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EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes

Sport

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EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes

Recommended Policy Actions in Support of
Dual Careers in High-Performance Sport

Approved by the EU Expert Group 'Education & Training in Sport'
at its meeting in Poznań on 28 September 2012

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Athletes often face challenges to combine their sporting career with education or work. The aim to succeed at the highest level of a sport demands intensive training and competitions at home and abroad, which can be difficult to reconcile with the challenges and restrictions in the educational system and the labour market. Not only high levels of motivation, commitment, resilience and responsibility from the athlete, but also special arrangements are needed to avoid the situation where talented[1] and elite[2] sportspeople are forced to choose between education and sport or work and sport. Such 'dual career' arrangements should be beneficial for athletes' sporting careers, allow for education or work, promote the attainment of a new career after the sporting career, and protect and safeguard the position of athletes.

Dual career arrangements are relatively recent in the majority of Member States and sports. In Member States where these arrangements have been developed for some time, they sometimes lack solid agreements between the sport system and either the educational sector or the labour market. They may also lack a legal framework or a sustainable governmental policy. Guidance could be helpful to develop and improve the conditions needed for sustainable dual career programmes allowing for tailor-made arrangements for talented and elite athletes throughout Europe, either in their position as a student-athlete or employee-athlete.

1.2. Purpose of EU guidelines on dual careers

These Guidelines are addressed primarily to policy makers in the Member States, as inspiration for the formulation and adoption of action-oriented national dual career guidelines and to raise awareness at national level about the concept of dual careers. They aspire to sensitise governments, sport governing bodies, educational institutes and employers to create the right environment for dual careers of athletes, including an appropriate legal and financial framework and a tailor-made approach respecting differences between sports. These Guidelines have not been developed to become a binding instrument and they respect the diversity of competences and traditions in Member States in the various policy fields.

The Guidelines should contribute to the exchange and spreading of good practices and learning experiences in this field. Furthermore, the Guidelines suggest a framework of possible arrangements at international level and invite the European Union to initiate supplementary actions because of the high mobility of athletes and the specific needs in some sports and in small Member States to facilitate dual career arrangements abroad. Promotion of dual careers of athletes matches with several of the aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy (prevention of early school leaving, more graduates in higher education, higher employability) and makes sport policies more efficient by keeping more talented and high-performance athletes in the sport system.

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(1) A talented athlete is an athlete recognised by a sport organisation as an athlete who has the potential to develop an elite sporting career.

(2) An elite athlete is an athlete who has a professional contract with a sport employer or sport organisation or has a recognised status by a sport organisation as an elite athlete.

1.3. Challenges relating to dual careers

The success of dual career arrangements often depends on the goodwill of persons in key positions of an organisation or institute, while in fact a systematic approach based on general and sustainable financial and legal arrangements is needed. The increasing trend that athletes regularly train and/or compete abroad makes the combination with study more complex. The organisation of individualised pathways in education or distance learning is demanding while extra 'holidays' are a problem in the labour market. Athletes are reported to be in a disadvantaged position compared to other workers in the labour market. Enterprises may perceive it as difficult to adapt to the changing employment needs that athletes have at different stages of their careers. Governments, various organisations and athletes have called attention to these challenges as well as to concerns about the quality of education and supporting services for young people involved in elite sport in Europe. The main challenges are:

— The safeguarding of the development of young athletes, especially of children in early specialisation sports, young people in vocational education and training, and disabled athletes;
— The balance between sports training and education and, at a later stage of life, the balance between sports training and employment;
— The end-of-sporting-career phase of athletes including those who leave the system earlier than planned.

A large number of specifications and regulations related to talented and elite sportspeople exist in a number of EU Member States, but most of them are fragmented or focus only on some aspects. A few Member States have set out legal regulations, including specifications relating to the necessary requirements to run training centres. Training duration (mostly in early specialisation sports) is limited through educational or labour laws or collective bargaining agreements in the case of professional sports, or on the basis of official guidelines issued by the State and/or the sports movement.

Examples of good practice

In France each regional training centre must sign a general agreement with an educational structure where athletes may follow their academic education. The aim of the agreement is to facilitate the time schedule of athletes, allow for personal planning of exams during competition time and provide tutoring.

