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**RESEARCH FOR CULT
COMMITTEE -
QUALIFICATIONS/DUAL
CAREERS IN SPORTS**

STUDY



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
POLICY DEPARTMENT B: STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

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SPORTS

STUDY

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education.

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to provide background information on the current situation of the combination of elite sports and education/work (i.e., dual career) commitments of European athletes.

Based on the analysis of the scientific literature on several dimensions of European student-athletes, the EU-funded projects, policy systems and best practices of dual career across eight European Member States, this study highlights challenges and recommendations for implementing policy actions to integrate university and sports in dual career paths.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADH	German University Sports Federation
CAP	Career Assistance Program
CIF	Canadian Interuniversity Sport
CONI	Comitato Nazionale Olimpico Italiano
DIF	National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark
DSH	Deutsche Sporthilfe
EAFU	Elite Athlete Friendly University
EAS	European Athlete as Student Network
ECVET	European Credit systemfor Vocational Education and Training
EOSE	European Observatoire of Sport and Employment
EPAS	Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport
EQF	European Qualification Framework
EU	European Union
EYOF	European Youth Olympic Festivals
HPSNZ	High Performance Sport New Zealand
INSEP	Institut National du Sport, de l'Expertise et de la Performance
IOC	International Olympic Committee
KADA	Karriere Danach
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
OECD	Economic Co-operation and Development
PROAD	Programa de Ayuda al Deportista
PwC	Price Waterhouse Coopers

TASS Sport England Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme

VET Vocational Education and Training

YOG Youth Olympic Games

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

European elite athletes are expected to undertake higher education in combination with their sporting careers to achieve a holistic development and to advance their potential role in society and in the labour market. In the past decade, the European Parliament and Commission, the International Olympic Committee, the European Athlete as Student (EAS) network, and researchers fostered the development of a balanced combination of sports and education/work commitments (i.e., dual career) of elite athletes. However, the majority of Member States still provides limited support to the dual career of talented and elite athletes. Therefore, it is necessary that the European Parliament maintains this issue in its political agenda.

Strategies aligning university programmes with the national high performance pathway empower student-athletes and increase their international competitiveness. Comparative data indicate that student-athletes participating in the Olympic Games are more likely to win medals when compared with their non-student counterparts.

Competences in the field of sport and education mainly lie with Member States. Moreover, dual career presents relevant differences in relation to the sport-specific and education/work-specific requirements, and eligibility criteria for dual career programmes and services. Thus, the multiplicity of national approaches to dual career limits the possibility to gather harmonized data on European athletes integrated into the educational/working paths.

Dual career is a multi-faceted policy domain requiring the peculiar roles and responsibilities of individuals, stakeholder organisations, and Governments. Furthermore, it needs a well-structured cooperation system, the support of specialized personnel, and a systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of dual career programmes. Actually, only few Member States present well-organized and extensive dual career systems ruled by formal agreements. Conversely, the majority of countries encompass fragmented actions and policies related to some aspects of dual career. In this framework, the well-established European platforms (e.g., the EU Sport Forums, the meetings of sports directors, sport and education ministers, and expert groups, the conferences of the Council Presidency, of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport of the Council of Europe, and of the EAS network) represent valuable resources to enhance cooperation between relevant stakeholders at national and European levels.

To enhance the cooperation and networking among stakeholders, to raise the awareness and to collect data on specific dual career issues, the European Commission has provided financial support for 18 trans-national projects and a European study to develop a set of minimum quality requirements for dual career services and facilities.

The number of international competitions has increased and temporary or long-term transnational athletic migration has become a widespread phenomenon. To support transnational mobility of European student-athletes, an international

cooperation between European sport and educational/work stakeholders is strongly envisaged. In particular, to facilitate the athletes' cross-border mobility, distance learning/work, establishment of dual career exchange educational programmes between schools/universities, and dual career mobility networks between service providers are required.

In line with the European Lifelong Learning Strategy for the Sport and Active Leisure sector and the European Qualification Framework, the development and implementation of an integrated competence-based approach to education/work could ensure athletes the recognition of capabilities acquired through non-formal and informal sports education as a part of or in addition to their formal education. Conversely, a limited cooperation between European educational institutions and sport bodies is in place and fractional statistics at national and European levels to monitor the profile of qualified sport staff and their employment condition are needed.

Aim

The aim of this work is to contribute to the implementation of dual career at European and national levels. The present study will: 1) analyse the scientific literature, the EU-funded projects on the dual career of student-athletes, and the EU-funded "Study on quality requirements for dual career services"; 2) provide an overview of different dual career policies/strategies adopted by Member States; 3) highlight main dual career challenges related to the phenomenon of European migrating student-athletes; 4) consider the competences and qualifications in sports in light of a lifelong learning programme for athletes; and 5) offer a contribution to EU policies for the implementation of dual career for athletes.

In the present work, the term 'elite' is inclusive of athletes competing at international level, playing sports at professional level, and young talented athletes trained in sports academies.

The methodology encompassed the analysis of the scientific literature and of the EU-funded projects, and the analysis of national data related to eight Member States selected according to their representativeness of: 1) the northern, central and southern European geographical areas, including at least one island region; and 2) the typology of policy approaches to educational services for elite athletes in higher education.

The following aspects were considered:

- Presence of a national network between different dual career stakeholders;
- Identification of the talented and elite athletes eligible for dual career services;
- Presence of well-established dual career programmes and services at educational, work, and sport levels;
- Presence of a monitoring system for the assessment of the dual career programmes, policies, and progress of athletes.

The following recommendations for European policies in support of dual career programmes/services at national and European levels are suggested:

- Adoption of a clear and universal definition of talented and elite athletes eligible for dual career paths and programmes;

-
- Enforcement of minimum quality requirements for dual career programmes and services to be put in place in the Member States.
 - Establishment of a European-wide harmonized monitoring system to assess the efficacy of dual career policies, programmes and services;
 - Support of national and European networks to continue/improve the communication and the cooperation among different dual career stakeholders;
 - Support of formal exchange agreements between national and European sport organizations, educational institutions, and dual career providers to sustain dual career paths of migrating European athletes;
 - Establishment of dedicated educational programmes for specialized dual career personnel to be employed by dual career providers, teachers, relatives, coaches, sports managers, and employers;
 - Establishment of dual career quality certification for sport and academic bodies and companies providing quality dual career programmes and engaging specialized staff;
 - Support of an integrated approach to education/work including the recognition of non-formal and informal education acquired through sports;
 - Establishment of European and national funding systems to implement dual career policies and to foster further research in this area.

The EU actions related to this policy domain should pertain to the supervision of the development of national strategies. In particular, the following aspects should be considered:

- The adoption of a common terminology and reliable methodology for data collection to allow monitoring of the effectiveness of sport-policy actions across Member States through cadenced national progress reports;
- The establishment of specific agreements between Member States based on minimum quality requirement services for dual career;
- The provision of sustainable financial support for EU higher educational programmes for dual career personnel;
- The provision of sustainable financial support for EU dual career exchange programmes through the Erasmus+ Sport chapter;
- The definition of specific tasks and deliverables for the establishment of a structured dialogue with stakeholders in the sport, education, and work sectors at national and EU levels;
- The accreditation of dual career providers in the sports, education and work sectors that engage in extensive dual career quality services, employ dual career personnel, and monitor systematically the sport and academic/work progresses of athletes;
- The recognition of quality performances of dual career providers when specific dual career objectives and policy measures are met.

GENERAL INFORMATION

KEY FINDINGS

- Vocational and higher education are deemed crucial to maximise the future inclusion of elite athletes in the labour market.
- Dual career for athletes is a complex phenomenon related to the individual athlete (i.e., micro dimension), his/her interpersonal relationships (i.e., meso dimension), the sport and education environments (i.e., macro dimension), and organizational and Governmental policies (i.e., policy dimension).
- Member States adopt different approaches to dual career for athletes, depending on the national educational and sport policies.
- Knowledge of dual career best practices in place in Member States is crucial to create dual career opportunities in a particular environment.
- A fruitful dialogue between educational and sport bodies is deemed necessary to develop and support dual career paths for athletes.
- Networking is necessary to establish permanent cooperation of the different stakeholders for the implementation of dual career actions and policies, and for the recognition of non-formal and informal sports education.

Sport is recognized as a growing social and economic phenomenon that strongly contributes to the development of European citizens (European Commission, 2007). To achieve top-level performance and to maintain a sports career during their adult years, athletes engage in a long-term, deliberate practice (Ericsson, 2006), which often conflicts with educational commitments, which are considered indispensable for a satisfactory academic career in higher education (Aquilina, 2013). Whilst student-athletes are recognized and supported under specific rules in Australia (EAFU, 2015), Canada (CIS, 2015), New Zealand (HPSNZ, 2015), and the United States (NCAA, 2015), in Europe competitive sport is mainly organized at club level, with no specific agreements regulating dual career paths to properly enable the engagement of athletes in academia. In particular, sports organizations tend to prioritize performance so that student-athletes could be misdirected towards academic dropout, whereas the lack of suitable academic programmes and services for athletes (i.e. facilities, tutoring, counselling, and flexibility for attendance and exams) might determine sport disengagement/dropout of athletes willing to pursue a degree before their potential peak performance is reached (Conzelmann & Nagel, 2003; Donnelly & Petherick, 2004; Wylleman & Reints, 2010, Park et al., 2013). Conversely, studies comparing Australian, American, French and British athletes participating in the Olympic Games indicate that student-athletes resulted more successful with respect to their non-student counterparts (Knapp, 2012). Furthermore, dual career paths could facilitate the transition of elite athletes at the end of their sport career to an alternative professional career (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005; Torregrosa et al., 2015).

