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# Sport in Prison, a Plan for the Future (SPPF)

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In collaboration with SPPF-partners



SPORT & SOCIETY  
RESEARCH GROUP



# Sport in Prison, a Plan for the Future (SPPF)

- Collaborative partnership Erasmus+ (2020-2022)
  - De Rode Antraciet (Coordinator) - Belgium
  - Vrije Universiteit Brussel - Belgium
  - Unione Italiana Sport per Tutti - Italy
  - United professionals for sustainable development Association - Bulgaria
  - Association for Creative social work - Croatia
  - Custodial Institutions Agency - the Netherlands
- Objective of SPPF is to develop a toolkit to allow prisoners to experience and prepare for new challenges after they have left prison; a toolkit that connects prisoners to the outside world through sport programmes.

# Sport in Prison, a Plan for the Future (SPPF)

# Phase 1: Objective of the online survey

- Get a good view on practices in EU member states that use sport activities to prepare prisoners for life after prison and sport activities that (might) have a link with the outside world.
- Target audience: those working in a prison environment involved in sport offer, in projects or working together with ex-prisoners in follow-up projects (prison management, prison staff, activity providers, sport organisations, social organisations...).
- Data collection between June and September 2020
- Online survey consisting of three parts
  - Part 1: Survey participants
  - Part 2: Sport activities
  - Part 3: All activities

# Part 1: Survey participants

- N = 198 individuals
- 64% were male
- 80 functions were described
- Experience in function: M = 9.22 years, SD = 7.84 years
- Employed in closed regimes (71%) and mid to high security levels (87%)

# Part 1: Survey participants

What is the country of the prison in which you are employed?

Country	n	%
Netherlands*	64	32.3
Croatia*	28	14.1
Belgium*	27	13.6
Bulgaria*	24	12.1
Italy*	20	10.1
Romania	11	5.6
Spain	9	4.5
Denmark	4	2.0
United Kingdom	4	2.0
Estonia	3	1.5
Austria	3	1.5
Ireland	1	0.5

**N=198; RR=100%; \*SPPF partner**

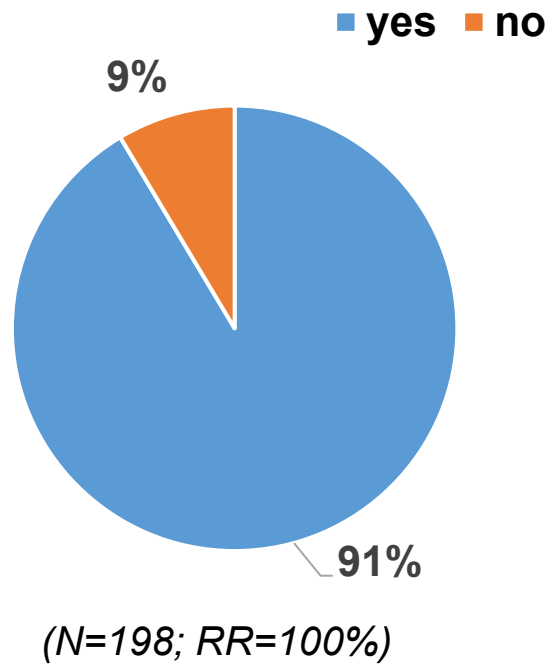
82.2 % of our respondents are employed in SPPF partner countries

Overrepresentation of Dutch respondents

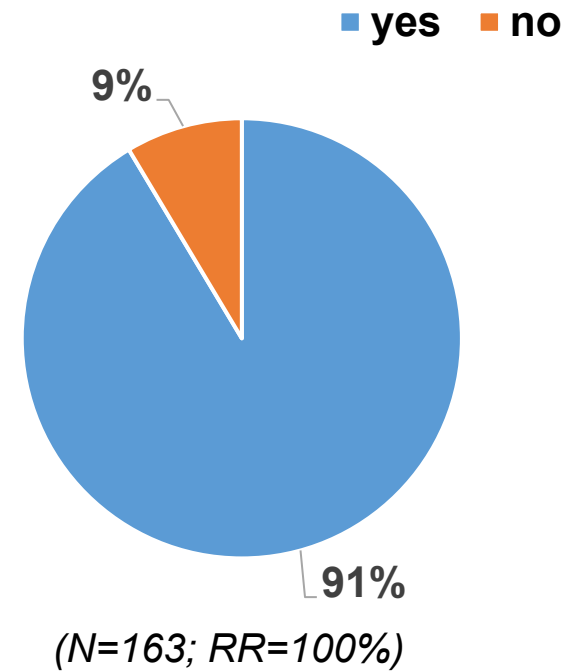
# Part 2: Activities

Do you have an activity in your prison that prepares prisoners for life after prison or that have a link with the outside world?

