



An analysis of the working conditions of professional sports players



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An analysis of the working conditions of professional players of Basketball, Hockey, Handball and Rugby across a number of European member states

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Preface by UNI Europa Sport

Over the past decade, as sport has become more and more commercial, the number of athletes in a work/employment relationship with a sport organization has grown correspondingly. Currently, there are many thousands of EU citizens making their living through the practice of sport. As this number grows, it is important that policy makers understand the conditions athletes endure in the work place. This is especially true in light of the apparent reluctance of many sport organizations to engage in social dialogue or collective bargaining.

The conclusions of this report are striking. Some of the conditions detailed in this report include:

- Many players work without a contract
- Wages are often paid late
- Lack of pension provisions
- Deficit of support from employers for education
- Sport poses a high risk to health
- Low incidence of insurance against career ending injuries
- Low Quality of refereeing
- High incidence of harassment and discrimination
- Doping away from the workplace is considered an invasion of privacy
- Increase in evening work
- Insufficient notice for changes to work schedule
- Low awareness of disciplinary rules

There is a difference between amateur sport and sport that is practiced as work. Athletes who are in a work relationship with a sport organization need the protection of EU law as it relates to work – especially relating to working time, mobility, training, health and safety, data protection, etc. Importantly, there is a general acceptance by athletes of the need for a sector wide agreement. It is hoped that this report will help to inform the social partners and EU policy makers to the reality of the working life for many young European athletes.

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Executive Summary

The study examined the working conditions of professional sports players of ice hockey, rugby, handball and basketball. The findings raise a number of interesting issues about life in professional sports, the way players are treated, their attitudes to their career after sport, their health, their financial provisions and how these sports are organised in various European member states. What follows below is a snapshot of the key issues raised by professional players about their working life, which ought to serve as an action plan for the representatives of players, their clubs and the leagues in which they work.

■ **Players without a contract**

Although the majority of players in the study have a formal contract with their club, there are still many who do not, raising issues such as security of employment and the application of employment legislation to protect their rights at work

■ **Late payment of wages**

In a number of countries, regardless of the type of sport, many players complained about receiving their wages late each month. In too many cases players state that their wages are sometimes or always paid late and this is something that ought to be addressed.

■ **Lack of pension provisions**

Many professional players have no pension, which raises doubts about individual players' capacity to make adequate provisions for retirement. UNI Europa Sport, employers and player associations all must work to raise the awareness among young players of the importance of having a pension.

■ **Deficit of support from employers for education**

While the evidence shows that sports players undertake some form of study while working as a professional, it is clear that players are not aware of educational opportunities for life beyond their career in sport. Furthermore, where players wish to participate in non-sport related training, too often their employer is unwilling to support them to prepare for a new career after they retire from sport. This lack of support by employers could threaten the sustainability of professional sports as younger players become reluctant to pursue this occupation due to the difficulties posed by beginning a new career once they retire from sport.

■ **Sport poses a high risk to health**

The findings for all four sports in this study show that 63.2 per cent of sports players within the scope of the research feel that their professional poses a risk to their health. The responses from players across

all four sports are littered with injuries – from broken bones, torn ligaments, concussion, injuries to the back and shoulders, damage to teeth to stress, general fatigue and sleeping problems.

■ **Low incidence of insurance against career ending injuries**

Given the high number of days sports players are absent from work due to injury, it is surprising that less than a third of all players in the survey have a current insurance policy to protect them against a career ending injury (31.4%), suggesting there is a significant amount of work to carry out by the stakeholders to ensure this issue is addressed.

■ **Satisfaction with therapeutic support**

Injured players rely upon the therapeutic support provided by their team's doctors and therapists, however there are significant variations in the quality of support provided to injured players by their employer and these issue needs addressing.

■ **Low Quality of refereeing**

One consistent complaint raised by players across all four sports was the apparent low quality of refereeing. The report contains suggestions for areas of improvement from players.

■ **Overwhelming support for sector wide collective agreement**

Without doubt, the extent of support for the creation of an industry-wide collective agreement to regulate minimum standards for working time, wages, pension provisions and minimum insurance provisions was overwhelming among players from all countries and sports.

■ **High incidence of harassment and discrimination**

The degree to which players have individually been subjected to acts of intimidation, bullying, harassment and discrimination were highlighted in the survey. The findings show that in all sports and across all countries professional players have been exposed to various unwanted physical acts, threats and bullying and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and age.

■ **Doping away from the workplace is considered an invasion of privacy**

Players who have experienced being tested outside of their workplace are far more likely to consider this to constitute an invasion of their privacy than those who have not. The issue of privacy and testing therefore needs the attention of the European Commission and the social partners, to provide a methodology that ensures that players who do artificially enhance their performance in this way are caught, yet the process for doing so must rest within the boundaries of what is socially acceptable and must be designed with the issue of privacy at the centre.

■ **Increase in evening work**

Although the research findings for the prevalence of Sunday work show similar trends to those in the previous study, there does appear to be an increase in the number of handball players working in the evenings in both Spain and France.

■ **Insufficient notice for changes to work schedule**

Notice of changes to a player's work schedule are often inadequate and the vast majority of players in all countries and sports examined regularly experience changes to their work schedule, many through notice measured in hours not days.

■ **Good work / life balance**

The majority of players are satisfied that their working life fits in well with their wider commitments outside the workplace. Although, many players would prefer less matches in the season and more time off around the Christmas / New Year period.

■ **Low awareness of disciplinary rules**

A significant number of players are not familiar with their league or club's disciplinary rules, and those that are not usually haven't been sent a copy of the relevant documents by their employer.

■ **Fines for misconduct**

Players are often fined by their club as a disciplinary measure. While the value of the fine varies, many players often agree the level of their fine with their club. However, there do not appear to be any consistencies of this type of approach across specific sports or countries.

It is clear from the research that the perception of professional sports players among the general public is far from the reality of the majority of professional players. The research raises serious weaknesses in the regulation of employment in the sector and the negative effects this has on the working lives of professional players. While these issues are not insurmountable and, in some cases, relatively simple actions would deliver significant improvements to the lives of players, improvements of the kind required will require a multilateral approach, involving the European Commission and its institutions, player associations, employers and the bodies regulating the leagues of each sport across all member states. In addition, the absence of a social dialogue infrastructure within the sector presents a significant challenge to the stakeholders and therefore the role and influence of the European institutions will need to be maximised in order to create an awareness of the problems identified by the research, to bring employers into discussions with player associations and to create a framework for jointly constructed solutions. Thus, improving the working lives of professional sports players will only be possible with the commitment and support of the European Commission in the coming months. The necessary changes are

feasible, but they require the commitment and full participation of the stakeholders and a genuine will on behalf of the European Commission.

Introduction

This report follows a similar examination by UBE in 2008, into the working conditions of professional basketball players. Following the success of the 2008 study, which unearthed specific areas requiring attention by the social partners, in 2012 Syndex was commissioned by EU Athletes and UNI Europa Sport to undertake a similar exercise, but widening the scope of enquiry beyond basketball and to include ice hockey, handball and rugby.

Our research began in early 2012 and the final batch of surveys were returned in May 2013, with a total of 11 interviews being undertaken with professional players in Slovenia, Poland, Spain and Sweden between September 2012 and January 2013 and further desk research was carried out throughout the entire period.

Despite our best efforts, we were unable to examine the four sports in all the countries originally selected, largely due to the lack of response from affiliates of EU Athletes and general malaise among non-affiliated sports associations. As we predicted early in the research, players in basketball provided the majority of responses – probably because a similar exercise for this sport had been carried out by UBE in 2008 and players were less anxious about providing personal confidential details to the research team. In a number of countries, sports associations simply either did not publicise the research to extent required or were unable to support the research due to their workload.

The responses are outlined in the table below, and the concentration of the support from among basketball players and players in specific countries is very clear.

	Basketball	Handball	Hockey	Rugby	Totals
Belgium	5	4	-	-	9
Denmark	-	5	-	-	5
Finland	-	-	6	-	6
France	139	49	-	6	194
Germany	65	6	-	-	71
Italy	2	-	-	-	2
Lithuania	5	-	-	-	5
Poland	36	68	2	-	106
Romania	30	15	6	9	60
Slovenia	2	2	6	-	10
Spain	5	19	-	-	24
Sweden	64	-	10	-	74
Totals	353	168	30	15	566

Limitations of data

While it is clearly important to extract key issues arising from the data collected, it is also important to accept any limitations of the data. However, as the above table shows, adequate overall responses from players of

basketball and handball legitimise our findings, the small number of surveys completed by players of ice hockey and rugby mean that it is difficult to draw conclusions based solely on the data derived in this way. Through our interviews, the survey responses and existing literature, we are able to make a number of conclusions, despite this low level of responses. Throughout the text of this report, where data is considered to unrepresentative of the sector, due to the response rate, this point is made clear. However, this does not prevent us from making conclusions based upon the sample and other sources of information. Where data is unavailable or insufficient to be of use then it will be omitted.

Interviews

A number of interviews were undertaken with players of basketball, handball and ice hockey and these have produced very interesting results. The interviews were undertaken in person or via the telephone and Skype and lasted for no less than 40 minutes each. The data from each interview is included in this report, although anonymised, and they have added great value to our findings.

Structure of the report

The previous study by UBE in 2008 focussed solely on professional basketball players and as such presented all available statistics from the surveys in a standardised format, examining each aspect of the survey. This research exercise, while attempting to replicate the previous one and extend the range of sports examined, has been more difficult to present, given the number of sports in its scope. Therefore what follows is a separate analysis for each of the four sports, in the order of the questions contained in the survey. In addition, interviews and desk research has greatly enhanced the survey findings and, where possible and appropriate to do so, has been interwoven throughout the relevant text. In relation to the question on education, the International Standard Classification of Education was used as benchmark from which respondents were asked to identify the appropriate level of education they had completed. The various levels of the ISCED are set out below along with their general definitions.

ISCED level¹	Definition
Level 1	First stage of basic or primary education.
Level 2	Lower secondary, or second stage of basic education. Usually the last stage of compulsory education.
Level 3	Upper secondary education.
Level 4	Post secondary non-tertiary education. Preparing for tertiary education or entrance to the labour market.
Level 5	First stage of tertiary education, preparing individuals for further study or professional occupations.
Level 6	Second stage of tertiary education leading to an advanced research qualification.

Overview of professional sports

Due to its atypical environment, life as a professional sports player is a far less glamorous occupation than it is often considered. A career of limited duration, the working life of our professional sports men and women is

¹ For the purposes of this research the 1997 ISCED classification was felt more appropriate due to the typology provided and the relevance for the target audience.

influenced by many factors, most of which are beyond the control of the player themselves. For example, very few other occupations demand so much physical exertion from the worker and expose him to health risks to the same extent, and few workers outside of professional sport can be considered fortunate if their career lasts beyond their 40th birthday. Yet, for our professional sports men and women, these factors are a daily concern and, combined with insecurity of employment so often experienced, provide a constant threat to their livelihood and, ultimately, to the life of our cherished sports.

Beyond the headlines and celebrity glitz, the working lives of our professional sports players remains a subject about which most of us are unaware. Workers within the public sector, such as teachers, doctors and local government administrators, as well as their working conditions are very well documented, as is their employment security. But the aim of this research is to provide the reader with an opportunity to gaze through a window into the working lives of our professional players so that a proper, contextualised, appreciation of their employment circumstances can be observed and assessed.

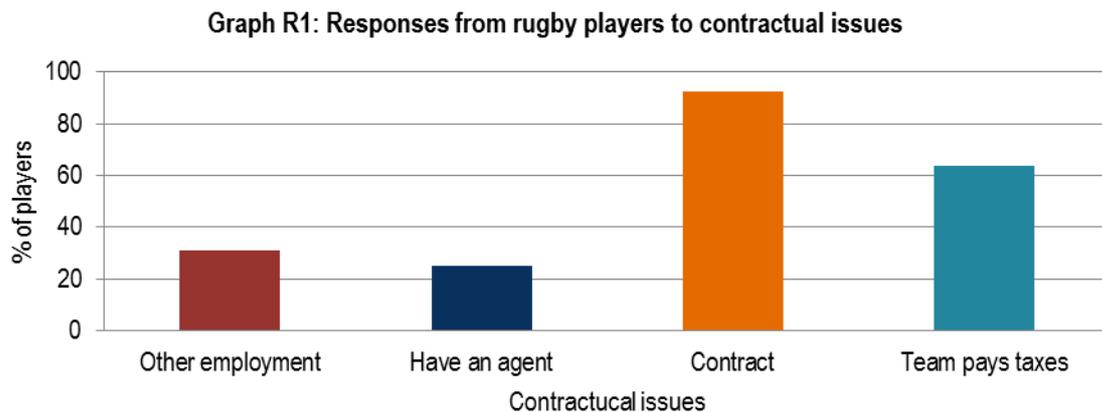
Rugby

Profile of respondents

This section combines responses from rugby players in France and Romania to provide an general picture of the sport and of the working conditions for those employed as professional rugby players. The average age of respondents is just over 26 years, none of which are married. Respondents began their playing career at just over 19 years of age, have played for 3.5 seasons on average and an average of 3.36 teams. When asked to provide an age at which they are seeking to retire, the average response was 35 years of age.

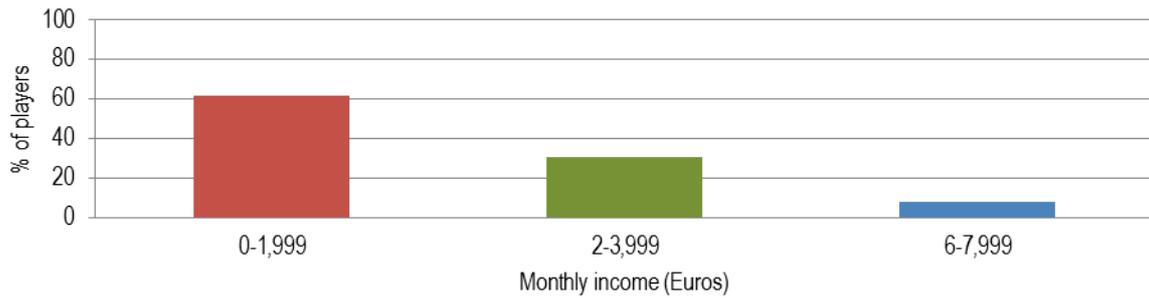
Contractual

A significant number of players undertake work elsewhere in Romania (a third), and almost all the players surveyed in France had an agent, compared to no players in Romania). All the players in France had a contract with their club, compared to just under 90 per cent in Romania, and players' taxes in France are paid by their club, 15 per cent of players in Romania are personally responsible for these



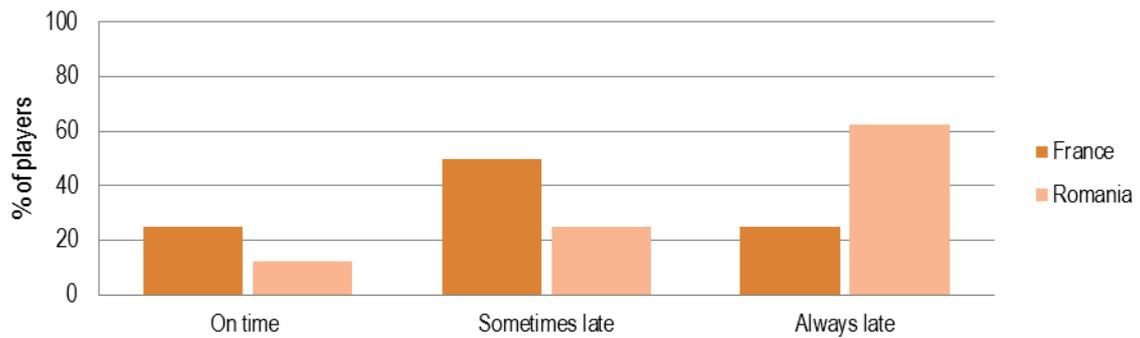
There is a big distinction between the incomes of players in Romania and in France, with the former accounting for the entire proportion of players paid up to 1,999 Euros per month, plus one player receiving between 2-3,999 Euros p/m. The remainder of players earning from 2-3,999 and 6-7,999 Euros p/m are based in France.

Graph R2: Monthly income for rugby players from France and Romania



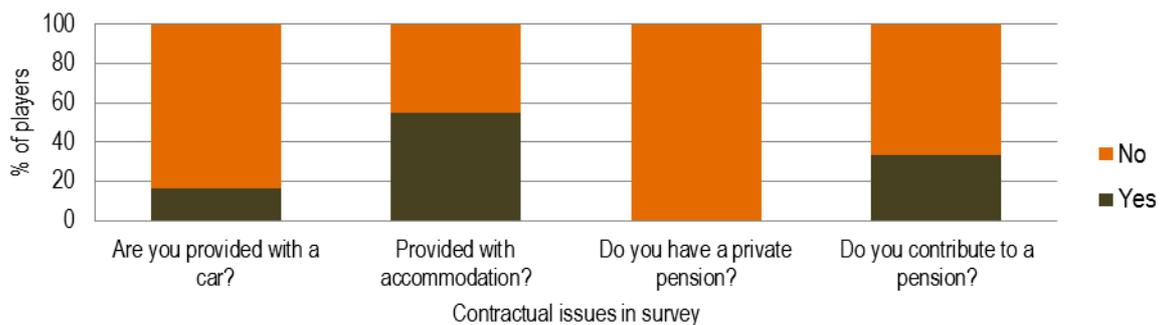
A large number of players in both countries state that they receive their wages late “sometimes” or “always”, however, due to the small sample of responses for this question from players in France, it has not been possible to draw conclusions. However, it is possible to do so for players in Romania and the data shows that a significant number of players in this country are not being paid regularly, as the graph below shows.

Graph R3: Frequency of salary payments for rugby players



Just over half of players are provided with accommodation and those who are provided a rating of 7.44 out of 10 for the quality of their accommodation, with no clear distinction between players in either country. Half of the rugby players employed in France have the use of a car, as part of their contract, whereas, of the players surveyed in Romania, none benefited from such contractual terms. Neither rugby players in France or Romania have entered into a secondary contract for their image rights.

Graph R4: Responses from rugby players to questions on compensation packages

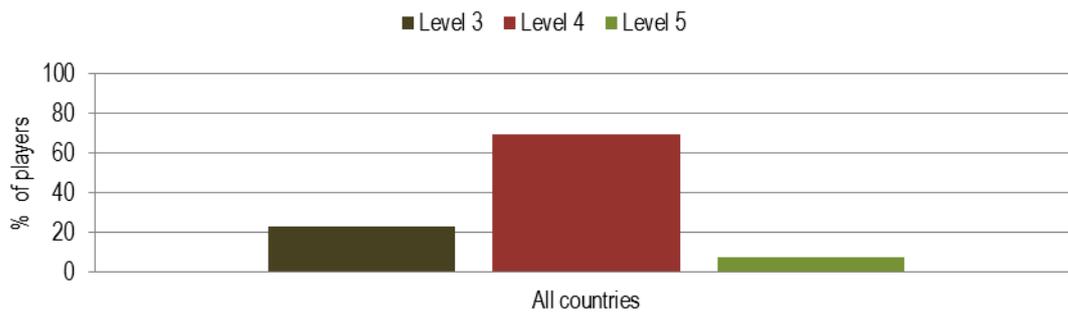


As the graph above demonstrates, rugby players across both countries do not generally have a private pension nor do they contribute to any type of pension, which raises issues about players' capacity to make adequate provisions for retirement and something that ought to be further explored in this sport.

Education

Rugby players from France and Romania have achieved similar educational attainment and the graph below shows the percentage of players and their education levels, as per the international classification for education.

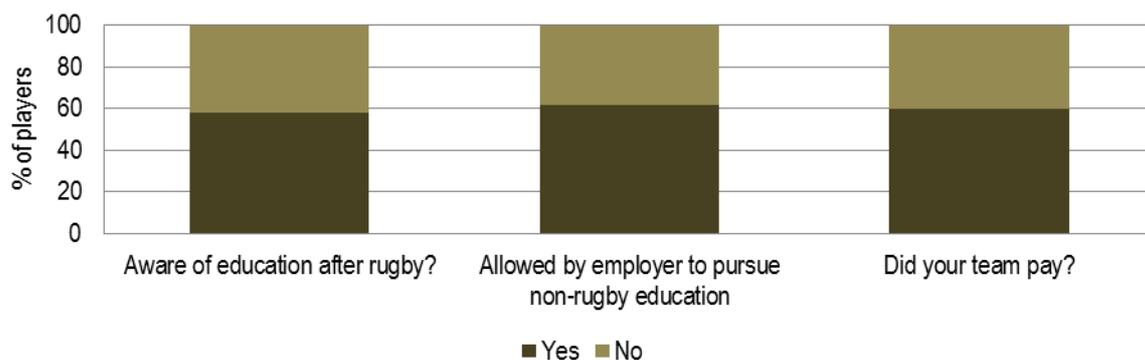
Graph R5: Levels of education among rugby players



Every rugby player who responded to the survey stated that they had, at some point in their professional career, studied while playing. Combined with the data in the above graph, this could account for the high number of players that have achieved a Level 4 qualification – the studies pursued while a professional player were technical qualifications.

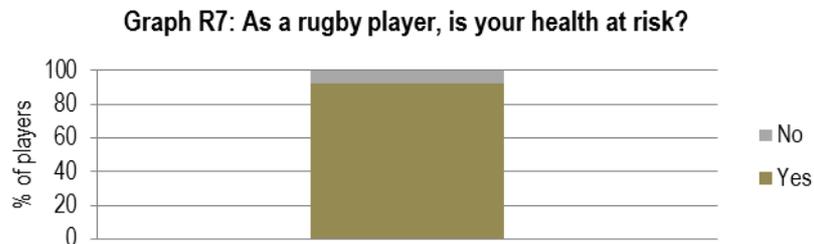
From the sample of respondents to the questionnaire, it appears highly probable that rugby players also studied while working as a professional, and the fact that the majority of players in the sample have gained a first degree, demonstrates the awareness among players of the importance of education. Unfortunately, this recognition and commitment is not universally shared by their employers, as the responses to the survey highlighted the reluctance of employers to support players undertake study, beyond their role on the field. Players in Romania are half as likely as those in France to be supported through study, and, where employer support is forthcoming, only a quarter of clubs provide financial assistance.

Graph R6: Responses from rugby players to questions related to education

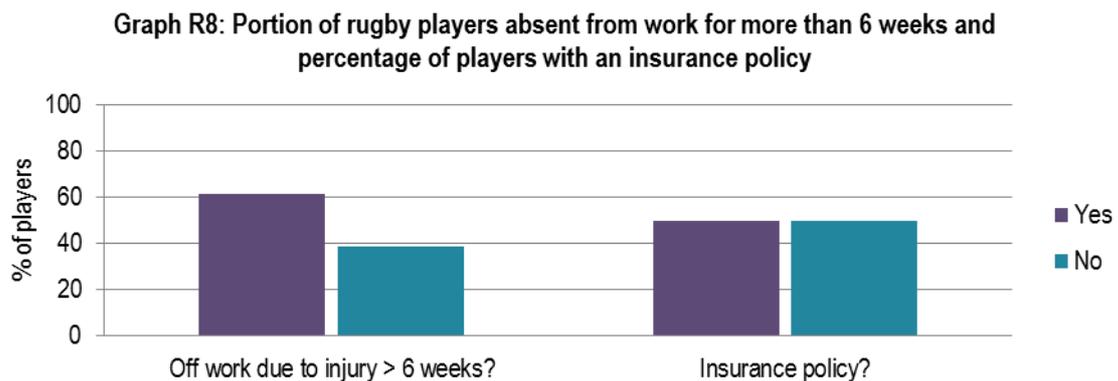


Health and Safety

An overwhelming number of players consider playing professional rugby as a risk to their health and safety, as the graph below shows. Rugby players highlight injuries such as sprains, muscular injuries, concussion, fractures and broken bones and general wounds to the face as the most common types of injuries received while carrying out their work.

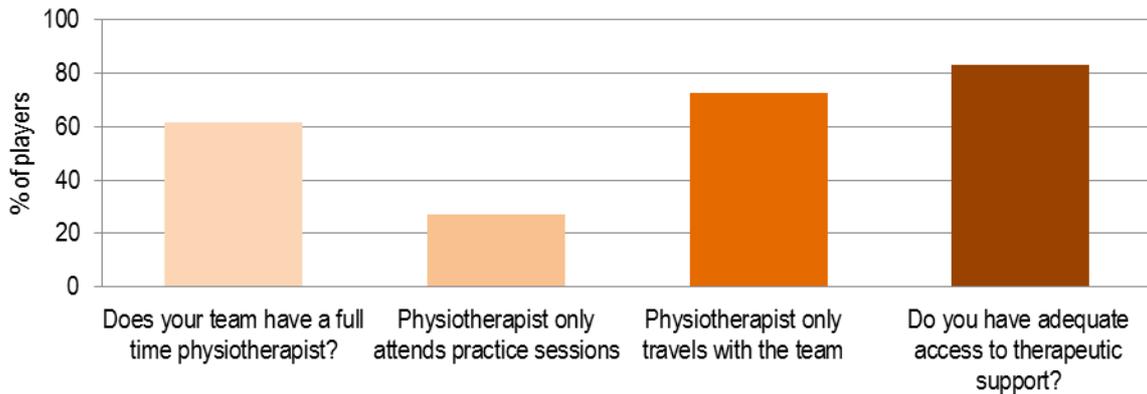


On average, players from both Romania and France were absent from work due to injury for less than a day, in the 12 months preceding the research. The number of average days lost due to injury was almost 41.



Players were asked if an injury had ever prevented them from working for more than six weeks, and the results are shown above. Interestingly, while the majority of players have received an injury that kept them from work for so long, only fifty percent of players actually have an insurance policy to provide financial support in the event of them suffering a career ending injury.

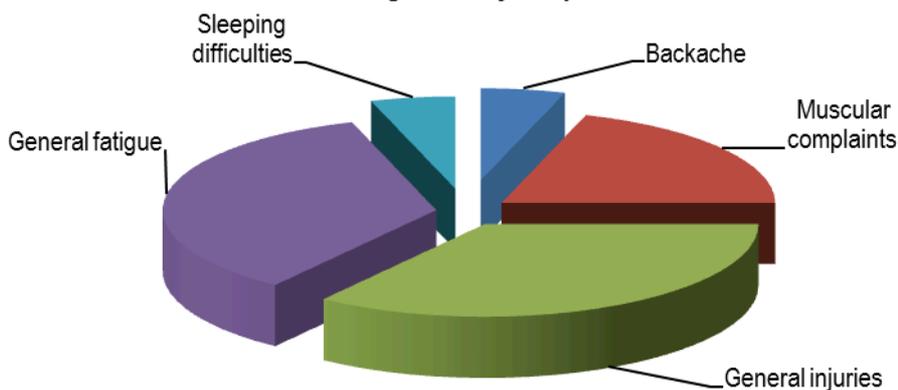
Graph R9: Responses from rugby players on questions related to therapy



As the graph above shows, over 60 per cent of rugby players state that their team has a full-time physiotherapist and, on the whole, they only tend to travel with the team. In terms of therapeutic support, the vast majority of players state they have adequate access to this service. Finally, players awarded a score of 7.15 out of ten, showing that they do consider rugby to be a stressful occupation.

Undoubtedly, professional rugby presents a risk to players, according to the results from the survey. Every player in France and almost 90 per cent of players in Romania agreed that their occupation poses a risk to their health, and backache and other muscular related complaints were cited as the main health problems encountered as a professional player.

Chart R1: Typical ailments caused by playing rugby, according to surveys responses



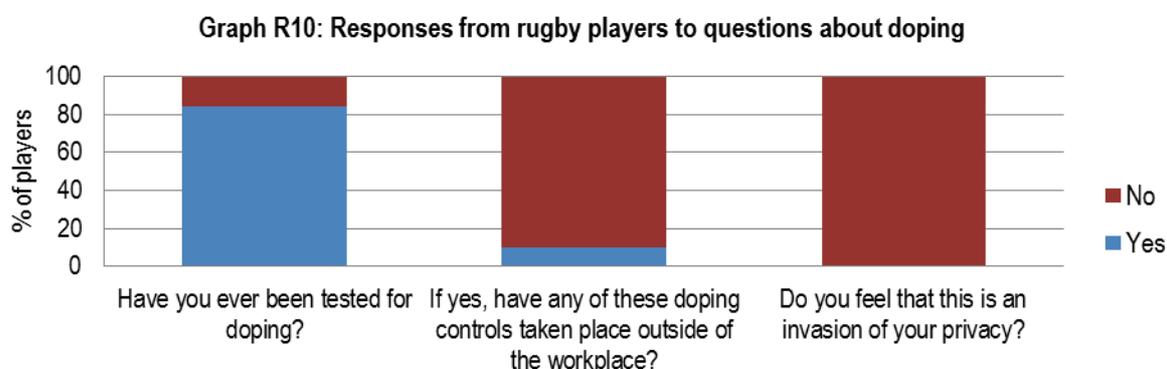
The pie chart above shows, injuries and general fatigue are the two biggest challenges for rugby players, followed by muscular complaints. The concern of players, about the effects of their occupation, on their health is justified when the average number of days lost per player due to injury is considered. Players in France are more than twice as likely to be absent from work due to injury, than players based in Romania (Just over 37 days compared to 14 in Romania). Furthermore, a large number of players, who had been injured in the past 12 months, stated their injury had prevented them playing for more than six weeks – over half of those players in

Romania and three quarters in France). However, despite this, all players in France and 55 per cent of those in Romania, consider that support they received from their team’s doctors and therapists to be satisfactory.

The level of support that clubs are able to provide for employees whose health is affected by their work is influenced by the resources provided by the club. In this context, and the physical nature of professional rugby, the fact that only half of French rugby clubs and almost 70 per cent of those in Romania have full-time a physiotherapist is significant. Perhaps even more startling is the absence of insurance to protect players from a career ending injury by players in Romania (22% compared to 100% in France).

Doping

The graph below shows the responses to a number of questions in the survey concerning doping. The vast majority of rugby players surveyed have been tested at some point in their career, and in ten per cent of cases, these tests took place away from the workplace. When asked about the possibility that this could be an invasion of players’ privacy, 100 per cent of players stated that this was not the case. Almost 80 per cent of players consider doping to be a problem for professional rugby.



As the graph below indicates, players feel that doping is an issue for rugby (half of the players in France, and almost 90 per cent in Romania feel this way). In terms of data protection, rugby players in the survey are almost evenly split over their view on their personal data being transferred to countries outside the EU that do not have rigorous provisions for data protection. Plus the majority of players think that anti-doping rules should respect the law. In fact, players in Romania appear less concerned about their personal data being transferred to countries with a lower regard for data protection than the EU and also marginally less concerned about the legal application of anti-doping rules than their counterparts in France.

Graph R11: Responses from rugby players to questions about doping

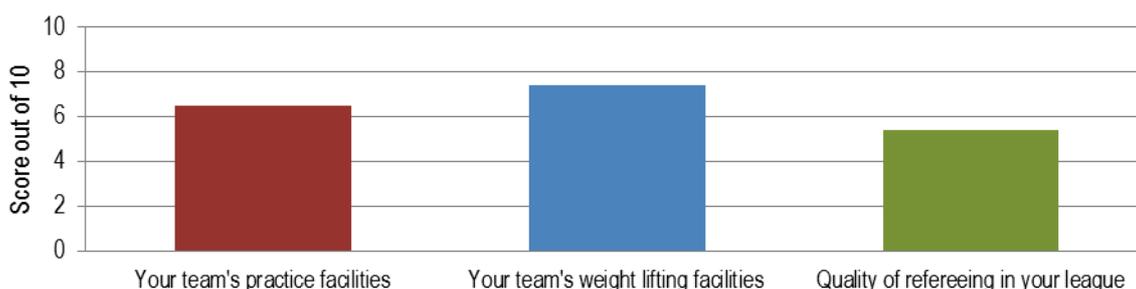


The WADA Athletes Commission provides advice to WADA on anti-doping issues and players were asked if they were able to name one or more of its members – no players could do this.

Conditions

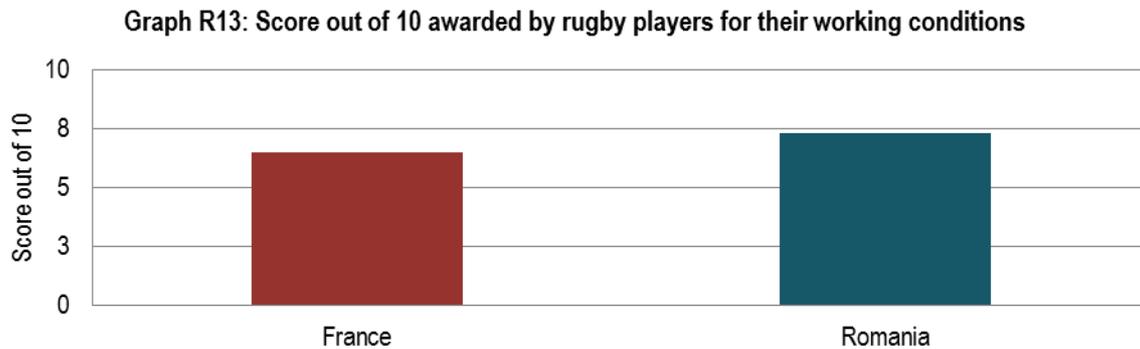
The graph below shows a general satisfaction among players of their team’s practice and weight lifting facilities and the quality of refereeing. On a scale of 1 to 10 (dissatisfied to satisfied) players rated their team’s practice facilities at 6.5; their team’s weight lifting facilities at almost 7.5; and the quality of refereeing at 5.42. However, when the data from the two countries are separated, rugby players in France are less satisfied than their counterparts in Romania about their team’s practice and weight lifting facilities. Rugby players in Romania are almost twice as satisfied, as those in France, with their clubs practice facilities and even more with its weight lifting facilities.

