, in all four countries there is a consensus and a low percentage of respondents who believe that current coaching courses and curricula address gender issues adequately: Italy (16.7%), Spain (18.9%), Greece (19.4%) and Cyprus (20.0%).

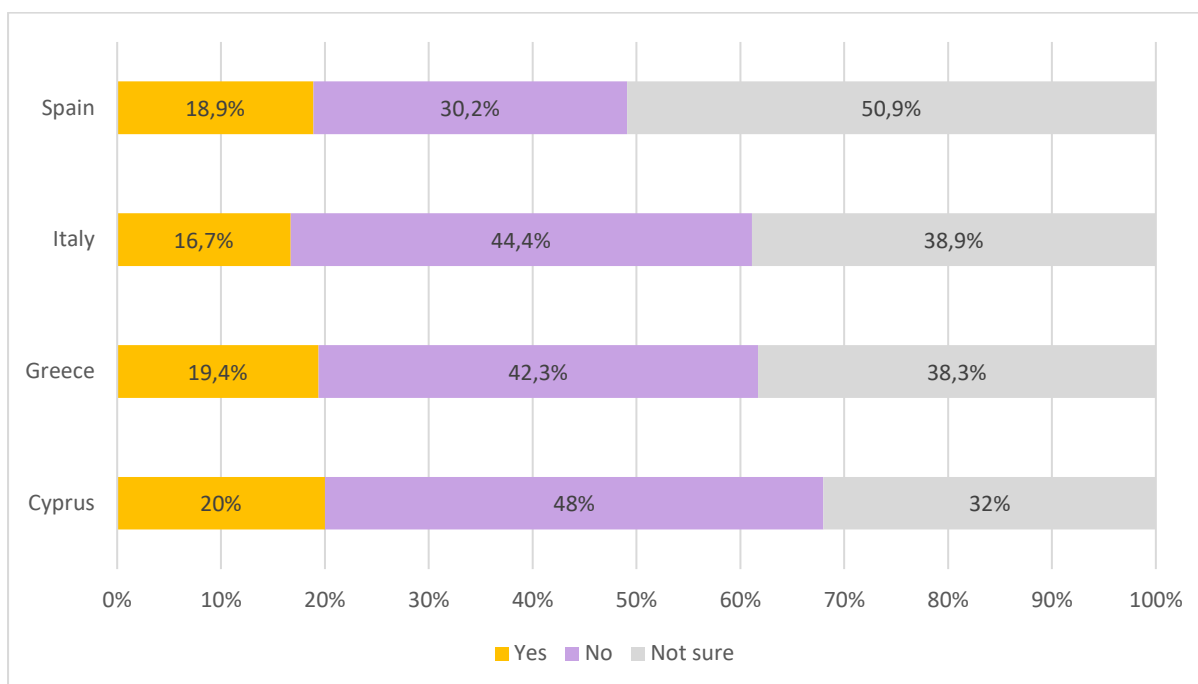
The perception that coaching courses do not deal in a satisfactory way with gender issues is relatively high in Greece (42.3%), Cyprus (48.0%) and Italy (44.4%), and slightly lower in Spain (30.2%). The high percentages of respondents who answered “I am not sure” - ranging from 32% in Cyprus to 50.9% in Spain - indicate a common lack of awareness or clarity about the content of coaching courses in all four countries.

This sense of perceived inadequacy, combined with high levels of uncertainty, suggests that there is an urgent need to improve sport education to better integrate gender issues and communicate these changes. Addressing this gap in coaching curricula is critical to promoting gender equality, enhancing inclusivity and preparing coaches to effectively manage diverse gender dynamics in sport.

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<sup>5</sup> The link leads to the “Mujer y Montaña FEDME” (Women and Mountains FEDME) website, which focuses on promoting gender equality and supporting women in mountain sports.

Graph 9: Responses to the question “Do you think that current coaching courses & curricula in your country adequately address gender issues in general?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

#### 4.3.6 The integration of gender related issues into existing coaching courses & curricula by the respondents own educational institution or organisation/association/etc.

In response to the question “Does *your* educational institution or organisation integrate gender related issues into existing coaching courses & curricula?”, Spain shows a relatively high level of integration of gender issues (34%) within respondents' educational institutions, which may serve as a “good practice model” for other countries. However, there is still plenty of room for improvement in all four countries.

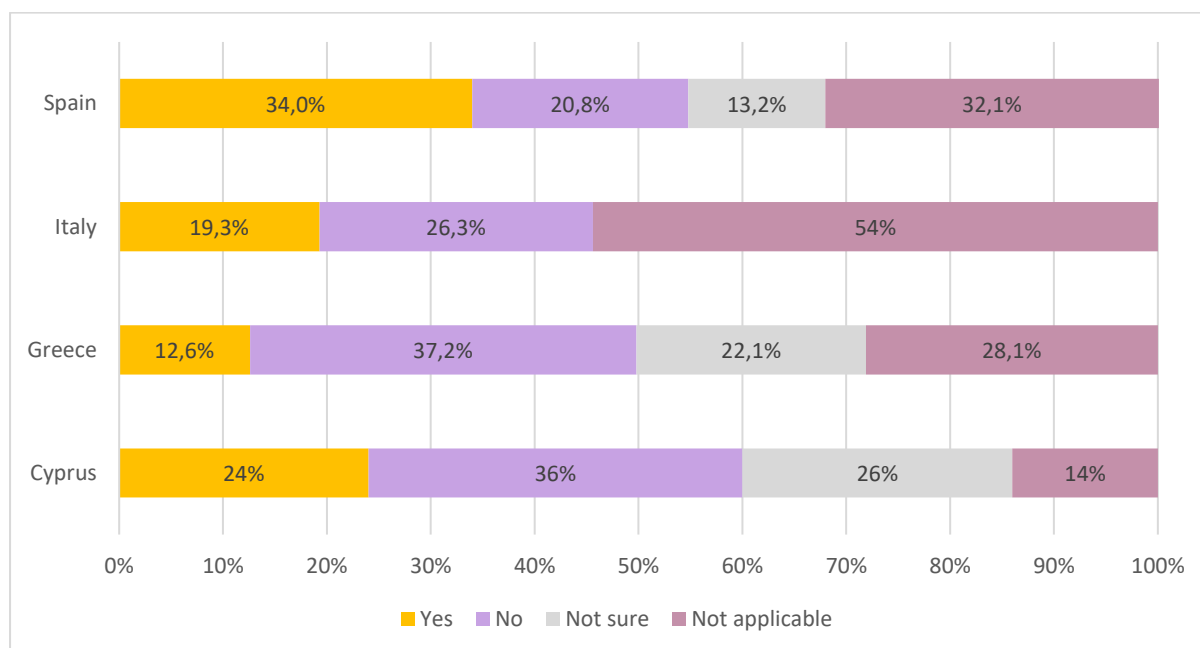
Greece and Cyprus have similar percentages of respondents indicating a lack of gender mainstreaming (37.2% and 36.0% respectively), and a comparable percentage of uncertainty (22.1% and 26.0% respectively). Italy stands out with a high percentage (54.4%) of respondents who indicated that the question was not applicable, because they don't work for an educational institution or because their organisation doesn't offer coaching seminars.

Individuals who answered “yes” or even “not sure” were asked -optionally- to give more details, and some indicative answers follow:

##### Greece

- *There is no difference in coaching methods or coach training between male and female coaches. It is exactly the same. I see no reason for gender issues to arise.*
- *In every coaching school we try to have discussions and topics on this subject, but unfortunately the participation of female coaches is very low.*
- *I took part in a seminar organised by the Hellenic Basketball Federation on the growth of women's basketball.*
- *The Basketball Coaches Association treats these issues with respect.*

Graph 10: Responses to the question “Does your educational institution or organisation integrate gender related issues into existing coaching courses & curricula?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

### Cyprus

- *The School of Coaches has included information on equality and from the beginning of the season there will be information to all the associations of Referees/Judges/Statistical Service. It is planned to hold a seminar for both parents and athletes.*
- *In the curriculum of the School of Basketball Coaches, there are relevant modules in the theoretical & practical courses and especially in the Special Basketball Coaching Course.*
- *Our Institution (...) takes part in projects funded by Erasmus+ Sports, which include educational and training activities for coaches. Examples are RISE Empowered Above Sexual Violence in Sports, Curricular Pathways for Migrants' Empowerment through Sport, Sports Tolerance, #BeActive Actions.*

### Spain

- *Training programs have always been open to all genders, ensuring inclusivity.*
- *The Health and Tutorial Plan includes workshops that address gender issues, and the LOMLOE<sup>6</sup> curriculum for Physical Education incorporates Basic Knowledge (blocks A and D) and specific evaluation criteria related to gender.*
- *Gender-related topics are occasionally addressed in certain modules or subjects within the curriculum.*
- *In the final cycle of the intermediate level, the MED-C 205 Gender and Sport module is included in the curriculum. This module is designed to encourage students to reflect on existing gender inequalities and apply appropriate intervention strategies.*

<sup>6</sup> LOMLOE, or Organic Law 3/2020, which came into force on 29 December 2020, is a reform of the Spanish education system. Its aim is to guarantee quality education with equal opportunities for all students.

## 4.4 Barriers and Challenges

### 4.4.1 The main barriers to gender equality in the coaching profession in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain

In response to the question “What do you think are the main barriers to gender equality in the coaching profession in *your* country?”, where multiple answers were allowed, the comparison of the findings highlights a widespread recognition of institutional and sociocultural obstacles as the main barriers to gender equality in coaching across all countries.

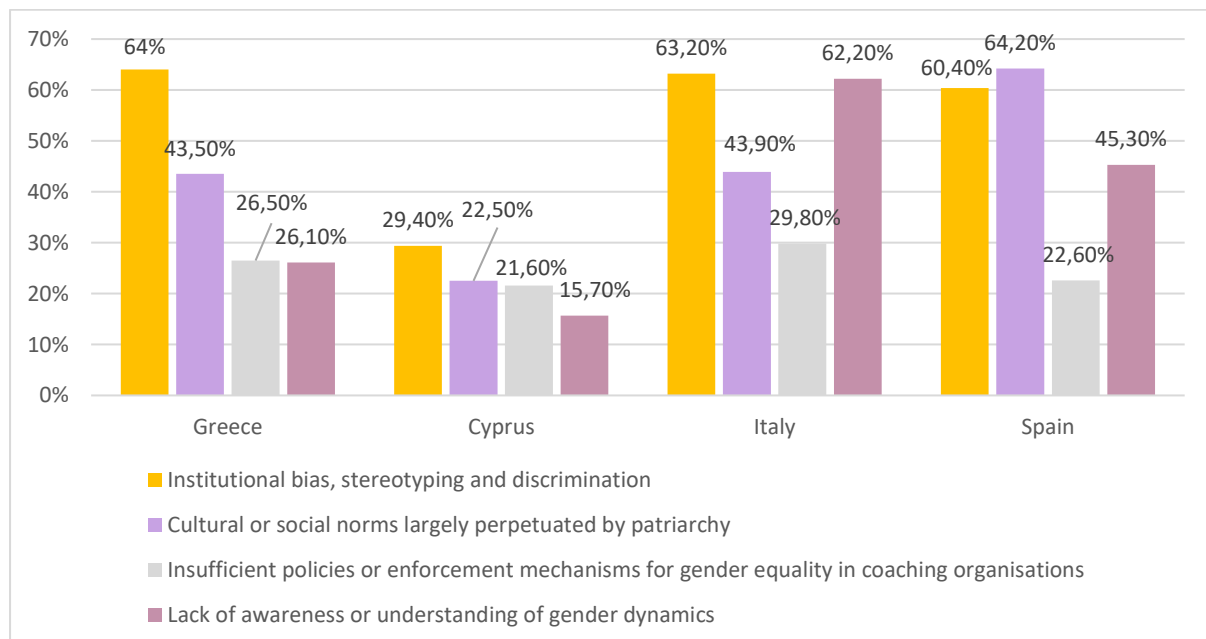
While the degree of emphasis placed on each of these barriers varies, Graph 11 shows the most important perceived barriers per country. Addressing these obstacles and challenges requires targeted efforts to tackle institutional biases, reform sociocultural perceptions, and design and implement effective gender equality policies.

In more detail:

“Institutional bias, stereotyping and discrimination” is identified as the most important barrier in Greece (64%), Italy (63.2%) and Cyprus (29.4%) and as the second most important in Spain (60.4%) with a very high percentage. This barrier includes issues like lack of support, opportunities and resources, gender pay gap, under-representation of female coaches, etc.