Respondents from all countries



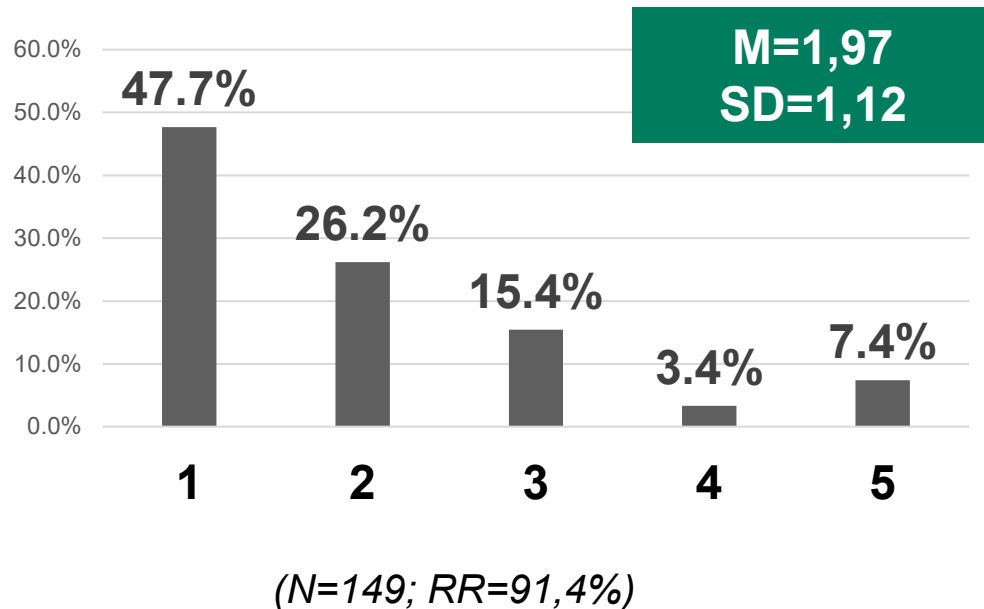
Respondents from SPPF-partner countries



- We managed to **reach our target group** as survey respondents

# Part 2: Activities (reported by SPPF-partner countries)

## How many activities would you like to describe?

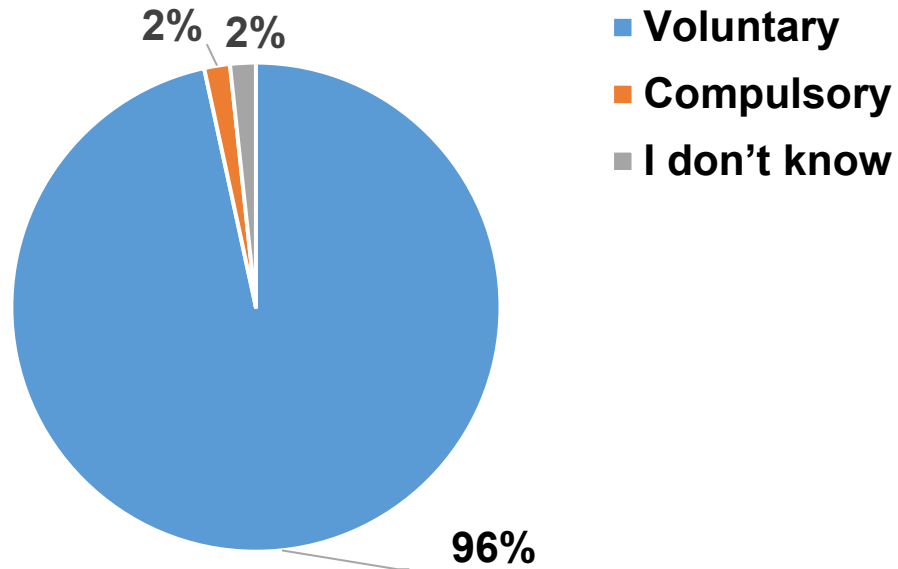


- In total we received **293 activity descriptions**
- With input from **149 respondents**
- **Majority** of the respondents **described 1 or 2 activities** (73,9%)
- Content on next slides is shaped based on all activity descriptions (N = number of activities instead of number of respondents)
- Results should be **interpreted with caution**
  - One activity could be included several times
  - One activity could be described differently depending on the experiences from the respondents



# Part 2: Activities

## Is this activity voluntary or compulsory?

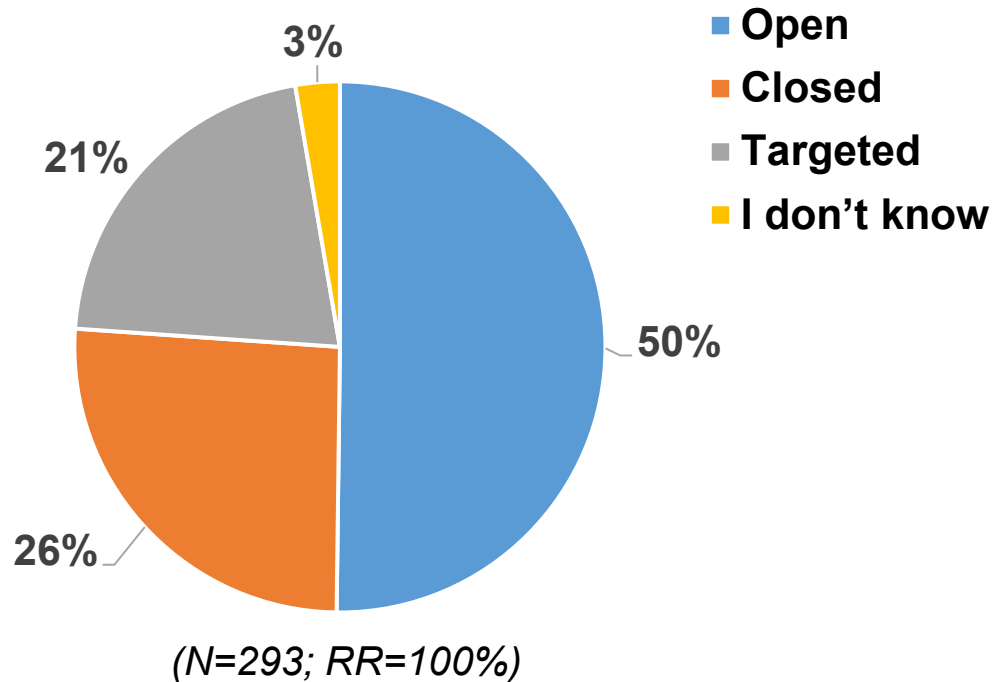


(N=293; RR=100%)

- Almost all activities are **voluntary** (96%)
- However, the **target group might not be reached** through voluntary engagement
- Perhaps even more important is to **understand** the **participation motives** of the participants
- Surprising that some respondents don't know what type of activity is provided