Graph R12: Rating (between 1 and 10) given by all rugby players for

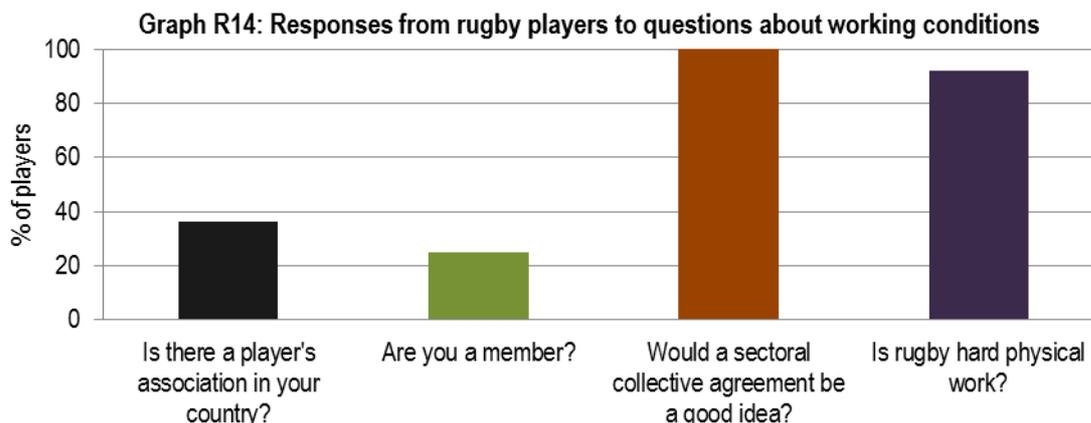


However, when asked about the quality of their league’s refereeing there is less variation and players from both countries awarded a score lower than 6 out of 10, as the graph above shows. In relation to problems with refereeing players cite the lack of experience, objectivity and knowledge of the games’ rules as deficiencies in the competencies of referees and the under-utilisation of technology as areas in which the refereeing of rugby could be improved. On the issue of a collective agreement to regulate issues such as minimum wages, pension provisions, insurance and working time, players from both France and Romania unanimously support the idea.

All players surveyed in Romania and three quarters of those in France consider their sport to be physically demanding and, despite the low number of players who answered this question, there is evidence from the survey responses of players personally experiencing, or witnessing, acts of physical violence at work. Interestingly, of the four sports examined in this study, rugby players awarded the lowest scores out of 10 for their satisfaction of their working conditions, as the graph below shows.



The vast majority of players consider rugby to be hard physical work. Players in Romania stated that there was no players' association in that country, whereas players from France stated that was, and out of these players, 75 per cent are members of their association. As with the responses from players in the other sports in the research, an overwhelming majority of rugby players consider a sectoral collective agreement to regulate minimum wages, working time, pension provisions etc, as a good idea. A quarter of players surveyed stated that they have had to train alone as a disciplinary measure and finally, overall, players awarded a score of just over 7 out of 10 for their working conditions.



Equipment

The divergence, between responses over equipment, requires a separation between the two countries in this section. French teams appear to provide all players with practice gear, yet only just over ten per cent of players in Romania are provided with such equipment. However, the provision of this equipment is qualified and players in France are generally required to wear it during their practice sessions. Of those rugby players who are

provided with practice gear, players in France rate this equipment higher than their counterparts in Romania (a score of 6.75 out of 10, against 1.83 respectively).

Graph R15: Percentage of rugby players, who are

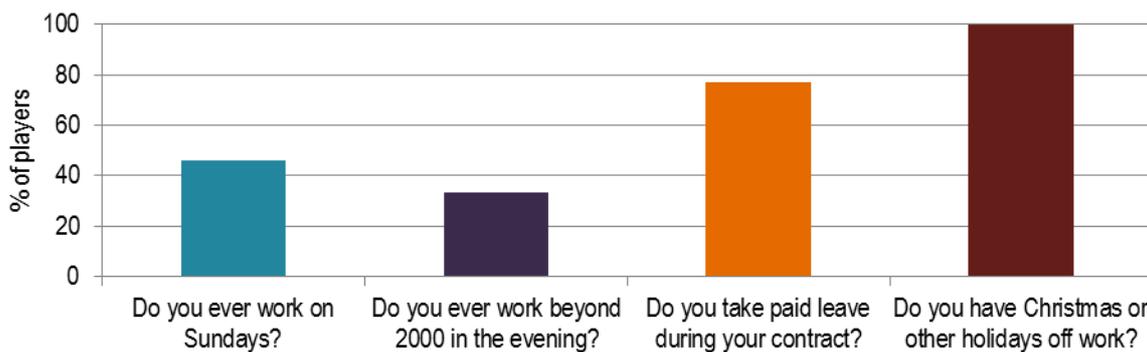


Surprisingly, given the responses to the last question, players in Romania are more likely to be provided with playing shoes (almost 80% of players in Romania are provided with shoes by their club) than their colleagues in France (only 25%).

Scheduling

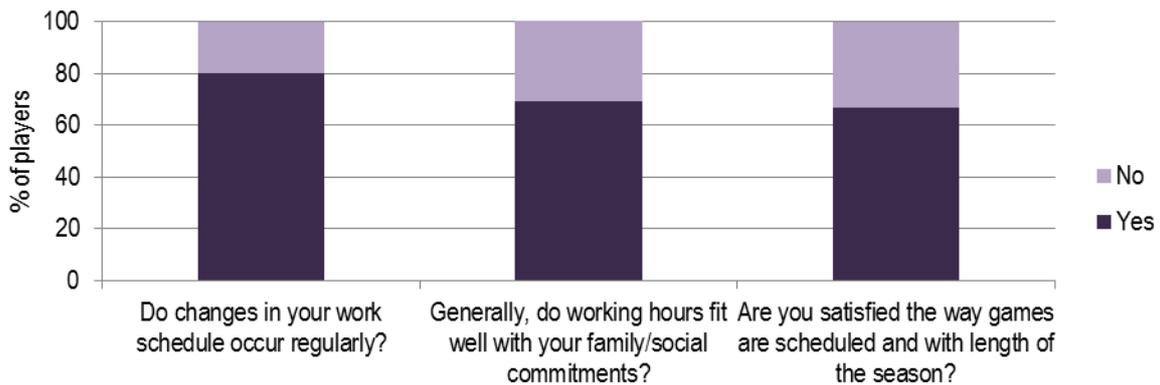
Around half of the players surveyed, in both France and Romania, said they work Sundays, and all the players in France stated that they worked after 2000 in the evening, compared to 11 per cent of players in Romania. All of the players in France and two-thirds of those in Romania take paid leave during their contract, and every respondent stated that they are given Christmas and other public holidays off work.

Graph R16: Responses from rugby players to questions about their working time



In terms of work schedule, the vast majority of players stated that changes take place regularly and while players in Romania tend to be given 1-2 days notice, players in France are more likely to be given one weeks' notice of any changes to their work schedule.

Graph R17: Responses from rugby players to questions about their work schedule



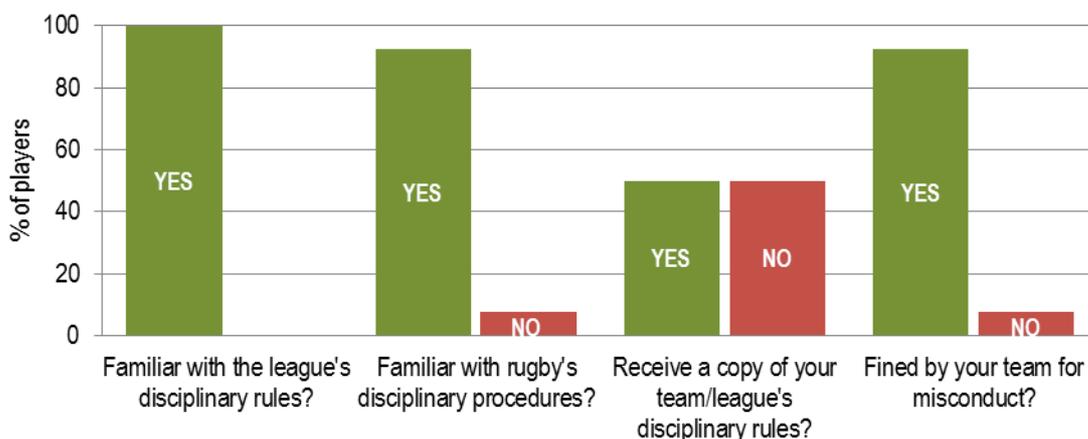
Many players complained that they were given insufficient notice when their work schedule changed, but the majority also consider their working hours fit in well with their family and social commitments (three-quarters of players in France and two-thirds in Spain). In terms of the changes that players consider would improve their working time, players in Romania suggested that they preferred the way the league operated better in the past.

In addition, almost 80 per cent of players take paid leave during their contract and all players are allowed Christmas and other public holidays off work. In terms of work schedule, the vast majority of players stated that changes take place regularly and while players in Romania tend to be given 1-2 days notice, players in France are more likely to be given one weeks' notice of any changes to their work schedule.

Discipline

Rugby players appear to be well aware of their league's disciplinary rules (100%), although players in France appear less so (75% of players said they were familiar with the general disciplinary procedures in rugby, compared with 100% in Romania). Interestingly 75 per cent of players in France and just under 40 per cent in Romania had received a copy of their clubs' or league's disciplinary rules.

Graph R18: Responses by rugby players to questions on disciplinary measures



All players in both countries indicated that their clubs impose financial penalties as a means of enforcing discipline, although the levels of fines varied – in Romania players are fined an average of just under €40, with a minimum of 30 and maximum of 250. Players in France on the other hand, described a tiered system with the level of the fine higher for more severe misconduct (a fine of €25 is imposed on players who receive a yellow card and one of €50 for receiving a red card). In France, two thirds of players stated that they had agreed the level of their fine when they had previously been disciplined, while only 25 per cent had done so in Romania

Handball

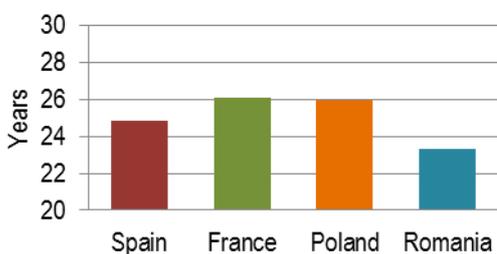
Profile of respondents

While the vast majority of respondents to the survey were male players, a number of surveys were received from female players in Denmark, Norway, Poland and Spain. In addition all of the respondents from Romania were female handball players. In addition players from Germany, Belgium and Sweden participated in the survey but, due to the low volume of responses, this data was not included in the analysis that follows.

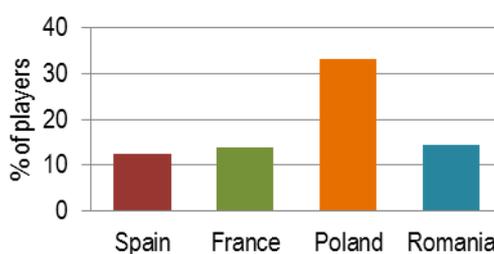
A number of female players, particularly in Spain, made very useful contributions to the research. One interviewee highlighted the fact that female players tend to stay with the same team throughout their career, and the absence of a wage agreement means that players' contracts are individually negotiated. There are 14 teams in the Spanish women's premier league, but at the moment there is only one professional team –Balonmano Bera Bera. Budgetary constraints have resulted in a number of clubs dissolving and this, according to one interviewee, has had a negative impact on the quality of women's handball in Spain. Overall, players' wages are declining gradually and, to compound this, there is no wage agreement for female handball players, so their income is unregulated. This gradual drop in income among female players is largely responsible for the exodus of Spanish players to elsewhere in Europe - the main beneficiaries of his movement of labour are countries such as France, Norway and Denmark. Five years ago there were 60–70 professional players, now there are barely 15–20 and most of those who left were the older, more experienced players.

Subsequently, due the shortage of skilled players this has created, those teams that continue to play in the premier league have needed to recruit non-professional, less able players, despite their apparent unpreparedness for the demands on players at this level of the sport. Furthermore, clubs tend not to employ professional managers and one interviewee suggested that many managers are in fact related to the players themselves. One respondent suggested that Spanish legislation ought to introduce financial incentives, such as tax relief, for clubs in order to develop female handball sport. In addition, our interviewee commented that the media only tend to report on the major tournaments and, as a result of the poor visibility this engenders, so female handball is starved of publicity, and subsequent investment.

Graph H1: Average age of handball respondents

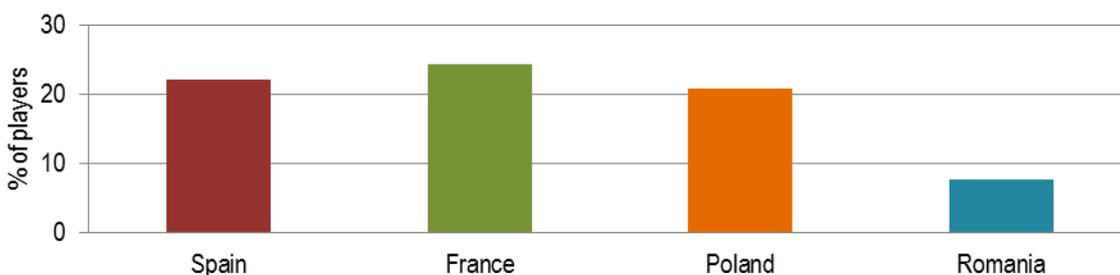


Graph H2: Marital status of handball respondents



All respondents were aged 23 to 26 years of age, play in either Spain, France, Poland or Romania and a number have children, as the graph below shows.

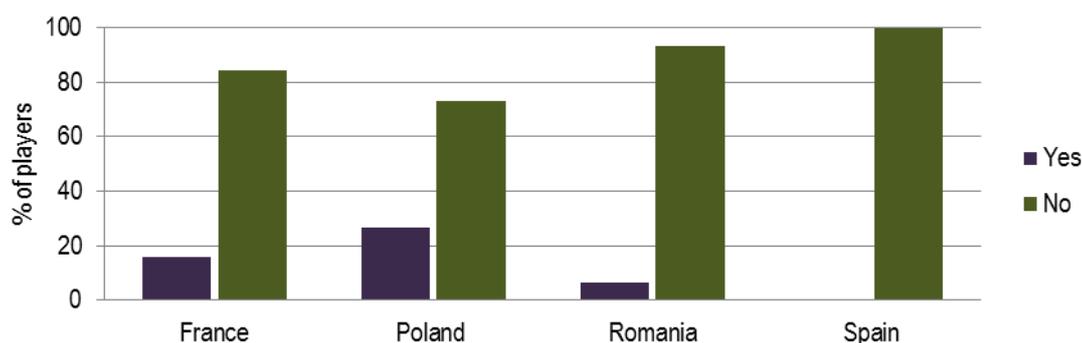
Graph H3: Handball respondents with children



Contractual

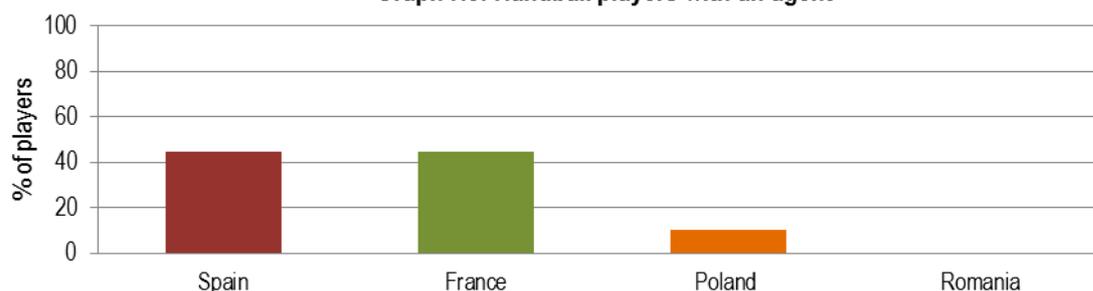
One interviewee mentioned the fact that a number of players in Spain have other jobs that they manage to combine with their professional handball playing, but added that these players are able to balance the demands of playing with the requirements of this secondary employment. However, and as the graph below shows, our findings from the returned surveys do not provide any evidence to support this claim. This could be due the sample of surveys or player concerns about reporting this issue for fear of any impact on their future playing career.

Graph H4: Handball players with additional paid employment



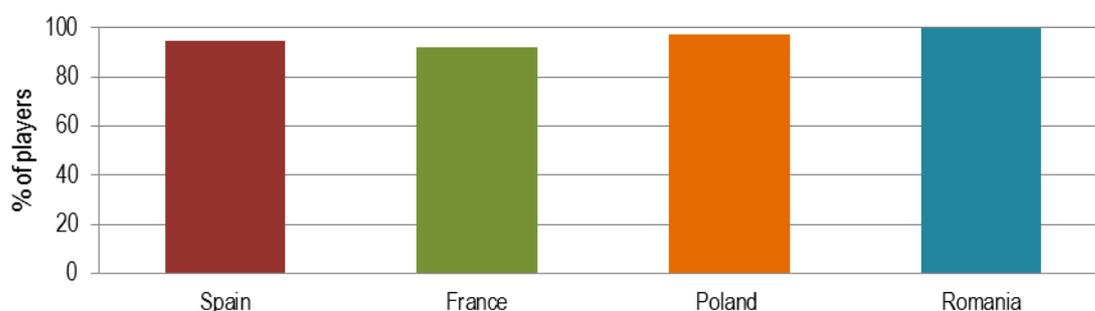
Generally, the players interviewed held a poor opinion of agents generally, and made comments about the unregulated nature of the profession - neither the competencies nor the scope of their responsibilities are formally defined. Players added that their lack of training among referees can result in confusion and misinformation, creating uncertainty in a game.

Graph H5: Handball players with an agent

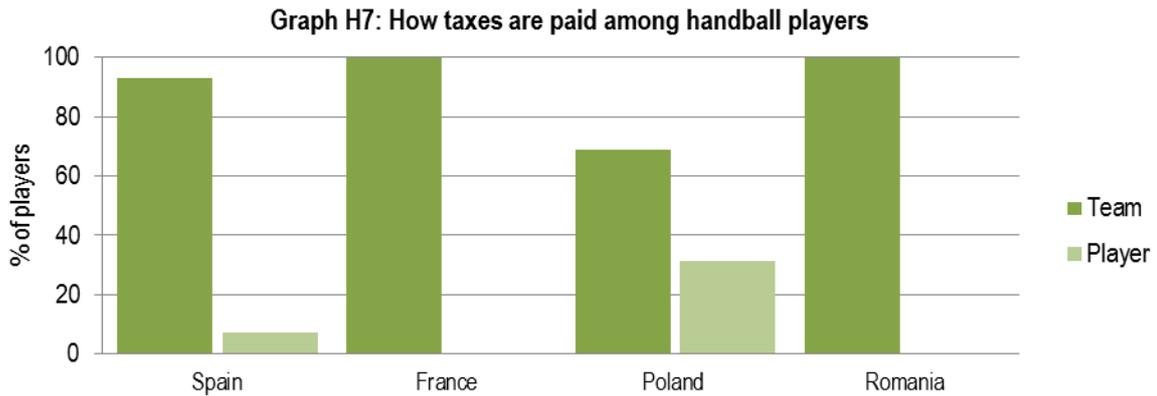


The research also examined how Agents are paid - by the clubs or players, however there were insufficient responses from the countries in this study to permit any further examination.

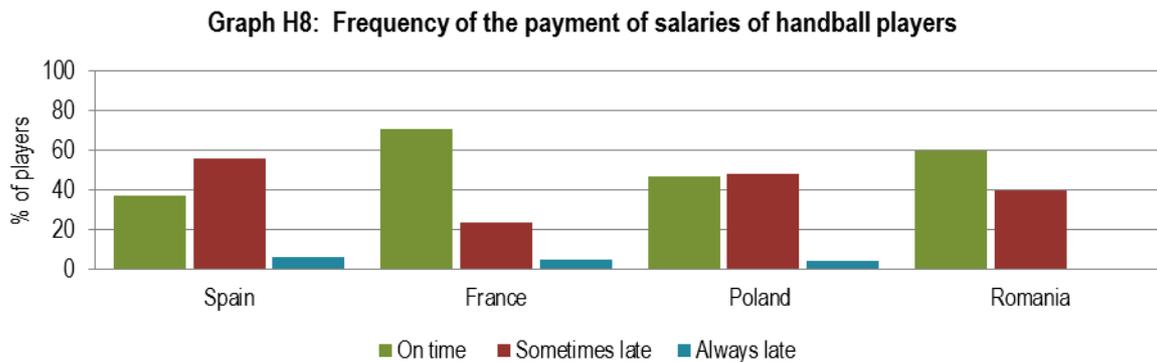
Graph H6: Handball players that have a a contract with their club



The vast majority of handball players have a formal contract with their club. However, there are still players, in Spain, France and Poland that do not have a formal, legally binding contract with a club, which could result in uncertainty as to the actual provisions of their work, compensation and general working conditions.

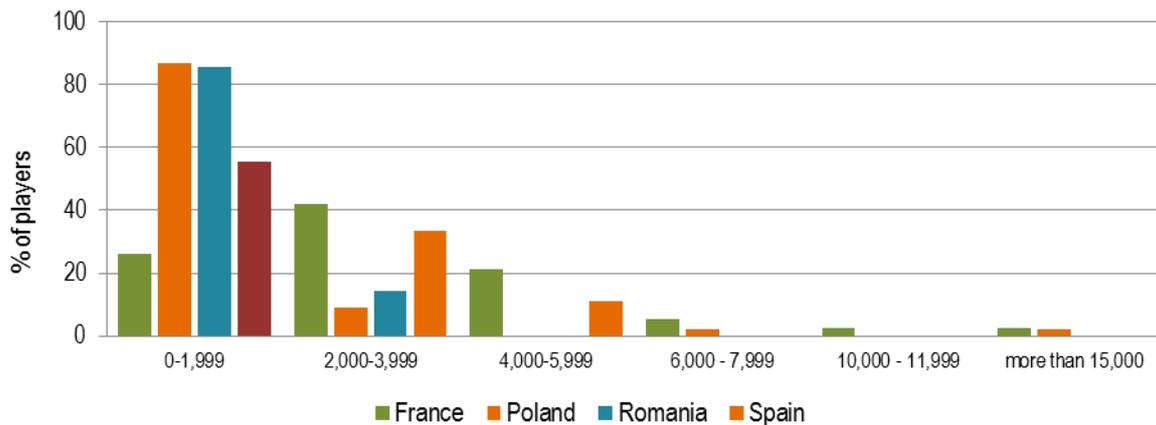


The liability for ensuring income tax is paid to the Government varies according to country. For example, as the graph about demonstrates, a significant proportion of players in Poland are responsible for this. As for player recruitment, some clubs are not paying their players as a result of the recession. But even of those players who are being paid regularly, a significant number state that they are not always paid on time.



Wage levels are uneven and depend on which club the players belong to, their bargaining power and the degree to which the sport is commercialised and generates ticket sales, media income and income from other sources. In Spain, the current average gross annual salary ranges from €20 000 to €40 000, with the highest wages paid to FC Barcelona and BM Atlético de Madrid players. In previous years, one interviewee informed, annual earnings were as high as €130 000.

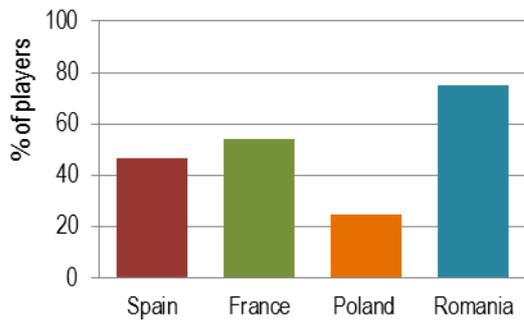
Graph H9: Monthly salaries of handball players (Euros)



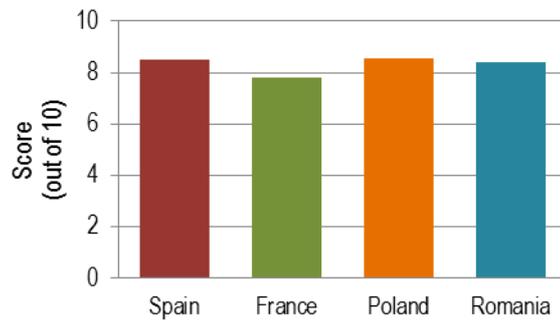
During the research we heard anecdotal evidence that, occasionally, female players in Spain receive other income, in addition to their contractual wages that are not covered by legislation and are often undeclared. In Spain, and as a result of the recession, the clubs' budgets have been squeezed and this has been reflected in the players' wages. Presently, the only clubs that have maintained their wages at pre-recession levels are FC Barcelona and BM Atlético de Madrid, while the salaries in the remaining clubs have fallen to as little as one thousand Euros per month.

According to unofficial data, Polish handball players earn anything from EUR 500 to 2500 a month. The monthly salary of a female handball player employed by a moderate club without any financial problems is EUR 550. The leading female player of the Superliga team in the TOP5 earns EUR 1250 a month. The amount is comprised of a base salary plus an add-on from the sponsor, who chose that particular player to promote its brand. The players in the amateur 1st league (2nd tier) in the clubs financed by local governments obtain fellowships of EUR 125 – 725 a month. Female players in the 2nd league (the lowest tier) receive no remuneration at all and play just for satisfaction. The former talented coach of the national team earned EUR 6,250 a month. The lowest monthly salary bracket in Vive Kielce (2nd rank in the male Superliga) is EUR 3,750 – 5,000, while the best players (playing for their respective national teams) get EUR 15,000 a month. In comparison, in 2010 two talented Polish handball players from the national team employed by German clubs managed to earn EUR 25,000 a month.

Graph H10: Handball players provided with accommodation



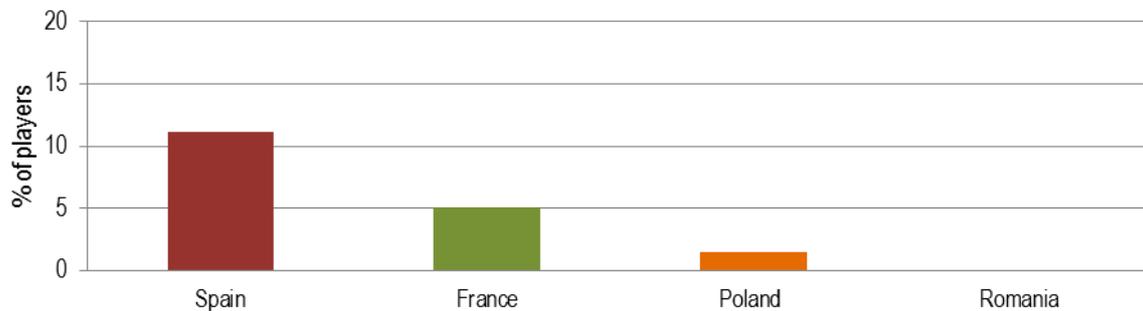
Graph H11: Rate given for accommodation by handball players



There are wide variations between countries in relation to the provision of accommodation as part of a players', as shown by the graph above, with players in Romania more likely to receive this as part of their remuneration package than in France, Poland or Spain. As far as the quality of accommodation, respondents from the four countries with a representative sample all gave a score above 7, suggesting their satisfaction with the accommodation.

A relatively low number of players have a second contract for their image rights, a percentage similar to that of basketball players in 2008.

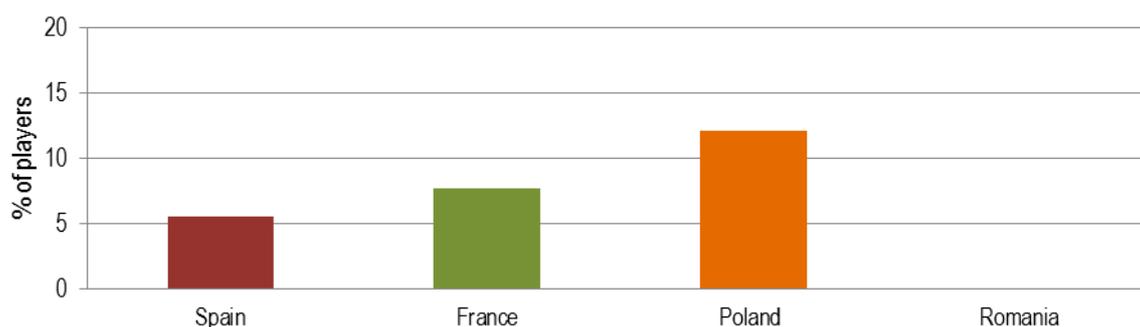
Graph H12: Handball players with a separate contract for their image rights



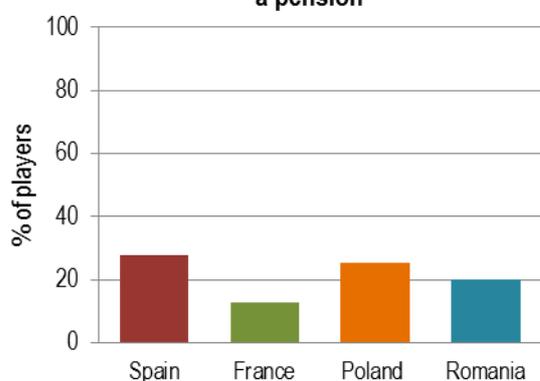
There are marked differences between countries in relation to image rights as shown above, and although players from Romania provided, what could be considered a representative sample of survey returns, none have a contract for their image rights. Although less than 12 per cent of players in Spain have such a contract, this is the highest of the countries surveyed. Incidentally, just as handball players are more likely to negotiate an additional contract for their image rights, the case is identical among basketball players too, although fewer handball players have such a contract compared to their contemporaries in basketball.

An insufficient number of surveys were returned by players in Germany and Belgium to permit a comparison with basketball players in relation to the provision of a car as part of their compensation package. As the graph below shows, players in Poland are more likely to benefit from the use of a car as part of their contract with their club.

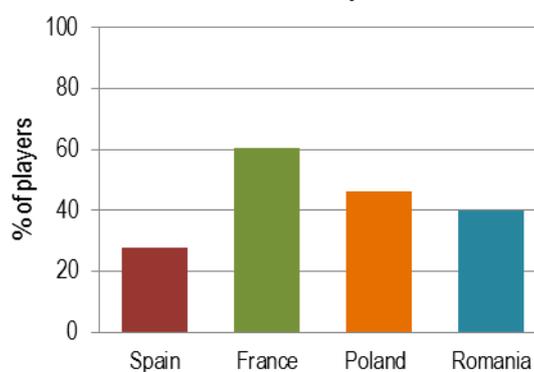
Graph H13: Handball players who receive a car as part of their compensation package



Graph H14: Handball players with a pension



Graph H15: Handball players who contribute to their pension



In terms of their compensation package, large variations exist between countries when specific elements of their benefits are compared. For instance, no players who completed a survey have the use of a car in Romania, but almost 50 per cent of players in Spain do. As for pensions, and players' contributions, players in Spain appear to have a greater opportunity than elsewhere to contribute to a pension, and yet players there are the least likely to do so.

Education

Female players in Spain combine work with study, either in the form of professional training or university programmes. In the absence of training provided by the clubs, any training undertaken tends to be done so through the determination of the individual. However the Spanish government does provide a professional orientation programme, managed under the auspices of the Oficina del Deportista² and this reports to Spain's Higher Sports Council.

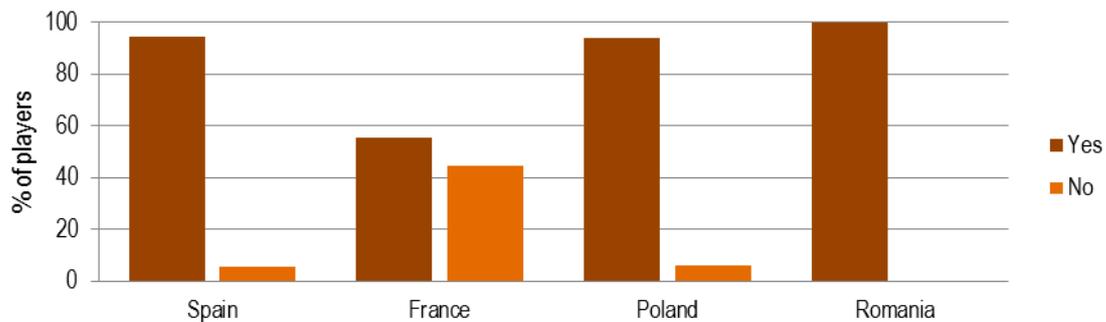
Many male handball players in Spain are also students, with most attending university and a number of arrangements exist in Spain with various universities for postgraduate studies. Furthermore, the players'

² [Sports persons' agency]

association has an accord with the Adecco Foundation to offer players help with job searching and counselling when they retire from professional sport, and this agreement also provides support with training.

One interviewee described the changes to the sport over the past two decades, and indicated that male players have extended their professional careers. According to the source, in the 1990s the typical career of a professional handball player lasted 15 years, while today it is not uncommon for a player to maintain a professional career spanning 20 years. Throughout their career they may play for up to five or six clubs and such changes are not always viewed as a positive move for the players, as they may be forced to relocate. According to the interviewee, an immediate consequence of such a transition is felt by the partners of players who are unable commit to permanent employment, which means that the players' wages become the families' main source of income.

Graph H16: Handball players that were once a student and a professional player at the same time



A very high number of players had previously studied while playing professionally, as the graph above shows. In fact, for handball players it does appear to be the rule rather than the exception, and the share of players pursuing both activities in this sport is higher than in any of the others in this research.