“Cultural or social norms largely perpetuated by patriarchy” is the main obstacle in Spain (64.2%) and the second most important in Greece (43.5%) and Cyprus (22.5%). It is also a key issue in Italy, with a high percentage (43.9%), but in third place.

Graph 11: Most popular responses to the question “What do you think are the main barriers to gender equality in the coaching profession in your country?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

“Lack of awareness or understanding of gender dynamics” is the number one perceived barrier in Italy (62.2%) and significant in Spain (45.3%) and Greece (26.1%). Cyprus also acknowledges this barrier, although to a lesser extent (15.7%).

“Insufficient policies or enforcement mechanisms for gender equality in coaching organisations” are a notable barrier in all countries with higher percentages in Italy (29.8%) and Greece (26.5%). In Spain, 22.6% of respondents identified this issue, while in Cyprus the percentage was 21.6%.

The barrier of “Limited access to training and networking opportunities” is less frequently indicated but still relevant, particularly in Greece (14.2%) and Spain (15.1%), while in Italy and Cyprus the percentages are 10.5% and 8.8%, respectively.

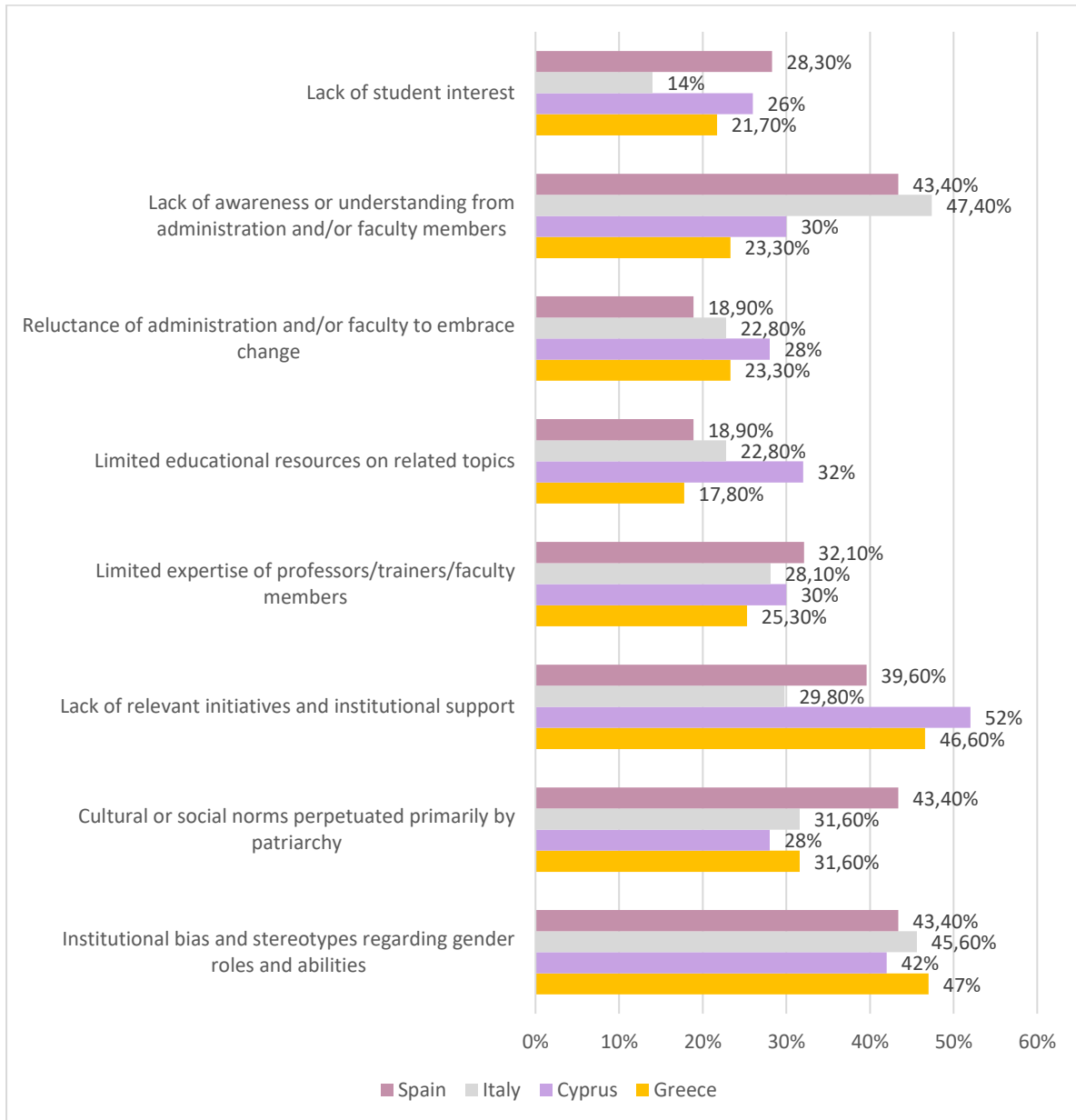
In all countries there were also some respondents who selected “other” and gave further explanations as follows:

- *In my opinion, there are no obstacles.*
- *Different playing styles between men and women*
- *There are very few female coaches who have worked with men's teams, and it's not easy for male players to accept them. In women's teams, I don't think there is any issue.*
- *I do not believe there is a problem with equality, as I have not personally encountered any lack of respect or different treatment based on gender.*
- *I don't think there is gender inequality in a profession that few consider as a “real profession”. There are very few full-time professionals, whether men or women.*
- *Insufficient training for women.*
- *The general decline of women's basketball in Cyprus is something that may prevent women from getting involved in coaching. However, this should not prevent women from getting involved in developmental coaching and academies, which is not the case. That's why I don't think it's a matter of any organisation promoting coaching exclusively for women. It is freely and openly taught to both sexes, whether they stay in the sport or not. Now, if there are to be separate guidelines/policies for coaching in women's basketball, we agree because it is very different from coaching in men's basketball, but again it cannot be done in a gender specific way. A man or a woman can also be taught to choose what "fills" them the most to be a coach.*

#### **4.4.2. The main challenges and barriers to integrating gender issues into existing coaching courses/curricula in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain**

In response to the question “What do you think are the main barriers to integrating gender issues into existing coaching courses/curricula in *your* country?”, where multiple answers were also allowed, the comparison of results in Graph 12 reveals again a consistent recognition of several common barriers -both institutional and cultural- in all four countries. To address these obstacles and challenges requires effective, comprehensive strategies that focus on raising awareness, tackling stereotypes, increasing institutional support, providing training for professors/trainers and updated materials, and revising curricula to include gender issues.

Graph 12: Most popular responses to the question “What do you think are the main barriers to integrating gender issues into existing coaching courses/curricula in your country?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

In more detail:

- “Institutional bias and stereotypes regarding gender roles and abilities” was the number one barrier in all four countries: Greece (47%), Italy (45.6%), Spain (43.4%) and Cyprus (42%).
- “Lack of awareness or understanding” was particularly noted in Italy (47.4%) and Spain (43.4%) and also identified in Cyprus (30%) and Greece (23.3%), indicating the need for focused education and awareness raising among faculty members and administrator personnel about gender dynamics.



- “Socio-cultural norms” were identified as perceived barriers in Greece (31.6%), Italy (31.6%), Spain (43.4%), and Cyprus (28.0%), reflecting the influence of patriarchy and traditional gender roles.
- In Cyprus (52%), Greece (46.6%), Italy (29.8%), and Spain (39.6%), respondents also mentioned the “lack of institutional support and related initiatives” as a critical barrier.
- “Limited expertise of educators” was a significant barrier in Spain (32.1%), Italy (28.1%), Greece (25.3%) and Cyprus (30%), indicating that professors and coaching trainers often lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively integrate gender issues into their courses. This barrier should be combined with “limited educational resources”, which was identified as an important barrier in Cyprus (32%), Italy (22.8%), Spain (18.9%) and Greece (17.8%), although to a lesser extent in some countries. In addition, curricular constraints and bureaucracy were cited as barriers to updating and integrating new gender-related content in all countries.
- "Reluctance to accept change" was mentioned as an obstacle in Cyprus (28%), Greece (23.3%), Italy (22.8%) and Spain (18.9%), indicating resistance at institutional level. "Lack of student interest and commitment" was mentioned in Spain (28.3%), Cyprus (26%), Greece (21.7%) and Italy (14%). Lastly, in some countries there were respondents who mentioned “other reasons”, with many stating there were no significant barriers or challenges.

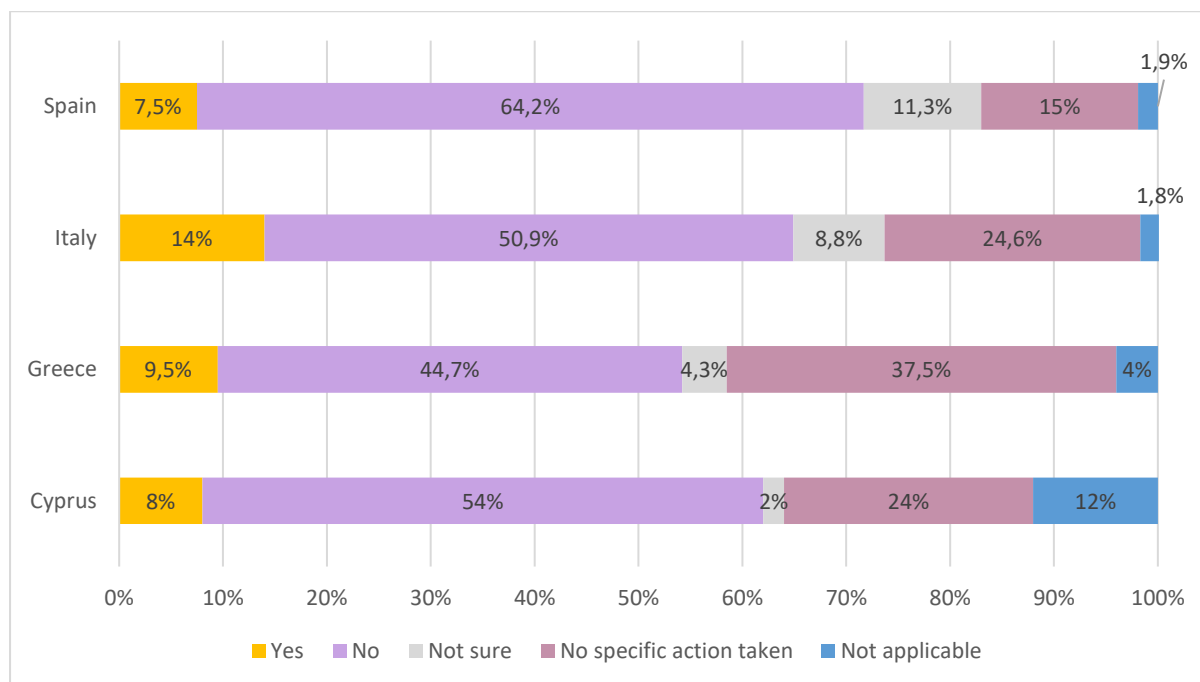
#### **4.4.3 Specific challenges or barriers in promoting gender equality in coaching within -mainly basketball- associations/federations/sport clubs**

Graph 13 presents the responses to the question “Have you encountered any specific challenges or barriers in promoting gender equality in coaching within your association/federation/sport club?” in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Spain. The majority of respondents in all four countries reported not having encountered specific challenges or barriers (Spain 64.2%, Cyprus 54%, Italy 50.9%, Greece 44.7%), which may reflect either a genuine absence of obstacles and challenges or a lack of recognition of such challenges and insufficient awareness of underlying problems or even a reluctance to admit it via a survey.

A high proportion of respondents also indicated that no specific actions had been taken within their associations to address gender equality, with Greece having the highest percentage (37.5%), followed by Italy (24.6%), Cyprus (24%) and Spain (15%). This suggests a need for more active involvement, proactive measures and initiatives within sports associations, federations and clubs to address gender equality.

The percentage of respondents who admitted that have encountered specific challenges is relatively low in all countries, with Italy having the highest at 14% and Spain the lowest at 7.5%. However, there is a considerable amount of uncertainty among respondents, with a notable percentage of “not sure” responses, particularly in Spain (11.3%) and Italy (8.8%). In addition, there were people who chose "Not applicable, because I don't work for a sports federation/association, etc."