In football, UEFA's Club Licensing System asks clubs to ensure that every youth player involved in its youth development programme has the possibility to follow mandatory school education according to national law and is not prevented from continuing his non-football education (complementary school education or profession)[3].

1.4. Added value of EU guidelines

In recent years, both non-governmental and governmental stakeholders in sport and education have been asking specific attention for these challenges and repeatedly called on the European Commission to consider taking action at EU level to facili-

[3] Strictly speaking, UEFA's licensing system applies only to professional football clubs entering European competitions, but national federations follow the European example and include similar demands in their national licensing systems.

tate the introduction and implementation of dual career programmes. It will help European athletes to perform well and compete at a high international level with athletes from other powerful sporting nations and which will decrease the number of talented athletes who drop out from sport. Equally important is the need for highly qualified employees on the European labour market (Europe 2020 Strategy). Elite athletes should have a balanced and healthy sporting career and good follow-up after their active sporting career so that no talent is lost and investment wasted. Reintegration into education and the labour market are of great importance. Moreover, a well-balanced dual career can help maximise the contribution of athletes to society, building on the capabilities athletes have developed during their careers, and can be seen as good preparation for becoming potential role models in society[4] . The design of dual career programmes should meet athletes' individual needs taking into account their age, sport specialisation, career stage and financial status, with the athletes themselves taking increasing responsibility as they progress through their careers.

The conclusions of two EU funded studies[5], the results of dual career projects supported in the framework of the 2009 Preparatory Action in the field of sport, and informal expert meetings with Member States led the European Commission to propose to develop guidelines on dual careers in its Communication on sport of January 2011. In its Resolution on an EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014, the Council decided to treat the development of such guidelines as a priority.

The guidelines are based on the relevant theories, research, practical experience regarding dual careers in the Member States and the drafted suggestions and guidelines by sport organisations in this field[6] . However, the purpose of the document is not a comprehensive academic review of the subject. The guidelines are addressed to a wide range of users. The use of references and specialist terminology has therefore been kept to a minimum.

All guidelines have been developed in reference to all athletes – men, women, boys and girls, without and with disabilities. A tendency persists to prioritise male athletes in certain sports and to discriminate against athletes with a disability in comparison with able-bodied athletes, in particular in funding policies of both governments and sport organisations[7]. It would amount to considerable progress for sport in general and disability sport in particular if measures in support of dual careers were applied equally for all athletes. This would be in line with the principle of an inclusive approach in which specific measures for certain groups can only be motivated by specific needs. It would also be in accordance with the EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2006 by the UN General Assembly, which was ratified by the EU in 2008 and came into force in 2011.

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[4] Dual careers of athletes are sometimes compared with the 'dual careers' of musicians, dancers and other artists. However, compared with these professions athletes face unique challenges because of the strong competitive character of elite sport, the relative brevity of a career at the highest level, and its wide international dimension.

[5] Study on Education of Young Sportspersons, PMP/Loughborough University (2004); Study on training of young sportsmen and sportswomen in Europe, INEUM Consulting/Taj (2008).

[6] For example, guidelines entitled 'Promoting Dual Careers in the EU' (EOC EU Office, 'Athletes-To-Business', March 2011).

[7] Radtke & Doll-Tepper, Progress towards Leadership (2006).

1.5. Timeline of athletes' careers

'Dual careers' in sport encapsulates the requirement for athletes to successfully initiate, develop and finalise an elite sporting career as part of a lifelong career, in combination with the pursuit of education and/or work as well as other domains which are of importance at different stages of life, such as taking up a role in society, ensuring a satisfactory income, developing an identity and a partner relationship. Dual careers generally span a period of 15 to 20 years. Different stages of athletes' development have been identified in a range of models starting from the introduction in a sport to the development towards a talent, the perfection of performance in the mastery stage, and the stage of ending a high-level sport career and looking for a new career.

The length of each stage varies depending on the type of sport and other factors such as gender and personal ability.[8] Specialisation will occur during adolescence in most sports and in childhood in early specialisation sports such as gymnastics, figure skating and swimming.[9] Not all sport careers span all stages. In particular, many young athletes already drop out during the development stage or the beginning of the mastery stage.