Reflecting a similar pattern to players of basketball, professional handball players generally tend to possess a good standard of education, although variations across countries do exist.

Graph H17: Levels of education among handball players

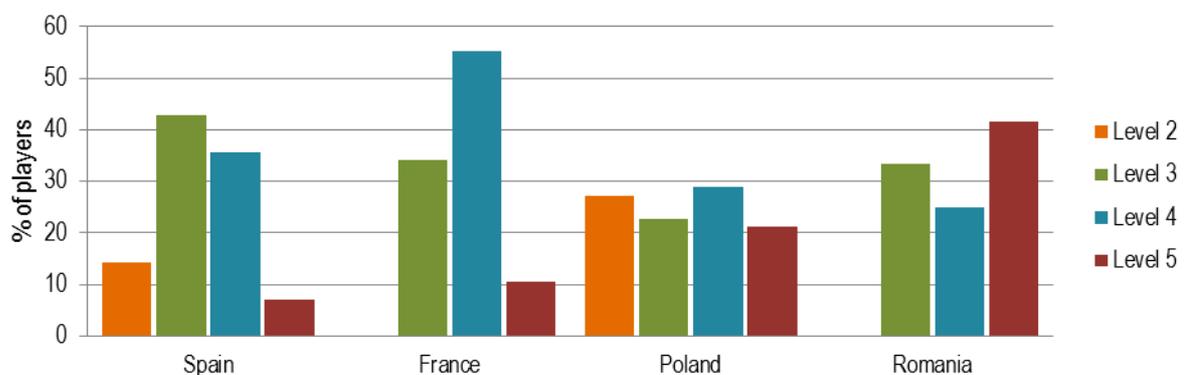
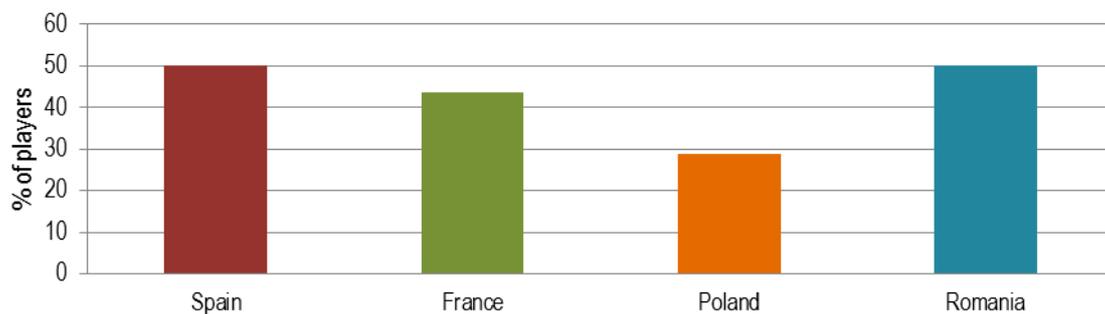


Table H1: % of handball players with specific education levels				
	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Spain	14.29	42.86	35.71	7.14
France	-	34.21	55.26	10.53
Poland	27.27	22.73	28.79	21.21
Romania	-	33.33	25	41.67

One possible explanation for the relatively high numbers of players that have achieved a Level 4 or 5 qualification is that players have studied for technical occupational related qualifications while playing, justification for which is provided by the high numbers of players who have pursued studies while employed as a professional player.

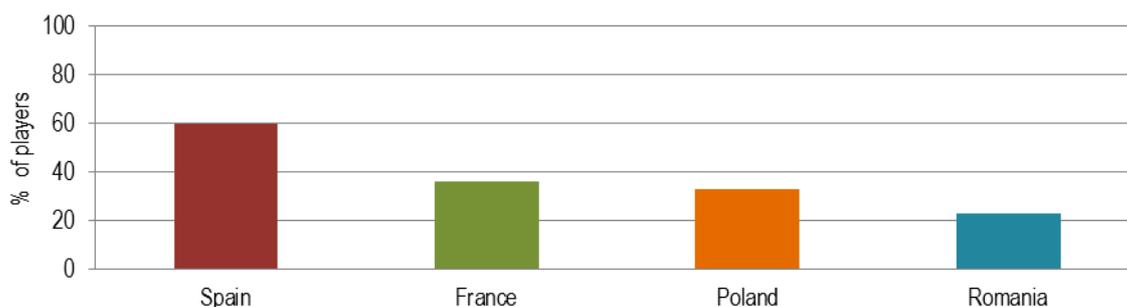
An important determining factor in the employability of professional players who have reached the end of their playing career is the extent to which they engage with further study as they near retirement from sport. So the awareness among players of the available training opportunities is crucial, highlighting the unfortunately low number of players who are aware of these opportunities, as the graph below shows.

Graph H18: Handball players who are aware of possible education programmes after their career in sport



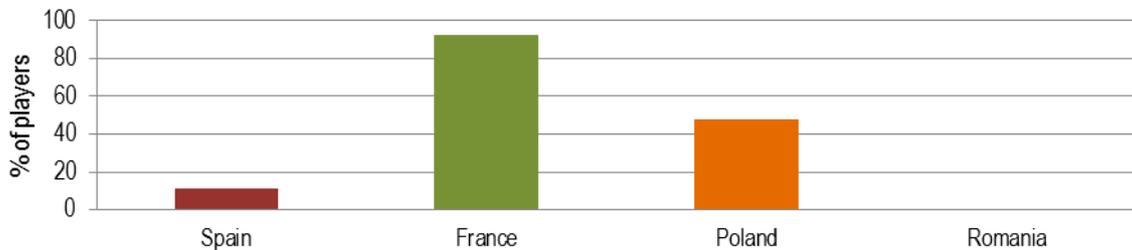
Of course, central to the ability of players wishing to take advantage of new opportunities is the willingness of their employer to permit them engage in such training programme. So the graph below, highlighting the relatively few clubs in Romania, Poland, France and Spain that do allow their players to take up other forms of training is of concern.

Graph H19: Percentage of handball players whose employer allowed them to participate in non-work related training



While the record for clubs permitting players to take up non-work related training is worryingly poor, the number of clubs that financially support this training is also of concern in Poland, Spain and Romania.

Graph H20: Handball players whose employer paid for non-work related training

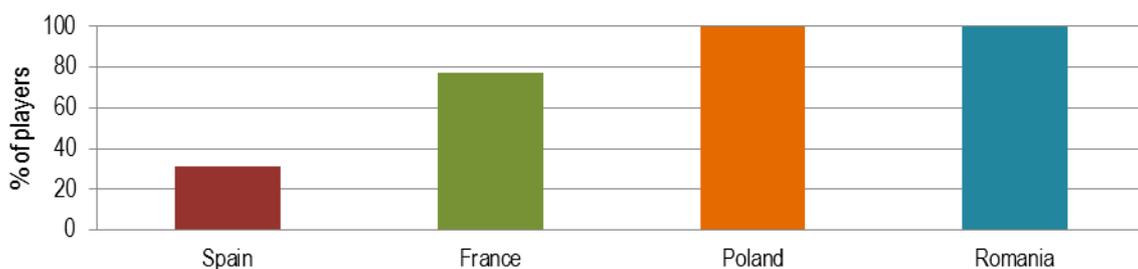


Health and Safety

The level of medical cover for in Spain depends on individual clubs and one respondent's perception of the quality of this cover was poor. No provision is made for incapacity through injury and most of the clubs do not employ a doctor or physiotherapist to be in attendance throughout matches or training sessions. Despite the risks associated with professional handball, the players themselves do not consider the work stressful.

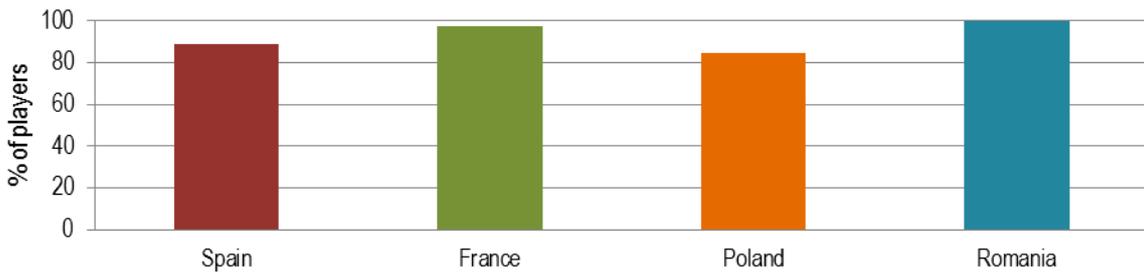
Players' health and safety are dealt directly by each club and the players' association considers that the medical services offered to players could be improved, and commented that, in their view, often clubs fail to invest in the most appropriate insurance policies, citing budgetary constraints as a barrier. Nonetheless, male handball teams in Spain have at least one physiotherapist at every training session and doctors and physiotherapists are usually in attendance during ASOBAL League matches.

Graph H21: Handball players who consider their health or safety to be at risk due to their work



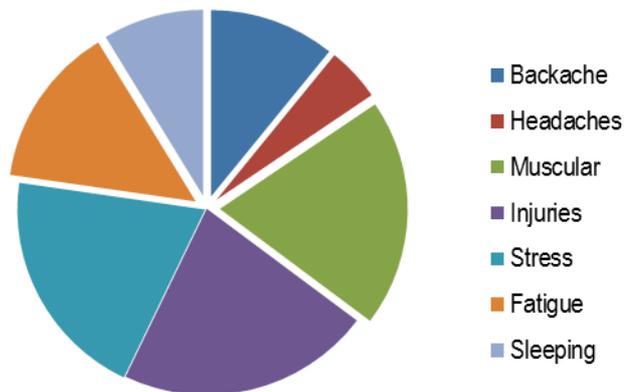
The relatively high number of players who consider that their profession endangers their health and safety, is demonstrated by the graph above. These figures positively correspond to the graphs on the following pages relating to injury and the amount of time injured players are unable to play. While it may appear obvious that such a physically demanding occupation does pose a higher than average risk to the post-holder's health, the number of days lost through injury, as shown by the graphs below, is remarkably high in a certain countries, posing serious questions about how employers in this sport can do more to safeguard their employees' wellbeing.

Graph H22: Handball players who stated that they have adequate access to therapeutic support



The majority of players surveyed stated that they were satisfied with the level of therapeutic support they receive by their club, and in all of the four countries in the above graph the proportion of players expressing such a view exceeds 80 per cent in every case.

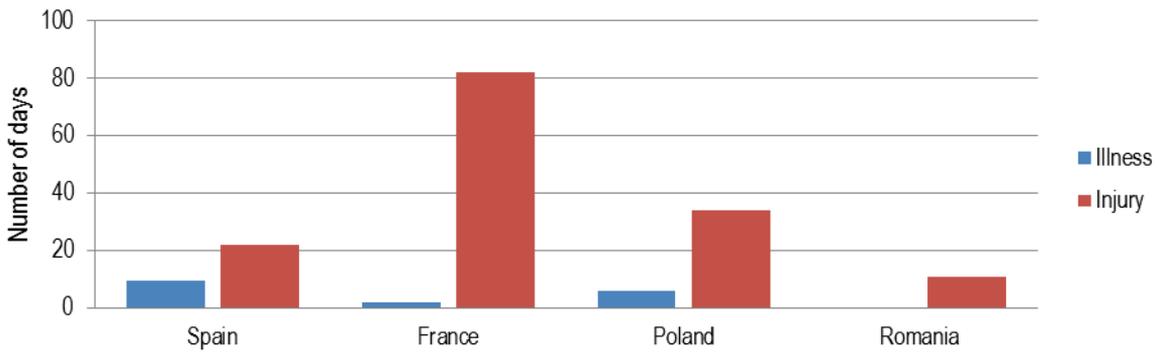
Chart H1: Typical health issues experienced by professional handball players



Players stated a large variety of ailments that they have experienced throughout their playing career and the extent of these is highlighted by the diagram above. According to the survey findings, backache, muscular problems, injuries and stress pose the biggest threats to handball players.

Of the 49 responses from handball players in France alone, a total of 1810 days were lost to injury in a 12 month period, followed with players in Poland who totalled 1756 days off from among 68 responses. In total, the respondents to the survey were unable to work due to injury for 4,007 days in the past 12 months – an astonishing average of 48.27 days off work due to a work-related injury from the 83 respondents who stated they had been injured in the previous 12 months. So of the 168 response we received by handball players, over 49 per cent had been off work due to injury in the previous 12 months.

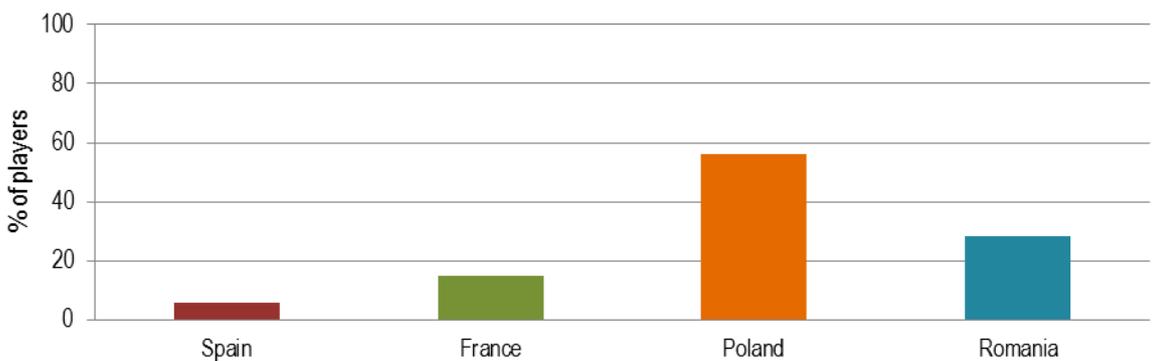
Graph H23: Average number of days handball players were absent from work due to illness or injury from among players who had an suffered from an illness or injury



In terms of player satisfaction of the support they received from their team’s doctors and therapists, players across all countries surveyed overwhelmingly responded positively – almost 90 percent of players in France, three quarters of those in Romania and over 90 per cent of players in Spain stated they were satisfied with the support offered by their team.

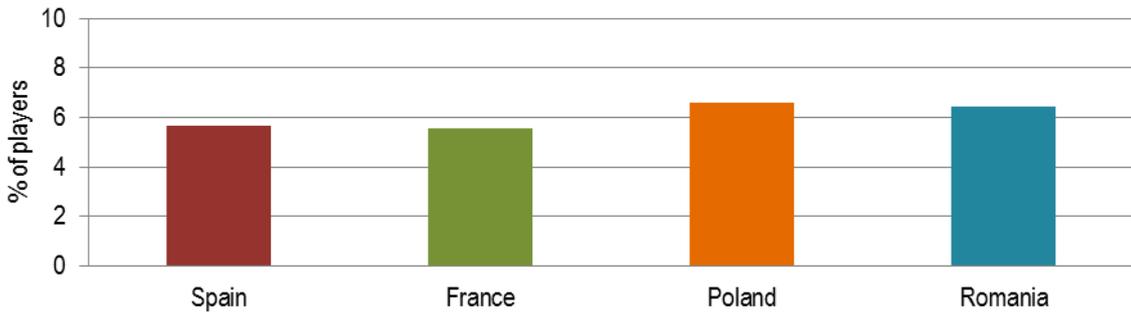
Interestingly, despite the high risk of injury for handball players, relatively few have an insurance policy to protect their income should they be unable to play as a result of injury. Players in Poland (56.06%) were the most likely to have an insurance policy for this event, followed by Romania (28.54%). Players in Spain were the least likely to have such cover (5.88%) with players in France next (15%).

Graph H24: Handball players with an insurance policy in the event of suffering a career ending injury



Players were asked to rate (on a scale of 1-10), the degree of stress they found their profession. The average rating was almost six, with large fluctuations between player, in the same countries. For example, in all four countries examined, scores awarded by players for the degree of stress experienced varied between the two extremes. In France for instance, a number of players gave a score of 8 while others gave 3.

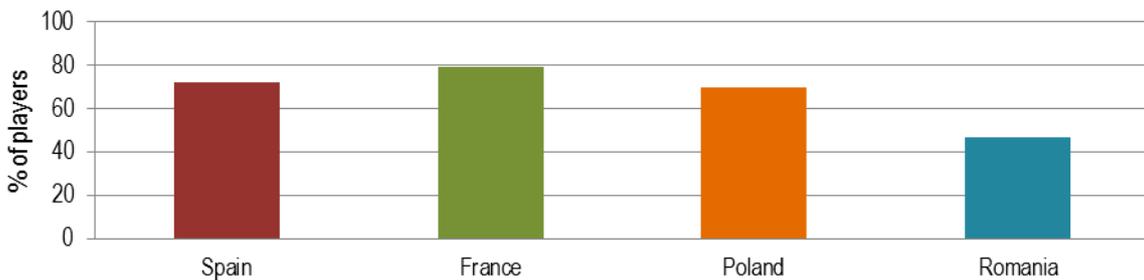
**Graph H25: How stressful is playing professional handball?
(on scale 1 to 10)?**



Doping

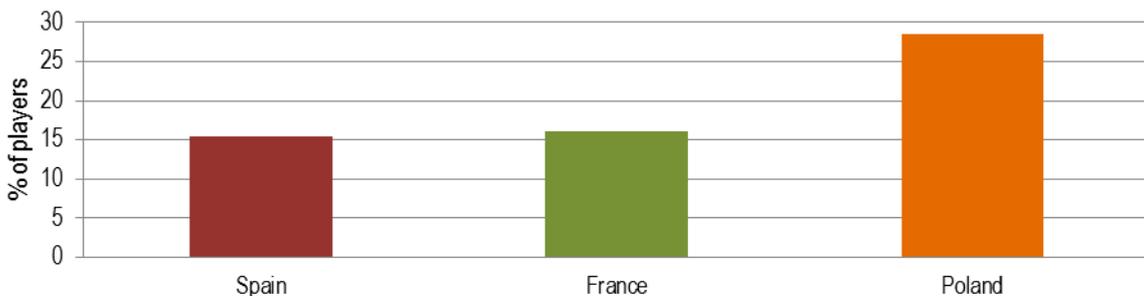
Almost all the teams in the Premier League in Spain conduct one or two doping checks every year, and they generally take the form of urine testing. Players do understand the need for doping checks and are satisfied with the way they are conducted. However, Spain has specific anti-doping legislation and each sports federation has its own rules, based on the legislation. In RFEB's case (Real Federación Española de Balonmano)³, this issue is left to each individual club to deal with.

**Graph H26: Handball players that have been tested
for Doping during their career**



Interestingly, players in France appear almost twice as likely to be tested than are players in Romania. The results from players in Germany appear to suggest that more tests are in fact carried out in that country than elsewhere in Europe. However due to the small sample of returned surveys, it is impossible to categorically state this.

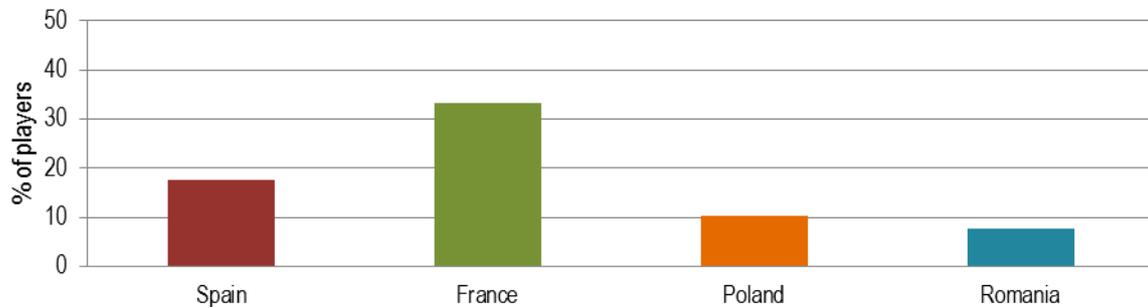
Graph H27: Percentage of handball players that have been tested away from work



³ Royal Spanish Handball Federation

Almost all respondents to the survey have been tested at some point in their careers, and a significant number of these tests have been carried out outside of their workplace – and a number of players stated that tests are carried out at the home.

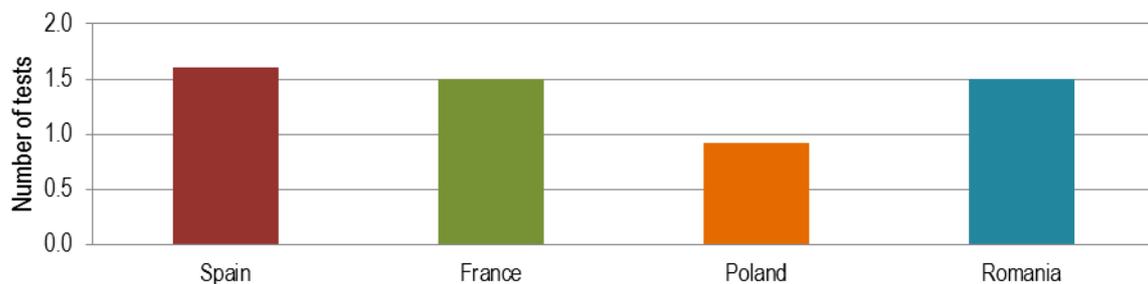
Graph H28: Handball players that think this an invasion of their privacy



Generally, players do not, on the whole, consider being tested outside of their workplace as an invasion of their privacy. However, the sample who responded to this question also included many players who had not actually experienced being tested away from their workplace. Once the answers from this group of players are removed from the analysis, the data reveals a different story. Although the sample for players who have been tested away from their workplace is relatively small, it is clear from the data that the perception of players on the question of their privacy is influenced heavily by their experiences and of those players who have been tested away from their workplace a large proportion consider this approach to invade their privacy.

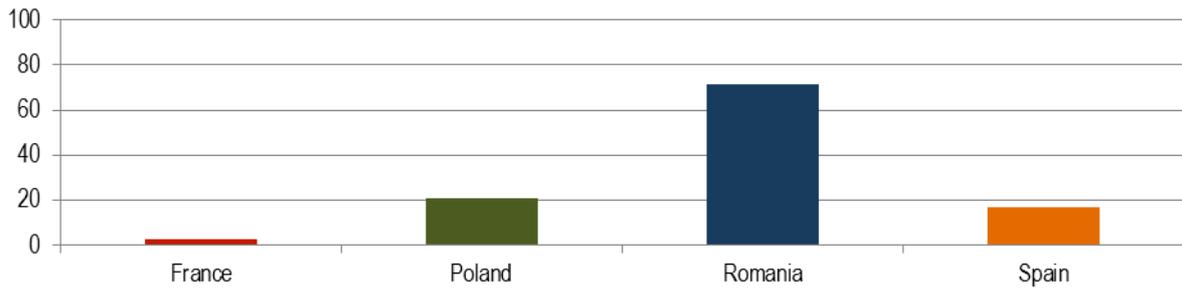
The results from players in Germany and France, when the data is filtered in this way, show that three fifths of players in France and two-thirds of those in Germany feel that testing for doping outside of the workplace to constitute an invasion of their privacy. Unfortunately players from the other countries examined were either not tested away from their workplace or left the question unanswered.

Graph H29: The number of times, on average, handball players have been tested in the past 12 months



In terms of the extent to which players consider doping to be an issue in handball, players in Romania consider this an issue than players elsewhere.

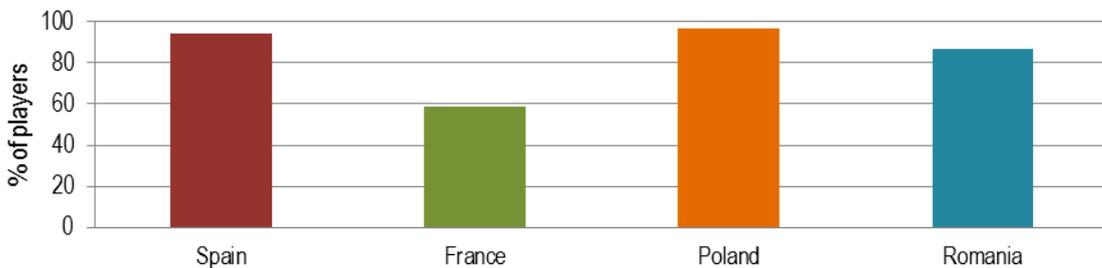
Graph H30: Handball players who consider Doping to be an issue in their sport



The Spanish government has recently approved a new Anti-Doping bill that adopts the requirements of WADA. The future law strengthens the economic sanctions for those found guilty but also affords greater protection for the fundamental rights and dignity of the players.

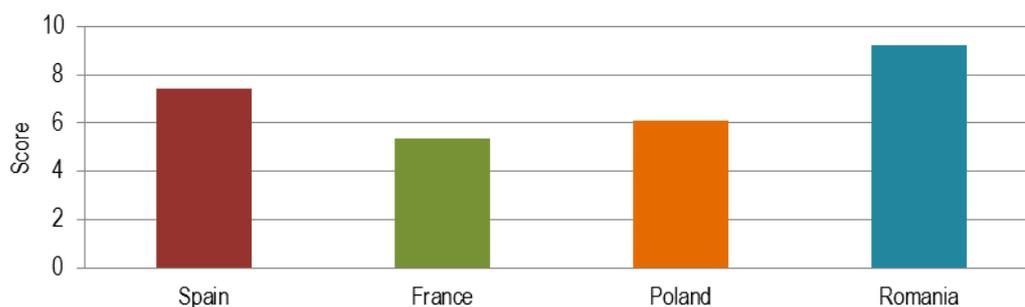
Conditions

Graph H31: Percentage of handball players who consider their sport to be physically hard work



The players' association in Spain suggests that clubs' facilities have been refurbished in recent years, but still further improvement is needed. Roughly 180 members out of the 240 or so professional players in Spain are members of the association. There are occasional problems with collecting membership fees – as players tend to fall behind on their payments. The Association's existence is perceived as a necessity, since the Association occasionally acts as mediator between the players and the club. As the graphs below show, training facilities are considered adequate by the players, although in isolated cases, one interviewee commented, the courts are often in a poor condition.

Graph H32: Rating by handball players of their team's weight lifting facilities
(1=unsatisfied 10=satisfied)



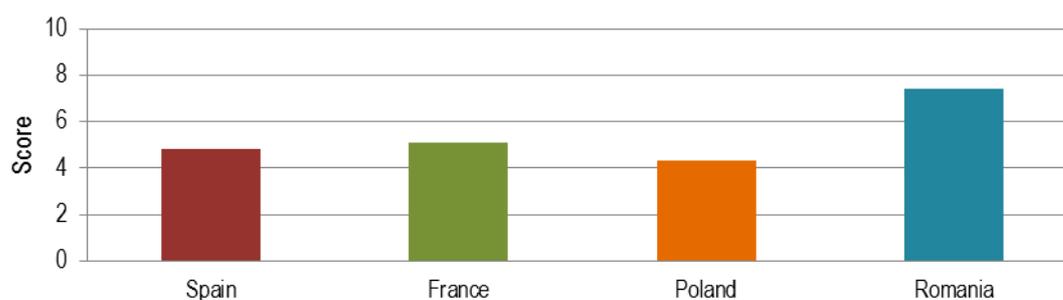
Players were asked whether or not there was a Players' Association in the country in which they play, and the results were perhaps a little surprising. Players in France and Spain were very aware of their association (90% and 89% of players respectively were aware of the existence of a Player's Association). However, the awareness of such an association was low in Romania (9%) and only a little better in Poland (19%).

In every country surveyed, with the exception of Poland (92%) and France (95), there was 100 percent support for the creation of a sector wide agreement setting minimum standards for wages, pensions, insurance and working hours.

The questions regarding bullying and harassment were not completed very well by respondents and so the results for most of the countries surveyed are not included in this report. However, the most common forms of this type of abuse are threats of physical violence and unwanted sexual attention. Acts of physical violence and age discrimination were closely followed by bullying, discrimination due to ethnicity and lastly, sexual discrimination. Respondents were largely consensual on their responses to questions asking if any of these types of behaviour had occurred in their workplace, with around 15 percent of players in France, and just over 10 percent of players in Poland stating they had witnessed such events.

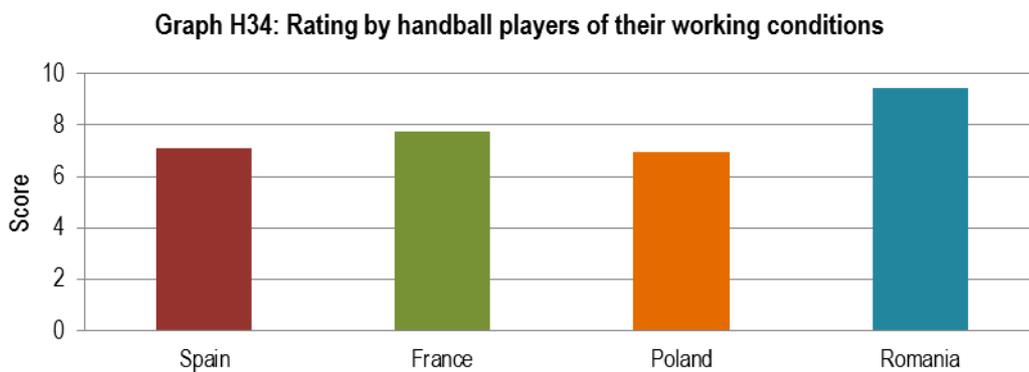
The quality of refereeing must be seen as a priority by the league, according to a number of sources interviewed, and the graph below demonstrates these sentiments are widespread.

Graph H33: Handball players' rating of their league's refereeing
(1=unsatisfied 10=satisfied)



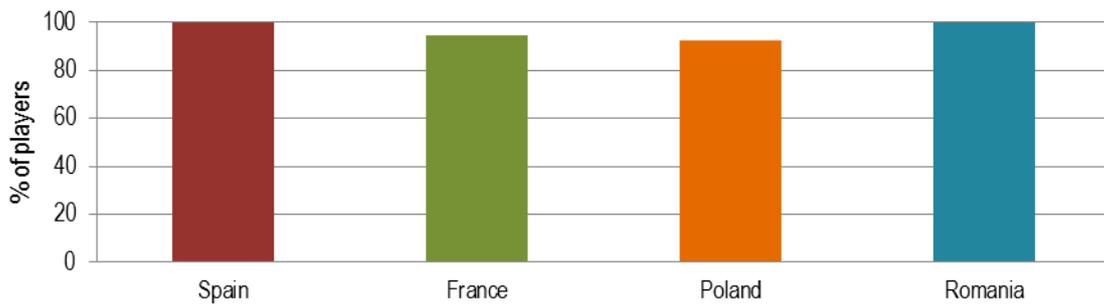
We asked players to highlight the areas in which they feel the quality of refereeing could be improved. A number of respondents from France stated their desire for referees to receive more training and the apparent favouritism shown by referees to the major clubs. Overall, these respondents highlighted communication skills as the area in which referees must improve. Players in Poland referred to the quality of the skills and knowledge of referees and their apparent bias and their lack of in depth knowledge of the rules of the game. The comments from players in Spain focused on their social skills, with some respondents referring to the “arrogance” of referees and their negative and ill-mannered behaviour towards the players themselves. The table below provides a snapshot of scores for all three questions, and again highlights the low regard for the quality of refereeing in the sport.

	Practice	Weights	Refereeing
Spain	8.61	7.44	4.83
France	7.26	5.33	5.10
Poland	6.62	6.08	4.33
Romania	9.93	9.20	7.43
Average	8.11	7.01	5.42



Overall, it appears that handball players in most of the clubs we surveyed are satisfied with their working conditions. An interviewee from the sport in Spain told of their frustration that women’s handball still remains an amateur sport there, and female players do not enjoy the same rights as their male counterparts.

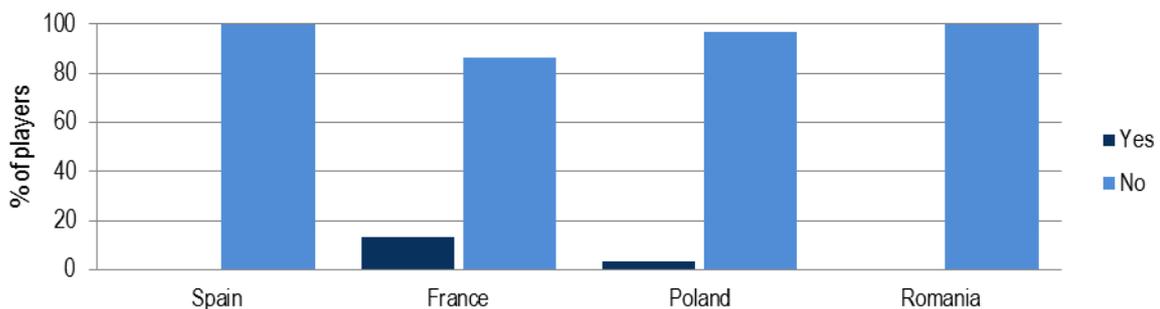
Graph H35: Percentage of handball players who support the creation of a sectoral collective agreement



As with the other sports studied in the research, the overwhelming majority of handball players in the survey support the creation of a sectoral agreement to regulate working conditions such as setting a minimum wage, pension provisions and working time, as the graph above shows.

Training alone appears to be rarely used by handball clubs as a means to discipline players, as the graph below indicates. Players in France were the largest group of individuals that have been made to train alone (13.5%).

