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# Participation in Sport - Eurostat's 2020 Sport Participation Study

Squash has long been characterized as a pastime primarily for older, affluent men. Yet, sporting federations are now putting concerted efforts into diversifying the player base by attracting younger participants and women. This challenge, however, isn't exclusive to squash. Comprehensive data from the European Commission's Eurostat Study 2020 affirms that this trend is prevalent across various sports in Europe.

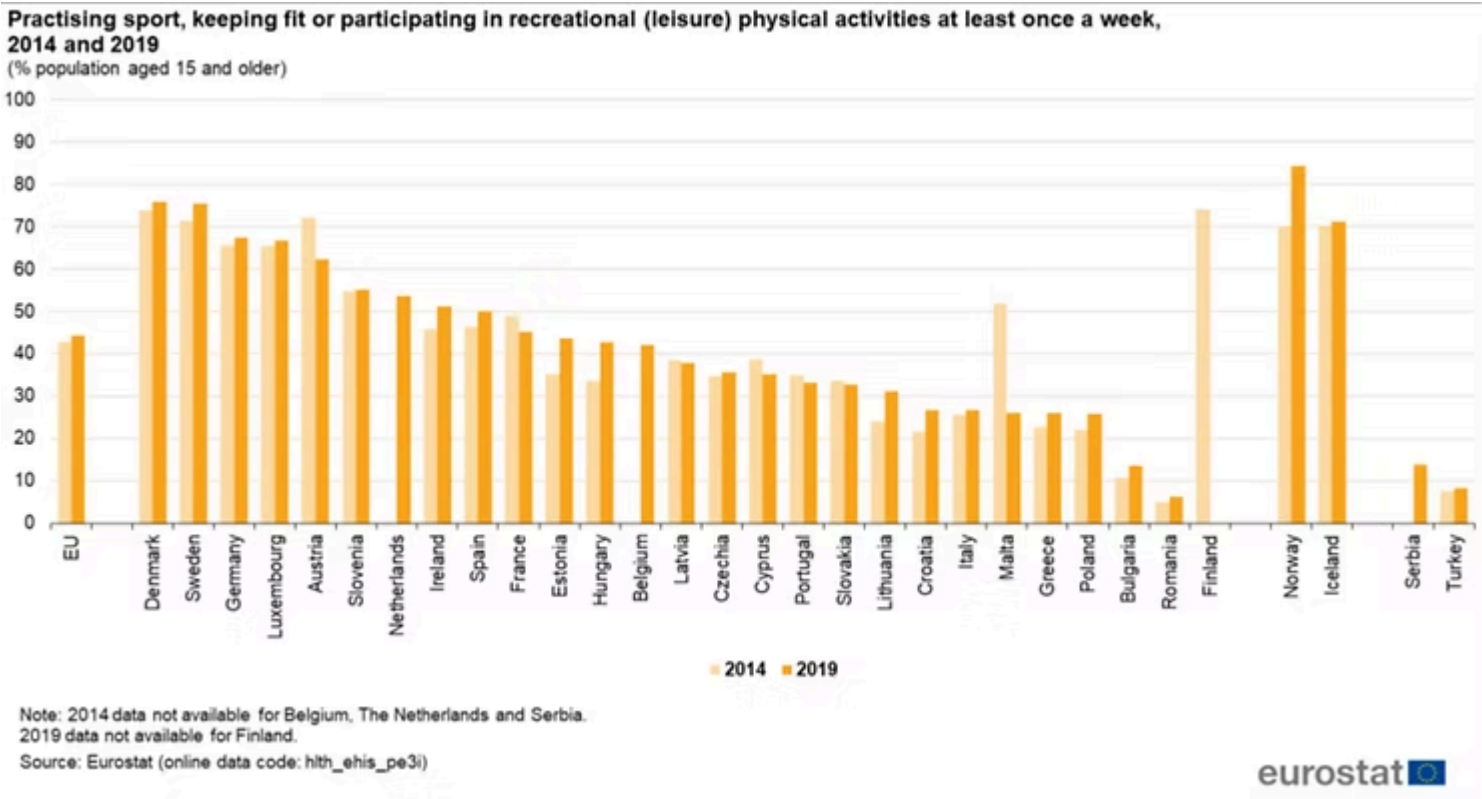
## Gender Bias in Sports:

Across the sporting world, a significant gender bias is observable. While squash has its share of male dominance, sports like ice hockey, cricket, and cycling demonstrate even greater gender imbalances. On the flip side, activities such as netball, figure skating, yoga, and aerobic classes predominantly attract female participants.

