



PRESS RELEASE

28 September 2026

"Stop asking women to prove they belong": SEPK and SheCOACH at the ENSE Forum 2026

Magda Georgiou, board member of the Greek Basketball Coaches Association (SEPK) and project manager of the Erasmus+ SheCOACH project, spoke at the panel "Coming off the Sidelines: Advancing Women in Sport Professions" at the ENSE Forum 2026, held on 24 September at FH Kufstein, Austria. She shared the stage with Lisa Steffny of ESV Olympia Köln and Equaletics e.V. The panel was moderated by Lisa Kalina of European Network of Sport Education (ENSE), who also works on SheCOACH as a project manager.

On where sport loses women coaches, she pointed first to mid-career, when caregiving years begin. Women in Greece spend almost twice as much time as men caring for children and elderly relatives, and coaching schedules are not built around that. More than 40 coaches interviewed for SheCOACH confirmed a second drop, between grassroots and elite level, where hiring still runs through informal, mostly male networks. "It's not about qualifications," she said. "It's about who has access to the room."

She also referred to the work of SheCOACH, an Erasmus+ Sport project, which brings together federations, coach educators, clubs and coaches' associations to close the gender gap in basketball coaching. "Change like this doesn't happen from one project alone," she said. "It happens when all of these people are in the room together."

She stressed the role of mentoring, citing FIBA Europe's Mentoring Program for Female Coaches, which has supported 26 coaches from 16 countries since 2021. "Talent gets women into coaching," she said, "but mentors, visible role models and real networks are what keep them there."

As a practical step, she noted that clubs already know how to build a coaching pipeline, but only for boys: promising young male players are regularly asked to help coach younger teams. "I have never once seen a club do the same thing with a girl player," she said. "It costs nothing. We just don't do it for both genders equally."



Co-funded by
the European Union

Co-Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. Project: 101133095 — SheCOACH — ERASMUS-SPORT-2023. Website: <https://shecoach.eu>.

"If we really want women to come off the sidelines," she said, "we need to stop asking them to prove they belong, and start giving them what we've always given men without a second thought: real opportunities, real trust, and room to grow."

Asked what sports organisations could do starting tomorrow, she said: "In sport, the stereotype shows up as: leadership looks like a man, a raised voice, a certain kind of authority. The simplest thing an organisation can do is make it a habit to say that out loud when it shows up — in a selection meeting, a bench appointment, a promotion — name it, and choose differently. You don't need a new policy for that. You need someone in the room willing to say, 'why not her?'"

SheCOACH website: <https://shecoach.eu>

SheCOACH social media: <https://www.facebook.com/shecoach.eu> -
<https://www.instagram.com/shecoachproject>



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Co-Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. Project: 101133095 — SheCOACH — ERASMUS-SPORT-2023. Website: <https://shecoach.eu>.