

DELIVERABLE 3.2

CAPACITY BUILDING & MENTORING INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP Pilot Action

Ljubljana, 06/12/2024 - 07/12/2024

National Football Centre: [Športni kompleks \(nzs.si\)](http://sportni.kompleks.nzs.si)



Project “V.E.R.A.” is Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

V.E.R.A. project aims at increasing equal opportunities, inclusion, diversity and fairness in the European sports system by enhancing protection and equality of women athletes' rights, empowering athletes themselves and organisations that represent them to work towards this objective and, therefore, towards a richer and more balanced sport system in Europe.

Partners' core concept behind the project is that without equal rights, in fact, our sport system cannot fully accomplish the goal of equality, with a relevant loss for the whole system in terms of potential, capacity, and contribution of women athletes, that represent a huge and constantly increasing part of the athletes in Europe.

Putting together different methodologies as interconnected steps (capacity building, mentoring, digital network of knowledge, awareness raising campaign) of a consistent overall intervention, V.E.R.A. represents a powerful network for equality, bringing together women athletes, previous athletes and sport organisations that work to support them to increase capacity, cooperation, visibility and awareness on women athletes rights in a wider scope of equality for the whole sport system in Europe.

Therefore, V.E.R.A. is a concrete way to implement and strengthen the objectives of European and international resolutions and standards on substantive equality.

The basic conceptual idea is proposing an athlete-centred approach: women athletes are not only the main beneficiaries but also the main protagonists of the project's empowerment action.

Main goal

Promote an international network of organisations and athletes working to protect, advance, and promote women's rights, improving the level of protection, respect, and value for them in sport in Europe and, consequently, building a fairer and more virtuous sporting world.

The project will target 4 objectives

Improve

safeguards, support and representation for women athletes, boosting awareness and protection of their fundamental rights in the profession, contributing to the full enjoyment and recognition of their sporting careers.

Increase

awareness among the European sport systems and general sport audience on the benefits and the added value that gender equality and diversity can bring to sport and athletes through advocacy, information and networking.

Create

a European platform for athletes, organisations and professionals to strengthen the opportunity to exchange best practices and possible solutions to common challenges and increase empowerment and cooperation.

Promote

mentoring and mutual support between athletes and professionals of organisations that represent and support them, encouraging blended training and multi-professional cooperation.

Tools

Creating Mentoring paths to strengthen capacity building and impact through workshops/open training event for athletes, previous athletes, sports managers and referents of sport federations, the project aims at building the competences and the connections for a sport system that can be better equipped to effectively advance equality in The concept of the project is pretty straightforward: starting from the needs of the main direct beneficiaries, women athletes and previous athletes, the project defines few effective tools:

- a capacity building and mentoring **programme** (toolkit)
- a European digital **platform** of connection and mutual support
- a European **awareness campaign** on the benefit that equality could bring to EU athletes and to the overall EU system

to strengthen their capacity and that of sports organisations that are supporting women athletes to increase equality in general and equal rights in sports, contributing to creating a positive change in the European sports system towards equality and fairness.

Three main tools were used for capacity-building development:

- the training program
- mentoring
- online platform

With a participatory perspective and centred on the "voice" of direct stakeholders (female athletes, former athletes, managers, etc.), the toolkit was tested within the workshop held in Ljubljana in December 2023.

The CAPACITY BUILDING & MENTORING INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP involved

- ✓ **athletes**
- ✓ **ex-athletes**
- ✓ **experts**

The first phase of the work covered the training programme designed by the ALICE MILLIAT ASSOCIATION who presented to the participants:

THE HIGH-CAPACITY BUILDING AND MENTORING TRAINING

(The document was created with a Canva file in order to make it interactive)

https://www.canva.com/design/DAF0ORADI7c/lfpuxSw9xwt8gA97wYft6g/view?utm_content=DAF0ORADI7c&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=editor





The key findings of the report of analysis: an overview of the status of women athletes' rights in Europe (EASE)

VERA - HIGH-QUALITY CAPACITY PROGRAM

(Interactive Workshop)

Definition and implementation of a high-quality capacity building & mentoring program to train athletes, former athletes, professionals of organisations that can support the advancement and representation of women athletes' rights at different levels and in different roles and promote further training as trainers themselves, to increase awareness, knowledge and proactivity on equality in sports rights in the European sports system.