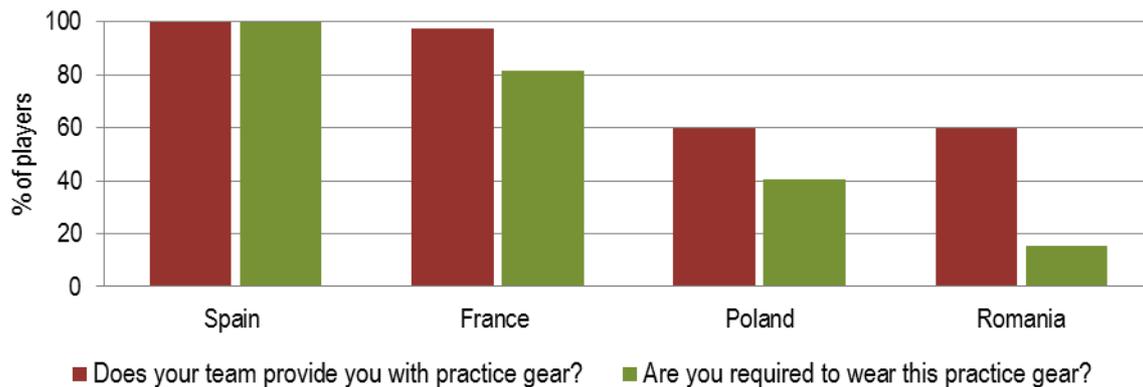
Graph H36: Handball players' that have trained aloned as a discipline measure



Equipment

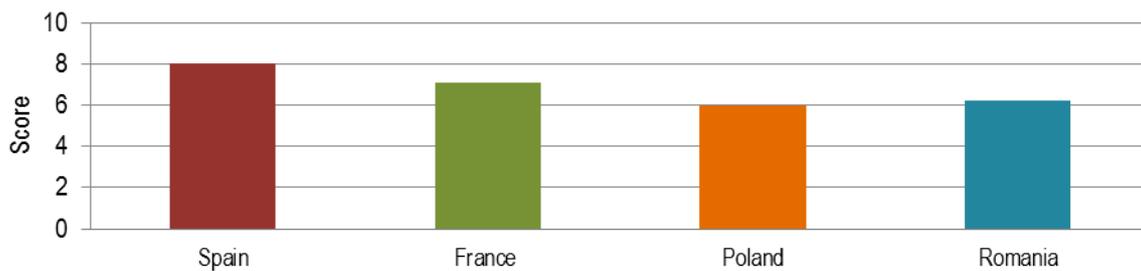
Teams in Spain, France and Germany tend to provide players with practice gear, while elsewhere it is less common. In addition, where teams do provide practice gear, players are often, but not exclusively, required to wear this during practice sessions. On the issue of equipment, there does appear to be a relationship between geographical location of the club and the gear provided to players.

Graph H37: Handball players who agreed with the statements below



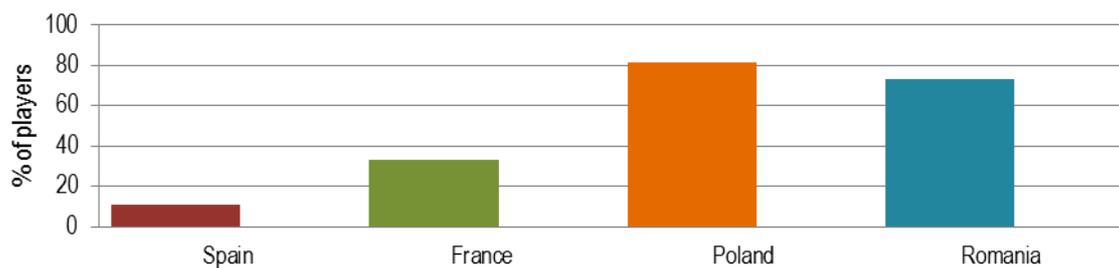
There seems to be a general satisfaction among players in terms of their opinion of their clubs' practice gear and equipment, and this is more so in Germany, Spain and France, but again there appears to be a relationship with the quality of gear provided by clubs and their geographical location – simply, clubs in western European states provide gear of a higher quality than those clubs further east..

Graph H38: Handball players' rating for the practice gear and equipment of their team (1=unsatisfied 10=satisfied)



The percentage of players provided with shoes for handball, given the responses to the previous answers, was surprising among players from Spain, France and Germany.

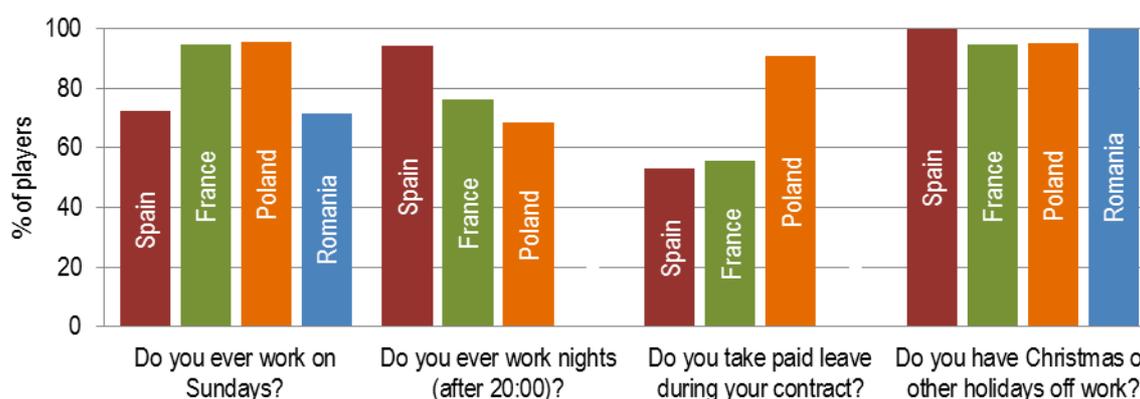
Graph H39: Handball players provided with shoes by their team



Scheduling

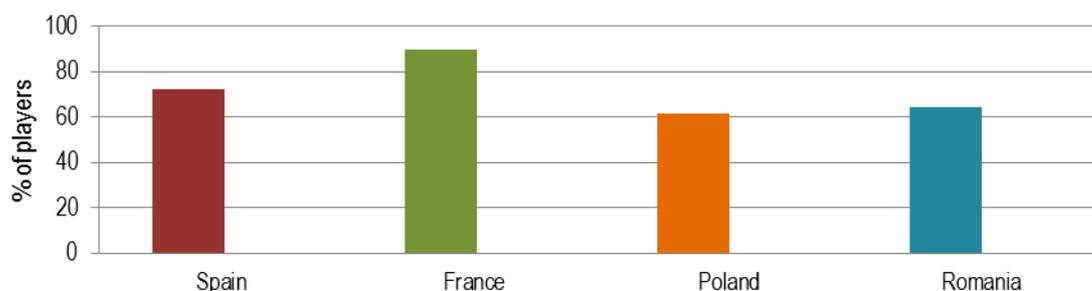
The majority of handball players work on Sunday and after 2000 in the evening.

Graph H40: Handball players who replied YES to the questions below



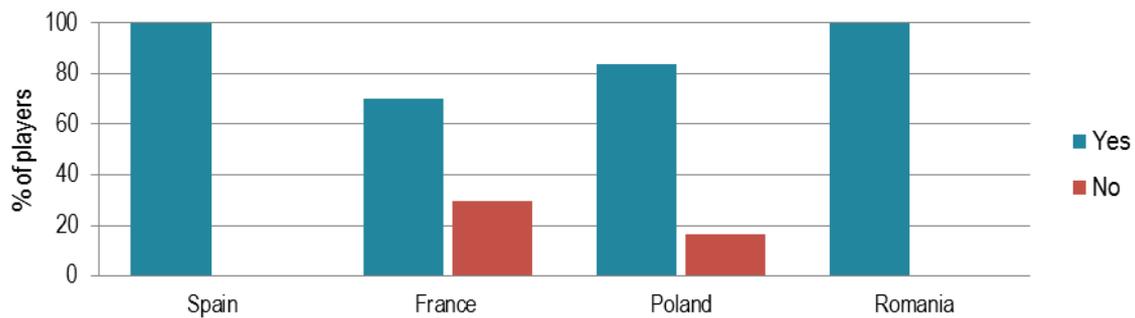
This propensity for Sunday work is also reflected in players working into the evenings, as shown by the graph above. These findings show clearly the extent of anti social working that professional handball players endure. As far as paid leave is concerned, there are variations across the countries studied. Players in Poland are highly likely to take paid leave during their contract, while just over 50 per cent of players in Spain do so and in Romania no players said that they do so. The vast majority of handball players are given Christmas and other public holidays off work, which is an improvement on the figures provided by the EU Athletes 2008 study. While the general figures for Sunday work are similar to those in the previous study, the data from the research provides evidence of the increased prevalence of evening work in Spain and France.

Graph H41: Handball players whose work schedule is changed regularly



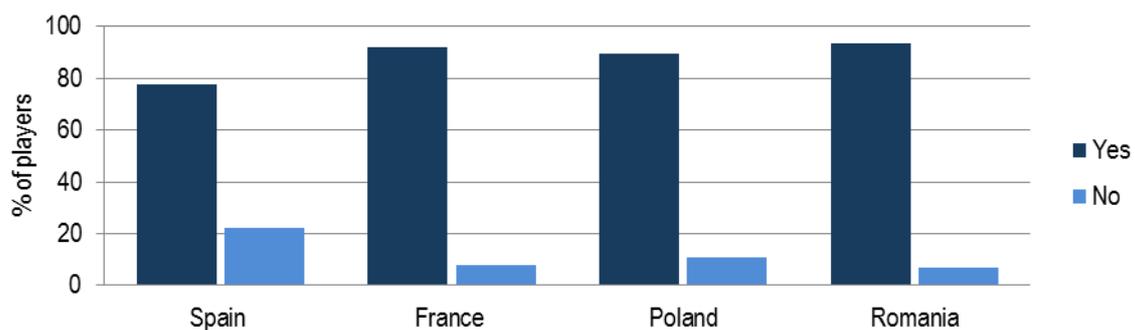
In addition to working anti-social hours, handball players are also subject to changes to their work schedule and a number expressed their frustration with the often short notice periods provided by their employer for doing so. In Spain, players are often given only a couple of hours' notice of changes to their schedule, and this is similar elsewhere - players in France are often told about changes three hours ahead, while one respondent stated that they are provided with a 30 day notice period for schedule changes.

Graph H42: Handball player responses to "Do your working hours fit well with your family or social commitments?"



Although many players are satisfied with the balance between work and their family or social commitments, there are a significant number in France (almost a third of handball players) and Poland (almost a fifth) who do not share this view..

Graph H43: Handball player responses to "Are you satisfied with the way games are scheduled and with the length of the season?"



Finally, as the graph above demonstrates, players are generally satisfied with the way their games are scheduled. However, as with players' views on their work/life balance, a significant number of players across the countries studies do not feel this way. Over 20 per cent of handball players in Spain, and a smaller portion of players in France, Poland and Romania are not satisfied with the way games are scheduled and with the length of the season. .

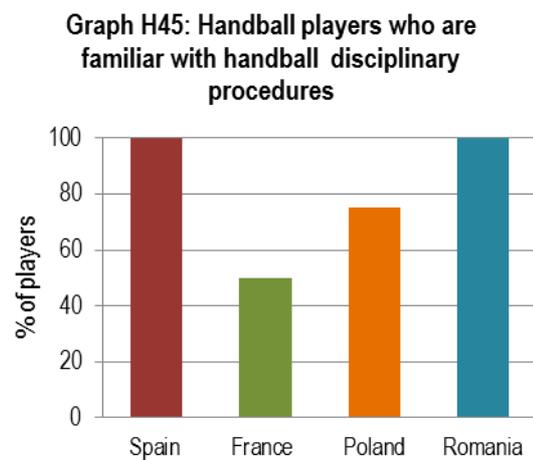
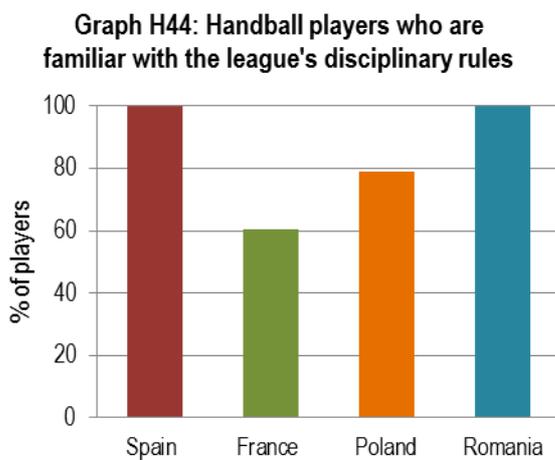
In terms of suggestions for improving their working conditions, players' suggestions included:

- better notice of the schedule; training to be held earlier in the afternoon;
- longer periods of rest between international matches;
- grouping championship games together;
- shortening the season and working days (one respondent in Germany trains from 1700 to 1900 each night and finds reconciling this with family life impossible);
- a winter break (currently some players have games on 23rd and 26th December;

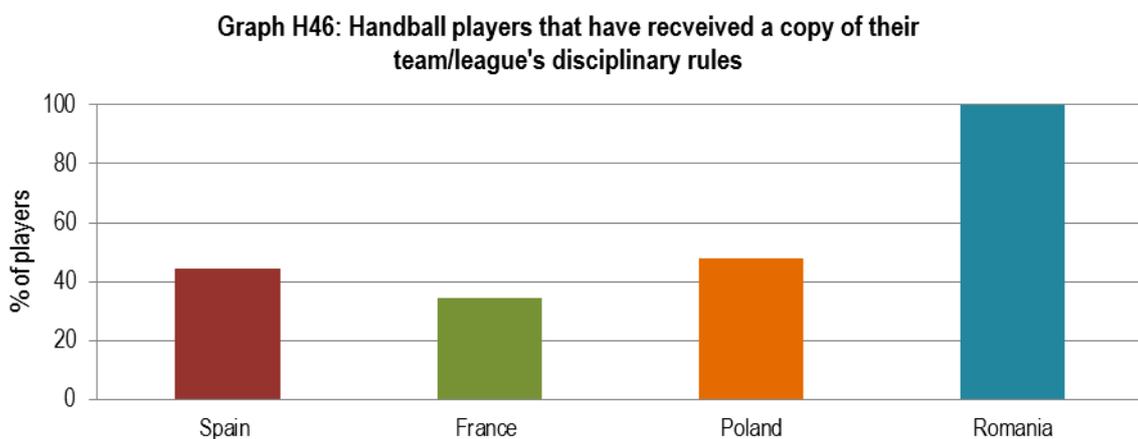
- In Spain, players would prefer training to be held in the morning do they are able to take a second job in the afternoon;
- Improvement in the quality and appropriateness of equipment and appropriate medical care;
- Higher incomes in relation to performance;
- More information for players prior to changes

Discipline

There seems to be a general familiarity among players across Europe of the disciplinary rules for both their club and the league.

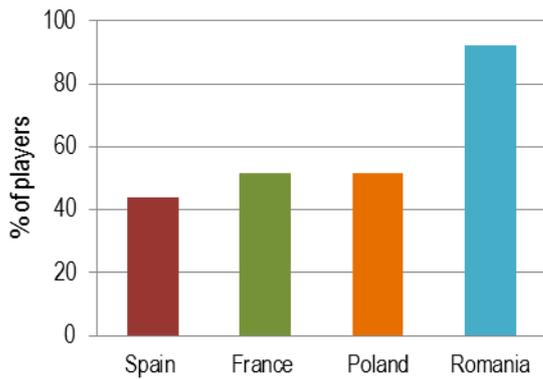


When players are found guilty of misconduct, players in Germany and Romania are far more likely to be fined as a punishment than players elsewhere. However, players in Germany do tend to agree the level of their fine with the club. However, this is not the case for players in Romania.

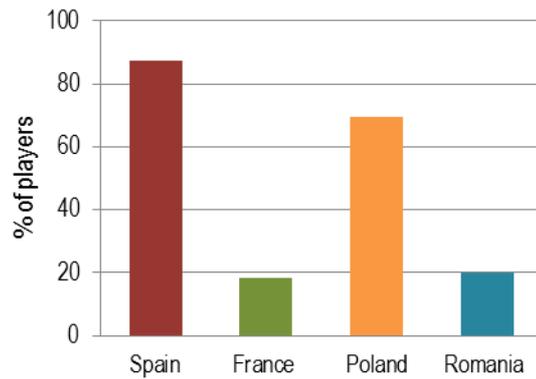


As the graph above indicates, many clubs are not providing players with copies of the disciplinary rules and, for players in France and Poland, this could explain why players in these countries are less familiar with the rules than their counterparts elsewhere who do receive copies of these documents.

Graph H47: Handball players who have been fined by their team for misconduct



Graph H48: Handball players that agreed the level of the fine with their team



Finally, a significant number of players have been fined by their club for misconduct – particularly in Poland and Romania. However, many more players did not agree the level of their fine with their employer, particularly in Romania, where a higher percentage of players have actually been fined in the past.

Basketball

Note

Given the number of responses to the survey from players in a number of countries, the following analysis is considered representative. However, the low response rate from players in Belgium, Lithuania and Spain means that the trends and subsequent conclusions ought to be treated with caution. The data from these three countries are merely included in this report to provide a very general indication of the perception of players about their working lives.

Profile of respondents

The career length of basketball players is influenced by a number of issues, such as their personal physical fitness and injuries received, although players begin their career at 18 and can play until they reach the age of 40, although responses to the survey indicate the intentions of players in Spain to retire in their mid-thirties. Throughout their career, a basketball player will be employed by a number of different teams and the frequency of transfers has increased in recent years due to the influence of foreign players who, by virtue of their national identity, are less likely to demonstrate an affinity with a particular club or geographical location. The interviewees emphasised that non-Spanish nationals are more likely to move between teams, but in general even Spanish nationals are now more likely to move between teams than they did in the past. Prior to the Bosman⁴ ruling, teams were limited in the number of non-nationals they employed. Since 1995 basketball teams have employed more non-nationals and this has influenced the sport dramatically, according to the interviews.

The extent of a player's professionalism depends on a number of issues, but is largely determined by the level of income provided by their employer and the time available for players to take up additional work. In Spain and France, according to the interviews and responses to the surveys, basketball players do not engage in other employment. The average age of the French respondents is 22 years and has been playing basketball for 4.6 years, including a little over two seasons with their current team. This compares positively when the surveys from Spanish basketball players are analysed. Although care should be taken due to the far lower return rate from players in Spain, players there have been with their current team for around 15 months.

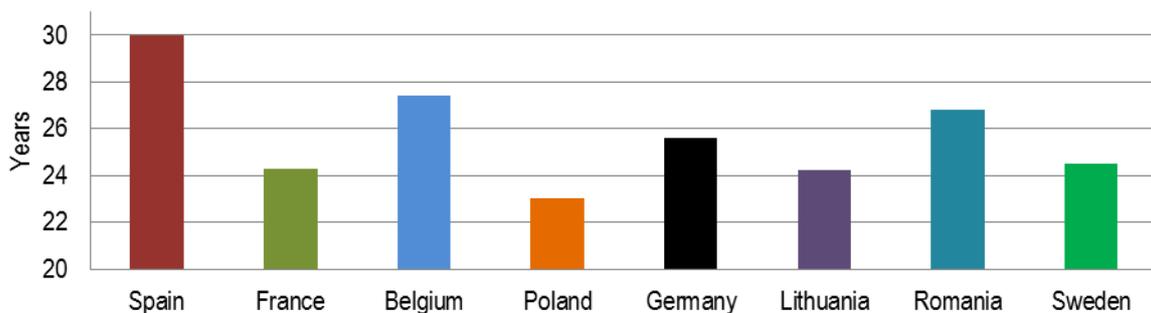
The Swedish basketball league is the only in Europe to have recently suffered from match fixing, where referees were acknowledged to have made money from rigging matches. The problem became such an issue that bookies refused to accept bets in the sport for several years. The owners, managers, players and fans appeared not to be particularly concerned due to the nature of the closed system and clubs did not want to aggravate referees for fear of not being able to find referees for their games and the risk of referees turning against their club in particular.

⁴ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=en&numdoc=61993J0415

With the exception of Poland, in each of the countries examined there was a mixture of nationalities, albeit to varying degrees. A quarter of players in Spain, who responded to the survey, were French nationals while the remainder were Spanish. Players in Germany form the broadest range of nationalities⁵, though the largest were German and a quarter from the United States. Players in France, although predominantly French, also travelled there from the United States. Players in Romania are also from a wide demographic background and after Romanian, Serbians (24%), Americans (14%) and Croatians (3.5%) play in the German leagues. Finally, in Slovenia the nationalities of players are equally split between Slovenian and Croatian.

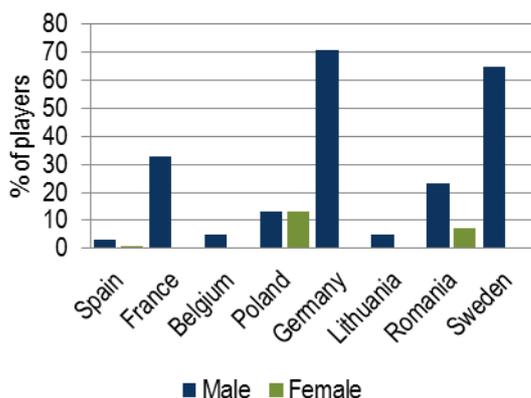
The average age of respondents to the survey is given in the graph below, on a country by country basis.

Graph B1: Average age of basketball players

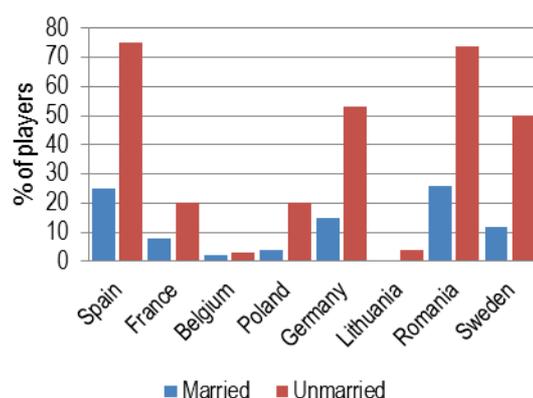


While the vast majority of respondents were male, our research did capture data concerning female players too, particularly from clubs in central and Eastern Europe.

Graph B2: Gender of basketball survey respondents

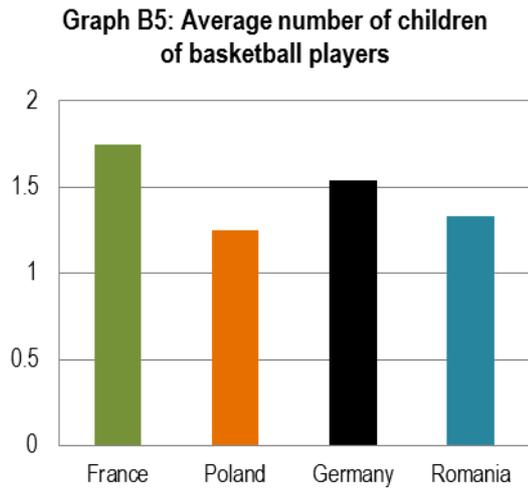
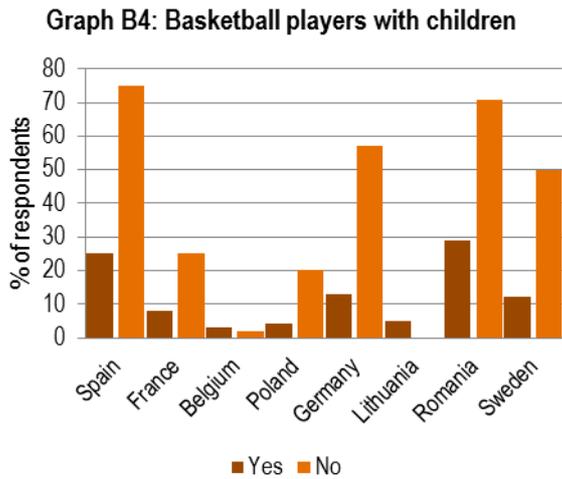


Graph B3: Marital status of basketball respondents



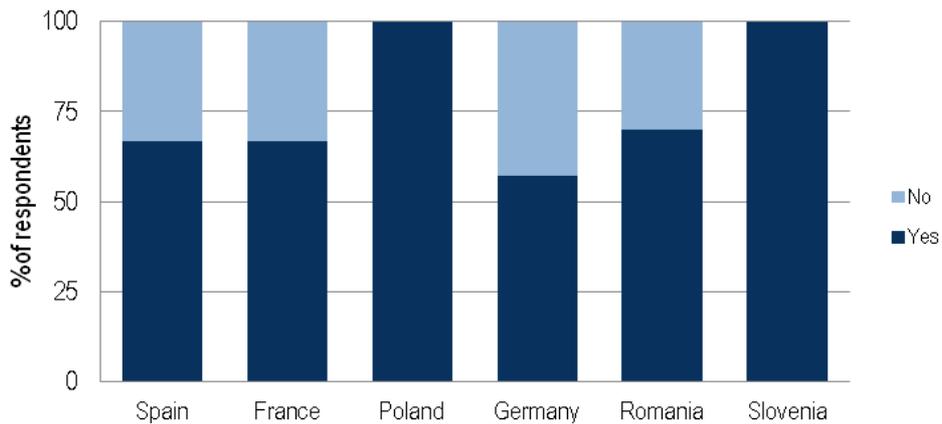
Perhaps a sign of the conflict between work and the social lives of professional players, or perhaps due to the relatively young age of professional players, it is unsurprising that most respondents were unmarried at the time of the survey.

⁵ While almost 50 per cent of players in Germany classified themselves as German nationals, other nationalities included: U.S, Spanish, Serbian, Lithuanian, Latino, Icelandic, Canadian, Bosnian, American/Cypriot, American/German, American/Georgian and African-American.



Reflecting the data on marital status, the majority of players do not have children, while those with children tended to have similar numbers regardless of where they play.

Graph B6: Can you speak the national language of the country in which you are employed?



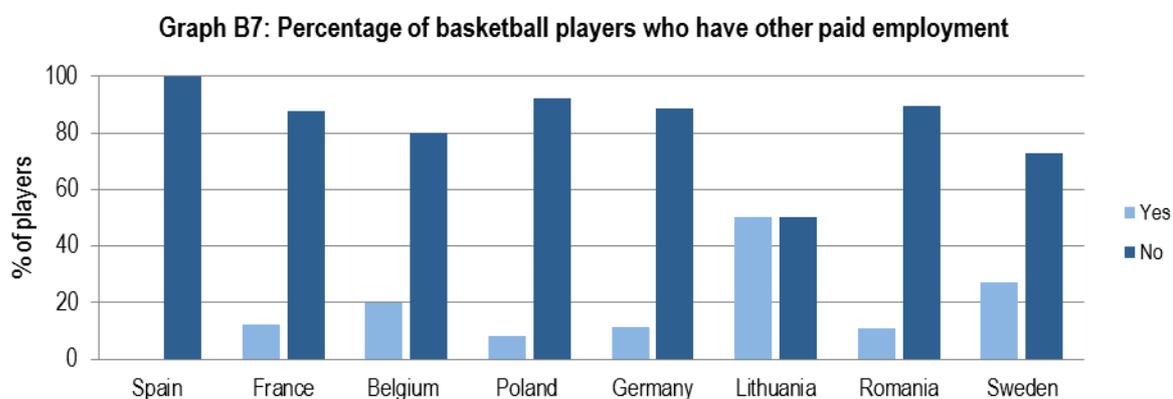
While there are many players who are unable to speak the language of the country in which they play, most players are able to do so, as the graph above shows.

The Swedish national team is interesting in relation to the country in which its players are employed professional careers. The national side has been successful in the past, yet the majority of its team members play abroad. In fact, according to our interviewee, most Swedish teams have 2 or 3 foreign players, and many of these are young Americans, who usually only stay for one season. Serious professionals from abroad (USA), apparently, play for a Swedish team to get their statistics up and then move on. This is possible due to the uncompetitive nature of the country's league. Players in Slovenia tended to begin their careers earlier than those playing in France for instance, while those in Spain, Belgium, Poland and Romania all tended to start their career at a similar age.

Contractual issues

A number of factors determine a player's contractual obligations and rights, including the nature and culture of the sport in any given country. In Sweden, where until recently a closed system operated players commented that, due to the lack of incentives to excel, there is very little profit in the sport, except for the elite players and managers who will have very good pay and, terms and conditions. Players do not tend to receive a pension and most clubs will pay a level of salary that allows them to escape paying tax to the state. We were told that one team, described as a newcomer, is rumoured to be paying wages using money obtained on the black-market and is avoiding tax. However, it is considered rare and temporary due to the fact that they are newcomers to the league.

Having said that, although there are problems facing the Swedish basketball league, none of these concern the poor treatment of players, non-payment of wages, bullying or harassment or over-zealous disciplinary regimes. However, according to our interviewees, the closed system in Sweden has permitted a culture of poor performance, undeveloped competencies and bad practice – things the clubs themselves do not appear to want to rectify. There are significant variations in the terms of employment among basketball players, the majority of which are determined by the country in which players are employed. Players in Sweden play on average two or three games per week and, as wages are insufficient to sustain a career and players seek additional employment, it is difficult for players to top-up their wages from the club with income from work elsewhere.



Interviewees spoke of the time commitment of playing basketball but, in some instances, players indicated their need for additional income. However, playing basketball professionally leaves very little time for other activities. Relatively few players have other employment, although this does vary from country to country.

Of the countries from which we received replies to the survey, in each case the majority of basketball players undertook no other employment. Our interviews and desk research substantiate the findings from the survey that highlighted the fact that none of the players surveyed in Spain held other employment. Elsewhere, despite a small number of players stating they had other forms of work, basketball players in France, Poland and Germany

all overwhelmingly stated that the sport represented their only form of work. However, a higher proportion (a fifth) of respondents in Belgium stated that they did undertake other forms of employment in addition to playing for their team. This suggests that signing with a club as a professional basketball player does not guarantee financially secure employment, yet our research suggests players have very little time between matches and training to work elsewhere to subsidise their wages from sport. Just as was the case in Sweden, our interviewee from Slovenia also considers the national league to be uncompetitive and this means that the players do not seek to improve their skills and the sport is not particularly of interest among younger people.

A comparison with the previous study in 2008 (VS/2008/0271) shows a similar trend today among players in Germany. In 2008, 13 per cent of these players undertook secondary employment, a similar number as in 2013 (just over 11%). However, in 2008 21 per cent of the players in France held other jobs, while in 2013 only just over 12 per cent do.

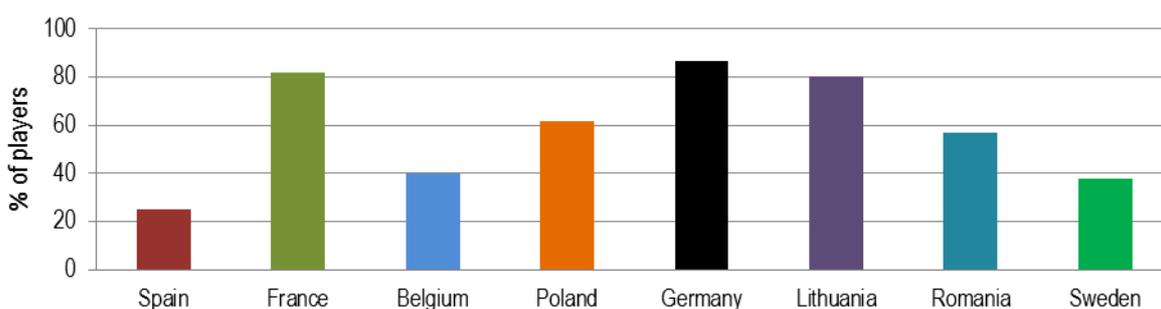
In terms of gender, and in contrast to the 2008 study, the data from surveys completed by female players⁶ showed no difference between women's and men's earnings, this was the case in France, Poland and Sweden. However, female players in Romania are more likely than their male counterparts to hold second jobs. Of male players in Romania 9.5 per cent hold second jobs, compared with 14.3 per cent of females.

Information gained from our Swedish interviews suggest that players' salaries there are generally very low, so many players leave the sport prematurely in order to establish an alternative career. Note, our interviewees suggested that the word 'career' was used a little generously and that the majority of players only play for a few years, leave the sport with little education then usually take up relatively low paid employment elsewhere in the economy. To keep costs low, most clubs employ three to four young less costly players (€100 p/m) who are keen to play within a professional setting and who will work hard – essentially low paid employment under the guise of a glamorous career in professional basketball. Interviewees advised that it is difficult to find a full-time basketball player and so young Swedish players tend to move abroad to find a team that can offer a full-time professional position.

There are only 3 fully professional basketball clubs, employing 12 full-time players and most teams are semi-professional, in which players rely on income from working part-time elsewhere. The schedule for games makes it difficult for players to study and with up to three games a week, training, working part-time and studying are all difficult to fit in.

⁶ No female players in Germany completed surveys so we are unable to make a comparison with the 2008 findings.

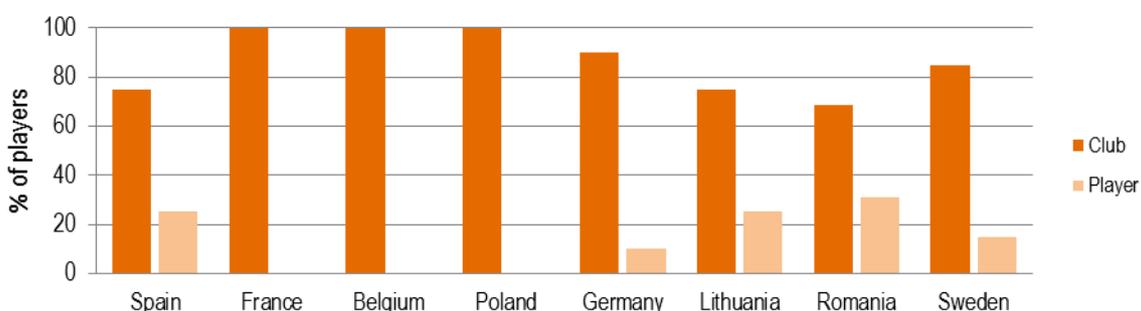
Graph B8: Basketball players with an agent



Perhaps to popular belief, not all professional basketball players have agents. Of the countries surveyed, players in Germany were the most likely to have an agent, followed closely by players in France (82%), Spain (75%), and Poland (61.5%). Players in Belgium were the least likely to have an agent (40%).

