

# **Best Practices: Effective Strategies for Addressing Gender-Based Violence**

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## Best Practices: Effective Strategies for Addressing Gender-Based Violence

Ever since the Preventing Gender-Based Violence in and through Sport (SportGVP) project kicked off in April 2024, partners from across Europe (EDEX – Educational Excellence Corporation Limited, Cyprus; ISCA – International Sport and Culture Association, Denmark; CESIE, Italy, KMOP – Education & Innovation Hub, Greece; CARDET – Centre for the Advancement of Research in Educational Technology Ltd, Cyprus; and TAKT – Združenje Za Unapreduvanje Megusebna Dobrevnja, North Macedonia) have been researching for best practices. As a result, the '*Gender-based violence and sport realities, challenges and responses*' report came into being, offering a comprehensive examination of gender-based violence (GBV) in sports contexts at both European and national levels focusing on the five project partner countries: Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Italy and North Macedonia.

Gender-based violence (GBV) in sports remains a pressing issue across Europe, affecting athletes, coaches, and communities alike. Addressing this challenge requires a multifaceted approach that incorporates education, policy reform, and community engagement. Here, we present key strategies and best practices drawn from recent initiatives and research, highlighting actionable steps for stakeholders committed to fostering safe and inclusive sports environments.

The research revealed that GBV, appearing in many forms, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence, in 2025 is still an ongoing phenomenon that needs to be addressed. Luckily, in the partnering countries, legislative measures and action plans are implemented to fight GBV. Let's see how!

### 1. Comprehensive Policies and Frameworks

A solid legal and policy framework is the foundation for combating GBV in sports. The International Olympic Committee's (IOC) "Safeguarding Athletes from Harassment and Abuse Toolkit" provides an excellent model. This resource outlines policies, reporting mechanisms, and training modules tailored for sports organisations. Localisation and adaptation of such frameworks to meet specific national and organisational needs are vital for effectiveness ([IOC's Safeguarding Toolkit](#)).

In Cyprus, the 2021 Violence Against Women Act introduced safety measures in sports and mandated ethical codes for sports organisations. Similarly, Greece's comprehensive legal framework includes the National Action Plan for Gender Equality, which integrates GBV prevention measures within sports policies. However, challenges remain in bridging the gap between policy and implementation.

### 2. Education and Training

Building awareness and capacity among stakeholders is critical. Programmes like Canada's '[Respect in Sport](#)' offer online training for coaches and administrators to recognise and respond to bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Such initiatives emphasise the importance of fostering a culture of respect at all levels of sports organisations.



Denmark's '[#Gamechanger](#)' programme exemplifies efforts to promote inclusion through structured training and eliminating discriminatory language within sports associations. This initiative has enhanced inclusivity and respect in sports environments by providing guidelines and ongoing support.

### 3. Visibility and Awareness Campaigns

Raising awareness through campaigns and public engagement can shift societal attitudes and encourage reporting. The "[Her Game Too](#)" movement in the UK, launched in 2021, addresses sexism in sports and promotes gender equality through powerful media campaigns and community events.

Similarly, the "Gwomen" initiative in Greece highlights the achievements of female athletes and addresses issues like GBV and discrimination through conferences, interviews, and publications. These efforts amplify women's voices and challenge stereotypes about gender roles in sports ([Gwomen Initiative](#)).

### 4. Inclusive Leadership and Role Models

Promoting gender diversity in leadership roles within sports organisations is a proven strategy for fostering equity. Finland's '[Leads Like a Woman](#)' programme equips women with leadership skills, enabling them to take on decision-making roles in sports federations. By providing mentoring and training, the programme has increased the representation of women in sports leadership and inspired others to follow suit.

### 5. Safe Spaces and Reporting Mechanisms

Creating safe environments is essential for addressing and preventing GBV. Initiatives like anonymous reporting platforms provide accessible and secure ways for victims to report incidents. In North Macedonia, panel discussions and safety-focused programmes have highlighted the need for better lighting and patrols in sports facilities to enhance safety for all athletes.

### 6. Intersectional Approaches

Acknowledging the interconnectedness of gender, race, socioeconomic status, and sexuality is crucial. LGBTQI+ athletes, for example, often face compounded discrimination. Italy's '[Arcigay Sports Groups](#)' and Denmark's '[DIF get2sport](#)' initiative address these issues by advancing inclusive environments and providing tailored support for marginalised groups.

### Conclusion

Effective strategies to tackle GBV in sports circle around comprehensive policies, inclusive education, visible advocacy, and the creation of safe, supportive environments. By learning from successful initiatives across Europe and adapting them to local contexts, stakeholders can make significant strides toward eradicating GBV in sports. Together, we can foster a culture of respect, inclusivity, and safety for all participants in the sporting community.

For more information on the project, please visit the project's website: <https://sportgvp.eu/>



