

ATHLETES 4 SOCIETY PROJECT

EMPOWERING THE PUBLIC VALUE OF SPORT THROUGH ATHLETES AS ROLE MODELS

Intermediate report: Population survey – results report

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ATHLETES4SOCIETY

THE PROJECT





“Together with the pursuit of elite sports results, maximum efforts are made to create **public value** and support for the **societal importance of elite sport** and to set an example for young talent. The Flemish **athletes** and their team serve as **ambassadors** to contribute positively to Flanders’ image in the world ” (p.37).

Actieplan TOPSPORT Flanders

ATHLETES4SOCIETY

RATIONALE



The initiative to develop the **ATHLETES 4 SOCIETY** project comes from the continued struggle that sport federations, governments and other stakeholders worldwide face to manage the societal impact of elite sport and sport more broadly (often due to a lack of capacity, financing or inspiration) (de Rycke & de Bosscher, 2019; Grix & Carmichael, 2012). This project will approach this through **capitalizing the potential of athletes as being inspiring societal role models**. Concretely, this project will assist sport organisations in building their capacity to manage and implement policies, programmes or campaigns with impact that leverage athletes as role models.

ATHLETES4SOCIETY

NEEDS ANALYSIS



Erasmus+ Programme has supported a range of European partnerships on sport with a goal to:

- **tackle specific threats** or negative **side-effects** of the development of sport;
- leverage or **promote positive aspects** of sport.

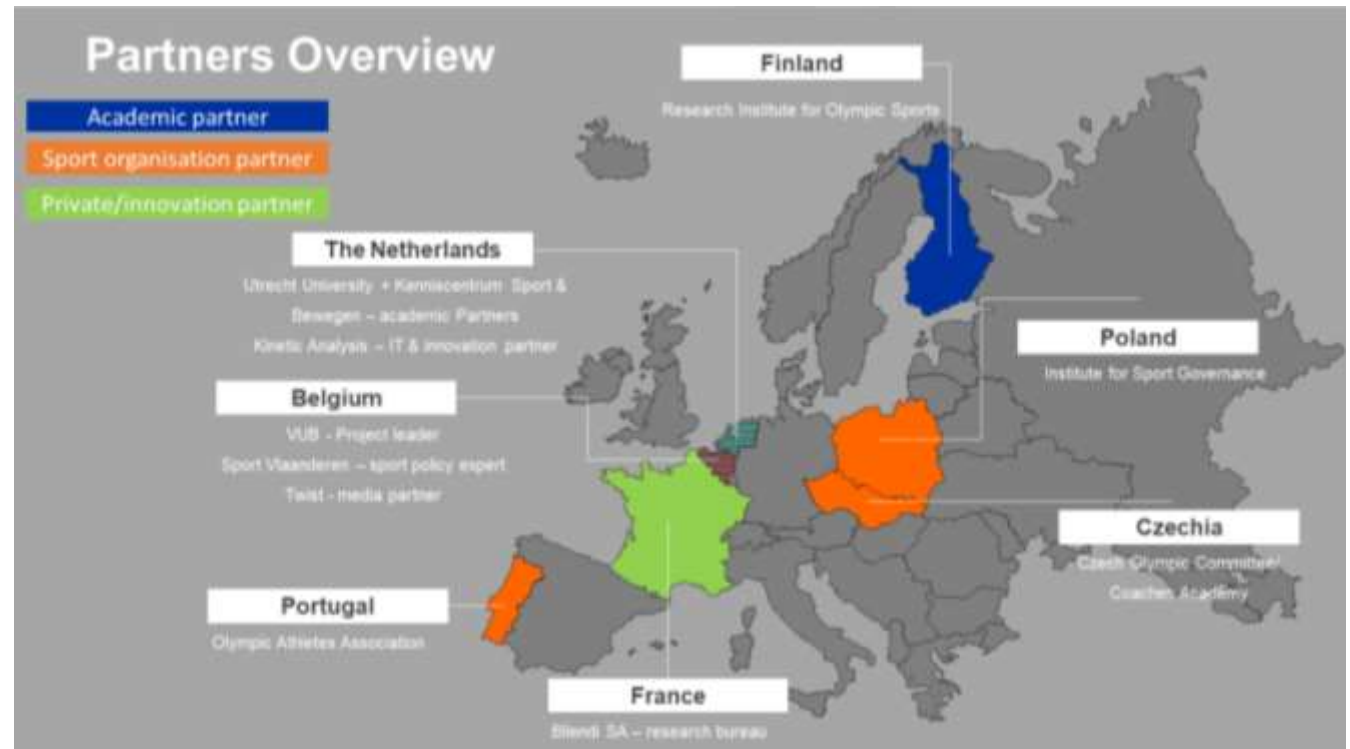


Sport organisations are **interested in more actively managing their societal impact**, but often **lack the inspiration or capacity** to do so (Taks et al., 2015).

- struggle to capitalize on the potential of **athletes as being inspiring role models**.

PARTNERS OVERVIEW

This Erasmus+ project partnership offers a **unique and appropriate mix of partners**, whereby all tasks will be led by VUB, the Project Coordinator. The partners have been selected for this project due to their **relevant individual expertise** and their **experience** working on successful European projects. The project brings together a mix of respected **academic sport partners**, innovative **private** partners with experience in the sport sector and public sport **associations/organisations**.



ATHLETES4SOCIETY

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of the ATHLETES 4 SOCIETY project is to inspire, support and stimulate sport organisations to increase the public value of sport. Specifically, by empowering sport organisations to develop policies, campaigns or programmes that successfully put athletes to good use towards positive societal impact. Hence, the running title of the project is: “Empowering the Public Value of Sport through Athletes as Role Models”.

The subaims of the ATHLETES 4 SOCIETY project are the following:

1

Evaluating the public value

The aim of this part of the project is to conduct a cross-country examination of the attributed public value of athletes as role models and (elite) sport by the population.

2

Stimulating and empowering public value

Finally, efforts will be made to stimulate and empower public value by setup, launch and award the ‘European Athletes4Society Challenge’.

3

Managing and creating public value

Based upon the theoretical project findings, an important objective is to build organizational capacity through the development of an innovative ‘Athletes4Society’ toolkit and bootcamp for sport organisations on how they can successfully utilise athletes to manage the societal impact of their sport.

PROJECT OVERVIEW



ATHLETES4SOCIETY

WP2 – Evaluating the public value of sport

Population survey



EVALUATING THE PUBLIC VALUE OF SPORT

OVERVIEW

WP1: Project Management

WP2: Evaluating public value

WP2.a: Literature search

WP2.b: Develop survey

WP2.c: Programme & start population survey

WP2.d: Survey amongst federations & athletes

WP3: Inspirational practices

WP3.a: Detection of inspirational practices

WP3.b: Evaluation of inspirational practices

WP3.c: Sharing of inspirational practices

WP4: Managing public value

WP4.a: Develop toolkit with guidelines

WP4.b: Develop 'train the NGB' bootcamp

WP4.c: Test & evaluate toolkit

WP4.d: Test & evaluate bootcamp

WP5: Stimulating public value

WP5.a: Setup campaign 'Athletes 4 Society Challenge'

WP5.b: Launch 'Athletes 4 Society Challenge' across EU

WP5.c: Evaluation of submitted projects

WP5.d: Award of 'Athletes 4 Society Challenge' winner

WP6: Communication, dissemination and legacy strategy

EVALUATING THE PUBLIC VALUE OF SPORT

RATIONALE

Aim

A cross-country examination of the attributed public value of athletes as role models and (elite) sport by the population.

- Conduct the first European wide population survey on the perceived societal value of athletes and sport (across all partner countries);
- Inform sport organisations and policy makers of each respective country about public perceptions regarding the societal impact of athletes as role models and about the value of elite and grassroots sport in society;
- Raise awareness about the role that stakeholders and athletes in particular can play in promoting sport and generating societal value.

Why ask the population?

- Through taxes, the population is the main sponsor of elite sport;
- There is an intention to substantiate and legitimise investments in elite sport amongst European countries;
- It is interesting for national policy makers to gain insight into how the population perceives the societal impact of elite sport;
- Achieving a positive societal impact through elite sport is considered important (de Bosscher et al., 2021).

EVALUATING THE PUBLIC VALUE OF SPORT

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical framework guiding the project is the '**Mapping Elite Sport potential Societal Impact**' (MESSI).

Considering the current upward trend of investing resources in sport, a better understanding of the **public recognition of athletes (as role models) and opinion about (elite) sports' societal impact** is deemed valuable (Grix & Carmichael, 2012). As there is little insight on the societal impact of major sport events, sporting success, sport stakeholders and athletes as role models in particular, De Rycke and De Bosscher (2019) recently attempted to fill this gap by presenting a comprehensive framework that maps the potential positive and negative societal impact spheres of elite sport.

The **MESSI framework** emerged from a systematic literature review of 391 scientific articles that empirically examined the social effects of elite sport. All 79 positive and negative societal impacts were clustered into **10 categories**:

1. Social equality and inclusion
2. Collective identity and pride
3. Ethics and fair play
4. Feel good and passion
5. Fans and (media) attraction
6. International prestige and image
7. Athletes' ability and quality of life
8. Sport participation and health
9. Sponsors and commercial activity
10. Local consumption and living conditions

Mapping Elite Sport's potential Societal Impact (MESSI)

athletes & teams

success

events

stakeholders

VALUE CREATION

Stakeholders: corporations, sponsors, media, governments, (inter)national federations, the public...

stakeholders

dimension

themes

pro's

con's

1. Social equality & inclusion	2. Collective identity & pride	3. Ethics & fair play	4. Feel good & passion	5. Fans & (media) attraction	6. International prestige & power	7. Athletes ability & quality of life	8. Sport participation & life skills	9. Sponsors & commercial activity	10. Local consumption & living conditions
integration social equality: racial & ethnic Inclusion	community identity community pride socializing opportunities	ethics fair play social debate	pleasure experience passion	fandom mass media sport knowledge	globalization international prestige country/city marketing	fame role model function quality of life	sport participation volunteering health awareness	economic boost Sponsorships sport industry assets	consumption employment tourism
sexism exclusion racism	rivalry nationalism shame	corruption Hooliganism doping	disappointment failure losing	gambling repulsion drop sport's image	power abuse bad international image war propaganda	pressure injuries safeguarding issues	discouragement unhealthy habits unrealistic body image	association with scandals financial losses window dressing	legacy costs environmental impact living conditions

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

MESSI-SCALE

Based on the MESSI framework and its categories, **a measurement scale** assessing the publics' beliefs of the positive and negative societal impacts that could potentially flow from elite sport was developed.

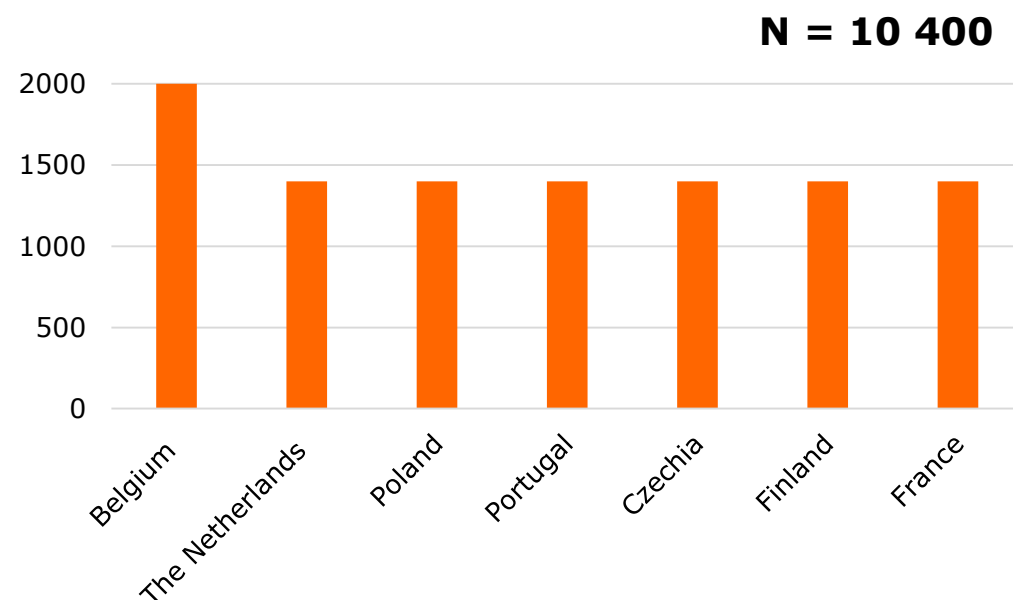
→ **THE MESSI SCALE** (De Rycke et al., 2019)

- The MESSI scale contains **70 items** divided over the 10 categories of the MESSI framework:
 - ✓ Use of bipolar items, a combination of a semantic differential scale and a Likert-type seven-point scale whereby people rate possible positive as well as negative impacts (e.g., in general, I think that elite sport ...; Positive: "brings equality", Negative: "brings inequality");

EVALUATING THE PUBLIC VALUE OF SPORT

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected using an **online survey** with citizens of each partner country. A representative sample of the European population was obtained during **August 2021**, just after the Tokyo 2021 Olympic Games. Sampling was based on the demographic variables of gender, age, level of education, marital status, employment status, family income, nationality, immigrant background, physical or mental disability, social contact and well-being/happiness. The survey was developed by the partners, but data collection was coordinated by a research firm to ensure data representativeness.



EVALUATING THE PUBLIC VALUE OF SPORT

RESULTS

The survey provided insights into the following themes, which will be discussed in further detail on the following pages:

1. Socio-demographic data;
2. Population's perceptions about consuming elite sport;
3. Population's perceptions about elite sport's societal impact in your nation;
4. Population's perceptions about athletes as role models;
5. Population's perceptions about corporate social responsibility;
6. Population's perceptions about Olympic values;
7. Population's perceptions about the Paralympics;
8. Population's perceptions about elite sport investments;
9. Population's perceptions about sports participation & physical activity;



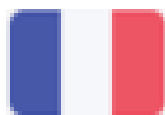
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

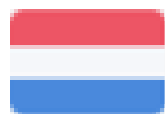
EUROPEAN SAMPLE



19,2 %



13,5%



13,5%



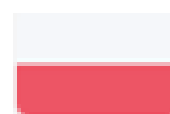
13,5%



13,5%



13,5%

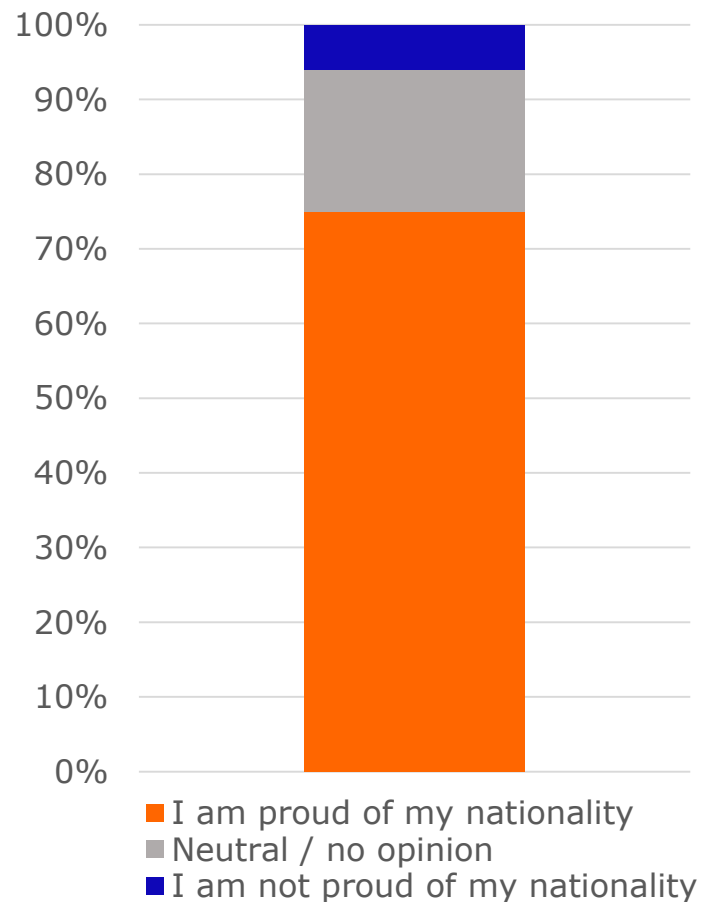


13,5%

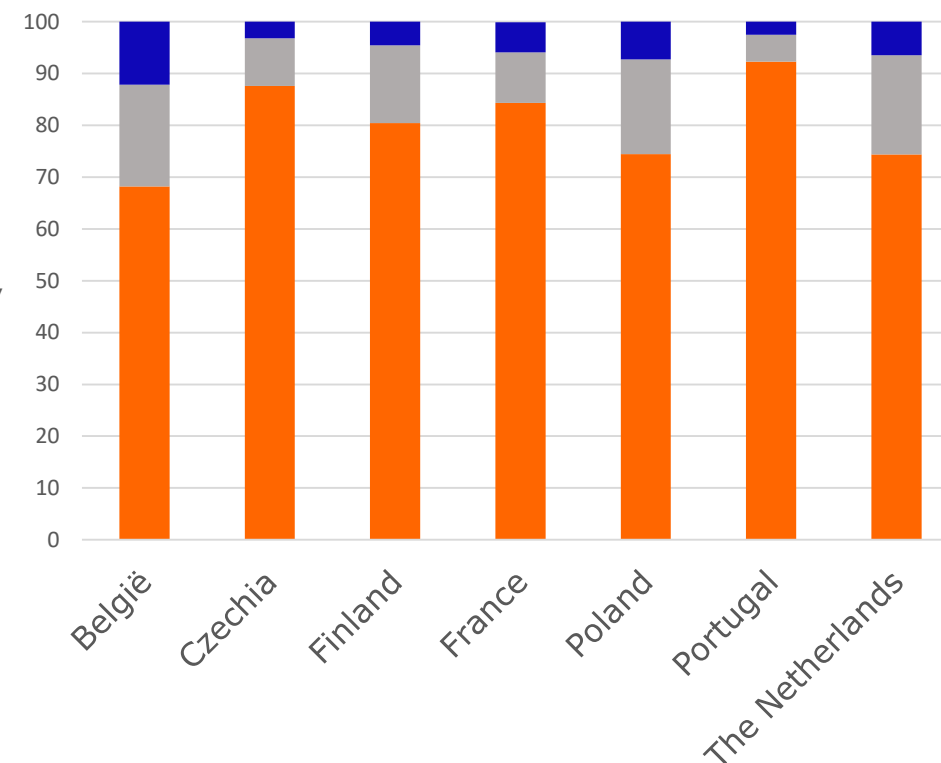
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

EUROPEAN SAMPLE

National pride



- I am not proud of my nationality
- Neutral
- I am proud of my nationality

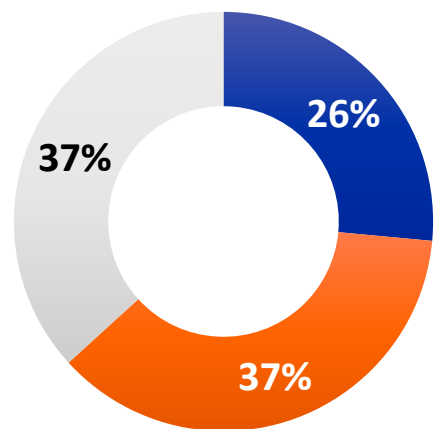


Analysis shows that Portuguese citizens tend to be more proud of their nationality than citizens of the other countries ($p < 0,05$).