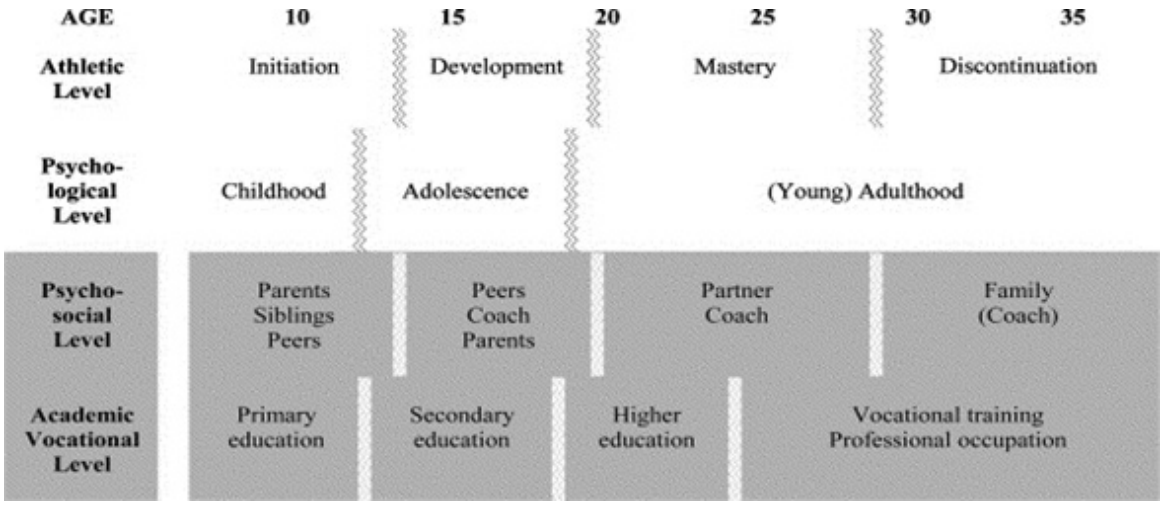

Fig. 1. A developmental model of transitions faced by athletes at athletic, individual, psychosocial, and academic/vocational level (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004)

As shown in Figure 1, an athletic career is determined by developments on an athletic level as well as on psychological, psychosocial and academic and vocational levels. Interactions occur between these levels of development and transitions are encountered by athletes throughout their sporting careers. Alongside transitions that can be expected, athletes also face less predictable transitions (e.g. an injury or change of personal coach) which can equally have a big impact on the quality of their participation in education, work, competitive sport and life in general.

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[8] On average, an athlete with a disability is older than an able-bodied athlete at the same stage of his athletic career as many athletes enter disability sport only after a traumatic event or after the onset of a degenerative illness. The relevant age group for high-performance disability sport is therefore from about 15 to 45.

[9] Although certain early specialisation sports are recognised, all development models agree on the importance of a good basis in Physical Education and engagement in a number of different sports in childhood.

Research findings show the strong concurrent, interactive and reciprocal nature of transitions occurring in the sporting career (athletic transitions) and transitions occurring in other domains of athletes' lives (e.g. academic, psycho-social, professional). As pupils change educational levels, they generally also disperse to different schools, thus breaking up the friendship networks which were a primary source of initiation of sport participation. While young talented athletes try to reach the mastery/perfection stage in their sporting careers where they need to perform at their highest level, as consistently and for as long as possible, they also have to cope with transitional changes at the psychological level (from adolescence into young adulthood), at the psycho-social level (development of temporary/stable relationships with a partner), and at the academic or vocational level (transition to higher education or a professional occupation). This all happens in an environment with a growing number of professional actors involved to improve the performance of the athlete. Athletes starting a professional career in sport may be supported by a personal manager or agent and may have occasionally contacts with the media and politicians opening their lives from a micro level as individual athletes to the macro level of society.