Based on the information in the VERA Analysis Report

See D2 ANALYSIS OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN RIGHTS IN EUROPE

<https://vera.assistitaly.eu/#outputs>

Financial support and social welfare rights

- **Definition:**
 - ✓ Policies, programs, and initiatives designed to provide **economic assistance, equitable opportunities, and social welfare protections** for women involved in sports.
 - ✓ Support for athletes **varies based on their performance, national laws, and sport discipline.**
 - ✓ If their discipline is **structured well enough at the national level**, financial support can be a **monthly remuneration**. If not, **contracts, scholarships, and sponsorships.**
 - ✓ A **variety of stakeholders**, including National Olympic Committees, federations, clubs, universities, and third-party entities, contribute to athlete support.

- **Why is it important?:**
 - ✓ **Crucial for High-Level Sports Development:** Financial support and social welfare rights are fundamental for advancing women's participation in high-level sports.
 - ✓ **Balancing Sports, Income, and Education:** Insufficient financial support often forces sportswomen to make the challenging choice between pursuing their athletic careers and managing income and education.
 - ✓ Ensuring proper contracts is **essential for athlete well-being** and legal protection.
 - ✓ Social welfare rights are often tied to **employment contracts** → **absence can limit protections.**
 - ✓ Compliance with European and international regulations regarding contracts can be challenging.

- **Legal framework:**

- ✓ **The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU):** includes provisions related to gender equality. Article 3(2) of the TFEU explicitly states that gender equality is a fundamental principle of the EU.
- ✓ **The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU:** explicitly prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex. It affirms the right to equal pay for equal work and the principle of gender equality.
- ✓ **Equal Treatment Directive (2006/54/EC)** and the **Gender Equality Directive (2004/113/EC)**, prohibit discrimination on various grounds, including gender, in areas such as employment and access to goods and services. These directives have implications for gender equality in sports.
- ✓ **International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions:** Several ILO conventions, such as Convention No. 100 on Equal Remuneration and Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), promote gender equality in the workplace, which includes sports-related employment.
- ✓ **International Olympic Committee (IOC) Charter:** The IOC is committed to gender equality in sports, as outlined in its Charter. It encourages National Olympic Committees and sports organisations to promote equal opportunities and support for female athletes.

National Implementation: While many international principles exist, the specific legal framework for financial support and social welfare rights for sportswomen is often defined by national laws and regulations. These laws may incorporate international principles and adapt them to the country's legal system.

- **Questions**

Do all signed written contracts establish an employment relationship?

NO. p. In a 2017 global employment report[82], which gathered over 3,000 responses from high-level players, FIFPRO observed that only 47 % of these players held employment contracts. The remaining players had an amateur contract (34 %), a self-employment contract (4 %), or were unable to identify the type of contract (15 %).

It is therefore important to note that while signing a contract is essential to respecting an athlete's rights, it does not guarantee him or her a decent income or social welfare rights.

- **Good practices examples**

Spanish professional women league: all players must have an employment contract.

The recent structuration of the Spanish women's professional football league is an excellent example of the development of high-level sports practice. The Spanish government recognised the league as professional and independent in 2021: Clubs are currently receiving some monetary support from the government to help their development, but they will have to be financially independent within three years. It represents an opportunity for clubs to create revenue and develop conditions for football players. As the league now has a professional status, clubs have to apply the relevant national law, which implies that all players must have an employment contract, which framework is regulated. The clubs and the players are actively negotiating a CBA to establish social and financial support for players in an official capacity.