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

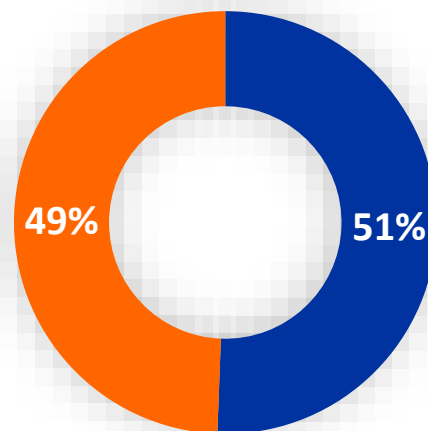
EUROPEAN SAMPLE

Age



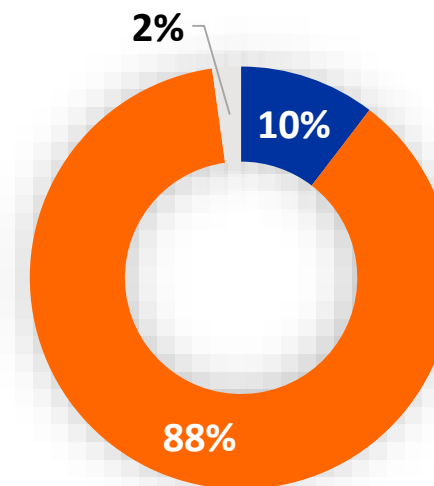
■ 18-35 y ■ 35-54 y ■ 55+

Gender



■ Male ■ Female

Migration background

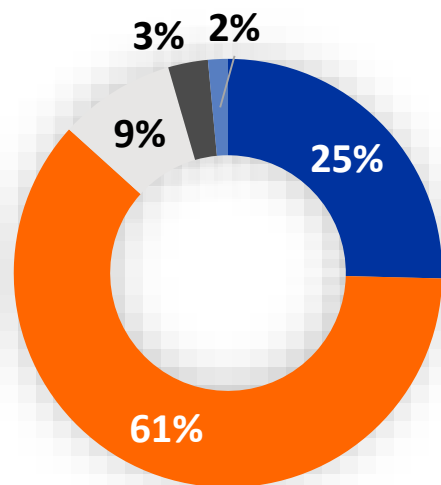


■ Migration background
■ No Migration background
■ No answer

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

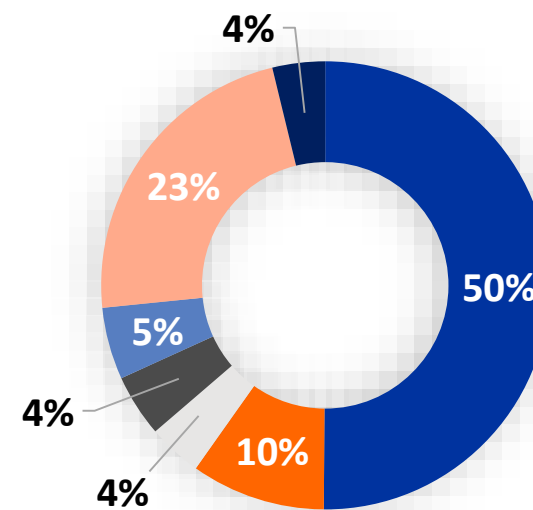
EUROPEAN SAMPLE

Marital status



- Single
- Married or couple
- Separation
- Widow(er)
- Other

Employment situation

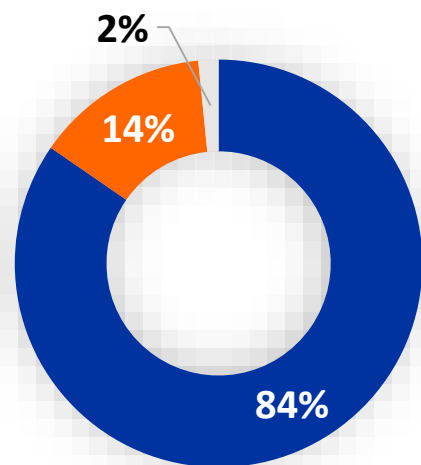


- Full-time employed
- Part-time employed
- Full-time house(man/wife)
- Student
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Other

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

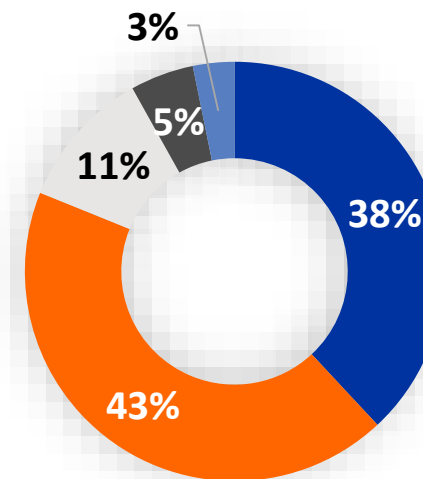
EUROPEAN SAMPLE

Physical or mental disability



- No limitations
- Physical (bodily) disability
- Intellectual (mental) disability

Social contact*



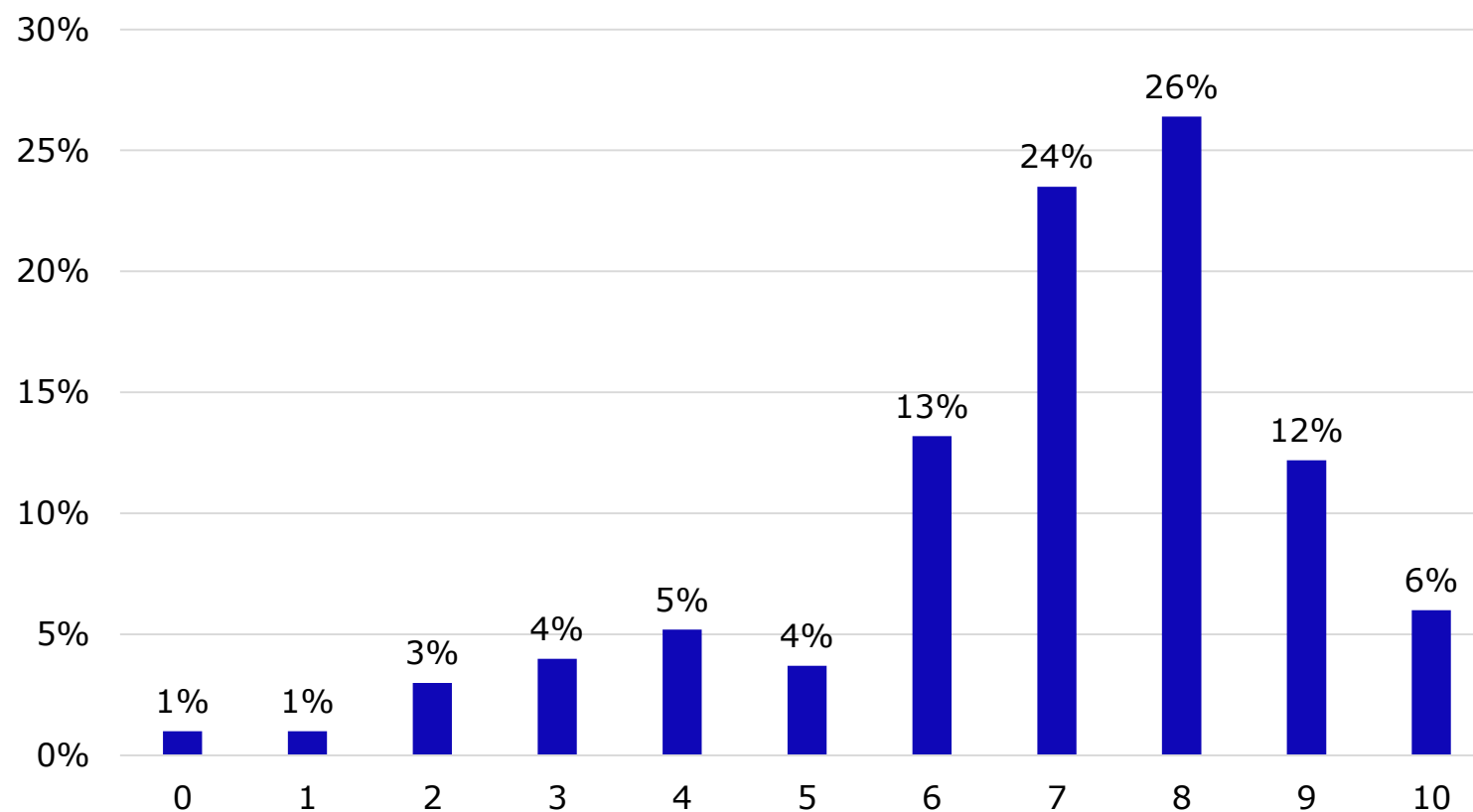
- Daily social contact
- Weekly social contact
- Monthly social contact
- Social contact less than once a month
- No social contact

*The following question was asked: 'In normal circumstances (e.g., there is no lockdown), how often do you have social contact with friends, family, neighbours, ... in your free time?'

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

EUROPEAN SAMPLE

How satisfied/happy are you* ?

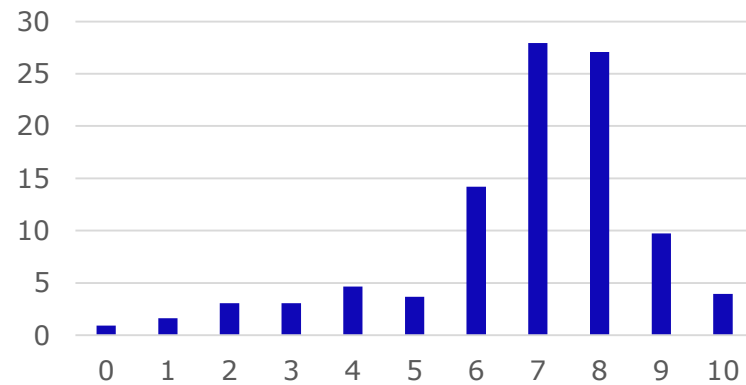


*Overall, taking everything into consideration, with your life

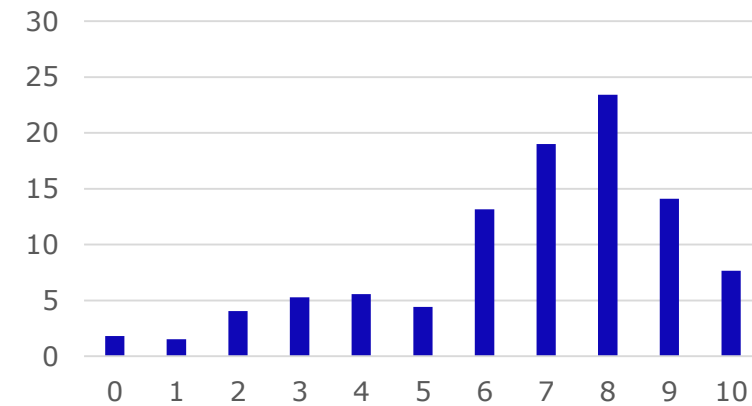
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

EUROPEAN SAMPLE

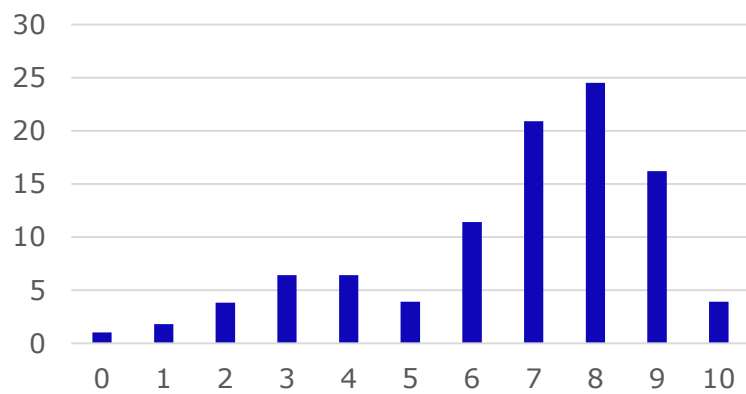
Belgium



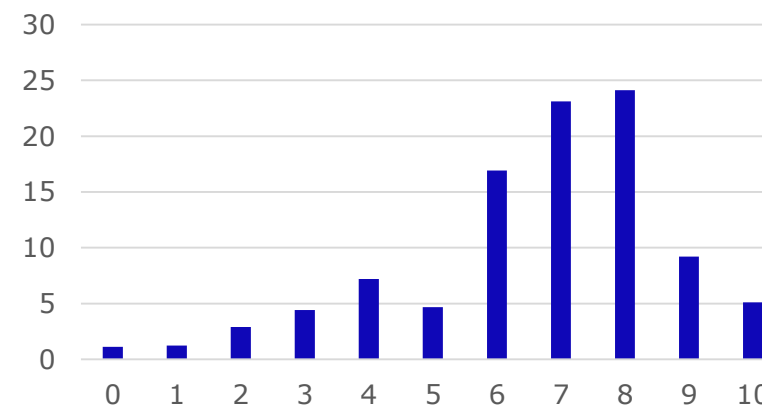
Czechia



Finland



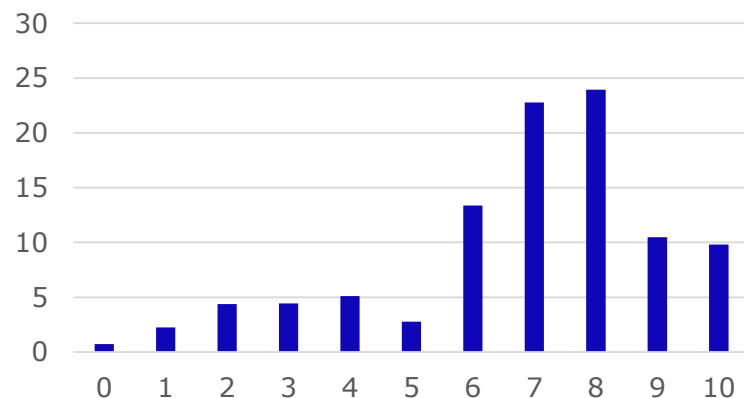
France



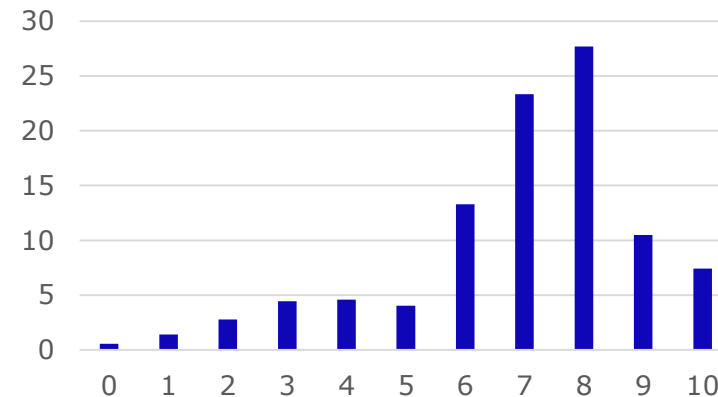
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

EUROPEAN SAMPLE

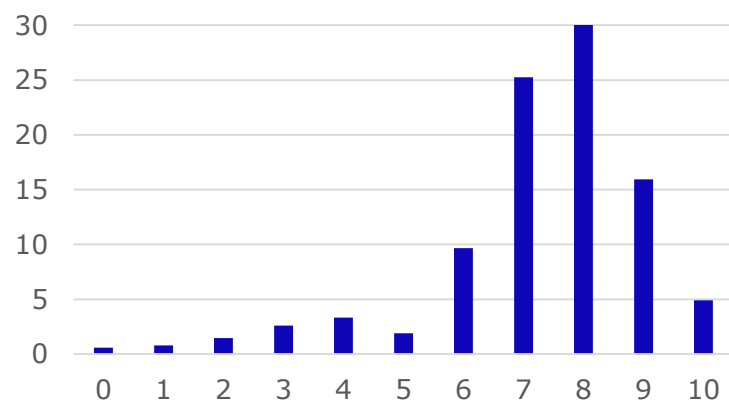
Poland



Portugal



The Netherlands



The Netherlands score significantly higher on the question 'how satisfied/happy are you?' compared to other countries, meaning that Dutch residents are happier than residents of the other countries surveyed according to our data.



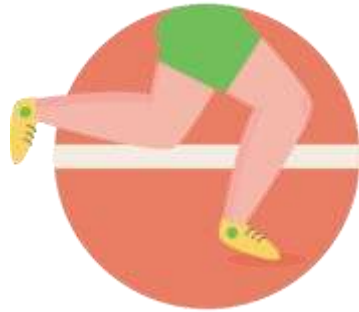
CONSUMING ELITE SPORT

CONSUMING ELITE SPORT

FAVOURITE SPORTS



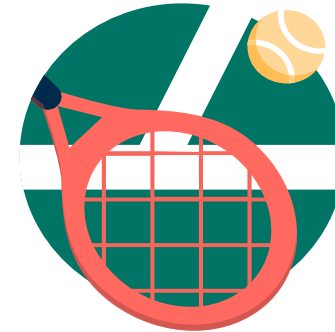
1. FOOTBALL
44%



2. ATHLETICS
29%



3. CYCLING
19%



4. TENNIS
19%



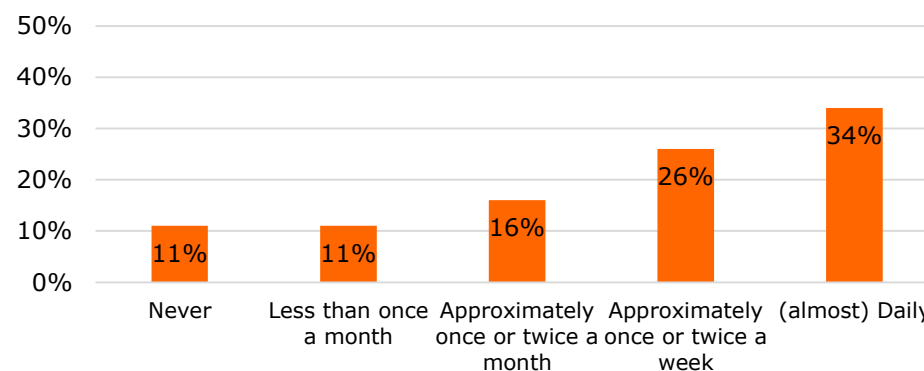
5. AUTO RACING
16%

The survey evaluates in which sports, Olympic and non-Olympic, European residents are most interested in. Analysis reveals that **football** is the most popular sport, followed by about half of the population in the countries surveyed. As a matter of fact, it is the most popular sport in all countries, with the exception of Finland. The Finnish population prefers following the **athletics**, which is the runner up in the top 5 of sports on a European level.

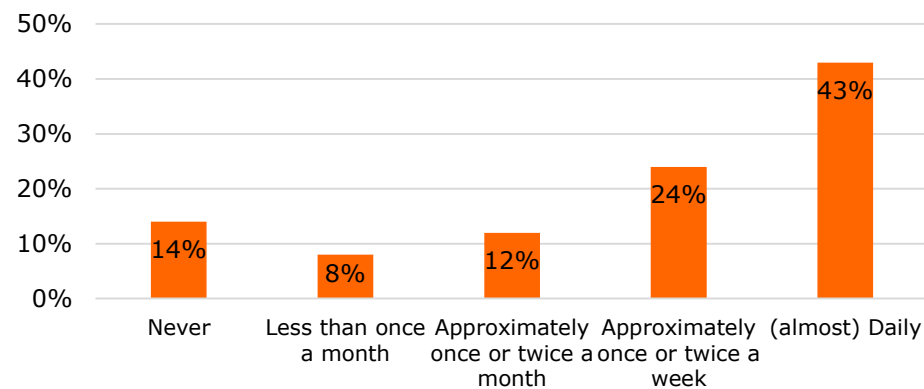
CONSUMING ELITE SPORT

FOLLOWING THE SPORT PERFORMANCES OF ELITE ATHLETES

1. How often did you watch, read about, or listen to sports in the past month?



2. How often did you watch, read about, or listen to the Tokyo Olympic Games in the past month?



CONSUMING ELITE SPORT

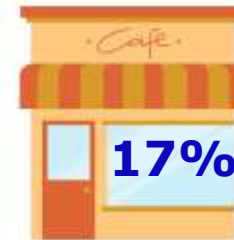
WATCHING WITH FRIENDS VS. WATCHING IN PUBLIC PLACES

During the Olympic games in Tokyo, I...

have watched sport competitions together with **friends**.



went to a **public place** to watch sport competitions.



During the European Football Championships, I

have watched the matches together with **friends**.



went to a **public place** to watch matches.



CONSUMING ELITE SPORT

IDENTIFICATION WITH THE NATIONAL TEAM & ELITE ATHLETES

How does the European population perceive the national team / elite national athletes?

71% of the European population find it important that their national team or national elite athletes can win medals.



31% of the European population indicate that they sometimes wear merchandise to support the national team or national elite athletes at the time of important matches.



A little more than half of the European population (51%) follow the performances of their national team or national elite athletes during the season.



