

# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

A SURVEY AND STUDY OF THE ÖAEC,  
GLIDING SECTION



## THE RESULT

Status February 2025

### INFORMATION

The survey took place online between 20<sup>th</sup> of April and 30<sup>th</sup> of June.

A total of **37 people** took part.

The participants came from: **AUT, DE, IT (South Tyrol)** and one participant from **Holland**.

The evaluation was carried out for **AUT**, significant deviations in **DE** were carried out.

Despite the small number of cases, the percentage is reflected in general comparative studies with significantly higher numbers of cases or are in logical correlations.

The study does not claim to be scientific findings but is intended to be a picture of the mood and an orientation aid for clubs.

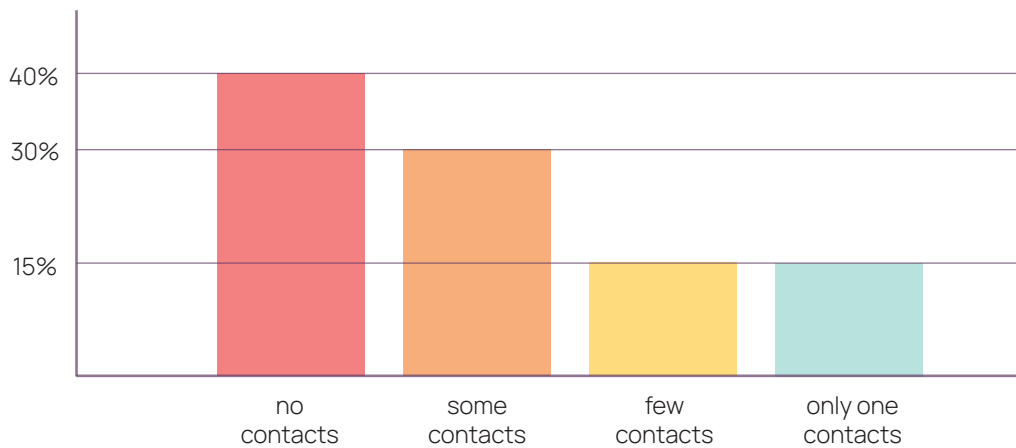
# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## TOPICS AND RESULTS

### Personal contact with club colleagues away from the airfield

#### QUESTION

I have personal friends at the aerodrome who I also meet outside of flying?



Just under **40%** have no contacts at the aerodrome that go beyond aerodrome life. **30%** state that they have some contacts with club colleagues outside the aerodrome and **15%** have very few or only one contact with club colleagues

**Germany:** Significantly more women with social contacts beyond club life  
Over **30%** some, **30%** a few, only **15%** none at all.



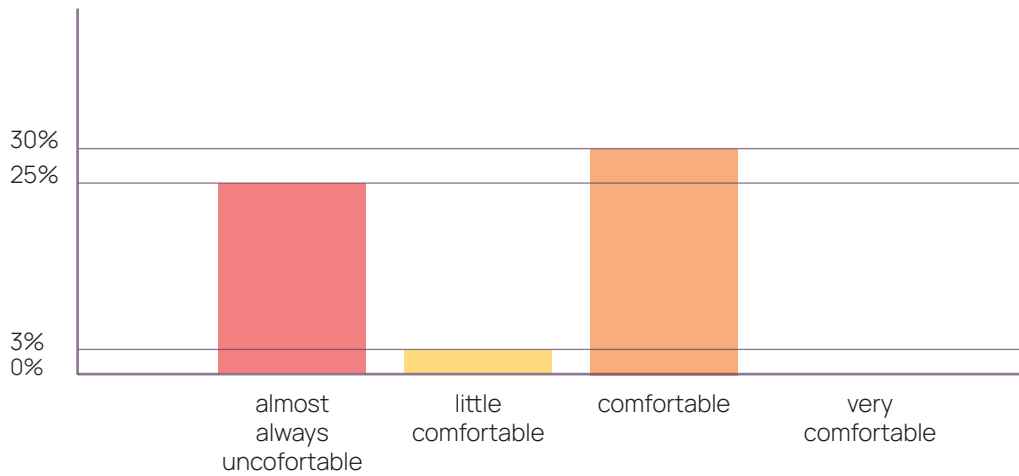
# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## TOPICS AND RESULTS

### How do women feel in the club environment?

#### QUESTION

When asked how women feel in an air sports club,...