# Part 2: Activities

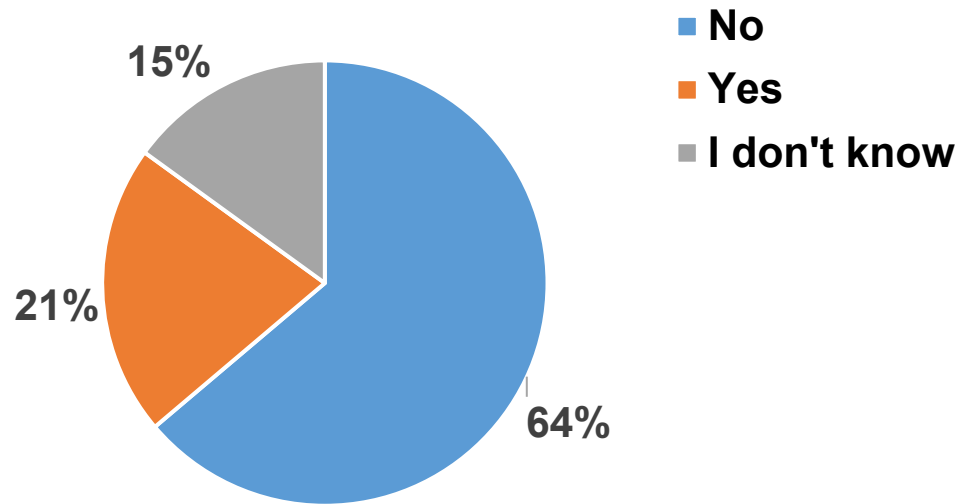
## Is this an open, closed or targeted activity?



- What kind of activity?
  - Open: everyone can participate
  - Closed: only after registration
  - Targeted: only specific target groups
- **50%** of all activities are **open activities**
- **47%** of all activities are **closed or targeted activities**

# Part 2: Activities

## Is there a waiting list for this activity?

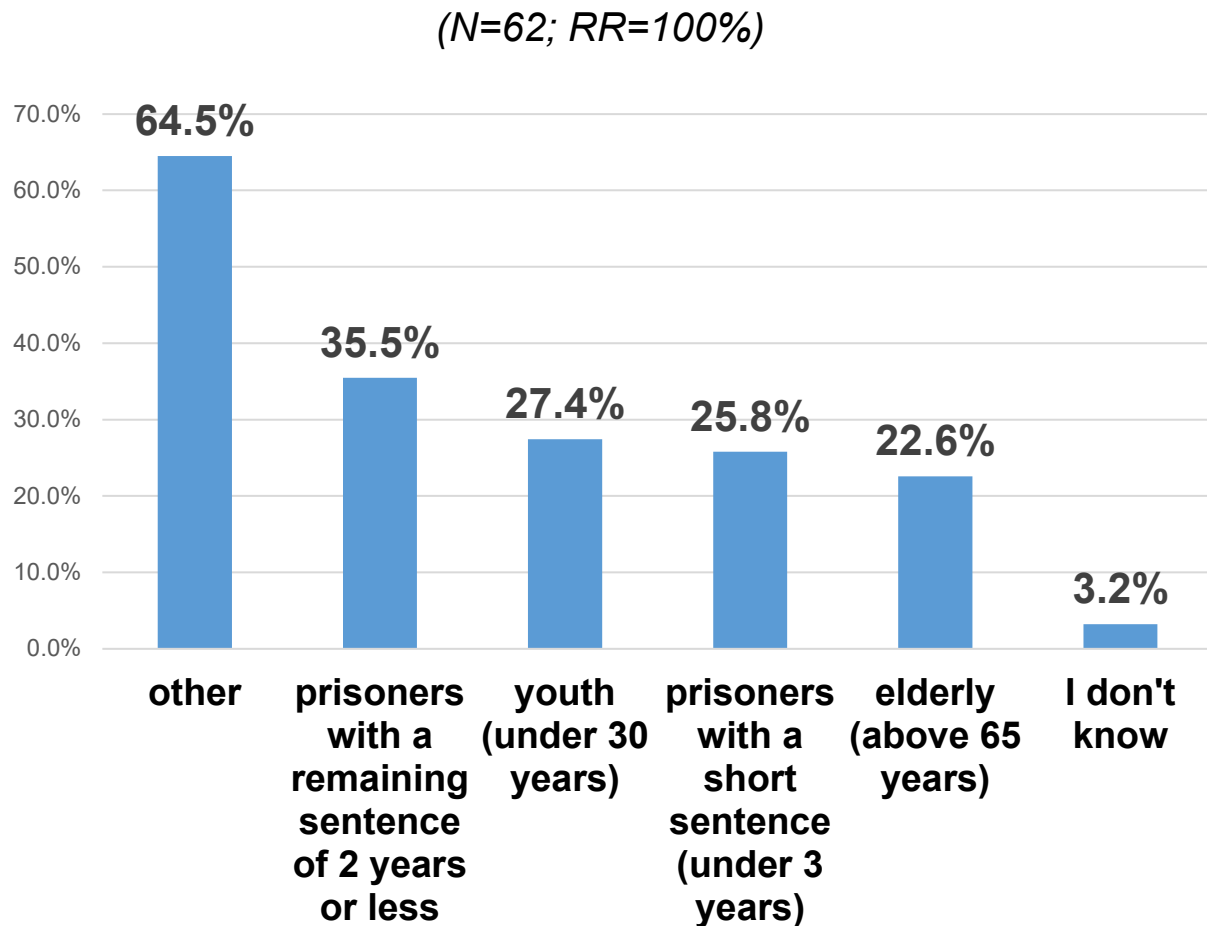


(N=293; RR=100%)