CONSUMING ELITE SPORT

IDENTIFICATION WITH THE NATIONAL TEAM & ELITE ATHLETES

How does the European population perceive the national team / elite national athletes?

More than half of the European citizens (53%) see themselves as a fan of their national team or national elite athletes.



48% of the European citizens find it important to be a fan of their national team or of their national elite athletes.



Just under half of the Europeans (45%) indicates that their friends perceive them as a fan of the national team or national elite athletes.





ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

PRIDE & HAPPINESS

Which domains make the European population proud?

This survey explores which achievements or accomplishments regarding a variety of domains in which European citizens are most proud of their country.

The analysis shows that 23% of the Europeans place elite sport within their top 3. This puts elite sporting achievements in 5th place compared to the other domains.

Europeans are most proud of nature & countryside (31%), followed by healthcare (30%), history (26%) and architecture & historical buildings (23%). However, Europeans are prouder of elite sporting achievements than, for example, social security (21%) or education (16%).

In the following page we take a closer look at the theme regarding elite sport.

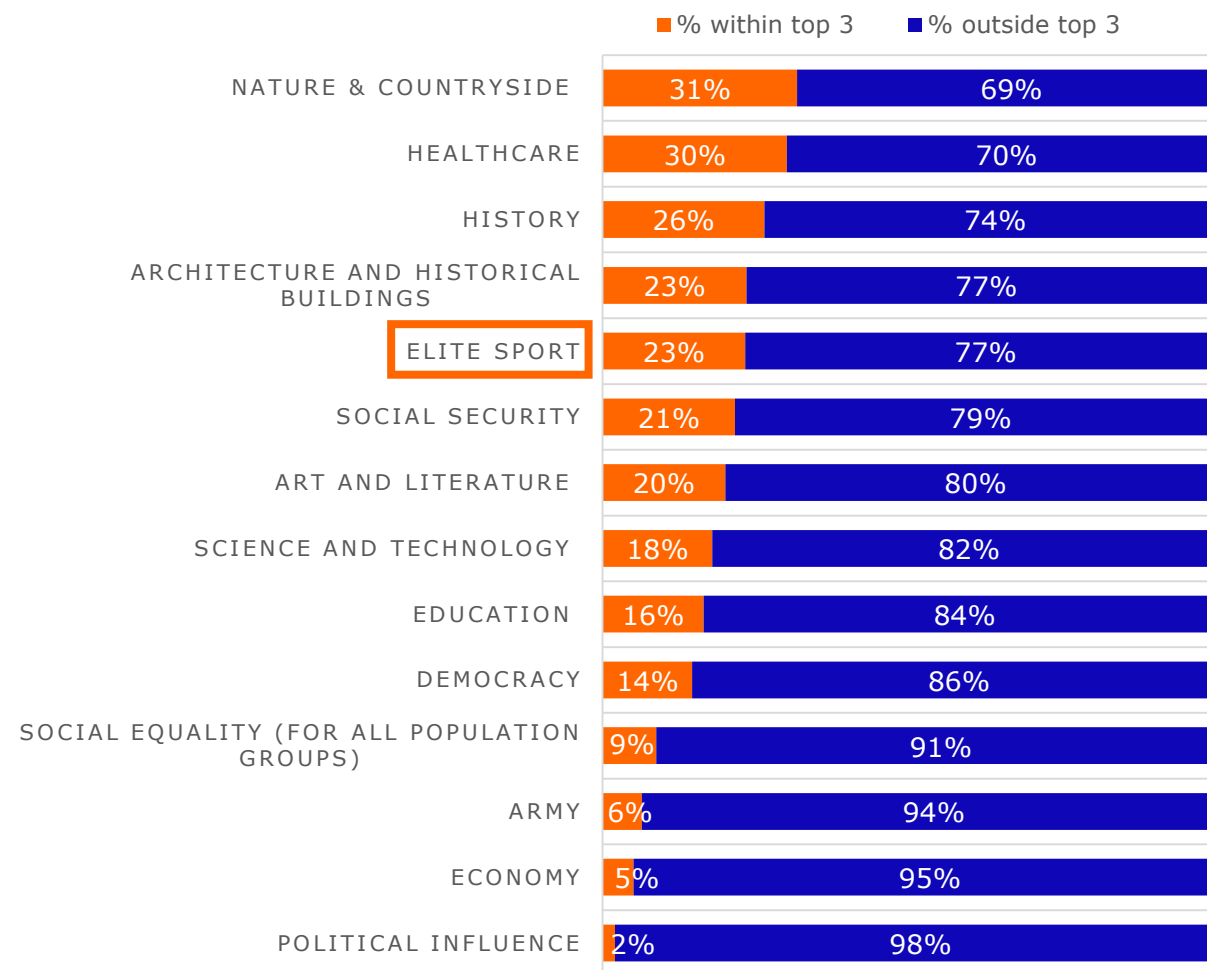


Figure 1: Which domain makes the European population proud?

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

PRIDE & HAPPINESS

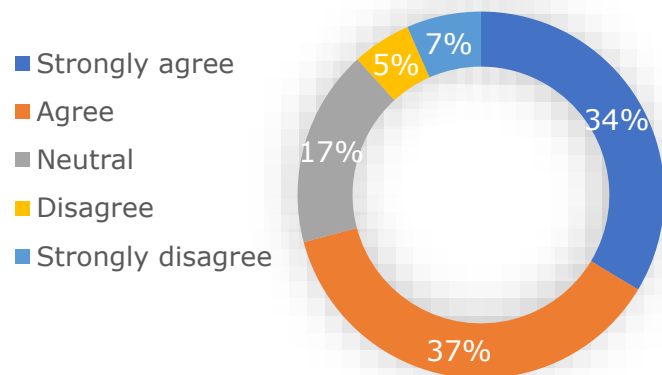


Figure 2: Achievements of elite athletes makes Europeans proud

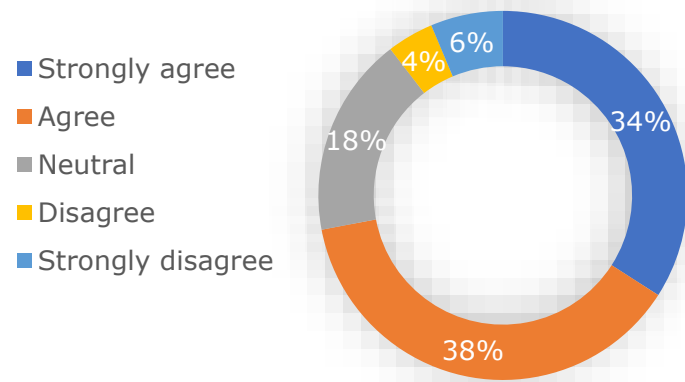


Figure 3: Achievements of elite athletes makes Europeans happy

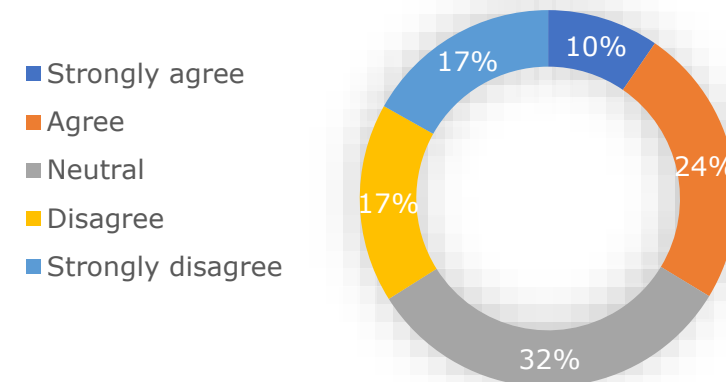


Figure 4: Poor performances of elite athletes makes Europeans unhappy

When the European population is asked if the achievements of elite athletes brings them pride and happiness, the answer is generally positive. Namely, just under three-quarters of Europeans report that the achievements of elite athletes make them **proud (71%)** and **happy (72%)**. When the question is asked in reverse, in other words, whether poor sport performances make them unhappy, 34% of European residents say it does.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP & HAPPINESS

It was examined whether there is a relation between happiness and performance at the European football championship. The following two statements are taken into consideration: "I considered it important that our men's national football team performed well at the European Championships Football" and "The achievements of the men's national football team make me happy". Respondents could indicate with a score from 1 to 5 the extent to which they disagree or agree with these questions (with 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree).

A significant positive correlation between both statements is found (0,735**). In other words, European citizens become happy due to good performances at the European football championship.



ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP & HAPPINESS

When looking into these results on country level, the analysis reveals that there is a significant positive correlation between happiness and performance at the European football championship for all countries. The strongest correlations are found for Belgium and The Netherlands, meaning that Belgian and Dutch citizens become happier due to good performances at the European football championship.



	Belgium	Czechia	Finland	France	Poland	Portugal	The Netherlands
Correlation	0,837**	0,714**	0,690**	0,778**	0,673**	0,673**	0,826**

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP & PRIDE



In addition, the analysis explores whether there is a relation between pride and performance at the European football championship. Hence, the following two statements: "I considered it important that our men's national football team performed well at the European Championships Football" and "The achievements of the men's national football team make me proud" are taking into account. Respondents could indicate with a score from 1 to 5 the extent to which they disagree or agree with these questions (with 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree).

A significant correlation between both statements is found (0,757**). Meaning that European citizens become proud due to good performances at the European football championship.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP & PRIDE

In addition, the relationship between pride and performance at the European football championship was examined on country level.

A significant positive correlation is found for all countries. The strongest correlations are found for Belgium, France and The Netherlands, indicating that Belgian, Dutch and French citizens become proud due to good performances at the European football championship.

	Belgium	Czechia	Finland	France	Poland	Portugal	The Netherlands
Correlation	0,847**	0,751**	0,692**	0,824**	0,696**	0,719**	0,824**



ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

IMPACT OF ELITE ATHLETES

I think that being an elite athlete is a genuine profession



The achievements of our athletes inspire young people to do (more) sport themselves



Our athletes provide us with a positive (inter)national image



Our athletes are role models for young people



The achievements of the men's national football team inspire young people to do (more) sport themselves

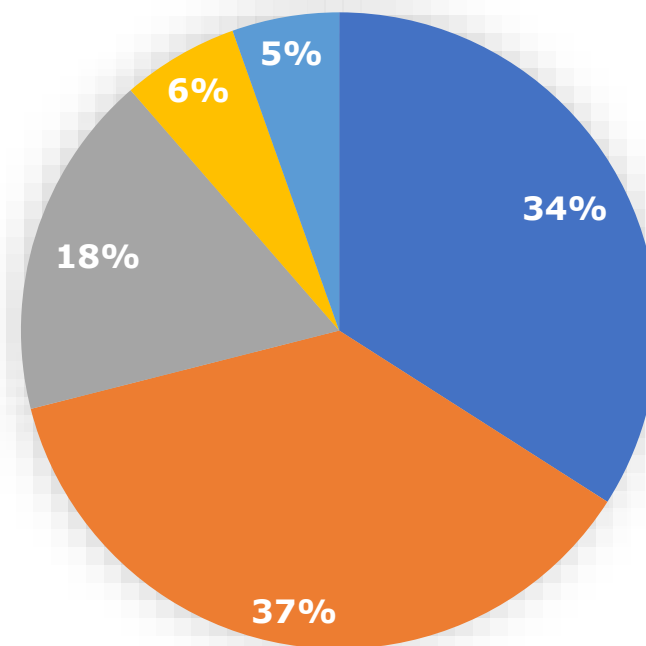


This survey examined how the European population views elite athletes and their thoughts about the potential impact those athletes will have on the general population. Overall, 55% of the European citizens consider being an elite athlete is a genuine profession. In addition, 70 to 77% of the European citizens perceive that elite athletes are role models for young people and that, moreover, the achievements of elite athletes inspire young people to do (more) sports themselves. Furthermore, Europeans (79%) indicate that elite athletes provide a positive international and national image.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

AMBITION

"I think that [country] should always have the ambition to be among the top 10 of most medal scoring nations in the Olympic Games"



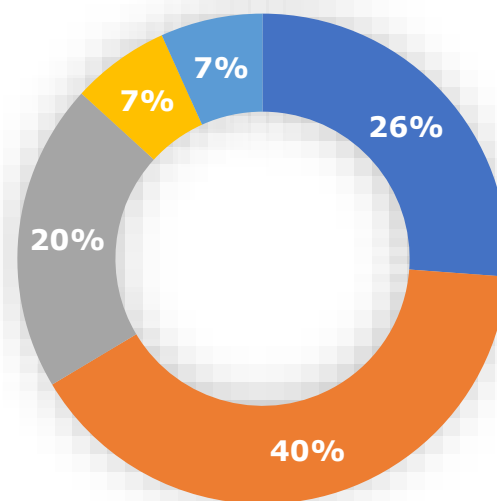
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Figure 5: Europeans perceived ambition to win a medal at the Olympics

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

HOSTING EVENTS

“I think it is important for our country to organise major elite sporting events”



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Figure 6: Europeans perceptions regarding hosting an elite sporting event

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

TRICKLE – DOWN EFFECT

Do good performances by Olympic athletes affect sports participation?

A large percentage of the European population estimate that there is an impact on the European **youth**. The impact on **adults** is estimated to be lower. When speaking of the impact on **oneself**, we see that these figures are even lower. The next pages will discuss the results in more detail.

Nevertheless, please note that interpreting the results requires some nuance as there may be a distinction between what the European population perceives and what they actually do.

Good performances by our top Olympic athletes...

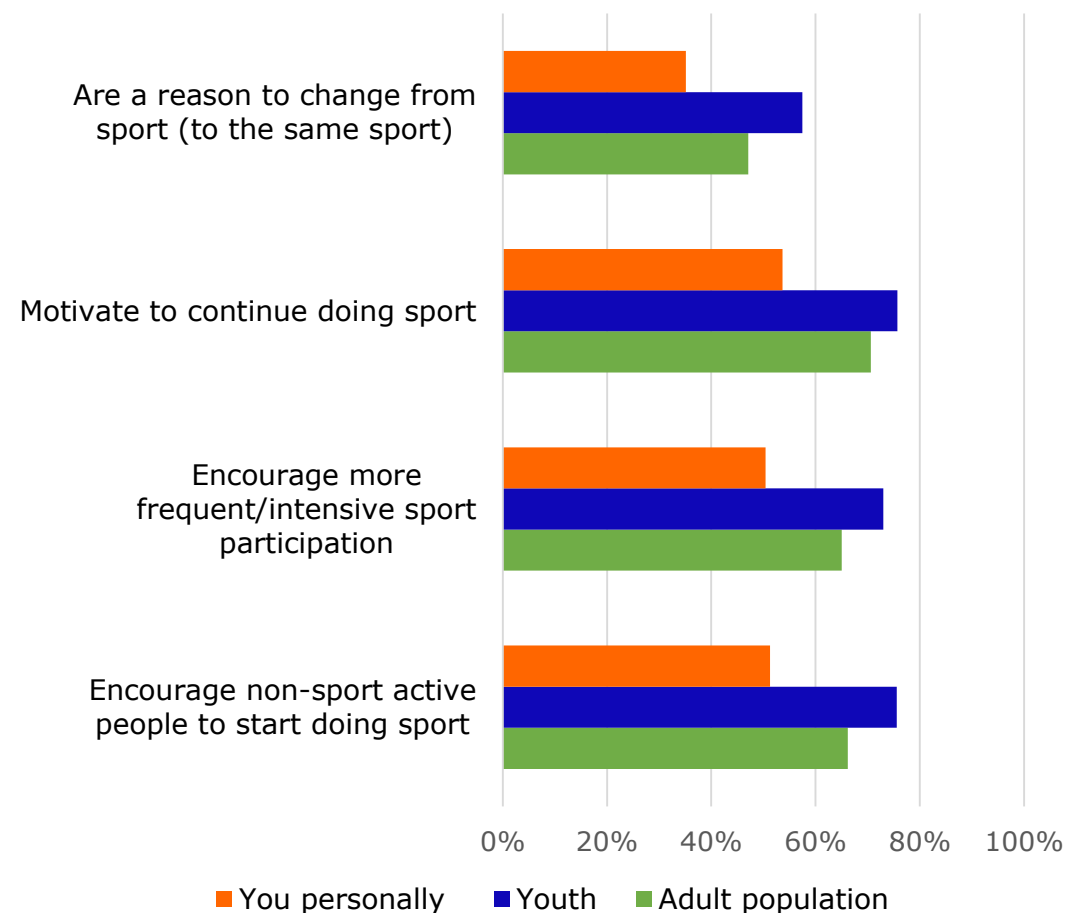


Figure 7: Impact of good performances on sports participation

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

TRICKLE – DOWN EFFECT

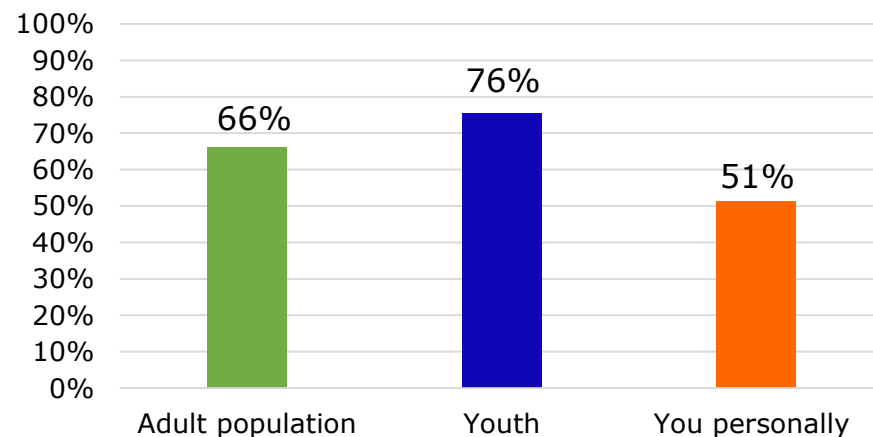


Figure 8: Impact of good performances on sports participation

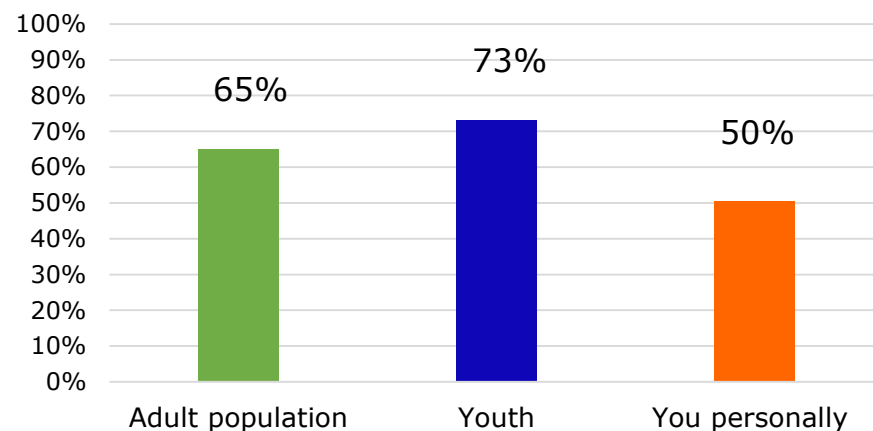


Figure 9: Impact of good performances on sports participation

Do good performances by Olympic athletes encourage non active people to start doing sport?

After the Olympics, 76% of Europeans believe that the good performances of athletes encourage **young** people to participate in sports. 66% indicate that the Olympic Games have a positive influence on **adults**. In addition, 51% indicate they are **personally** encouraged to actively engage in sports.

Do good performances by Olympic athletes encourage more frequent/intensive sport participation?

