

REPORT

on the awareness and use
of the SCforH guidelines
among HEPA policymakers,
promoters, and researchers in
Europe



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Background and aim

An important starting point of the project “Creating mechanisms for continuous implementation of the SCforH guidelines in the European Union” was to study the level of awareness of the SCforH guidelines in different EU countries as well as their use and implementation. In general, awareness of guidelines is the prerequisite to their use, dissemination and implementation.

In parallel with the development of a 20-minute online learning program about the SCforH movement, a questionnaire was designed. This collaborative development provided an opportunity to convey important information through the online course and then ask people a variety of questions.

One aim of the study was to find out whether representatives of a governmental body (HEPA policymakers), representatives of public health institutes (HEPA promoters & researchers), and National Physical Activity Focal Points are aware of initiatives in their countries to promote the use or implementation of the SCforH guidelines among sports clubs. Therefore, we asked them whether they perceive that there are specific actions to promote SCforH guidelines among sports clubs in their country.

Second, the aim was to examine among the study participants their awareness of the SCforH guidelines before participating in the online course.

Finally, we wanted to know if the study participant’s organisation had taken any initiatives to promote the use or implementation of the SCforH guidelines among sports organisations or sports clubs in their country.

Methods

Study design and participants

As part of our 2020-22 Sports Club for Health (SCforH) project, newly designed SCforH online learning course was created, and disseminated among public health promoters, researchers, and policy makers from 36 European countries. A questionnaire-based, cross-sectional study on the awareness and use of the Sports Club for Health approach was conducted. Representatives of 27 EU member states at the time, 5 candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey), Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and UK were asked to complete the survey. Out of 650 invited participants, 146 agreed to participate in the study, went through the SCforH online learning course, and provided their responses to the survey. All respondents consent to participate in the survey. The sample included members of the HEPA Europe network and other European HEPA promoters & researchers, EU National Physical Activity Focal Points, representatives of national ministries of health, national ministries of sport, and other selected individual policymakers. Sample responses are presented in Figures 1 and 2. The study was supported and approved by the Ethics Committee of Faculty of Kinesiology, Zagreb University (number: 10/2021).