Transitions in athletic careers are in concurrent and reciprocal interaction with those occurring in the psychological, psychosocial, academic/vocational, and financial domains of the athlete's life (Wylleman et al., 2013). Theoretical frameworks to understand sport-specific career development, transition paths, and assistance of athletes in sport and life, have to consider the diversity of cultures (Stambulova & Ryba,

2013; 2014) and reflect a holistic approach related to the different factors influencing the success of a dual career (Wylleman & Reints, 2010). Actually, sports disciplines favouring top performance at the youth age (e.g., gymnastics) and the recent introduction of the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) for athletes aged 14-18 years (IOC, 2009) might create an imbalance in dual career that starts at the high school level jeopardize their professional growth and/or development as future elite athletes (Capranica & Millard-Stafford, 2011).

The responsibility of accompanying talented athletes during their developmental years and elite athletes during their high-level competitive years does not lie in a single person, institution, or specific context (Larsen et al., 2012; 2013). In fact, various interested groups are involved with nurturing elite athletes through either initiating or implementing specifically designed programmes that cultivate sport and academic success. Figure 1 summarizes the multiplicity of the stakeholders involved in the dual career of talented/elite athletes by presenting, in different colours, the micro (e.g., the individual athlete), meso (e.g., parents, peers, teachers/employers, coaches, sport managers), macro (e.g., sport clubs/federations, educational institutions, and labour market), and policy (e.g., national and European governing bodies) dimensions of dual career. The arrows indicate the relationship between the different stakeholders, in relation to its strength (e.g., very strong, strong, moderate), proximity (e.g., direct, not necessarily direct, indirect), frequency (e.g., very frequent, frequent, less frequent), and direction (e.g., unidirectional or bidirectional).

The target of dual career paths is the talented/elite athlete (e.g., micro dimension, pink colour) with his/her physical, psychological, and social characteristics, and specific needs for individualized programmes in relation to the practiced sport discipline, athletic achievements, university majors, and working conditions.

The meso dimension (orange colour) comprises actors belonging to the family (e.g., relatives/partner/friends/peers), to the sport (e.g., coaches, managers, staff, dual career tutor), and to academic/work (e.g., teachers/professors, tutor, employers) environments having very strong, direct, very frequent, and bidirectional relationships with the athlete. To enhance the quality of the athlete's dual career path, moderate, not necessarily direct, frequent, and bidirectional relationships between these stakeholders are vital.

Sport (e.g., national sports federations/clubs, EU Athlete organizations), education (e.g., schools/universities), work (career counselling/employment services), and support (e.g., service providers) organizations are encompassed in the macro dimension (yellow colour) and could present strong, not necessarily direct, frequent, and bidirectional connections with the athlete. Furthermore, very strong, direct, very frequent, and bidirectional relationships between stakeholders included in the macro and meso dimensions should be established/implemented. Finally, less strong, not necessarily direct, less frequent, and bidirectional relationships should be present between stakeholders of the macro dimension.

The global dimension includes both national (green colour) and international (blue colour) political bodies, which influence dual career through specific policies and financial resources. In particular, very strong, direct, very frequent, and bidirectional relationships exist between national and EU bodies. Conversely, less strong, not necessarily direct, less frequent, and bidirectional connections link national governmental departments with their relative macro stakeholders. At national level, financial resources, culture/traditions, and media, play a modulating role for the development and sustainability of dual career paths.

In the last decade, the scientific literature on dual career in Europe has increased (Guidotti et al., in press; Stambulova & Ryba, 2014; Stambulova & Willeman, 2015). In particular, the analysis of the different relationships between stakeholders and dual career

policies in place (Aquilina & Henry, 2010; Caput-Jogunica et al., 2012; Henry, 2013) determined the classification of the Member States in: 1) State-centric regulation (e.g., Government legislation, or statutory regulations place responsibilities on higher education institutions to provide flexible academic paths); 2) State as sponsor/facilitator (e.g., States promote formal agreements to meet athletes' needs at educational level); 3) National Sporting Federations/Institutes as intermediary (e.g., national governing or sport bodies negotiate flexible academic paths with educational institutions); and 4) Laisser-faire/No Formal Structures (e.g., individually negotiated agreements are arranged, when possible). Whilst the first three categories mirror different cultural/organizational approaches for eligibility of flexible dual career paths, the last one does not provide services in a formal manner so that athletes have to rely on their individual capability to arrange their academic and sport lives. In relation to the adopted dual career policy, further information on 8 Member States is presented in Chapter 2. Actually, the lack of harmonized data does not allow conclusive statistics regarding the impact of dual career policies on sport and academic success or drop out of talented or elite athletes (Amsterdam University of Applied Science et al., unpublished data). Nonetheless, these different policies determine unequal treatments of athletes across Europe and raise a significant concern for their rights as European citizens.

To allow elite student-athletes to manage their daily life and dual career paths, proximity between sport facilities/services and universities/working places is essential. Therefore, networking is necessary to foster the involvement of all the potential stakeholders at national and European levels, to raise awareness of the potential benefits of educated elite athletes entering the labour market at the end of their sport career, to coordinate efforts, to follow the progress and implementation of dual career actions and policies, and to establish permanent cooperation for further actions. The European Parliament (European Parliament, 2003) and Commission (European Commission, 2014d), the International Olympic Committee (IOC, 2015), and the European Athlete as Student (EAS) network (Capranica et al., 2015) put their efforts in advancing the holistic development of athletes and their potential integration in the labour market during and at the end of their sports career. In particular, the European Parliament and Commission not only provided the European Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes (European Commission, 2012), but also keep on considering this issue in their policy agenda by supporting partnerships (European Commission, 2014c) and gathering information on the minimum quality requirements for dual career services (European Commission, 2014a). In this framework, EAS is the only EU network providing a platform where European sport and academic bodies could converge and collaborate (www.dualcareer.eu). This network has been a partner in several EU projects and, more recently, in the EU studies on "Minimum quality requirements for dual career services" (European Commission, 2014a) and on "Sport qualifications acquired through sport organisations and (sport) educational institutes" (European Commission, 2014b). Working in close cooperation with the EU Commission, EAS plays a relevant role in the long-term process of policy implementation aimed to develop, educate, train, and employ elite athletes in Europe (Capranica et al., 2015).

Elite sport could be an avenue of personal growth through the acquisition of positive psychosocial and life skills, which can enable athletes to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Networking and cooperation between educational institutions and sport bodies are also important to recognize competences and qualifications elite athletes acquire through the non-formal and informal sports education as a part of or in addition to their formal education.

SUCCESS STORY

The European Athlete as Student (EAS) Network

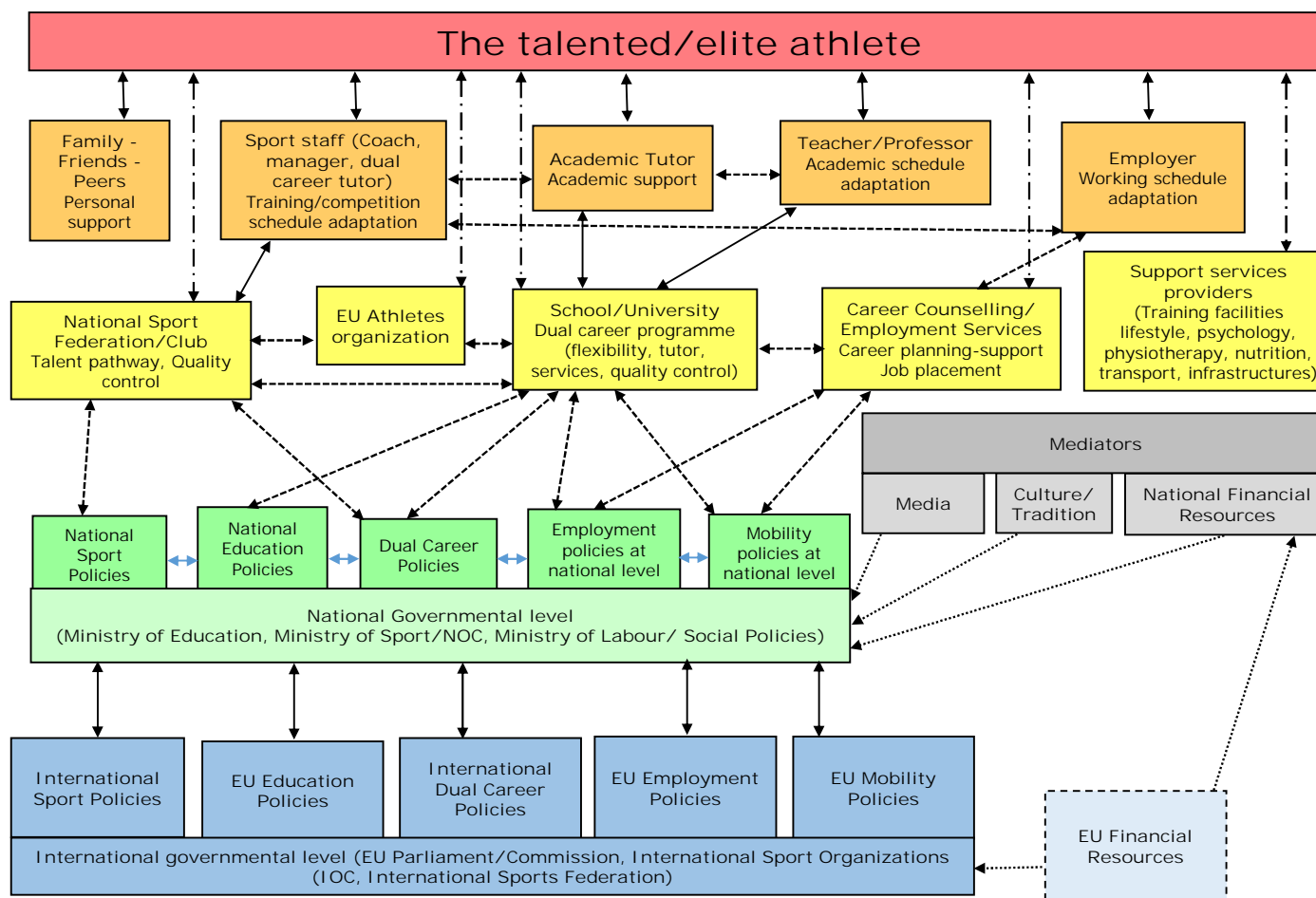
During the European Year of Education through Sport 2004, EAS was established to facilitate the recognition of the educational needs of student-athletes. By providing a platform for a fruitful dialogue between educational bodies (e.g., universities, high schools, sports schools), sport organisations (e.g. clubs and federations), and agencies of the labour market, EAS actively supports the efforts of the European Union (EU) in promoting dual career and is accepted as an observer in the EU Expert Groups on Human Resources Development in Sport and on Good Governance.