Maternity Rights

- **Definition:**
 - ✓ Definition (Article 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU): "the right to **protection from dismissal** for a reason connected with maternity and the right to **paid maternity leave** and to parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child, to reconcile family and professional life"
- **Why is it important?**
 - **Introduction:**
 - ✓ Their body and physical ability are their **working tools**.
 - ✓ **Pregnancy** may heavily impact their sporting careers.
 - **Maternity Rights and Worker Status:**
 - ✓ If the sportswomen do not have **the status of workers**, no guaranteed maternity rights arise from these status.
 - **Health and Well-Being:**
 - ✓ Pregnancy and childbirth are **significant life events** that require **appropriate medical care and recovery time**.
 - ✓ Maternity rights ensure that sportswomen have the necessary time and support to prioritize their health and well-being during and after pregnancy..
 - **Retention of Talent:**
 - ✓ Sportswomen often **invest years of hard work** and training to reach elite levels.

- ✓ Maternity rights enable them to continue their sports careers after giving birth, helping retain talent and experience in women's sports.
- **Work-Life Balance:**
 - ✓ Balancing a sports career with motherhood can be challenging.
 - ✓ Maternity rights facilitate a healthier work-life balance by allowing sportswomen to take the necessary time off for pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare.
- **Promotion of Gender Equality:**
 - ✓ By removing barriers that might discourage women from pursuing or continuing their athletic careers.
 - ✓ They promote the idea that women can be successful athletes and mothers simultaneously.
- **Legal Framework:**
 - ✓ EU level : **The Pregnancy Directive (92/85/EEC)[86]** requires a minimum of 14 weeks of paid leave for each worker, including the ante- and post-partum period.
 - ✓ **Article 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights** of the EU
 - ✓ FIFA and FIFPRO (International Federation of Professional Footballers) have introduced maternity rights, entitling female players to 14 weeks' paid maternity leave, with two-thirds of their contracted salary.
 - ✓ UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale) and ITF (International Tennis Federation) have also implemented pregnancy-related provisions.
 - ✓ CBAs (Collective Bargaining Agreements) are emerging in Europe, specifying maternity leave and financial support for female athletes.
 - ✓ Maternity rights often apply to workers under ILO or EU regulations, leaving gaps in protection.

Federation can decide to provide maternity rights via regulations.

Ex : FIFA, UCI, ITF

CBA are also established for women in sports in order to consider their specific needs related to pregnancy.

However, for athletes who fall outside the scope of these regulations, there is no specific mechanism, such as maternity leave or financial support. Hence, motherhood still appears as a barrier to an elite sports career.

- **Good practices examples:**

The **Italian Department for Sport** of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers provides a **monthly contribution for non-professional athletes** who have had to put on hold their competitive activity due to maternity.

Compared to previous years, the **monthly payments of the contribution have been increased**, passing to 12 monthly payments of 1 000€ each, and the audience of potential beneficiaries also extended to athletes active in the previous sports season.

- **Questions:**

Do “anti-pregnancy” clauses exist in sportswomen contracts ?

YES. Ex: , in 2017, El Pais revealed that some Spanish football and basketball teams had inserted "anti-pregnancy" clauses into their contracts. These clauses would enable the clubs to cancel the contracts of sportswomen if they got pregnant without any form of compensation. These clauses contradict the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights, which ensures maternity rights, including the right to protection from dismissal due to pregnancy.

Technical and Medical Support

- **Definition:**

- ✓ Medical and technical support refers to the **specialists involved** in ensuring the excellent performance of sportswomen.
- ✓ Medical support includes all **medical professions** (doctor, physiotherapist, osteopath, psychologist, etc.).
- ✓ Technical support has a broader scope and concerns **any action that might be necessary** for the practice of sports by women athletes (administrative staff, management, etc.).
- ✓ As our definition of support refers to the professionals who intervene in sports performance, technical or medical support required by women athletes in their private life are omitted.

Technical support

- ✓ This support takes **several forms and is almost compulsory** in some countries, notably Portugal and Spain

- ✓ In most cases, the technical team consists of **one to three people**. The profiles of the **team members are very diverse**, although they almost always include a **coach and administrative and secretarial staff**. The rest of the technical staff, such as the **manager** or the person responsible for relations with the press and public, varies enormously from country to country.