## Key Findings from Eurostat's 2020 Sport Participation Study:

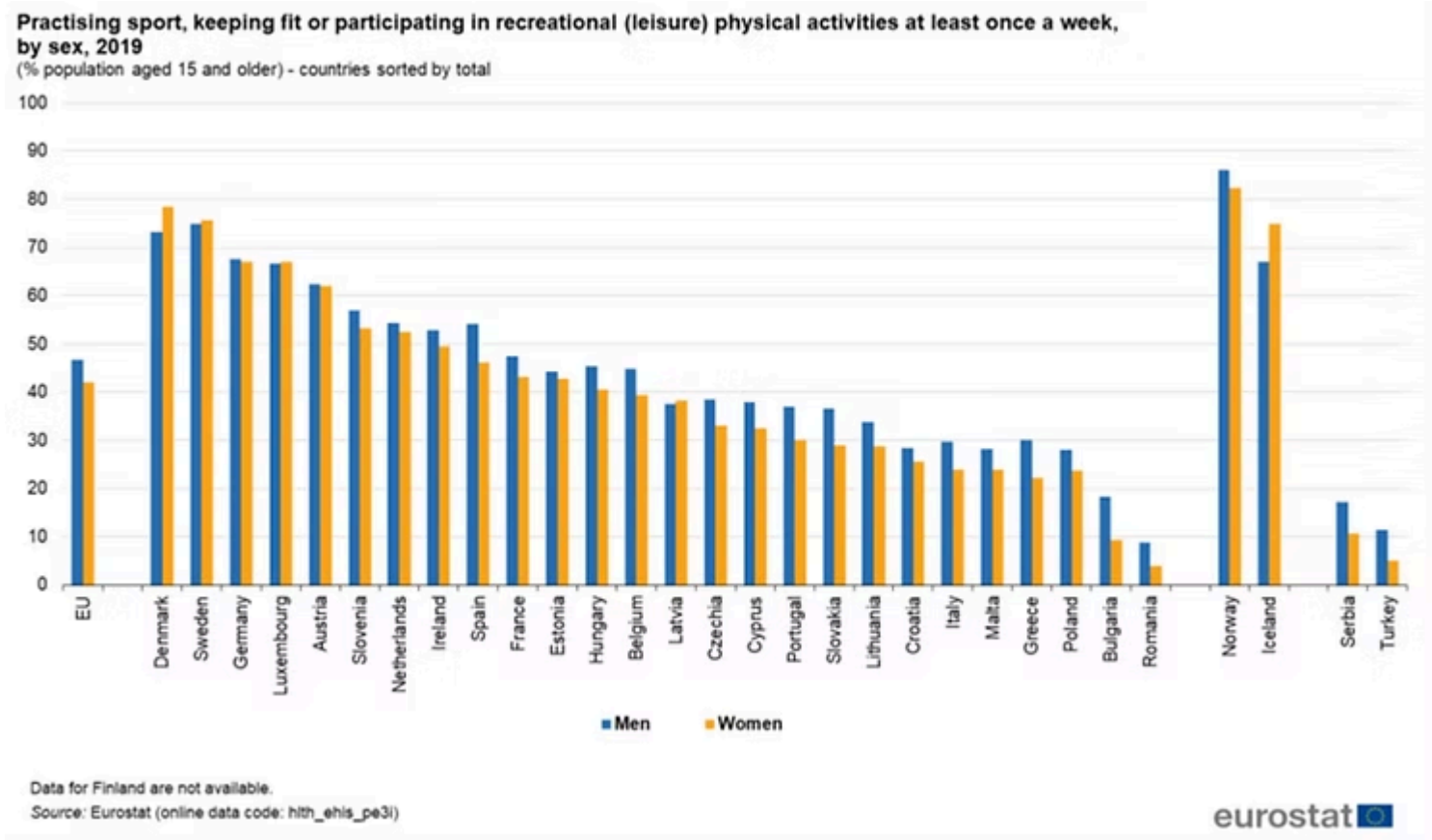
The Eurostat study exclusively considered non-work-related physical activities, encompassing a range of sports and fitness activities that induce at least a minimal increase in heart rate or breathing. These include Nordic walking, brisk walking, ball games, jogging, cycling, swimming, aerobics, rowing, and squash among others.