In particular, EAS encourages networking between institutions involved in high performance sport and in education, promotes the exchange of dual career best practices, strengthens the link between educational institutions and sport organisations and supports projects and research on dual career.

Annually, the conference of the Network presents key issues on dual career at local, national and European levels, and disseminates findings of EU-funded projects.

Source: Capranica et al., 2015

Figure 1: Relationships between European dual career stakeholders



Legend Colours: Pink=Micro dimension; Orange=Meso dimension; Green=Macro dimension; Blue=Global dimension; Grey=Mediators.
 Connections: \longleftrightarrow Very strong, direct, very frequent, and bidirectional; $\leftarrow \cdot \rightarrow$ Strong, not necessarily direct, frequent, and bidirectional; $\leftarrow \cdots \rightarrow$ Less strong, not necessarily direct, frequent, and bidirectional; $\cdots \rightarrow$ Less strong, indirect, less frequent, and unidirectional; \leftrightarrow Dialogue between national policy departments.

Source: Guidotti and Capranica, 2015

1. ANALYSIS OF THE EU-FUNDED PROJECTS AND THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

KEY FINDINGS

- The main financial resource for cross-national projects on dual career derives from European funds.
- Cross-national projects highlighted challenges and proposed possible solutions for the implementation of dual career in different settings.
- Recently, a quality framework on support systems and facilities for dual career, to be deployed uniformly in individual Member States, has been proposed.
- Scientific contributions focused mainly on the micro (e.g., the student-athlete) and macro (e.g., the sport and education environments) dimensions of dual career, whereas the meso dimension (i.e., interpersonal relationships of student-athletes with relatives/partner/friends/peers) has been scarcely investigated.
- Research focused mainly on northern European countries characterized by a State as Sponsor/Facilitator dual career policy.
- The term "dual career" needs to be consolidated and there is a need for valid tools for large-scale, longitudinal, cross-national, and cross-sports investigations.
- Future research should explore the intertwined relationships between different dual career stakeholders and dimensions by means of an integrated trans-disciplinary approach.

Since 2009, the European Commission has provided financial support for 18 trans-national projects to address different aspects of a European dual career (European Commission, 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2016), including networking among stakeholders, awareness-raising actions, and data collection through consultations or surveys (Annex 1). A common parameter is the establishment and implementation of a fruitful dialogue between academic institutions, sport organizations, and agencies for the promotion of dual career paths for student-athletes, the implementation of dual career strategies, and the integration of former athletes in the labour market. Furthermore, to develop a set of minimum quality requirements for dual career services and facilities at national and European levels, a call for tender has been financed (European Commission, 2014a). Despite the variability in the methodological approaches, these projects provided useful information for understanding the European dual career phenomenon, offering possible solutions to develop, transfer, and/or implement innovative practices for larger scale initiatives at National and European levels. In general, a positive relationship between sport and educational bodies determined effective programmes and best practices. Conversely, the multiplicity/specificity of stakeholders and their different roles in supporting the dual career of elite student-athletes challenges the generalizability of a national programme at the European level.

Recently, the EU-funded study on "Minimum quality requirements for dual career services" (Amsterdam University of Applied Science et al., unpublished data) highlighted the need for a European-wide framework on support systems and facilities for dual career to be

deployed uniformly in individual Member States. The study proposed a quality framework aimed to allow self-assessment of friendliness towards dual career, support the advancement of dual career arrangements, and promote long-term dual career monitoring. Furthermore, the study envisioned: 1) educational paths for dual career support providers (e.g., sport scientists, psychologists, nutritionists, and former athletes) to tutor and counsel athletes, inform and raise awareness of relatives, coaches, and sports managers regarding the athlete's whole-life-development-plan and its progress; 2) responsibility for systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of dual career programmes and services assigned to independent dual career organizations; 3) Formal agreements at national and European levels between educational institutions, sports organizations, and the labour market to empower dual career networking; and 4) Proximity of sports facilities and dual career services to educational institutions/working places.

In line with the EU actions in this field (European Commission, 2009, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2014d, 2016), the scientific information on the complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon of the dual career of European student-athletes has increased in the last decade, revealing a growing scholars' interest toward the student-athletes and their specific needs (Guidotti et al., in press). The 62 studies presented in Annex 2 focused on different aspects of this issue. Twenty-six Member States were represented in the papers, with the exception of Bulgaria and Romania. Student-athletes of different ages (e.g., youth, adult, former athletes), sex, competition level (e.g., youth elite, elite, and sub-elite), and sport typology (e.g., individual and team sports) have been investigated.

In general, the majority of findings (35%) relates to the micro dimension (e.g., psychological aspects of student-athletes, elite athletes' life, and career transition) and strongly rely on self-reported life histories and questionnaires to investigate the athlete's reasons for maintaining or ceasing involvement in sport and/or education, perceived career transition factors, and motivations towards academic and sport careers (Aquilina, 2013; Guidotti et al., 2013; Ryba et al., 2015). Conversely, there is a need to develop tools based on sound theoretical constructs validated across Member States and sport disciplines (Lupo et al., 2014).

Also the macro dimension of dual career (e.g., the sport and education environments) is well represented in the scientific contributions (32%), specifically related to the effectiveness of practices in sport and educational environments. A positive relationship between sport and educational bodies seems to determine effective programmes and best practices in specific settings (Jonker et al., 2009; Henriksen et al., 2010). In this vein, a demanded EU strategy should aim to increase the dialogue between academic institutions and sport organizations, involving also agencies that could play a key role in integrating former athletes in the labour market. However, some findings also highlighted opposite results (Emrich et al., 2009; Henriksen et al., 2014), indicating that no single programme could be suitable across Member States and sports disciplines. In this respect, the EU calls for proposals nurture cross-national cooperation for the identification of the best practices in dual career and promote exchanges between sport and education decision makers at local, national, and EU levels to overcome resilience of educational/work and sports institutions.

The global dimension (e.g., sport and educational policies) and multidimensional aspects of dual career have been investigated in 16% and 13% of the studies, respectively. From the seminal study of Aquilina and Henry (2010), which focused on the identification of different approaches to dual career in Member States, other contributions investigating this phenomenon in specific geographical areas called for investments and resources in support of the elite student-athletes (Caput-Jogunica et al., 2012; De Bosscher et al., 2011; Petry et al., 2008). Interestingly, the majority of studies have been conducted

in northern European countries characterized by a State as Sponsor/Facilitator dual career policy (e.g., Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), indicating that countries facilitating the education of talented elite athletes also support scientific interests in this research field.

Despite the crucial role of interpersonal relationships of athletes with family, peers, educators, coaches and managers, only two studies focused on the meso dimension of dual career. Furthermore, research is characterized by the lack of a consolidated use of the term "dual career" and valid and reliable tools suited to large-scale and cross sport investigations to assess aspects related to both specific national and cross national contexts (Lupo et al., 2012; Guidotti et al., 2013; Lupo et al., 2014). Surely, an integrated approach formulating more complex research questions, involving different scientific areas, and applying empirical, longitudinal, and cross-national research designs could better explore the intertwined relationships between different dimensions of dual career, provide relevant information on the effectiveness of dual career programmes across Europe, and increase the generalizability of findings into practical applications (Guidotti et al., in press).

2. DUAL CAREER POLICIES IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

KEY FINDINGS

- Dual career paths for athletes depend on national educational and sport policies.
- Legal frameworks and funding resources for dual career are available in few Member States.
- Eligibility criteria of student-athletes for dual career services differ across Member States.
- Personalized and flexible educational paths represent positive measures to support student-athletes in higher education.
- At a national level, a monitoring system regarding student-athletes and their dual career paths and employment is lacking.
- Dual career policies lack quality assessment procedures.