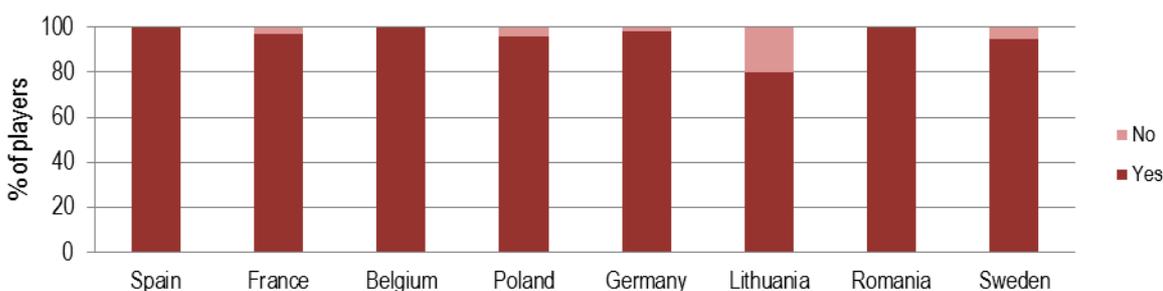
The majority of players in the countries surveyed have an agent, and this is particularly pronounced in France, Germany and Spain, with players in Poland and Belgium less likely to have an agent. Interestingly, the agents representing respondents in France, Belgium and Poland are all paid for by the team, while the highest number of respondents who stated that they pay their agent were found in Germany and Spain (10% and 25% respectively).

Graph B9: Of basketball players with an agent, who pays for them?



In the vast majority of cases, with the exception of players in Spain and Romania, players who were surveyed said that their team paid for the services of their agent. In three countries – France, Belgium and Poland – no player paid for their own agent.

Graph B10: Percentage of basketball players with a contract with their club



Generally speaking, all basketball players in the countries surveyed had a formal contract of employment, with only a relatively small number of players in France, Poland and Germany without one (3%, 3.8% and less than 2% respectively). Although a minority, it is concerning that some players have no contract with their club and this will need addressing by the clubs concerned.

There are striking variations across the countries surveyed in terms of payment of taxes. For instance, on the whole employers pay the taxes owed by players, on behalf of each individual player. However, the extent of this practice varies from country to country. For example, in Germany teams pay the taxes of individual players in 80 per cent of cases, whereas the responses from French players suggest that individuals pay their own taxes just under 80 per cent of cases.

In terms of the payment of taxes, there are wide variations between the countries surveyed. In Spain for example, half of the players surveyed said that they were responsible for paying their taxes on their income, while players in Germany generally rely on their employer to do this (80%), and similar figures were given for Poland and France (both at 79%). However, only 40% of players in Belgium pay their taxes themselves. Naturally, there are wide variations between levels of income across Europe. This is unsurprising given the variations in the costs of living and the national systems of social security and state pensions.

In some countries wages are governed by a collective agreement, such as in Spain where minimum rates are set out in a sector-wide labour agreement. The Spanish agreement only covers players from within the European Union and non-EU players must rely on the country's general employment legislation.

Until 2008 all female basketball players in Spain were covered by a wage agreement, but since the demise of the employers' organisation this has fallen by the way-side. Female players instead, tend to rely on sporadic payments from their club and, according to one interviewee, do not consider their work as conferring professional status. However a small number of clubs (two, possibly three) do sign female players, but these are the minority and, despite the existence of a contract, are still not considered professional players. Such arrangements can make the receipt of wages difficult to obtain and female players are forced to make a legal claim, having to prove the existence of a genuine employment relationship in order to convince the court of their entitlement to wages. Finally, female basketball has no formal structures, unlike the male sport and this makes the existence of a professional status and a career as a female player difficult and in no way comparable to their male counterparts.

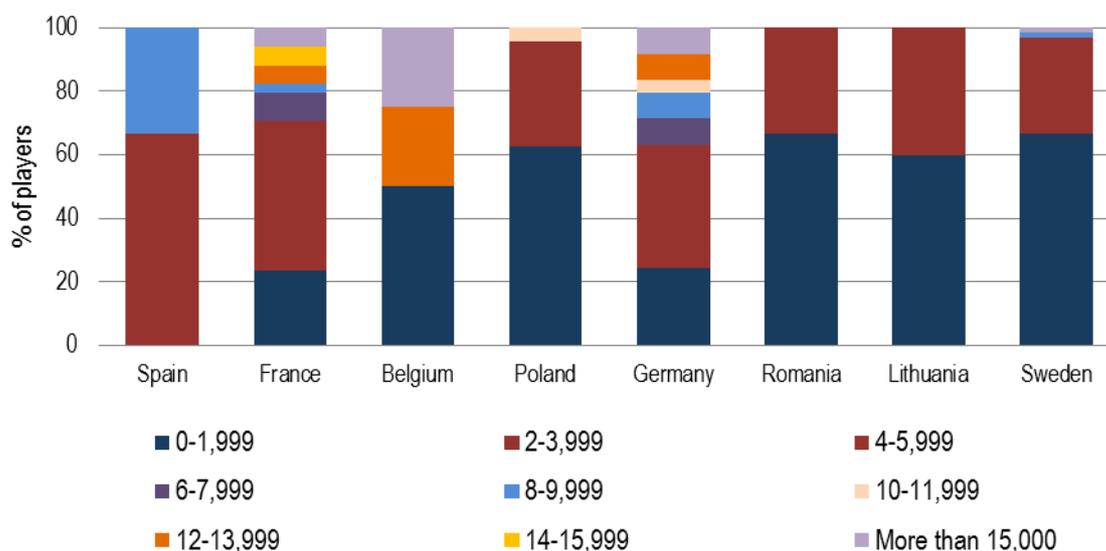
The Third Collective Bargaining Agreement in Spain regulates employment conditions such as contracts, wages, working time, strikes, sanctions and others issues such as parity commissions and Wage Guarantee Funds, and the table below sets out the minimum wages in Spain of male basketball players.

Table B1: Salaries for basketball players in Spain	
Age (years)	Salary in Euros (per season)
18-19	14,037
20-21	23,395
22-23	32,755
24-25	42,113
Older than 25	51,472

Historically, wage levels for Spanish players were higher than they are today but the impact of the crisis since 2008 has caused them to drop by 40 per cent. The inequality among Spanish players is likely to be no different than in other member states. This season, for example, 12 of the 18 teams in Liga Endesa ACB are signing contracts for their premium players above €200,000 for the first time in years. As with other countries, this level of salaries is the preserve of mega-stars, and many other major players sign for under €100,000.

According to a report by the Spanish Basketball Federation in 2010, the average female player was 25 years old, had completed secondary education (a number had also attended college) and earned between €20,000 and €30,000 per year. However, today the education level of female players is lower and wages have dropped and, according to one interviewee, the average salary of a player in Liga 1 is around €1,000 per month and wages in Liga 2 do not exceed €600 per month.

Graph B11: Monthly salary of basketball players (Euros)



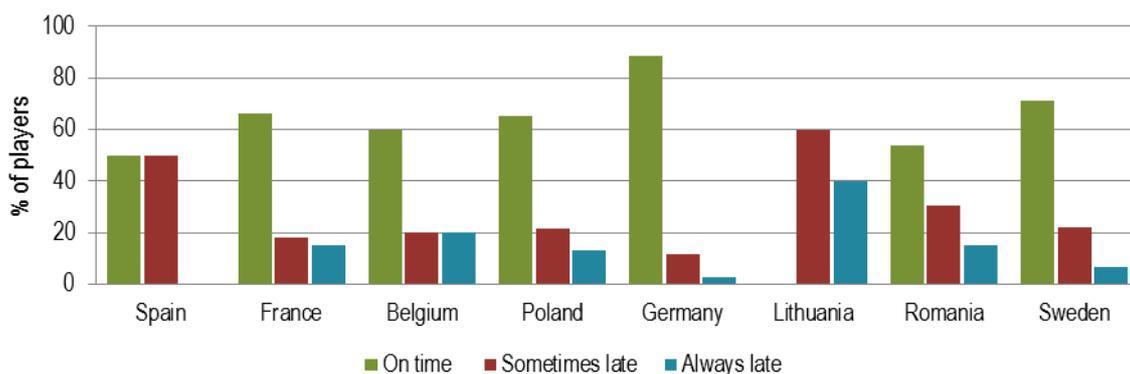
In Slovenia, a regulatory cap on the number of foreign players (mainly from the US and the Balkans) has marginally improved players' income. It is often perceived that foreign players are more likely to accept lower wages than national players. In 2009 the monthly salary of one of the top Slovenian basketball players, with a decade of experience in the league, was €9,650 and an apartment, car and access to healthcare were also part

of their compensation package. However, elsewhere in the league, remuneration was not so generous for less skilled players, many of whom have instantly recognisable names, who are able to earn anything between €5,000 and €8,250 per month. The women, who represent PLKK teams and compete for the top league ranking, can earn between €2,500 and €3,000 per month. The monthly salary of a promising under-21 junior player who is still studying and only trains with the senior team, and in whom a leading 1st Tier club anticipates a long-term future, can realistically be €800, with annual increments, and will include an apartment. A non-professional player from the Slovenian 3rd Tier (2nd league), who relies on work outside the sport for their main source of income typically earns €425 per month. They will train every afternoon and play games at the weekend. A reserve female player, who seldom plays but nevertheless values a regular salary can receive €412.50 per month. A 2nd league (3rd Tier) player, who is also a student, has a part-time job and views basketball as a hobby will receive a monthly wage of €100.

In Spain, although the vast majority of survey respondents were male, the working arrangements for female players are also of interest to this research. In the past, women's basketball was the only female professional sport, complete with a professional structure, a players' association and a collective agreement. Today wage agreements in Spain cover only male players and the lack of a national infrastructure of social dialogue for female players causes concern among a number of organisations – especially as women, according to one interviewee, tend not to consider entering sport in a professional capacity.

An interviewee stated that the relatively low levels of wages are masked by the apparently generous provisions from employers - for example, all necessary kit and equipment is provided by the club. However, some players have argued that they would prefer to be more highly paid and be able to purchase their own equipment. It was also argued that that this so-called generosity of Swedish clubs conceals the rather amateur nature within Swedish basketball. The average wage for a Swedish basketball player is around €1,000 to €1,500 per month, demonstrating the semi-professional nature and of the necessity for players to maintain alternative employment outside the sport to sustain a good standard of living.

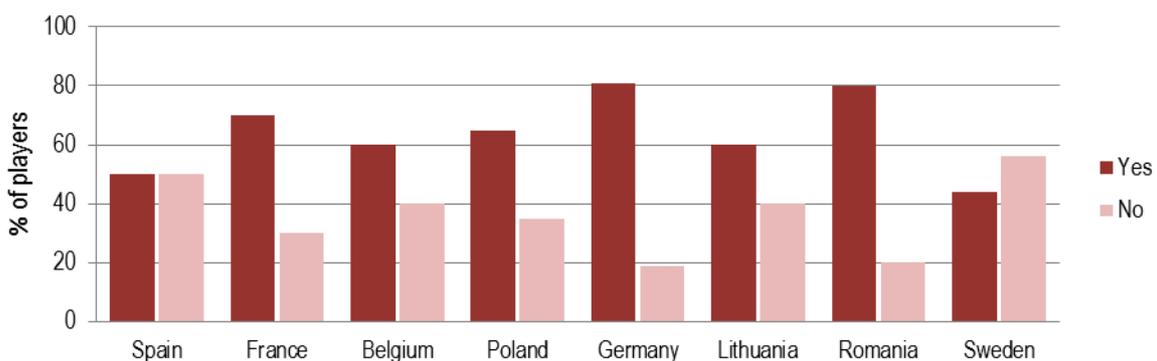
Graph B12: Regularity of basketball players' salaries



The late payment of wages is a constant worry for many players. In fact, in 2010 the late payment of salaries and players' poor health insurance were the subject of strike action in Greece, supported by 89.5% of players, resulting in the postponement of the season. With the exception of players in Germany, in every country surveyed wage payments were "always on time" for less than two thirds of professional basketball players. Given that wages are fundamental to the legal obligations of employers, these figures are extremely worrying.

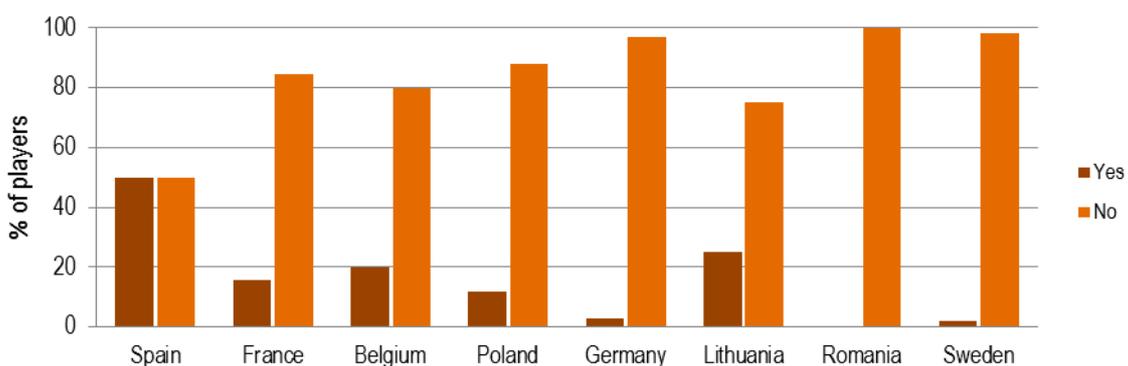
In every country surveyed, employers provide accommodation for their players as part of their contract, with eight out of ten players in Germany being assisted in this way.

Graph B13: Basketball players that are provided with accommodations as part of their compensation package



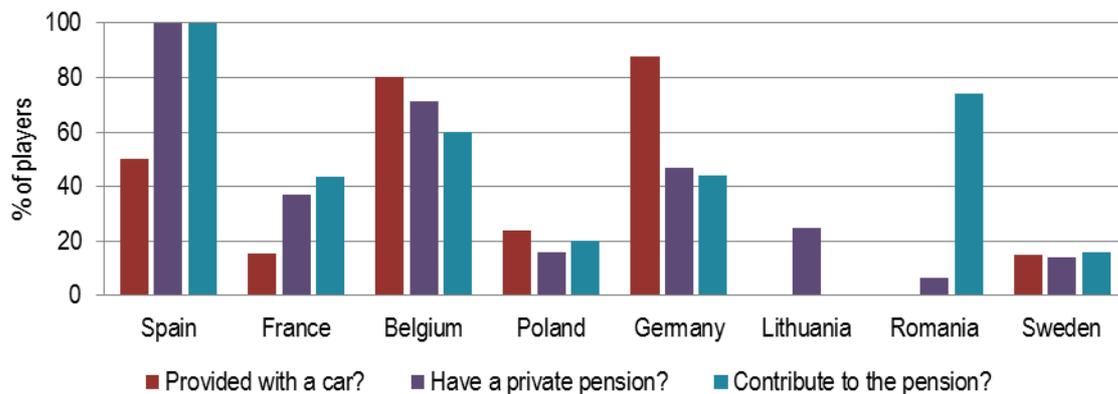
Having a contract for an individual's image rights can be an additional source of income for professional players and those surveyed were asked if they had such a contract. Overall, players in Spain tend to have a contract for the rights to their image, whereas players in Belgium (20%), France (16%), Poland (12%) and Germany (3%) are far less likely to negotiate such an arrangement.

Graph B14: Basketball players with a separate contract for their image rights



The majority of players do not have a separate contract for the image rights. Players in Spain are those most likely to do so, with less than three per cent of players based in Germany doing so.

Graph B15: Responses from basketball players to questions on their compensation package



As the graph above shows, players in Germany and Belgium are more likely to have the use of a car as part of their overall compensation package, with those based in Spain coming third. On the contrary, players working for French or Polish clubs are very unlikely to benefit from such an arrangement. Finally, no players in Romania have access to a car provided by their employer.

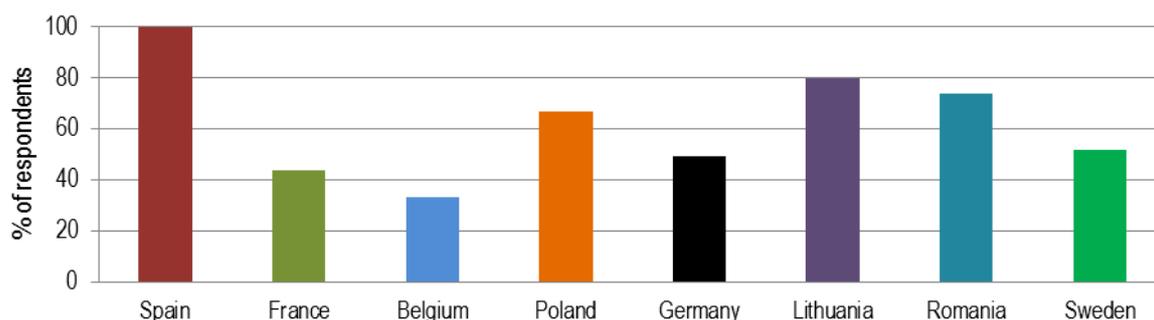
Players in Germany and Belgium are far more likely to benefit from the use of a car as part of their employment package (87.5% and 80% respectively), followed by players in Spain, Poland and France. On the contrary, players employed in Romania are highly unlikely to receive this as part of their employment contract – in fact none of the players surveyed that play in Romania have a car included as part of their employment package. Of those players with a private pension, not all contribute themselves. Players are just as likely as they are unlikely to contribute to a private pension, however, players in Romania are more likely to and those in Poland less likely to. One interviewee from Slovenia said their employer does not provide a private pension, and only makes the required social security contributions.

Education

According to the interviewees, most professional players are aware that their career as a professional basketball player does in fact end and so prepare for that moment. However, many players do not have the opportunity to pursue non-work related training and so fail to prepare adequately for this transition. The survey responses and interviews suggest that employers could do much more to highlight training and educational opportunities outside the sport and support players more effectively in the transition from sport to alternative employment.

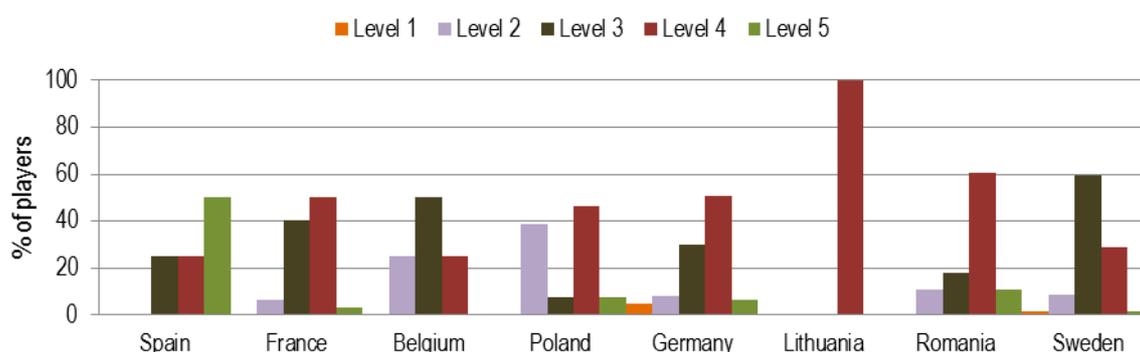
Despite the existence of professional training programmes for professional sports players, accessing these, finding the time to study and financially supporting study while working is very difficult. In Spain teams affiliated to the Association of Basketball Players do not offer any professional training, but the Association has partnership with universities and other educational establishments to provide some assistance for players to study while they continue to work.

Graph B16: Percentage of basketball players who have studied while playing professional sport



The survey results do not provide information on the type of education or training players undertook while employed as a professional basketball player. But, as the graph above shows, many players do in fact undertake studies while working as professional sportspeople. However, given answers to other questions in this section, it is possible to assume that any training undertaken was at the behest of individual players and not part of overall programme of support provided by employers. The good news is that despite the apparent low levels of support from teams, many professional basketball players have studied while playing, as illustrated by the graph above.

Graph B17: Education levels of basketball players



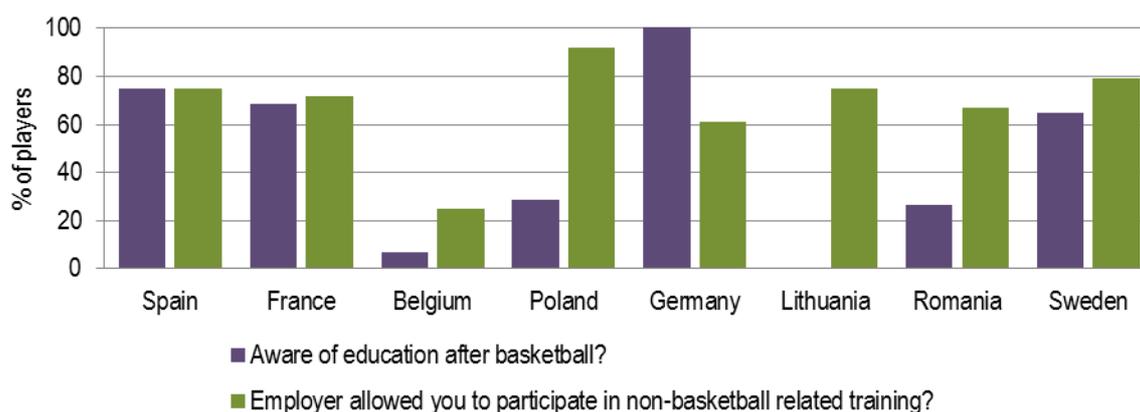
Contrary to popular belief, professional sports players are well educated. However it is not possible to state whether or not their education predated their sports career or whether players have studied while working. The latter scenario would suggest that employers are providing some support for their players to prepare for life after professional sport. However, given the level of support thus far highlighted through the interviews and survey responses, it is possible and likely probable that players have completed education either prior to embarking on their professional career or have done so in tandem and entirely through their own efforts, while playing basketball professionally.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Spain	-	-	25	25	50
France	-	6.26	40.62	50	3.12
Belgium	-	25	50	25	-

Poland	-	38.46	7.69	46.16	7.69
Germany	4.76	7.94	30.16	50.79	6.35
Lithuania	-	-	-	100	-
Romania	-	10.7	17.87	60.72	10.71
Sweden	1.7	8.47	59.33	28.8	1.7

It is possible to breakdown the educational attainment by country and the table above provides this comparison. As the data shows, there are variations between the education levels of players in different countries, for example: 100 per cent of players in Lithuania have all achieved Level 4 and the highest Level achieved by the majority of players in Belgium is Level 3. It is not possible from the research to provide an explanation of this variation, although specific sport-related technical qualifications at Level 4 could well account for the relatively high number of players achieving this Level of education.

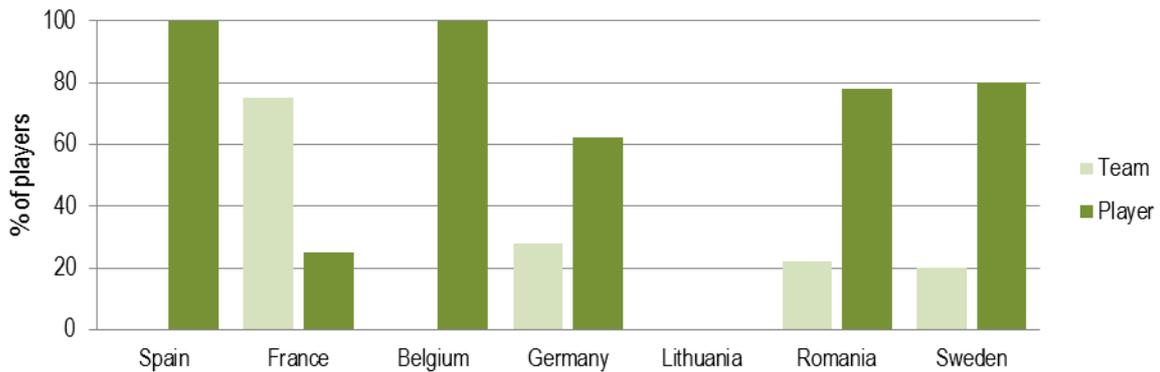
Graph B18: Basketball players who replied YES to questions on education opportunities outside basketball



Players employed in Germany tend to be more aware of the available educational programmes to prepare players for life after their sport, which is encouraging. However, the players aware of alternative career training elsewhere, particularly in Poland and Romania, are few in number and this suggests employers are failing to support players for preparing for their new career post-basketball.

The degree to which players are permitted to participate in training for work outside of basketball vary significantly across EU member states. Players in Germany are far more likely to have been given this opportunity, while players in France, Romania and Poland less so.

Graph B19: Of the basketball players whose employer has allowed to participate in non basketball related courses, who paid for these courses?

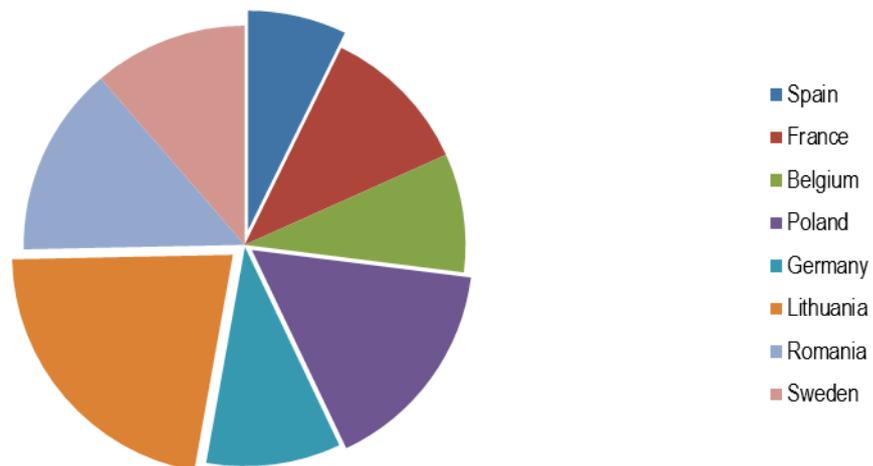


Of those players able to access training outside of the sport, the vast majority funded this training themselves. However players in France and Romania, despite being less likely than players elsewhere to be permitted to participate in training outside of basketball, were more likely to have had their training paid for by their employer.

Health and Safety

As the pie chart below shows, by country, players tend to consider their profession as a risk to their health and safety.

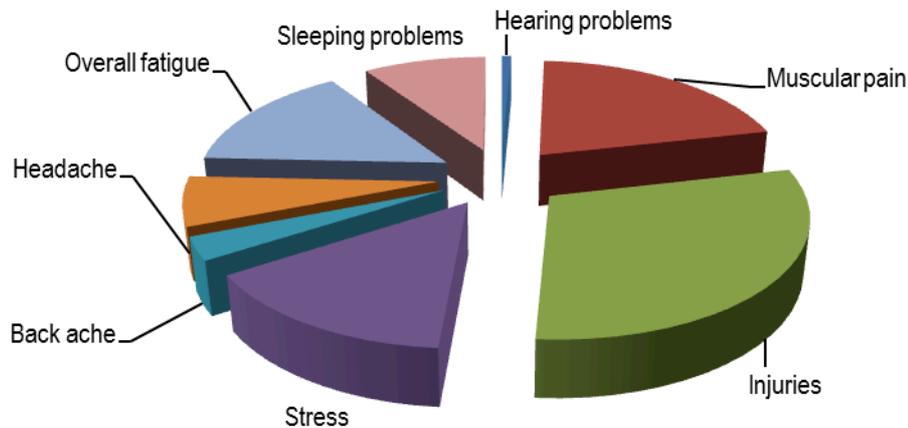
Chart B2: Percentage of basketball players who feel their health and safety is at risk due to their work, by country



Players in Poland, Romania and France feel that their profession presents a risk to their health and safety. On the contrary, players in Germany and Belgium do not share this view. As the chart below shows, well over half the number of players stating their health was at risk came from the former three countries. Again, due to the relatively low response rate from Spain it is not possible to be confident about the results from players in this country.

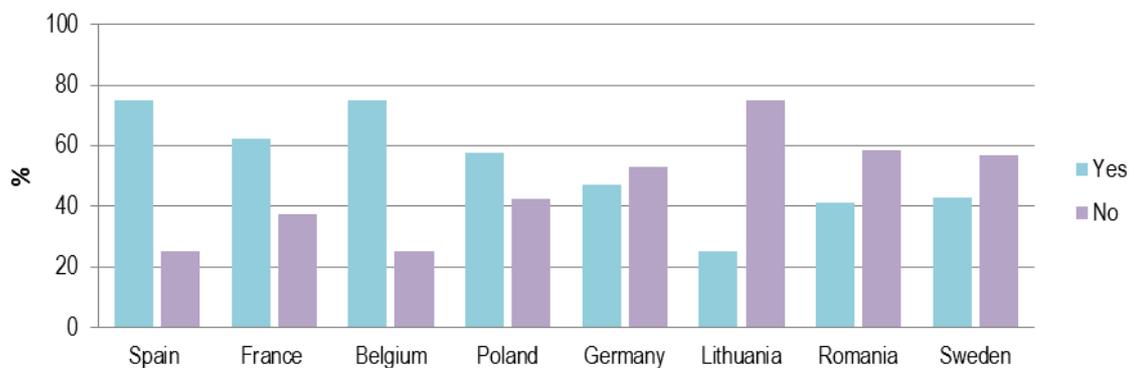
Sprained and fracture ankles, back and knee ligament injuries, dislocations and injuries to players' faces are the injuries most frequently cited by basketball players in the survey.

Chart B3: Percentage of illnesses associated with basketball



In terms of injuries, an average of 1 day was lost in the previous 12 months to illness and an average of 12 days due to injury. These figures are averages across the five countries surveyed. The highest number of days lost for illness and injury was 1.5 and 12.5 in Germany, respectively.

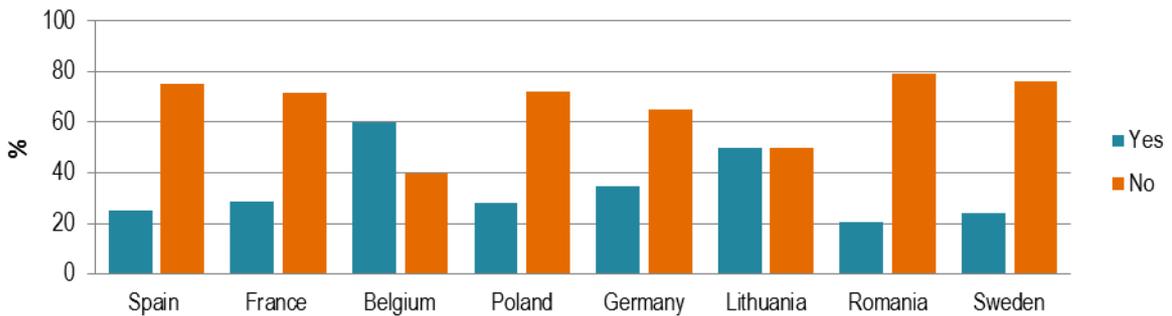
Graph B19: Basketball players absent from work for more than 6 weeks due to an injury



Interestingly, despite the rather high number of players who have suffered an injury that has prevented them playing for more than six weeks, the majority of basketball players do not have an insurance policy to protect them in the event of a career ending injury.

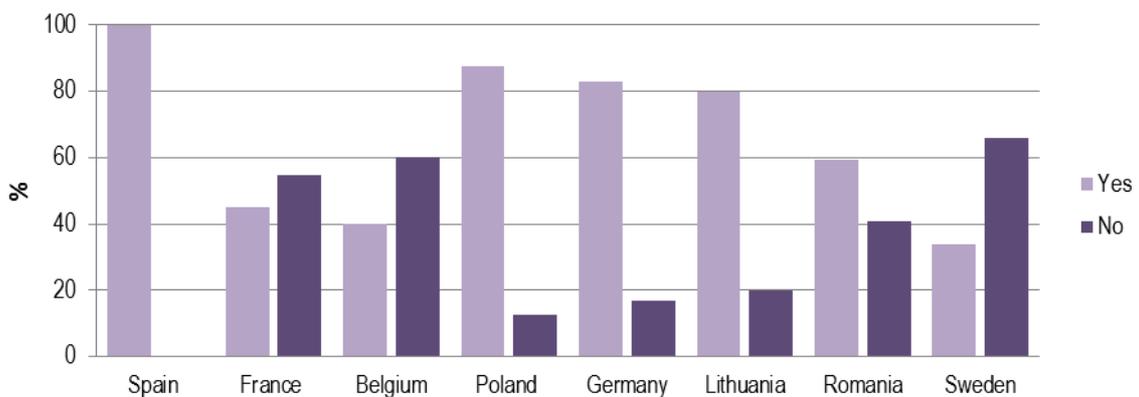
Players were asked about any insurance they have to provide them with an income in the event of suffering a career ending injury and the results are displayed in the graphs below. As the results show, the vast majority of players in the five countries surveyed, with the exception of Belgium, do not have an insurance policy in place to protect their income should their career end abruptly through injury.