Graph 13: Responses to the question “Have you encountered any specific challenges or barriers in promoting gender equality in coaching within your association/federation/sport club?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

Those who answered “yes” were asked -optionally- to briefly describe the challenges they have faced and their answers follow:

#### Greece

- *Many teams hire only male coaches and many parents prefer male coaches for their children.*
- *In the sport clubs where I worked, I always got the last say, the worst hours, and the sections no one else wanted. As a single mother, I received no favourable treatment; no one helped when issues arose with my child, among many other challenges.*
- *They never explicitly said no to my proposal to include women in the staff, but they supported a man for the position instead.*
- *There is a small number of female coaches and a lack of trust from the management.*
- *Female coaches face different treatment compared to male coaches, including lower pay.*
- *There are less opportunities, lack of recognition, exclusion from promotions, and a hostile, discriminatory work environment.*
- *In the summer of 2019, I tried to include a female coach in the academy's coaching team and as a "volunteer" in the men's team staff, but my request was not accepted.*
- *Men's basketball is much stronger «product». Women's basketball does not interest the public, does not generate revenue, and is not promoted, staying low-profile. The “Greek female coach” is typically associated with women's basketball and is not considered for staff positions in men's teams or as the head coach.*

## Italy

- *I found resentment in situations where female coaches taught men.*
- *It's not always easy to let everyone know that you're there because you're competent and without recommendations.*
- *It depends a lot on the type of discipline, but also on the cultural level of the society. In general, there is a tendency to have more confidence in male figures and to propose different rewards.*
- *Male coaches are often preferred, even if their career paths are the same.*
- *Reports about a coach's inadequacies are often ignored when made by female colleagues, but are more likely to be welcomed and taken seriously if reported by a male colleague.*
- *A female coach is considered less than a male coach for the same skills.*

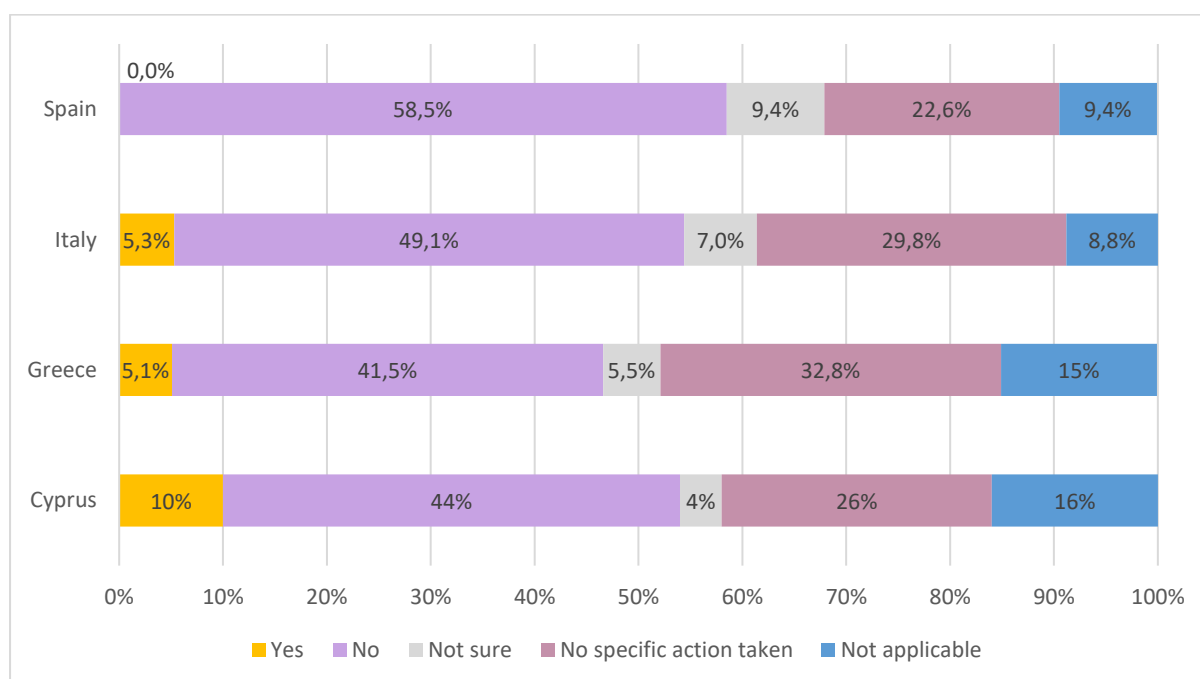
## Spain

- *Female basketball is often considered inferior to male basketball, relegating female players and coaches to a secondary status.*

### 4.4.4 Specific challenges or barriers to integrating gender related issues to promote gender equality in coaching within educational institutions

Graph 14 shows the responses to the question “Have you encountered any specific challenges or barriers in your attempt to integrate gender-related issues to promote gender equality in coaching within your institution/in your training courses?” in all four countries.

Graph 14: Responses to the question “Have you encountered any specific challenges or barriers in your attempt to integrate gender related issues to promote gender equality in coaching within your institution/in your training courses?” (% per country)



Remarkably, the majority of respondents in all countries reported not having faced specific obstacles or challenges, with Spain having the highest percentage (58.5%) and Greece the lowest (41,5%). The percentage of respondents who acknowledged encountering specific barriers is relatively low across all countries, with Cyprus having the highest at 10% and Spain the lowest at 0%.

The findings suggest that while gender issues are being addressed, many respondents do not perceive significant obstacles, which is obviously positive. However, as discussed above, the above percentages may indicate a lack of awareness of the challenges and problems encountered, or even a reluctance to admit them in a survey.

Of those who answered “yes”, very few went on to explain their answer by saying “I received reduced interest and irony”, “In the schools where I work, the biggest obstacle is the old mentality of some teachers who still believe that there are 'things for girls and boys'", "I am there every day, only and exclusively as a woman. You don't have the same weight as a man”.

It should also be mentioned that a significant percentage of respondents indicated that no specific actions had been taken to integrate gender-related issues in their courses: Greece 32.8%, Italy 29.8%, Cyprus 26% and Spain 22.6%. This highlights the need for more proactive measures and structured initiatives to address gender equality in coaching courses and curricula. Finally, there is a small but still notable degree of uncertainty, with respondents choosing “not sure”, while there were also participants who answered “not applicable because I don't work for an educational institution/do not teach in coaching seminars”.

## 4.5 Suggestions and Recommendations

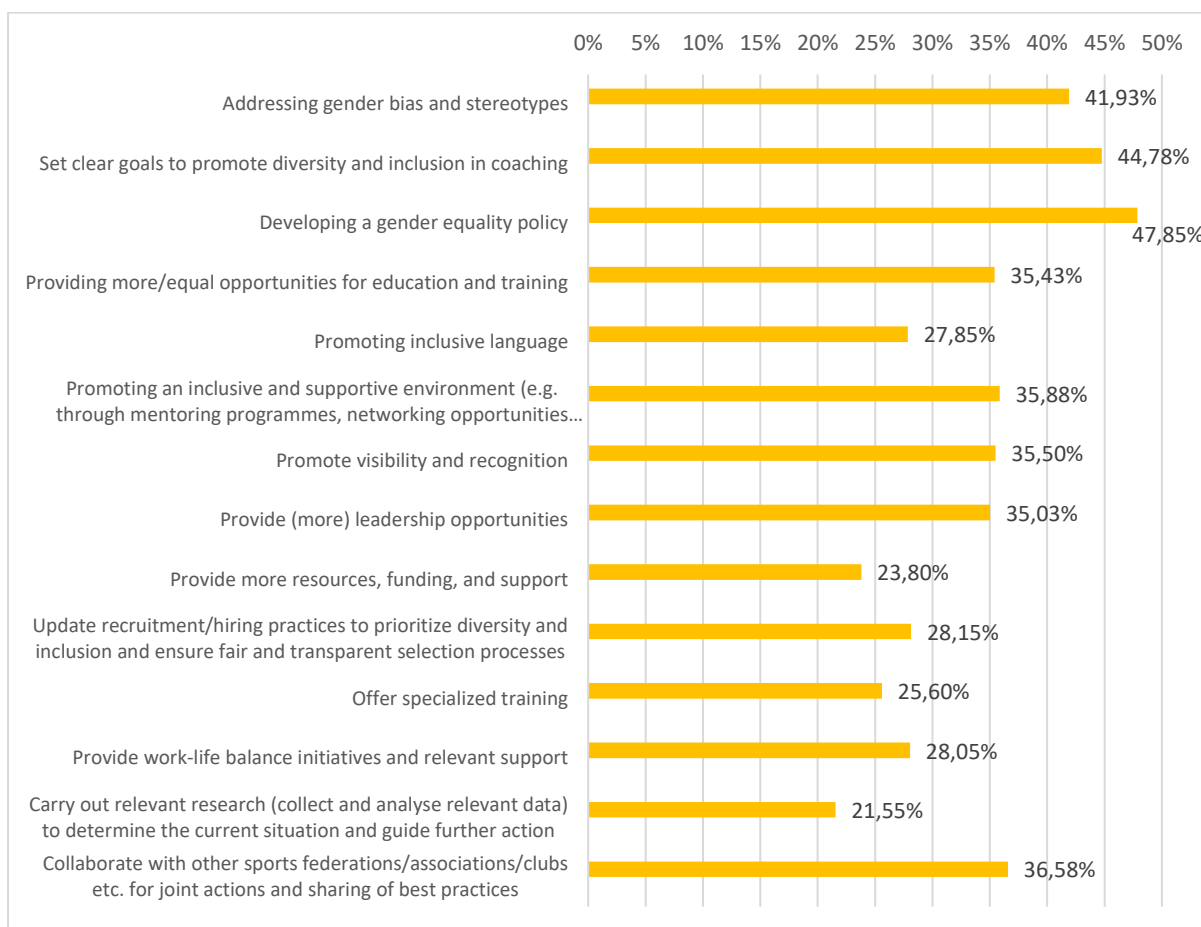
### 4.5.1 Strategies or methods that could use sports associations/federations/clubs etc. to promote gender equality in coaching in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain

Participants in all countries were then asked to answer “Which of the following strategies or methods could sports associations/federations/clubs etc. use to promote gender equality in coaching in *your* country?” and multiple answers were allowed. Graph 15 shows the average % across all four countries, while Graph 16 shows the % responses to the question by country.

Examining the answers at a transnational level, the most popular strategy for almost half of all participants is to develop a gender equality policy (47.8%), followed by setting clear goals to promote diversity and inclusion in coaching (44.7%) and tackling gender bias and stereotyping (41.9%). Collaborating with other federations, associations, and sports clubs for joint actions and sharing of best practices (36,5%) has been also highly recommended.

Promoting a supportive and inclusive environment through mentoring programmes and networking opportunities (35.8%), encouraging visibility and recognition (35.5%) and providing to women more equal opportunities for education and training (35.4%) as well as for leadership (35%) were also seen as important measures. Updating recruitment and hiring practices to prioritize diversity and inclusion while ensuring fair and transparent selection processes (28.1%) and providing work-life balance initiatives (28%) and promoting inclusive language (27.8%) were also considered important by almost a third of respondents.