25% almost always uncomfortable  
3% little comfortable  
30% comfortable  
0% very comfortable

Germany: 30% feel very comfortable



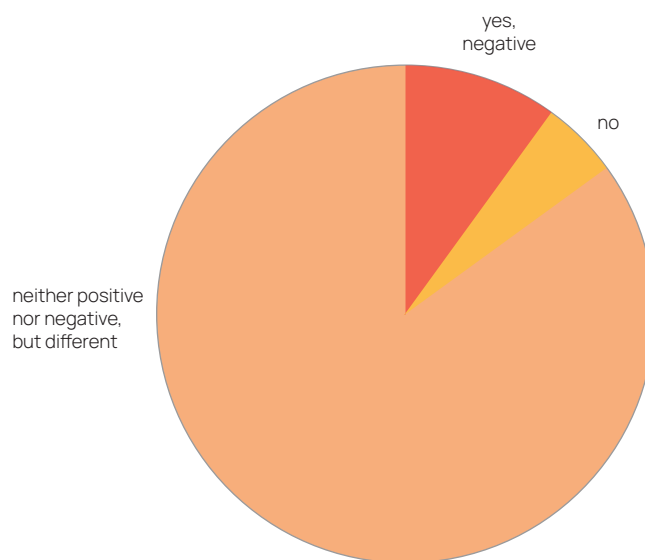
# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## TOPICS AND RESULTS

### How do women feel treated at the aerodrome in the club environment?

#### QUESTION

As a woman, I am treated differently.



10% yes, negative

5% think no

85% Yes, but mixed - neither positive nor negative, just different from my male colleagues

Germany: no significant differences in the results





# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## Cited examples of 'different' treatment

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Men are often more helpful, unlike with other male colleagues. Of course, it depends on the situation, but when it comes to carrying heavy things, men are always happy to help me (I am also grateful for their help). When it comes to flying skills, I find that there is equality, everyone accepts tips from everyone, regardless of whether they are men or women.

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You are often not taken seriously. If a man says the same thing, it suddenly has to be true. When you arrive at a new airfield, you always have to explain several times that you are flying yourself and not there as a helper.

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**Positive** when older colleagues in particular emphasise courteous, respectful interaction.

**Negative** when (all age groups) macho colleagues make sexually connotated, suggestive remarks. For example, when mending a rope to emphasise how important nailing is. Or when using ambiguous terms and grinning innocently and suggestively. It's annoying and stressful.

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Because of my experiences, we gave up flying as a hobby.

a.) e.g. we took part in a summer camp at my husband's home field in Germany. 35 people, 2 women - the rest men, including my husband. I took it upon myself to take over the kitchen. I did the cooking, prepared the food, etc. But that meant I was right in the middle of things at the time. So everything was OK. As soon as the camp was over, nobody greeted me any more. I became an appendage of my pilot husband again. I felt that I was no longer recognised as a person.

b.) Filly-mouthing among us women! One of the leaders in our club/associations is a female person who tends to marginalise, only greet women and other people selectively and only speak intelligently for selected circles.

c.) The aerodrome company only sees the achievements and not the existence of a person. And that is disrespectful - no, you are simply disrespectful in parts. I think the low percentage of women is really enough for you!!!

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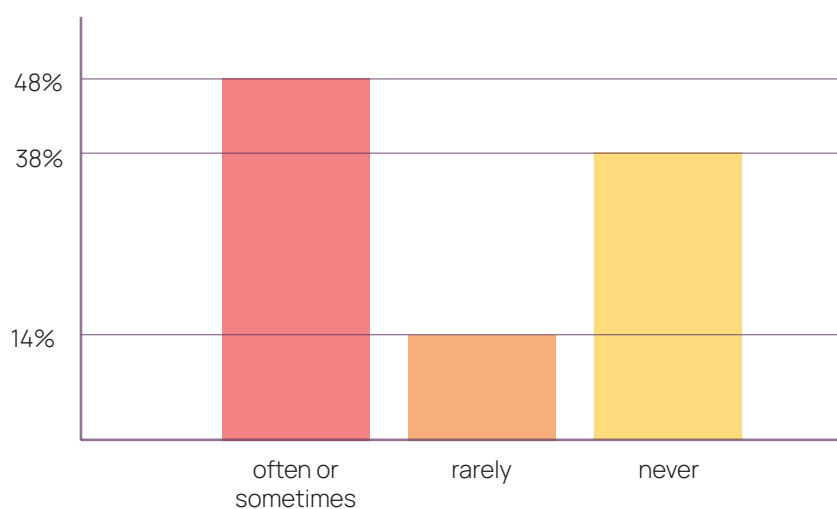
# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## TOPICS AND RESULTS

