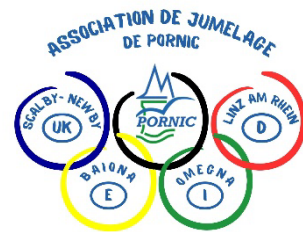




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Round table: gender equality in sport

Thursday 6/06 at 5.30pm, room 2, Maison des Associations, 4, rue de Lorraine

1. **In France:** Sports are still highly gendered, both in reality and in mental representations: there are so-called 'feminine' sports and others that are 'masculine'. For example, the percentage of female footballers is lower than the percentage of male footballers.

The same is true of Spain, Italy and Germany: In our 4 countries, there are inequalities between men and women in sport, both in terms of participation, especially from adolescence onwards, and in terms of the material conditions offered (adapted premises, equipment provided, financial conditions, organisation of time, etc.).

Why is this?

- Mental representations, which are still highly gendered, evolve slowly and influence our society in many ways, perpetuating gender inequalities and promoting stereotypes and traditional gender roles. It is important to recognise and deconstruct the manifestations of patriarchy in order to create a more egalitarian and inclusive society for all genders.

- As a result, there are historical obstacles linked to a form of cultural patriarchy, with the 'stronger sex' dominating and the 2 sexes playing different roles. The exhibition, organised by the Piedmont town of Verbania, traces geopolitical, political, social and cultural developments since the creation of the modern Olympic Games. It looks at themes such as equality, women's rights, the fight against racism and many other issues that have shaped our contemporary world.

- One of the consequences of the influence of gender stereotypes is the unequal media coverage of sporting events; there is still a big gap between popular men's football and women's football, which has fewer highly paid stars.

- Team sports (basketball, volleyball, handball, etc.) are highly valued in schools, but many girls give up sports that are considered 'masculine' during their teenage years.

- What's more, few women continue in their favourite sport and give up competitions for lack of funding.

- **In Spain,** the inclusion of women in sport continues to be an unresolved issue in society, although changes are increasingly perceptible. There has been an increase in the number of women taking part in sport, with more women joining federations. Women's fitness is gaining in popularity. Gender equality is one of the main objectives of sport in Spain, and the Higher Sports Council encourages the participation of women in various federations: role of the Women and Sport Programmes dating from 2005. Basketball is the team sport most represented by women in Spain.

- However, the data shows that there is still a long way to go, as women represent only 23% of all federated athletes.

There are still disadvantaged sectors that are not subsidised: remoteness and poor distribution of infrastructures.

- More financial resources need to be made available to achieve equality, and the political will needs to be generated, from local level to that of the federations.



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- In **Germany**, team sports are also under-represented, with the exception of football. Women's football in Germany is experiencing remarkable growth. More and more women and girls are playing football in clubs affiliated to the German Football Association (DFB).

- In **France**, women's participation in sport is on the increase. One example is the very high percentage of girls in a gymnastics association south of Pornic. In Pornic, the women's football section set up in 2017 has seen the number of registrations double. But more resources are needed at national level, whether in terms of coaching, financial resources or infrastructure.

- In France, progress is also being made, but equipment needs to be adapted to women's physiology. Take the example of a female road cyclist: saddles need to be improved to enhance performance, changing rooms need to be provided...

Women's sport, particularly health sport, is developing rapidly. A survey carried out in Machecoul (south of Pornic) shows that women prefer to practise sport outside clubs, as they can adapt their activities to their professional and family commitments.

- In **Italy**, the number of women taking part in sport fell sharply after the pandemic. A new project has been set up to encourage women to take up sport by providing facilities...

- This is also true in other countries.

Yet sport conveys moral and social values that are recognised in all our countries, and a sport-health focus is emerging.

2. Coaching, managing, refereeing: the other area of inequality: in France, there are currently 19 women presidents of 115 federations.

Too few women hold leadership positions and responsibilities, whether as presidents of federations or referees.