In 2019, the report showed that 44% of the EU population above the age of 15 participated in sports at least once a week. Moreover, men (47%) were more active than women (42%) across the European Union.



In general, women practise sport less than men

In the EU as a whole, in 2019 more men (47 %) than women (42 %) exercised regularly (see Figure below).



Older people in some Member States are sportier than young people in others

Generally, as people age, their involvement in sports tends to diminish. According to the study, the percentage of EU citizens engaging in sports at least once a week ranged from a high of 65% among those aged 15-24 to a low of 31% in the 65+ age group.

**Practising sport, keeping fit or participating in recreational (leisure) physical activities at least once a week, by age group, 2019**  
(% of population aged 15 and older)

	Total	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
EU	44	65	53	47	44	39	31
Belgium	42	64	51	47	41	37	26
Bulgaria	14	42	27	16	9	4	2
Czechia	36	63	48	48	37	23	13
Denmark	76	82	79	74	78	73	71
Germany	67	86	75	68	68	64	56
Estonia	44	63	55	53	44	35	25
Ireland	51	64	64	57	50	39	32
Greece	26	64	43	31	23	14	7
Spain	50	69	58	53	51	46	35
France	45	66	52	48	43	41	32
Croatia	27	53	44	41	30	22	13
Italy	27	50	40	31	28	21	12
Cyprus	35	36	36	38	36	35	30
Latvia	38	66	45	41	38	31	24
Lithuania	31	61	44	33	26	21	16
Luxembourg	67	78	71	66	64	65	58
Hungary	43	66	54	51	44	29	26
Malta	26	41	37	28	24	17	12
Netherlands	54	70	63	55	55	49	37
Austria	62	78	70	65	63	62	45
Poland	26	47	37	33	23	15	11
Portugal	33	59	42	39	34	24	19
Romania	6	20	11	7	3	2	1
Slovenia	55	83	67	67	62	45	27
Slovakia	33	57	41	39	32	22	13
Sweden	75	82	77	77	77	73	70
Iceland	71	82	70	77	76	66	62
Norway	84	89	87	87	85	84	76
Serbia	14	37	26	16	9	6	3
Turkey	8	14	12	8	5	4	2

Data for Finland not available  
Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth\_ehis\_pe3i)

eurostat

People on lower incomes are less likely to practise sport

It's evident that income is a significant factor influencing sports participation rates. In 2019, 55% of those from higher income brackets were active compared to 37% from lower-income groups. While some sports can be costly and less accessible, other activities like walking require no financial investment. Thus, the income disparity in sports participation may also be attributed to other socio-economic factors such as educational attainment, social standing, awareness of health benefits, and availability of free time.



Interestingly, when focusing on individuals aged 15-29—who are generally more active—the income quintile did not show substantial disparities in time spent on aerobic physical activity per week, particularly among those with higher participation rates (150 minutes or more per week).

Summary

The Eurostat 2020 Sport Participation Study sheds light on several critical aspects, one of which is the demographic makeup of squash participants. The data indicate that squash's player demographics reflect the broader patterns observed in sports participation across Europe. This suggests that squash is an inclusive sport, drawing individuals from various age groups, genders, and economic backgrounds. These findings highlight the sport's potential as an engaging and diverse recreational activity that appeals to a wide cross-section of society.

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