### Do women feel like proper members of a flying club?

#### QUESTION

In club life, I have the feeling that I am not taken seriously because of my gender



48% say OFTEN or SOMETIMES

14% say RARELY

38% say NEVER

In **Germany**, women feel that they are taken significantly less seriously,  
75 % think OFTEN or SOMETIMES

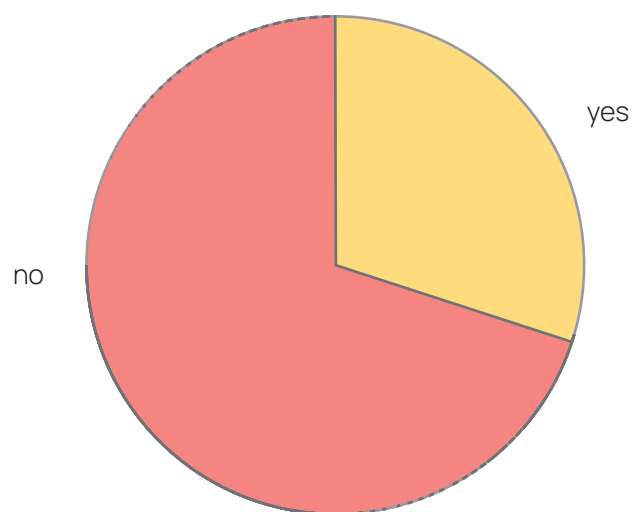
# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## TOPICS AND RESULTS

### Are there significant differences between the individual clubs/airfields?

#### QUESTION

In some clubs/places I feel more welcome than in others because of my gender.



When asked whether there were significant differences in behaviour towards women at different airports

80% negative  
20 % affirmative



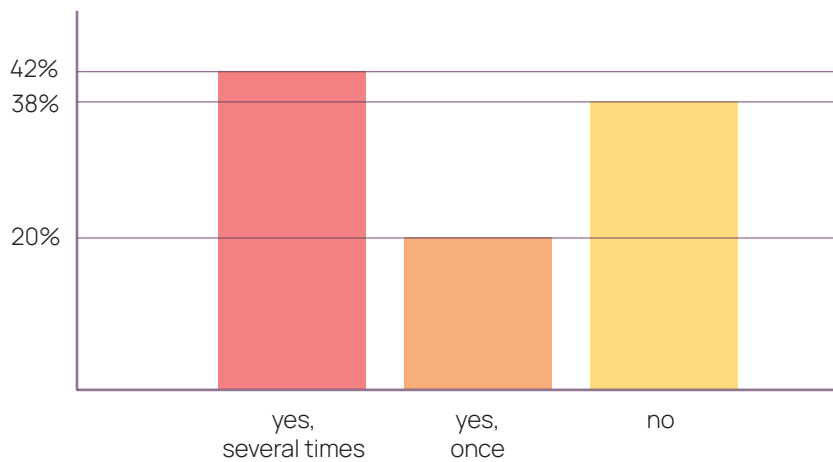
# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## TOPICS AND RESULTS

### Me too: Are there incidents that are beyond all red lines?

#### QUESTION

Has anything ever happened in the context of flying that you felt was sexually assaultive or sexist?



	AUT	GER
YES, several times	42%	40%
YES, once	20%	27%
NO	38%	33%

### A study by the Unique Research Institute with the following values

57 % of women reported having experienced unwanted lewd comments.

42 % of women said they had experienced unwanted touching.

17 % of women were victims of sexual assault.

The survey included 800 people and was conducted by telephone and online in 2021.