In Europe, relevant cultural and organizational differences between Member States in educational and sport systems exist (Aquilina & Henry, 2010; Henry, 2013; Radtke & Coalter, 2007). Findings from three European studies on the dual career of student-athletes (Amara et al., 2004; European Parliament, 2003; INEUM Consulting & TAJ, 2008) highlighted a wide range of policies in support of student-athletes (Aquilina & Henry, 2010; Caput-Jogunica et al., 2012; Henry, 2013). These profound differences between countries challenge the development of a common approach to dual career. More recently, findings of the EU-funded study on “Minimum quality requirements for dual career services” (Amsterdam University of Applied Science et al., unpublished data) indicated a growing interest from Member States towards dual career as a topic for action and policy. However, only few Member States presented well-organized and extensive systems, whereas the majority of countries encompass fragmented actions and policies related to some aspects of dual career for talented and elite athletes. Moreover, findings highlighted differences between Member States in the main actors involved in dual career policies and a clear need for stakeholders to be responsible for effective transition into the labour market.

At present, the possibility to compare figures between Member States is limited by the lack of a common methodology for data collection, academic-specific admission procedures, sport-specific differences in the identification of talented and elite athletes who are eligible for dual career services.

To represent the northern, central and southern European geographical areas, and to provide a synthetic overview of the different dual career policies in place in the Member States, eight countries with a long sports history and tradition have been selected and their profiles are presented in the next sections.

According to the classification of Aquilina & Henry (2010), the analysis of dual career programmes in place in France and Spain will represent examples of the State-Centric Regulation approach; Denmark, Germany and Sweden will represent examples of the State as Sponsor/Facilitator approach; the UK will represent an example of the National Sporting

Federations/Institutes as Intermediary approach; and Austria and Italy will represent examples of the Laisser-Faire/No Formal Structure approach.

2.1. State-Centric Regulation approach

This category includes Member States providing legal obligations regarding the definition of the student-athlete status, the academic admission procedures, and dual career services, such as France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, and Spain. However, several differences exist between these countries.

2.1.1. France

In France, an integrated approach to dual career is in place. The French Ministry of Health and Sport established the Institut National du Sport, de l'Expertise et de la Performance (INSEP), and 17 regional education and training centres and three national sport academies (i.e., National Sport Network), with the aim of contributing to the development of elite athletes by facilitating the completion of their education and their integration in the labour-market (www.insep.fr). Furthermore, INSEP provides Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses to elite sport staff and managers.

National sport federations provide the Ministry of Health and Sport with a list of outstanding athletes aged 15 years and above to validate their eligibility as elite athletes. To note, at the 2012 London Olympic Games INSEP student-athletes won 56% of the national medals.

Leading the National Sport Network, INSEP establishes relations and agreements with school/academic institutions for the implementation of dual career programmes and the involvement of specialized staff (e.g., tutors) to support individualized dual career programs for student-athletes, including e-learning.

INSEP supports research focused on dual career (e.g., career transition, dual career management) and monitors the academic path of student-athletes involved in a dual career programme. Moreover, INSEP is a partner of the EAS network and participates in several EU-funded projects on dual career.

To facilitate the transition of elite athletes in the labour market, every year the Employment Department of INSEP organizes dedicated forums and workshops in cooperation with specialized companies. In particular, elite athletes have the opportunity of individualized job contracts through the "Convention d'insertion professionnelle" with the Ministry of Sport and French companies.

2.1.2. Spain

In Spain, specific laws for elite sport are in place, regulating the status of the elite athlete, defining the educational, employment, and tax-related measures, and creating a Career Assistance Program (CAP) for elite athletes. In particular, within six months of an outstanding athletic accomplishment, athletes can apply for elite status, which has to be officially recognized by the President of the Superior Council of Sports (www.csd.gob.es/csd/). Elite athletes maintain dual career rights (i.e., access to higher education, a flexible attendance and exam schedule, and sport coaching certification) for five to seven years after recognition of their status.

In 2009, the Spanish Sport Council established the Programa de Ayuda al Deportista (Athletes' Support Program - PROAD) to provide elite athletes with group or individual e-counselling regarding education, employment, and career planning through a network of tutors-consultants (www.csd.gob.es). Furthermore, PROAD promotes agreements with institutions, organizations, agencies and companies directly or indirectly involved in the dual career process.

Around 760 elite athletes enrol annually in the PROAD mentoring/tutoring programme, which has proved to be useful in providing information on work/study opportunities during their sports career (de Subijana et al., 2015).

2.2. State as Sponsor/Facilitator approach

This category includes countries with no legal obligations regarding dual career but facilitate the student-athletes' access and continuation of their academic career, such as Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, and Sweden.

2.2.1. Denmark

In Denmark, there is a comprehensive dual career policy at national, regional, and local levels, including sport-specific and education-specific features. In particular, dual career policies are supported and implemented through different programs: Team Danmark, Study4Player, Job4player, and FIFPro Online Academy.

Funded in 1984 by the Danish Government, Team Danmark aims to ensure the best services to elite athletes of 28 National Sport Federations (www.teamdanmark.dk). The Danish Ministry of Culture and Sports Federation, through the sale of broadcasting and media rights, sponsorships, and marketing rights, provides funds for ensuring several Team Danmark services for elite athletes (i.e., sports medicine, physiology and psychology, education and career consulting, housing, and training facilities).

According to their athletic achievements, elite athletes are classified as a World Class Athlete (i.e., ranked in the top-eight in recent World Championships/Olympic Games), an Elite Athlete (having the possibility to achieve a top-eight position at the next World Championships/Olympic Games), and a Team Danmark Athlete (included in youth or adult national squads).

Specifically regarding dual career, Team Danmark cooperates with the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) to ensure that the development of elite sport is compatible with the Danish cultural policy and with a holistic development of elite athletes. In particular, it provides individual financial support, guidance, education and training to athletes. Recently, Team Danmark has appointed a dual career coordinator to help individual athletes to negotiate flexible academic paths. For youth student-athletes attending secondary education, a number of public schools offer special sport classes with integrated training sessions into the school schedule and allow them an extra year (i.e., four instead of three) to finish their secondary education (Henriksen and Christensen, 2013). Finally, Team Danmark cooperates with Adecco and the IOC Athlete Career Programme for helping former athletes in their transition to the labour market.

To provide guidance and support for athletes during their transition to higher education and at the end of their sport career, the Danish Football Players Association, the Danish Handball Players Association, and the Danish Elite Athletes Association initiated a dual career programme for student-athletes (e.g., Study4Player) and a programme for athletes at the end of their sport career (e.g., Job4player). In particular, Study4player helps individual athletes in identifying their educational needs, in planning a flexible education path, and in establishing networking with other athletes. Furthermore, the Study4player Online Academy offers online courses with limited attendance requirements. To increase the employability of former athletes, in cooperation with Team Danmark and Adecco, the Job4player programme aims to provide counselling on individual competences (Henriksen and Christensen, 2013).

2.2.2. Germany

In Germany, there is a comprehensive national, sport-specific, education-specific dual career policy, involving the Ministry of Interior Affairs, sport bodies, universities/schools, and private companies.

The Elite Schulen des Sports represents an active cooperation between schools and organised sports (e.g., clubs and associations) to provide athletic, academic, and boarding support to young athletes (Borggreve and Cachay, 2012). At a higher academic level, the Allgemeiner Deutscher Hochschulsportverband (e.g., the German University Sports Federation-ADH) is the umbrella organization of the German University Sport Institutions, which supports dual career for student-athletes (www.adh.de/en.html). In 1999, ADH launched the project "Partner University of Elite Sport", which includes today about 100 partner universities providing special services, flexible curricula, individual counselling, and solutions for the fulfilment of the academic requirements of elite athletes. In particular, the German Olympic Team of London 2012 comprised 53% of student-athletes.

Main career management services (e.g., career counselling, physiotherapy, and medical services) are provided at the Olympic training centres. The German Sport Aid Foundation (Deutsche Sporthilfe-DSH) and several local or regional supporting institutions (e.g., foundations of the chamber of commerce) ensure financial support and additional individual counselling for elite athletes, increasingly promoting their dual career in higher education. Finally, the Career Counselling of the Olympic Training Centres (n=19) and the Chamber of Commerce facilitate the transition of athletes into the labour market.

Athletes to be treated in the Olympic Training Centres and to get special Dual Career support will be elected from their National Sport Federation based on the carded system ("Kader System") of the German Olympic Sport Federation (DOSB), which separates them into A-B-C-D carded athletes, depending on age and elite sport levels.

2.2.3. Sweden

In Sweden, a comprehensive national and sport-specific dual career policy is in place. In the '70s, the Swedish Sports Confederation established the national elite sport schools where talented youth athletes (i.e., 16-18 years) can pursue both sport and education (Stambulova & Johnson, 2013).

The Swedish Sports Confederation, Sport Federations, the Swedish School authority organization (i.e., Skolverket), and local communities finance 51 national elite sport schools operating across the country, some specific only to one sport and others including several sport disciplines. Athletes consider elite sport schools not only avenues to the Swedish national/Olympic teams, but also providers of dual career assistance to adjust their school programme to suit training and competition. Furthermore, regional and local certified sport schools assist athletes competing in sport teams/clubs (Stambulova & Ryba, 2014).

In higher education, student-athletes could benefit from a flexible academic path adjusted to their sport schedule. Elite athletes also have the possibility to receive financial support from the National Olympic Committee for their dual career.

Despite not having a special national programme to support athletes' post athletic career, the National Olympic Committee provides a career advisory service, agencies help elite athletes to find flexible employment, and some prestigious sport clubs "advertise" their retiring athletes in the job market.

National sports federations award a sporting excellence status to athletes eligible to attend a secondary sports school.

2.3. National Sporting Federations/Institutes as Intermediary approach

Member States with national governing bodies or national sports institutions designating organizations/structures to act on behalf of student-athletes and to provide them with services and financial support include Greece and the UK.