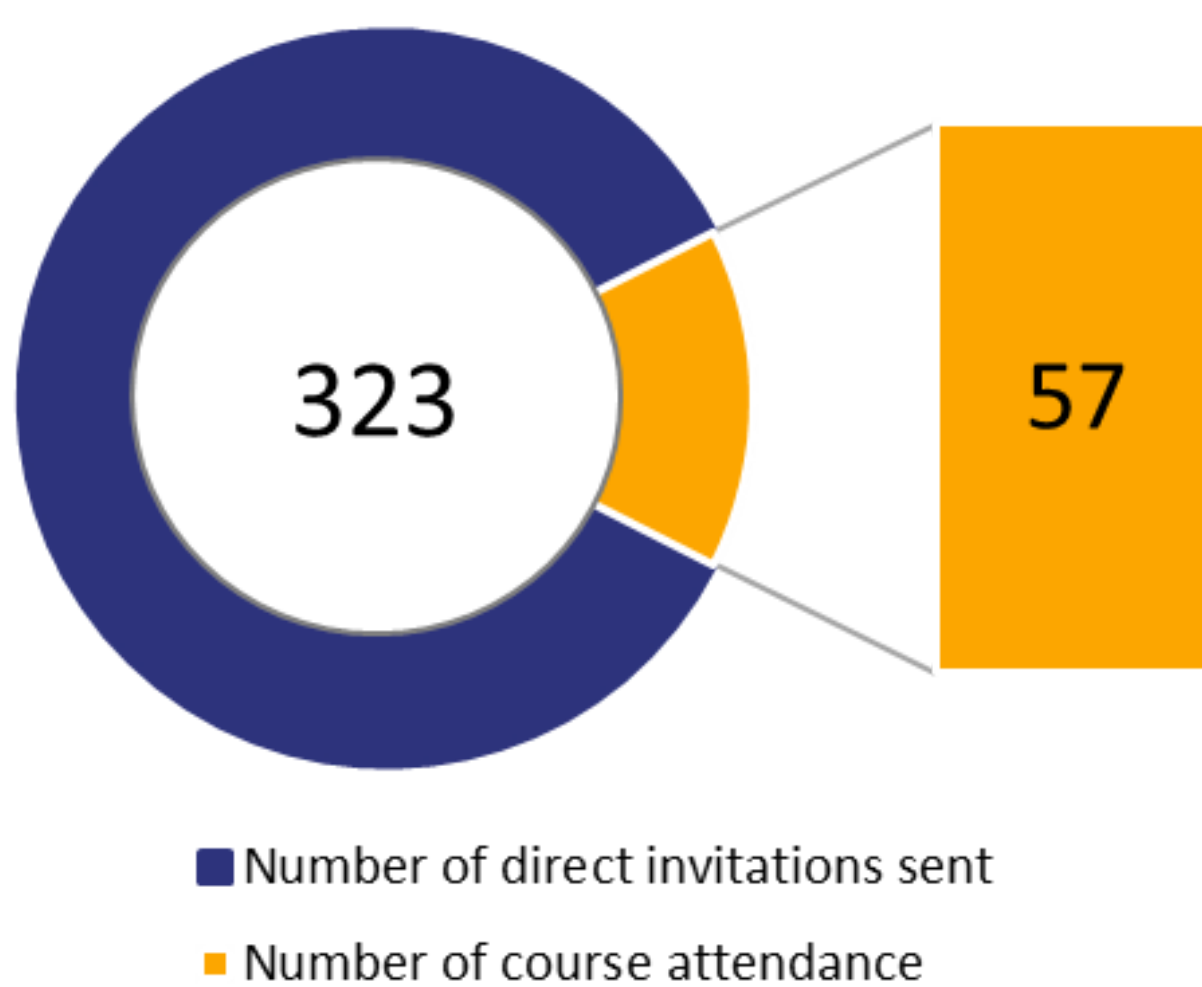


Figure 1. Response rate among HEPA promoters & researchers

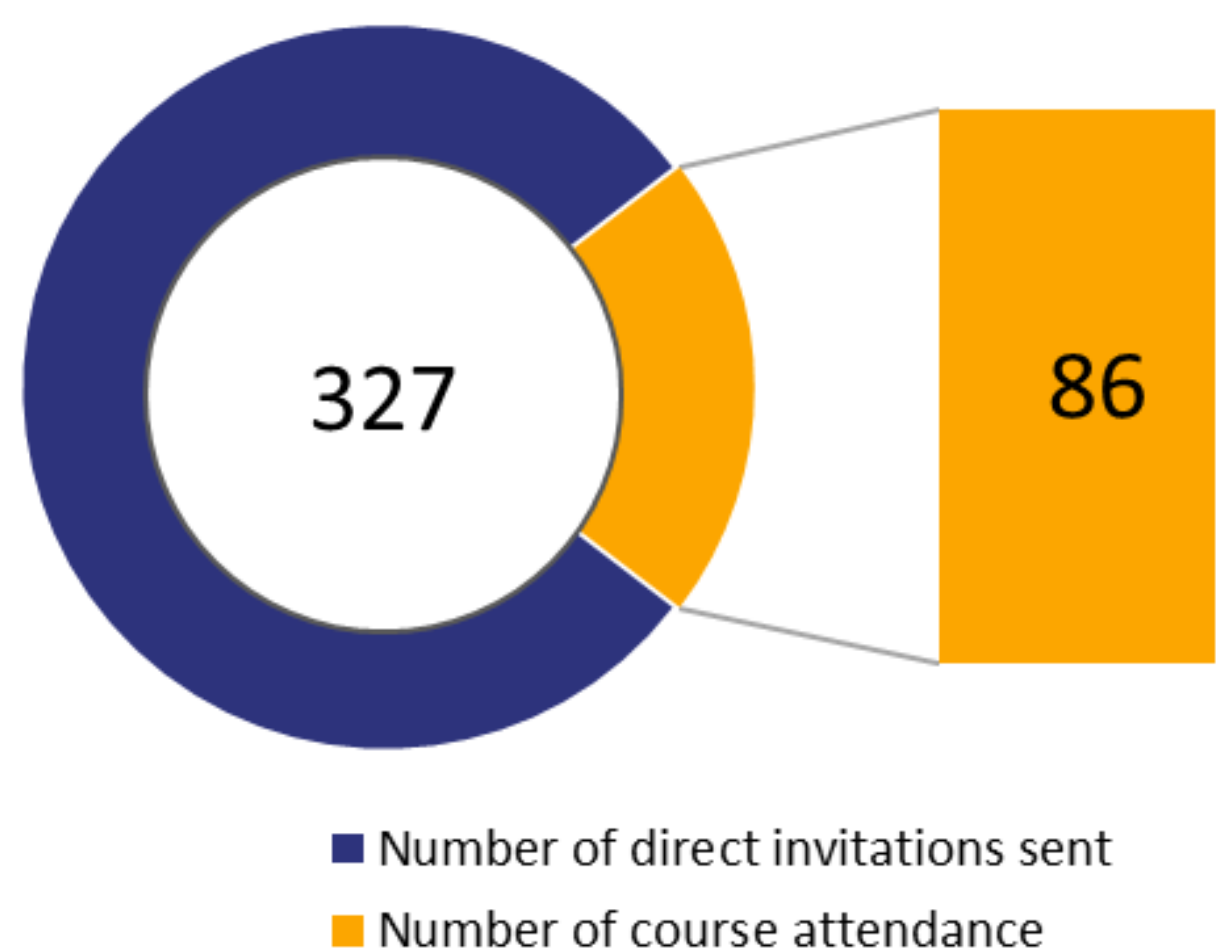


Figure 2. Response rate among HEPA policymakers



Measures

Each participant provided following data:

- the organisation type: (i) public health institute, (ii) National Physical Activity Focal Point, or (iii) governmental body;
- the country in which their organisation's headquarters are located;
- their assumption on the existence of initiatives in their countries to promote the use or implementation of "Sports Club for Health Guidelines" among sports clubs: (i) on the governmental level, (ii) by public health institutes, (iii) individual by the "SCforH" project partners or HEPA Europe "SCforH" working group members, and (iv) individual by other relevant stakeholders;
- their awareness of the SCforH guidelines prior to attending the course
- the initiatives taken by their organisation to promote the use or implementation of the 'Sports Club for Health guidelines' among sports organisations or sports clubs in their country.

Data analysis

The reported initiatives to promote the use or implementation of the SCforH guidelines among sports clubs for each country and the overall percentage of initiatives: i) on the governmental level, (ii) by public health institutes, (iii) by the "SCforH" project partners or HEPA Europe "SCforH" working group members, and (iv) by other relevant stakeholders were calculated for each country. Furthermore, the percentages of: (i) individual awareness of the SCforH guidelines prior to attending the course, and (ii) initiatives taken from the participant's organisation to use or implement SCforH guidelines has been calculated. The data analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel, version 2209 (Build 15629.20208 Click-to-Run).

Results

The distribution of reported initiatives to promote the use or implementation of the SCforH Guidelines among sports clubs by different types of organisation for each country and overall is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Initiatives to promote SCforH guidelines reported by the government, public health institutes, members of the SCforH consortium, and by other stakeholders in 36 European countries

Country	Initiatives to promote SCforH guidelines by different “types of organisation”			
	By government	By public health institutes	By members of SCforH consortium	By other stakeholders
Albania	/	/	/	/
Austria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belgium	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bulgaria	/	/	/	/
Croatia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cyprus	/	No	/	/
Czech Republic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Denmark	/	No	/	/
Estonia	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finland	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

France	No	Yes	Yes	No
Germany	No	No	Yes	No
Greece	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hungary	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Iceland	/	/	/	/
Ireland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Latvia	No	Yes	No	Yes
Lithuania	No	/	/	/
Luxembourg	Yes	/	/	/
Malta	No	No	/	/
Montenegro	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Netherlands	No	No	No	/
North Macedonia	No	Yes	Yes	No
Norway	No	No	No	No

Poland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Romania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Serbia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovakia	/	/	/	/
Slovenia	No	Yes	No	Yes
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sweden	No	No	Yes	No
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	No	/
Turkey	No	No	No	Yes
United Kingdom	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Overall (% Yes)*	56,7	70,0	66,7	76,0

* % of those who replied to the question, /= no reply

No information was available from four countries and in 12 countries the representatives indicated that all four types of organisation promote the use or implementation of the SCforH guidelines in sports clubs. In two countries it is considered that none of the types of organisation show clear initiatives regarding the SCforH guidelines in sports clubs.



The awareness of the SCforH guidelines prior to the course among HEPA promoters & researchers and HEPA policymakers were 56,3% and 50% accordingly. The overall awareness (HEPA promoters & researchers and HEPA policymakers together) was 53,5%. (Figures 3-5)

Figure 3. Awareness of the SCforH guidelines prior to the online course among HEPA promoters &

