

Welcome to Our First Newsletter

We are delighted to share the first newsletter of the Don't (meno) PAUSE project. Funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Sport programme, Don't (meno) PAUSE brings together six partner organisations from Croatia, Greece, Italy, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Netherlands with a shared mission of empowering women aged 40-60 to stay active, informed, and connected during and beyond menopause. Through a combination of research, education, digital tools, and community sport events, the project aims to break the silence and stigma around menopause and promote lasting wellbeing through physical activity.



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About the Project

The Don't (meno) PAUSE project launched on 1 January 2026 and will run until 30 June 2028. Over thirty months, the consortium will develop a range of practical resources including a digital handbook drawing on more than 100 real-life menopause experiences, twenty expert-led video modules covering exercise, nutrition, and mental wellbeing, and the MenoTalks platform which is a virtual community space where women can connect, share, and access expert-led support. The project will also organise “Sport in Menopause” community events in five countries, each bringing together at least thirty women to celebrate movement, share stories, and build local networks of support.



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The Kick-Off Meeting: Where It All Began

In March 2026, all six partners gathered in Rome for the first transnational project meeting which was the kick-off that officially launched our journey together. The meeting gave everyone the opportunity to align on project objectives, clarify responsibilities, and establish the working structures that will guide the next two and a half years. Key discussions covered the dissemination strategy, quality assurance procedures, research implementation, financial reporting, and the first steps of the extended research phase. For PESG, the project coordinator, it was a crucial moment to introduce the monitoring plan, share implementation guidance, and ensure all partners were ready to move forward with confidence.



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For those joining the consortium for the first time, the experience was both professionally enriching and personally inspiring. ANCE from Greece shared that the meeting created a wonderful space for open discussion, allowing the team to present the Dissemination Plan and clarify the objectives of each Work Package. BGKMU from Ukraine described gaining valuable insight into collaborative Erasmus+ project management and establishing strong communication channels for future cooperation. ROMNI APS from Italy highlighted the shared commitment of all partners to women's wellbeing, inclusion, and community-based work. Women for Women International from Bosnia and Herzegovina arrived with deep experience in women's empowerment and left with a clearer sense of direction and renewed motivation to reduce stigma around menopause. PESG noted that what stood out most was the genuine enthusiasm, openness, and willingness to collaborate from the very first day.

Voices from the Consortium

“Menopause is still a topic surrounded by silence for many women. Through this project, we want to show that physical activity, education and community support can make a real difference and help women feel stronger, healthier and less alone during this life period.”

- Mateja Šimunović, Project Coordinator, PESG



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“This project gives ROMNI the opportunity to speak about menopause, health, and wellbeing in a way that is inclusive, respectful, and close to Roma women’s real-life experiences. Through this work, we want to create safe spaces where women can share their stories, receive relevant information, and feel supported in a life phase that is often not discussed openly.”

- Saska Jovanovic, ROMNI APS

“Through Don’t (meno) PAUSE, we want to help create a space where women feel informed, supported and encouraged to stay active. For our work it is very important to communicate to women in Bosnia and Herzegovina that menopause should not be a stepping back from movement, confidence or community activities.”

- Women for Women International



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Activities Since the Kick-Off Meeting

Since the kick-off meeting in Rome, the consortium has moved swiftly into action across all partner countries, combining internal coordination with outreach, research, and early community engagement.



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Across the partnership, the first major shared effort was Phase 1 of the extended research, a quantitative survey reaching women in perimenopause and menopause. Women for Women International collected responses from 65 women, BGKMU surveyed 101 women, PESG reached out to 50 women, ATERMON surveyed 20, and ANCE gathered 50 responses, building a rich initial picture of women's lived experiences with menopause, physical activity, and wellbeing across different

national contexts. PESG, as project coordinator, supported partners throughout this data collection process and coordinated the monitoring of project indicators.