1.6. Benefits of a dual career

According to international research, one-third of all participants between the ages of 10 and 17 withdraw from sports each year as they consider that sport takes up too much of their time and prevents them from pursuing other things in life (e.g. to study). More efforts therefore need to be made to coordinate and support athletes' dual careers to keep talented young people in sports and educational systems and make them aware of the benefits of a dual career. This process will enhance the responsibility of young athletes while making them aware of the benefits of a dual career.

Benefits for athletes involved in dual career programmes (as compared with athletes experiencing a lack of coordination between sport and education) are clearly articulated in sport research and include:

— Health-related benefits (e.g. balanced lifestyle, reduced stress levels, increased wellbeing);
— Developmental benefits (e.g. better conditions to develop life skills applicable in sport, education and other spheres of life, development of personal identity, positive effects on athletes' self-regulation abilities);
— Social benefits (e.g. positive socialisation effects such as expanded social networks and social support systems and better peer relationships);
— Benefits related to athletic retirement and adaptation in life after sport (e.g. better career/retirement planning, shorter adaptation period, prevention of identity crisis);
— Enhanced future employment prospects (e.g. higher employability and access to well-paid jobs).

Society and sport will benefit from the positive image of educated athletes who make sport more attractive for others, function as positive role models for young people and express the importance of excellence in society.

2. Policy areas

2.1. Need for a cross-sectoral, inter-ministerial approach at national level

The notion of a dual career for elite athletes by definition involves engagement in the sports domain and the domains of work (whether training or employment), education, and the health sector. In addition to these domains, Ministries of Finance may well be engaged in issues relating to student-athlete funding, taxation and payment for health benefits. The individual will thus enjoy a range of rights and responsibilities in relation to these domains depending on Member State policies and practices (including legal frameworks), and responsibility for the policy domains themselves will be invariably spread across a number of central (and in many cases regional and local) government departments responsible for work, sport, education and health with the precise configuration of responsibilities varying from one Member State to another. Health provision and protection for elite athletes may be administered by health departments, while financial matters such as tax incentives for commercial providers of education provision are likely to be the responsibility of finance departments.

In addition to engagement of a variety of policy bodies across related policy domains, organisations and interests across the commercial, public and non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector are implicated in the arrangements to be made for dual careers. Thus in terms of regulation or control, or the fostering of good practice, the area of athletes' dual careers invariably involves an element of 'joined up policy' across policy domains, and the steering and/or regulating of activity to ensure that athletes' long-term needs outside of sport are met. Athletes and their representing organisations should be involved in this process.

There is no single model to be recommended on how to include all related policy domains in the dual career framework, nor can it be said which sector should take the lead in this coordination process. Different studies[10] identify four types of approaches to state intervention in this area, namely: a state-centric provision backed by legislation; the state as a facilitator fostering formal agreements between educational and sporting bodies; National Federations / Sports Institutes acting as facilitator/mediator engaging directly in negotiation with educational bodies on behalf of the individual athlete; and a 'laissez faire' approach where there are no formal structures in place. Research points out how France, Finland and the UK respectively have sought to adapt to their local systems and produce success in both academic and sporting terms, by cooperation across levels of government, across policy domains and across commercial, public and NGO providers.

[10] Aquilina, Henry, and PMP (2004), a review of policy on the education of elite sportspersons in the (then) 25 EU Member States.

Guidelines for Action

Guideline 1 — Talented and elite athletes in amateur and professional sports, including athletes with a disability as well as retired athletes, should be recognised as a specific population group in the relevant policy areas. This status should be:

a. Developed and recognised through cooperation between stakeholders in elite sport including the athletes' representing organisations, education, employers and business, as well as governmental agencies (ministries responsible for sport, education, employment, defence, home affairs, economy, health and finance);
b. Integrated in the institutional regulations and policy plans of sport bodies and educational institutes, in the social dialogue between employers and employees in professional sports and in the dialogue between executive boards and athletes' committees of sports organisations in amateur sport;
c. Supported by specification of pathways for late and early specialisation high-performance sport and for athletes with a disability, in particular where pathways for able-bodied athletes cannot be used.

Guideline 2 — Public authorities responsible for policy domains involved in the provision of sport, education, training, social and financial support and employment should consider the establishment of interdepartmental bodies or mechanisms to ensure the coordination, cross-sectoral cooperation, implementation and monitoring of dual career policies for talented and elite athletes including retiring elite athletes.