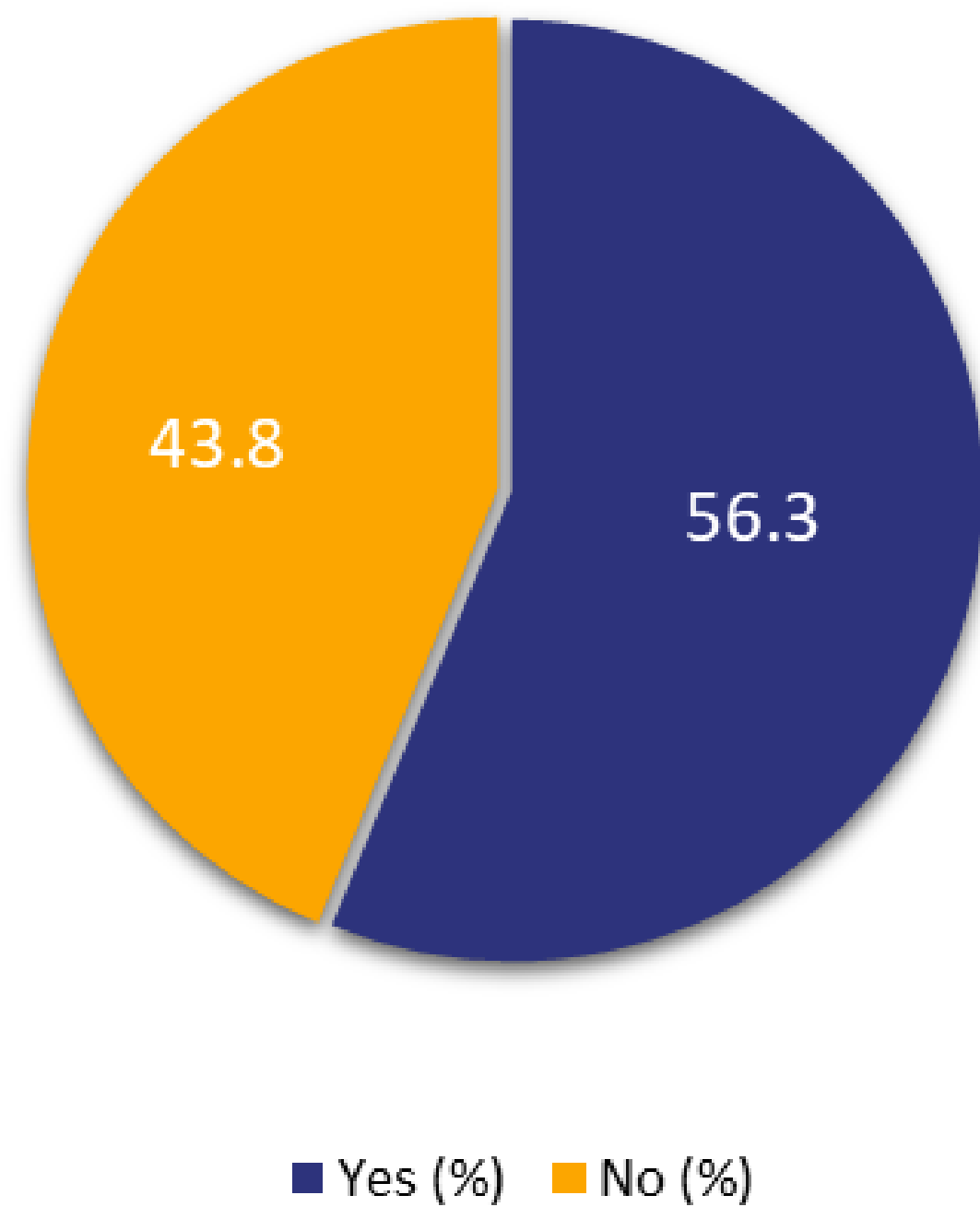


Figure 4. Awareness of the SCforH guidelines prior to the online course among HEPA policymakers