73% think that **young** people will play sports more frequently and intensively because of good performances by Olympic athletes. Further, 65% indicate that they think that **adults** will intensify their sporting activities. Half of the European population (50%) perceive that **oneself** will exercise more frequent/intensive.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

TRICKLE – DOWN EFFECT

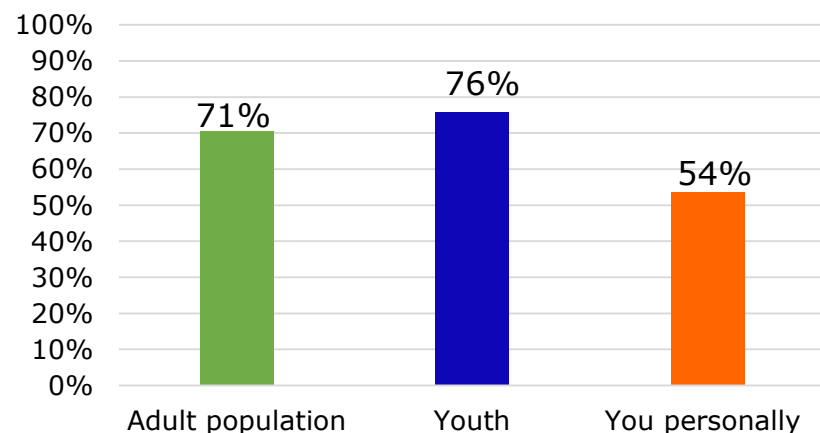


Figure 10: Impact of good performances on sports participation

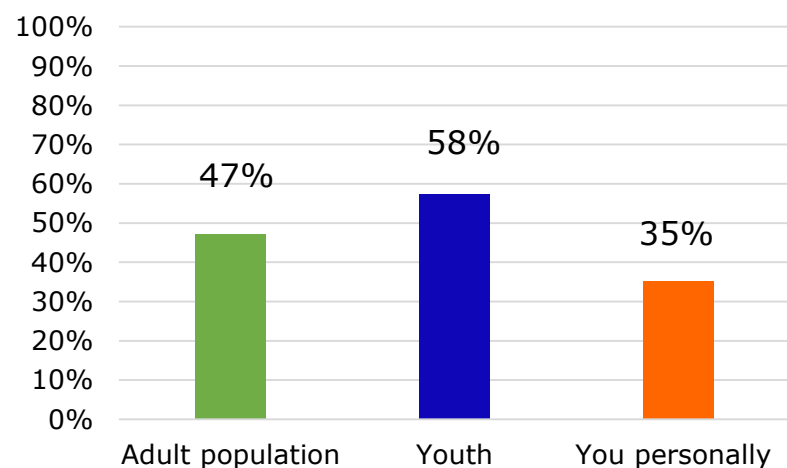


Figure 11: Impact of good performances on sports participation

Do good performances by Olympic athletes motivate people to continue doing sport?

After the Olympics, Europeans estimate that good athletic performances also lead to motivation to continue playing sports: 76% for European **youth**, 71% for European **adults** and 54% for **themselves**.

Are good performances by Olympic athletes a reason to switch sport?

In other words, do good performances in one particular sport lead to Europeans switching sports in order to participate in those successful sports?

Respectively 58% and 47% of the respondents indicate that good performances in a particular sport have an influence on the European **youth** and **adults**. Only 1 in 3 (35%) indicate that they felt **personally** influenced to switch sports because of elite sport success.

MOST POPULAR SPORTS FOR SUCCESS

In which Olympic sport does the European population prefer to see elite sport success?

Figures 12 and 13 provide an overview of the Olympic sports in which the European population would prefer to have elite sport success. Respondents could choose up to five sports and rank them according to their most favorite.

Overall, the results indicate that the summer games are more popular among the European citizens. **Athletics** (44%), **football** (30%) and **cycling** (19%) are the Olympic sports that the greatest number of European citizens placed in their top 5 in which they would like to achieve success. When looking exclusively at the winter games it was seen that **ice hockey** (13%), **biathlon** (9%) and **cross-country skiing** (6%) are the sports in which they prefer to achieve elite sport success.

The next page shows the complete top 5, summer and winter games included.

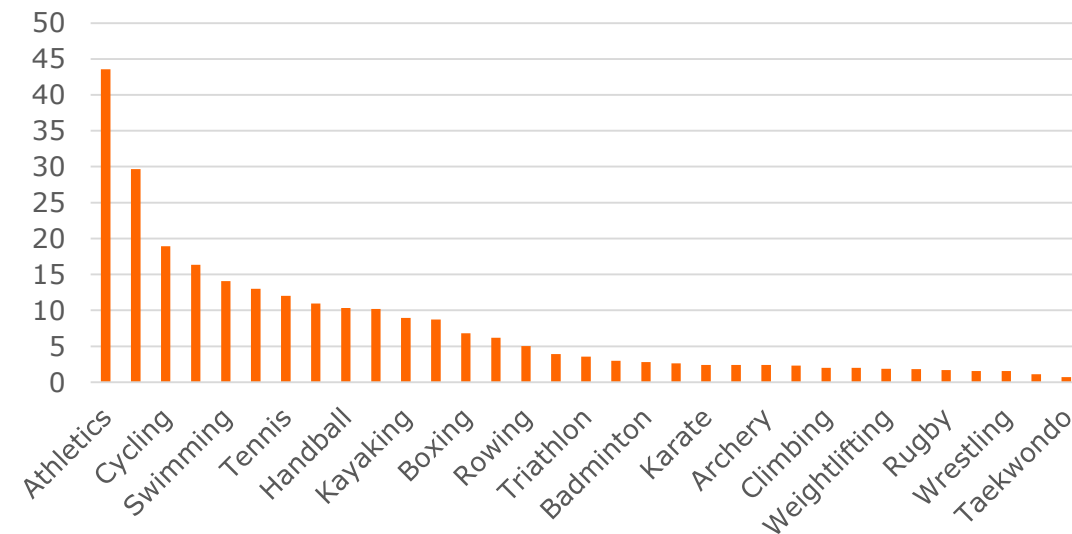


Figure 12: European sport preferences for elite sport success (summer games)

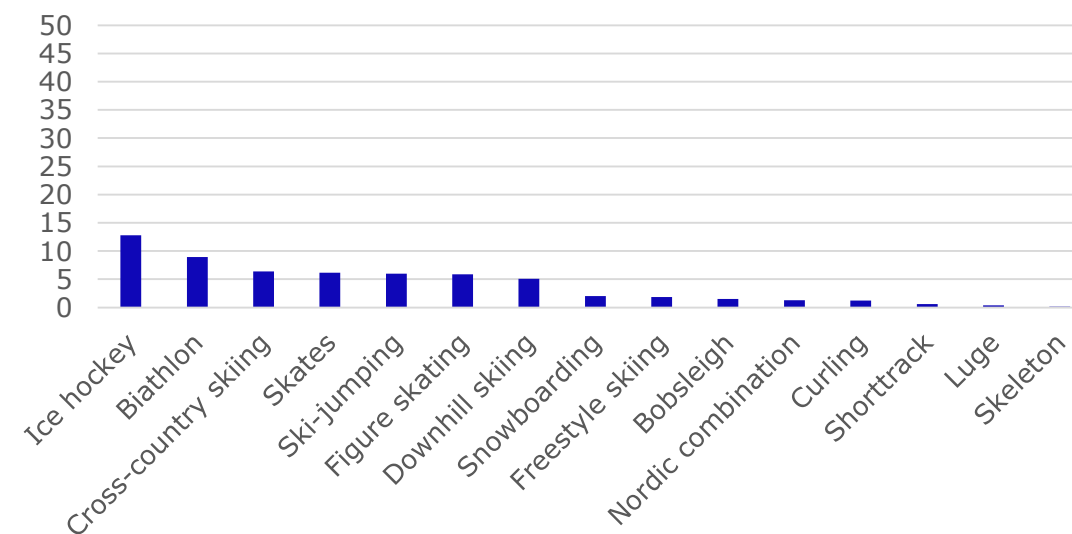
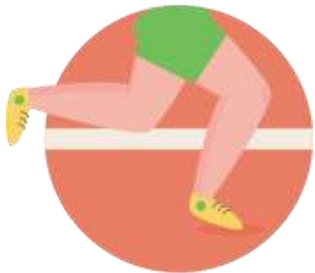


Figure 13: European sport preferences for elite sport success (winter games)

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MOST POPULAR SPORTS FOR SUCCESS



1. ATHLETICS

44% of the European population has athletics in their top 5 sports in which they prefer to achieve elite sport success.



2. FOOTBALL

Despite football being a non-traditional Olympic sport, 30% of Europeans put football in their top 5 of sports in which they prefer to achieve Olympic success.



3. CYCLING

With 19%, cycling completes the top 3 of sports in which the European citizens prefer to see Olympic success.



4. GYMNASTICS

Gymnastics follows cycling closely with 16% of Europeans putting gymnastics in his or her top 5 as a sport in which they prefer to achieve elite sport success.



5. SWIMMING

Swimming closes our top 5, as 14% of the European citizens would prefer to see Olympic success in it.

This page lists the most popular sports for success at the European level, the top 5 national data varies by country.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI

Does the European population have a positive or negative perception about the social impact of elite sport?

Figure 14 shows the most positive (orange) or negative (blue) impact that the European population perceives. The European population who do not attribute any positive, nor negative impact to elite sport are represented by the grey bars.



The results show that the majority of the European population believe that **elite sport primarily generates a positive impact.**

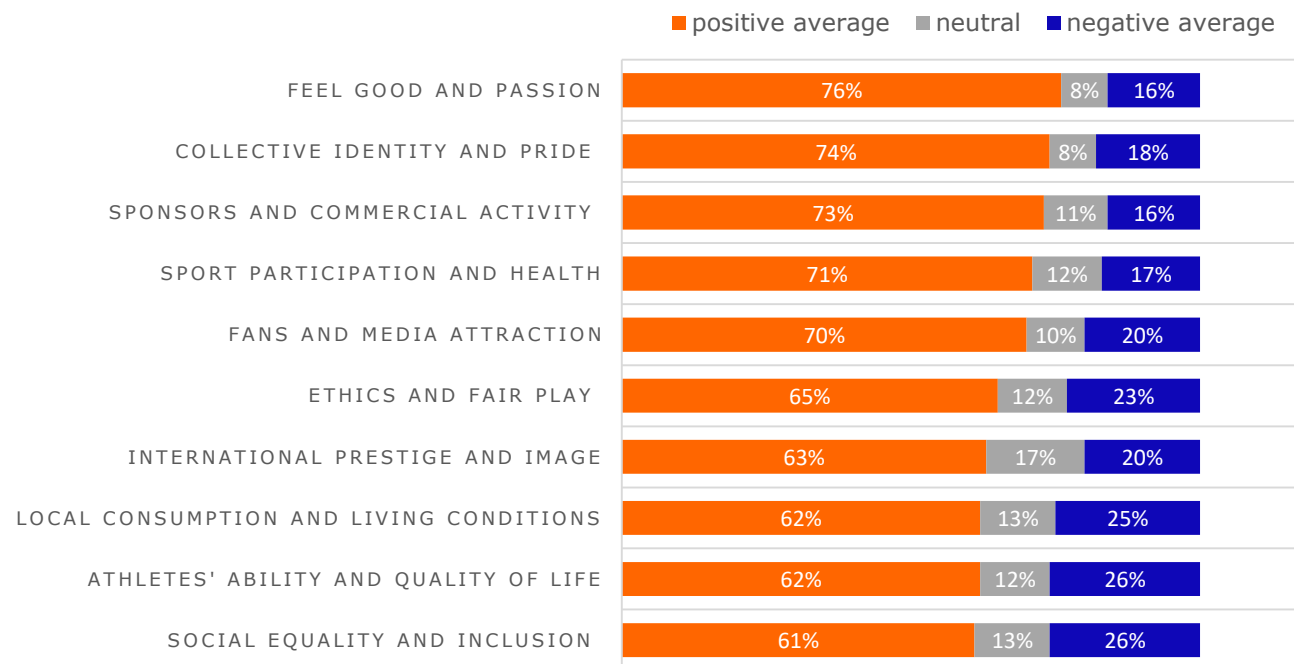
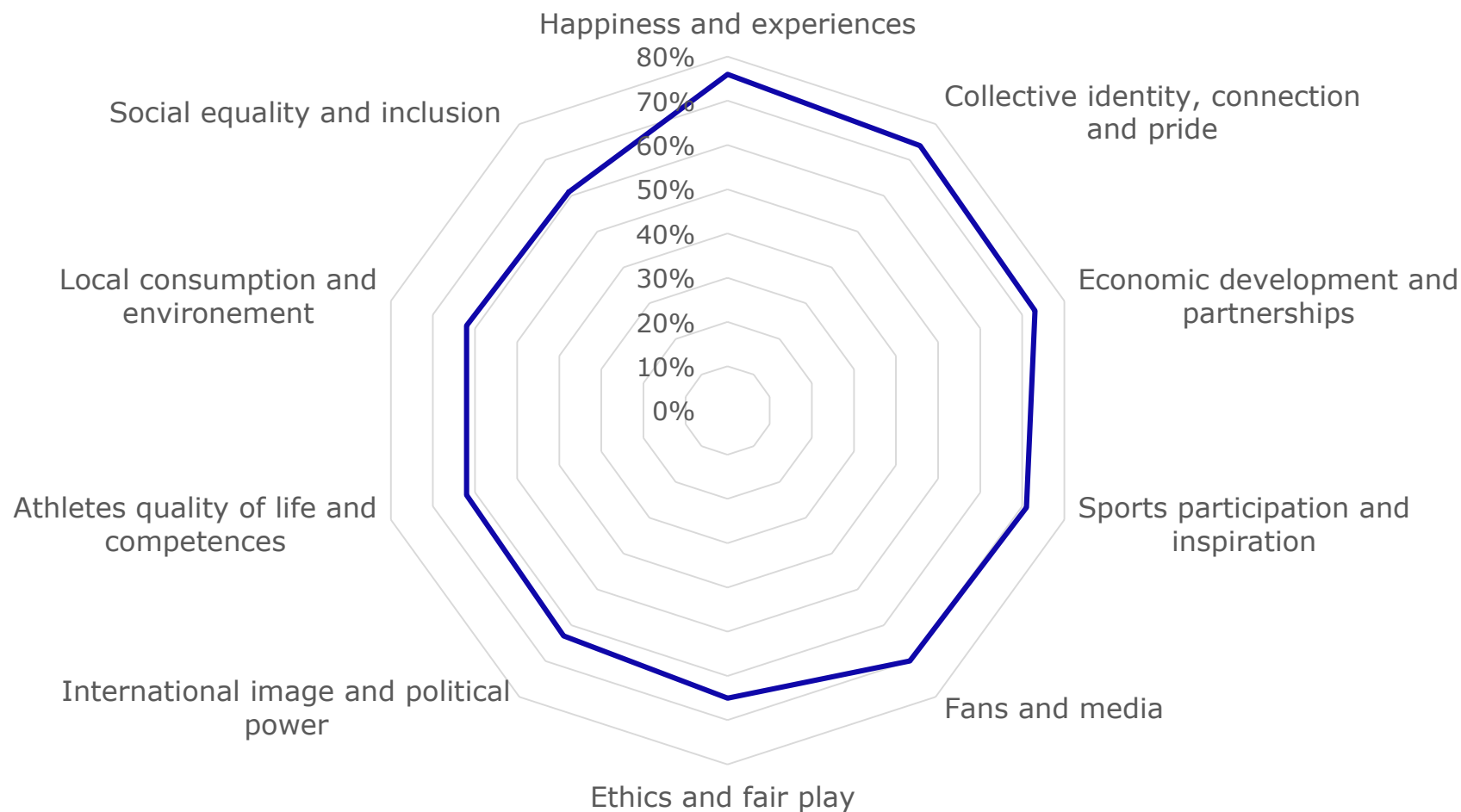


Figure 14: Overview of the European population on the positive and negative impact spheres of elite sport.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - POSITIVE IMPACT

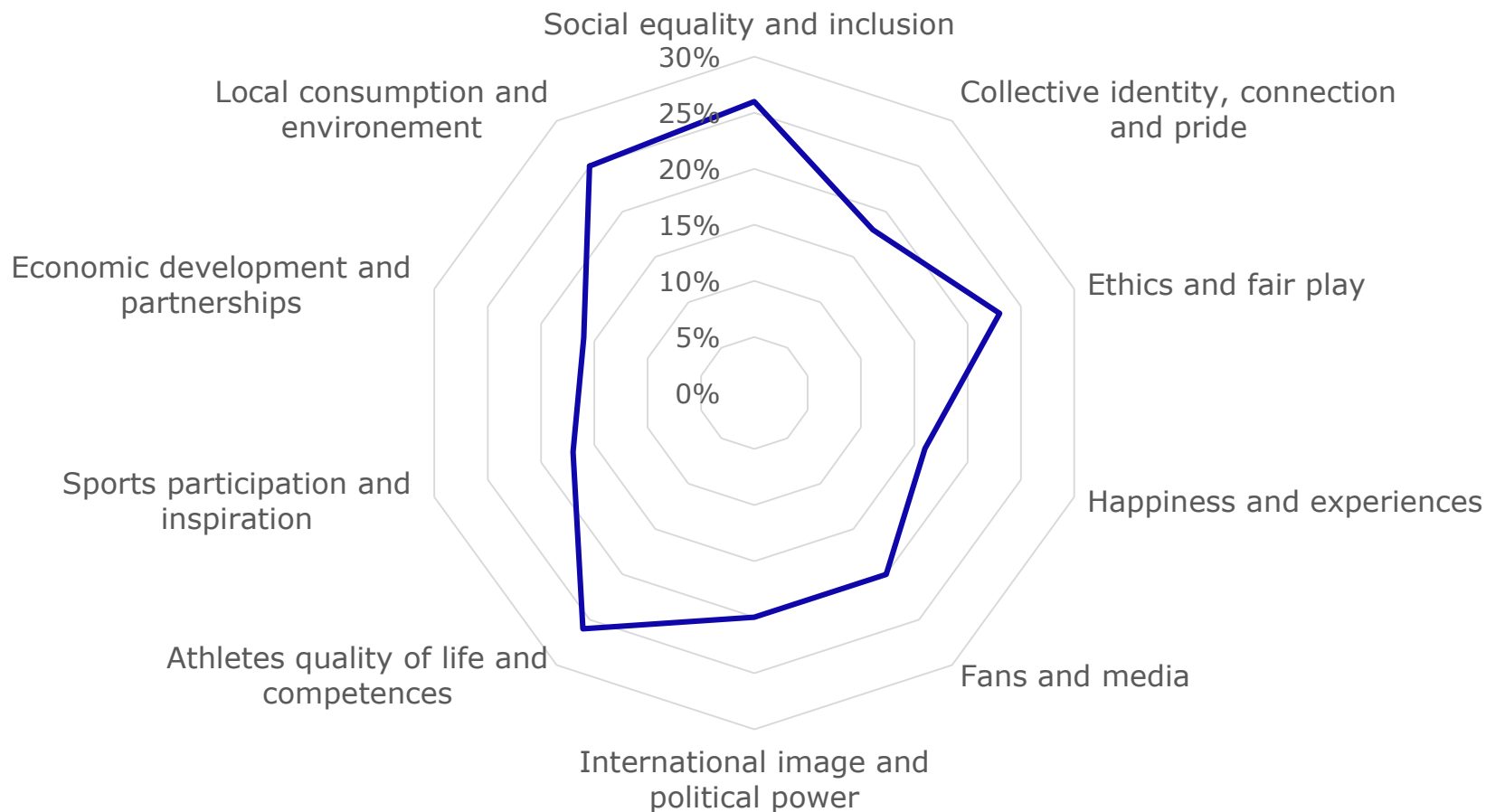


The overall scores of the ten dimensions show that the European population perceive that elite sport contributes positively to **feel good & passion** (76%), **collective identity & pride** (74%), **sponsors & commercial activity** (73%), **sport participation & health** (71%), and **fans & (media) attraction** (70%).

Figure 15: Percentage of the European population that believes elite sport has a positive impact

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - NEGATIVE IMPACT



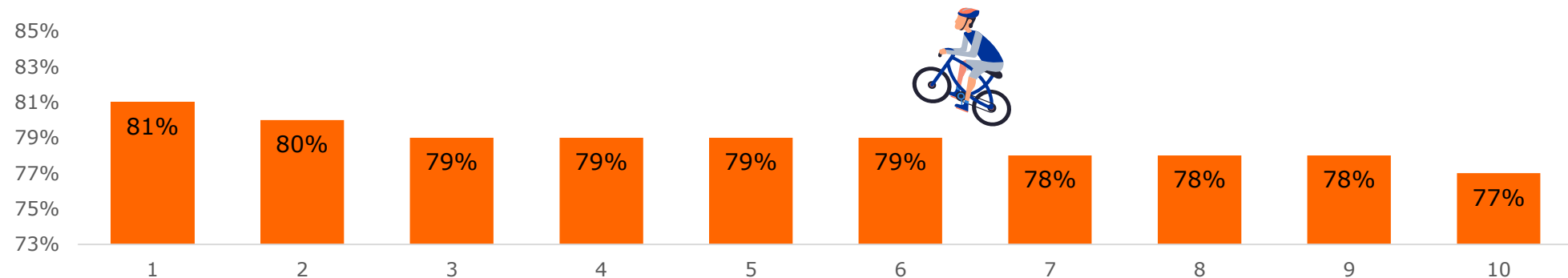
As mentioned before, the European population generally perceives few negative social effects of elite sport. However, the most perceived negative social impacts are in the dimensions **social equality & inclusion** (26%), **athletes' ability & quality of life** (26%), **local consumption & living conditions** (25%), **international prestige & image** (20%), and **ethics & fair play** (23%).