2.3.1. United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom (UK), a comprehensive sport-specific and education-specific dual career policy is in place. In 2003, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport of the UK established a specific Dual Career organization (e.g., Sport England Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme - TASS), which represents the partnership between the Government, academic and sporting bodies in support of student-athletes (www.tass.gov.uk).

Talented and elite student-athletes who have been recommended by their national governing sport bodies receive services (e.g., strength and conditioning, education and lifestyle support, physiotherapy, sport psychology, nutrition and sports medicine provided by TASS Accredited Centres) and scholarships from TASS.

The impact of TASS's investment emerged at the Olympic/Paralympic Games with a high proportion of TASS student-athletes among UK medallists (London 2012 Games: 33 Olympic, 24 Paralympic). In 2015-2016, the TASS programme was increased further, including 400 student-athletes across 30 sports.

Twenty-four UK universities have been recognized as a TASS Accredited Centre (TAC) and have to deliver services to TASS student-athletes. To facilitate the access to TASS services, TASS student-athletes are assigned to a TAC depending on their geographical location, independently from actual enrolment at that university.

Independently from other types of academic scholarship, UK talented student-athletes aged >16 years can apply to the Sport England TASS. They can plan individualized sport and academic programmes, including flexible learning policies. Based on the sport and academic achievements of the granted student-athletes, TASS monitors their eligibility annually for a maximum of three years.

TASS actively supports the EAS network and participates in several EU-funded projects on dual career.

2.4. Laisser-Faire/No Formal Structures approach

A lack of services towards dual career characterizes Member States with a Laisser-Faire/No Formal Structures policy approach where student-athletes individually negotiate agreements with their schools/academics. According to Aquilina and Henry (2010), this category encompasses Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, and Romania. However, in recent years, dual career policies have been implemented in some countries.

2.4.1. Austria

Despite Austria having been classified among the Laisser-Faire Member States (Aquilina & Henry, 2010), a dual career policy, including national, regional, local, sport-specific, and education-specific features, is currently in place, which locates it in the State as a Sponsor/Facilitator category.

In particular, "Karriere Danach" (i.e., "career after the career" – KADA) was established in 2006 to help athletes safeguard their future by actively preparing for a post-elite sport career (<http://www.kada.co.at/>).

Financed by the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, KADA cooperates with the Austrian Olympic Committee, the Austrian Sport Aid, the Austrian Federal Network Sports Psychology, the Austrian National Sports Organisation, the Military Sports Centre of the Austrian Armed Forces, and numerous Austrian Sports Federations. At the European level, KADA is participating in two of the recently EU-funded projects on dual career.

Through academic/professional career and vocational integration counselling, KADA supports youth athletes (e.g., 15 years and above) from all the 61 sports recognized by the Austrian National Sports Organisation with custom-tailored programmes adapted to the needs, personal, and professional goals of the individuals, and assists them in all phases of their dual career, including digital education orientation for junior athletes and tailored training for elite athletes ("KADAcademy"). KADA cooperates with nine main Austrian universities (i.e., study programme "Studium Leistung Sport") to provide study and career coaching for elite athletes. Independently from KADA, one other university (i.e., University of Klagenfurt) offers a dual career programme itself.

At secondary school level, KADA cooperates with numerous "Nachwuchskompetenzzentren" (elite schools of sport) and "Spezialeinrichtungen" (i.e., football academies) in supporting youth talented athletes to pursue their dual career. In collaboration with the Public Employment Service Austria, KADA also provides a nationwide career coaching service, both for former elite athletes and sports coaches.

Talented athletes of elite schools of sport, participants of YOG or EYOF, European or World Junior Championships, members of the junior national teams, and players of the Austrian Football Academies are eligible for the career development programme. Also elite athletes of single sports funded by Sport Aid, Army Athletes, Olympic squad members, members of the A or B squad in their national sports federation, team sport players of the national team (from Under 18 to first Team) and of the two highest national leagues are eligible for the career development programme. Former elite athletes funded by the Sport Aid, Army Athletes (high performance centres), Olympic squad members, members of the A or B squad in their national sports federation, members of the national teams, players of the two highest national leagues, and professional sports coaches, are all eligible for the vocational integration programme.

Finally, KADA uses a national database to monitor KADA athletes, to record the individual counselling processes and to share information within KADA's national network of career counsellors.

2.4.2. Italy

Despite the dual career policy in Italy lacking comprehensive interventions coordinated at national level, a number of sport-specific and education-specific agreements are in place at local and regional levels.

In 2013, an agreement between the Italian Ministry of Education and the National Olympic Committee established the *Licei ad Indirizzo Sportivo* (i.e., sports high schools), which aims to enhance the sports culture at high school level (DPR n.52, www.gazzettaufficiale.it). However, no specific dual career is ensured and student-athletes have to individually negotiate a flexible path in relation to their sport needs.

At university level, few institutions provide academic flexibility for student-athletes and established agreements with specific national sports federations (i.e., fencing, rowing, triathlon, track and field) to support their student-athletes. In general, universities apply different eligibility criteria for dual career services and also very few offer scholarships for student-athletes (Guidotti et al., 2014).

At work level, the Italian Army recruits elite athletes competing at international and national levels through a public competition. Therefore, army-athletes have the opportunity to combine elite sport with a military career. Furthermore, the CONI Servizi SpA and

National Sports Federations guarantee flexibility and a 45-day athletic leave to its employee-athlete members of National Teams to prepare for and to compete in athletic events (CONI Servizi SpA, 2010). Finally, CONI, in partnership with Adecco, provides resources and training to former elite athletes when entering the labour market through the Athlete Career Programme (www.adecco.it).

At present, no monitoring system is available to evaluate the efficacy of the dual career of Italian student-athletes.

2.5. Comparative analysis

The considered countries showed a variety of dual career policies and programmes, as well as stakeholders responsible for supporting student-athletes. Countries enforcing sport-specific and education-specific agreements and/or providing structured funding and dedicated agencies present the most advanced dual career programmes and services. In particular, Austria, France, and United Kingdom could be considered examples of good practices for dual career in Europe. Conversely, countries characterized by the absence of comprehensive national formal dual career policies (e.g., Italy) need to radically implement their policies to meet the EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes (European Commission, 2012).

A critical aspect emerged relatively to the accurate identification of athletes and coaches as being talented and elite. In general, sport organizations are involved in the recognition of talented/elite athletes to be eligible for a dual career programme. However, the Member States adopt different criteria for the recognition of athletes eligible for dual career programmes. Whilst the members of national teams are clearly identified as elite athletes, many others competing at a high level or still in their athletic developmental phases may fall outside this cohort. These differences might hamper possible future transnational agreements in favour of migrating student-athletes who could be considered eligible in one country but not eligible in other countries. The recommendations of the EU-funded study on common eligibility criteria and minimum quality requirements for dual career programmes have addressed this aspect as an issue that should be central for future EU policy actions in this area (Amsterdam University of Applied Science et al., unpublished data).

In general, these countries neglect the quality assessments of dual career policies. Similarly, sport and academic progresses of student-athletes are not monitored. To have a clear picture of the dual career phenomenon in all the Member States, it is necessary to gather systematic and harmonized data at sport, educational, and work levels. Therefore, the European sport agenda should consider the introduction of a European observatory, which could be helpful for providing transparency in evaluating the progress of the dual career programmes at national and European levels.

3. TRANSCENDING NATIONAL BOUNDARIES: DUAL CAREER FOR THE EUROPEAN MIGRATING ATHLETES

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Major sport events tend to rotate across the globe.
- To enhance athletic performance, training camps are organized in different part of the globe.
- Temporary athletic mobility could determine altered psycho-physiological conditions with negative effects on the athlete's sport and academic performances.
- European athletes migrating transnationally are attracted by the dual career opportunities of the USA collegiate athletics system.
- Transnational exchange agreements among Member States are crucial to establish/implement the European dimension of dual career at academic and sport levels.
- Flexible academic paths and courses offered in English are vital to support dual career during temporary and long-term athletic migration.
- Migrating European student-athletes should profit from dual career programmes, sport facilities, and dual career services available for national athletes.

Elite sport transcends national boundaries and major championships and tournaments tend to rotate across the globe (Reilly et al., 2005). Therefore, talented and elite athletes competing at international level may have to face several travel journeys to participate in sport events. Furthermore, to increase athletic performance, executive sport bodies often organize training camps in different part of the world to profit from particular environmental conditions. This sport-related temporary mobility may require the crossing of several time zones, especially for European teams (Reilly et al., 2005). The scientific literature showed that travel across time zones exposes athletes to altered physiological conditions, including sleep disorders, disruption of mood state, difficulty concentrating, irritability, and reduction of athletic performance parameters (Kern et al., 2002; Manfredini et al., 1998; Hill et al., 1993). Logically, sound dual career strategies to allow student-athletes to perform their best at academic level should adjust exams and study schedules to trans-meridian travels.

The globalized culture of elite sport presents also the phenomenon of transnational athletic migration of athletes, which encompasses different typologies of migrating talented, and professional and non-professional elite athletes (i.e., "mercenaries" interested in the economic reward, "nomadic cosmopolitans" interested in experiencing different countries and cultures, "pioneers" motivated to proselytize their sport in other cultures, "settlers" in the country where they moved to compete, "returnees" motivated to return to their country of origin after completing their sport career, "ambitionist" motivated to pursue their sport career anywhere, "exile" compelled to leave their country because of threats to their life, and "expelled" forced to leave their country of origin).