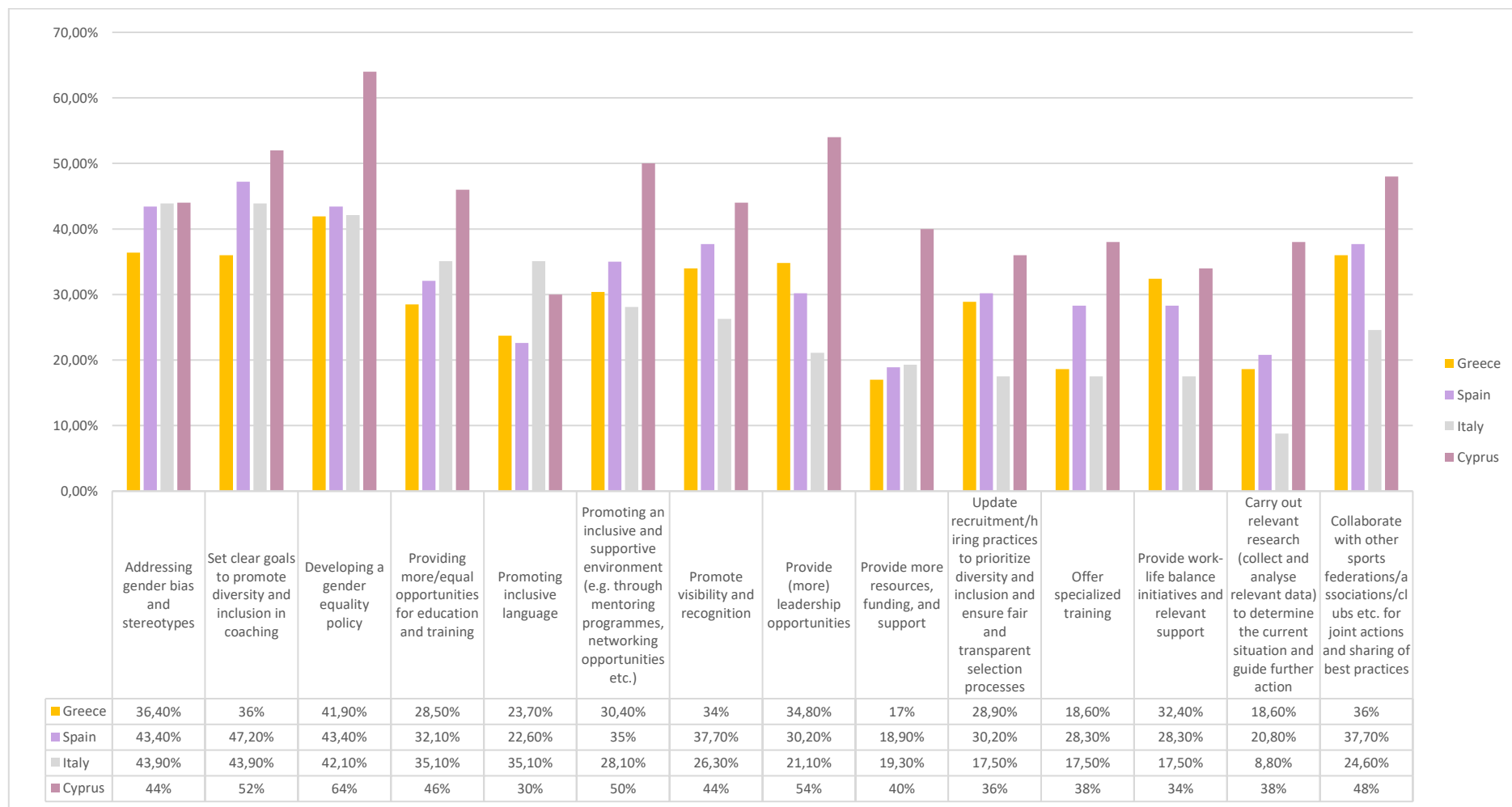
Graph 15: Responses to the question “Which of the following strategies or methods could sports associations/ federations/clubs etc. use to promote gender equality in coaching in your country?” (average % across all countries)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

Additionally, respondents suggested specialized training (25.6%), more resources, funding, and support (23.8%) and carrying out relevant research to determine the current situation and guide further action (21.5%). The findings suggest that a comprehensive approach is needed to promote gender equality in coaching, with strong support for policy development, goal setting and direct action to address bias and promote inclusivity.

Graph 16: Responses to the question “Which of the following strategies or methods could sports associations/federations/clubs etc. use to promote gender equality in coaching in your country?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

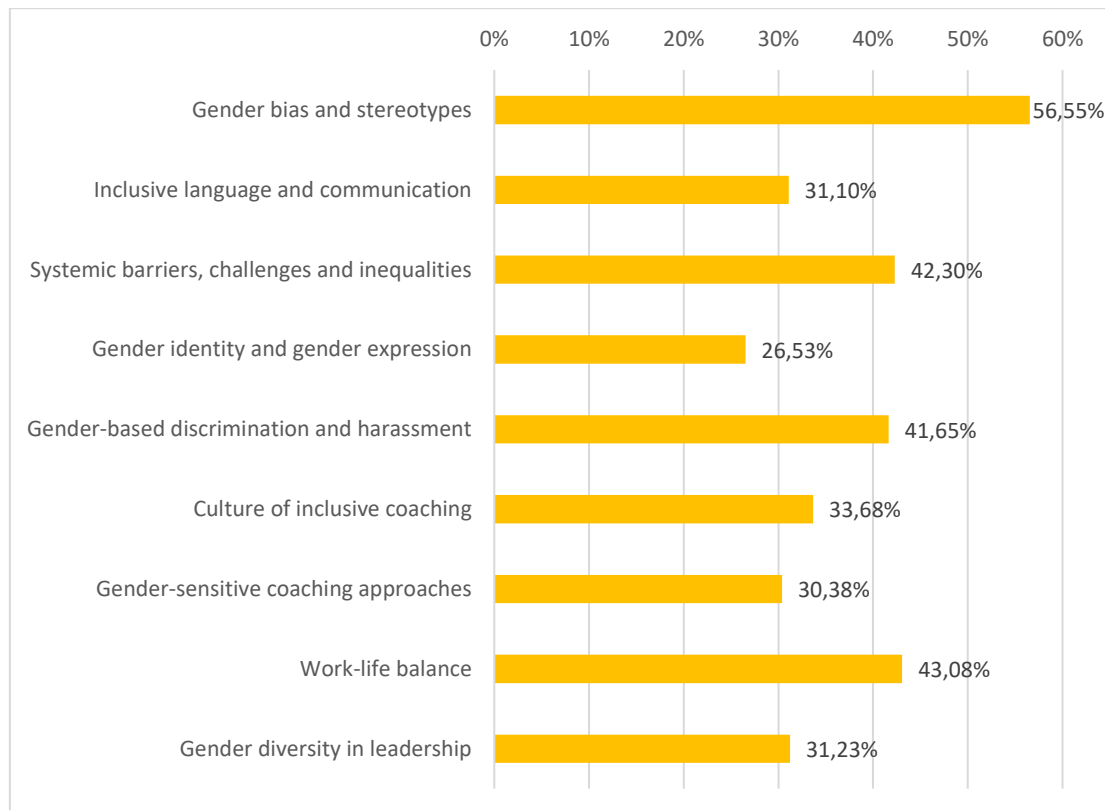
#### 4.5.2 Specific gender-related topics that should be included in coaching courses & curricula

In response to the question “What specific gender-related topics do you think should be included in coaching courses & curricula?”, where multiple answers were allowed, the respondents identified several key areas, listed here in order of popularity at the transnational level (see Graph 17).

The issue most frequently mentioned by the majority of respondents in all countries was gender bias and stereotyping (56.5%), followed by work-life balance (43%), and then systemic barriers, challenges, and inequalities (42.3%) and gender-based discrimination and harassment (41.6%).

Other suggested topics were inclusive coaching cultures (33.6%), gender diversity in leadership (31.2%), inclusive language and communication (31.1%), gender-sensitive coaching approaches (30.3%) and gender identities and gender expression (26.5%).

Graph 17: Responses to the question “What specific gender-related topics do you think should be included in coaching courses & curricula?” (average % across all countries)



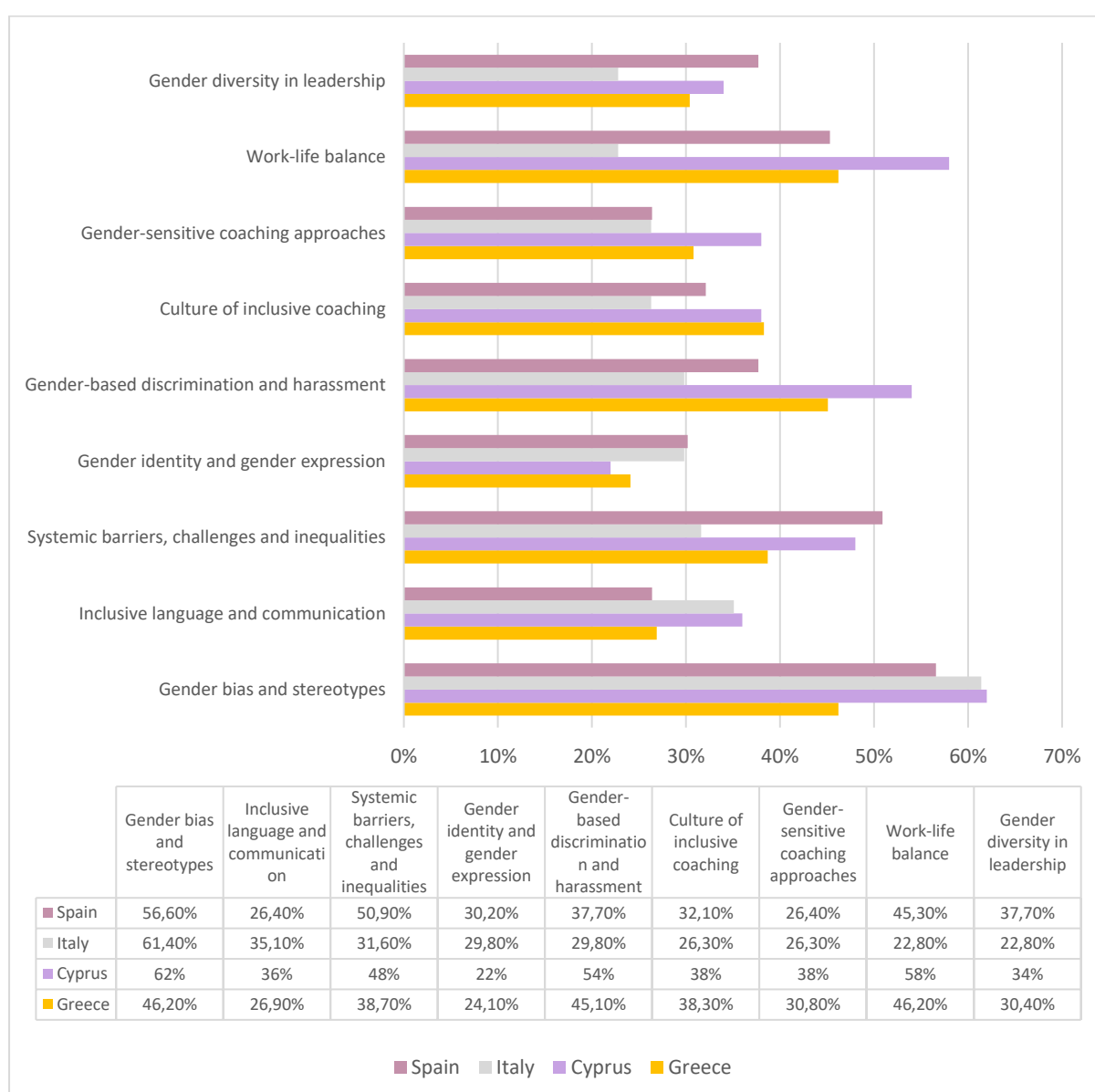
Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

Graph 18 presents the % of responses to this question by country, highlighting the clear consensus in all four countries that addressing gender bias and stereotypes is the most important issue to include in coaching courses and curricula, with Italy having the highest percentage (6.4%).

Gender-based discrimination and harassment are also highly prioritised, particularly in Cyprus (54%) and Greece (45.1%), while systemic barriers, challenges, and inequalities are highly prioritised in Spain (50.9%) and Cyprus (48%). It is interesting to note that Cyprus (58%), Greece (46.2%) and Spain (45.3%) put much more emphasis on work-life balance than Italy (22.8%), which may indicate that the balance is better achieved in that country.

Despite the variability in the perceived importance of the suggested topics, the data indicate that there are certain topics that are popular and universally recognised as important to include in coaching curricula and courses, and this will guide the design of the SheCOACH capacity building programme.

Graph 18: Responses to the question “What specific gender-related topics do you think should be included in coaching courses & curricula?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024



## 4.6 Brainstorming section (general comments & selected answers)

The final section of the survey was a brainstorming activity and participants in all four countries were asked to fill in the following sentences with the first thing that came to mind:

- a) Women in coaching/ Female coaches.....
- b) Men in coaching/Male coaches.....
- c) Gender equality in coaching .....

Here we summarise the main points of the given answers at the transnational level, also including some quotes.