Graph B20: Basketball players with an insurance policy to protect against a career ending injury



The majority of players do not have insurance to ensure they have an income in the event of being unable to play due to injury. Players in Belgium appear, those surveyed, more likely to have such insurance. In Greece, strike action was taken in 2009 when the players' association (PSAK), supported by the National Federation of Professional Basketball Players, ceased to participate in games for a week in November due to demands from players for improvements in players' insurance policies and better security arrangements. Discussions between HEBA (the Professional League in Greece) and the PSAK were not fruitful and did not prevent the strike.

Graph B21: Basketball players whose team has a full-time physiotherapist



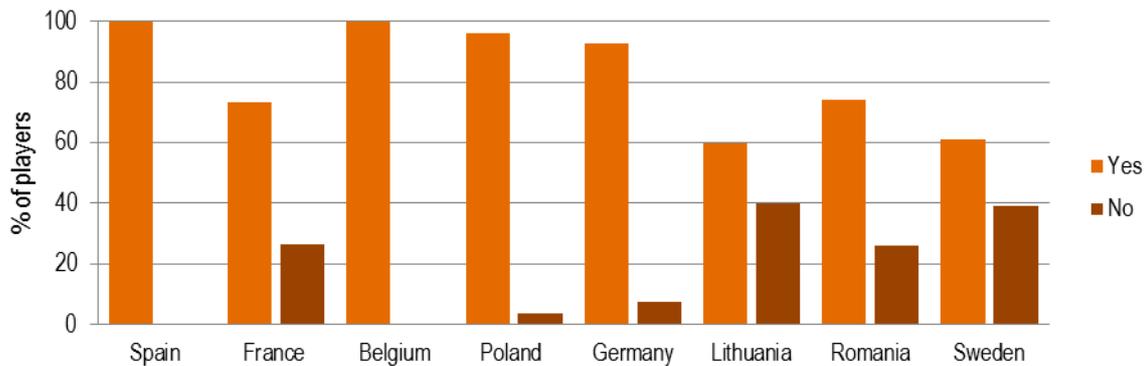
Players were asked about the therapeutic support available from their club and, specifically about the team's physiotherapist. As the graph above shows, while the majority of clubs do provide a full-time physiotherapist this is by no means universal. Teams in France and Belgium appear to be particularly under resourced in this area of player support.

Although in Sweden, the majority of clubs employ doctors and physicians, players are expected to use the state's healthcare system, partly due to its superior provision and the fact it saves clubs money. However there appears insufficient attention paid on helping players reach their optimal physical condition. In fact, it is not unusual for a team to workout at the gym than rely on the clubs' fitness equipment. If a player is injured, then they will receive 80% of their salary for 6 months – but this is provided by the state. However, these characteristics of Swedish

basketball ultimately place little stress and pressure upon players and thus remarks on club discipline, working conditions and salaries were all positive.

In Slovenia, players interviewed repeatedly praised the, more than adequate, healthcare provided by its clubs.

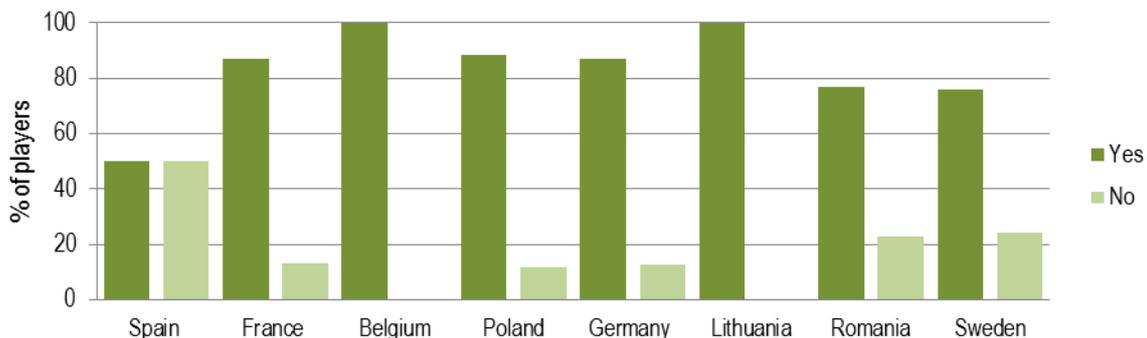
Graph B22: Basketball players with adequate access to therapeutic support



The same trend can be observed in France and Romania when access to therapeutic support is considered. The vast majority of players in Spain, Belgium, Poland and Germany all stated that they did have access to this kind of support.

As the graphs below demonstrate, with the exception of players in Spain, the majority of players, who responded, were satisfied about the support they were given by their team’s doctors and therapists. However, a large number of players across the five countries did express their dissatisfaction in terms of the level of support they received and the proportion of players feeling this way was the highest in Romania.

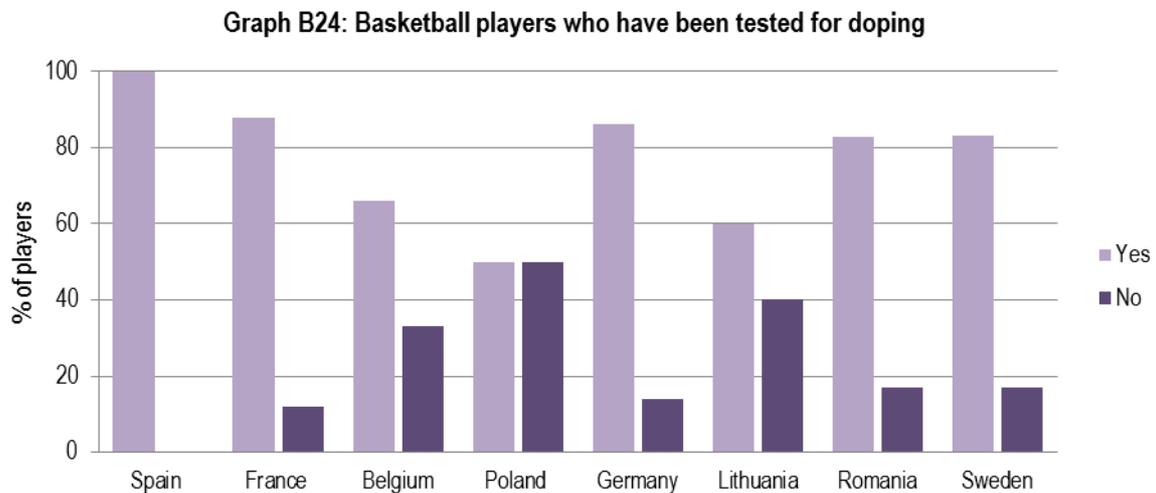
Graph B23: Basketball players who are satisfied with the level of support they received from the team’s doctors and therapists



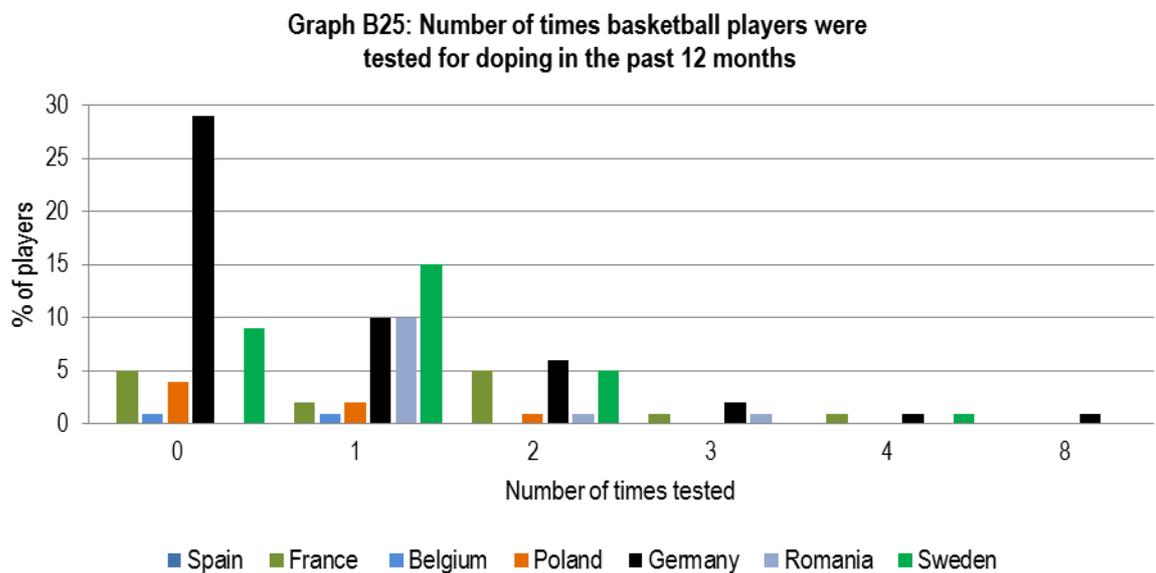
Doping

Our interviews emphasised the resentment for players who breach the doping regulations to achieve a better performance, and criticisms of the various national systems were focussed on the low frequency of tests. The German sample of survey responses we received were numerous, and sufficient on which to build a concrete

analysis, so the German figures in the graph below are particularly helpful in relation to the frequency of doping tests within the sport in that country. Although the sample from Poland was smaller, the data does suggest that a large number of basketball players in the five countries examined are being tested.

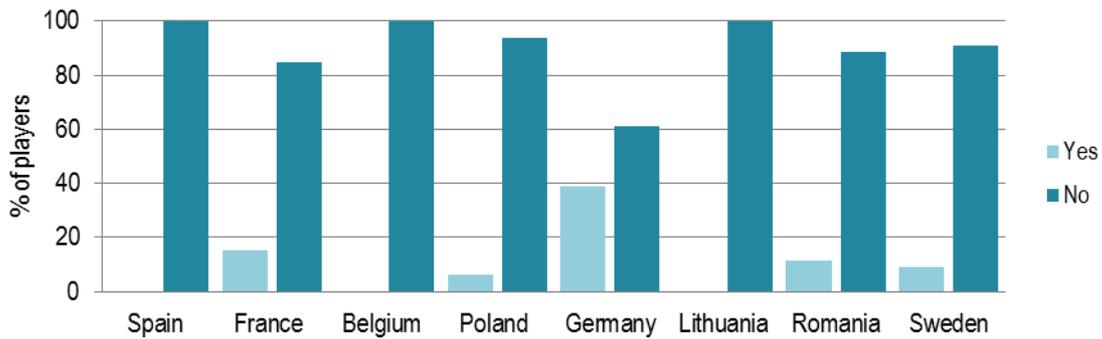


The frequency of tests are also an important factor in the doping process, and a number of players had been tested several times in the previous 12 months, in some cases as many as eight times, while other hadn't been tested at all.



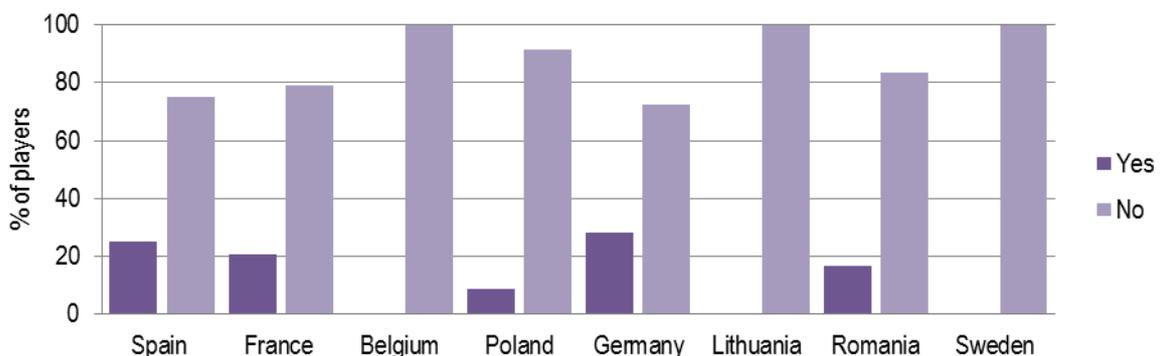
While these tests are being carried out in the workplace, a significant number of players are being tested away from their work and this is particularly pronounced in Germany.

Graph B26: Basketball layers who have been tested for doping away from their workplace



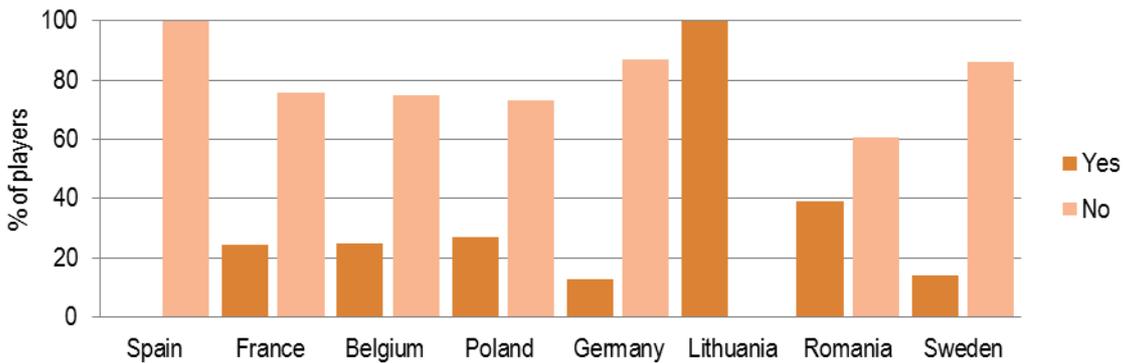
In line with the findings from handball, a player’s perception in relation to testing away from the workplace and the issue of privacy is determined largely by their own personal experiences. For example, when asked whether or not they consider being tested in this way constituted an invasion of personal privacy, basketball players on the whole said no. However, when the responses from only those players who have actually experienced this is taken into account, the findings dramatically change. For example, of those players in France who have been tested outside of their workplace 45 percent stated that this was an invasion of their privacy. To support this conclusion, when a similar exercise is undertaken for players in Germany, almost a third said that they feel this is an invasion of their privacy. Once again, the findings from the data when filtered this way provide evidence that players’ perception over the question of privacy and testing is heavily influenced by their own personal experiences and those who have been tested away from their workplace are much more likely to consider this approach to invade their privacy.

Graph B27: Basketball players who consider testing away from work is an invasion of privacy



When asked whether or not doping was a particular problem in their sport, the response varied along country lines, with players in Romania more likely to consider this the case than those employed in Germany.

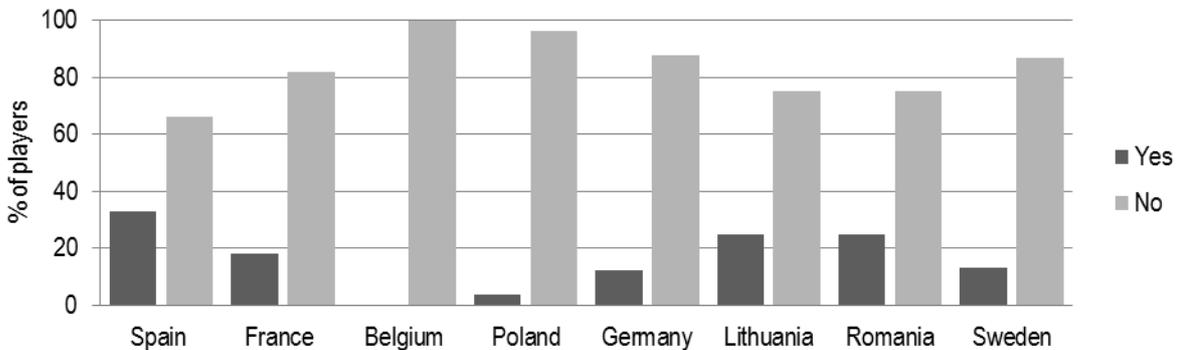
Graph B28: Basketball players who feel that doping is a problem in professional basketball



Our Slovenian interviewee described the several anti-doping tests used in the league in which his team plays and stated that he disagrees with doping, due to the unfair advantage this can create, and feels the anti-doping tests should be carried out more often.

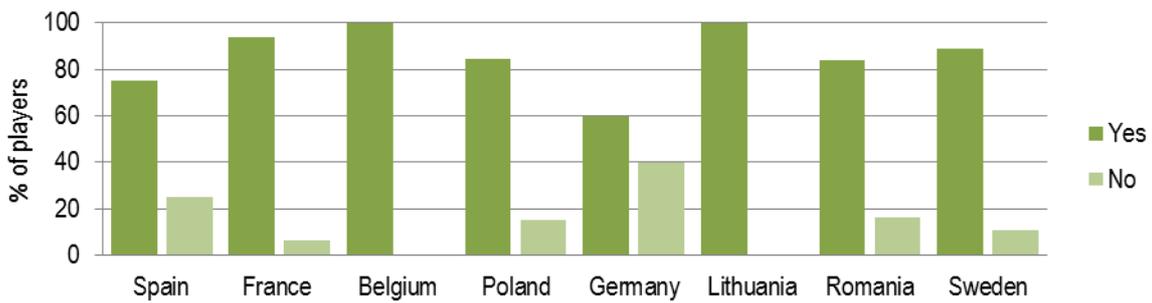
In Spain, as advised by one interviewee, dope tests are carried out weekly checks and each week a set number of teams and a set number of players are tested. These tests are non-invasive and around 90 per cent of them are conducted in the training halls. Sometimes there are even spot checks at the player's home.

Graph B29: Basketball players replies to "Would you want your personal information transferred to countries with lower data protection standards than the EU?"



On the issue of the transmission of personal data, the overwhelming majority of players stated that they did not want their personal data transferred to other countries with lower standards of data protection.

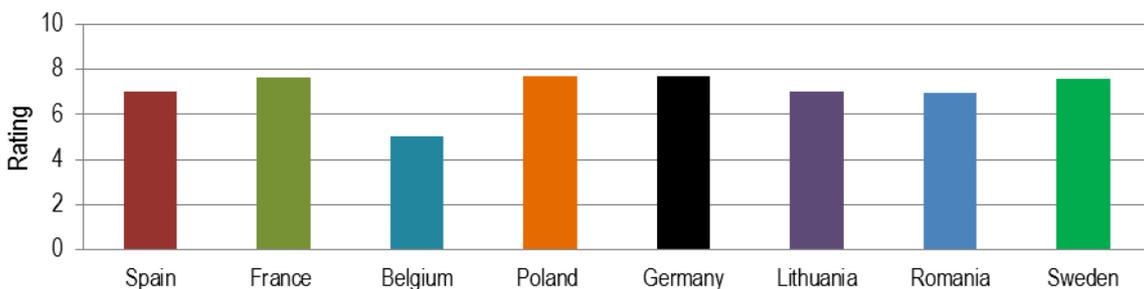
Graph B30: Basketball players replies to "Do you think that anti-doping rules should respect the law (including human rights conventions)?"



Conditions

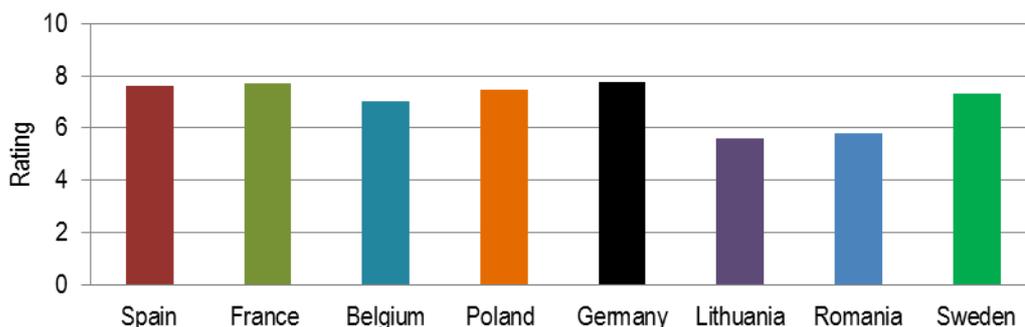
In Romania, during a meeting held with our researchers, players suggested a number of improvements to their working conditions, such as the introduction of physical assistants for indoor activities (at least two for each team) and the introduction of compulsory payments of wages and health insurance, for those players not covered, in the period between seasons to enable all players to practice regularly and to reduce preventable injuries. Players commented that unless they are able to practice in the period between seasons their results will continue to be poor once the season commences.

Graph B31: Basketball players' rating of their team's practice facilities (1=unsatisfied 10=satisfied)



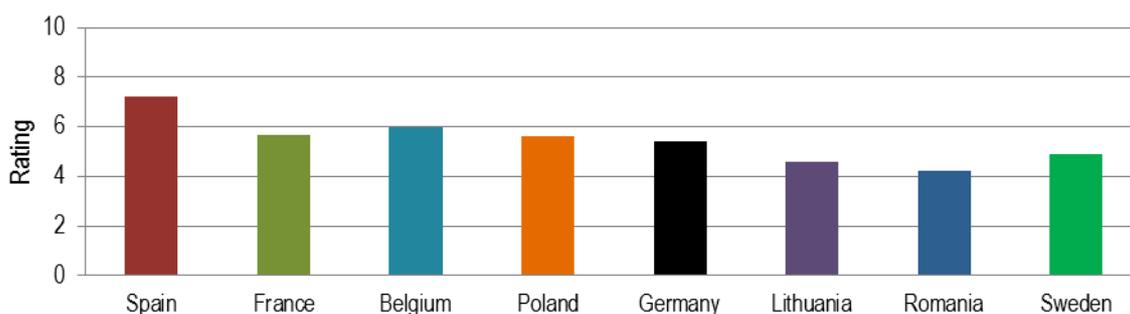
The graphs on this page show the ratings, given by players in various countries, awarded to their team's practice facilities, weight lifting facilities and their league's refereeing standards. On weightlifting, it appears that players in all countries surveyed are relatively content with the facilities offered by their club, with only players in Lithuania and Romania giving a score below six out of 10.

Graph B32: Rating by basketball players of their team's weight lifting facilities
(1=unsatisfied 10=satisfied)



The quality of refereeing is not regarded positively by many players in the countries surveyed, with the vast majority of players awarding less than six out of 10 for their league's referees.

Graph B33: Rating by basketball players of their league's refereeing
(1=unsatisfied 10=satisfied)



A snapshot of the views of basketball players across eight countries is provided by the table below. It is clear from the table that the quality of refereeing is badly perceived by players.

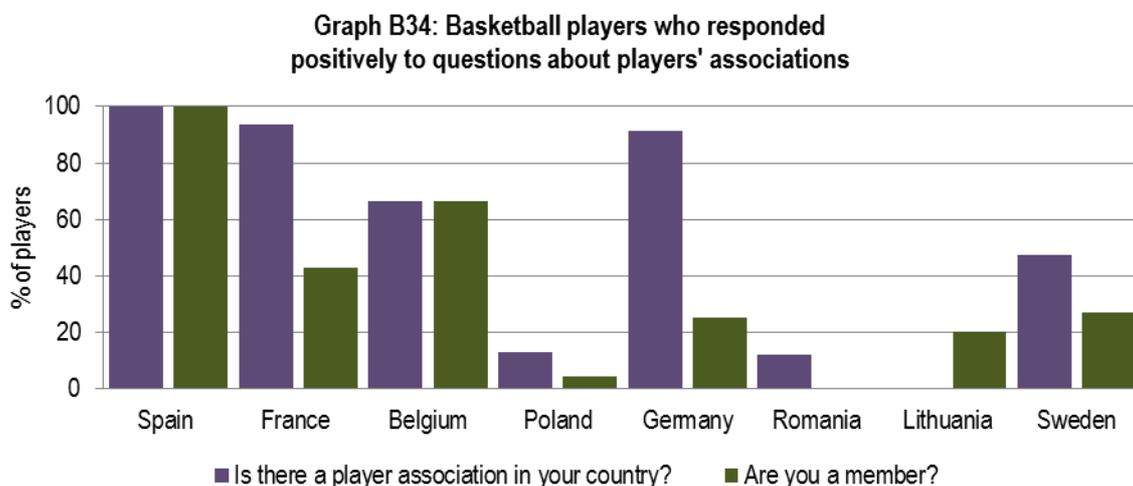
Table B3: Basketball players' ratings			
	Practice	Weights	Refereeing
Spain	7.00	7.60	7.20
France	7.65	7.70	5.70
Belgium	5.00	7.00	6.00
Poland	7.69	7.46	5.62
Germany	7.67	7.74	5.40
Lithuania	7.00	5.60	4.60
Romania	6.97	5.80	4.24
Sweden	7.56	7.30	4.89
Average	7.07	7.03	5.46

Players' comments on how the quality of refereeing could be improved in basketball included:

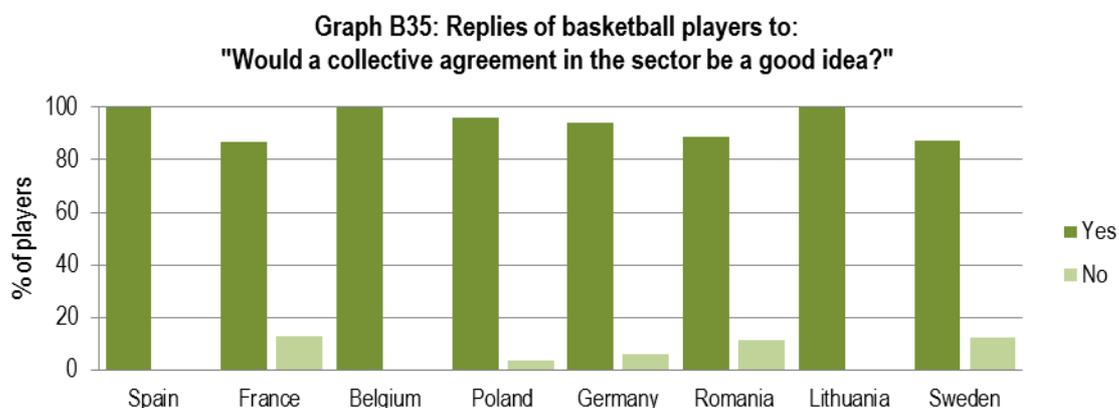
- Inconsistency between referees
- Referees not allowing small amounts of physical contact, despite the game requiring it
- The general low level of knowledge about the rules of basketball

Finally, one player remarked that they would like to see the introduction of a scoring system through which referees could be judged against their performance – just like the players !

Surprisingly, despite many players surveyed in Romania and Poland stating that they did not know of the existence of an association in the country in which they played, a relatively high proportion of these players said they are members of the country's players' association, as the graph below show.

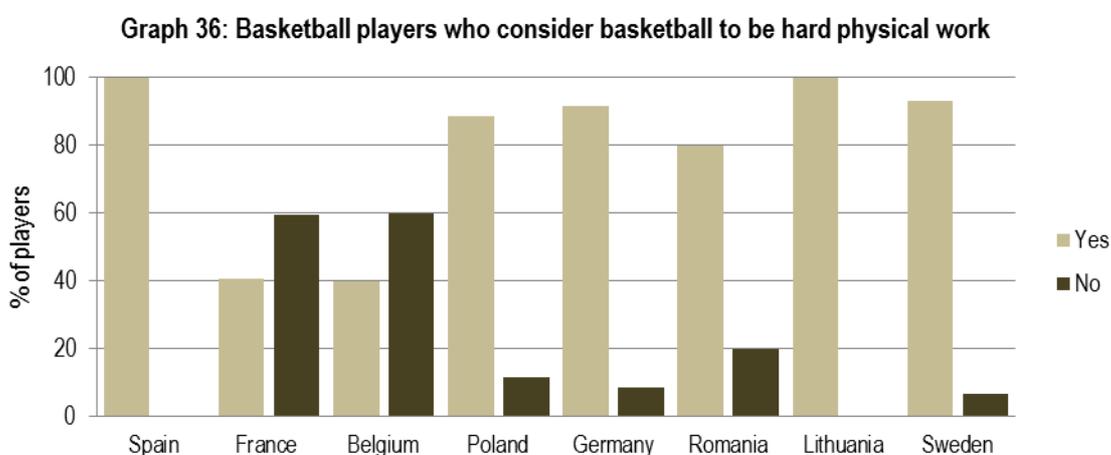


The notion of a sector agreement for basketball players has been discussed before. The rationale for such an agreement would be to set basic hours of work, salaries, pension arrangements, minimum insurance and working time and to guarantee basic minimum standards for professional players across the EU27. In response to this question, the vast majority of respondents expressed their support for a sector-wide collective agreement.

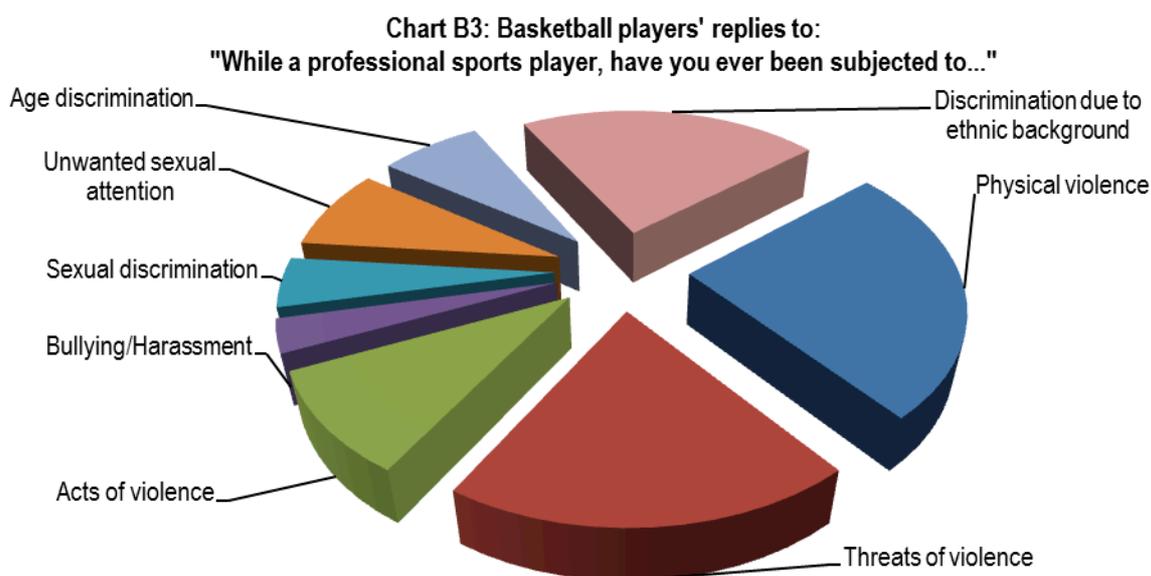


Players in all countries surveyed were overwhelmingly in favour of establishing a sector wide agreement to regulate minimum hours, wages, insurance cover and pension provision. Unfortunately, no further information is available from those players who oppose such an agreement. In fact, the prospect of creating a trade union for basketball players very interested interviewees unable currently to access such support and who are without union representation.

The responses to the question concerning the extent to which basketball can be considered hard physical work are varied, with a large percentage of players in Spain, Germany, Poland and Romania all answering positively to the question. On the other hand, players in France and Belgium were of the contrary view, as demonstrated by the graph below.

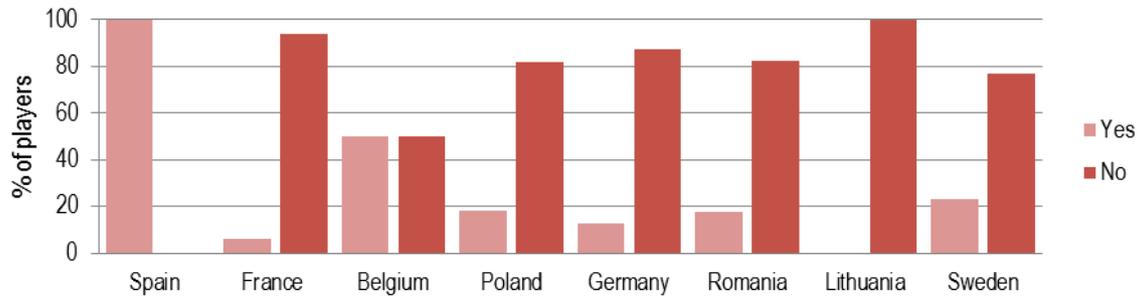


This section of the questionnaire sought to elicit the experiences of players in relation to threats or acts of aggression, discrimination and unwanted sexual behaviour by other players.



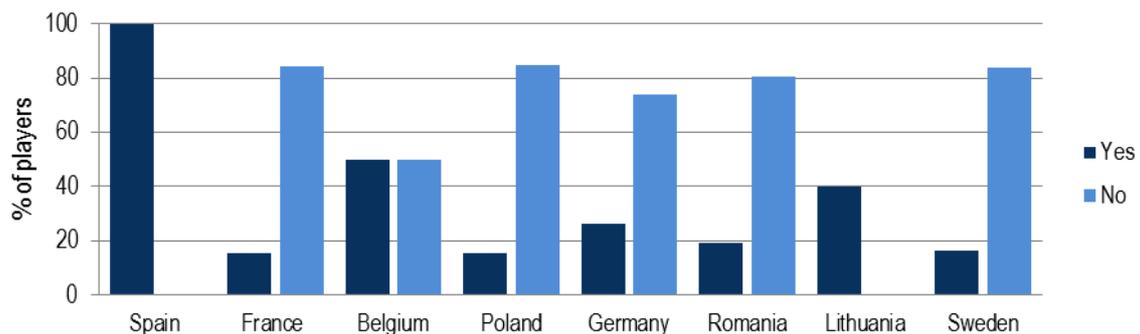
Just over 22 per cent (22.6%) of respondents stated that they were aware of any of the above taking place in the workplace, with a further 14 per cent (14.28) stated that they had personally suffered one of these in their own workplace. A disproportionately high number of players in Germany responded positively to these questions, perhaps requiring further investigation.