The literature showed that European migrating non-professional athletes are especially attracted by the USA collegiate athletics system, which offers the unique opportunity to simultaneously obtain a university education and compete in a sport at a high level, offers athletic scholarships, and provides sport facilities and support resources, distance learning, academic flexibility, and counselling, independently from the nationality of the athlete (Love & Kim, 2011; McCormack & Walseth, 2013; Ryba et al., 2015). Furthermore, there is a need to consolidate the EU qualification framework in sport to facilitate the qualified staff's mobility between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning (EOSE, 2011).

Athletic migration is a special subject of concern for European athletes born in small Member States (e.g., Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta) or in countries with a limited sport tradition and/or lacking sport-specific environments/facilities (e.g., winter and sea sports) in the discipline of their interest. In Europe, available dual career programmes and services are offered to national athletes and often precluded to those with a foreign passport. In fact, sport in Europe is a national issue and this limits the cooperation between Member States.

To enhance the athletic mobility and/or the migration of talented and elite athletes, and sport staff in Europe, possible suggestions include the establishment/implementation of:

- Dual career exchange agreements and transnational networks among Member States at educational and sport levels;
- Clear criteria for the status of European talented and elite athletes eligible for athletic scholarships/services at academic and sport levels;
- A European quality certification for education and sport institutions involved in transnational dual career programmes;
- Individualized transnational academic dual-career programmes under the Erasmus+ and the Life Long Learning programmes, including flexible entry requirements, e-learning, academic flexibility (extended term time, blocks of intensive learning, individualized study plan), individual tutoring, and academic studies offered in English;
- National high-performance sport facilities and services should be available to migrating European athletes.

4. COMPETENCES AND QUALIFICATIONS IN SPORTS: MANAGING THE ATHLETES' DUAL CAREER AND POST-ATHLETIC CAREER

KEY FINDINGS

- Athletes could prepare for a post-athletic career within or outside the sport sector.
- Qualifications in the sport sector should be based on the formal, non-formal, and informal education.
- Alignment of sport qualifications to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) principles could facilitate the integration of non-formal education into formal educational paths.
- Sport is considered a tremendous environment for informal learning of life skills that represent important attributes of European citizens and productive workers.
- The recognition of the non-formal and informal learning of elite athletes is deemed central to implement academic curricula and define suitable dual career study models.
- Former elite athletes with a dual career degree could achieve greater educational and labour market success with respect to their non-athlete counterparts.
- Academic programmes should include dual career courses to prepare dual career experts/support providers to be employed in the sports and work sectors.

Traditional education in sport is based on formal learning (i.e., the number of hours spent attending specific courses and in individual study at university/vocational education and training institutes), whereas non-formal and informal learning relate to capabilities acquired through different types of educational providers (e.g., public and private, in and outside the formal education system) and daily activities/experiences, respectively (EOSE, 2011; EU Expert Group Education and Training in Sport, 2013; PwC & CONI Servizi SpA, unpublished data). In sport, non-formal education is delivered through specific courses for qualifying sport staff (e.g., coaches, physical trainers, referees, sport managers), whereas informal education is mainly related to life skills and competencies acquired through sport participation that could be transferred to educational/work situations. However, the education in sport mirrors the complexities of the sport and active leisure sector in Europe, which lacks a clear structure and presents uncertainties for employment opportunities and career progress (EOSE, 2011; PwC & CONI Servizi SpA, unpublished data). A competence-based approach at educational and work levels could embrace the recognition of cross-sectorial competences and qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning associated with elite sport. This approach is central to sustain the athletes in their dual career and to increase their employment opportunities during the retirement transition.

Athletes could prepare their post-athletic career within or outside the sport sector. Those interested in a future career in the sport field could acquire formal education at universities offering Bachelor, Master's, and PhD programmes in sport sciences, or non-formal education at national sport federations issuing sport-specific certifications (e.g., coaches, physical trainers, referees, managers). Unfortunately, at present limited cooperation between European educational institutions and sport bodies is in place (PwC & CONI Servizi SpA, unpublished data).

However, Estonia embodies a good practice for the strong collaborative relation between Estonian sport bodies and educational institutions to release sport qualifications. Furthermore, the Estonian Sport Register provides national data on sport staff. Another good practice is in place in Italy where the national Olympic committee (CONI) aligned its first four levels of qualification (e.g., level 1: assistant coach, level 2: coach, level 3: head coach, level 4: high-level technical staff) to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) principles, defining the core competences, skills, knowledge, and level of responsibility of sport staff at different levels of qualification (CONI Servizi SpA & Scuola dello Sport, 2015). Based on this framework, the University of Rome Foro Italico offers a Bachelor programme in sport sciences specifically tailored on the competences of sport staff holding the European 4th level qualification issued by CONI. Another best practice is the Italian University consortium "AlmaLaurea" (www.alma laurea.it) that provides annual surveys on the Graduates' Profile and the Graduates' Employment Condition in relation to their academic majors. Although these instruments present detailed information regarding graduates in sport sciences in Italy, they do not provide disaggregated data on the student-athlete cohort across academic majors and their implementation is strongly envisaged.

Athletes interested in preparing for careers outside the sport field could benefit from the recognition of informal education acquired during their sport career. In fact, independently from the formal learning process, athletes develop life skills such as goal-setting, emotional control, self-esteem, self-knowledge, problem solving, goal attainment, teamwork, skill development, and a hard work ethic, which could help them to achieve specific working/educational outcomes (Goudas, 2010; Gould & Carson, 2008; Holt et al., 2009). Furthermore, elite athletes often experience cross-cultural understanding, adapt to different environments, master media communication, and adopt healthy behaviours, which could represent important attributes of European citizens and productive workers. In fact, a statistical report of the American National Center for Education Statistics (2005) on the associations between high school athletic participation and later-life outcomes showed that elite athletes are more likely to achieve greater educational and labour market success with respect to their non-athlete counterparts. These findings substantiate the role of informal education acquired through high-level sport participation and call for concrete European initiatives towards the validation of non-formal and informal learning recognition mechanisms at educational and working levels through competence-based approaches.

At present the on-going project "Facilitating Higher Education for Athletes - WINNER education model", financed by the EU Life Learning Programme, aims to emphasize the recognition of the informal learning achievements of elite athletes to implement academic curricula and define a suitable dual career study model (www.winner-project.eu). Furthermore, the on-going EU project "Gold in Education and Elite Sport -GEES", funded by the EU Erasmus + Sport Programme, aims to: a) describe the competences, instruments, and methods required for athletes to successfully prepare, manage, and finalize their dual career pathway; and b) develop a profile of competences as well as instruments and methods required by dual career experts/support providers working with athletes in a dual career pathway (www.gees.eu). The outcomes of these projects are expected by the end of 2016/beginning of 2017 and will provide interesting results to integrate better student-athletes in the European higher educational system. Therefore, academic institutions should offer educational courses to prepare dual career experts/support providers in adopting an

outcome-based and solution-based approach to issues identification and resolution for helping athletes managing dual career paths and career transitions.

Finally, to help elite athletes successfully manage the transition from sport to the labour market, in 2005 the IOC launched the IOC Athlete Career Development programme in cooperation with local Adecco organizations (IOC, 2015) and provides on-line Athlete Learning Gateway courses (<http://onlinecourse.olympic.org/>). Although several national Olympic committees of Member States are currently providing this programme, only 11000 elite athletes from over 60 worldwide countries worldwide have been supported by the end of 2012 (IOC, 2015).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF DUAL CAREER POLICIES

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clear definitions of talented and elite athletes and common eligibility criteria for dual career services should be adopted at European level.
- Minimum quality requirements for dual career programmes and services should be settled for Member States, with specific tasks to fulfil, and outcomes to deliver at sport, academic and work levels.
- To identify and monitor dual career initiatives and their efficacy/quality, a European dual career observatory should be established and financed by EU funds.
- Existing EU and/or national funding programmes for sport and educational bodies should be made conditional on the observance of minimum quality requirements for dual career programmes and services at sport, academic and work levels.
- The Erasmus+ and Life Long Learning programmes should be implemented with a flexible structure for the mobility of student-athletes.
- The setting-up of a new funding should support a transnational EU approach to dual career programmes that ensure temporary and long-term athletic mobility of European student-athletes.
- Funding resources should be allocated for strategic partnerships/synergies that enhance network operations between principal providers of dual career programmes and/or services ensuring temporary and long-term athletic mobility of European student-athletes at national and international levels.
- Based on the provision of dual career programmes and specialized staff, European dual career quality certification for sport and academic bodies and companies should be established.

In the last decade, dual career has been a constant concern for the EU Parliament and Commission, which provided specific guidance to Member States and stakeholders (European Commission, 2012). Although Governments increased their interest in the holistic development of talented and elite athletes through education, recent data highlighted significant differences among Member States in dual career policies, programmes and services (Amsterdam University of Applied Science et al., unpublished data), which raise concerns for the athletes' rights as European citizens. These discrepancies call for concrete EU actions, also in light of the growing phenomenon of transnational athletic migration of student-athletes, especially to the USA. Therefore, a continuous political and financial EU interest and support in dual career is advised both at a European and national levels. Specifically, EU actions should rely on cooperation, on information provision, and on incentive measures.

To support the cooperation between the different stakeholders of the dual career environments, the EU Sport Forum and meetings of sports directors, sport and education ministers, and expert groups, as well as conferences of the Council Presidency, of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) of the Council of Europe, and of the EAS network, represent well-established European platforms to be sustained as valuable resources for sharing best practices, for divulging scientific evidence, and for envisioning future directions of sustainable dual career policies and programmes.