Medical support

- ✓ Typically, the medical teams that assist elite female athletes are comprised of **one to three members**.
- ✓ The **doctor** remains one of the **professionals most present** in the structures, all countries taken together, to ensure the follow-up of the health of the athletes.
- ✓ The **presence** of a **physiotherapist varies enormously**, with a strong presence in Portugal, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain.
- ✓ Other professionals involved include **psychologists and osteopaths**. It appears that **in Spain**, this support is **compulsory**.
- ✓ However, in general, some athletes reported that this support is present in their **country's national team, not in their club**.

Why is it important?

Performance Optimization

- ✓ Technical support ensures efficient management, **organization, and logistics** of sports activities, allowing athletes to focus solely on their training and competitions.
- ✓ Medical support plays a crucial role in monitoring athletes' health, **preventing injuries**, and providing timely **treatment**, enabling them to perform at their best.

Psychological Well-being

- ✓ Psychologists in the medical support team offer **mental health and emotional support** to athletes, helping them **cope with the pressures** of competition and maintain a positive mindset.

Injury Prevention and Recovery

- ✓ Physiotherapists and osteopaths play a pivotal role in **preventing injuries** through specialized training regimens and aiding in athletes' recovery, minimizing downtime.

→ Maybe add: **women's specific needs** (cycles, menstruation, contraception, and pregnancy) in medical care will help improve athletes' health, performance, and well-being. For instance, a gynecologist on the team can make a massive difference to athletes who do not have one.

- **Legal Framework**

There are no regulations on this subject by non-sporting institutions. Sporting institutions sometimes provide for a mandatory minimum number of technical and medical people in the structures. However, these situations remain at the margin for highly developed sports.

- **Questions / good practices examples:**

Enumerate the various professionals who contribute to ensuring optimal performance for female athletes.

Access to facilities

- **Definition:** "Access to facilities" refers to the availability and suitability of sports training facilities.

It involves assessing training conditions to ensure they meet the standards required for high-level performance.

- ✓ Having **sufficient training venues** and equipment accessible to female athletes.
- ✓ For instance, having multiple basketball courts, or swimming pools accessible to the teams.
- ✓ **Appropriateness and functionality** of the training facilities.
- ✓ Assessment involves **evaluating safety, cleanliness**, and upkeep of facilities. → **Regular inspections** to ensure that training venues are in optimal condition for use.

- **Why is it important?**

- ✓ **Equal Opportunities:** Providing female athletes with access to high-quality facilities ensures they have the same opportunities as their male counterparts. This helps level the playing field and promotes gender equality in sports.

- ✓ **Performance Enhancement:** Well-maintained and adequately equipped facilities contribute to improved performance. Female athletes can train effectively and reach their full potential when they have access to facilities that meet their specific training needs.
- ✓ **Injury Prevention:** Safe and appropriate training facilities reduce the risk of injuries. Properly designed spaces and equipment minimize the chances of accidents or overuse injuries, enabling female athletes to stay healthy and active.
- ✓ **Mental Focus:** Access to consistent training environments helps female athletes maintain mental focus and build confidence. Familiarity with their training facilities allows athletes to concentrate on their workouts and competitions without distractions.

- **Legal Framework**

- ✓ **Sports institutions** sometimes provide a **mandatory disposition** for the facilities' accesses. However, these regulations remain at the margin for **highly developed sports**.
- ✓ Local authorities and **the state own the vast majority of sports facilities**. As a result, sports organisations have **less flexibility** in using and accessing sports facilities for female athletes.
- ✓ Indeed, the percentage of organisations with specific provisions regarding access to facilities for women athletes (construction of facilities, financing, the arbitration for the occupation of facilities) is **disparate across countries**.

- **Good practices examples:**

The **Spanish Supreme Council of Sports** has implemented different provisions to **improve sporting conditions** and access to facilities for elite athletes.

Therefore: They **invested 16 million euros** in 2022 to improve the infrastructure of the pitches and stadiums of first-division women's football teams.

The facilities of the High-Performance Centres, which are labelled by the Spanish Supreme Council of Sports and are used for elite athletes training all over Spain, are **accessible to both men and women on an equal basis**. However, access is not guaranteed to be unlimited.