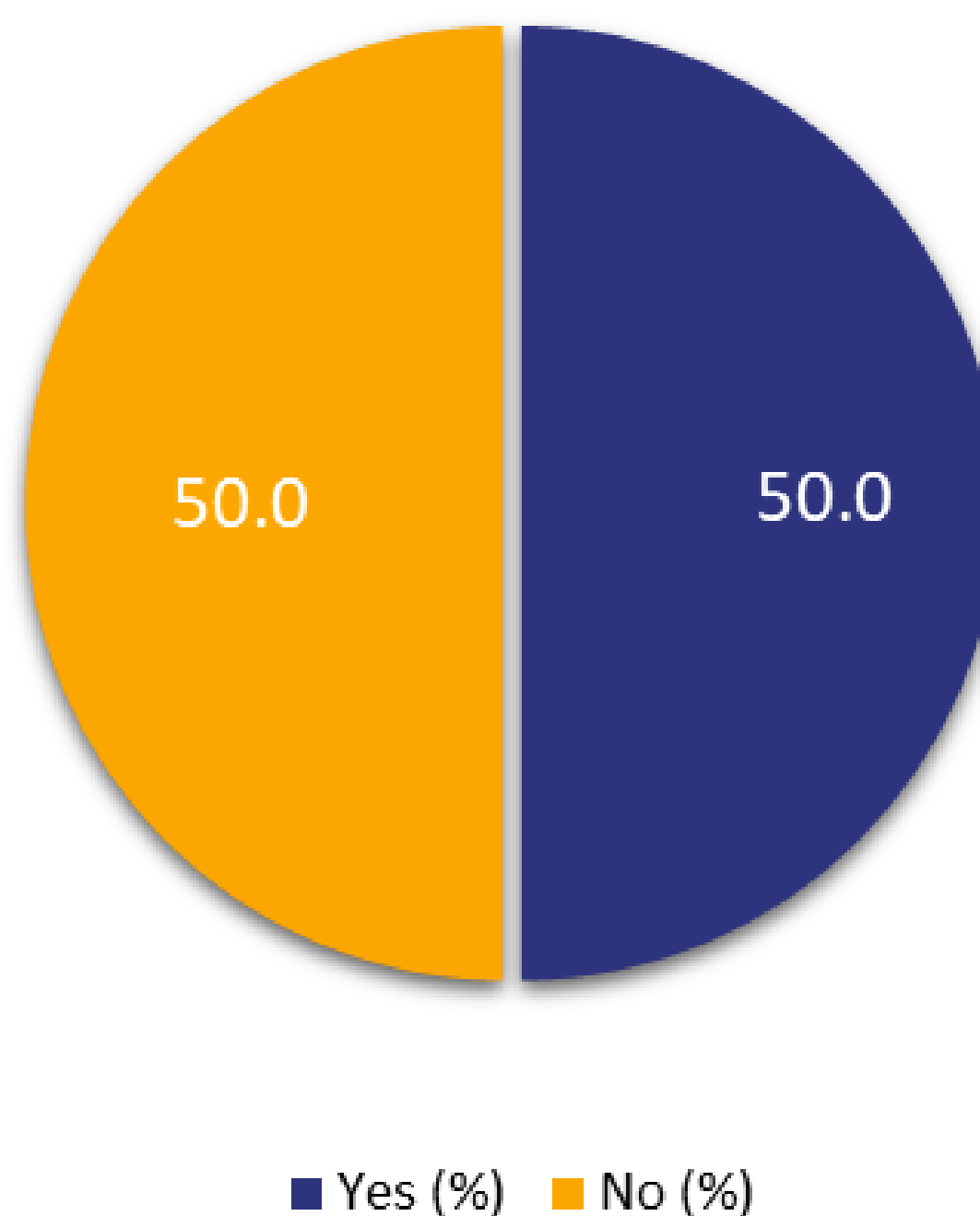
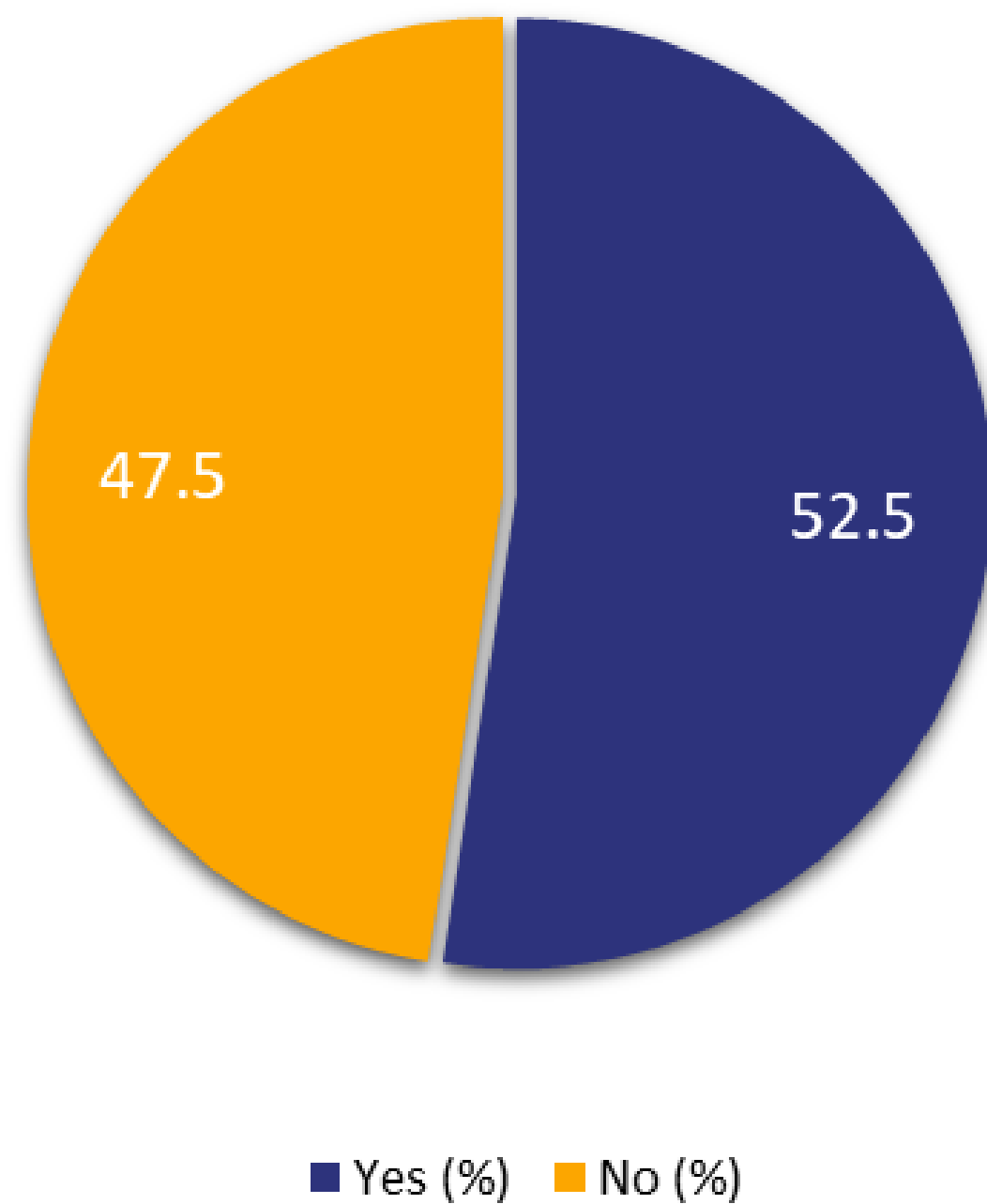