3. a- Media coverage: media coverage of sportswomen is a powerful indicator of the norms of femininity in sport. Only men are seen 74% of the time; 4.8% of the media time devoted to sport is devoted to women, and 21% to 'mixed' competitions.

The professionalisation of women's football is very recent, as in the case of Olympique Lyonnais 'On n'est pas là pour danser' (We're not here to dance). Media coverage that respects and enhances the women's game will generate public enthusiasm and encourage identification with champions and funding for training. For the moment, many sportswomen have to work in addition to their training.

b- Getting media coverage, yes, but how? There is an obligation to prove one's 'femininity'. To what extent is this true in your respective countries?

4. How do you explain the unequal presence of men and women in sport?

- Lack of sports facilities?

- Lack of time? Housewives (absorbed in domestic and parental tasks) play less sport than working women.

- Or are these inequalities linked to representations and norms of the 'masculine' and the 'feminine', because sport is part and parcel of existing cultures and social relations between the



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sexes? Sport has been organised by men for men, and the acceptance of women in all sporting disciplines has taken place over 150 years.

5. The lasting effect of gendered norms: sports that remain 'feminine'. Primary socialisation is highly gendered, particularly within the family,

- What is the role of education?

- Does sport really emancipate?

- Does co-education lead to equality? A number of studies of behaviour in the classroom show that co-education does not produce equality.

Many girls, unlike boys, give up sport when they reach adolescence.

How can we get girls to 'dare' to take up a particular sport dominated by boys?

We need to raise awareness of the need to make sport more accessible: we need to adapt every sport, and every piece of equipment, to suit everyone's body, including the disabled.

Physiological differences between the sexes: (Valérie Trichet, Professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Nantes):

Men were better off than women in terms of muscle mass, power and endurance. And now we know why! But clearly, there are a few areas where women are undeniably ahead of men.

All the experts will agree, for example, that women have stronger minds, and are therefore far more resilient to stress and pressure. Even if it is sometimes difficult for these sporting gentlemen to admit it.

Flexibility is also one of women's strong points. It's due to the female hormones that encourage joint and muscle laxity. It is even more important in the middle of the cycle or during pregnancy, when oestrogen levels rise.

Finally, strategy is also better developed in women, who are less of a go-getter, more composed and more able to think before they act.

6. Conclusion

What can be done to promote gender equality in sport?

How can stereotypes be deconstructed?

Educating young and old alike in respect and fair play?

Training leaders?

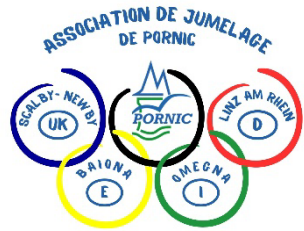
Valuing everyone's efforts?

Enable women to take part in sports that are supposed to be 'masculine' and promote them.

While there has been some progress in terms of gender equality in sport, there is still a great deal of progress to be made. We will continue our work at Omegna on gender equality in families and schools.



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Participants

Baiona

Elena: Head of Women's Information Centre

Javier F. López, Head of Sports Department

Sheila: Gender Equality Adviser

Linz am Rhein: Twinning Association

Sharon and Helmut - Doctor

Omegna: Twinning Association

Laura Ruschetti and Margot,

Lucia Camera, President of the town council

Pornic

Marie-Paule Marié, Deputy for social affairs

Valérie Trichet, Association Femmes Toutes Debout

Deputy for sports affairs and Professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Nantes

Pornic Foot, Claire Guillard, Women's football coach, fair play, gender equality

Charlotte Forest, Paralympic Games 2024 referee coach

Inclusion, gender equality

Twinning Association

Marie-Agnès Morice, President, Germany and Italy committees

Dolores Dupont, Secretary, Spain committee

Josette Leray Vice-President, Spain and England committees

Hervé Dupin, Treasurer, Italy committee