**Note:** Since our question here mixes sexual assault or sexism (also in the sense of male hierarchy, see the notes), we see ourselves in aviation sport below the federal values (Austria) of this study, but on average in society.





# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## Examples of comments made:

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Unwanted touching from upper body to bottom.  
Sexist remarks are part of everyday life.

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Inappropriate touching/rapid advances are standard.  
Hands on the bum are also a regular occurrence, although fortunately not quite as often.

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It is often assumed and said out loud that certain tasks are to be done by women.

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A flight instructor once told me during a flight how his young female flight students flew in bikinis at another airfield in the summer heat and then asked me if I would like to do the same.

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Discrimination on the radio in LO? (Clear mention of a specific aerodrome present)

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# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## Remarks and statements beyond the survey.

### AUSTRIA

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Of course, not all men are unpleasant, otherwise it would be unbearable. Unfortunately, it has only happened to me once so far that another man has intervened with a stupid comment. Maybe it would be a lot easier if other men reacted to such comments too. (x2)

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Generally well looked after and accepted as a woman in the flying club. Without wishing to criticise, some flight instructors still sometimes find it rather unusual to teach female students the 'simplest things'. However, this is not necessarily due to my gender, but can also be related to my lack of technical background or knowledge.

This is precisely where I see potential to bring more women into the sport: if the focus remains on the sporting aspect. Safety and technology are constant companions in aviation anyway. But for me, the relaxed, sporty spirit is sometimes neglected. It's sometimes very 'demanding' and a lot was expected of me during my first flights that I simply wasn't able to do yet.

After that, I realised that everything is (relatively) easy once you have a certain relaxed approach.

I see room for improvement here: fun and enjoyment should always take centre stage!

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Perhaps another question about age. There are a few women of different ages in our club. I'm 18 myself, but I started at 15.

That certainly makes a relevant difference in club life.

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It is interesting that unequal treatment is also equated with sexual assault here, but in my opinion it is about something completely different. It's about trusting a woman to do the same as a man.

A man would never dare to say many things to another man. (A small example: after 30 years as a female glider pilot, I was told by my colleague that I lowered my arm too quickly when holding the wing - towing - ....)

In principle, however, I have to say that these are exceptions and the percentage of misogynistic or belittling statements is less common among glider pilots than in the rest of our society.

Why only a few women fly and stick with it is perhaps also due to the fact that it is not easy for young fathers to stick with it, and even more difficult for women.

Men come to rearm and then HAVE to go home for lunch.....

Women have to cook it too....

A difficult situation....

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# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## Remarks and statements beyond the survey.

### AUSTRIA

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I think the main reason for the lack of women in gliding is the children. Of the 20 or so women I was in the club with, only 3, including myself, stayed in despite having children. And we flew very little for years. The sport is not compatible with children.

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Ask the parents/mother of a 14-year-old why they allow them to start gliding training - despite the dangers. Why don't you just let a normal member (KaffeeTrinkeFliegerin) tell you on your hp why he/she is practising this hobby.

Or has stopped.

No - you are drunk from the many thousands of kilometres that some luminary of yours flies. Nobody outside cares about that!

Gliding is in constant decline (e.g. Arcus costs > 300,000 €) and in 20/30 years there will hardly be any affordable clubs left. Somehow you are (have been) misguided when you say that flying is an easily affordable hobby.

By the way - gliding is absolutely not a sport - just ask - why not?

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My friend is also a glider pilot, I don't know if I would have got this far without him.

P.s.: sometimes even we women are our worst enemies.

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# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## Remarks and statements beyond the survey.

### GERMANY

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It's great that there is such a survey. Will an analysis of the survey be published?

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The behaviour in the clubs is often rough and the talk is stupid. Clubs are often so small that parts of the board are often aggressors themselves. Who can you turn to then?

I would immediately report what I have to put up with in the club to my professional environment.

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Although I fly in Germany, this April I was once again a guest at an airfield in the south of Austria with my own glider. I felt right at home there.

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One more hint:

There is even more discrimination than gender. Quite banal is age (as in my case). This leads to people turning away from flying. Especially from flying in a club. Just look at the crowds on the sites in the south of France. Or even more impressively: the paragliders.

To complete the survey on the subject of women, you should also ask how the men experience the women in the club.