- **Questions**

Sport infrastructures should be adapted to the specificities of women.

True or False?

TRUE. Adapting sports infrastructure to women's specific needs is crucial for gender equality, injury prevention, and optimal performance. It fosters inclusivity, supports growth in women's sports, and demonstrates a long-term commitment to female athletes.

VIDEO of Capacity Building & mentoring Workshop_Interviews:

Interviews with experts and participants during the workshop

<https://youtu.be/BOpWkonF4ak?si=e0D-PyA6gNGp37kb>



THE PLATFORM

<https://vera.assistitaly.eu>



<https://www.veranetwork.it>

The platform has the ambition to represent a tool for networking people, bodies, and institutions involved in enhancing and protecting women athletes' rights and, at the same time, to be educational support for increasing awareness and knowledge.

The project's initial phase has produced an analysis focusing on the rights of female athletes considered "elite athletes". So the first challenge has been to identify the criteria for using the definition of "elite", the second challenge the analysis struggled with has been to investigate the most critical topics for the well-being of women athletes, which have been identified in financial support, social welfare rights, maternity rights, technical and medical support, and access to facilities. Since the great variety of specialities, the research has covered just a few popular sports split by team sports like football (including futsal), basketball, rugby, handball, and individual disciplines like tennis, cycling, swimming, and athletics

The core of the platform consists of:

- a training programme on the 4 topics identified by the consortium, which aims to provide information and documents with a view to 'capacity building' for female athletes, sports organisations and professionals
- a 'mentors' section, which aims to connect platform users with experts on each of the previously identified topics
- a 'forum' section, where platform users can dialogue both with experts and with each other.

Platform testing:

participants tested the platform, each group was assigned a specific section/aspect of the platform (thematic areas, joining the network, forum, general layout and accessibility) to navigate and test in order to share feedback (each group tested all sections, 15 minutes per test, writing at least 3 main positive results and suggestions for improvement for each section tested)



E1.8 - Capacity building & mentoring international workshop

Agenda

- **When:** 06-07/12/2023
- **Where:** Slovenia, NZS premises at National Football Centre: [Športni kompleks \(nzs.si\)](https://www.sportni-kompleks.nzs.si)

Possibility to participate remotely through Zoom link:

DAY 1: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87477791663> - ID riunione: 874 7779 1663

DAY 2: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83742906223> - ID riunione: 837 4290 6223

- **Participants:** athletes, ex athletes, experts to test VERA training programme and platform

DAY 1 - 06/12/2023

Arrivals and check-in at the hotel (5 min walk to the event venue)

12.00 - arrival and registration of participants at the venue

12.00 -1.30 pm - lunch at event venue

1.30 - 2.00 pm – opening session NZS (partner’s referents and guests) & ASSIST (project’s coordinator)

2.00 - 3.15 pm – the key findings of the report of analysis: an overview of the status of women athletes' rights in Europe (EASE)

3.15 - 3.30 pm - break

3.30 pm – thematic workshop: focus on VERA’s 4 main topics with [facilitators](#)

- Financial support & social welfare rights
- Maternity rights
- Technical & medical support
- Access to facilities

5.30 - 6.30 pm – wrap up and feedback from participants (peers exchange and group sharing, partners will share link for Day1 evaluation-Google Form)

6.30 - 20.00 - partners meeting

20.00 - dinner *at the hotel*

DAY 2 - 07/12/2023

8.30 - 9.00 – arrival and registration of participants

9.00 - 9.20 - recap of contents from Day 1: review of the HQG Program with interactive Q&A session (AMA)

9.20 - 9.40 - aims and functions of VERA platform: how to navigate and participate in VERA's shared knowledge (ASSIST)

9.40 - 10.40 pm - testing the platform: participants will be testing the platform, each group assigned a section/specific aspect of the platform (*thematic areas, join the network, forum, general layout and accessibility*) to navigate and test to share feedback (each group will test all sections, 15 min. each test, writing down at least 3 main positive findings and suggestions for improvements for each section tested)