Figure 5. Overall awareness of the SCforH guidelines prior to attending the online course



In response to the question: "Did your organisation take any initiatives to promote the use or implementation of the SCforH guidelines among sports organisations or sports clubs in your country?" the responses were as follows: The implementation or use of the SCforH guidelines by the HEPA promoters' & researchers' and by the HEPA policymakers' organisations was 64,3% and 70%, respectively. Overall, the implementation or use of the SCforH guidelines was 67,6% (Figures 6-8).

Figure 6. Implementation of the SCforH guidelines among organisations of HEPA promoters & researchers

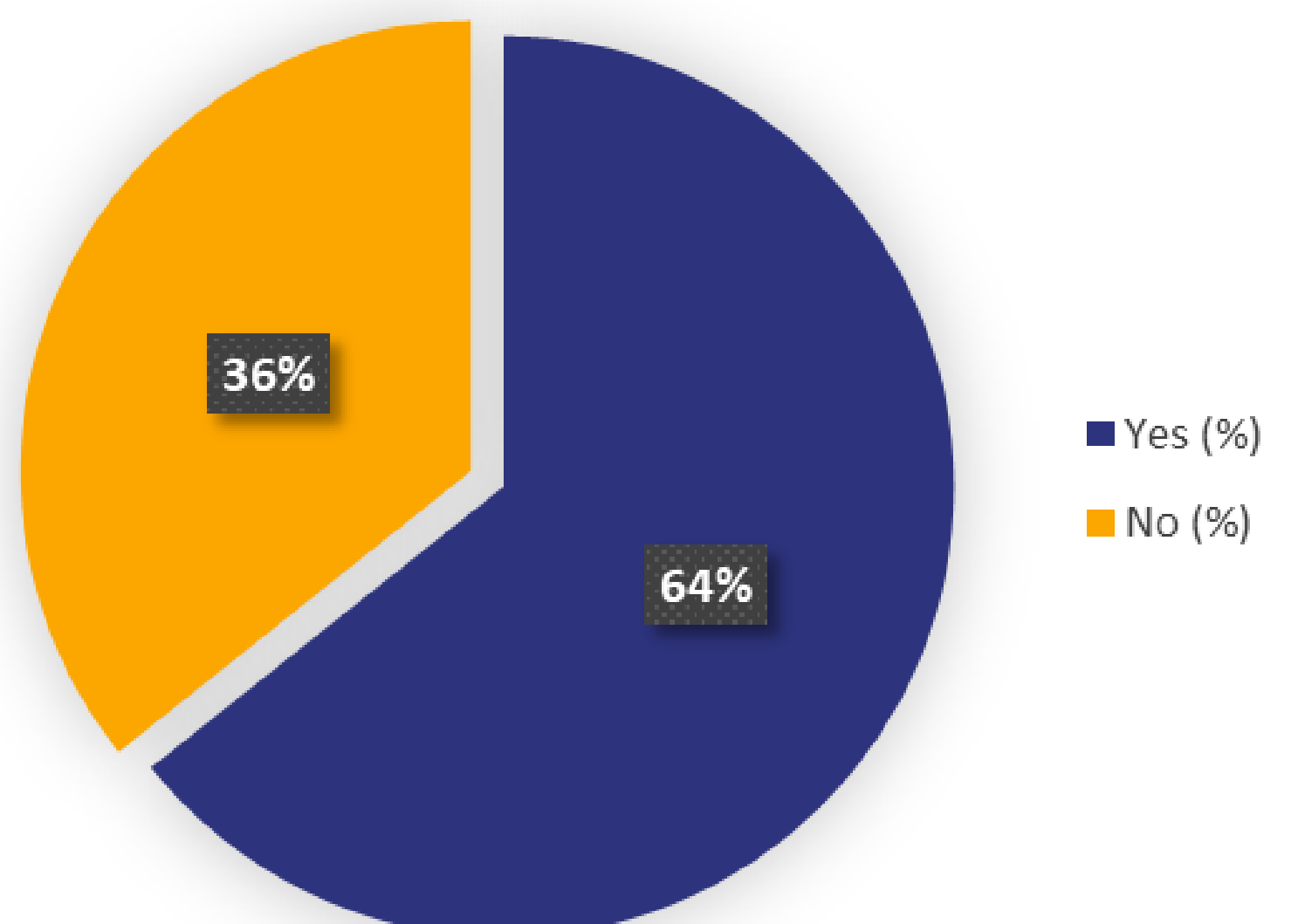




Figure 7. Implementation of the
SCforH guidelines among
organisations of HEPA policymakers