The provision of information relies on studies and surveys aimed to identify strengths, gaps, and needs of further initiatives, as well as transnational projects aiming to test the effectiveness of innovative programmes and educational models. In this respect, the European sport policy has been particularly effective (European Commission, 2009, 2013a, 2013b). Furthermore, the Erasmus+ Programme has been implemented to support collaborative partnerships, the dialogue among relevant stakeholders and projects aimed to provide evidence for policy making (European Commission, 2016). Future EU policies should be directed towards a more effective communication of projects outcomes and recommendations to exploit sport-specific evidence-based findings for the development/implementation of further actions at national levels.

Recent examples are the EU-financed studies. In particular, the EU-funded study on minimum quality requirements for dual career services provided not only an updated picture of the dual career of European athletes but also an initial model of a quality framework to be used uniformly in individual Member States (Amsterdam University of Applied Science et al., unpublished data). The proposed quality framework could assess the dual career friendliness of different stakeholders, ranging from the individual dimension (e.g., the athlete) to the International/EU dimension. This tool could be also useful for monitoring the effectiveness/implementation of dual career programmes in Member States overtime. Similarly, the EU study on "Sport qualifications acquired through sport organisations and (sport) educational institutes" will provide (the official report is expected in March 2017) an updated picture of the European qualifications in sports and recommendations to match national degrees in sports, also in light of the integration of formal, non-formal and informal education (PwC & CONI Servizi SpA, unpublished data).

The EU Parliament could consider it appropriate to endorse the recommendations of these studies to support, coordinate or complement sport policy measures taken by its Member States. In particular, Governments, departments and institutes could be praised for their contributions to dual career at national and European levels. Incentive measures for concrete achievements should consider the establishment of European dual career quality certifications for service providers, educational institutions, sport organizations, companies, and dual career personnel. To stimulate the Member States and the stakeholders enforcing the recommendations and guiding principles of the EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes (European Commission, 2012), EU funding proved to be an important and systematic policy instrument for supporting good practices and contributing to the convergence towards EU policies between Member States (European Commission, 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2016).

The implications of successful development of dual career include pathways to increase interest in this issue, the allocation of finances, and a positive public profile for student/working-athletes. Unfortunately, comparable and sound information on dual career is still in its infancy. To keep an updated register of progress in education,

attainment of qualifications, and employment rate of talented and elite athletes, it is required that Member States collect harmonized and rigorous data on a regular basis. These data should be publicized so that policy makers at all levels, researchers, and laypersons could monitor the trends and developments.

In this framework, to guarantee synergies between Member States in dual career policies, EU policy makers could require national governmental bodies (i.e., Ministries of Education, Sport, Labour and Social Policies) to:

- Establish specific dual career policies through legislative or regulatory Acts at sport, academic, and work levels, also in cooperation with the international sport bodies (i.e., European Olympic Committees and European Sport Federations).
- Establish a national observatory of student-athletes to monitor their career development paths.
- Recognize specific qualifications for dual career counselling (i.e., academic dual career tutor, sport dual career tutor).
- Provide formal recognition of quality certifications to sport organizations, academic institutions and companies that embrace dual career policies and provide dual career services.
- Establish structures and partnerships between dual career academic/work and sport actors to ensure specific dual career student/staff mobility opportunities across Member States are permanently accessible for talented and elite athletes when training abroad.
- Provide human resources and funding opportunities for sustainable actions.

In particular, at a national level, the Ministry of Education should acknowledge quality certifications to schools/universities that collect information on the academic careers of their student-athletes, comprise flexible attendance and exam schedules, have the workforce for dual career counselling and structures for training, and provide services (lifestyle and career counselling, sports medicine) for athletes. Therefore, schools and universities should appoint a dual career contact person capable of providing advice and guidance for academic planning, to negotiate assessment deadlines, minimum attendance at lectures, and study flexibility (i.e., distance education) depending on sporting commitments, and to negotiate and/or implement student cross-institutional credit transfer arrangements. In considering as crucial the qualifications of staff specializing in dual career of athletes acting in the academic, sport, and work environments, universities should also provide dedicated courses to educate students to become dual career specialists. Because former elite athletes who successfully accomplished a dual career path could represent excellent human resources for helping new generations of talented athletes in adequately managing their career transitions, the recognition of their informal and non-formal education (European Commission, 2014b) is crucial and in line with the indications of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Finally, inter-university concerted actions for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning associated with elite sport and agreements for student-athletes' mobility at national and international level should be enforced.

Similarly, the National Olympic Committees and Ministries of Sport should systematically collect data on the actual academic/work career of athletes, identify and recognize talented/elite athletes to be eligible for a dual career programme, formally recognize sports federations that encompass dual career education for managers and coaching staff, and ensure career counselling for

athletes. Consequently, sports federations should acknowledge quality certification to sports clubs that offer talent development paths, supportive dual career staff, supervision of the academic achievements, and counselling for athletes and their relatives. Therefore, sports clubs should appoint specialized dual career contact persons capable of advising the athlete's parents to nurture and support their child's sporting development, to provide athletes with advice and guidance for academic/work planning and career transition, to negotiate flexible academic/work requirements with schools/universities/companies in relation to the sport commitments of the athletes, and to support distance learning/working of athletes.

Also, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies should collect information on the employment rate of former elite athletes. Furthermore, a cooperative financial funding scheme should be developed, providing tax exemptions or incentives to companies that recognize non-formal and informal learning associated with elite sport, adopt employment strategies favouring former elite athletes, enforce workplace conditions for athletes that balance a sport with career and productivity, allow flexible arrangements and athletic leave to their employee-athletes, and employ a dual career specialist.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: European-funded projects on dual career for athletes

Project title, funds received and brief description	
Call for Proposals 2009	
Dual Career for Young Athletes in Europe – DC SPORT 253.176,00 €	The aim of the project was to encourage and motivate cooperation in the sports field by developing suitable support and the tools needed by young athletes to enable them to have a dual career while focusing on: 1) Creating a functioning network and establish the best practices in sport training to increase possibilities for athletes to receive double career opportunities; 2) Finding better ways to provide “dual career” training for young sportsmen and sportswomen; 3) Providing high quality local training centres to safeguard their educational and professional interests.
ATHLETES2BUSINESS 251.378,00 €	The project aims were: 1) To promote the concept of dual careers in Europe by improving the knowledge base and sharing good practices; 2) To identify good practices of sport organisations, universities, career programmes, and businesses providing an enabling environment for dual careers; 3) To improve the potential access for athletes to the labour market by specifying an enabling environment; 4) To identify and remove barriers that prevent athletes from engaging with education in particular at tertiary level; 5) To provide a starting point for a network offering know-how on the concept and implementation of dual career and support to interested parties.
FIFPro online Academy 237.175,00 €	Project purposes were: 1) To analyse the needs amongst professional footballers across 11 EU Member States to establish potential alternative career choices for potential beneficiaries once their sporting careers end; 2) To identify the ways on which the proposed international On Line Academy can complement and meet the needs of the different educational systems in 11 member States; 3) To set up an International On- Line Academy for Professional Footballers to cover 11 partner EU Member States which will be used by approximately 250 beneficiaries every year; 4) To give professional footballers the opportunity to prepare for their second careers.
INTECS - Network Building: Preparatory Actions for Establishing a Network of International Training and Education Centers for Winter Sports 194.733,00 €	The project intended to establish an international network to foster joint opportunities within the INTECS network between winter sports and education institutions within the EU. In this way, the institutions involved can share knowledge about problems and good practices related to combining young winter sports athletes' training and education, and in doing so find the solutions for establishing a "dual career" for athletes.
Call for Proposals 2013	
Improving player associations support for dual careers 194.038,00 €	The aim of the project was to offer the possibility of fruitful discussions and interactions to learn about the organizational structure and support systems for dual career in different countries and/or sports across Europe through exchange visits of 19 player associations.

<p>Networks of knowledge</p> <p>240.000,00 €</p>	<p>The general objective of the project was to establish transnational partnerships across networks of dual career knowledge in the EU. The partners within this project group are recognised national leads for dual career within their country thereby not only providing European coverage, but also delivering national penetration through each partner's national network. This strategy will identify mobility opportunities, promote these across the network building an understanding of dual career practice and ultimately lead to the increase of governance and dual career skills across Europe. Therefore in simple terms this project will identify, understand, link, test and deliver dual career mobility structures.</p>
<p>Lifelong Learning Programme 2013</p>	
<p>Facilitating higher education for athletes - WINNER Education Model</p> <p>441.442,00 €</p>	<p>The project's key target group is young athletes in Europe, who have professional sports training and competing career, and who at the same time study in higher education institution. This group of you EU citizens possesses a great potential (goal-orientation, entrepreneurial spirit, discipline and international approach that are extremely relevant in future European economy and labour-market). However, their "dual career" model is problematic all over Europe due to time management problems and high drop-out level. For increasing attainment levels and strengthening the social dimension of higher education, we develop athletes studying model following "dual career" principles. When we use the concept of 'athlete' in this WINNER project's framework, we refer to this group in European education system, who are young, train professionally and study at the same time. The project aims to create tailored education model for athlete (adaptation of chosen existing degrees, testing the adaptation and disseminating information about the good practice that is developed).</p>
<p>Call for Tender 2014</p>	
<p>Study on the minimum quality requirements for dual career services</p> <p>189.450,00 €</p>	<p>To develop a set of minimum quality requirements at European level, which could function as a reference point for national dual career services and facilities; To provide a model of a QUALITY FRAMEWORK, taking into account a quality label and/or accreditation system for facilities and dual career services at national and European levels.</p>
<p>Call for Proposals 2014</p>	
<p>Gold in Education and elite sport</p> <p>624.639,00 €</p>	<p>The quality by which athletes are able to combine their athletic career with their educational pathway through secondary and higher education impacts not only their educational and athletic development but also their vocational development and employability during as well as after their athletic career. This project develops and implements guidelines (cfr. EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes, 2012) by focusing on the need to enhance (a) athletes' competences for developing their own dual career pathway and (b) the quality of dual career support experts/services provided to athletes preparing, managing and/or finalizing a dual career 'education and sport' pathway. It will (a) describe the competences, instruments and methods required by (a selection of) ±5.000 12-to-18 year old and ±4.400 18-to-25 year old athletes to successfully prepare, manage and finalize their dual career 'education and sport' pathway; (b) develop a profile of competences as well as instruments and methods required by (a selection of) 525 dual career experts/support providers working with athletes in a dual career 'education and sport' pathway. Results will be disseminated via a website, social networks, articles/presentations, reports and dedicated workshops and conference.</p>