### a) Women in coaching.....

- Under-representation and fewer opportunities: Female coaches are few in number and many responses in all four countries highlight their numerical minority compared to men. They are often described as “few” or “minimal” in number and are perceived to have fewer opportunities compared to their male counterparts.
- Socio-cultural barriers: Responses, particularly from Greece and Italy, highlight the social and cultural barriers that women face in the coaching profession, including discrimination, lack of respect, and the need to work harder to prove their worth. These challenges are often rooted in gender stereotypes and biases within the coaching profession and broader society. Many responses indicate that women coaches are often treated with contempt and not get the respect they deserve. It is reported that they often have to work much harder to prove their worth.
- Need for more equal opportunities and recognition: There is a strong consensus in all countries that women deserve more equal opportunities, respect and recognition for their work. Many respondents highlighted that women should be judged based on their skills, not their gender. The call for equal pay was also mentioned in many answers.
- Competencies and capabilities: Many responses mention that female coaches are just as capable as their male counterparts and can be just as successful. Despite the challenges they face, women coaches are considered as charismatic, competent and equal to men. Their contribution to the field is seen as necessary and valuable. Responses from all countries emphasise that women have many skills, professionalism and emotional intelligence to succeed as coaches.
- Growth and potential: Many answers show optimism about the growing presence and potential of women in coaching. Women coaches are also seen as advocates for gender equality in sports and as role models for future generations. Words like “growing”, “dynamic” and “determined” reflect this fact, but in many cases, it is underlined that there is still much work to be done to support their continued progress and achieve gender equality in coaching.

Some indicative quotes follow: Women in coaching/Female coaches.....

- ✓ *...are few and have to work much harder to prove their worth.*
- ✓ *...are treated with contempt by almost all male coaches and relevant stakeholders.*
- ✓ *.... should have the same opportunities as men and be judged only on their work.*

- ✓ *... do not have sufficient knowledge and there is a problem of enforcement when working with men's teams.*
- ✓ *...are not given the same opportunities as male coaches and that's one reason why there are far fewer of them.*
- ✓ *....need to assert their legitimate rights.*
- ✓ *...should be paid the same as men.*
- ✓ *....are great!*
- ✓ *... are always criticised.*
- ✓ *...perform remarkable work.*
- ✓ *...are equally dynamic and able to perform to the maximum as expected, trained, with the same skills and abilities as men in the field of coaching.*
- ✓ *... perfectionists, attentive, empathetic and passionate.*
- ✓ *... are not so many of them, and they are very often discredited in Italy.*
- ✓ *....should have equal opportunities with men and not be afraid to show up.*
- ✓ *... even if they are capable, they train the women's teams at a low level.*
- ✓ *... bring emotional intelligence and empathy, which are crucial in coaching.*
- ✓ *...bring innovative perspectives and leadership in sports coaching.*
- ✓ *...society needs to break stereotypes and provide equal opportunities for women coaches.*

#### b) Men in coaching....

- **Dominance and over-representation:** The majority of respondents in all countries acknowledge that men dominate the coaching field, not only in terms of numbers, but also in various other ways, usually holding the vast majority of highly prestigious positions, even within women's teams and leagues. This dominance is seen as an obstacle to gender equality in sports coaching.
- **Privilege and Opportunities:** Many responses indicate that male coaches have more opportunities and privileges compared to women and they are often perceived to advance more quickly, with less effort, and enjoy better recognition and job security. This is linked to the broader societal and institutional biases that favor men over women not only in the coaching profession but in society in general.
- **Attitude and behavior towards female coaches:** There is a strong feeling that male coaches often do not treat female coaches with the respect and equality they deserve. Several responses point out that male coaches may display contempt, underestimate female coaches, or use sexist language, whether consciously or unconsciously. This behavior contributes to a challenging work environment for women in coaching.
- **Bias and gender stereotypes:** Many responses suggest that many male coaches may not be fully aware of the privileges they hold in society, nor of their own biases. Male coaches need to be more aware of their attitudes and behaviours and avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes in their interactions with female colleagues and athletes.
- **Competencies, capabilities and experience:** While men are often recognized as talented and dedicated coaches, there is also criticism that this competence is sometimes overestimated due to gender bias. Some responses suggest that even less capable male coaches are often more respected and given more opportunities than their female counterparts. Male coaches are often seen as more experienced and better trained. At

the same time, the need for ongoing training and information, particularly on gender equality issues, is highlighted.

- Potential for positive change: Despite the criticism, there is also an acknowledgment that male coaches have the potential to be powerful allies in the promotion of gender equality. It is recognised that collaboration between male and female coaches can be beneficial and that men can learn a lot from women and vice versa. By recognizing their privilege and actively supporting female coaches, men can contribute to the creation of a more equitable and inclusive environment in sports.

Some indicative quotes follow: Men in coaching/male coaches.....

- ✓ *...are the vast majority and have more opportunities than women.*
- ✓ *.....should not underestimate female coaches and treat them with equality and respect.*
- ✓ *...think they know everything.*
- ✓ *...usually treat female coaches or women in power with contempt.*
- ✓ *....occupy 90% of the positions even in women's teams/ in women's leagues.*
- ✓ *...get promoted in less time and with less effort than a female colleague.*
- ✓ *...have the same passion and dedication as women.*
- ✓ *... a large percentage of male coaches use sexist language - even if they are not aware of it - and reproduce stereotypes and pass them on to the new generation of female athletes.*
- ✓ *...are qualified and well esteemed.*
- ✓ *...dominate in the field of coaching.*
- ✓ *....promote women in coaching!*
- ✓ *...even if they are less capable, they get more respect.*
- ✓ *...are the best!*
- ✓ *.... don't recognise the privileges they have.*
- ✓ *...are competent and ambitious.*
- ✓ *...are aggressive and hysterics.*
- ✓ *...are determined, self-centered and dedicated.*
- ✓ *... should not assume that a woman's body, which is physiologically less powerful than a man's, is fragile, even in the field of work where skills are not only physical.*
- ✓ *...are not very empathetic.*
- ✓ *...are chauvinists.*
- ✓ *...can become powerful allies in promoting a fairer future for women in sport. Their influence and leadership can have a multiplier effect by providing opportunities and creating the right conditions to tackle inequality in sport.*

### c) Gender equality in coaching

- Necessity, importance and the need for action: Many responses in all countries emphasise that gender equality in coaching is essential, necessary and important. Several responses also highlight the need for immediate action and effective measures to promote it, mentioning that it's not just about equal opportunities, but also about changing attitudes and cultivating an inclusive culture in coaching.
- Scepticism, challenges and resistance: In many cases, participants underline that achieving gender equality in coaching is difficult or even utopian, especially in societies or sports that are seen as deeply patriarchal or traditionally male-dominated. A minority

of responses, which should also be mentioned, show indifference or resistance to the idea of gender equality in coaching. Several responses indicate that the feasibility and relevance of gender equality in coaching may vary depending on the sport and sports that are perceived as more "tough" or "traditionally male" are seen as less suited to female coaches, reflecting deep-rooted gender biases. All these highlight the continuing cultural and societal barriers and challenges that need to be addressed.

- Inclusivity, diversity and respect: Achieving more gender equality in coaching is seen as creating more opportunities but also about fostering a culture of inclusivity and respect. This includes changing "old fashioned" attitudes and promoting inclusive language and practices. Some respondents advocate a meritocratic approach, where individuals are judged on their abilities rather than their gender, and emphasise that diversity is a strength for teams.
- Education, training and the long road ahead: Many participants mention the need for more specialised education and training to break down barriers and promote gender equality in coaching. While some responses acknowledge that progress has been made, there is a general feeling that much more needs to be done. Gender equality in coaching is seen as a long and challenging journey that requires effort and commitment from all stakeholders.

Some indicative answers follow: Gender equality in coaching....

- ✓ *... is necessary.*
- ✓ *...should not be negotiable.*
- ✓ *...It has to do with supply and demand. There are very few women coaches and they are mostly involved in women's basketball that feel more familiar. And it makes sense since most 75% of the athletes who play basketball are men.*
- ✓ *...leaves me indifferent, I don't want women in coaching.*
- ✓ *...has to be taken for granted.*
- ✓ *...is difficult to achieve in Greece because our society is deeply patriarchal.*
- ✓ *... is important and should apply to all professions.*
- ✓ *... lies in the nature of the sport. For example, due to the inherent "toughness" of basketball, I believe that this sport is more suited to a male profile, whether we are talking about an athlete or a coach.*
- ✓ *... means assessing individuals on merit and providing equal opportunities regardless of gender.*
- ✓ *...is something more than just equal opportunities; it is an attitude and culture that emphasises inclusivity and cultivates the talents of both women and men, while respecting their individuality.*
- ✓ *...It needs immediate activation and measures to support it.*
- ✓ *...doesn't exist.*
- ✓ *...is very important.*
- ✓ *...still needs improvement, but it has made steps forward compared to previous years.*
- ✓ *... Federations and associations need to be well informed and gender equality to be promoted for the benefit of all. It is not just about helping women; it is about giving them the opportunity and the environment to help clubs/federations/institutions.*
- ✓ *...is a utopia.*

- ✓ *...is a difficult goal but one to be achieved.*
- ✓ *...varies from sport to sport.*
- ✓ *... does not have to follow the concept of equality. Embracing the richness of diversity and sharing it is the solution!*
- ✓ *...a challenge to embrace.*
- ✓ *... in front of you is a person, regardless of sex or colour, but an individual.*
- ✓ *...in some sports, it is more applicable than in others.*
- ✓ *...There's a lot of work to be done.*
- ✓ *...is crucial for inclusivity and diversity.*
- ✓ *...more education and training are essential for advancing gender equality.*
- ✓ *...breaking barriers and promoting equal opportunities are key-issues in coaching.*
- ✓ *...inclusive language is critical for achieving genuine gender equality.*
- ✓ *...it must be designed, promoted and implemented with an intersectional approach (regardless of sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender, race, nationality, class and other factors that lead to discrimination and segregation), for inclusive, equal, and equal treatment of all.*

## 4.7 Closing remarks

### 4.7.1 Additional comments/ideas e.g. regarding gender equality in coaching or related topics

Participants had the opportunity to make additional comments or, optionally, to share any other ideas or suggestions related to the topics of the survey. Here are some indicative answers:

- ✓ *The football federation actively promotes gender equality with free seminars, and is committed to the development of women's football.*
- ✓ *I believe that in order for more female coaches to appear, they need to be exposed to the sport of basketball and cultivate positive feelings towards it. Gender respect should be instilled from the very beginning. For example, a female athlete who hasn't experienced respect within the sport may be reluctant to take coaching seriously.*
- ✓ *I hope this project is the start of equal opportunities in coaching, so that we don't remain on the sidelines.*
- ✓ *What the research will ultimately achieve is forcibly placing women in positions, perhaps without meeting requirements, just to prove that there is equality. The fact that we are discussing the need for additional promotion and training (...) shows that there is a need for "special" treatment based on gender, which is wrong. There should be no change or distinction in approach. It should be the same.*
- ✓ *I don't think that gender inequality regarding leadership positions will ever disappear in Greece; instead, more space will be given to women in supportive roles in coaching staffs.*
- ✓ *It would be good for (basketball) federations and associations to entrust national teams, union sections, the productive process, and school outreach to successful female coaches in our field and to promote it to increase participation.*
- ✓ *Let's be clear and admit that there is no equality.*

- ✓ *Discussing the issue, creating role models for women and promoting women will be crucial in gradually changing the coaching profession towards gender equality.*
- ✓ *Women coaches must finally be given opportunities to excel!*
- ✓ *The practice of coaching is open to every person, regardless of their gender. It depends in my opinion on the personality, cognitive competence and experience of the person.*
- ✓ *Women are usually not taken seriously. We have to always be 110% for people to acknowledge us. Social media is always speaking about the men's side of basketball. Everyone is always talking about the boy's or men's teams. Female youth players rarely get acknowledged unless they have done something insane to bring attention to themselves and their team. Women coaches are always judged more than men. We have to be twice as ready, and knowledgeable and decrease mistakes as much as possible, or else we get negative attention and opinions.*
- ✓ *I believe that there is meritocracy both in the Unions and in the Federation.*
- ✓ *Gender equality, in my opinion, is a wrong term. There cannot be gender equality, because fortunately we are different, with different winning assets that, when combined, make a difference. We should be talking about equality of goals, equality of resources, equality of opportunities.*
- ✓ *We need a “cultural revolution”!*
- ✓ *In the society in which I have been working for years, gender equality is present in all its facets, from the simplest to the most important decisions.*
- ✓ *The lack of economic resources in women's basketball, and consequently the lack of professional opportunities, makes it difficult for women who have grown up playing the sport to pursue a career in it.*
- ✓ *It is important to address gender equality in all aspects, especially in education.*
- ✓ *When the media treat female athletes the same as male athletes in terms of news coverage (often in sports events, a man is talked about for his results, but a woman is talked about for her appearance or partner), we will take a step towards gender equality.*
- ✓ *If you are a woman, you are lucky if you get to coach girls in your club or at lower levels. But if girls and boys do not have female role models in coaching and leadership, they will not see it as normal and healthy for the club president or head coach to be a woman when a man is available or applying for the position. We are still associated with reproductive and caring work as priorities, and with fragility that could affect us in crucial moments of competition.*
- ✓ *Sadly, the ability to lead and manage is still presumed for men, while women have to prove it, overcoming difficulties for the first opportunity and family reconciliation for continuity.*
- ✓ *Hiring should be based on merit, knowledge, and management, not gender. If someone is qualified for a position, they should get it whether they are a man or a woman.*
- ✓ *Modules or subjects on this topic should be included in vocational training and university degrees.*
- ✓ *At the amateur development level, it is much more difficult for women to advance and identify with projects due to social prejudices that insist they follow a different path. Family reconciliation is key, as is giving opportunities before proving oneself because many women have not seen themselves in certain positions until they were given the opportunity. This may not be in their thoughts. Everything must be approached without imposition, naturally and with reasoning based on the results and contributions they make towards equality.*