- **Remind previous slide:** 26% (n=76) of all activities are closed activities
  - But are prisoners able to participate after a registration (waiting list)
- For **21%** (n=81) of all activities there is a **waiting list**
  - Number of prisoners that might not be able to participate is huge
  - Prognoses based on current data:
    - N of act waiting list X average number of part = ?
    - $81 \times 22 = 1782$  **prisoners are waiting** to join an activity programme
- But this might be an **underestimation of the reality** as most activity programmes don't have a waiting list
- For **64%** (n=169) there is **no waiting list**

# Part 2: Activities

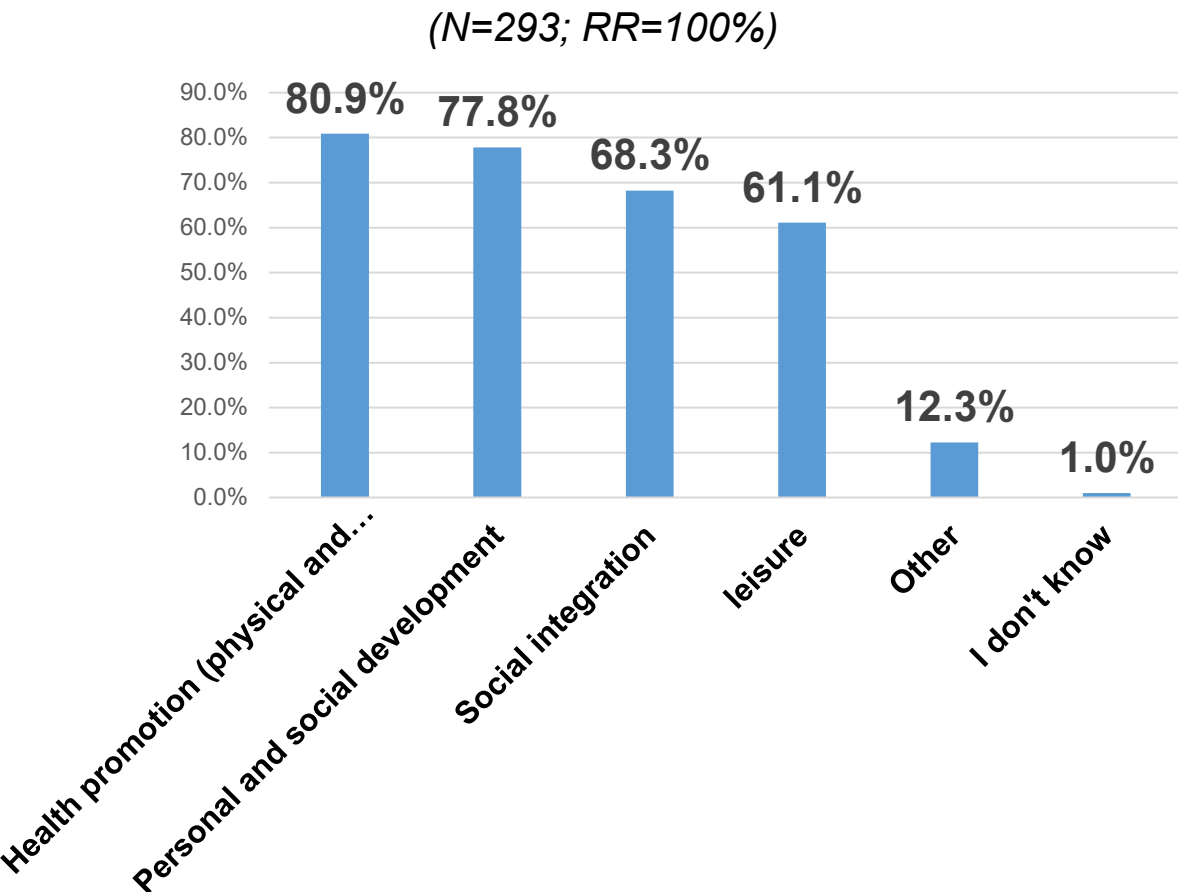
## Which specific target groups can participate in this activity?



- **Remind one of the previous slides:** 21% (n=62) of all activities are **targeted activities**
- **Variety** of specific **target groups**
  - Combination of different target groups exist in our sample
- But **most target groups** (n=40; 64,5%) are **not fitting** into the **predefined categories**
  - Responses for 'other' = 32 (RR=80%)
  - What other target groups were mentioned?
    - Residents of the drug-free section
    - Individuals behaving well
  - These are just a few examples
  - **Some responses also raise questions** about invisible power relations. Unequal access might be an issue here.

# Part 2: Activities

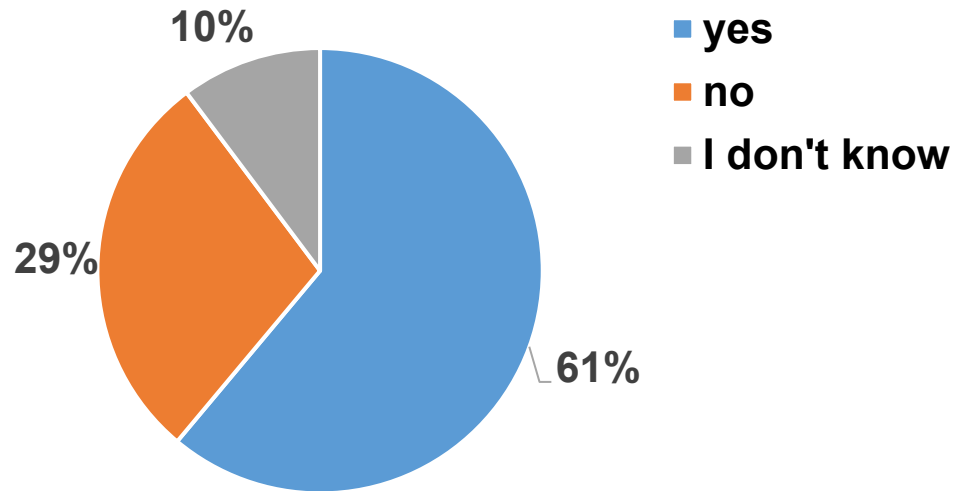
## What are the objective(s) related to this activity?