Graph 37: Basketball players that have personally suffered any of the following in their workplace



However, when asked about their own personal experiences of the above behaviour, with the exception of players in Spain, the majority of players surveyed replied that they had no such experiences personally.

Graph B38: Basketball players that have trained alone as a disciplinary measure

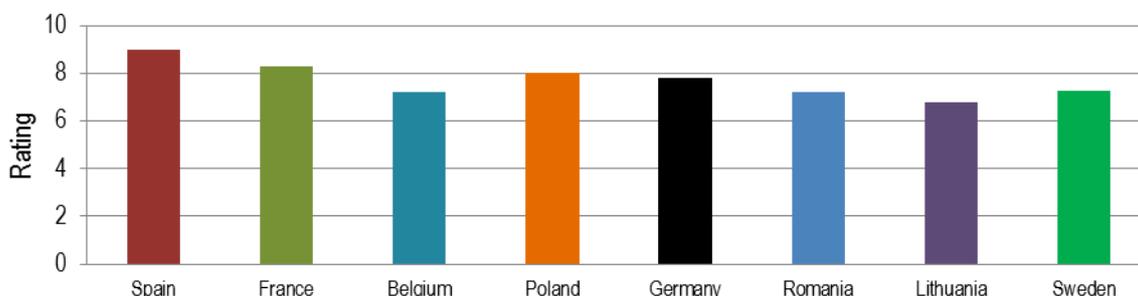


Again with the exception of Spain (keeping in mind the relatively low sample from players in this country), most respondents replied that they had not ever been required to train alone as a disciplinary measure. However, the number of players who have experienced this as a punishment should not be ignored and, in the case of Belgium, this practice appears rather more common than elsewhere – suggesting further enquiry necessary.

According to one interviewee, Swedish basketball is a specific case as it was, until very recently, a 'closed system' for over 20 years, resulting some players say, in a league in which clubs appear to be indifferent to losing and performing badly as there is little incentive for anyone to excel. Our contact said that they hoped that the opening of the league will create greater competition and at the same time, drive up the standards of players and their terms and conditions. However, the impact of this may not be felt for several years as the current generation of players, managers, owners and fans give way to a new generation with no experience of the former system.

Players appear relatively satisfied with their working conditions, as shown by the graph below. Our data shows that players in Spain are the most satisfied, while those in Lithuania, the least.

Graph B39: Basketball players' rating of their working conditions
(1=unsatisfied 10=satisfied)



According to our interviewee in Sweden, the lack of professional clubs affects the quality of basketball coaches, who are not as skilled as their counterparts abroad. In Sweden, coaches tend to work half time and have employment elsewhere too. On the other hand, our interviewee highlighted that the situation in Germany was entirely different from that of Sweden, describing the sport as the best and the country's basketball league as "the most organised I've ever seen".

Equipment

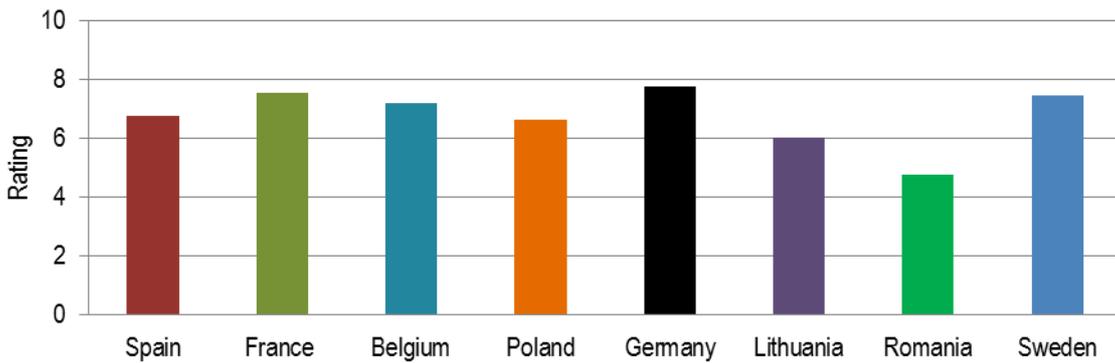
An overwhelming number of clubs provide their players with practice gear, although not all clubs demand their players wear it, as the graphs below show.

Graph B40: Basketball players who answered YES to questions about the practice gear provided by their club



On the whole, players appear to be satisfied with the quality and provision of their practice gear, although this does vary somewhat across the five countries with players in Germany and France the most satisfied.

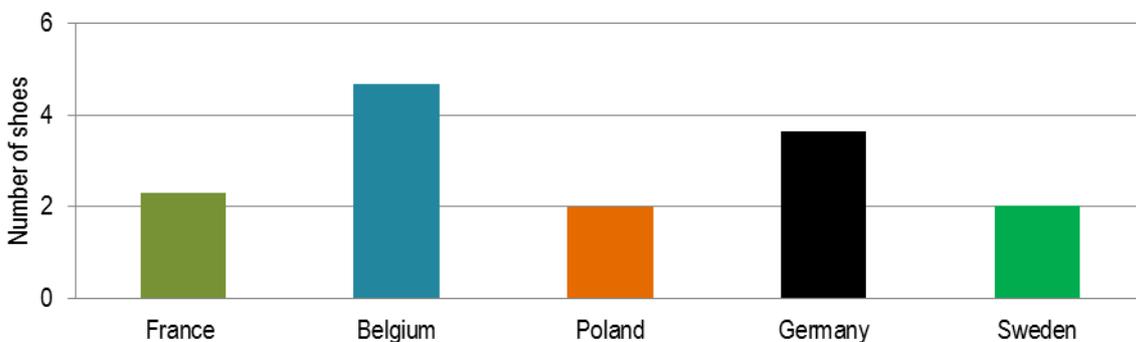
Graph B41: Basketball players' rating for practice equipment provided by their club
(1=unsatisfied 10=satisfied)



While the majority of players were provided with a set amount of pairs of playing shoes, a number of players (particularly those in France) are given a cash allowance to purchase their shoes themselves. These cash allowances were universally up to the value of €300. In all other countries surveyed, players were provided with a specific number of shoes.

With the exception of one player stating they do not receive any shoes, players in France are provided with an average of two pairs of shoes by their club. Although a smaller sample, players in Spain received as much as €500 in allowances to purchase their shoes, with one player being provided with 8 pairs of shoes.

Graph 42: Number of shoes provided for basketball players by their club

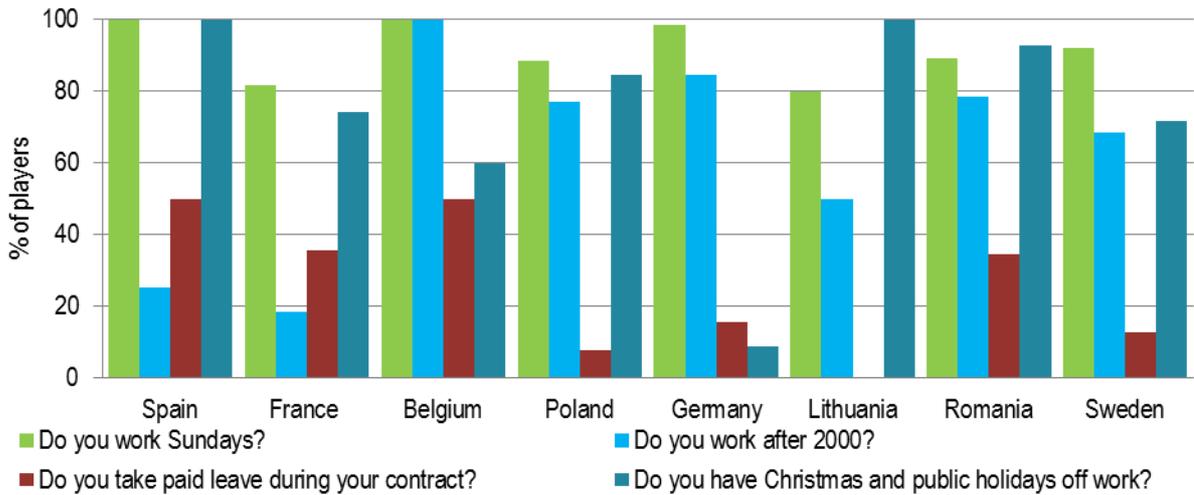


Despite the facilities offered by teams (which were described as world class by one interviewee), players criticised the insufficient number of shoes provided by the club. However, this appears to be related to the club's financial situation and is not a usual characteristic of Slovenian professional basketball.

Scheduling

From the data contained in the surveys, it appears that today professional basketball players across Europe must be prepared to work on Sundays and in the evenings, beyond 2000.

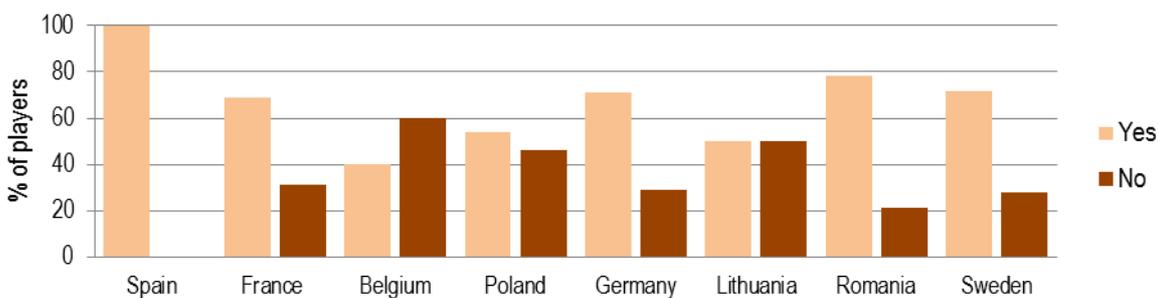
Graph B43: Basketball players replying YES to questions about their working schedule



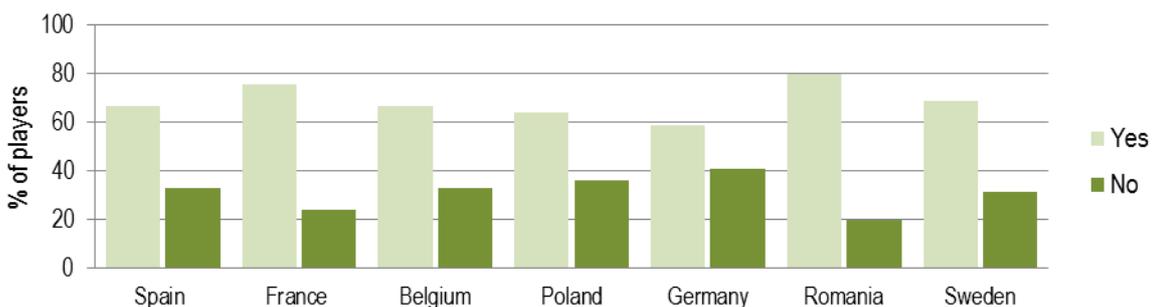
In line with the findings from the 2008 study, a large proportion of players are working on Sundays and beyond 2000 in the evening, suggesting that further attention ought to be paid to this issue. However, on a country by country basis, certainly in the cases of France and Spain, the previous trends highlighted in 2008 appear to have been reversed. Players in these countries are now less likely to work past 2000 in the evening.

A large number of players are taking leave during their contract, and there appears to be no correlation between this and whether or not the player is given time off at Christmas and on other public holidays.

**Graph B44: Basketball players' replies to:
"Do changes in your work schedule occur regularly?"**

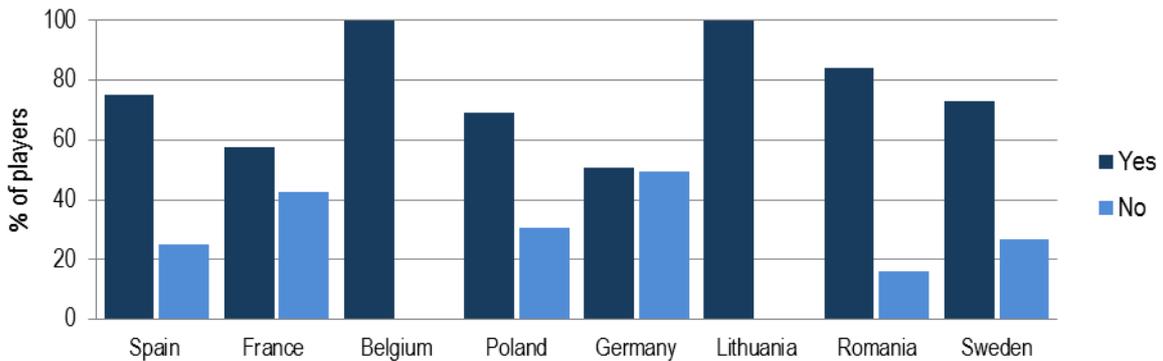


Graph B45: Basketball players who consider that their working hours fit in well with family and social commitments?



It is clear that players' work schedules are flexible, as the graph above shows. In every country, except in Belgium, more players stated that their work schedule is subject to change on a frequent basis. However, most players also state that their working lives fit in well with their social or family commitments. In addition, players also seem satisfied by the way games are scheduled and with the length of the season.

Graph B46: Basketball players who are satisfied with the way games are scheduled and with the length of the season



However, of those players with the contrary view, many complained that the season was too long, and that by arranging for two games to be played each week, the duration could be shortened. Players highlighted the short recovery time over the Christmas period.

Discipline

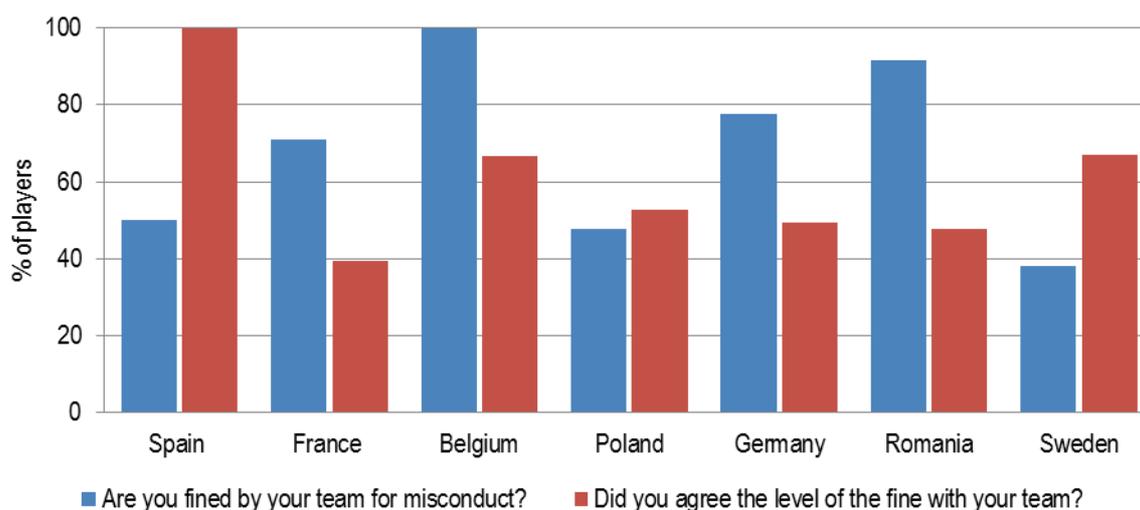
In Sweden, the club disciplinary system appears to be transparent and no real concerns were voiced by our interviewees or highlighted in responses to the survey. That said, there are instances in which new starters at a club will be made to carry out a ritualistic act (such as wearing an “I’m stupid” tee-shirt for their first week). Our interviews uncovered no evidence of bullying or harassment, and players suggested this was largely due to the lack of pressure upon players and their clubs to perform well, given the previous ‘closed-system’ regime. According to one interviewee, discipline in basketball generally varies from team to team and country to country, for example discipline is not something our contact described as harsh in Sweden (in fact just the opposite) and players are not fined, for breaches of the rules, in Germany.

Graph B47: Basketball players who answered YES to the following questions:



Surprisingly, there are players who are not familiar with their clubs' disciplinary rules. This is especially interesting given the responses to the question about players receiving a copy of their clubs' rules. However, this lack of awareness does not apply to players' knowledge about the disciplinary procedures for basketball generally. Fines for misconduct appear to be part and parcel of professional basketball playing across all countries we surveyed, with variations only in terms of personal experiences. However, when fined by their club, a great number of players had agreed with the level of fines imposed.

Graph B48: Basketball players who replied YES to questions about being fined for misconduct



Ice Hockey

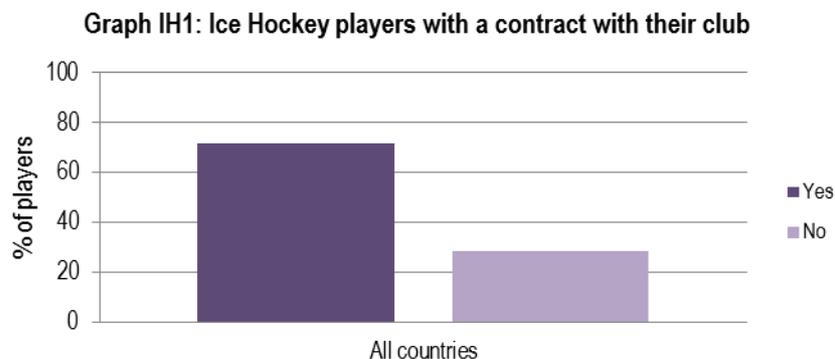
Profile of respondents

Due to the relatively low volume of replies to the surveys among hockey players, we are unable to produce country comparisons. However, below the responses from players in Denmark, Finland, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden have been aggregated to provide an adequate analysis for the report. Throughout the data for ice hockey players, there is a polarisation between the responses from players in Poland and Slovenia and from the answers provided by players in Denmark, Finland and Sweden. This perhaps highlights the real differences between the maturity and structure of the sport as a profession across Europe.

In every case, players in the sample were employed in their home country. The average age of respondents is 26 years, they are all male and just under 10 per cent are married. Respondents said they began their professional career, on average, at age 18 and have played for an average of nine years.

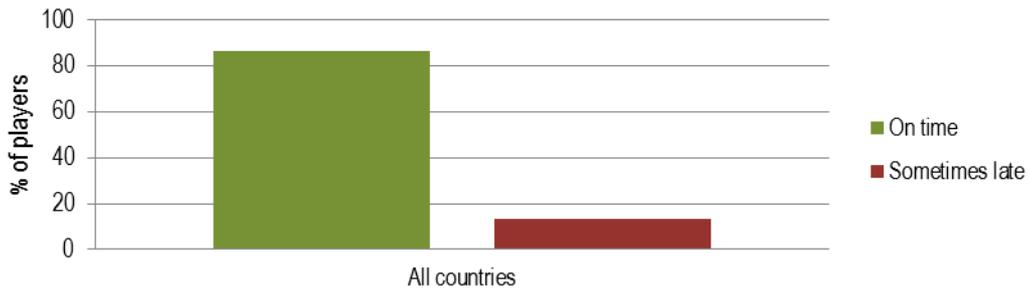
Contractual issues

Just over a third of ice hockey players (with a slightly larger share in Slovenia) have second jobs, perhaps highlighting the relatively lower wages there. From the countries surveyed, only players in Sweden and Finland have agents for which individual players pay in every case.



As the graph above shows, a relatively large number of players are without a contract with their club. In fact, of the four sports examined for this research, hockey players are by far the least likely to have a contract for their work. Finally, with the exception of a single player in both Poland and Slovenia, of the responses for hockey, only players from Denmark, Sweden and Finland have a contract with their employer.

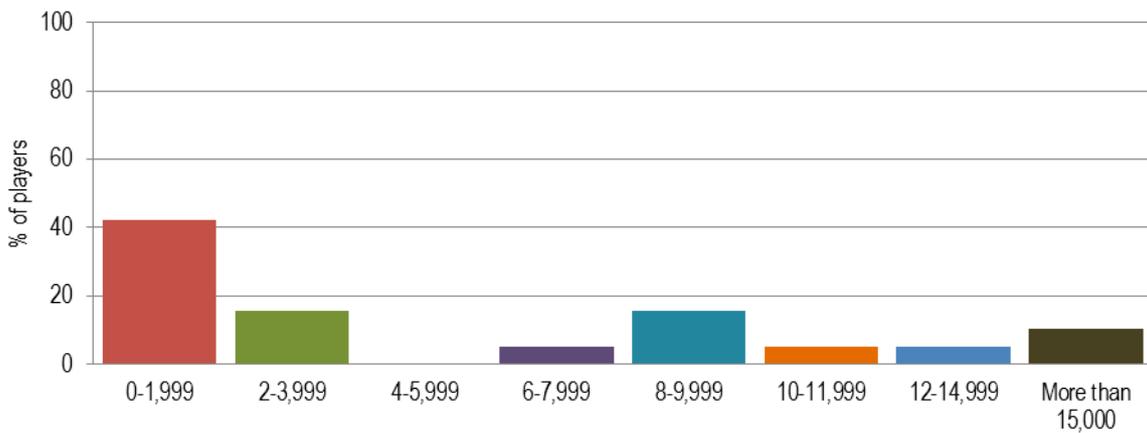
Graph IH2: Regularity of salaries of ice hockey players



Players from Slovenia did not answer the question about the timing of their wages. However, in all cases, except for players in Poland, hockey players always receive their wages on time. Polish players stated that sometimes their wages are paid late. One player, from Slovenia, stated they had never been paid and also had other employment, perhaps indicating that they are not indeed a professional player. However, more worryingly, it could be the case that they are professional but are not being paid for their services.

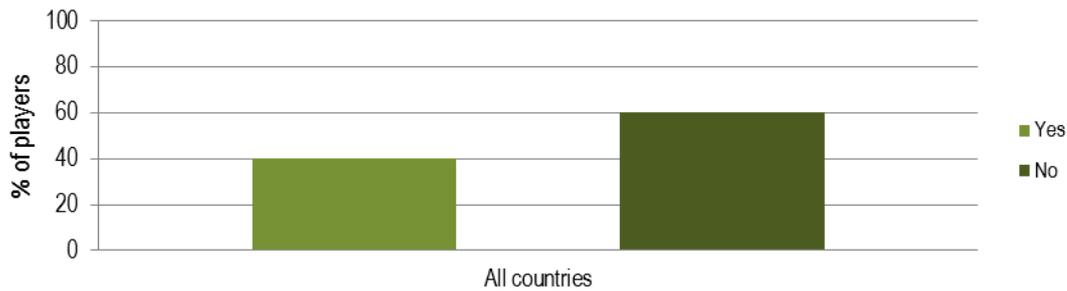
There is a higher percentage of players earning up to 1,999 euros per month in Slovenia and Poland, compared to higher income levels among 10 per cent of players in Sweden, where wages can be higher than 15,000 euros per month. Generally, ice hockey players in Sweden tend to receive higher wages than in the other countries surveyed.

Graph IH3: Monthly income for ice hockey players



No player in the survey has an additional contract for their image rights and none are provided with a car, while only a handful of players are provided with accommodation as part of their remuneration package. Those that are given accommodation were from Denmark and Finland. Finally, no players, other than a few from Sweden and Finland have private pension.

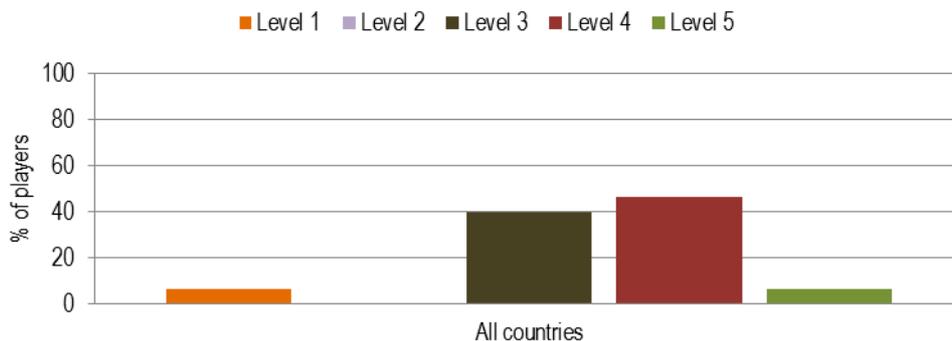
Graph IH4: Ice hockey players with a private pension



Education

Three quarters of the respondents have at some point in their career studied while player professional ice hockey, and there are country trends for this. As for the education level of players, there are no country trends, and a large proportion of players in the survey have attained level 3 or 4, as defined by international standards classification. The concentration of players who have achieved a Level 3 or 4 qualification could be a result of players pursuing occupationally related technical courses while employed as a professional player.

Graph IH5: Education level of ice hockey players

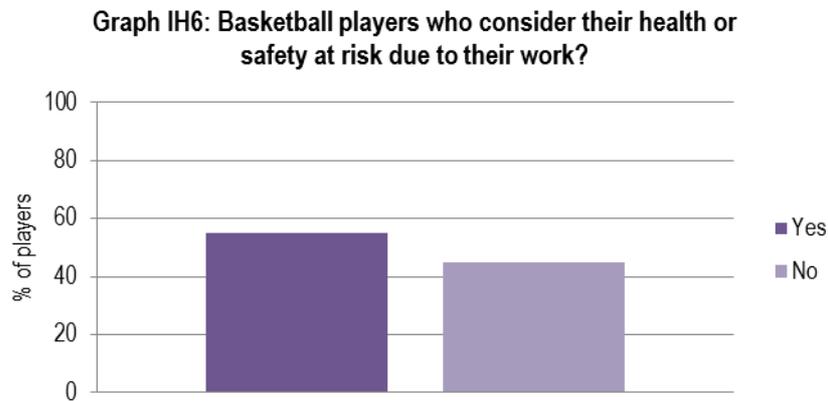


However there are differences between the experiences of players in different countries when their awareness of further career training is considered. Overall, almost 60 per cent of all ice hockey players surveyed were aware of the available courses. But at individual country level, players in Slovenia and Poland appear to be less aware of these opportunities. Again, players in Slovenia and Poland are also less likely to have been granted the opportunity to pursue these courses by their employer.

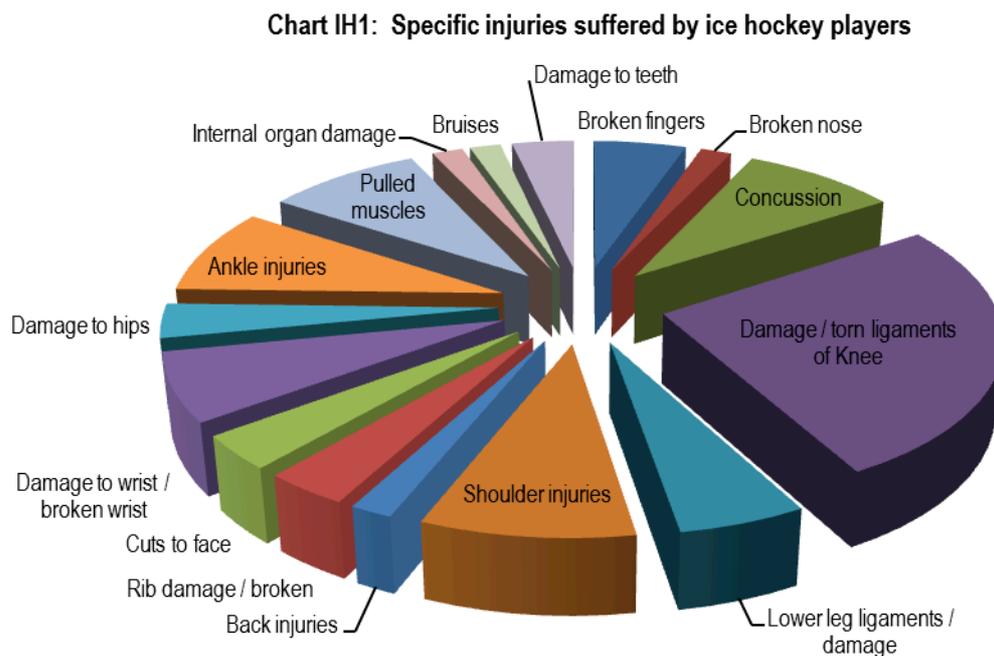
Although there is insufficient data to draw conclusions on their employer's willingness to financially support such course, it is possible to suggest that players from Finland and possible Sweden and Denmark, are more likely to have an employer willing to provide funding for these courses.

Health and Safety

When asked if they consider their health and safety to be at risk due to their occupation, players, regardless of country, were almost equally split.

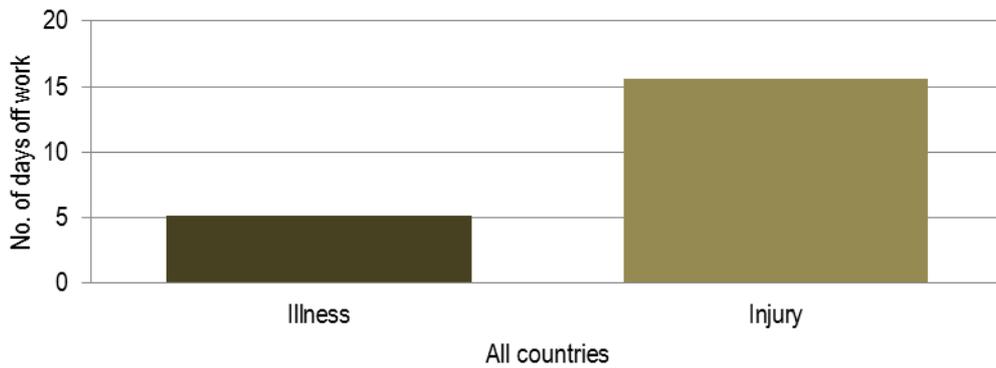


Beyond doubt, ice hockey players receive harsher injuries through their work than the players of the other three sports in this research, demonstrated by the pie chart below.



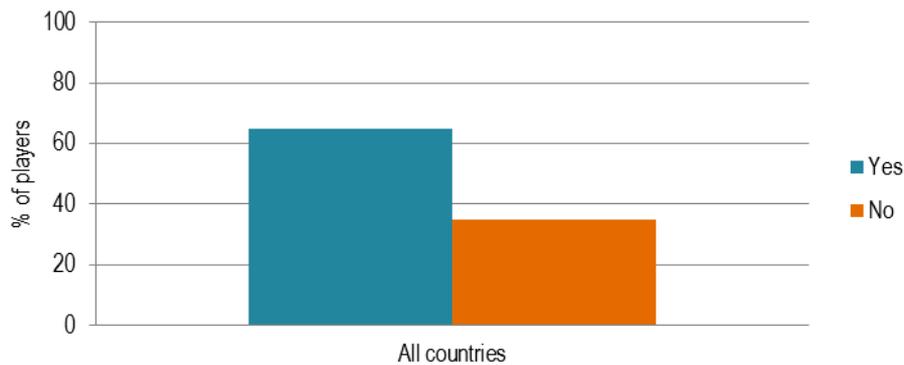
Ice hockey players were absent from work an average of 15.5 days in the 12 months preceding this research, while illness claimed just over 5 days. Of these players over 40 per cent were absent from work for more than six weeks, due to receiving an injury at work. However, all players were satisfied with the support they received from their employer's doctors and therapists.

Graph IH7: The number of days lost through illness or injury of ice hockey players in the past 12 months



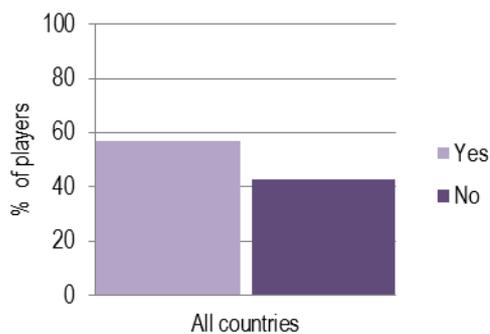
All players from Sweden and Finland stated that they have an insurance policy to protect them in the event of their career being cut short due to injury, while virtually all players in Slovenia and Poland said they did not.

Graph IH8: Ice hockey players who have insurance in the event they suffer a career ending injury

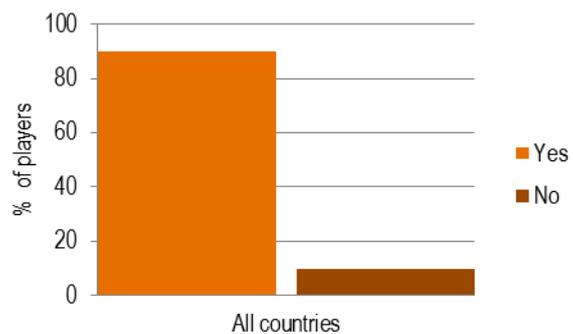


The majority of players stated that they have adequate access to their team’s therapists, and this view was shared across the countries examined. However, less than 60 per cent of players said that their team has a full-time physiotherapist, and this answer was evenly expressed across all countries.

Graph IH9: Ice hockey players whose team has a full-time physiotherapist



Graph IH10: Ice hockey players who have adequate access to therapeutic support



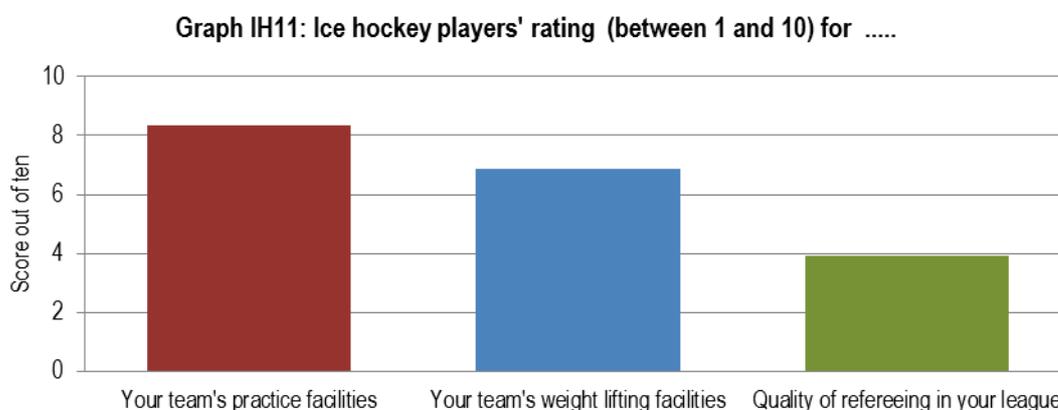
Finally, when asked to rate the extent to which their work can be considered stressful, players awarded just over six per cent on average.