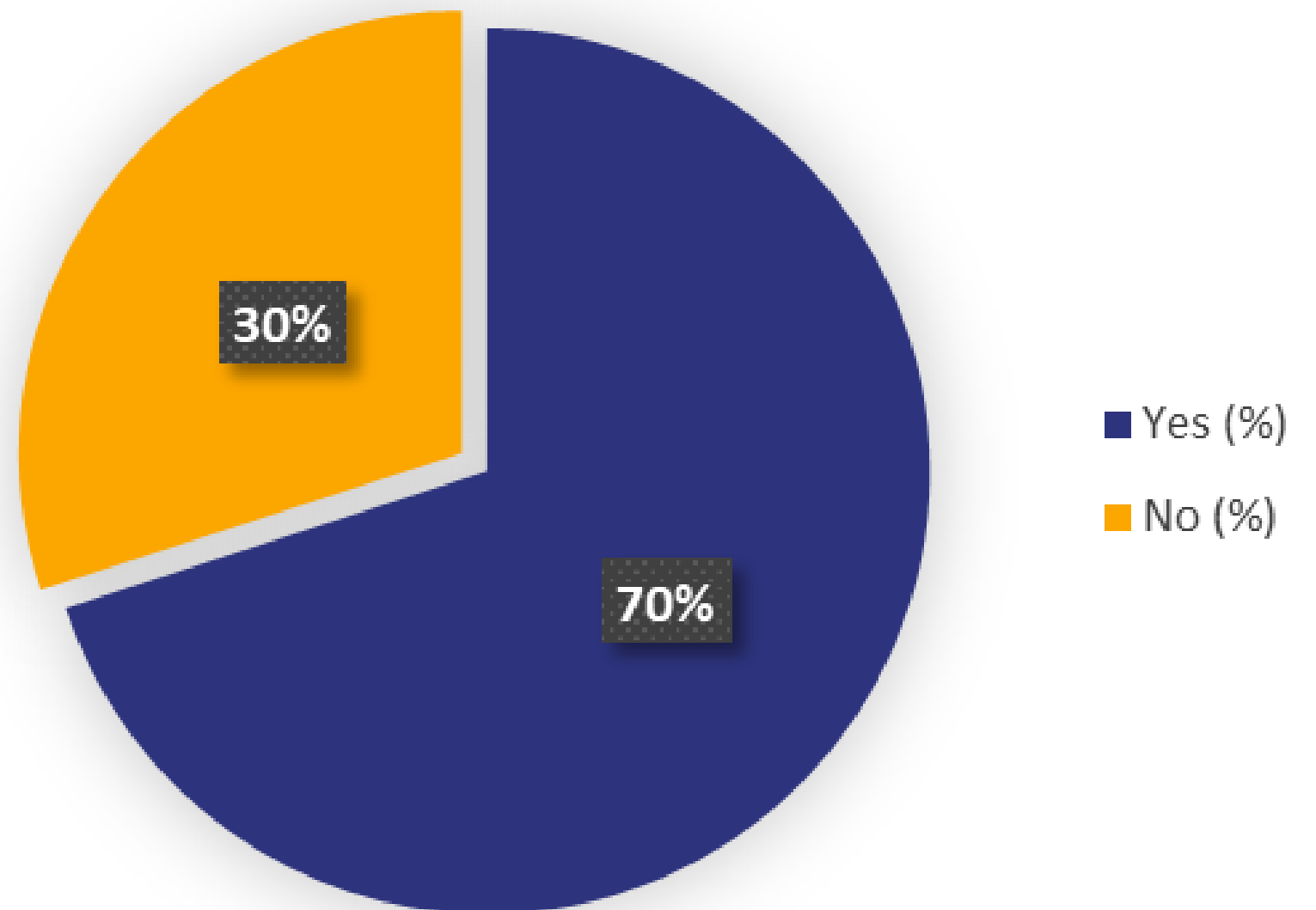
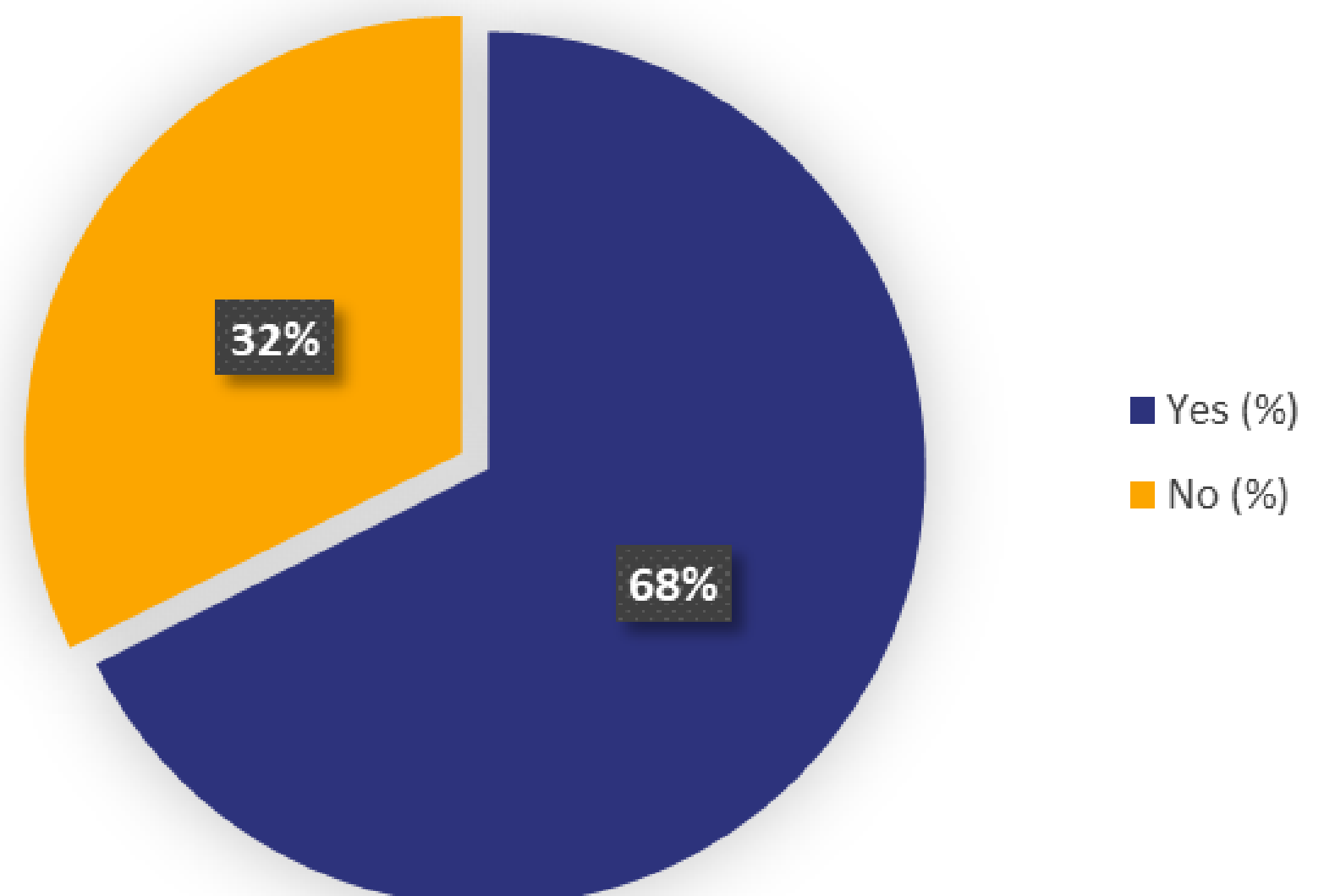