- **Number of activities with non-sport related objectives is very high**
- Many activities seem to have **different objectives**
- Uncertain how these (formal) outcomes are **defined** by those working with the prisoners
- Still not clear how they intend to reach such objectives (e.g., pedagogical approach)
- 'Other objectives' for 12,3% (n=36) of the described activities
  - Number of responses for 'other' = 33 (RR=92%)
  - E.g., relaxation, emotional discharge

# Part 2: Activities

## Is there an evaluation of this activity?

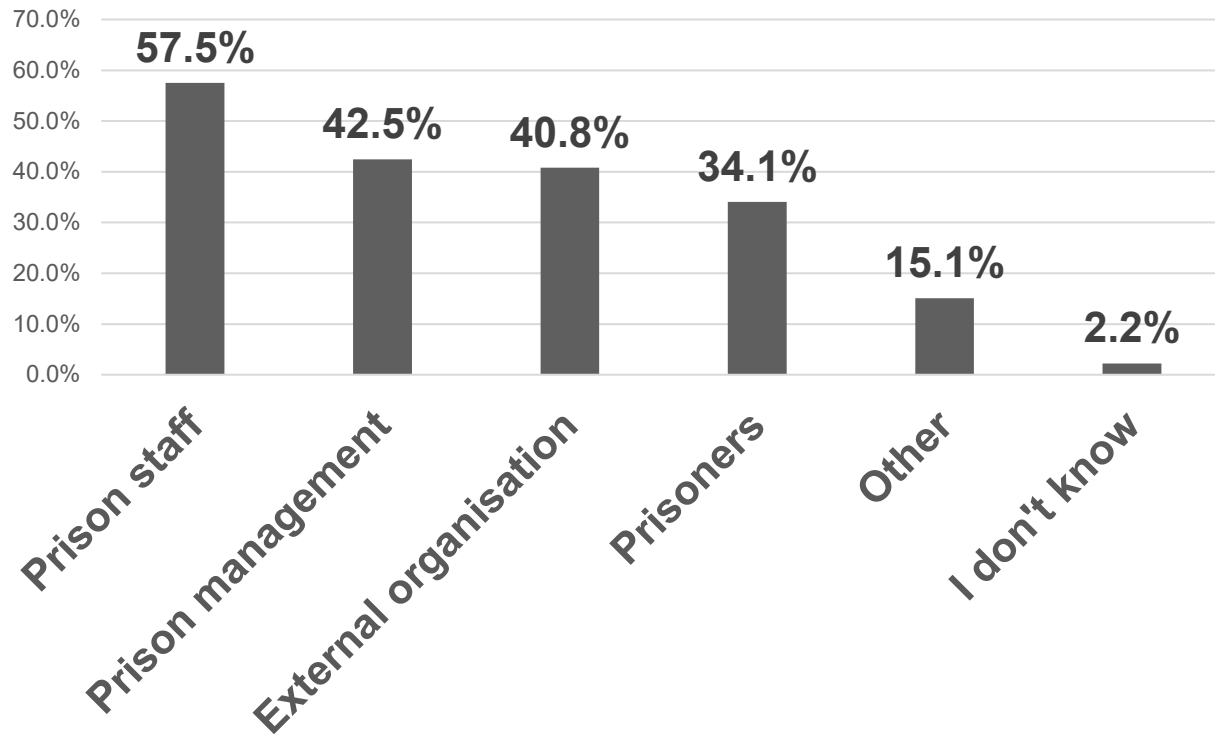


(N=293; RR=100%)

- **61% of all activities are evaluated**
- But still 29% is not evaluated
- For 10% this is unknown

# Part 2: Activities

## Who evaluates this activity?



(N=179; RR=100%)

- Majority is evaluated by **prison staff & management**
- For only **34% prisoners are involved**
  - Merely a fraction of all activities (n=293) that were described (21%)
  - Why not including the end-users?
- **40,8% evaluated by external organisations**
  - n=39, RR= 53%
  - E.g., De Rode Antraciet, Flemish table tennis league
- 15,1% = other
  - n=25, 92,5%
  - E.g., therapist, sports official


# Part 2: Activities

To what extent do they recognise the added value of this activity?

(1 = not recognised at all; 10 = recognised very much)

## By prison staff

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10




<b>M</b>	7,12
<b>SD</b>	1,85
<b>Min.</b>	0
<b>Max.</b>	10

(N=290; RR=99,0%)

## By prisoners

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



<b>M</b>	7,93
<b>SD</b>	1,72
<b>Min.</b>	0
<b>Max.</b>	10

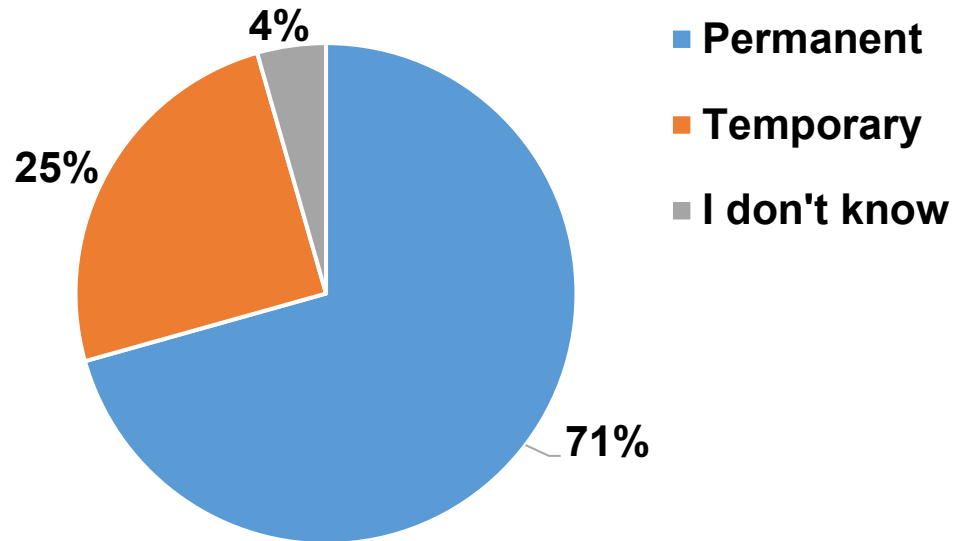
(N=291; RR=99,3%)