Doping

Almost 80 per cent of players have been tested for doping at least once in their career and this was distributed across all four countries. However, players in Slovenia, according to the research, are 50 per cent less likely to be tested than players in Denmark, Finland, Poland and Sweden. Less than ten per cent of players have ever been tested away from the workplace and around the same number feel that this is an invasion of their privacy. Overall, just over one in two players had been tested in the 12 months preceding the research. Over 80 per cent stated that anti-doping rules should respect the law. Less than 20 per cent of players feel that doping is a problem for the sport, and 90 per cent of players would not want their personal data transferred to countries with lower standards of data protection than the European Union.

Conditions

There is a general consensus among players in Denmark, Finland, Poland and Sweden in relation to their team's provision of practice and weight lifting facilities, and the quality of refereeing in the league in which they play.

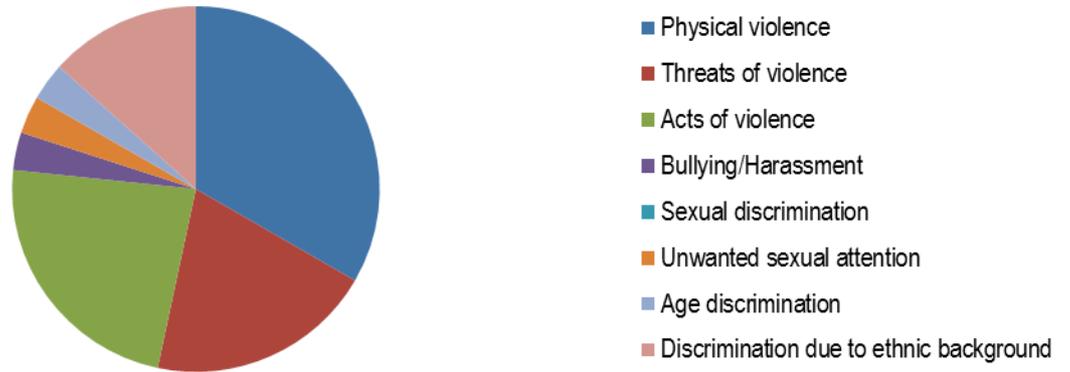


When asked to describe the changes to refereeing, players suggested the following:

- Greater fairness, commitment, passion and respect from referees
- Better focus and consistency both with detecting breaches of the game's rules and punishment for breaches (for example removing players committing gross breaches from the pitch)
- Better skills at reading the game and better understanding of the rules

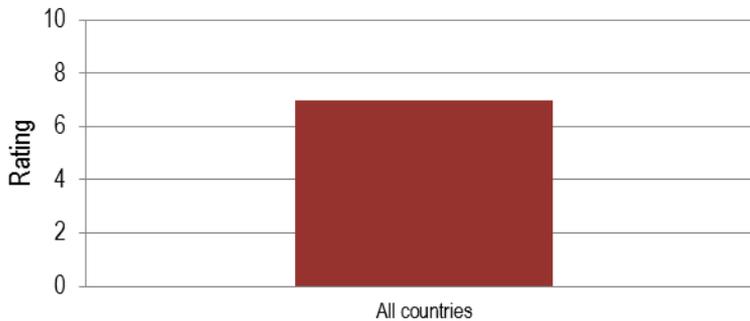
All players overwhelmingly support the establishment of a collective agreement for the sector. Ice hockey players spend, on average, almost one hour per day travelling to and from their workplace. And over 95 per cent of players consider ice hockey to be hard physical work.

Chart IH2: Acts of violence and discrimination experienced by professional ice hockey players



20 per cent of players have, at some point in their career, been made to train alone as a disciplinary measure by their employer. Finally, on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1=dissatisfied and 10=satisfied), players were asked to rate their working conditions. As the graph below shows, the average score given was seven.

Graph IH12: Ice hockey players' rating of their working conditions (1=unsatisfied 10=satisfied)



Equipment

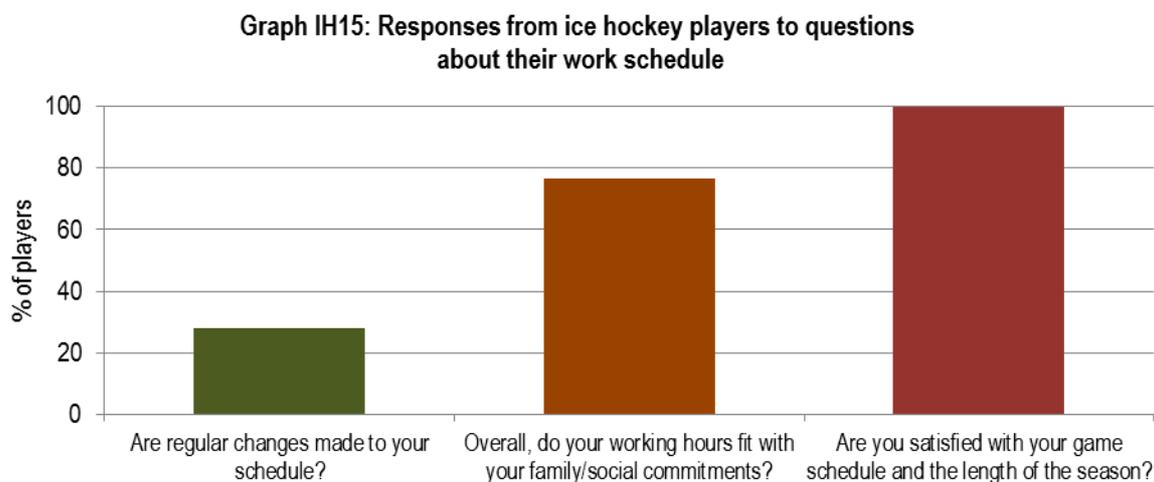
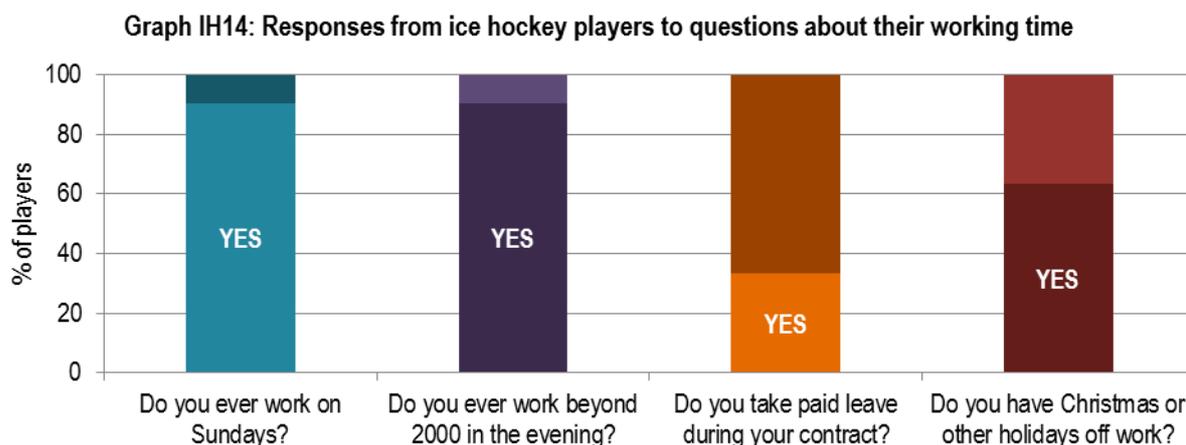
As the graph below shows, almost all players are provided with practice gear by their employer, which awarded 7 out of 10, and over 85 per cent are required to wear this at practice sessions. Almost 60 per cent of players are provided with two pairs of shoes by their employer.

Graph IH13: Ice hockey players who are



Scheduling

An overwhelming number of ice hockey players work on Sundays and in the evenings beyond 2000 hours, while the majority take paid leave during their contract and are permitted Christmas and other public holidays off work, as shown by the graph below.

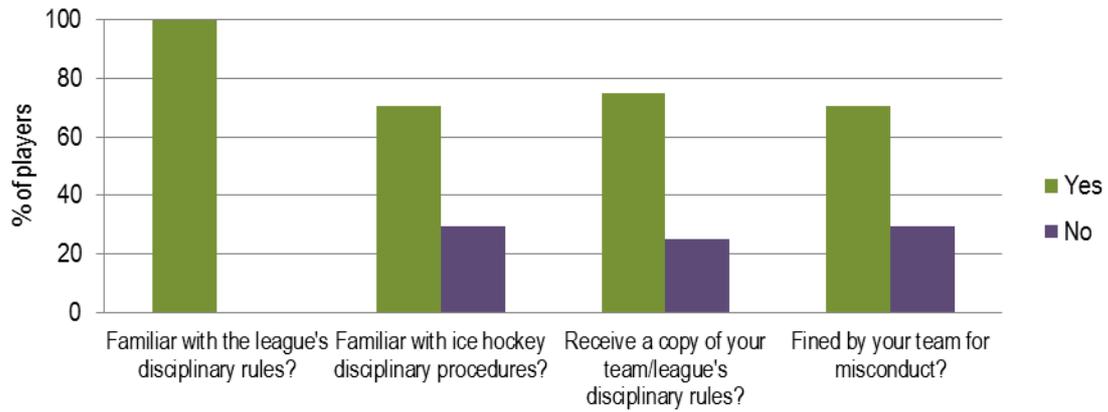


On average, players are provided with between 1 and 2 days' notice from their employer about changes to their work schedule.

Discipline

Players were asked a series of questions about disciplinary measures taken by their clubs and the responses are shown in the graph below. All players stated they were familiar the disciplinary rules of their own league, but less than three quarters of players were familiar with the sport's disciplinary procedures (70.59%), and the number of players that have been provided with a copy of the disciplinary procedures of their club or league is only slightly higher at 75 per cent.

Graph IH16: Responses by ice hockey players to questions regarding disciplinary measures



When it comes to the punishment for players' misconduct, just over 70 per cent of players are fined by their club and for all countries the fines range from 5 to 300 Euros. One player in Finland stated that the fine imposed by their club could be anywhere from 5 to 5,000 Euros. Finally, the majority of players said that they had agreed the amount of the fine with their team (70 %).

Conclusions

The conclusions of the research are grouped into the categories of the main report and highlight some of the trends and inconsistencies across all four sports and countries. A general conclusion across all sports and countries examined is the relationship between the geographical location of a club and the quality of working life as a professional sports player. That is, clubs in the west of Europe tend to provide better employment than those that are located in Eastern Europe. However, this is not universal across all areas of the study but does provide a general rule of thumb for the majority of topics the research covered.

Overall, the conclusions of the research ought to be seen within the context of a wider, multilateral effort by players' federations, professional clubs and leagues and the European Commission. These parties must all work towards improving the working lives of professional sports players, because it is only by creating a sustainable future for the players themselves that our sports can flourish and continue to provide an industry capable of entertaining audiences across Europe, promoting good health and wellbeing and, through the sector's supply chain and related consumer products, and provide a significant contribution to the European economies.

■ Contractual

Although the majority of players in the study have a formal contract with their club, there are still many who do not, raising issues such as security of employment and the application of employment legislation to protect their rights at work. There appears to be little relationship between the likelihood of players having other employment besides working as a professional sports player, and there are differences across sports and countries. In fact, the assumption may be that players in Eastern European countries undertake alternative work in addition to their work as a player due to the lower financial reward that professional sports brings in these states. However, players in Western Europe undertake a second form of employment just as often. For example, basketball players in France are just as likely to have a second job as their counterparts in Poland; whereas handball players in France are twice as likely to do so, compared with their counterparts in Poland. In fact, basketball players in Sweden are the most likely to have a second form of employment than basketball players in any other country examined in that sport.

The payment of players' salaries is a cause for concern, regardless of the country. In a number of countries, across all four sports, players state that their salary is sometimes or always paid late and this is something that ought to be addressed.

In terms of the breadth of their compensation package, there are very large variations between sports and countries. A number of players stated that they have the use of a car and accommodation as part of their package, while others have neither. The variations between players cannot be accounted for in terms of country of employment or type of sport. It appears that the determinant factor for these additional benefits is purely

bargaining power – i.e. the more in demand a player, the greater likelihood that they will benefit from these additional items.

Rugby players in France and Romania do not generally have a private pension nor do they contribute to any type of pension, which raises issues about players' capacity to make adequate provisions for retirement and something that ought to be further explored in this sport.

■ Education

It is clear from the findings that, at some point in their career, sports players have undertaken some form of study while working as a professional and the courses followed are related to their occupation. However, despite country variations and differences between the four sports, it is clear that players are not aware of educational opportunities for life beyond their career in sport and that employers are more often than not, unwilling to support their employees to gain further qualifications and prepare for their career after they retire from sport. This is a worrying trend and is a key issue, given the general policy orientation of the European Union and national government and the tendency across all sectors of the European economy for employers to provide more lifelong learning opportunities for their employees. The implications for this lack of support by employers could threaten the sustainability of professional sports as younger players become reluctant to pursue this occupation due to the difficulties posed by beginning a new career once they retire from sport.

Where employers have agreed to allow players to pursue non-occupational studies, the issue of funding of this training appears to fall on the shoulders of players in many cases, particularly for basketball players. For rugby players, their team paid for 60 per cent of this training; for handball, with the exception of players in France, players funded this training themselves in the majority of cases; almost 80 per cent of ice hockey players funded this training themselves; and the vast majority of players in Spain, Belgium, Germany, Romania and Sweden paid for this training themselves.

Given the certainty of players retiring from professional sport years, if not decades, prior to the statutory retirement age, the lack of awareness of non-sport related training opportunities and the low level of employer support for players wishing to pursue such training, the issues of lifelong learning and future employability urgently need addressing by the social partners. For one thing, if this trend continues future players may well be less likely to pursue professional sport as a career, threatening the future viability of the very clubs that are failing to support their employees at present.

■ Health and Safety

The latest figures for the proportion of workers in EU27 who report that their health is at risk due to their work show that in 2010 24 per cent of workers felt this way, a drop from 31 per cent in 2000. The findings for all four

sports in this study show that 63.2 per cent of sports players within the scope of the research feel that their professional poses a risk to their health. Additional findings from the research provide further information and an explanation of this perception. The responses from players across all four sports are littered with injuries – from broken bones, torn ligaments, concussion, injuries to the back and shoulders, damage to teeth to stress, general fatigue and sleeping problems. Overall, on average, players from the four sports combined were absent from work in the 12 months preceding the research due to illness a total of 3.38 days. The same figures for players absent due to injury show that on average sports players were off work due to injury for an average of 32.64 days in the last 12 months. According to the 5th Working Conditions Survey (WCS)⁷, the average number of absent days per worker across the EU27, and covering all sectors, was 14 days per year for health-related problems. Though it is not possible, through the WCS, to identify the precise number of days workers were absent due to a workplace accident, it is reasonable to conclude that days lost through workplace accidents ought to be lower than days lost through health related problems, suggesting that the number of days sports players are absent due to injury far exceeds that of other groups of workers. This is an incredible figure and ought to be given attention across the sport in the future.

Given the high number of days sports players are absent from work due to injury, it is surprising that less than a third of all players in the survey have a current insurance policy to protect them against a career ending injury (31.4%), suggesting there is a significant amount of work to carry out by the stakeholders to ensure this issue is addressed.

In addition, there are significant discrepancies between countries over the level of support provided to injured players by their employer and these needs addressing.

■ Doping

Although the majority of workers stated that tests for doping carried out away from the workplace did not infringe their privacy, a significant minority of players felt it did invade their privacy. However, it is very clear from the data that players who have been tested outside of their workplace for doping are far more likely to consider this as an invasion of their privacy than those who have not. This issue needs addressing and this can only be achieved through the social partners working together.

In terms of personal data, the majority of players would be concerned if their personal data was transferred to other countries in which there was less data protection than in the European Union. The extent to which players consider doping to be an issue for their sport varied between countries and the type of sport examined and the precise findings of the research are outlined in the table below. However, overall, almost 70 per cent of players across all four sports feel that doping is an issue.

⁷ “5th Working Conditions Survey”, Eurofound (2012)

Percentage of players from Handball and Basketball who consider doping to be an issue.

	Handball	Basketball
Spain	16.67	0
France	2.56	24.24
Poland	26.41	26.92
Romania	71.43	39.28
Germany	0.00	12.86

It is not possible to include Ice Hockey and Rugby as the results from these sports are aggregated due to the relatively small sample of surveys returned. However, there are clear distinctions between the views of all players from all countries, but this is particularly pronounced between players of handball and basketball in France and Romania, further details on which a closer examination of these sports in the two countries may provide.

■ Conditions

One consistent response from all players across all four sports, was the perception by players of the low quality of refereeing. Despite a slight variation in the rating (out of 10) for their teams' practice facilities and weight lifting facilities, there was virtually no variation in the score provided for the quality of refereeing in all sports. Players in Basketball, Handball, Ice Hockey and Rugby all rated the quality of refereeing below six out of ten (5.46, 5.42, 3.90 and 5.42 respectively). Thus, there is a consistent criticism across all four sports that the quality of refereeing needs attention and suggestions for improvement were provided by players and have been included in the relevant sport chapter of this report.

Without doubt, the extent of support for the creation of an industry-wide collective agreement to regulate minimum standards for working time, wages, pension provisions and minimum insurance provisions was overwhelming among players from all countries and sports.

The degree to which players have individually been subjected to acts of intimidation, bullying, harassment and discrimination were highlighted in the survey. The findings show that in all sports and across all countries professional players are routinely exposed to various unwanted physical acts, threats and bullying. Furthermore, players are also subjected to intimidation and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and age. The overall picture is of a working environment in which an individual player is very likely to find themselves exposed to this type of behaviour and this is certainly an area of professional sporting life which needs attention by both clubs and the leagues.

■ Equipment

On the whole, players from countries in western and northern Europe are significantly more likely to be provided with practice gear by their employers than are players based in central and Eastern Europe, and this trend is observable across all four sports. Presumably, this is due to the finances of clubs across Europe, rather than a divergence in employment policy, but further enquiry would be helpful in identifying the determinant factors for this divergence. Perhaps unsurprisingly, players whose club has provided them with practice gear are generally expected to wear this in practice sessions.

Conversely, handball clubs in Eastern Europe are more likely than their western counterparts to provide handball players with shoes, according to the results of the surveys returned⁸. For basketball, players were more likely to be provided with shoes from Belgium, France, Germany, Spain and Sweden than basketball players in Lithuania, Poland and Romania. Ice hockey players in Finland are all provided with shoes and players in Sweden are more likely to be provided with shoes by their employer than are players in Poland and Slovenia – further evidence of a divergence between east and western European states. Finally, rugby players in Romania appear to be more likely than players in France to be provided with shoes. However, the responses from players in France did not all include answers to this question.

■ Scheduling

The responses for questions about work schedules are varied, yet do not appear to follow a particular trend or pattern. The majority of all players across all four sports, with the exception of those in rugby, work Sundays. Although there are exceptions, most players from all four sports also work beyond 2000 hours in the evenings⁹.

Although the research findings for the prevalence of Sunday work show similar trends to those in the previous study, there does appear to be an increase in the number of handball players working in the evenings in both Spain and France.

Finally, the vast majority of players, across all countries surveyed and in all four sports, have Christmas and other public holidays off, with the exception of basketball players in Germany. Of these individuals, only just over 8 per cent have these public holidays off work.

Ice hockey players appear to suffer the least from regular changes to their work schedule and less than a third of hockey players stated this was the case. In contrast, with the exception of basketball players in Belgium and

⁸ For handball, surveys were returned from players in France, Poland, Romania and Spain.

⁹ The exceptions to working beyond 2000 hours are rugby players, also basketball players in Spain and France

Lithuania, the vast majority of players in all countries and sports examined regularly experience changes to their work schedule.

In terms of the notice period provided by employers for changes to work schedules, there appear to be no clear trends or patterns. The only conclusion that it is possible to make, and even then subject to caveats, is that players from countries in which the sport is well organised, structured and has a regulated labour market, tend to receive greater notice for these changes to their work schedule than players in countries elsewhere. Despite this, the majority of players are satisfied that their working life fits in well with their wider commitments outside the workplace. Although, many players would prefer less matches in the season and more time off around the Christmas / New Year period.

■ Discipline

In basketball, many players, particularly in Sweden and Spain, are not familiar with their league's or club's disciplinary rules, and, along with players from Poland, have not been sent a copy of the relevant documents for these – suggesting that clubs are failing to do this and the direct consequence is a lack of familiarity by players of the disciplinary rules of their club or league. A similar trend can be observed in handball. For handball, players in France and Poland are less likely to be familiar with their club's or league's disciplinary rules and these players are also less likely to have received a copy from their club or league. Given the low response rate and the aggregated results for both ice hockey and rugby it is difficult to observe a trend. However, ice hockey players are more likely than players of any other sport examined to know both their league's and their club's disciplinary rules and are also more likely to have received a copy of these. For players of rugby the findings are somewhere in between – rugby players appear to be familiar with the league's and their club's rules, yet only half of them have received a copy of the relevant documents.

While the value of the fine varies, the majority of players across all sports examined can be fined by their club for misconduct. Finally, players often agree the level of their fine with their club, but this does not appear to fit with any trends or patterns across the sports.

Recommendations

■ Salary payments

Too many players receive their salary late and this needs to be addressed.

The European Commission ought to investigate this issue further and create a strategy, involving UNI Europa Sport, player federations and employers to ensure this basic employment right is upheld.

■ Pension provisions

Not enough players have access to a pension.

The European Commission, with UNI Europa Sport and employers could jointly communicate the importance of pension provision to raise awareness among players and to increase their own personal provisions and hereby improving players' economic security.

■ Players not aware of further education programmes

Employers need to do more to highlight the educational opportunities for players outside their sport.

With the support of the European Commission, UNI Europa Sport ought to work with employers to ensure they raise the information available to players of the available education opportunities.

■ Lack of employer support for this type of training

Both general and financial support for training for courses outside sport is poor.

The European Commission has a clear policy approach to employer supported training and must ensure employers in this sector are unable to avoid their responsibilities to support their employees in their pursuit of additional skills and knowledge. The Commission and UNI Europa Sport could seek to influence the level of support made available by employers

■ Very high risk of injury

Professional sports carry a high degree of risk to players' health.

Employers need to ensure that adequate effort is made to minimise such risks

■ Lack of career ending injury insurance

Despite high levels of workplace injuries, few players have an insurance policy to protect them in the event of suffering a career ending injury.

The European Commission, employers and UNI Europa Sport ought to publicise the importance of health insurance

■ **Level of support for injured players varies**

*The amount of support players receive from their employer when injured varies enormously.
Employers and UNI Europa Sport to consider ways in which to improve this support*

■ **Quality of refereeing**

*Across all sports and countries, players complained about the quality of refereeing.
UNI Europa Sport to consider working with leagues to improve quality of refereeing*

■ **Doping rules**

The European Commission ought to provide a framework for the social partners to re-evaluate the process of testing outside of the workplace.

■ **Collective agreement**

The European Commission, through its work supporting sectoral dialogue must bring together both sides of the industry to begin discussions for creating the necessary environment within which a collective agreement could be introduced. Such an agreement could provide a comprehensive approach to tackling a number of other issues raised in the conclusions, such as pension provisions, access to education and lifelong learning, insurance for career ending injuries and for the transition from a player's career in professional sport to a post-player career.

■ **Acts of violence etc too high**

Players complained of excess exposure to threats or acts of violence and discrimination in the workplace.

The Commission and UNI Europa Sport should consider working with sports bodies to tackle the problem.

■ **Notice for changes to work schedule**

Players are routinely given too little notice of changes to their work schedule.

UNI Europa Sport to consider working with sports bodies and employers to monitor the situation and plan accordingly

■ **Increase awareness of disciplinary rules**

It appears that players that are not aware of their club's or league's disciplinary rules could be improved by ensuring clubs issue the necessary documents to their team members

UNI Europa Sport to consider communicating the problem to employers in an attempt to improve the situation

ANNEX

Below is a copy of the questionnaire used in the research. All questionnaires were virtually identical in their contents, and differed only by the name of the sport at question one. The version below, in English, was sent to basketball players.

SURVEY
ON THE WORKING CONDITIONS
OF PROFESSIONAL SPORTS PLAYERS
IN EUROPE
VS/2011/0178



Funded by a grant from
the European Commission
DG Employment, Social Affairs
and Equal Opportunities
Industrial Relations and Social Dialogue
Project VS/2011/0178

A SURVEY OF THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES IN EUROPE

This survey on the working conditions of professional athletes in Europe will help the entire sporting community - teams, players, federations, agents, national governmental institutions and European institutions – better understand the current conditions under which professional sports people are employed, and where, if necessary, improvements are needed.

This survey is being undertaken by UNI Europa -a European trade union federation- and EU Athletes –The European Elite Athletes Association- an independent federation of player associations representing over 25,000 professional athletes across Europe, with the financial support from the European Commission, under the project “FOCUS ON ATHLETES”.

This study represents the first such investigation into the terms and working conditions of professional sports people and the largest to date. In 2008 the European Basketball Players Association carried out a similar study and the information from individual players greatly enhanced the knowledge of the sports sector among national associations, government and European institutions. It also highlighted the difficulties and challenging working conditions many of our affiliates’ members are employed under. This new study will widen the scope of its investigations and examine the employment and working conditions in the basketball, handball, rugby and ice hockey professions.

The data received by completing this survey will remain anonymous and will not be disclosed on an individual basis. However the overall picture of the employment and working conditions obtained through this survey will enable national associations and governments to address some of negative conditions under which professional sportspeople operate.

With the future two years test phase for the European social dialogue in the sport sector, this survey will help us to provide to the stakeholders relevant information regarding the improvement of the working condition in professional sports in Europe.

With the expansion of the European Union, it is clear that more information is needed about the conditions of players in countries where no players association exists. It is also clear that, in order to make a comparison, information is needed about the current working conditions in countries with long established associations.

Thank you for your participation!

Jean-François REYMOND

General Secretary of EU Athletes

TEAM INFORMATION

1. Sport: basketball
2. Name of your League: Click here to enter text
3. Team name: Click here to enter text
4. Did you play for your country's national team last season? YES NO

PERSONAL INFORMATION

5. Gender: Male Female
6. How old are you? Click here to enter text
7. Are you married? Click here to enter text
8. Do you have children? YES NO
If so, how many Click here to enter text
9. What is your nationality? Click here to enter text
10. Do you speak the local language? YES NO
11. Please rate your ability to speak the local language on a scale of 1-10
Not able to speak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Native Speaker*
12. How old were you when were first paid for playing basketball? Click here to enter text

CAREER

13. How many years have you played professional basketball? Click here to enter text
14. How many seasons have you played for your current team? Click here to enter text
15. What age do you expect to be when you stop playing professionally? Click here to enter text
16. How many different teams have you played for during your career? Click here to enter text

CONTRACT

17. Do you have any other paid employment? YES NO
18. Do you have an agent? YES NO
19. Is he/she paid by you or the team? me team
20. Do you have a contract with your team? YES NO
21. Does your team pay your taxes or do you? I pay my own taxes My team pays my taxes
22. What is your monthly total compensation (in Euros)?
 0-1,999 2,000 - 3,999 4,000- 5,999 6,000 - 7,999
 8,000 - 9,999 10,000 - 11,999 12,000 - 14,999 Over 15,000
23. Are you paid on time or are payments sometimes late?
 Always on time Sometimes late Always late No reply
24. Are you provided with accommodation as part of your compensation? YES NO
25. If yes, please rate your satisfaction with your accommodation on a scale of 1-10?
not at all satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *very satisfied*
26. Do you have a separate contract for your image rights? YES NO
27. Do you receive the use of a car as part of your compensation? YES NO
28. Do you have a private pension? YES NO
29. Do you contribute to the pension? YES NO

EDUCATION

30. Were you ever a student and a professional player at the same time? YES NO
31. What level of education have you completed?
 Level 1 - Compulsory primary education
 Level 2 - Compulsory secondary education
 Level 3 - Upper secondary education
 Level 4 - Bachelor's or first degree
 Level 5 - Master's or higher degree
 Level 6 - PhD
32. Are you aware of the available educational programs after your career in basketball?
 YES NO
33. Has your employer ever allowed you to participate in training programs for work, other than as a professional basketball player? YES NO
34. If yes, who paid for these courses? me employer

HEALTH AND SAFETY

35. Do you feel your health or safety is at risk due to your work? YES NO
36. If yes, how does your work affect your health?
 hearing problems backache headaches
 muscular pains injuries stress
 overall fatigue sleeping problems
other: [Click here to enter text](#)
37. How many days of work have you missed in the last year due to illness or injury?
illness [Click here to enter text](#) *injury* [Click here to enter text](#)
38. Please list injuries or illnesses that you have suffered throughout your career:
[Click here to enter text](#)
[Click here to enter text](#)
39. Were you satisfied with the level of support you received from the team's doctors and therapists? YES NO
 If not, what was the problem? (please answer in space below)
[Click here to enter text](#)
40. Has an injury ever kept you from playing for more than 6 weeks?
 YES NO
41. Do you have an insurance policy against a career ending injury? YES NO
42. Does your team have a full time physiotherapist? YES NO
43. If YES, then do they:
 Attend practice sessions Only travel with the team Both
44. Do you have adequate access to therapeutic support (tape, ice, massages, etc.)?
 YES NO
 If not, what is missing? [Click here to enter text](#)
45. Is playing professional basketball a stressful job? Please rate on a scale of 1-10:
not stressful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *stressful*

DOPING

46. Have you ever been tested for doping? YES NO
47. If yes, have any of these doping controls taken place outside of the workplace?
 YES NO
48. If yes, how many doping controls have you undergone in the last year? Click here to enter text
49. Do you feel that this is an invasion of your privacy? YES NO
50. The WADA Athletes Commission gives advice to WADA on anti-doping issues.
Can you name one or more of its members?
Click here to enter text
51. Do you feel doping is a problem in professional basketball? YES NO
52. Would you want your personal information transferred to countries with lower data protection standards than the E.U.? YES NO
53. Do you think that anti-doping rules should respect the law (including human rights conventions)? YES NO

CONDITIONS

54. How satisfied are you with your team's practice facilities on a scale of 1-10?
unsatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *satisfied*
55. How satisfied are you with your club's weight lifting facilities on a scale of 1-10?
unsatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *satisfied*
56. How satisfied are you with the quality of your league's refereeing on a scale of 1-10?
Unsatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *satisfied*
If you are unsatisfied, what specific area or situation could the referees improve?
Click here to enter text
Click here to enter text
57. Is there a players association in your country? YES NO
Are you a member of the association? YES NO
58. Do you think a collective agreement between the players and the league, establishing standards such as a minimum salary, pension provisions, minimum insurance or working times, would be a good idea? YES NO
59. Have you ever suffered violence in the course of your work? YES NO
60. How much time do you spend travelling to and from work? Click here to enter text
61. Do you consider basketball to be hard physical work? YES NO
62. While carrying out your duties as a professional sports player, have you ever personally been subjected to:
 Physical violence *Threats of physical violence* *Acts of physical violence*
 Bullying or harassment *Sexual discrimination* *Unwanted sexual attention*
 Age discrimination *Discrimination due to ethnic background*
63. Are you aware of any of these activities taking place in your workplace? YES NO
Did you ever have to train alone as discipline measure? YES NO
64. On the whole, are you satisfied with the working conditions in your job?
unsatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *satisfied*

EQUIPMENT

65. Does your team provide practice gear? YES NO
66. Are you required to wear this during practice? YES NO
67. Please rate the practice gear and equipment of your team on a scale of 1-10?
Poor quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Excellent quality*
68. Are you provided with shoes for basketball? YES NO
 If so, how many? [Click here to enter text](#)

SCHEDULING

69. Do you ever work on Sundays? YES NO
70. Do you ever work nights (after 20:00)? YES NO
71. Do you take paid leave during your contract? YES NO
72. Do you have Christmas or other holidays off work? YES NO
73. Do changes in your work schedule occur regularly? YES NO
74. Typically, how much warning are you given about these changes? [Click here to enter text](#)
75. In general, do your working hours fit in well with your family or social commitments? YES NO
76. Are you satisfied with the way games are scheduled and with the length of the season? YES NO
77. Please briefly describe below what changes should be made?
[Click here to enter text](#)
[Click here to enter text](#)
[Click here to enter text](#)
[Click here to enter text](#)

DISCIPLINE

78. Are you familiar with your league's disciplinary rules? YES NO
79. Are you familiar with basketball disciplinary procedures? YES NO
80. Are you fined by your team when you are disciplined for misconduct? YES NO
81. If yes, what is the amount of the fine (in Euros)? [Click here to enter text](#)
82. Did you agree the level of the fine with your team? YES NO
83. Did you receive a copy of your team/league's disciplinary rules? YES NO

**IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE A COPY OF THE RESULTS,
PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS ON THE BACK OF THIS FORM**

SURVEY RESULT NOTIFICATION

If you wish to receive a copy of the results of the survey, please fill out your name and email address

(please print clearly):

Last name: [Click here to enter text](#)

First name: [Click here to enter text](#)

Email address: [Click here to enter text](#)