

Press release

18 April 2023

## Launch of SUPPORTER, Equipping Sports Higher Education Institutions with Intersectional, Innovative and Inclusive Gender Equality Plans

**SUPPORTER, “SecUring sPORTs Education thRough innovative and inclusive Gender Equality Plans”, is an EU-funded project running from April 2023 until September 2025. Launched on 19. April 2023, it aims to support eight sports higher education institutions from Central and Eastern Europe in developing their own intersectional, innovative, inclusive and impactful Gender Equality Plans which explicitly address gender-based violence and sexual harassment.**

While lauded for empowering youth and promoting inclusivity and team spirit, sport environments are also infamously known for being a ‘microcosm’ of sexual harassment and assault, idealising toxic masculinities, and for their inherent culture of violence. Studies also highlight European sports institutions’ incapacity to protect potential victims and overall provide equitable conditions to differently positioned inequality groups, including those based on age, disability, gender, gender-identity, ethnicity, nationality, race and sexual orientation and groups at the intersection of these inequalities. The situation is further exacerbated in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the region which SUPPORTER focuses on.

SUPPORTER seeks to contribute to the advancement of inclusive gender equality in eight partner sports institutions across Central and Eastern Europe and beyond. Through tailored training and mentoring mechanisms provided by expert partners, the eight partner institutions will design intersectional, innovative, inclusive and impactful Gender Equality Plans, adapted to their situation.

*“By developing innovative gender equality plans, each tailored to the specific contexts of the implementing partners yet all addressing gender-based violence, SUPPORTER is a great opportunity to make sports institutions in the CEE region safer, inclusive, and more attractive!” Ildi Ipolyi, Project Coordinator*

In concrete terms, the project aims to:

- 1) Identify and document systemic challenges faced by sports higher education institutions in Central Eastern Europe in advancing gender equality and eradicating gender-based violence.
- 2) Develop activities adapted to the Central and Eastern European context and tailored to each partner institution.



- 3) Strengthen the sports institutions' organisational capacity to address gender equality with an intersectional approach.
- 4) Foster an inclusive institutional culture by developing mutual-learning processes.
- 5) Strengthen networking and exchange among sports institutions and with communities of practice
- 6) Foster gender-related institutional, sustainable, transformative changes in the sports institutions with a specific attention on the challenge of gender-based violence -thus ultimately fostering the institutions and their Gender Equality Plans' inclusiveness and the overall adherence to intersectionality.

While initially partnering with eight institutions, the SUPPORTER project aspires to target and reach the wider sports ecosystem and its various organisations in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond, and in the long run contribute to wide societal changes.

### Project Partners

- Fondation Européenne de la Science (ESF), France
- Göteborgs Universitet (UGOT), Sweden
- Kentro Erevnon Notioanatolikis Evropis Astiki mi Kerdoskopiki Etaireia (SEERC), Greece
- Univerzitet u Banjoj Luci (UNIBL), Bosnia & Herzegovina
- Univerza v Ljubljani (UL), Slovenia
- Univerzita Karlova (CU), Czechia
- Natsionalna Sportna Akademiya Vassil Levski (NSA), Bulgaria
- Lietuvos Sporto Universitetas (LSU), Lithuania
- Universitatea de Vest din Timisoara (UVT), Romania
- Georgian State Teaching University of Physical Education and Sport (GSTUPES), Georgia
- Universitatea de Stat de Educație Fizică și Sport (USEFS), Moldova

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