- Different perceived added value depending on target group
- Prisoners were not part of our target group for this survey
- Does this estimated 'M<sup>added value</sup>' concur with the real perceived added value of prisoners?
- Who knows? Previous slide: only a fraction of the activities involve prisoners when evaluating activities



# Part 2: Activities

## Is this activity temporary or permanent within your prison?

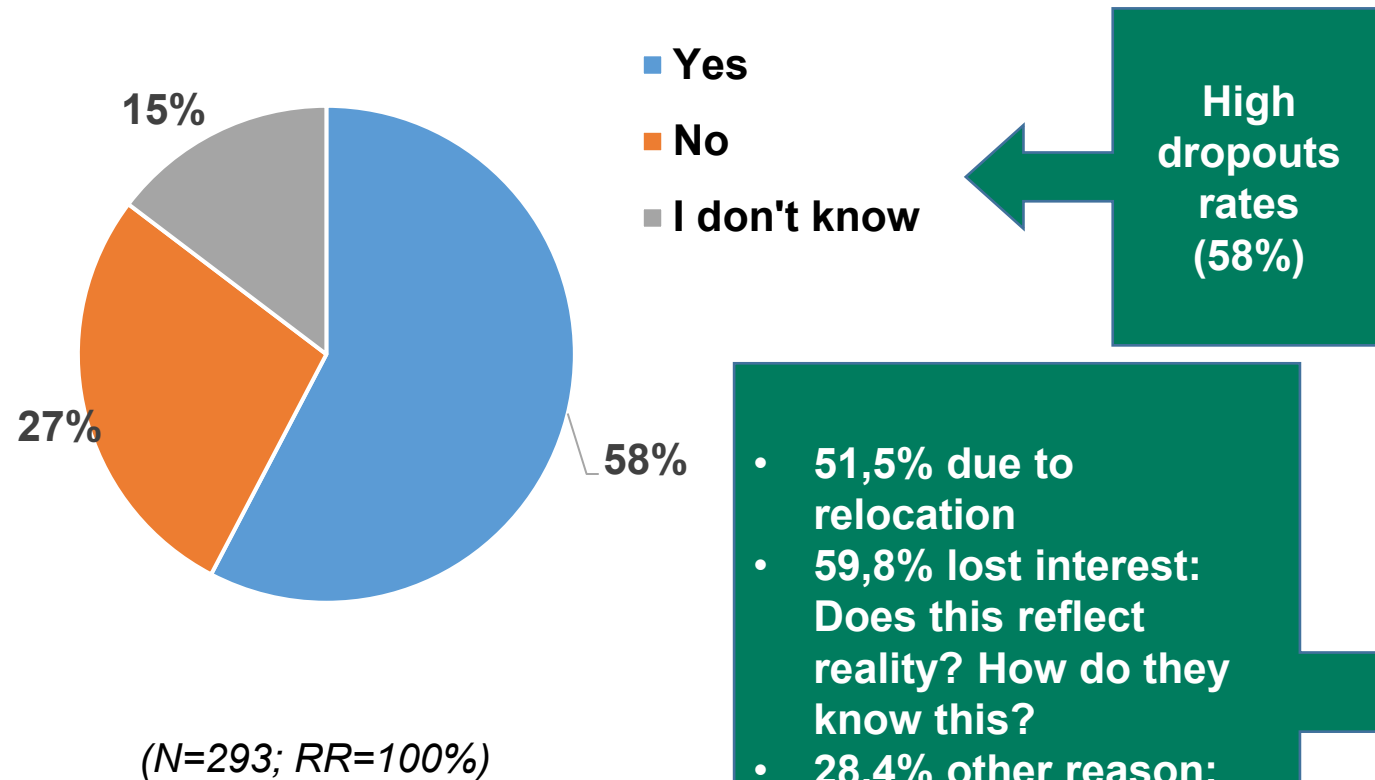


(N=293; RR=100%)