Figure 16: Percentage of the European population that believes elite sport has a negative impact

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - POSITIVE IMPACT

Focussing exclusively on the positive perceptions of the impact of elite sport, it is striking that the ten highest-ranked items are underlined by almost three quarters of the European respondents. The five items that Europeans most commonly perceive as having a positive impact are: 'elite sport encourages young people to do sport themselves' (81%), 'elite sport boosts the sport industry' (80%), 'elite sport giving the media a profitable source of income' (79%), 'elite sport creates passion/enthusiasm' (79%) and 'elite sport spawns positive sport heroes' (79%)



In general, I think that elite sport in our country...

- 1. encourages young people to do sport themselves**
2. boosts the sport industry
3. giving the media a profitable source of income
4. creates passion/enthusiasm
- 5. spawns positive sport heroes**
- 6. is important for providing inspiring role models for young people**
7. strengthens international prestige of a country
8. makes people feel proud of their country
9. positively affects the image of a country, city or neighborhood
10. provides pleasure/joy

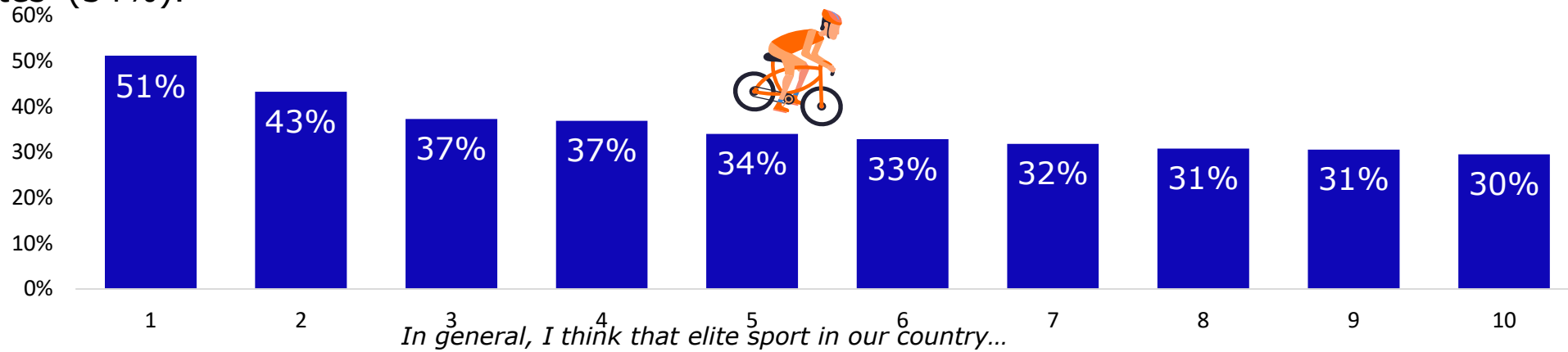


The three items 'encourages young people to do sport themselves' (81%), 'spawns positive sport heroes' (79%) and 'is important for providing inspiring role models for young people' (79%) legitimizes and underscores why this project is important.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - NEGATIVE IMPACT

The five items that Europeans most commonly perceive as having a negative impact are: 'elite sport exposes elite athletes to transgressive behaviour' (51%), 'elite sport induces gambling addiction' (43%), 'elite sport widens the gap between poor and rich people' (37%), 'elite sport leads to costs in organising elite sporting events that are unjustifiable' (37%) and 'elite sport encourages the use of performance-enhancing drugs among top athletes' (34%).



In general, I think that elite sport in our country...

- 1. exposes elite athletes to transgressive behaviour**
- 2. induces gambling addiction**
- 3. widens the gap between poor and rich people**
- 4. leads to costs in organising elite sporting events that are unjustifiable**
- 5. encourages the use of performance-enhancing drugs among top athletes**
6. encourages the amateur use of performance-enhancing drugs
7. has an impact on the environment that is negative/harmful
8. lessens the popularity of politicians
9. provides top athletes with severe health conditions
9. leads to (years of) investments that are irresponsibly high

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT ACROSS THE COUNTRIES

Positive impact

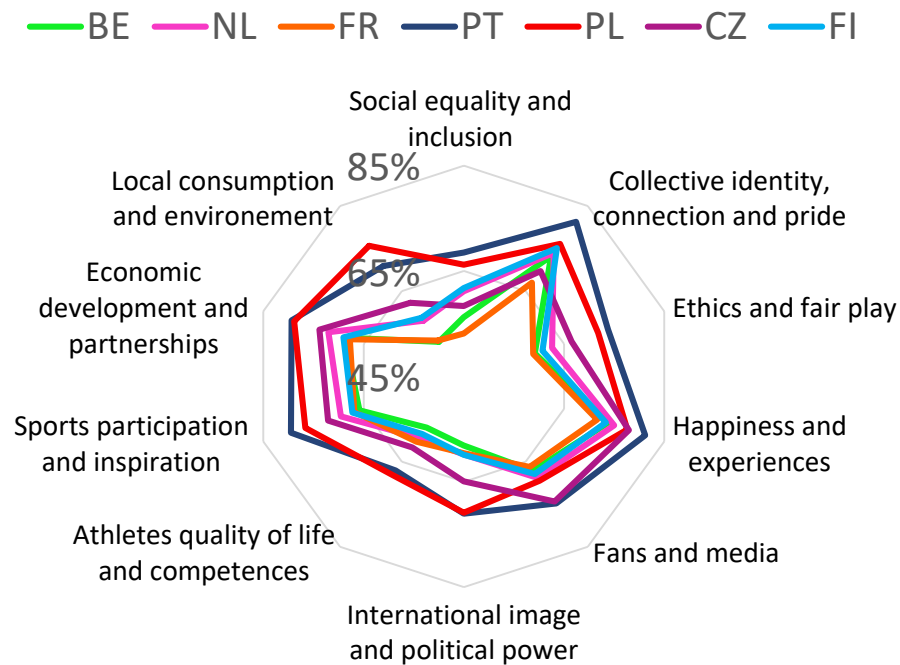


Figure 17: Percentage of the European population across the countries that believes elite sport has a positive impact

Negative impact

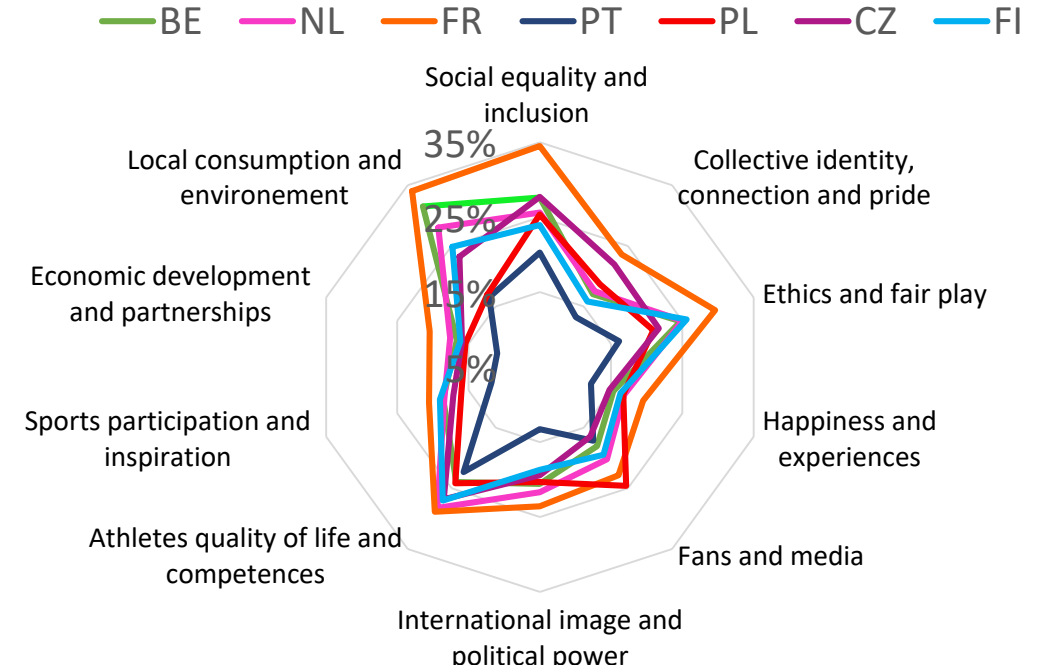


Figure 18: Percentage of the European population across the countries that believes elite sport has a negative impact

When looking into the European sample, we can conclude that elite sport mainly contributes to the positive impact spheres. On the following pages we focus on the differences across the countries.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - SOCIAL EQUALITY & INCLUSION

Social equality and inclusion refers to the potential of elite sport, when properly leveraged, to **bridge different cultures**, thereby **promoting harmony** between different cultural groups and **socio-economic equality** (e.g., Berry, 2011). In contrast, patterns of manifest and institutional forms of **discrimination** continue to shape the experiences of minorities and **limit minority involvement** in the game (Bradbury, 2013).



61% of participants think that elite sport promotes social equality and inclusion in their country.



15%



The lowest number of participants who expect a positive impact was found in France, the highest in Portugal.



26% of participants think that elite sport counteracts social equality and inclusion in their country.



14%



The highest number of participants who expect a negative impact was found in France, the lowest in Portugal.

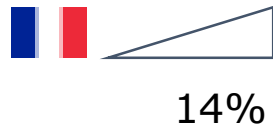
ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - COLLECTIVE IDENTITY, CONNECTION & PRIDE

Elite sport provides occasions for the public expression of **national values, pride, collective unity, identity and nationalism** (e.g., Coackley, 2010). Moreover international sports events are used to highlight national symbols and present athletes and teams as representatives of nation states. On the other hand, sports events could be outlets for nationalism which can fuel **rivalry and aggressive behaviour** (e.g., Armstrong & Giulianotti, 2002).



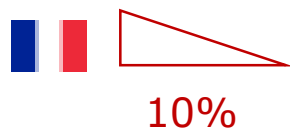
74% of participants think that elite sport promotes collective identity, connection and pride in their country.



The lowest number of participants who expect a positive impact was found in France, the highest in Portugal.



18% of participants think that elite sport counteracts collective identity, connection and pride in their country.



The highest number of participants who expect a negative impact was found in France, the lowest in Portugal.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - ETHICS & FAIR PLAY

Elite sport provides an international platform for **social debate** (Tomlinson, 2014). In contrast, harmful scandals regarding **corruption and fraud** among the international sport federations are well reported (e.g., Numerato, 2009).



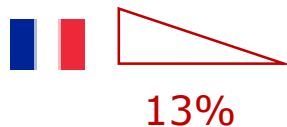
65% of participants think that elite sport promotes ethics and fair play in their country.



The lowest number of participants who expect a positive impact was found in Belgium and France, the highest in Portugal.



23% of participants think that elite sport counteracts ethics and fair play in their country.



The highest number of participants who expect a negative impact was found in France, the lowest in Portugal.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - HAPPINESS & EXPERIENCES

Sport fans who attend or watch live sporting events derive a pleasurable form of **excitement, happiness and satisfaction** (e.g., Hallmann et al., 2013). Elite sport creates the opportunity for a controlled decontrolling of restraints on emotions and an **escape from everyday life** (e.g., Kim et al., 2011). On the downside, following a sport match, there can be **anger, disappointment, frustration and hostility** (e.g., Mann, 1988).



76% of participants think that elite sport promotes happiness and experiences in their country.



10%



The lowest number of participants who expect a positive impact was found in France, the highest in Portugal.



23% of participants think that elite sport counteracts ethics and fair play in their country.



7%



The highest number of participants who expect a negative impact was found in France, the lowest in Portugal.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - FANS & MEDIA

Societal impacts related to the **attractive power of athletes and sport events** which enjoy a great deal of worldwide media coverage (Dolles & Söderman, 2008). Mass media and the commercialisation of sport and sports personalities **boost the popularity of elite sport** (e.g., Bouchet et al., 2011). A professional sports team has the potential to build **brand equity** by capitalising on the emotional relationship it shares with its fans (e.g., Underwood et al., 2001). The coverage of professional sports also regularly highlights cases of **cheating** (e.g., doping), **conflicts** (e.g., unethical athlete behaviour), **decadence** (e.g., extreme high wages) and **controversies** (e.g., ambush marketing; e.g., Lee et al., 2013).



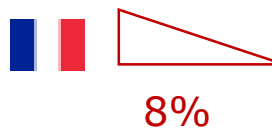
70% of participants think that elite sport promotes fans and media in their country.



The lowest number of participants who expect a positive impact was found in France, the highest in Portugal.



20% of participants think that elite sport counteracts fans and media in their country.



The highest number of participants who expect a negative impact was found in France, the lowest in Portugal.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE & IMAGE

Sport offers an arena for countries to compete with each other to gain **international recognition and prestige** (e.g., Jennings, 2013). Countries bidding for major events sometimes do so to create a powerful public stage for their ideological battles (Merkel, 2013) or as propaganda or because they want to use sporting events as a foreign **policy tool** to build relations with with as many countries and people as possible.



63% of participants think that elite sport promotes international prestige and image in their country.



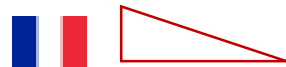
13%



The lowest number of participants who expect a positive impact was found in Belgium, the highest in Portugal and Poland.



20% of participants think that elite sport counteracts fans and media in their country.



10%



The highest number of participants who expect a negative impact was found in France, the lowest in Portugal.

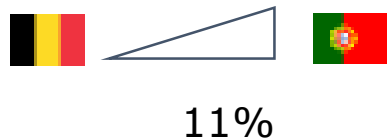
ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - ATHLETES ABILITY & QUALITY OF LIFE

(Elite) sport stimulates the **development of life skills** and incorporates the **pride** of being an elite level sportsman/woman, fame, and the role model function of athletes (e.g., Vescio et al., 2005). Several physical and **psychological challenges** (e.g., injuries, social isolation, pressure to perform) may pose elite athletes' well-being at risk (e.g., Ruedl et al., 2012).



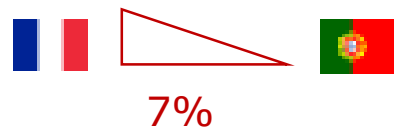
62% of participants think that elite sport promotes athletes' ability and quality of life in their country.



The lowest number of participants who expect a positive impact was found in Belgium the highest in Portugal.



26% of participants think that elite sport counteracts fans and media in their country.



The highest number of participants who expect a negative impact was found in France, the lowest in Portugal.

ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - SPORT PARTICIPATION & HEALTH

It is believed that athletes provide **inspiration, motivational direction and meaning** for people to develop an active lifestyle. In contrast, studies reported negative impacts like **increasing body image issues** and overall sport participation rates among the youth have led some authors to theorise about a discouraging effect. Several authors argue that **discouragement from participating** in sport among youth is the result of experiencing a competence gap with successful athletes (e.g., Feddersen et al., 2009).



71% of participants think that elite sport promotes sport participation and health in their country.



14%



The lowest number of participants who expect a positive impact was found in Belgium the highest in Portugal.



17% of participants think that elite sport counteracts fans and media in their country.



9%



The highest number of participants who expect a negative impact was found in France, the lowest in Portugal.

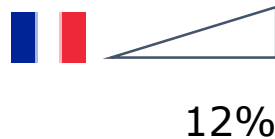
ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - SPONSORS & COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

It is assumed that elite sport provides **financial returns** to a variety of stakeholders that are involved in it (e.g., Downward et al., 2009). However, literature confirms that economic gains are far from certain, and mega-event organisers suffering from **financial hangovers** are abundant throughout history (Barclay, 2009).

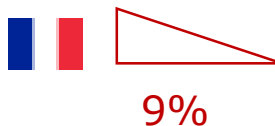


73% of participants think that elite sport promotes sport participation and health in their country.



The lowest number of participants who expect a positive impact was found in Belgium the highest in Portugal.

16% of participants think that elite sport counteracts fans and media in their country.



The highest number of participants who expect a negative impact was found in France, the lowest in Portugal.

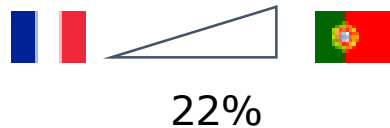
ELITE SPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT IN YOUR NATION

MESSI - LOCAL CONSUMPTION AND LIVING CONDITIONS

Elite sport holds beneficial impact such as **increased tourism, consumption and employment to exploitation costs** and the impact on the **living conditions** within host communities. Especially when hosting mega-events, cities tend to try to regenerate neighbourhoods by investing in public transportation, local infrastructure, hotels and green zones (e.g., Brown et al., 2004). However, research showed that a net local economic benefit is far from certain, as there is aftermath with regard to **excessive temporal and lasting costs** (e.g., Smith, 2012), and often **limited noticeable positive impacts occur for the community** (e.g., McCartney et al., 2010).



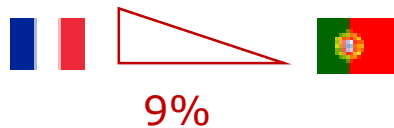
62% of participants think that elite sport promotes local consumption and living conditions in their country.



The lowest number of participants who expect a positive impact was found in Belgium the highest in Portugal.



25% of participants think that elite sport counteracts local consumption and living conditions in their country.



The highest number of participants who expect a negative impact was found in France, the lowest in Portugal.



ATHLETES AS ROLE MODELS

ATHLETES AS ROLE MODELS

OLYMPIC ATHLETES & OLYMPIC TEAMS

Are you a fan?

The analysis shows that European citizens are more likely to be a fan of an individual Olympic athlete rather than of an Olympic team. Specifically, 41% of the European population report to have one or more athlete(s) currently active in an Olympic sport that they like to watch, have sympathy for or are even a fan of. When taking a closer look at the gender of the favorite athletes reported, we see that 52% is male, 47% is female and 1% is defined as 'other'.