10.40 - 11.00 - break

11.00 - 11.45 pm - shared feedback session, main findings of each group

11.45 - 12.30 pm - VERA next steps and conclusion (partners will share link for Day2 evaluation-Google Form)

12.30 pm - lunch

List of participants / Multiplier sport events

"Please print a list for each Multiplier sport event"

Project reference nr.: 101049501
Title of project: VERA Voice for Equality of Women Athletes
Event title: E.1.8 CAPACITY BUILDING & MENTORING INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
Date and place (country, city): 06-07/12/2023
Leading organisation: NZS

N°	Organisation	Family name, first name	Departure country	Signature of participant
1	NZS	[REDACTED] ANJA	SLOVENIA	[REDACTED]
2	NZS	[REDACTED] MIKA	SLOVENIA	[REDACTED]
3	NZS	[REDACTED] KATJA	SLOVENIA	[REDACTED]
4	NZS	VERONIKA [REDACTED]	SLOVENIA	[REDACTED]
5	NZS	[REDACTED] TJASA	SLOVENIA	[REDACTED]
6	NZS	[REDACTED] URSKA	SLOVENIA	[REDACTED]
7	NZS	MAJA [REDACTED]	SLOVENIA	[REDACTED]
8	ALICE MILLIAT	[REDACTED] NANCY	FRANCE	[REDACTED]
9	ALICE MILLIAT	[REDACTED] JULIANA	FRANCE	[REDACTED]
10	ALICE MILLIAT	[REDACTED] TESS	FRANCE	[REDACTED]
12	ALICE MILLIAT	Proline [REDACTED]	FRANCE	[REDACTED]
13	CRESTA	[REDACTED] Xavier	BELGIUM	[REDACTED]
14	CRESTA	DARCIUS [REDACTED]	BELGIUM	[REDACTED]
15	ASSIST	[REDACTED] ALVISE	ITALY	[REDACTED]
16	ASSIST	[REDACTED] LARA	ITALY	[REDACTED]
17	ASSIST	[REDACTED] ANNA	ITALY	[REDACTED]
18	ASSIST	ANTONIA [REDACTED]	ITALY	[REDACTED]
19	AJFSF	Glenn [REDACTED]	Spain	[REDACTED]
20	AJFSF	Cristina [REDACTED]	Spain	[REDACTED]
21	AJFSF	Joziane [REDACTED]	Spain	[REDACTED]
22	AJFSF	Laura [REDACTED]	Spain	[REDACTED]
23	SEA	[REDACTED] LIZIA	Portugal	[REDACTED]
24	SEA	[REDACTED] PEDRO	Portugal	[REDACTED]

"Please print a list for each Multiplier sport event"

Project reference nr.:		101049501		
Title of project:		VENA Voice for Equality of Women Athletes		
Event title:		E 1.8 CAPACITY BUILDING & RETENTION INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP		
Date and place (country, city):		LJUBLJANA, 07/12/2023		
Leading organisation:		NZS		
N°	Organisation	Family name, first name	Departure country	Signature of participant
1	NZS	ANJA	SLOVENIA	
2		NIKA	SLOVENIA	
3		KATJA	SLOVENIA	
4		VERONIKA	SLOVENIA	
5		TJASA	SLOVENIA	
6		VERKA	SLOVENIA	
7		MAYA	SLOVENIA	
8	ALICE MILLIAT	NANCY	FRANCE	
9	ALICE MILLIAT	JULIANA	FRANCE	
10	ALICE MILLIAT	JESS	FRANCE	
12	ALICE MILLIAT	Pauline	FRANCE	
13	CRESTA	Xavier	Belgium	
14	CRESTA	SARCIS	Belgium	
15	ASSIST	ALVISE	ITALY	
16	ASSIST	LARA	ITALY	
17	ASSIST	ANNA	ITALY	
18	ASSIST	ANTOCCIA	ITALY	
19	AJFSF	Gloria	Spain	
20	AJFSF	Cristina	Spain	
21	AJFSF	JOZIANE	Spain	
22	AJFSF	LARA	SPAIN	
23	SEA	TUBIANA	PORTUGAL	
24	SEA	REDRU	PORTUGAL	