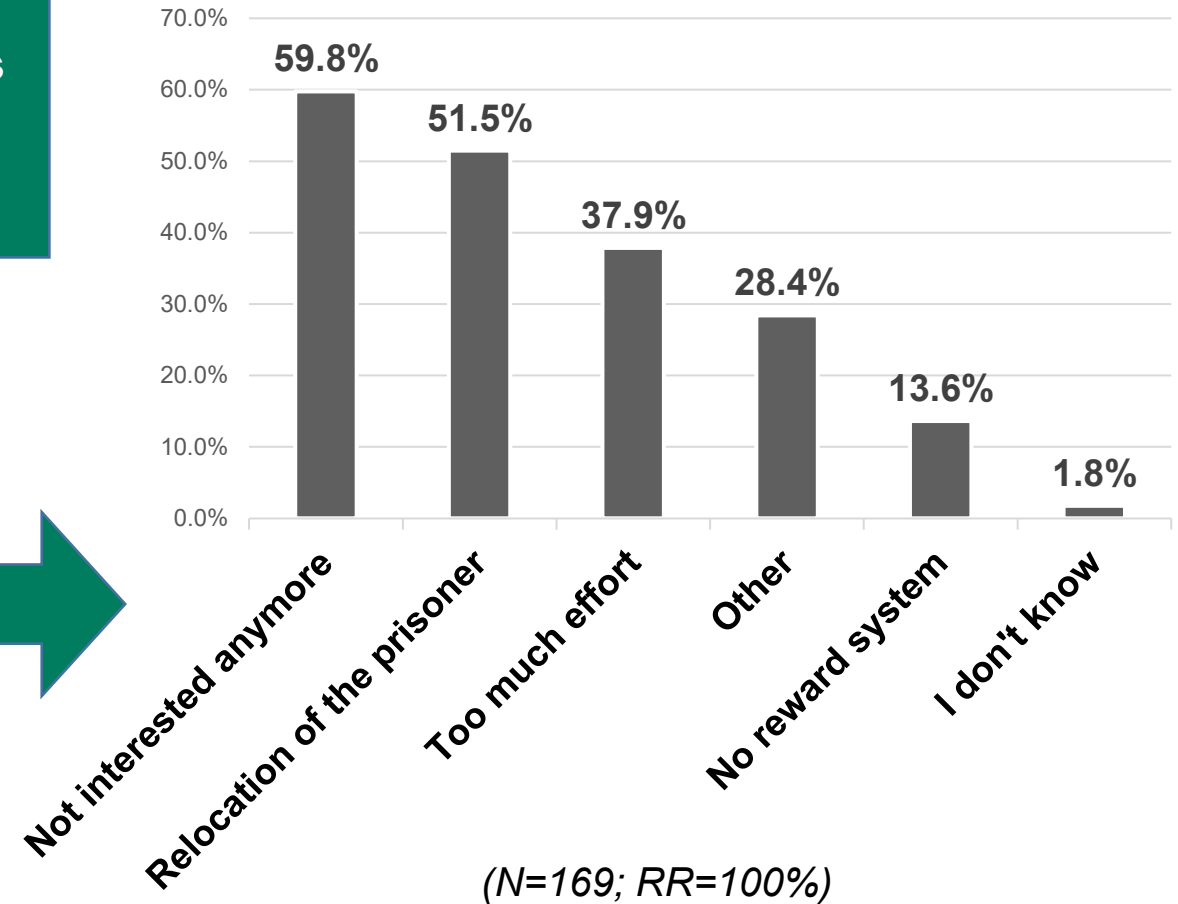
- **71% of the activities are permanent**
  - Big advantage: a context that allows structural improvement
  - Monitoring & evaluation
  - Challenging but valuable to (re)think the role of prisoners

# Part 2: Activities

## Are there dropouts and what are the reasons for dropping out?



- 51,5% due to relocation
- 59,8% lost interest: Does this reflect reality? How do they know this?
- 28,4% other reason:
  - > N=40, RR=50,3%
  - > E.g., health reasons, behavior of prisoner



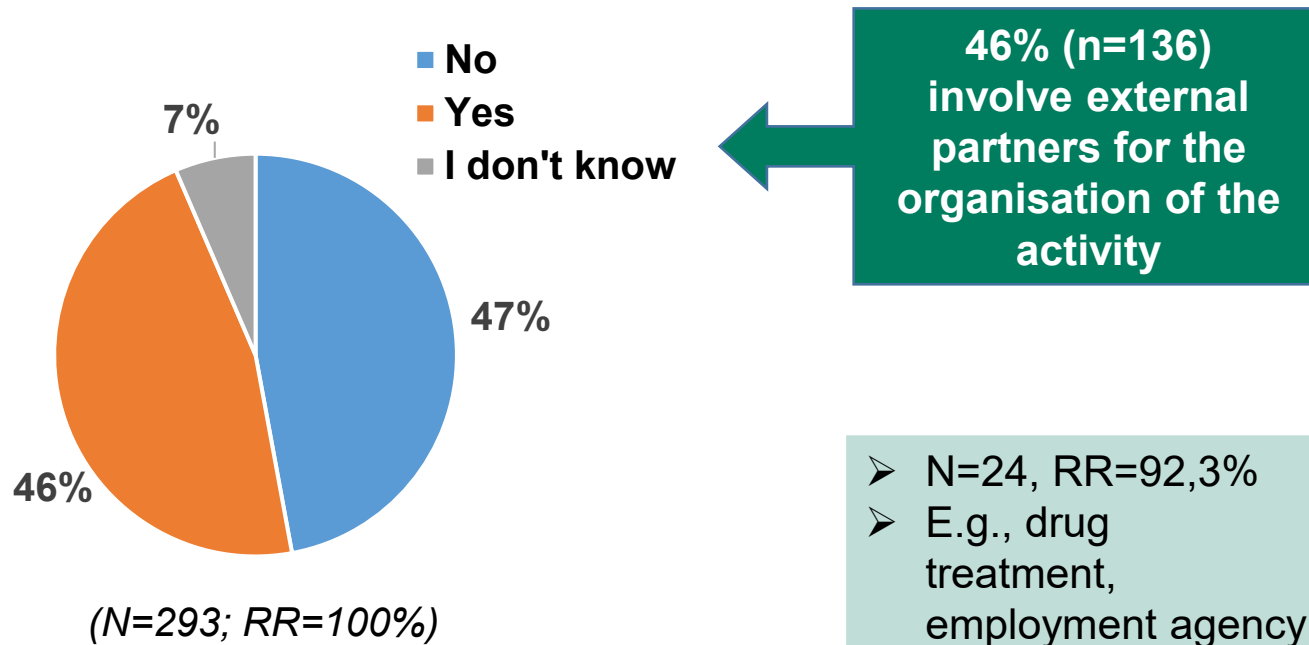
# Part 2: Activities

## Do you receive external financial support from organisations for this activity?

- **21%** (n=62) activities receive **external funding**
- Where is this external funding coming from?
  - N=62, RR=36,2
  - RR is very low – Why? Simple because it's an open question or is the source unknown?
  - E.g., government, sponsors, European social fund
- **67%** (n=42) activities that receive external funding are **depending on their external funding**
  - A minority of all activities (only 14%)
  - This is favorable for the implementation of structural changes