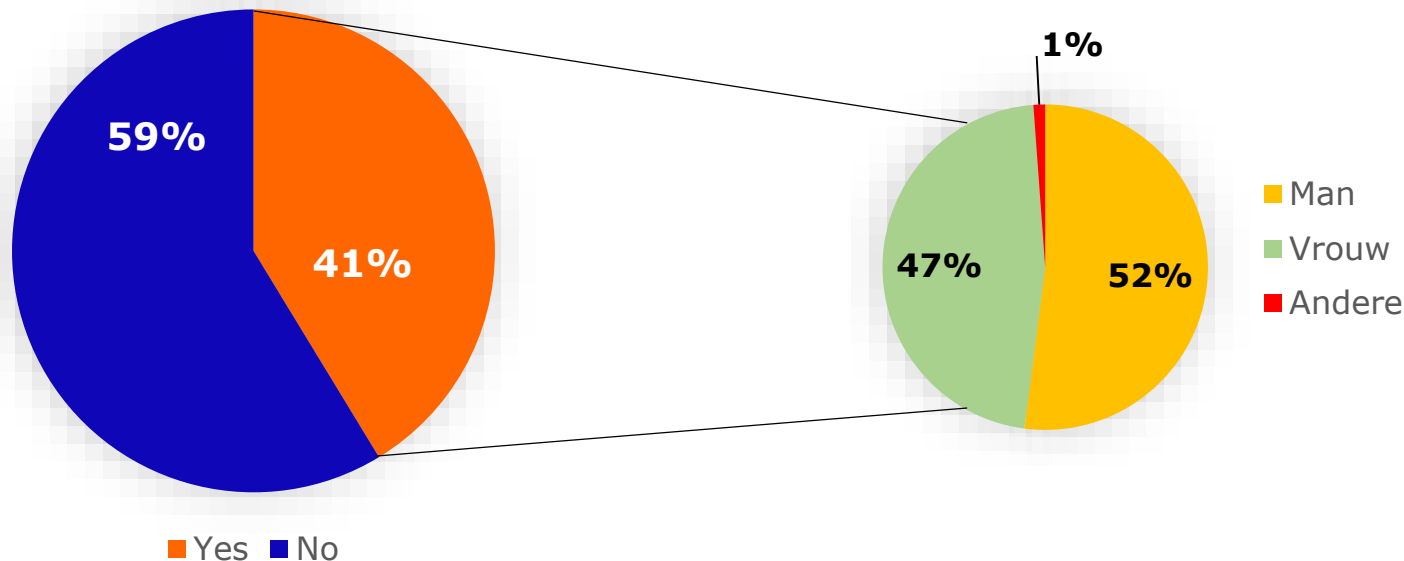


Figure 19: The extent of the population that is or is not a fan of an Olympic athletes

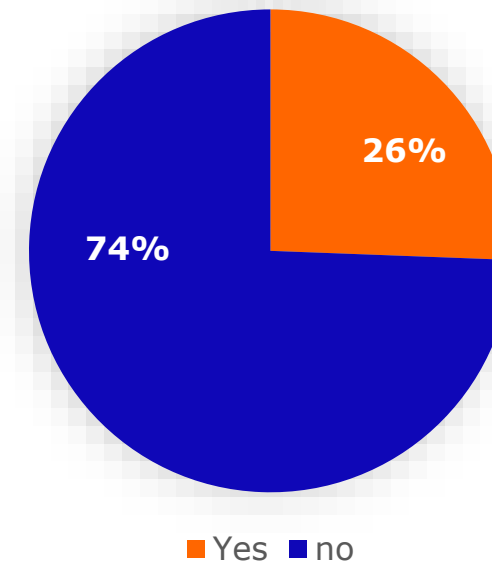


Figure 20: The extent of the population that is or is not a fan of an Olympic team

ATHLETES AS ROLE MODELS

LIKEABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF OLYMPIC ATHLETES

What characteristics do people love about their favorite Olympic athlete?

By means of the statements shown in figure 23, it was examined why the Europeans citizens (41%) are a fan of their elite athlete.

The analysis shows that Europeans are most likely to be a fan of an athlete when: a) the athlete is a **positive example** to others (90%), b) the athlete is in very **good physical condition** (89%), c) the athlete shows **fair play and respect** for opponents and other players (89%), d) the athlete is **among the world's best** in his/her sport (88%) and e) the athlete's top matches against their biggest opponents are very **exciting** (88%).

Another interesting finding is that 68% of the Europeans indicate that their favorite Olympic athlete is a **role model** for them.

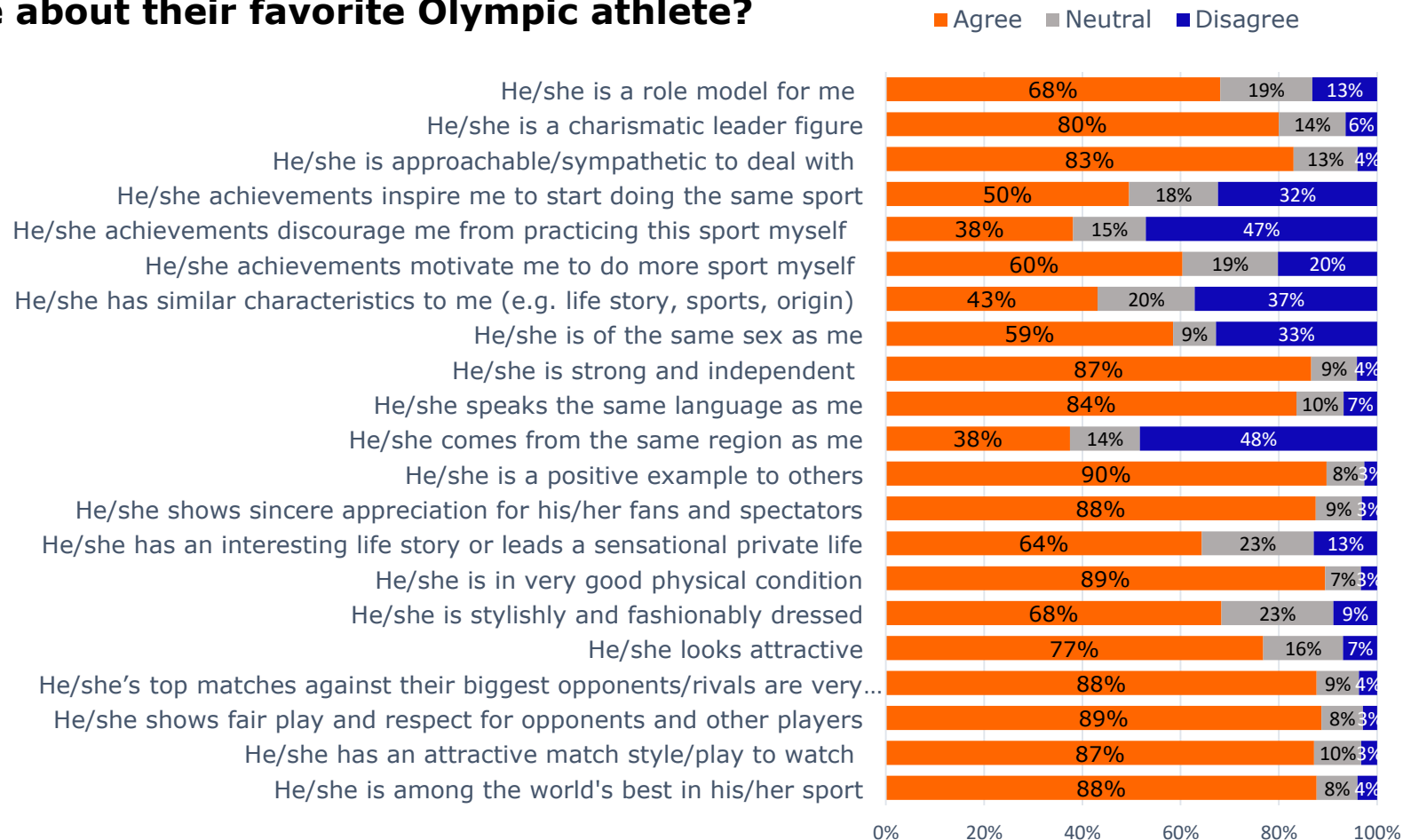


Figure 21: Likeable characteristics of Olympic athletes



ATHLETES AS ROLE MODELS

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD ROLE MODELS

What behaviour should elite athletes display?

In addition, the question was asked what elite athletes can do to be perceived as 'true' role models. In other words, which characteristics find the European population important for Olympic athletes to display in order to be perceived as a role model.

Overall, maintaining a **healthy lifestyle** (37%) and demonstrating **exemplary behaviour** during (44%) and apart from sporting competitions (35%) are considered as the most important characteristics of athlete role models.

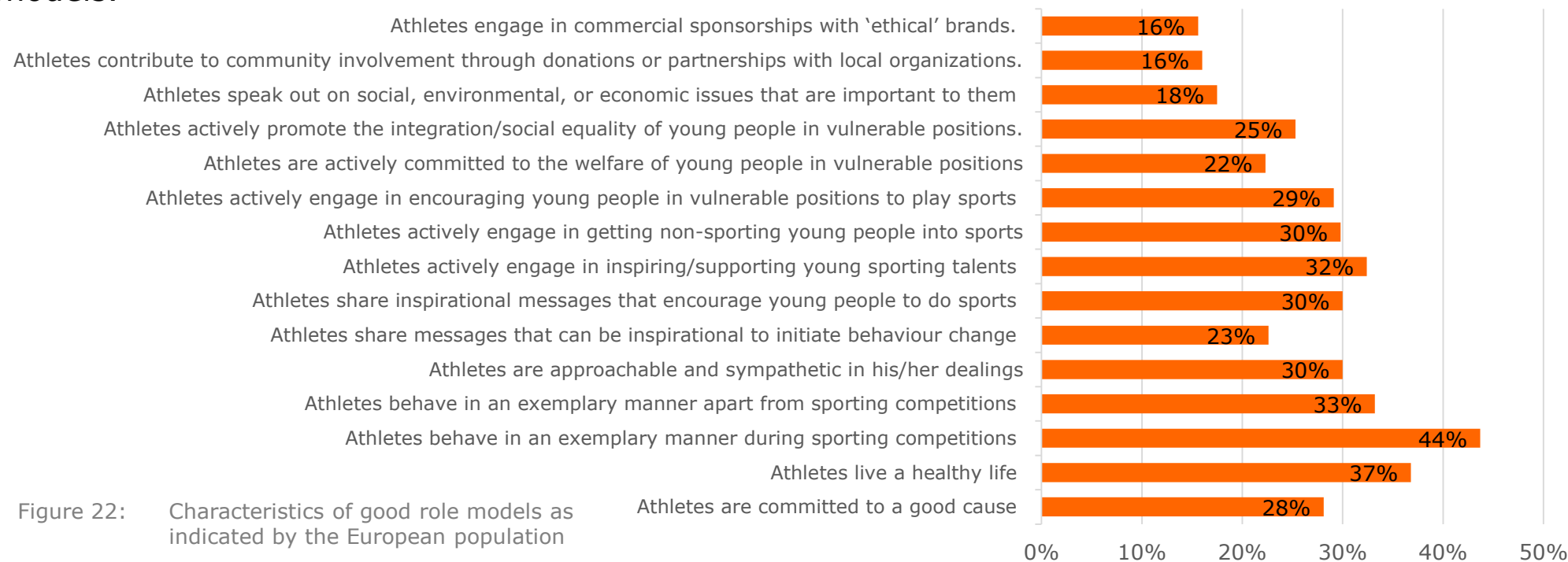


Figure 22: Characteristics of good role models as indicated by the European population

ATHLETES AS ROLE MODELS

RELATION BETWEEN MESSI AND BEING A FAN OF AN ATHLETE

Participants who indicated that they have a role model are more likely to believe in the positive societal impact of elite sport.

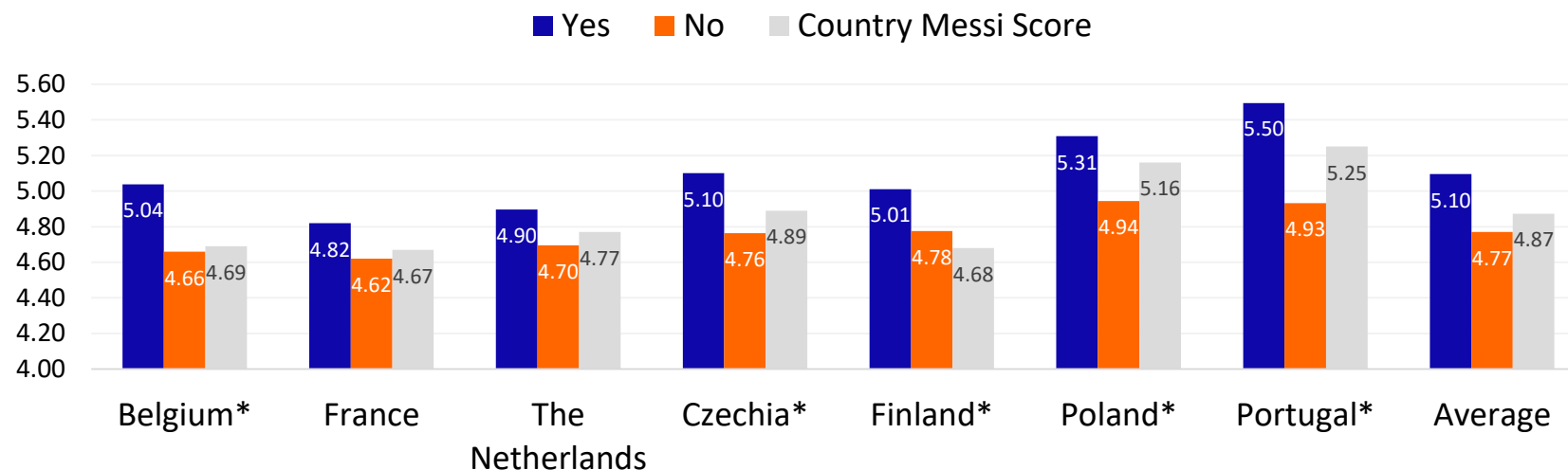


Figure 23: Relation between Messi and being a fan of an athlete



These insights are of importance for assisting sport organisations to develop succesful athlete role model programmes/campaigns.



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SPORT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Another contribution of the survey was to examine the elements where national sports organisations should pay attention to while developing sport policies and programmes (e.g., with athletes as role models).

The three elements that European participants think are most important for **national sport organisations** (e.g., Olympic Committee, Sport Federations) **to engage** in are:

1. Promoting ethical conduct and fair play
2. Stimulating social equality and inclusion
3. Providing inspiring role models that activate young people

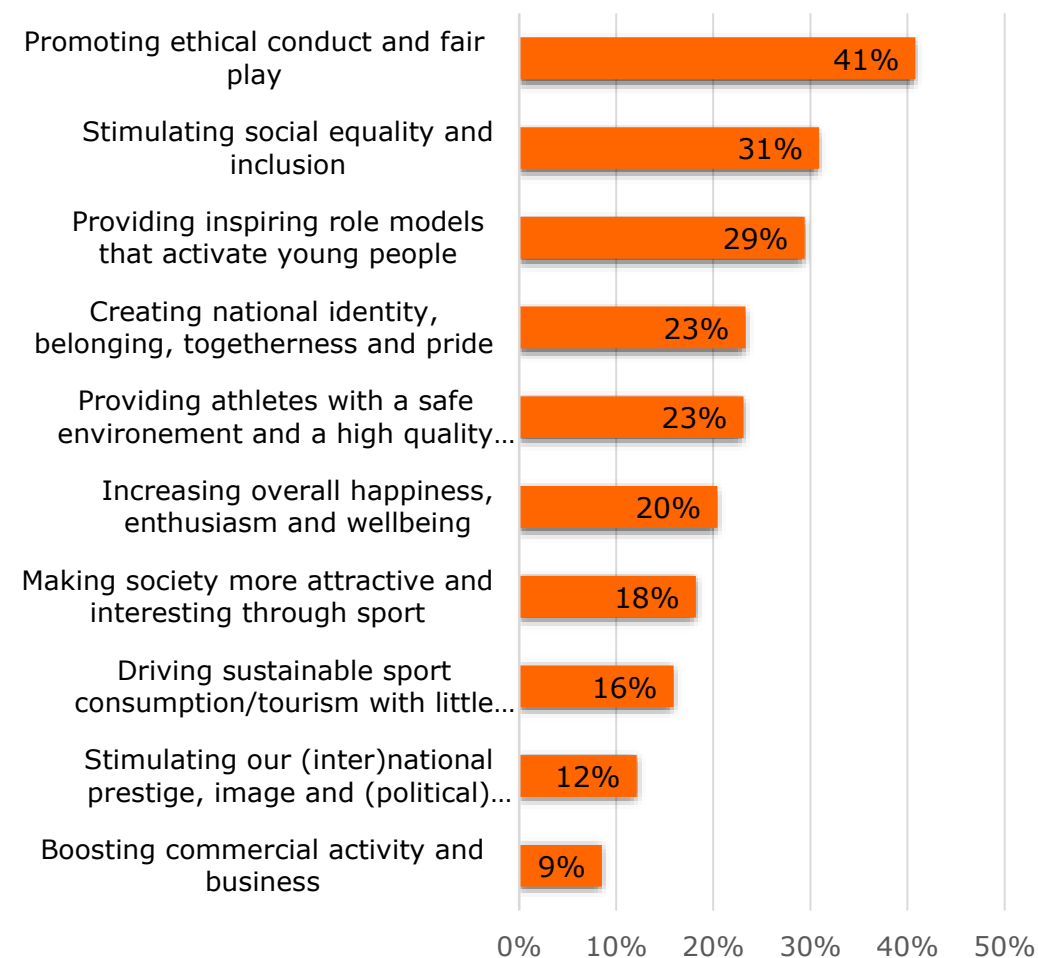


Figure 24: Percentage of elements that are most important for national sport organisations to engage in according to European citizens

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SPORT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Following international standards, it is advisable that sport organisations practice social responsibility and contribute to sustainable development (e.g., take into consideration societal, environmental, legal, cultural, political and organizational diversity, as well as differences in economic conditions, while being consistent with international norms of behavior). (Babiak & Trendafilova, 2011; Lawson, 2005)

In line with this literature, we asked what principles of social responsibility are valued the most among the European population. The three principles that European participants think are the most important for **national sport organisations** (e.g., Olympic Committee, Sport Federations) **to implement** are:

1. Ethical behavior
2. Respect for human rights
3. Transparency

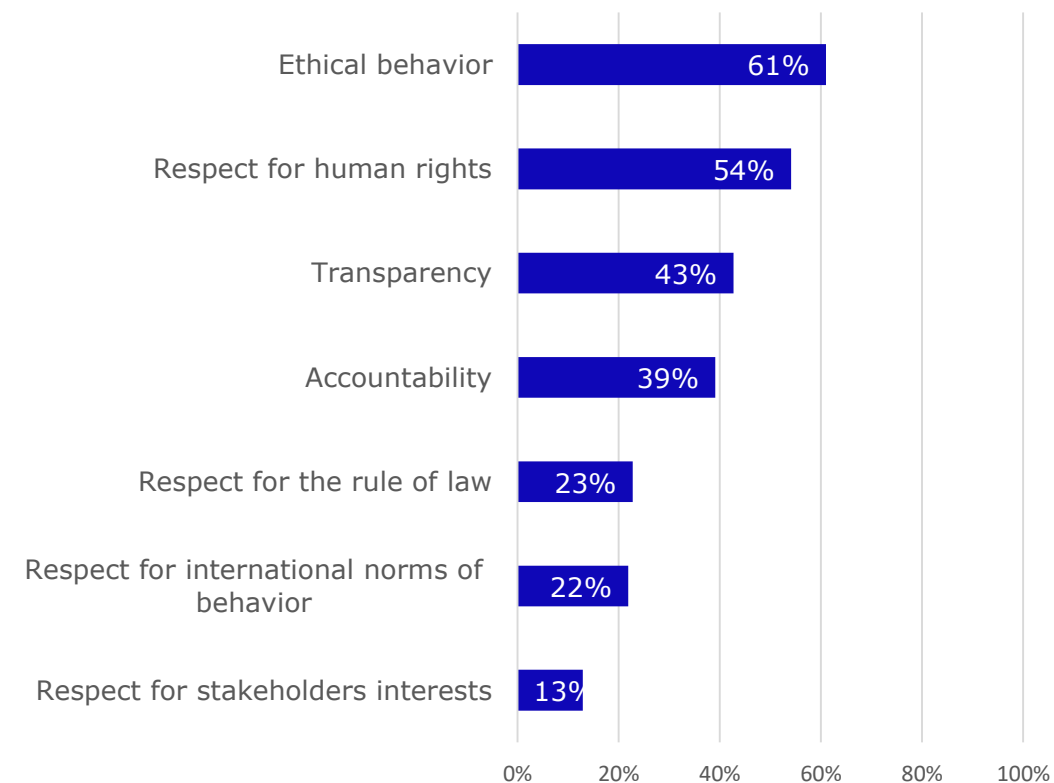


Figure 25: Percentage of elements that are most important for national sport organisations to implement according to European citizens



OLYMPIC VALUES

OLYMPIC VALUES

PERCEPTIONS OF EUROPEANS ON THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Performing well at the Tokyo 2021 Olympic Games is something important to the European population. Specifically, 62% indicate that they consider it important that their country performed well. In addition, 58% indicate that they felt connected during the Olympics because of the performances of their national team. When looking back at the Olympics of 2021, a little more than half the population (55%) is satisfied with the results their country achieved and thus consider the Olympics as successful. When looking further into the importance of getting medals, 60% of the surveyed European citizens consider that winning an Olympic medal is just as valuable as obtaining a school diploma.