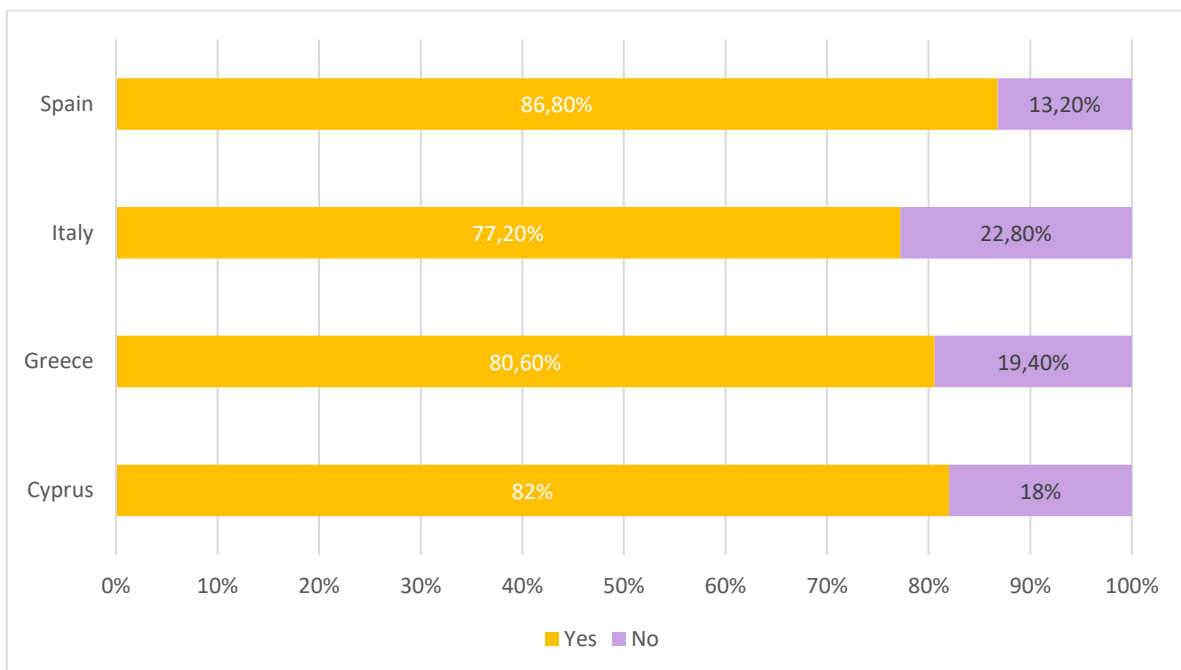
#### 4.7.2 The impact of the SheCOACH online survey to participants

In an effort to assess the impact of this research, the final question was “Has this survey offered you 'food for thought' and helped you broaden your view on gender equality in coaching?”.

The vast majority in all four countries answered “yes” with the percentage at transnational level being 82%. The detailed results per country are shown in Graph 19. The highest level of agreement was in Spain (86.8%), while Italy had the lowest (77.2%), but still a strong majority. It is also worth noting that 186 of the 413 participants (45%) in all countries provided their email address and expressed interest in being involved in future project activities and receiving project updates.

These results show that the SheCOACH research has had a significant impact, encouraging participants to self-reflect and think more deeply about gender equality in coaching and their own involvement in relevant activities, which is a positive step towards promoting greater awareness and potentially driving change in the sport sector.

Graph 19: Responses to the question ““Has this survey offered you 'food for thought' and helped you broaden your view on gender equality in coaching?” (% per country)



Source: SheCOACH D2.2 National Reports for Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain, 2024

## **5. Presentation and discussion of the interview results in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain**

### **5.1 Participants' profile**

All **20 individuals** who participated in the **SheCOACH interviews in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain** signed consent forms, which informed them, among other things, that all findings would be recorded anonymously and that they would not be identifiable in any reports or publications.

The interviewees –5 per country– have extensive experience in sport, with a mix of coaching, administrative and educational roles. The diversity of gender, professional background, experience and expertise, with participants from different sports and professional positions, has contributed to a broad view of coaching dynamics and sport education in all four countries. In addition, their insights and wide range of experiences and perspectives are crucial for the development of well-rounded conclusions and recommendations for the SheCOACH project.

#### **5.1.1 Demographics and gender representation**

In Cyprus and Italy, all the interviewees were women, which provided a valuable perspective as the all-female groups offered direct insights into the experiences and challenges faced by women in the coaching profession. In Greece, of the five experts interviewed, four were men and one was a woman, indicating a male-dominated group and also reflecting the wider trend in sports coaching where male coaches dominate. In Spain, there were three men and two women, a balance that allows for a variety of perspectives on gender equality in coaching.

#### **5.1.2 Professional background, expertise and roles**

In Cyprus, the all-female group of respondents had between 5 and 20 years of professional experience in basketball coaching and administration in basketball and other sports such as cycling. Their backgrounds included active coaching, with several holding significant administrative positions in the national federation.

In Greece, the interviewees had extensive experience ranging from 28 to 35 years, with expertise in basketball, volleyball, and handball. They were not only experienced athletes and coaches but also held teaching positions in higher education and executive roles in sports federations or associations. Their extensive experience in both coaching and sports administration, as well as their involvement as professors and trainers in sports education and coaching seminars, has provided a broad perspective on systemic issues in coaching.

In Italy, the all-female group had varied experiences across different sports, including basketball, football, and artistic gymnastics. Their roles ranged from youth coaching to managing mini-basketball sectors, reflecting a wide-ranging understanding of coaching challenges and opportunities across different sports.



In Spain, the interviewees had extensive experience within the Spanish Basketball Federations, including roles as professional players, coaches and educators. Four of the five participants have coaching experience, with two of them also contributing as educators at various levels of education - whether in schools, academic programmes or within their respective basketball federations.

## 5.2 Awareness and understanding

### 5.2.1 Familiarity of the interviewees with the concept of gender equality in coaching and their interpretation of the term

Interviewees in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain showed varying levels of familiarity with the concept of gender equality in coaching, but in all cases recognised its importance in general, not just in coaching, with shared views on equal opportunities, fair treatment and equal pay.

Most participants interpreted gender equality as equal opportunities, rights and respect for men and women and emphasised the need for an inclusive environment. In other cases, some interviewees highlighted that gender equality is also related to tackling discrimination and promoting the fair representation of women in traditionally male-dominated sports. However, some acknowledged that gender equality hasn't been achieved in practice.

The different levels of familiarity, awareness and interpretation of the term, even though all participants covered different aspects, suggest that although the concept is widely accepted, its full understanding and implementation still requires intensive efforts.

### 5.2.2 Assessing the importance for a) sport organisations/associations/federations to address gender equality in coaching and b) for coaching education providers to address gender equality in coaching in their courses

In all four countries, all respondents agree that sports organisations, federations and coaching education providers have a crucial role to play in promoting gender equality. They recognise the progress that has been made, but also acknowledge that there is still much to be done.

In Greece and Cyprus, there is a shared recognition of the male-dominated nature of the coaching profession and the importance of addressing gender equality. Similarly, Italy's respondents stress the necessity of creating opportunities for women, reducing barriers and equipping coaches with the knowledge to deal effectively with gender issues. Spanish participants advocate a meritocratic approach to the training and selection of coaches, emphasising the creation of inclusive opportunities for both men and women.

Overall, in all countries there is a focus on creating an inclusive environment and addressing cultural biases that prevent women from progressing in coaching roles. There is a collective call for more focused and consistent efforts to ensure that coaching education and organisational practices in sport federations & associations can lead the way to true equality in coaching.

The following answer from an interviewee in Greece highlights that the issue of gender equality is of paramount importance for educators themselves, as it enables them to navigate the complexities of education and meet the needs of society: *"It is of the utmost importance that*

*trainers, professors and coaches have a comprehensive understanding of their own experiences as students, athletes and/or coaches, as well as engage in self-reflection on their current roles as educators and/or coaches. In the absence of such self-reflection, it is challenging to navigate the complexities of contemporary education. Our mindset is shaped by a multitude of experiences, which also influence our pedagogical practices. This phenomenon is not limited to the professional context; it also affects our personal lives. It is crucial to ensure that all stakeholders are aware that contemporary pedagogical and coaching practices do not differentiate between the sexes and genders”.*

### 5.3 Current situation and existing practices

#### **5.3.1 Existing initiatives or efforts within sport associations/federations etc. to promote gender equality in coaching in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Spain and beyond**

Interviewees in all four countries provided insights into various initiatives and efforts by sports federations and associations to promote gender equality in coaching, although some, particularly in Italy, were unaware of any such initiatives.

In Cyprus, the Basketball Federation, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Commissioner for Gender Equality to develop programs aimed at increasing women's participation in basketball. However, other related efforts are still in early stages or limited and the long-term impact remains uncertain. The gap in the number of female coaches persists, despite targeted encouragement for women to apply for coaching roles.

In Greece, the Hellenic Basketball Federation has implemented significant initiatives, such as appointing female coaches for all minor female national teams. However, according to one respondent, this has raised concerns about “reverse discrimination” and doubts about the effectiveness of such measures. Despite women being invited to take on managerial roles, many decline due to time constraints or lack of interest. In addition, various sports federations have adopted anti-sexual harassment policies, while the Greek Basketball Coaches Association emphasises education by offering scholarships to female coaches and inviting female speakers at various trainings and events.

In Italy, respondents' awareness of gender equality initiatives is limited. FIBA's reserved quotas for female coaches and FIGC's “Quote Rosa”<sup>7</sup> initiative is recognised, but their practical impact is seen as minimal, highlighting a gap between policy and practice.

In Spain, some participants acknowledge the existence of equality plans and highlight ongoing efforts, while others are less informed, indicating a need for better communication and implementation. Overall, the responses in Spain underline the importance of comprehensive communication and robust implementation of equality plans in all federations. While some demonstrate proactive engagement, others suggest room for improvement in ensuring wider awareness and effective implementation of gender equality initiatives in sport.

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<sup>7</sup> A policy implemented by the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) aimed at promoting gender equality.

At the transnational level, while there are efforts to promote gender equality in coaching in all four countries, the effectiveness and awareness of these initiatives vary considerably, highlighting the need for more coordinated and communicated efforts to achieve more meaningful gender equality in sport coaching.

### **5.3.2 Existing situation and current initiatives in institutions/universities/VET centres in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain regarding the integration of gender issues in coaching training courses/programmes and curricula**

In Greece, significant progress has been made in integrating gender issues into physical education. Historically, Greek universities had separate classes for men and women, but this practice has been abolished and all classes are now co-educational. At institutions such as the Democritus University of Thrace, gender equality is horizontally integrated into various courses, while at the University of Thessaly there are also stand-alone courses on gender issues. In addition, public coaching programmes, such as those offered by the Greek Basketball Coaches' Association, include specialised courses that address the specific needs of female athletes. Recent initiatives, such as academic conferences and sports activities, further highlight the growing importance of gender issues in sports education.

In Cyprus, gender issues are increasingly being included in university curricula, although there are usually no separate courses on gender equality in coaching. The University of Cyprus, for example, includes gender issues in sports management and physical education courses. However, respondents noted the need for more structured and dedicated modules specifically focused on gender equality to ensure a deeper understanding and engagement of students.

In Italy, awareness of the integration of gender issues in coaching education is limited. Respondents report a lack of relevant courses on gender issues. The focus appears to be minimal, with only a few initiatives such as reserved quotas for women mentioned, and even these have limited practical impact. This suggests a need for more comprehensive efforts to integrate gender issues into the education system.

In Spain, responses indicate a mixed level of awareness and engagement with gender equality initiatives within coaching education providers. While some participants recognize the existence of gender equality plans and emphasize ongoing efforts to promote these issues, others are less aware, pointing to a gap in communication and implementation.