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I would find it interesting to find out about the relationship between the women who fly.

But that might make the survey too complicated.

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# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## **An attempt to interpret the results by the author of the study:**

We as a gliding community, as a decidedly male society, are no more disparaging than society as a whole, and tend to be less overbearing,

But probably a little more underestimating when it comes to technical and operational skills. But we are not significantly better or more appreciative than the average and this must be recognised  
be recognised as clear criticism and potential for improvement.

The fact that women maintain very few friendships with club colleagues 'off the field' is not such a meaningful realisation in hindsight. After all, young people between the ages of 16 and 20 will probably also rarely hang out with club mates. And in general, it would be interesting to compare the overall average in this matter, as many club colleagues are really only to be found at the airfield.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that activities beyond everyday flying (excursions, ski days, etc.) can improve social contacts within the club and thus ensure that people get to know each other better, which would lead to a more relaxed atmosphere at the aerodrome.

## **AIRFIELD AS A PLACE OF WELL-BEING**

25% of all women state that they feel fundamentally uncomfortable - here I would like to refer to the conclusion and go even further. At the entrance gate it says 'No trespassing', grim-faced older men tell you what you should and should not do, usually without explanation. Most airfields have very little friendly ambience, no flowers, no flowering shrubs, no play equipment for children, more like locker posters than other pictures. Feel-good places look different, especially as you have to spend a lot of gross time at the aerodrome.





# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## An attempt to interpret the results by the author of the study:

### BEING FULLY ACCEPTED

What women don't realise is that many groups within a flying club don't feel that they are taken seriously. Men, however, have a different hierarchical tolerance and are confident that they can still fly their way up the hierarchy and young members see this as an expression of their youth - whereby youth is still encouraged and placed on its own level.

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AERODROMES

80% who see no difference is a reassuring sign. If, yes, if you don't belong to the 20% who are viewed more negatively. If you belong to this group, you should seriously consider your future viability. Of course, this does not mean that the majority of aerodromes only have a feel-good atmosphere (see also Airfield as a place of well-being). However, we can assume from the nature of the responses and the examples that the statement is that a significantly worse 'feminine climate' prevails at around 20% of aerodromes.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT - SEXIST BEHAVIOUR

So the number of cases here is not so low and the airmen are no better or more chivalrous than average. That is bitter.

The biggest accusation that can be read from the answers and statements here is that there is too little or no reprimand or disapproval of these incidents by other men in the club. If there is a clear instruction for action, then it is not to smile sourly or agonisedly as a witness to inappropriate slogans and jokes, but to take a clear stand.

I understand the statement as a lack of protection and condemnation of anti-social behaviour.



# SURVEY ON WOMEN IN AVIATION

## Conclusion by the study author

Our clubs are run and organised by men for whom the airfield is a wonderful place to live and love anyway. The smell and the aura of the hangar is adventure and comfort zone enough. Lingered at the take-off site with a flight every 15 minutes is pure entertainment and leisure enjoyment. We (sic) do not recognise and see the deficits that we radiate compared to 'normal people'. The high gross time on the field for the low net time in the aircraft, the long distances, the rather sober surroundings are not perceptible to us.

For outsiders, however, these problem areas stand out strongly.

Now the big surprise: this applies not only to women, but also to neutral guests and children. Many people accept these deficits just to learn to fly from us. This also explains the high drop-out rates. If you want more women in your club and also want to attract neutral visitors (who are not yet infected by the flying virus) and gain members from these ranks, you will have to face up to the **5F programme**:

### **FIT FÜR FRAUEN, FAMILIEN, FREIZEIT**

We as the Gliding Section see this **5F programme** as a task for the future viability of our sport and will endeavour to draw up a catalogue of suggestions and recommendations for action. This is because the statements of women who are familiar with flying from a family context and who have asserted themselves are not conducive to changing anything fundamentally for the better.

### **5F SUGGESTION NUMBER 1 TO CLUB BOARD MEMBERS**

Take a critical look at your club environment and then brainstorm what might appear unfriendly, dismissive and uninviting about your club environment or could be interpreted as exclusionary for individual groups (don't forget to take a look in the fridge).

Then take this list and see which of the points you can change quickly and easily - you'll be surprised how long the list gets.