<p>Developing an innovative European Sport Tutorship model for the dual career of athletes</p> <p>410.997,70 €</p>	<p>The general idea of this new project is to establish a collaboration synergy in the field of sport for professional athletes and to establish a network among the universities involved and other parties that are related to the sports development, linking this to a tutorial of the athletes so that they can combine their higher education with professional sports. This project aims at developing a European "Sport Tutorship" model at Universities that will allow high-level students-athletes further develop their dual career across Europe. The ultimate goal is therefore to facilitate, through the Sport Tutorship, the integration of athletes into the University context, by maintaining their sport career performance.</p>
<p>Call for Proposals 2015</p>	
<p>Athletes Learning Entrepreneurship – a new Type of Dual Career Approach</p> <p>490.327,00 €</p>	<p>The AtLETyC project will open a new opportunity to Athletes and a new direction in their lives. They will be better educated and will even be able to create new jobs. We want to provide educational training on Entrepreneurship at postsecondary (VET and tertiary) level with our partners to Athletes. Athletes are dedicated to achieving results and have an attitude and the capability to be the best and to succeed. Our approach shall provide Athletes with a new career path and decrease unemployment what contributes to EU 2020 Strategy in delivering smart and inclusive growth to economy. The Specific objectives of AtLETyC are: 1) To develop a vocational and/or higher education course on Entrepreneurship Athletes which will be offered in modules; 2) To develop tailor-made training as the best solution. The training will be composed of web-based modules and face to face modules in English on overlapping topics equal in all partner countries and special modules with country specific learning content in the language of the partner.</p>
<p>Dual European Careers of Athletes – Professional Basketball and Vocational Training</p> <p>304.617,09 €</p>	<p>The goal of the project is to have an educational partnership with sport clubs from five to six EU-member countries, in which highly talented basketball players, who have the prospect of becoming professionals, will stay in the state of Bremen for three years. During this time, the athletes will be integrated into the German Premiere Basketball League, playing at the major basketball club "Eisbären Bremerhaven". At the same time, they are given a vocational education or training, which will be organized by our associated partners in Bremen. The project addresses the European policy objectives for the dual career of athletes in several ways. It gives promising athletes prospects to pursue their athletic careers, while simultaneously providing them with an education and vocational training to prepare them for employment after their athletic careers. In addition, the project is an innovative approach to solving the unemployment problem of youths in Southern European countries by serving as a best practice example for youth and sport mobility.</p>

<p>Innovative Clubs for Dual Careers</p> <p>380.903,63 €</p>	<p>The objective of this project is to develop an innovative club-based pilot programme to support Dual Careers that facilitates an optimal combination of high-quality training and education to young athletes practicing water sports, namely canoeing, rowing and swimming. The Programme will target athletes between 14 and 21 years old, a critical age in which athletic, academic, psychosocial and professional transitions take place. In total, 100 athletes coming from the three partnering clubs will directly be involved in the testing of the pilot programme. Athletes will be supported by different experts coordinated by the Dual Career Case Manager as a key figure to integrate medical, psychological, educational and other support services that will be provided by clubs (further information about this profile is available below in this section). The main aim is to combine a successful educational and sporting career of athletes by bringing them the right supporting services from their own clubs, and hence contributing that at a later stage of life they keep a balance between sports training and employment.</p>
<p>Training Athletes for Sports Events Management</p> <p>416.415,20 €</p>	<p>The main objective of the project is to promote and support dual careers for athletes by setting up a transnational network of stakeholders that will develop a platform for the training of athletes in the management and organization of sport events, hence contributing to their employability. Through the collaboration of a transnational partnership comprised of 15 partners covering 9 countries, the project will conceive and develop a Dual Career Training Programme In Sports Events Management (TPISEM), delivered by the academic organizations integrated in the consortium and targeting 30 athletes and 15 coaches affiliated to the Olympic Committees and National Federations involved. Thus, the partnership brings together a range of key stakeholders jointly working for the strategic development of new educational and training opportunities for athletes in the field of sport management, notably around sports events, which will also benefit from the programme and develop a greater social legacy.</p>
<p>AFTERMATCH - Life Beyond Sport</p> <p>399.751,68 €</p>	<p>The AFTERMATCH project is a cooperation initiative implementing a pre-emptive approach for the promotion of "second careers" among athletes based on the valorisation of "sport-related transversal skills" which can facilitate the integration of ex-athletes in the labour market. The AFTERMATCH Model is targeted to teachers (sport schools/academies), sport trainers, sport association/federation managers and employers, with the aim of updating and empowering their knowledge and competences in the field of "dual career" promotion. The AFTERMATCH Model, jointly created by a partnership composed by educational/vocational training centers & sport federations/associations located in 5 different EU countries, implements a modular & customized approach: modular because it can be applied separately on 3 different targets (1. Sport managers & trainers; 2. Teachers of sport schools/academies; 3. Private employers), customized because it is based on a preliminary analysis of local needs and on local experimentations carried out in 5 different EU countries. The partnership of the AFTERMATCH project is concentrated in EU countries where "effective post sport career actions" are not properly organized and implemented (e.g., Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Poland). The project foresees a strong sustainability action aiming to achieve the signature of at least 5 protocols for the adoption of the Model in partner's countries, in agreement with sport organizations.</p>

<p>Athletes Global Management</p> <p>330.038,75 €</p>	<p>The project aims at: 1) providing possibilities to combine elite/subelite sport with university studies to athletes by offering support, flexibility, scholarships and other benefits; 2) creating a European education model that will include sports as a part of its structure and will have transversal and international deployment.</p>
<p>Improving Para-Athlete Coaching and Training Careers in Sport</p> <p>193.712,00 €</p>	<p>The IMPACTS project aims to extend the careers of disabled athletes by improving their opportunities in accessing coaching and training careers with disabled and/or able-bodied athletes. Up to now the sporting career of a disabled sports person is limited to active participation in sports, as no career opportunities and learning pathways are present for disabled athletes: this is an obstacle in their career and personal development and hinders their full (societal and personal) inclusion. The IMPACTS project aims to mainstream disabled athletes into coaching and training positions, improve the image of disabled athletes and coaches, empower disabled athletes to become role models for people with disabilities and promote their inclusion through participation in sport.</p>
<p>Regional Center for Dual Career Policy and Advocacy</p> <p>319.768,50 €</p>	<p>This project will focus on the priority of supporting the implementation of EU policy documents in the field of Dual Career: EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes and other relevant documents such as recommendations, guidelines, policy strategies etc. (e.g. EU Physical Activity Guidelines, Principles on good governance in sport). The project team, through its diverse structure of partners, covers a multitude of aspects involved in the field of Dual Career programmes: 1) the academic institutions are interested to find the best solutions to adapt their program studies allowing young athletes to follow their curses and thus targeting to attract a larger number of students as well as acquiring sport performance; 2) public bodies in sport, are pursuing the idea of generating a coherent national strategy for implementing EU Guidelines for Dual Career; 3) non-governmental organizations adhered to the project with the role of raising awareness of national authorities and governing bodies to the necessity of adopting coherent measures for end-of-career athletes.</p>
<p>RLEF Training and Education Portal</p> <p>465.999,87 €</p>	<p>This project provides a modular training, education and qualification framework, using transnational mobility, mentoring, multi-directional learning and innovative eLearning systems in addition to the dissemination of best practice in sport governance so vital in providing the participating organisations with a solid foundation on which to grow sustainably and efficiently. Combined, these aspects will serve as the foundation of the European rugby league's dissemination long after expiration of the 36-month term. The Project will disseminate an expanded suite of RLEF technical qualifications to cater to a maturing participant pool; is committed to obtaining recognition of those qualifications on the EQF, which will augment the legitimacy of the education offered; introduces professional actors to broaden the scope and perspectives of the project themes and, for the first time, builds a major eLearning open access portal that approaches course delivery, participation and assessment in a fresh and comprehensive manner.</p>

Source: European Commission, 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2016

Annex 2: Scientific Contributions on European dual career from the year 2007 to 2015

Year	Authors	Abbreviated reference	Dimension
2007	Radtke & Coalter	Report Scottish Instit Sport Foundation	Macro
2007	Stambulova et al.	Psychol Sport Exerc, 8:101-118	Micro
2008	Petry et al.	In: Comparative Elite Sport Development: Systems, Structures and Public Policy, pp.115-46. BH	Global
2008	Pummell et al.	Psychol Sport Exerc, 9:427-47	Micro
2009	Christensen and Sørensen	Eur Phys Educ Rev, 15:115-33	Micro
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Source: WOS, Scopus, SportDiscus

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