Overall, while there has been some progress in addressing gender issues in coaching education in the four SheCOACH countries, especially in Greece and Cyprus, the level of integration and effectiveness of initiatives varies widely and there is certainly room for improvement. The interviews highlight the need for more specific horizontal approaches, but also for structured initiatives to integrate gender issues more fully into coaching education and training programmes.

## 5.4 Challenges and barriers

### 5.4.1. Challenges and barriers in promoting gender equality in coaching in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain

The answers given in all four countries reveal more or less similar challenges and barriers, mainly rooted in socio-cultural and structural factors. More specifically, despite the ongoing progress that the majority acknowledged, social norms and cultural perceptions continue to play an important role in limiting women's progress in coaching. Most interviewees highlighted the persistence of “traditional” stereotypes that question women's abilities in the coaching profession, while others noted that such biases are often combined by structural barriers, such as limited opportunities, unequal pay and a lack of visible female coaches as role models.

In Greece and Cyprus, family obligations and traditional gender roles were emphasised as significant obstacles, revealing a wider perception that it is difficult -if not impossible- for women to balance a high-level coaching career with societal expectations of motherhood. A lack of confidence on the part of many female coaches and internalised sexism among female coaches and athletes, according to some responses, add to the challenges.

In Italy, respondents highlighted resistance to female coaches and their under-representation, particularly in male-dominated sports such as football. In Spain, the responses reveal a complex picture, with some participants reporting a supportive environment, while others highlighting significant barriers for female coaches, such as gender bias, unequal career progression and a general perception that favours male coaches.

The consensus is that despite the progress achieved, particularly in raising awareness and initiating discussion, there is still a lot of work to be done to overcome these deep-rooted barriers and promote gender equality in coaching. Addressing the aforementioned barriers requires not only policy changes but also a cultural shift that challenges traditional gender roles and promotes equal opportunities for women in coaching.

### 5.4.2. Specific examples that concern a) sport associations/federations and b) educational institutions in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain

In Greece and Cyprus, while no specific examples were provided, most interviewees acknowledged the progress made in recent years and emphasized the need for ongoing action to address gender biases and promote gender equality in sport and coaching. In Cyprus, there was a comment about policies that exist on paper but lack effective implementation, as well as a call for stronger mentoring and more effective support networks for female coaches within the sport associations.

In Italy, responses varied, with some interviewees noting a lack of institutional support for female coaches and insufficient integration of gender issues in training programmes. Others highlighted deep-rooted prejudices and the low enrolment of women in existing courses. In Spain, there was a noticeable contrast in the level of engagement with gender equality initiatives and again no specific examples of obstacles were mentioned.

## 5.5 Suggestions and recommendations

### **5.5.1 Suggestions to a) promote gender equality in coaching within associations/federations and ways to overcome barriers and b) integrate gender related aspects in courses and educational curricula in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain**

In all four countries, the majority of participants highlight the need for a holistic approach to promoting gender equality in coaching and agree on the necessity and importance for awareness-raising campaigns, training programmes and policy interventions within sports organisations and educational institutions.

Incorporating gender issues into coaching curricula and actively promoting the achievements of female coaches are seen as essential steps in overcoming barriers and promoting gender equality in sports coaching. Most respondents stress the importance of providing equal opportunities, resources and support for both male and female players and coaches.

The involvement of all stakeholders from federations, associations, teams, athletes and coaches themselves is key to success and the focus should be on tackling stereotypes and promoting a more inclusive environment. According to an interviewee from Greece, it is also important to recognise that parental and family views can influence the acceptance of female coaches.

### **5.5.2 Resources or support mechanisms contributing in promoting gender equality in coaching within organisations/federations in Cyprus, Greece, Italy & Spain**

Awareness-raising and role models, educational material and cooperation and networking are the main resources and support mechanisms proposed in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain, believing that they will contribute to the promotion of gender equality in coaching within sports organisations and federations.

In more detail, the need for up-to-date educational resources on gender issues is highlighted, particularly in Greece and Cyprus, and it is noted that this material should be made available to coaching education providers to enhance their curricula and promote gender equality. Facilitating networking and training opportunities, especially abroad, is also recommended to empower female coaches.

In Italy and Spain, the focus is on promoting the work of successful female coaches and using inclusive language. In Greece and Cyprus is also mentioned that federations, associations, sports clubs and the media should work together to promote the achievements of female coaches and challenge stereotypes. Spain also highlights the importance of leadership and organisational culture in shaping players' attitudes towards gender equality.

### **5.5.3 Specific topics that should be included in a gender-sensitive and gender-balanced coaching course that aims to promote gender equality**

Based on the answers collected in Greece, Cyprus, Italy, and Spain, here are some specific topics that, according to the interviewees, should be included in a gender-sensitive and gender-balanced coaching course to promote gender equality:

- Structural issues and systemic inequalities. Recognising and understanding structural issues is the first step to addressing them, such as the unequal treatment and under-representation of women in coaching and leadership positions in sport.
- Legal frameworks and policies that focus on equal rights and support gender equality in sport. Understanding and advocating for gender equality in coaching, and developing and implementing comprehensive policies to support female athletes and coaches are considered crucial.
- Sport-specific gender issues. Tailoring gender issues to the specific needs and challenges of different sports, as well as addressing sport-specific barriers and opportunities for female coaches, can ensure that training is relevant and practical.
- Leadership skills, communication and conflict resolution. Developing leadership skills is crucial for all coaches. In addition, effective, inclusive communication and conflict resolution are particularly beneficial in overcoming challenges, including those that are gender-related.
- Tackling stereotypes and cultural biases: Addressing and overcoming gender stereotypes is a crucial step towards gender equality. In Italy, coaches suggest raising men's awareness of women's abilities and using inclusive language, while in Spain, participants focus on challenging cultural and societal stereotypes that undermine women's role in sport. In Cyprus, the need for case studies and real-life examples of successful female coaches to inspire and encourage future female coaches was highlighted.
- Work-life balance. Discussing the challenges of balancing family responsibilities with professional commitments and providing strategies and support mechanisms to help female coaches manage the situation is of great importance.
- Best practices from sport organisations & coaching education providers from different countries. Studying successful gender equality initiatives and learning how to adapt good and best practices to local contexts can be very beneficial. It is also important that curricula and courses include practical activities that present different perspectives and encourage hands-on experience on gender issues.

## 5.6 Future plans and further involvement

### 5.6.1 Expression of interest for further involvement in the SheCOACH initiative

In all four countries, there is a shared interest for further involvement in the SheCOACH initiative, although in some countries there are some formalities that need to be addressed. The overall feeling reflects a willingness to support initiatives that advance gender equality in sports.

All interviewees in Greece and Cyprus expressed a strong interest in further involvement, however, some noted that sport federations, associations and public universities usually require specific procedures (e.g. official invitations for participation) as decisions are taken by the board of members, university authorities etc. In Cyprus, participants also suggested organizing regular workshops and conferences to maintain involvement.

In Italy, some coaches, expressed interest due to their organization's open-mindedness, while others indicated no barriers to participation and openness to relevant courses. Spanish

respondents suggested strategies to promote gender equality in basketball through involvement in the SheCOACH project, emphasizing the need for advocating for comprehensive policies, mentorship networks, and targeted training programs to raise awareness and integrate gender equality into coaching practices.

### **5.6.2 Specific goals or targets related to gender equality in coaching for the near future**

Based on the interviews from related stakeholders and experts in Greece, Cyprus, Italy, and Spain, here are some specific goals or targets related to gender equality in coaching for the near future:

- Promotion and increased media coverage: All four countries aim to promote more the achievements of female athletes and coaches and increase media coverage of women's sport and female coaches to challenge negative gender stereotypes.
- More equal opportunities: Ensuring equal opportunities for women in coaching is a crucial objective. In Cyprus, a target of a certain percentage of women in coaching positions within the next five years was also mentioned. It is important to establish evaluation metrics to regularly assess progress towards gender equality goals.
- More mentoring programmes and increased confidence: Associations, federations and sport clubs want to help women coaches develop their confidence. Mentoring programmes can provide support, guidance and inspirational role models.
- Effective policies and ongoing monitoring: Advocate for comprehensive policies that ensure gender equality and resources for male and female athletes and coaches. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are needed to assess the effectiveness of policies over time.
- Targeted training programmes: Implementing targeted training programmes and workshops to raise awareness of gender equality issues among coaches and integrating gender-related modules into coaching certification programmes is also emphasised.

### **5.7. Brainstorming section (general comments and selected answers)**

According to the answers given in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain:

- Women in sports coaching / Female coaches: ... are seen as necessary and excellent, particularly effective in motivating younger athletes, though their presence is limited (Greece & Cyprus), ... are valued for their competence, toughness, and resilience, with some considering them indispensable and a valuable addition to coaching (Italy), ...are regarded as “the future of coaching”, with examples like Ana Montañana and Becky Hammon highlighted (Spain).
- Men in sports coaching / Male coaches: .... are seen as dominant, excellent and hold the majority of coaching positions, although some need to manage their behaviour better and be less tempered (Greece & Cyprus), .... are more common and sometimes perceived as superior, although there are mixed views on their equality with women and the need for them to learn from female coaches (Italy), .... are recognised but there is a focus on

equality with calls for equal opportunities and fair treatment for both male and female coaches.

- Gender Equality in Coaching: ....is seen as minimal, with significant gaps in numbers, pay, and opportunities. There is a need for more efforts to strengthen it (Greece), ....is challenging but crucial, with recommendations for targeted recruitment, mentorship programs, and zero-tolerance policies towards gender discrimination (Cyprus, Italy & Spain), .... There's a recognition that it's increasingly being promoted but remains limited overall (all countries).
- The first thing my association/federation/club should do to promote gender equality in coaching is to....: In Greece, there are suggestions to continue the good work already done and improve training programmes, promote the achievements of more female coaches and raise awareness through events and information days. In Cyprus, answers focus on adopting a zero-tolerance policy towards gender discrimination, continuous education, and visible leadership commitment to gender equality goals. In Italy, participants emphasise the need for actions that will promote positive female role models, continuing promotion efforts, and allowing female coaches to manage older age groups. In Spain proposals include introducing specific projects or courses on gender equality, creating a gender equality committee, funding coaching courses for women, increasing media coverage, and investigating gender equality needs.
- The first thing my coaching education provider should do to promote gender equality in coaching through our courses/curricula is to ...: In Greece, the discussion should start with equality in sport and then focus on coaching, while it is also crucial to seek cooperation and joint actions, with some already taking steps in this direction. In Cyprus, the emphasis is on ongoing dialogue, education and regular workshops to address both conscious and unconscious bias. In Italy, responses include integrating gender issues into curricula, promoting inclusive examples and offering specific courses on gender equality. Finally, in Spain, suggestions include introducing gender equality courses or projects, setting up a gender equality committee, funding courses for female coaches and raising awareness within clubs and sports federations.



## 6. Final conclusions and recommendations at transnational level

The role of coaches is essential to the physical and mental development of athletes, as well as to their training, with the goal of promoting their overall well-being, improving their performance and instilling values such as teamwork, discipline and fair play. SheCOACH is a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to **contribute to gender equality in sport coaching by promoting the participation of women in (basketball) coaching education** in Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Spain.

This report, in the form of an e-publication (D2.3):

a) summarises the main findings of the primary research conducted in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain, as presented in four corresponding SheCOACH national reports (D2.2), and

b) provides recommendations for actions and measures to be taken by (basketball) coaching education and qualification providers to address the gaps in awareness and knowledge for gender mainstreaming in coaching curricula and training programmes.

The SheCOACH primary research was conducted from April to June 2024 and targeted professionals from national or regional basketball -and other sports- federations, associations and sport clubs, as well as professionals from educational providers offering coaching courses, and other relevant stakeholders.

The project's online questionnaire was distributed to all implementing partners' members and networks in the abovementioned countries and a total of 413 responses were collected. In addition, all implementing partners conducted a total of 20 in-depth interviews -5 each- with relevant sport stakeholders.

With a transnational average of 82% of respondents confirming that the SheCOACH online survey had indeed offered them "food for thought" and helped them to broaden their view on gender equality in coaching, the SheCOACH partnership is confident that the project is already having a significant impact from its first phase, encouraging stakeholders to reflect more deeply on gender equality issues, which is the first positive step towards driving change in the sport sector.