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Phase 2 of the extended research (the qualitative focus groups) is now well underway. Women for Women International was among the first to complete this step, hosting a focus group on 13 May 2026 at the Žene za žene Sist'Her Center in Sarajevo, with 10 women participating in person. ROMNI APS held an initial focus group in Italy involving seven women over the age of 45, facilitated by Dr. Elisei Petrovici, exploring perceptions of change, eating habits, and participants' needs and expectations.

June 2026



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ANCE followed closely, organising its focus group on 25 May 2026 at the WHEN Hub in central Athens, where ten women aged 40 to 60 spent ninety minutes in open, candid conversation. Common themes across all sessions included weight changes, sleep difficulties, fatigue, mood shifts, emotional vulnerability, and a strong appetite for more personalised information and peer connection. Again and again, participants described how much they value rare opportunities like this; to connect, share, and speak openly about menopause with other women.

Alongside the research work, significant progress has been made on visibility, dissemination, and partnership building. PESG and ANCE led the development of the project's visual identity and branding, and launched the project's social media channels on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.



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The Project Management and Quality Plan (PMQP) was finalised and adopted by all partners by February 2026. PESG secured meaningful media coverage in Croatia. The project was presented on the local television programme “Ženska strana sporta” on Sportska TV and featured in articles on the portals Žene i mediji and Suvremena žena.

PESG also established a partnership with SVOJA, a Croatian organisation focused on women’s empowerment and equality, to help expand the project’s reach. BGKMU promoted the project through the Faculty’s Facebook page and made initial contact with local sports and fitness clubs, including Factura Fitness Club, who expressed interest in future cooperation. ANCE connected with several NGOs active in the health and women’s sectors in Greece to identify potential participants and lay the groundwork for closer collaboration ahead.

What's Coming Next

The coming months will be full of activity. Focus groups are either recently completed or in final planning in every partner country. PESG is preparing focus group sessions in Zagreb for the end of May or beginning of June 2026, with the possibility of hybrid participation for women unable to attend in person. BGKMU organized its focus group at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University on 27.05.2026. ROMNI APS will continue expanding its focus group work in Italy, involving additional participants to strengthen the preliminary findings. ANCE will channel its energy into social media outreach and contribute to the development of the digital handbook and video production guidelines, including the preparation of four exercise-focused modules to be led by kinesiologists and sports instructors.



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Beyond the focus groups, PESG will organise a capacity-building webinar for consortium partners on Erasmus+ Sport project management and financial requirements. Partners across the consortium will contribute to the content framework for the digital handbook, continue mapping local stakeholders, and remain active in monthly coordination meetings. Women for Women International will continue dissemination efforts, prepare comprehensive evaluation reports, and track information for the project's Green Erasmus commitment.

A Shared Reflection

One of the most consistent and moving themes to emerge from the early months of this project is how much women want and need a safe and open space to talk about menopause. Across the partner countries, women who came forward to share their experiences expressed relief at being heard, gratitude for the connection with others, and a clear appetite for more. As ANCE observed, the most powerful conclusion of their focus group was that life absolutely does not end here; menopause is a positive, normal transition into a new chapter.



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ROMNI APS put it well. Menopause is not only a physical transition, but also an emotional and social experience. Many women need to be listened to, understood, and supported through an integrated approach that includes nutrition, lifestyle, mental wellbeing, and opportunities to share with others.



PESG captured a broader truth. When women are given a safe and supportive environment, they are ready and willing to speak openly and that willingness holds the potential to reduce stigma and create stronger conversations around menopause across Europe.



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Women for Women International summed it up. Menopause becomes easier to navigate when approached with comprehensive support with everyday wellbeing, movement, confidence, and community. This project treats menopause as a moment when women deserve more information, care, and encouragement.



Stay Connected

We invite everyone who cares about women's health, physical activity, and healthy aging to follow the Don't (meno) PAUSE project and help us spread awareness. Small conversations can lead to big changes. Follow us on social media to stay up to date with project news, research findings, upcoming events, and the future launch of the MenoTalks platform. If you are a woman in perimenopause or menopause, we encourage you to get involved in upcoming activities and help shape resources that reflect real needs and real experiences.



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