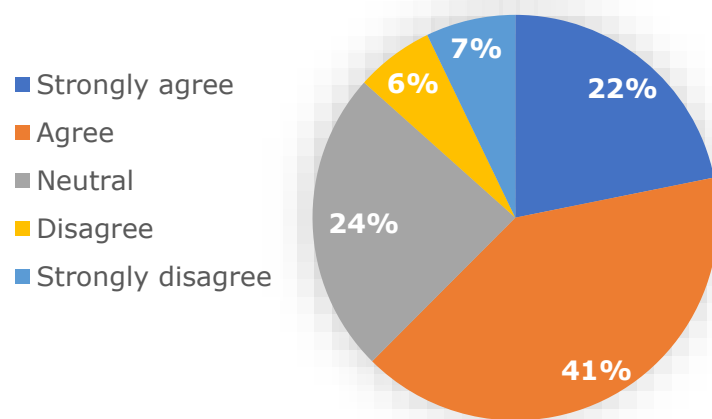


Figure 26: Importance of good performances on the Tokyo 2021 Olympic Games

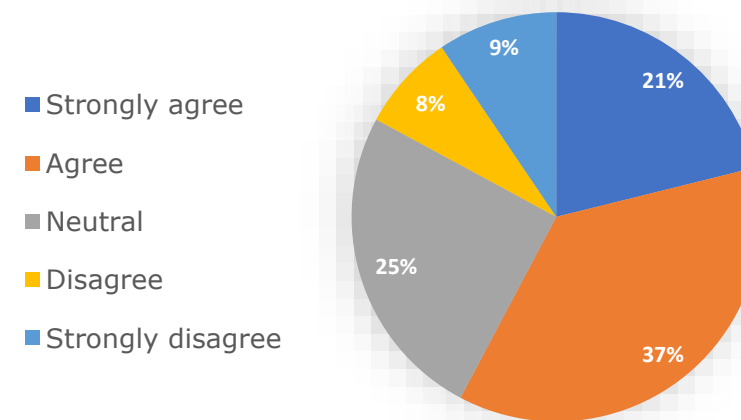


Figure 27: Feeling of connection with the national team during the Tokyo 2021 Olympic Games

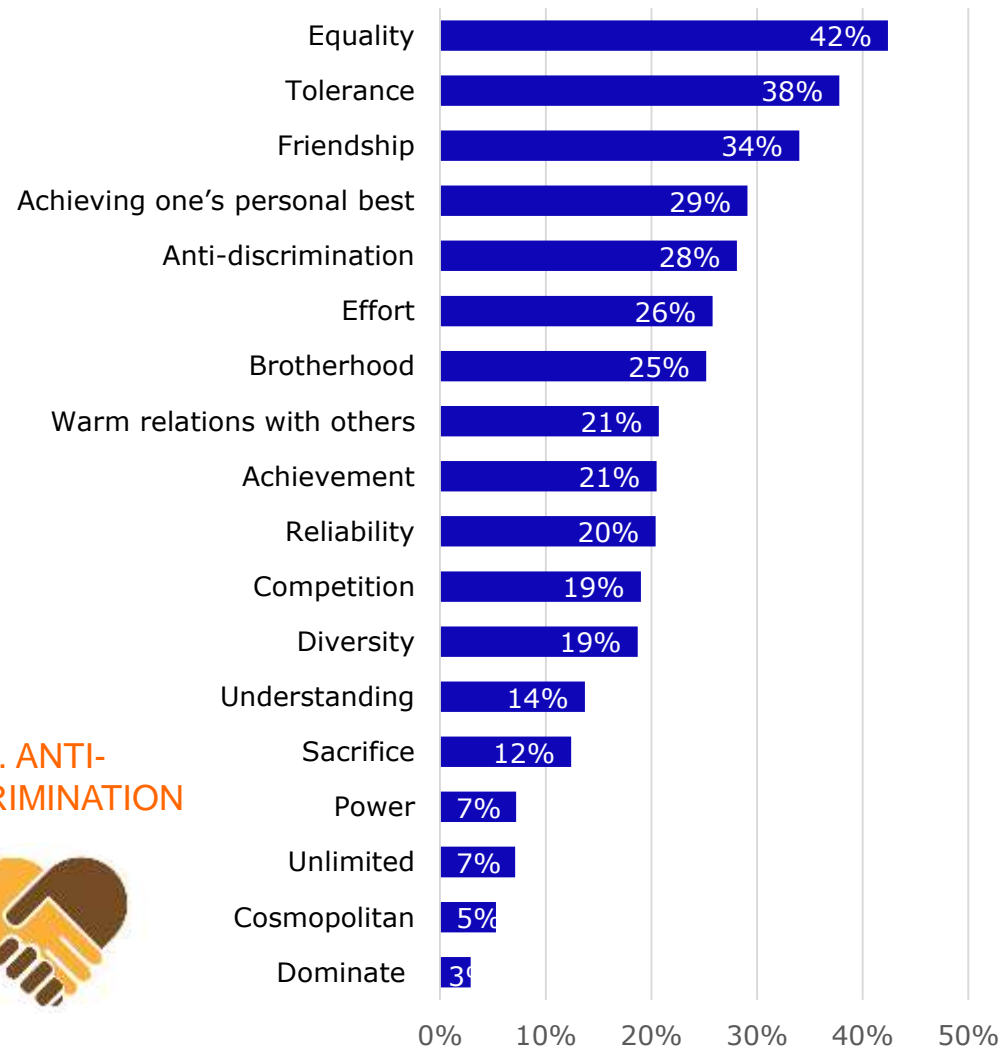
OLYMPIC VALUES

OLYMPISM

What values do people associate with the Olympic Games?

Respondents were giving a list of values that can be used to describe **Olympism** (i.e., the ideology/philosophy of the Olympic Games). They could choose up to 5 values.

The analysis reveal that European citizens think that Olympic and Paralympic athletes should convey equality (42%), tolerance (38%), friendship (34%), achieving one's personal best (29%) and anti-discrimination (28%).



1. EQUALITY

2. TOLERANCE

3. FRIENDSHIP

4. ACHIEVING ONE'S
PERSONAL BEST

5. ANTI-
DISCRIMINATION



Figure 28: Percentage of values that describe Olympism according to European citizens

OLYMPIC VALUES

OLYMPISM

What values brings elite sport in our society?

European respondents indicate that elite sport brings the most **connectional value**, i.e., the value of bringing people together (29%) and **inspirational value**, i.e., the value of inspiring other (24%).

On the other hand, European citizens indicate that elite sports brings the least **economical value**, i.e., the value of creating a profit or financial return (45%).

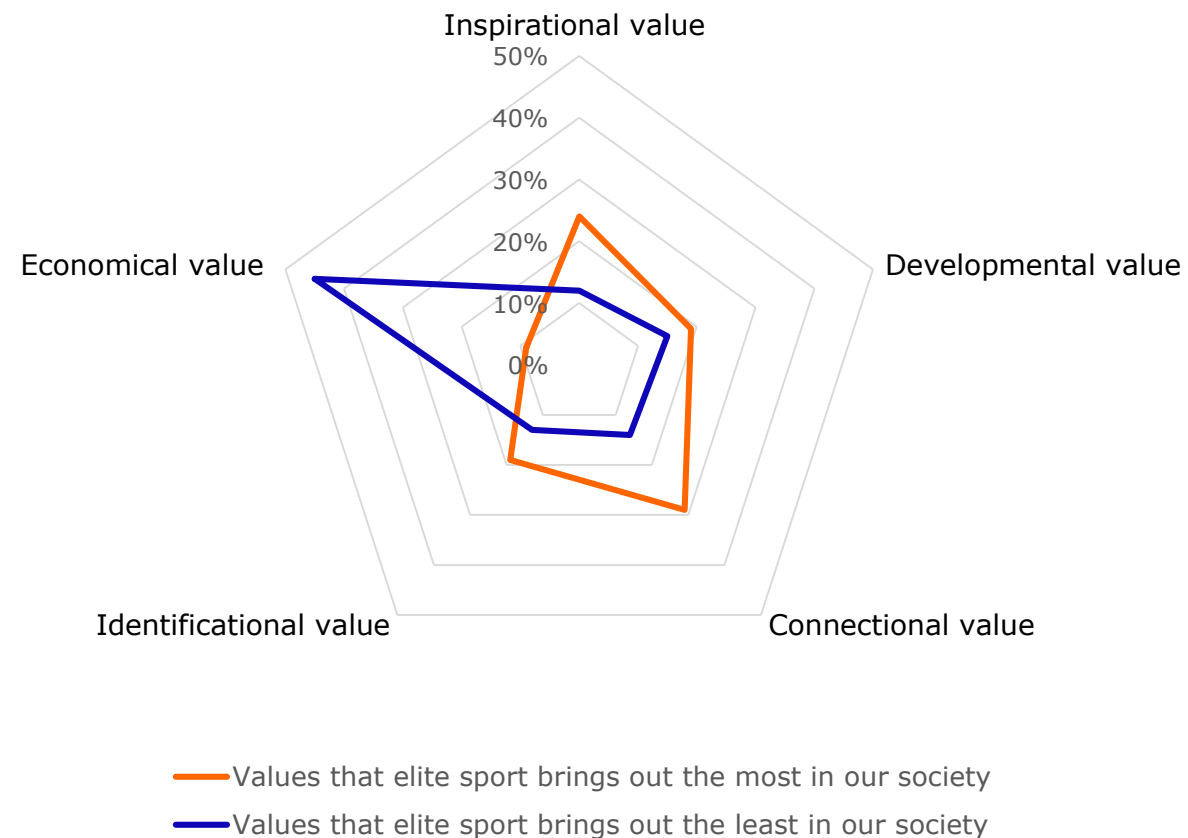


Figure 29: Percentage of values that elite sport brings in our society according to European citizens



THE PARALYMPICS

THE PARALYMPICS

KNOWLEDGE

What are the Paralympics?

“The Paralympics are the Olympic Games for persons with physical disability, visual impairment and/or cerebral palsy”

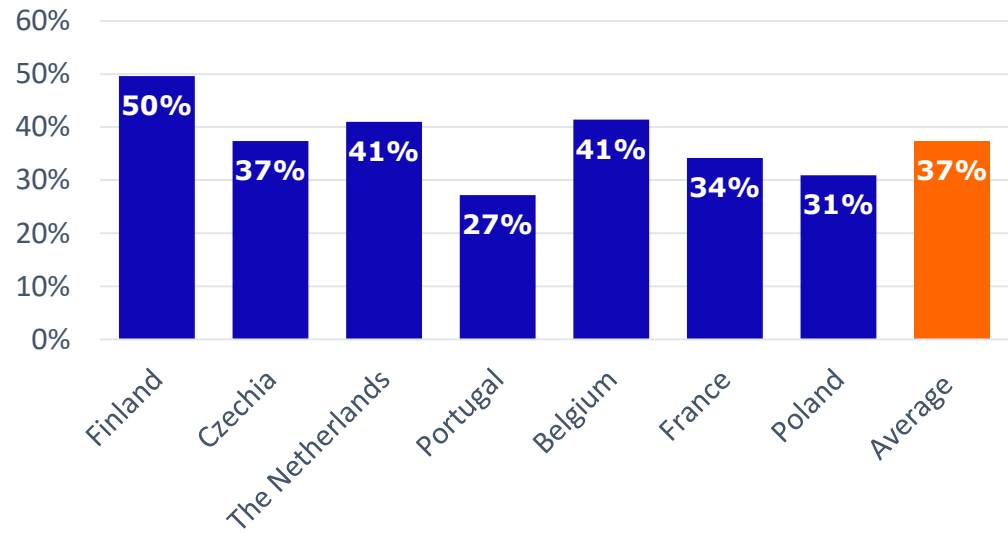


Figure 30: Knowledge of the Paralympics

The overall knowledge of the Paralympics is **limited**. Specifically, more than half of the European population (63%) fails to identify the correct definition of the Paralympics.

If we analyze the partner countries individually, figure 30 shows that the knowledge of the definition of the Paralympics is **highest in Finland** and **lowest in Portugal**.

SPORT PREFERENCES IN WHICH EUROPEANS PREFER TO SEE ELITE SUCCESS



1. ATHLETICS

33% of the European population has athletics in his or her top 5 of Paralympic sports in which they prefer to achieve elite sporting success.



2. SWIMMING

Subsequent to athletics, swimming follows with 26% of European inhabitants putting swimming in the top 5 of sports in which they prefer to achieve Paralympic success.



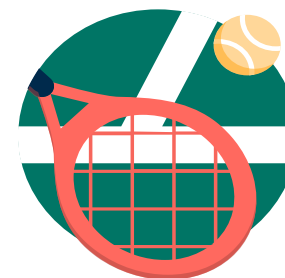
3. CYCLING

Cycling completes the top 3 of sports in which the European citizens prefer to see Paralympic success. 18% have placed cycling in their top 5.



4. WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

17% of the European population has wheelchair basketball in his or her top 5 as a sport in which they prefer to achieve elite sport success.



5. WHEELCHAIR TENNIS

Wheelchair tennis closes our top 5, as 12% of the European citizens would prefer to see Paralympic success in the discipline of wheelchair tennis.

THE PARALYMPICS

PERFORMANCE

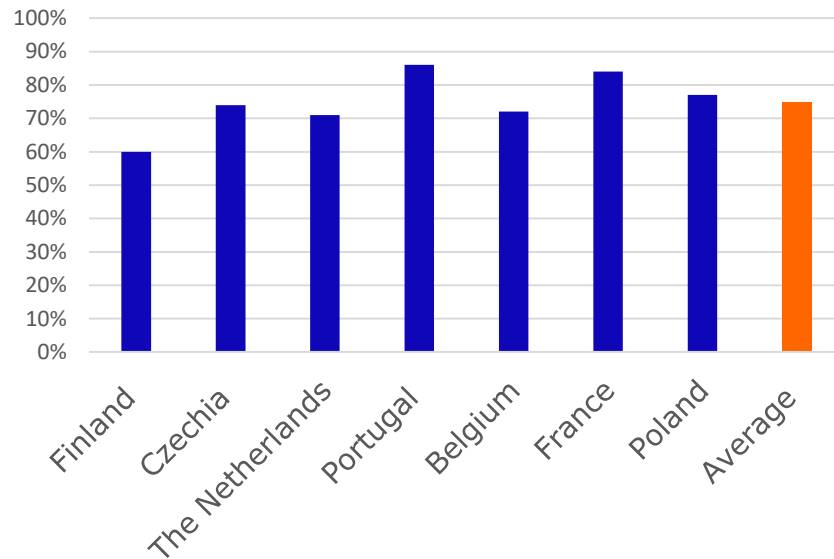


Figure 31: Importance of elite performances at the Paralympics

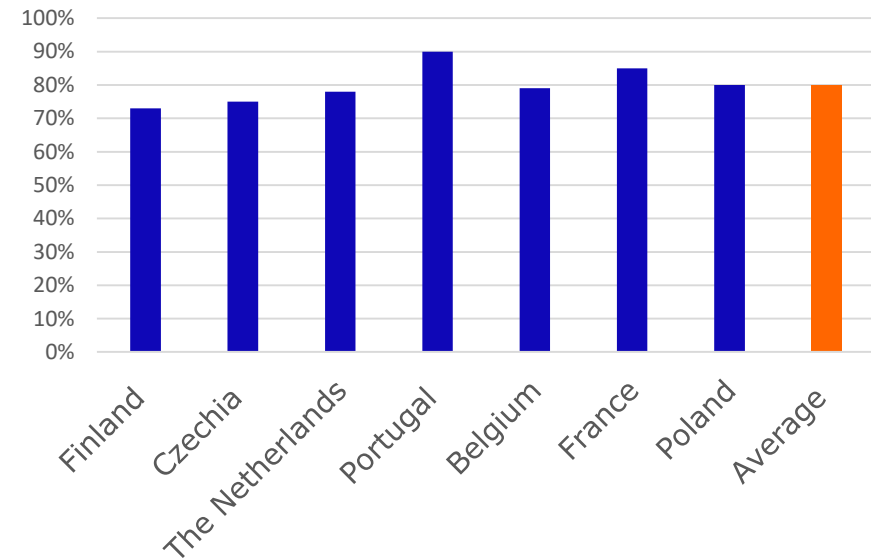


Figure 32: Importance of getting a medal at the Paralympics



Overall, all European countries attach great importance to the Paralympic Games and the achievements of their Paralympic athletes. The results show that the European population attach substantive value on the performance of Para-athletes (80% of the European citizens value Paralympic medals equally high as Olympic medals). When looking at the different countries, figure 31 shows that Portugal, France and Poland attach the most importance to the Paralympics.

THE PARALYMPICS

HAPPINESS, PRIDE & IMAGE



72% of the European population indicate that the achievements of their Paralympic athletes make them happy.



75% of the European population states that the achievements of their Paralympic athletes make them proud.



79% of the European inhabitants perceive that their Paralympic athletes provide a positive image for their country and abroad.

THE PARALYMPICS

INCLUSION IN SOCIETY & ROLE MODELS

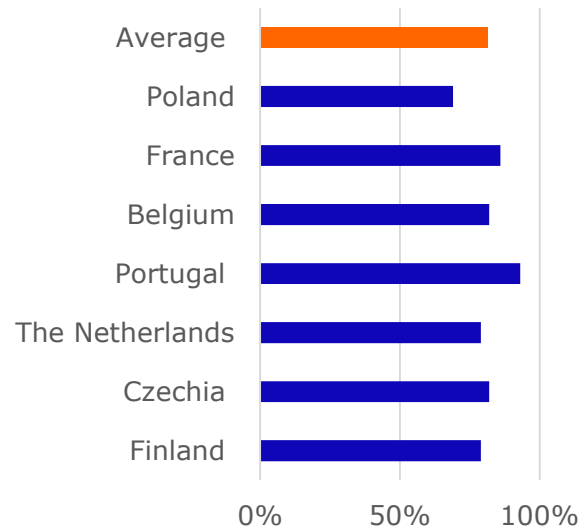


Figure 33: Paralympic athletes can promote inclusion of people with disabilities in society

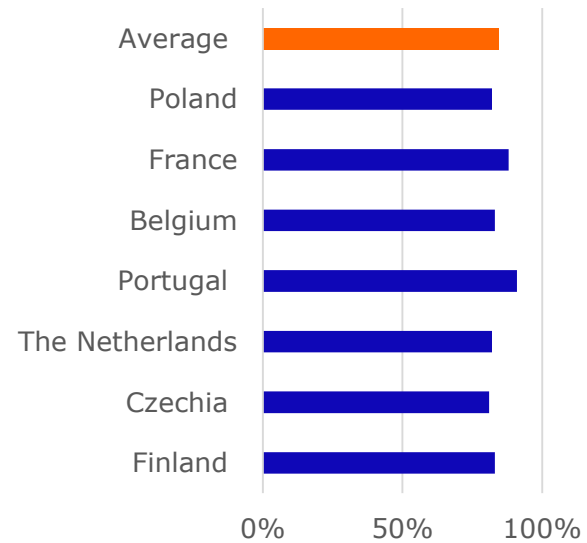


Figure 34: Paralympic athletes can serve as role models for young people with disabilities

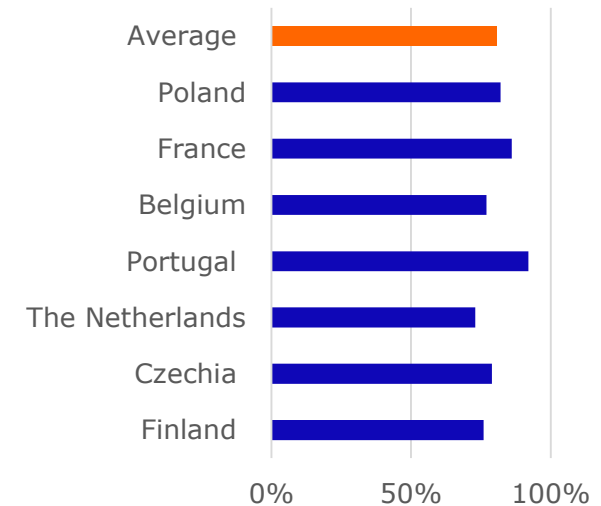


Figure 35: Paralympic athletes should actively promote para-sports among young people with disabilities

When looking into the sporting context in terms of inclusion and role models, we notice that 81% of the European population indicate that **Paralympic athletes can promote the inclusion** for people with disabilities in society. Interestingly, although **Polish respondents** indicate that they attach value on the performance of Paralympic athletes, they feel **less strongly that Paralympic athletes can promote the inclusion** of those people. In addition, 84% of the European population, with Portugal as leading country (91%), indicate that **Paralympic athletes are role models** for young people with disabilities. Moreover, 80% of the Europeans find that **Paralympic athletes should actively promote para-sports** among young people with disabilities.