The SheCOACH suggestions and recommendations at transnational level will form the basis for the development of Work Package 3 which will include the SheCOACH Capacity Building Programme (D3.1) and the SheCOACH e-learning platform (D3.2), which aim to mainstream gender in coaching curricula and develop specialised modules and training materials for coaching education providers. WP3 will also include the piloting and evaluation of this capacity building programme and a related evaluation report (D3.3).

It should be noted that the SheCOACH online survey and in-depth interview methods used in this project are exploratory in nature and the sample is not representative of the entire relevant population in all four countries. However, despite the limitations, the quantitative and qualitative research findings at the transnational level can provide rich insights and should be interpreted accordingly.

The most important key findings, conclusions and recommendations at the transnational level, based on the primary research conducted by SheCOACH are summarised in the following pages:

## 6.1 Main conclusions from the SheCOACH research

The SheCOACH research, conducted in Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Spain, highlights both common and unique challenges to gender equality in sport coaching, particularly in basketball. The various common themes and barriers that emerge clearly demonstrate a persistent gender gap in the coaching profession and the need for coordinated action at both national and transnational levels.

**Gender inequality and underrepresentation of female coaches:** In Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain, there is a clear under-representation of women in coaching positions in all “traditionally male”, but also in other sports. Basketball coaching remains male-dominated in all four countries and, despite progress, male coaches still occupy the majority of leadership positions even in women's leagues. Although gender discrimination is not always evident, systemic barriers -such as institutional or unconscious bias, cultural norms and lack of access to resources, funding, visibility and career advancement opportunities- continue to limit the progress of women in coaching positions.

**Awareness & familiarity vs. training & action:** While there is a high level of self-reported familiarity with the concept of gender equality in coaching, the significant gap between the high level of awareness and the low level of participation in related training raises doubts about the actual level of knowledge of participants. Furthermore, despite the growing awareness of gender equality issues in sports coaching, this is not always translated into concrete actions. Many sports federations, associations and clubs are aware of the importance of promoting gender equality, but lack the strategic plans, policies and resources needed to implement effective interventions.

**Socio-cultural and institutional barriers:** Socio-cultural norms, institutional biases are key barriers to achieving gender equality in coaching. Traditional gender roles, perpetuated by patriarchal values, limit women's opportunities and reinforce stereotypes that undermine their potential as coaches. These barriers are reinforced by institutional barriers and gender discrimination, including a lack of support for female coaches, limited access to leadership opportunities, and a lack of role models in high-level coaching positions.

**Need for effective gender equality strategies and policies:** The findings highlight the need for sport organisations and coaching education institutions to develop and implement comprehensive, proactive and holistic strategies and policies to promote gender equality in sport coaching. These strategies should include the development of clear gender equality policies, the integration of gender issues into coaching education and curricula, and the promotion of women's achievements in sport. There is also a need for targeted initiatives to address specific barriers faced by women, such as work-life balance, the gender pay gap and access to more professional development opportunities.

**Importance of media representation and role models:** The work and achievements of female coaches are not sufficiently promoted, resulting in a lack of positive role models. This of public fair, balanced and unbiased public representation perpetuates a cycle in which future

generations of female players and coaches have fewer examples to look up to, potentially limiting their aspirations and opportunities in the field.

The brainstorming sessions in both the online survey and the in-depth interviews provided valuable feedback, leading to the following conclusions:

**Women in coaching...:** Overall, the responses reflect a recognition of the significant barriers faced by female coaches, but also an appreciation of their abilities and potential. There is a transnational demand for greater equality, respect and opportunities for women in coaching, as well as the need to challenge and overcome existing social and cultural biases that are barriers to women's progress. To achieve a more inclusive coaching environment, it's essential to promote equal opportunities, recognise women's achievements and challenge the stereotypes that continue to limit the participation and potential of women coaches.

**Men in coaching...:**The feedback from all four countries confirms once again the fact that (basketball) coaching is male-dominated and that men often have more power, privileges and opportunities as coaches in comparison to women. While male coaches are generally seen as competent and committed, there is considerable criticism of the way they treat female coaches, which in many cases reproduces “old fashioned” stereotypes. However, there is also optimism that male coaches can play a crucial role in promoting gender equality if they are willing to recognise and challenge stereotypes and prejudices and support women in order to foster a more inclusive coaching environment.

**Gender equality in coaching....:**The responses reflect a complex landscape where gender equality in coaching is widely recognised as important and necessary, but faces significant challenges and resistance, and in some cases is even characterised as “impossible” or “utopian”. Achieving true gender equality in coaching requires a “cultural change” and dedicated, coordinated efforts to address barriers and challenges, promote inclusivity and ensure that opportunities are based on merit rather than gender.

Many additional comments collected in different parts of the primary research in all four countries confirm the need to promote gender equality in coaching. Many participants talk about the need for equal opportunities and support for women in coaching, while some express concern about “enforced equality” without value. The “open” responses highlight once again the existent challenges for female coaches in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain, including stereotypes, social prejudices, lack of recognition and unequal treatment. There is a call for wider socio-cultural change, more educational initiatives, and more effective systemic support. Overall, the additional comments highlight the need for genuine, merit-based inclusion while recognising the hard work that is still required to achieve this goal.

Key suggestions by the SheCOACH survey participants that need to be taken into consideration:

- **Prioritisation of policy development:** At transnational level there is a strong consensus on the need for official, structured and up-to-date commitments to gender equality.
- **Setting clear goals and tackling bias:** There is a strong need to set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (S.M.A.R.T) goals and to address deep-rooted cultural and institutional obstacles.
- **Collaboration and shared practices:** The value of sharing best practices and pooling resources to achieve common gender equality goals is highly recommended.

- Supportive environments, equal opportunities, fair recruitment, work-life balance and language: These are also seen as fundamental to creating a fair, inclusive and welcoming environment for women in coaching.
- Specialised training and resource allocation: These reflect the need for targeted interventions and sustained investment to drive meaningful change.
- Research and evidence-based action: In the pursuit of gender equality in coaching, evidence-based decision-making is of critical importance.

## 6.2 SheCOACH recommendations for providers of coaching training and qualifications

The following recommendations can guide providers of coaching education and qualifications in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of training curricula and other related activities and measures. The aim is to increase awareness, knowledge and practice of gender mainstreaming, resulting in a more inclusive and equitable coaching environment.

**Gender equality as a genuine commitment under a holistic approach:** Gender equality in coaching should be treated as a real commitment, not as a superficial or isolated effort, or even as a marketing strategy or a tool to help sports organisations and educational institutions meet regulatory standards. It must go beyond simply increasing the number of women in coaching education programmes, although these numbers are important indicators of progress. It needs to be addressed in a complete and holistic way, starting with general education, moving to a greater focus on sports education and then including coaching-specific issues. It is important to adopt a horizontal approach in sports curricula, but also to include specific gender issues in specialised seminars, training programmes and coaching curricula.

**Resource allocation for gender mainstreaming and gender equality initiatives:** The allocation of specific resources -human and material- is the first step in the successful development and sustainability of gender equality training programmes. This includes not only financial resources and materials, but also experienced staff and time. The establishment of a gender equality committee within coaching education providers -if one doesn't already exist- is crucial to ensuring that gender issues are consistently addressed and integrated into all aspects of coaching education. This committee or group will act as a dedicated body responsible for overseeing, designing and implementing the equality policy, monitoring progress, evaluating and updating the coaching curriculum, etc.

**Research and data collection:** Coaching education providers should conduct primary or secondary research to identify specific gender-related barriers, challenges and training needs within the sport coaching community and use data-driven evidence to design training programmes to effectively address the most pressing gender related issues.

**Design and implementation of an inclusive, gender sensitive curriculum design:** An inclusive curriculum design that mainstreams gender equality, consciously incorporates principles of gender equality and inclusivity into all aspects of teaching and learning and ensures that gender considerations are integrated into all subjects and educational activities. Training providers should work to ensure that all course materials and resources and activities reflect diverse, gender-sensitive perspectives. The use of inclusive language, gender-inclusive practices and examples of successful female trainers are essential.

**Targeted, comprehensive modules on gender equality:** Coaching education providers should also include specific modules in coaching curricula that cover key issues related to gender equality, such as the definition, barriers and benefits of gender equality, in particular unconscious bias and gender stereotypes, the legal framework for gender equality, etc. Interactive and experiential learning methods such as role-playing and case studies are strongly encouraged to engage participants and deepen their understanding.

**Assessment, evaluation, review & update:** Successful training programmes incorporate effective assessment methods to evaluate learner understanding and use feedback to continuously improve the curriculum and address knowledge gaps. It is essential for sport education providers to regularly review and update curricula to ensure relevance and alignment with learner needs, current developments and best practice in gender equality in sport and coaching.

**Participation incentives or even mandatory trainings:** Continued professional development opportunities focused on gender equality could include beginners or advanced courses, seminars and webinars. Where appropriate, coaching education providers should include either optional or mandatory gender equality training and workshops for all participants in coaching certification programmes, and offer accreditation, recognition awards or other incentives to encourage participation.

**Collaboration with gender equality experts and female educators and mentors:** Involving gender equality experts, organisations and advocacy groups in the design and delivery of coaching education curricula or even individual courses can ensure a comprehensive structure and high-quality content. In addition, the recruitment of (more) female educators, trainers and mentors can contribute to a more positive impact as gender equality in action.

**Awareness raising campaigns:** The use of various communication channels, such as websites, social media, newsletters, workshops, info-days, conferences etc. should be used to reach a wider audience and raise awareness in the coaching community to highlight the importance of gender equality and encourage participation in available training opportunities. Highlighting success stories and role models within the coaching community can play a key part in ensuring the success of such campaigns.

For example, a targeted awareness raising campaign could be a “Gender Equality in Coaching Week” or month with workshops, seminars and public discussions led by successful female coaches.

**Policy advocacy for gender equality in coaching:** Coaching education providers should work with education and sport governing bodies at national and international level to ensure that gender equality is a priority in coaching certification standards and the overall framework for sport coaching. By effectively advocating for gender equality in coaching certification and working with sport governing bodies, coaching education providers can contribute to systemic change that will support the development of a more equitable and inclusive coaching environment and ensure long-term systemic change within the sport sector.

### 6.3 SheCOACH recommendations for collaboration and transnational action

Collaborative and transnational efforts and joint actions, especially in the framework of EU-funded projects such as SheCOACH, can effectively address gender mainstreaming in sport education and contribute to bridging the gender gap in sport coaching. There is a clear need for more proactive and structured initiatives to address gender equality issues, coupled with increased awareness and recognition of existent potential barriers. Sharing experiences, strategies and good practices between different countries, in our case Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Spain, can significantly advance gender equality by promoting cooperation between federations, associations, sports clubs and coaching education & training providers.

**Transnational gender equality policies:** An up-to-date, comprehensive and unified framework for gender equality in sports education and coaching, which can be adapted to the specific needs and contexts of each country, can have a significant impact. Such a framework should include clear guidelines for promoting gender equality, addressing systemic barriers, and ensuring equal opportunities for women in coaching.

**Gender equality plans:** Such plans are essential in sports authorities, sports organisations and clubs, and sports education institutions, and should include concrete measures and clear targets in areas such as organisational culture, gender balance in leadership, gender equality in recruitment and career progression, work-life balance, integration of the gender dimension in research and teaching, measures against gender-based violence, etc.

**Gender mainstreaming in coaching education:** Ensuring that gender-related topics are fully integrated into coaching curricula across all levels of education and training in all countries can truly promote gender equality in sports and foster an actually inclusive coaching environment. Key issues that need to be addressed include defining main concepts, recognising and tackling systemic barriers, challenging stereotypes, addressing gender bias and gender discrimination, fostering work-life balance, and promoting inclusive communication and leadership styles.

**Support and promotion of female role models and media engagement:** Transnational and collaborative efforts to highlight and celebrate the work and achievements of female coaches in all four countries, using social media campaigns and also working with journalists and established media to gain greater public recognition, can help to challenge stereotypes and provide visible, positive role models for the future generation of female coaches.

**Strengthened collaboration and networking:** Strong cooperation between sports federations, associations, clubs and educational institutions at national and transnational levels can lead to more solid and effective actions. The creation of networks for joint initiatives and the development of platforms and discussion forums where useful material and good practices can be exchanged and ideas discussed can indeed promote gender equality in coaching. In this context, regular monitoring and evaluation of the progress and effectiveness of gender equality policies and initiatives can help to ensure that strategies lead to tangible, positive results.

By addressing these issues in a collective and strategic way, Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Spain can make a significant difference in achieving gender equality in sports coaching and set a positive example for other countries.

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