

# FIT BALKANS NEWSLETTER

Improving the Subjective Well-being  
of Young Women in Balkans through  
Interventions in their Physical Activity



## POLICYMAKING WORKSHOP

**Date:** May 9th, 2025

**Location:** Štip, North Macedonia at Goce Delčev University

On May 9th, 2025, a key milestone was reached in the Fit-Balkans project with the organization of the Policymaking Workshop (WP8) held at Goce Delčev University in Štip, North Macedonia. The event gathered a diverse group of policy stakeholders, university researchers, local partners, and civil society actors to discuss how research findings from the project can inform healthier, more inclusive and gender-responsive policies across the Balkans.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Fit Balkans is a 36-month Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership in Sport project, co-funded by the European Union, dedicated to promoting active lifestyles and improving the wellbeing of young women aged 18-30 in the Balkan region. The project brings together a multidisciplinary partnership of academic institutions, NGOs, and practitioners to design interventions, share expertise, and generate policy-relevant research.

As the project nears completion, recent activities provided key moments to reflect on results, engage stakeholders, and plan for long-term impact. This newsletter highlights two of these milestone events.



Co-funded by  
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# WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

*This Policymaking Workshop emphasized the importance of evidence-based policymaking in tackling health disparities among young women in the Balkans. By aligning scientific findings with practical, inclusive, and locally adaptable policy actions, the Fit-Balkans project strengthens the foundation for long-term well-being and active urban living. Stakeholder participation, vibrant dialogue, and practical recommendations made this event a valuable step forward toward healthier, more equitable Balkan societies.*



## Key Research Findings Presented

- Low levels of physical activity among participants in urban areas, especially in Serbia and Greece
- High screen time, with average daily use exceeding 5 hours, often replacing time for physical activity
- Unequal access to walking and cycling infrastructure; 70% reported a lack of alternative cycling routes in their neighborhoods
- Positive correlation between well-developed walkable areas and higher activity levels, particularly in Bulgaria and North Macedonia
- Perceived well-being varied across countries but was generally linked to lifestyle factors such as active transportation and reduced sedentary behavior

## Recommendations Presented to Policymakers

- Design safe, gender-sensitive public spaces and bike parking
- Involve women in urban planning
- Offer free or subsidized fitness programs for all life stages
- Promote workplace fitness and flexible hours
- Provide transport support and women-only sessions
- Use apps and digital campaigns to boost activity
- Include fitness in school/university programs
- Train local women as community health ambassadors
- Combine physical and mental health support (e.g., yoga, counseling)





# FINAL MEETING

**Date:** June 16–18, 2025

**Location:** National Technical University of Athens (NTUA)

*This gathering brought together all project partners to formally conclude the three-year Erasmus+ collaboration focused on enhancing the physical and mental well-being of young women across the Balkans.*

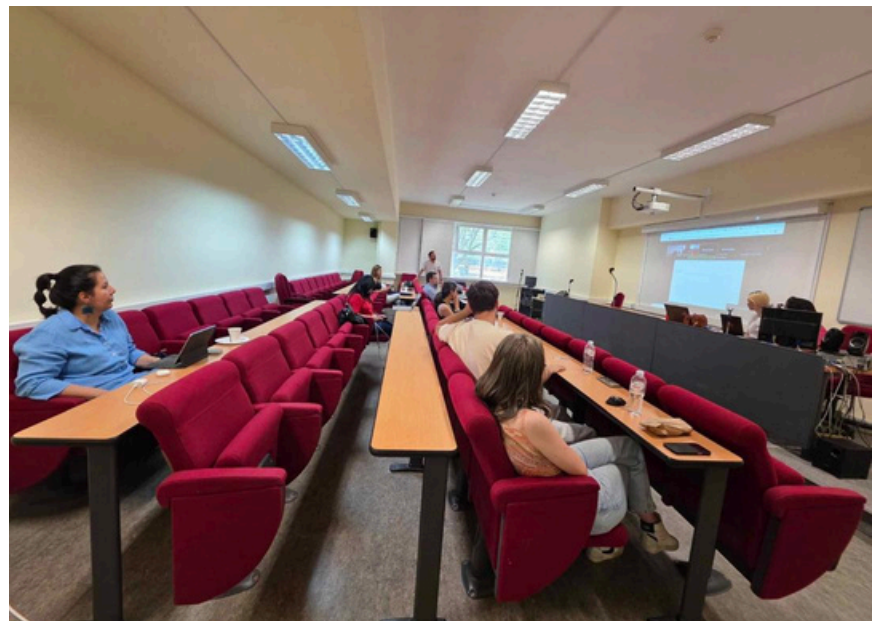


## Purpose of the Meeting

*The primary goal of the meeting was to reflect on the overall progress of the project, assess results across all work packages, and finalize the documentation for reporting and dissemination. It also served as a platform to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and strategies implemented throughout the project.*

## Forward Outlook

*The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to sustaining the project's long-term impact. Partners emphasized the importance of continuing advocacy for active lifestyles, inclusive urban planning, and health education for women, ensuring that the knowledge and momentum gained through Fit-Balkans extend beyond its official timeline.*



## Activities and Discussions

*Over two full working days, partners delivered comprehensive presentations summarizing their contributions to research, data collection, awareness-raising, and communication activities. These discussions included key findings, implementation challenges, and best practices.*

*Additionally, dedicated sessions were held to review the Final Report and Financial Report, ensuring consistency and completeness before submission to the European Commission.*

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