



# GENDER & SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN SPORT



FAIRPLAY-VIDC FACTSHEET DEVELOPED IN THE PROJECT "SPORT FOR ALL GENDERS AND SEXUALITIES".  
IN COOPERATION WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF INTERSEX PEOPLE AUSTRIA (VIMÖ), & SKATE AUSTRIA

Everyone has the right to take part in sport. LGBTIQ+ people often experience exclusion, hatred and discrimination in sport, which prevents or discourages them from participating. It is the responsibility of clubs and sports organisations to create a safe and respectful space in which everyone can play the sport they are good at and/or enjoy without being harmed. Clubs and organisations are also invited to seek help from experts.

Currently, people are being excluded from sport because of their gender or sexual orientation or are confronted with discrimination. Sport is based on the idea that there are two clear and unchangeable genders (men/boys & women/girls), to which certain characteristics and abilities are often ascribed. But the reality is more diverse. For example, there are trans\* and intersex people or people who cannot or do not want to categorise themselves as either gender (non-binary). Grassroots sport has the purpose to attract as many people as possible and to give everyone access to sporting activities.

## WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?

**Discrimination** refers to the devaluation / exclusion / unequal treatment of or violence against people based on certain (ascribed) characteristics.

**For example:** on the basis of origin, gender, skin colour, sexual orientation, gender identity or religion.



## HOW DOES DISCRIMINATION MANIFEST ITSELF IN SPORT?

### OVERT FORMS

- Explicit exclusion from sport
- Everyday language & insults: e.g. using "gay" as an insult, devaluing girls, sexist or racist language, making degrading comments about the appearance of others
- Bullying, harassment, hatred, physical and psychological violence
- Symbols, images, prejudices, clichés, ignorance

### HIDDEN / STRUCTURAL FORMS

- (Lack of) representation and role models
- Being made invisible and not addressed: e.g. on advertising images, websites or in the media
- Lack of offers for certain target groups
- Unequal distribution of funding, space, infrastructure



NOT allowing people to participate in sport because of their gender, sexuality or gender identity is overt discrimination.



# IMPORTANT TERMS: GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUALITY

## „QUEER“

is an umbrella term for all people who do not conform to the "conventional" norms of society in terms of sexual orientation and/or gender and/or gender identity.

## „LGBTIQ“

is an abbreviation - the letters stand for the terms Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queen.

## „\* + : \_“

stands for all possibilities of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender diversity beyond and between man/woman or heterosexual. This is to ensure that everyone is included and addressed.

## BODY AND SEX

People have sexual characteristics. A person's physical sex is made up of **externally visible anatomical characteristics** (e.g. penis or vulva) as well as **internal sexual characteristics, hormones, and chromosomes**. Both on a medical level and in terms of social norms, sex is not unambiguous and the definition of what/who is a woman or a man, for example, changes culturally and historically.

**Intersex / inter\*** refers to people with variations in their sexual characteristics. Intersex people do not conform to society's binary way of thinking of unambiguous male or female bodies. They may have female and male sexual characteristics.



## SEXUALITY AND DESIRE

People have sexual desire. This is called **sexuality**. Who people love and who people want to have sex with varies. This is their **sexual orientation**.

## TERMS IN RELATION TO SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- \* **Heterosexual** Women, who desire men, and men, who desire women.
- \* **Lesbians** Women, who desire women.
- \* **Gay** Men, who desire men.
- \* **Bisexual** is someone, who desires both men and women.

## GENDER IDENTITY

At birth, children are assigned to a specific gender based on physical characteristics: usually as female or male. This categorisation can be consistent or inconsistent for a person throughout their life. Gender identity describes the **self-determined/chosen and lived/experienced belonging of a person to a particular gender**. This gender is not necessarily the same as the one assigned at birth. A person can see themselves as a man, a woman, between these two genders or completely different to them.

## TERMS IN THE FIELD OF GENDER IDENTITY

- \* **Female** woman\*/belonging to the female gender
- \* **Male** man\*/belonging to the male gender
- \* **Cis** The (self-determined, perceived, lived) gender identity corresponds to the one assigned at birth
- \* **Trans\*** The (self-determined, perceived, lived) gender identity does **not** correspond to the one assigned at birth.
- \* **Non-binary** The person is neither male nor female, the gender identity can have male or female aspects, be somewhere in between, or be completely outside of these categories.
- \* **Inter\*** Intersex can refer not only to physical sexual characteristics but can also be one's own lived gender identity. However, intersex people do not automatically define themselves as inter\* - some live as a woman or a man, for example.