THE PARALYMPICS

INCLUSION IN SOCIETY & ROLE MODELS

82% of European citizens indicate that it is important that para-athletes are supported (financially) to participate in the Paralympic Games.



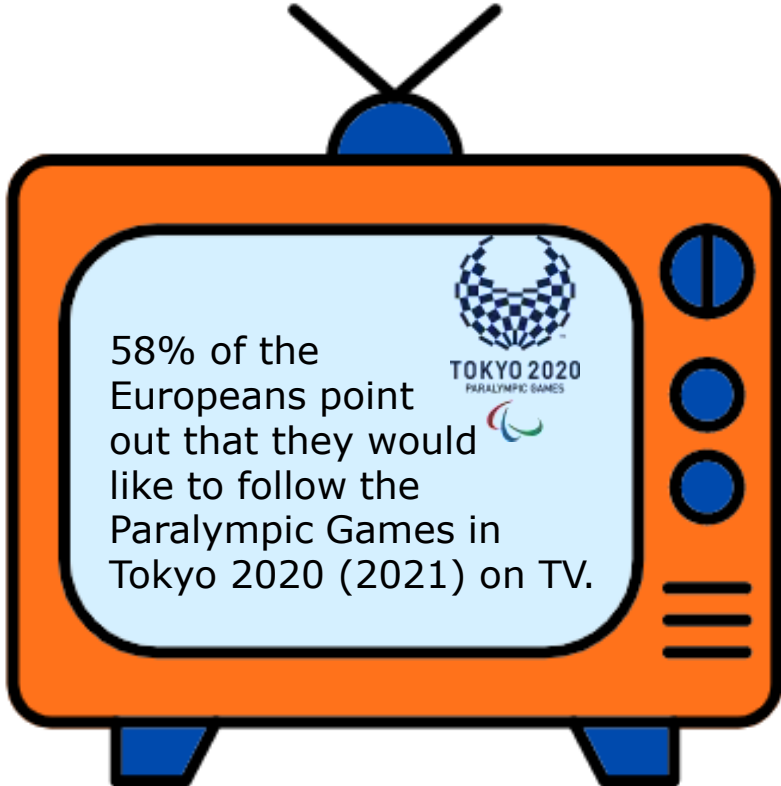
83% of the European population believe that people with disabilities should be able to play sports according to their needs and abilities, whether or not in a regular sports club.



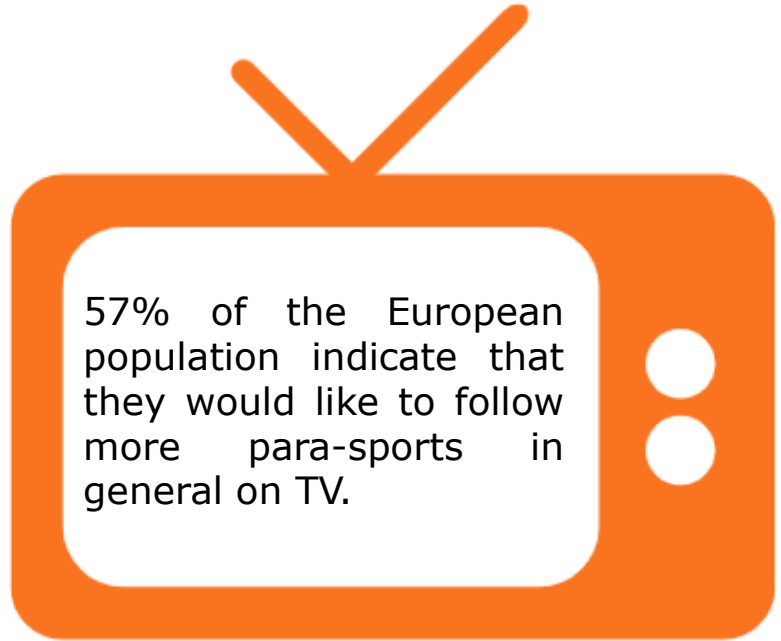
THE PARALYMPICS

MEDIA COVERAGE

47% of the European citizens state that the achievements of Paralympic athletes are sufficiently covered by the media.



58% of the Europeans point out that they would like to follow the Paralympic Games in Tokyo 2020 (2021) on TV.



57% of the European population indicate that they would like to follow more para-sports in general on TV.



ELITE SPORT INVESTMENTS

ELITE SPORT INVESTMENTS

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ELITE SPORTS INVESTMENTS

Respondents were informed on the current elite sports investments in their country. Subsequently, several statements were presented related to those investments:

1. The government must invest more in total/less in total in elite sport than it does now;
2. The government must invest proportionally more/proportionally less in elite sport than in grassroots sport;
3. Investments by the government in elite sport are useful/not useful because elite sport has significant meaning in our society;
4. If other countries are going to invest more in elite sport, I think I would be happy/not happy if my country did the same.



ELITE SPORT INVESTMENTS

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ELITE SPORTS INVESTMENTS

Current **investments in elite level sports are relatively widely supported** by the European population. Almost half of the European citizens (47%) indicate that the government should invest more in elite sport, while 12% of the Europeans disagree with this proposition. In relation to grassroots sport, the European population is rather neutral as 43% indicate that the degree of investment is good. 34% of the respondents' state that the government must invest proportionally more in elite sport than in grassroots sport. Elite sport investments are useful, according to more than three-quarters of Europeans (78%), because elite sport has significant meaning in our society.

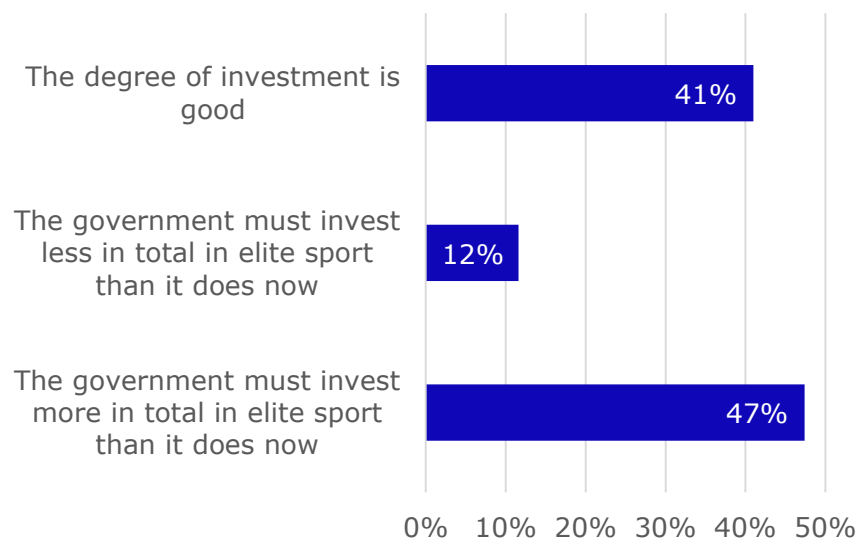


Figure 36: Perception about elite sport investment

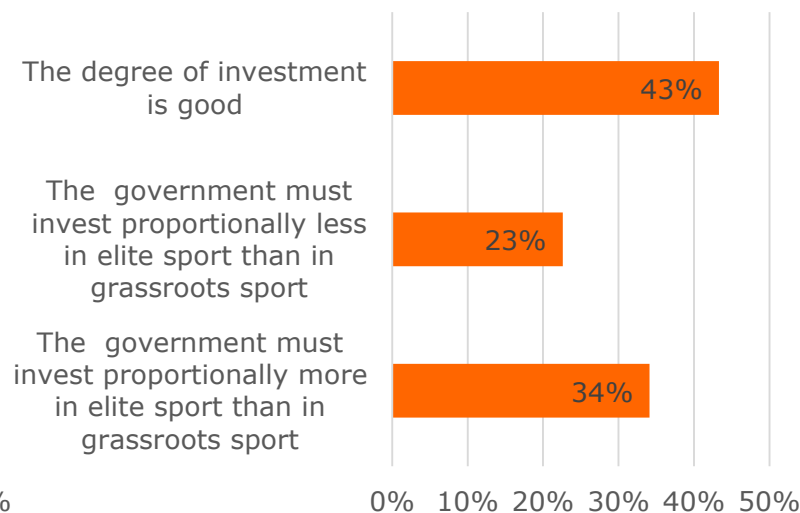


Figure 37: Perception about elite sport investment in relation with grassroots sport

Are investments by the government in elite sport useful ?

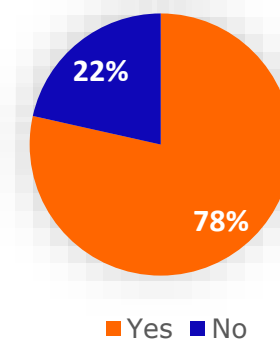


Figure 38: Perception about the usefulness of elite sport investment

ELITE SPORT INVESTMENTS

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ELITE SPORTS INVESTMENTS

Overall, there is a relative high willingness to participate in the global sporting arms race, i.e., international sporting success can be produced by investing strategically in elite sport (Oakley & Green, 2001). 69% of the European population is willing to invest more if other countries do so as well. When taking a closer look at each country individually, the analysis indicates that Portuguese and Polish citizens have a higher willingness to pay compared to the other countries.

If other countries are going to invest more in elite sport, I think it would be good if our country did too.

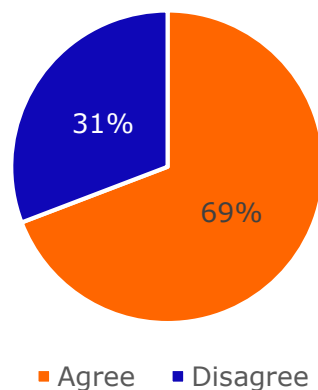


Figure 39: Perceptions about elite sport investment in relation with other countries

If other countries are going to invest more in elite sport, I think it would be good if our country did too.

If other countries were to invest more in elite sport, I would not be happy if our country did the same.

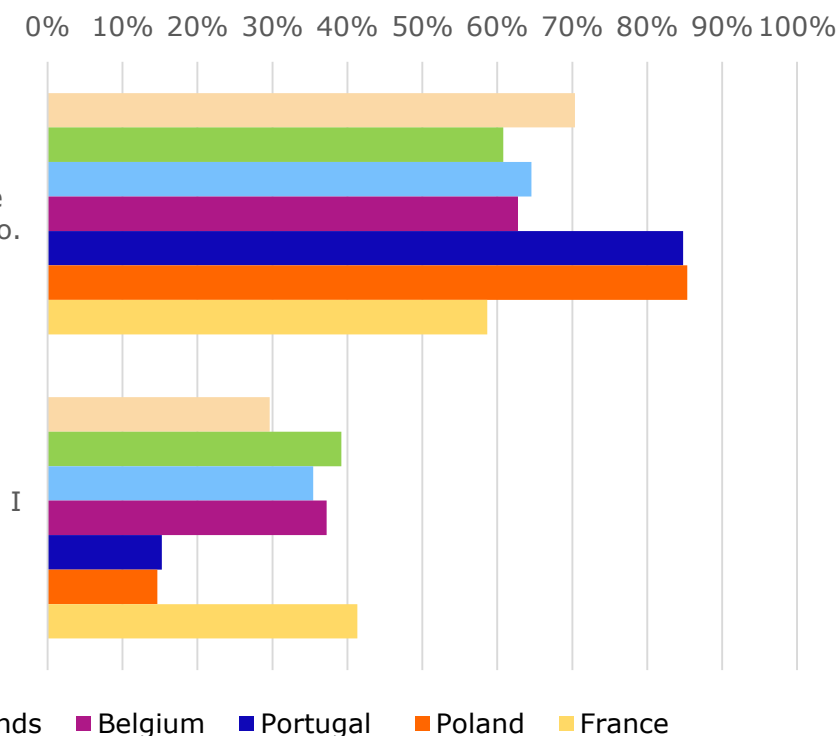


Figure 40: Perceptions about elite sport investment in relation with other countries

ELITE SPORT INVESTMENTS

TRUST IN ELITE SPORT POLICY MAKERS

This survey also assesses the trust in elite sport policy organisations, more specifically the following question was asked: To what extent are you confident that the bodies responsible for elite sport are doing a good job?

The analysis shows that the confidence of European citizens in elite sport policy organisations is relatively high. Notably, according to the descriptive statistics, the confidence in sport federations is lower than in the other athletic and governmental agencies.

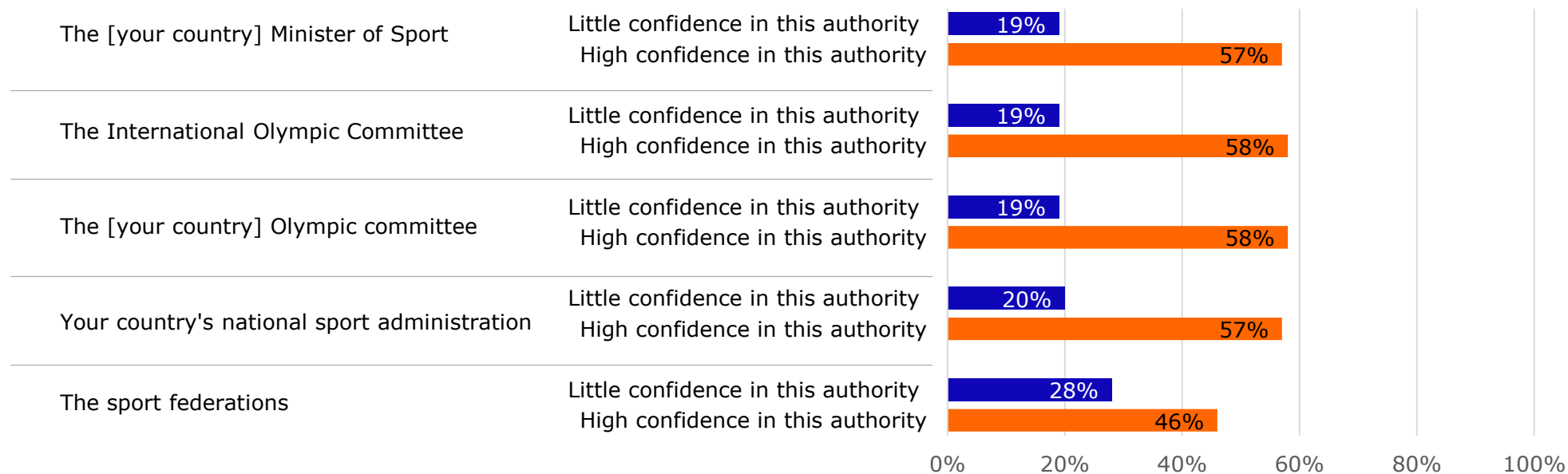


Figure 41: Trust in elite sport policy makers



SPORTS PARTICIPATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

SPORTS PARTICIPATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

EFFECT OF ELITE SPORT ON SPORTS PARTICIPATION

One of the goals of this survey was **to gain more insights in the physical activity levels and sports participation among European citizens**. Adequate physical activity meant that the person is consciously active 3 to 5 times a week for 20-60 minutes at an intensity where you sweat and your breathing speeds up. This included various forms of physical activity such as housework in the home environment and gardening, walking or cycling, sports and physical activity at work.

Given the worldwide pandemic, the **frequency of sports participation before the COVID-19** crisis was taking into account. Reliance was placed on the memories of the participants (i.e., recall bias).



SPORTS PARTICIPATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

RELATION BETWEEN SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND HAPPINESS & PRIDE

As mentioned before, the analysis reveals that the achievements of elite athletes bring the European participants pride and happiness. When looking into these results in terms of sports participation the analysis show that **European citizens who exercise more (i.e., at least once a week) are happier** ($p < .001$) **and prouder** ($p < .001$) with the performances that elite athletes achieve.

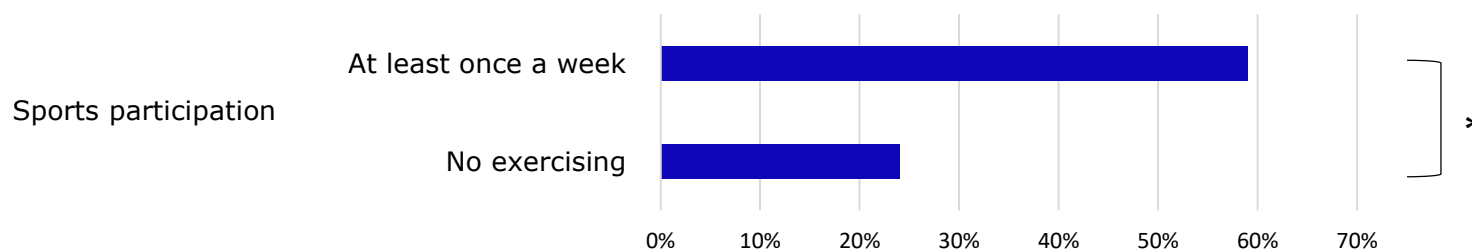


Figure 42: Sports participation of European citizens
Statistical test: independent samples t-test ($p < 0,001$)*

In addition, it was examined if sports participation has an influence on people's general happiness scores. The results show that **European citizens who exercise more** (i.e., at least once a week) **report experiencing more happiness in their daily life** ($p < .001$).

SPORTS PARTICIPATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

SPORTS PARTICIPATION & CONSUMING ELITE SPORT

Is there a relation between consuming elite sport and sports participation?

34% of the European residents indicate that they follow the sport performances of elite athletes almost daily. Europeans who **frequently follow sport performances of elite athletes** (i.e., watch read about or listen to sports) **are more likely to participate in sports themselves** ($p < .001$).

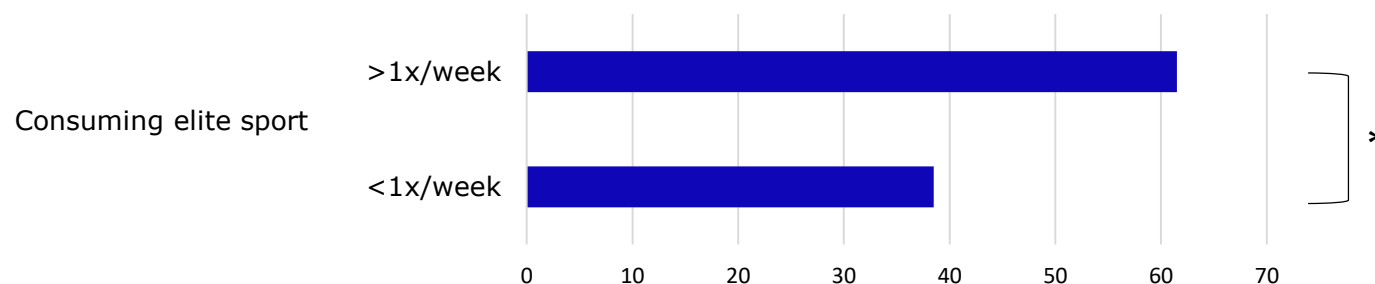


Figure 43: Consumption of elite sport as indicated by European citizens
Statistical test: independent samples t-test ($p < 0,001$)*

SPORTS PARTICIPATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

SPORTS PARTICIPATION & ATHLETE ROLE MODELS

Of the 41% of the European respondents who indicate that they are a fan of an elite athlete, 68% report that their favorite Olympic athlete also serves as a role model for them.

When looking at the relation between having an athlete role model and sports participation, it can be concluded that **European respondents who report having a role model are more likely to be participating in sports** ($p < .001$).



SPORTS PARTICIPATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & ATHLETE ROLE MODELS

Is there a relation between having an athlete role model and European respondents engaging in physical activity?

55% of the respondents indicate that they were physically active. **European respondents who have an athlete role model are more likely to engage in sufficient physical activity** ($p < .001$). Of those respondents (45%) who reported they were not physically active, the analysis shows that European citizens who mentioned they haven't an elite athlete role model have less intention of changing their behavior within the next six months ($p < .001$). In contrast, **those who indicate that they have an elite athlete role model have a higher intention to engage in physical activity** ($p < .001$).



Questions or remarks? Get in touch!

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