# Part 2: Activities

## Are you working with external partners to organise this activity?

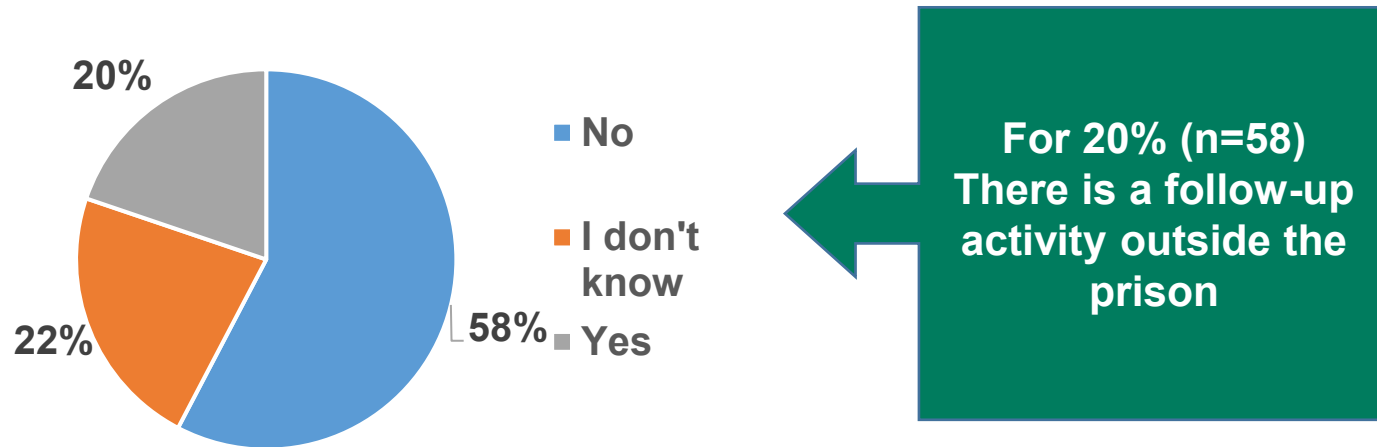


Number of partners		
Mean		2,78
Stand deviation		3,71
Type of partners		
	n	%
Sport organisation	93	68,4
Social organisation	61	44,9
Governmental organisation	39	28,7
Private person	26	19,1
Other	26	19,1
I don't know	2	1,5
<i>n=136, RR= 100%</i>		

- **Most important roles of these partners** (n=136, RR=100%)
- Coaching/teaching the activity (66,2%)
- Helping to connect the prisoners to the outside world (62,5%)
- Create social benefits (e.g. education) (48,5%)

# Part 2: Activities

## Is there a follow-up activity outside the prison walls connected to this activity?



(N=293; RR=100%)

Objectives	n	%
Personal and social development	49,0	84,5
Social integration	43,0	74,1
Health promotion (physical and mental wellbeing)	33,0	56,9
leisure	18,0	31,0
other	10,0	17,2
I don't know	0,0	0,0

n=58, RR=100%

- **Description of follow-up activity**  
E.g., Start of new job, award ceremony
- **Are participants selected for follow-up activity? YES for 52% (n=30)**
  - **Intrinsic motivation** as main selection criteria (90%, n=27)
- **Half of all follow-up activities are evaluated** (52%, n=30)
  - **Organisers** are mainly evaluating the follow-up activities (77%, n=33)

# Part 3: General questions related to all activities

## Perceived impact of COVID-19 measures on organisation of activities?

- Results from respondents that described activities NOT all the activities that have been described
- For **56%** (n=83) COVID-19 measures will have an impact on the organisation of this type of activities in the future
- **Most impact is perceived** to make it even more **challenging** (e.g., to stay in close contact with different partners) but some also mentioned **unexpected opportunities** (e.g., use of digital tools)

# Discussion

**Let's go back to our point of departure**

**Objective of the survey**

**Did the survey enable us to get a good view on practices in EU member states that use sport activities to prepare prisoners for life after prison and sport activities that (might) have a link with the outside world?**

# Discussion

**Our contribution** provides more insight into different aspects that are essential to evaluate good practices. For example:

- ✓ **Competencies** that are perceived to be important **for the individuals** involved in the organization of the activity
  - ✓ The extent to which **prisoners are involved** in the evaluation/organization of the activity
  - ✓ Type of targeted **outcomes**
  - ✓ Collaborations with **external organisations**
  - ✓ Some aspects related to the **evaluation** of activities
  - ✓ ...
- High rates of **permanent activities** (71%) and majority of activities are **not depending on external funding** (86%)
- **Favourable context** for the implementation of structural changes, monitoring and evaluation



# Discussion and next steps

We contributed to existing knowledge, but there are still **some knowledge gaps**:

- Are there **significant differences between SPPF-partner countries**?
- Are these data **representative for all countries**? (e.g., Belgium: missing data for Wallonia)
- Data set from **one single perspective** and leading to limited insights into different important aspects. For example:
  - Intrinsic motivation of prisoners is crucial. Most activities are voluntary and this is a main selection criteria for a follow-up activity
    - But **participation motives** are still unknown?
  - Many activities are evaluated (61%)
    - But why are **prisoners** often **not included** into the **evaluation** of the activity?

# Concluding remarks and questions ...

- This survey provides new insights, but remains very general
  - Merely descriptive with no in-depth insights
  - Not explanatory
- Our general impression is that – like in most ‘sport-for-development’ initiatives – most sport activities in prison can be characterised as ***“ill-defined interventions with hard to follow outcomes”***
  - ***“Can we really expect that current circumstances allow sport providers to achieve these broader social objectives?”***
  - ***“What is needed to ensure the achievement of these objectives?”***



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# Thank you!



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