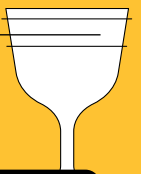


# WHY SPORT NEEDS TO TAKE ACTION



## WHY IS SPORT CALLED UPON TO DEAL WITH TRANS\*, INTER\* & NON-BINARY ATHLETES

- 1 **Human rights and the right to participation and inclusion also exist in sport.**
- 2 **Trans\*, inter\* and non-binary people are currently excluded from sport and face discrimination and violence.**
- 3 **There is a need and demand from currently excluded groups.**
- 4 **There is a clear call to action from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to all international sports federations to find solutions.**
- 5 **The aim of grassroots sport is to encourage as many people as possible to participate in sport.**



## CONSEQUENCES FOR SPORT ORGANISATIONS, IF THEY DON'T TAKE ACTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

- People, who do not feel respected, leave the club and therefore usually also organised sport as a whole (girls/women, LGBTIQ+, Jewish/Muslim people, migrants, Roma, BIPOC etc.)
- Lack of diversity and lost potential at clubs
- Problems with recruitment and shortages of volunteers
- Conflicts within the club → violence against certain groups in the club, disputes, weakening of performance
- Punishment → competition regulations: money, points deduction, relegation, suspension
- Reputational damage? Social responsibility? Human rights?

**My values and my messages as a club or coach have a lasting impact on the development of children, young people and adults.** If, for example, a player's identity as a girl is constantly devalued or not taken seriously, I have fewer prospects of developing a positive self-image and healthy self-confidence. I will turn my back on sport or be hindered in my healthy development.

**i** We don't necessarily have to immediately categorise people into genders. We can also say: Everyone is human. Gender doesn't matter. Sometimes we don't recognise a person's gender. That's ok.

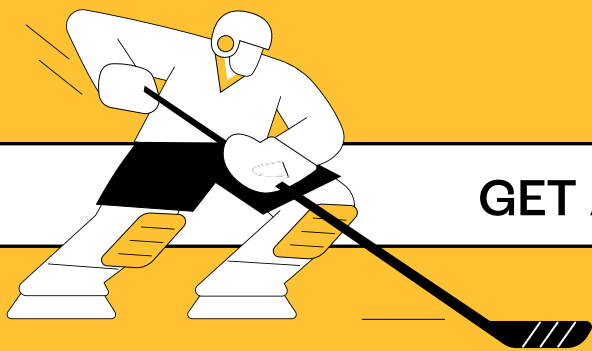


According to recent estimates, 9% of people have a sexual orientation other than heterosexual, and 3% of people have a gender identity other than the one assigned to them at birth ("cis"). These figures increase if we only look at the younger generation. 1.7% of people are intersex. (LGBT+ Pride 2023 Ipsos Survey). Your organisation is probably more diverse than you think!

## CONSEQUENCES FOR AFFECTED GROUPS, IF SPORT ORGANISATIONS DON'T TAKE ACTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

- Denied access, marginalisation and systematic exclusion of social groups from sport
- LGBTIQ+ hide their identity → crisis!
- Psychological problems and great suffering up to suicide. (Homosexual young people have a suicide rate 6 times higher than heterosexuals!)
- Reinforcement of hatred & segregation → risk of radicalisation
- No social connection and no social participation → lack of integration
- Health-promoting effects of social interaction and physical activity fail to materialise





## GET ACTIVE!

Implementing gender diversity in everyday sport presents us with challenges for which we have to find solutions together. These can look very different and we obviously cannot change everything overnight. But we can address the issue openly and work together to see what can be done to break down barriers at various levels of sport. Change comes about by addressing an issue, and even small steps can make an important contribution.

**If you would like to get or to share ideas, want to implement measures towards more diversity, contact your local Information and Contactpoints**

⇨ <https://edu.fairplay.or.at/en/lessons/local-information-and-contactpoints-for-gender-and-sexual-diversity/>

## MEASURES

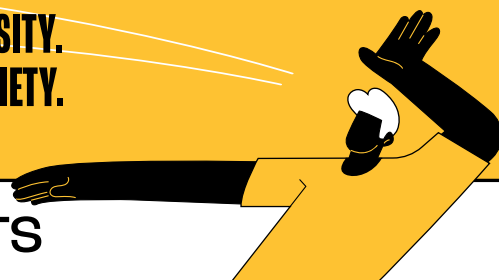
- **Training & Workshops**
- **Campaign for Diversity** “Rising Together – open your sport for all genders and sexualities”
- **Testimonials for Gender Diversity**
- **Regional Working Group on Gender and Sexual Diversity in Sport** Exchange and Knowledge transfer
- **Consultations of your sport organisation**



You can find links & infos on measures and activities here: <https://edu.fairplay.or.at/en/lessons/measures-and-activities/>



**IT IS IMPORTANT TO SHOW AND LIVE DIVERSITY.  
ONLY THEN CAN ALL PEOPLE BE PART OF SOCIETY.**



## RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

- **Good Practice Report** – European Good Practice examples for gender and sexual diversity in sport (fairplay/SGS-project)
- **Guidelines for diversity in sport clubs** (fairplay/SGS-project)
- **Research-Report: Results of the European survey on gender and diversity** (fairplay/SGS-project)



You can find all resources, infos and links on the topic and our “Sport for all genders and sexualities”-project here: <https://edu.fairplay.or.at/en/courses/gender-and-sexual-diversity-in-sport/>



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