Figure 8. Overall implementation of
the SCforH guidelines



Conclusions

In this study, we gained insight into awareness and use or implementation of SCforH guidelines in 36 countries. When interpreting the results, it is important to keep in mind that not all study participants had a solid overview of the use or implementation of the SCforH guidelines by the different types of organisations in their country. Nevertheless, in 25 (69%) countries, initiatives to promote SCforH guidelines were undertaken by at least one type of organisation.

Approximately half of the online course participants who completed the questionnaire were aware of the SCforH guidelines before taking the online course. Prevalence was higher among HEPA promoters & researchers than among HEPA policymakers. This finding shows how important the online course is in spreading the word about the SCforH movement, and the SCforH guidelines in particular, to both groups.

Finally, about two-thirds of the study participants knew that their organisation had taken initiatives to implement or promote the SCforH guidelines in organisations or sports clubs. This time, the prevalence was higher in HEPA policymakers compared to HEPA promoters & researchers. This prevalence is already high. However, we do not know how many initiatives have been launched and how sustained these initiatives are.

For future dissemination of the SCforH movement and the SCforH guidelines, the online course will continue to be a very important source of information.

Recommendations for future dissemination

Dissemination of the SCforH online course should continue. One possible strategy for the future could be to reach out to countries where the SCforH guidelines have not or rarely been used or implemented. Using a bottom-up and top-down approach, combined strategies could be developed to spread the SCforH movement to these countries. From these activities, we can learn whether there is a general scheme to be followed to successfully disseminate the SCforH guidelines, or whether the conditions in each country are so different that only country-specific approaches are successful. It is also recommended to assess the sustainability of the use or implementation of the SCforH guidelines as well as their quality in the future.



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