Guideline 3 — Authorities responsible for the implementation of dual careers should develop national guidelines for dual careers taking into account the EU Guidelines on Dual Careers and the specificity of the national sport and education system and cultural diversity. They should consider the use of agreements between stakeholders to promote dual careers. Where appropriate, such agreements could involve specific reward mechanisms, such as incentives for educational institutions or employers to recruit dual career athletes.

2.2. Sport

Sport policies should aim at talented and elite athletes participating in a combined career of sport and education or work. National Governments in most EU Member States play an important role in national sport policies through their legal and/or financial frameworks. As political and often the main funding bodies, they can react to developments in sport and society and give direction to the implementation of the concept of dual careers by organising inter-ministerial arrangements and distributing funding to sport organisations, federations and other stakeholders which recognise and support the importance of dual careers.

Alongside contributions from other sectors such as education, employment, health and well-being and finance, stakeholders in the field of sport such as sport organisations, sport centres and, in particular, coaches and parents play a key role in the successful implementation of dual careers for athletes.

2.2.1. Sport organisations

Sport organisations (confederations, federations, associations, clubs) which still have a tendency to focus on the organisation of competitions should define or review their policies and require the development of dual career programmes. National sport bodies could promote and support the inclusion of the concept of dual careers in the various activities of their member sport organisations, taking into account the position of athletes, a long-term strategic approach to dual career arrangements and the availability of supporting services and facilities. As many sport disciplines for people with a disability are integrated in mainstream sport organisations, special attention is needed for this group so that equal treatment can be achieved and specific pathways can be developed if pathways for able-bodied athletes cannot be used. This requires that decision-making processes incorporate the perspectives and needs of this group.

The career of athletes, generally from the age of 10-12 years[11] onwards, should be the starting point of high-performance strategies and actions of sport organisations. Careful consideration should be given to the particular challenges of early specialisation sports and the start of intensive training at a young age. Although the national associations and clubs are legally free to apply their own training policies and can decide by themselves to start intensive training earlier or later, in all cases the personal, physical and mental development of the child should be the focal point.

It is essential that the process of selection of talented or elite athletes and the further decisions on the dual careers of athletes are transparent and exclude any form of discrimination or exclusion based on gender, race, religion or sexual preference. Strict ethical regulations are necessary. Private life and developments outside sport should be respected and a balance in athletes' lives considered important. Concrete charters and ethical rules could be helpful if they regulate for example the process of appeal against decisions inside organisations. Clear and open communication and information about the rules and the decision process are recommended.

A strategy to involve athletes in governing bodies and integrate athletes' points of view in decision-making processes should be developed. In the retirement process of athletes, sport organisations could support the athletes by providing a role in the organisations' activities. Good practices include athletes' committees, consultation processes of athletes in decision-making, specific election processes to include athletes in their governing body, facilities or programmes to support and spread athletes' opinions, priority access for athletes to employment or voluntary activities in the sport organisation's programmes, and engaging with players' organisations and addressing dual careers in the framework of the social dialogue.

In strategies, structures and programmes for athletes' dual careers the different stages of career development in the particular sports discipline should be identified and clearly described, so that clear pathways from the beginning of practice to the highest level and retirement are foreseen. Such pathways should be flexible and recognise the different needs and rates of early and late development of athletes. This approach should be shared by all the relevant actors, recognising the need to develop the responsibility and decision-making abilities of the athlete.

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[11] For early specialisation sports the starting point is at a younger age.

In training and competition schedules, educational and extra-sport activities need to be planned and integrated in for example a period without training and competition. Proper dual career arrangements need to be arranged when athletes are abroad for a longer time because of training or competition. Better use could be made of existing international contacts, including with international federations, to contribute to the development of international educational networks linked to high-performance training and sport locations and to spread awareness about effective dual career programmes and policy and legal frameworks.

Example of good practice
Recently, the IOC included in its evaluation of international federations an assessment of athletes career programmes, which should integrate the dual career approach. This represents an important step since, as it is identified as a must-do, international federations will have to contribute to the whole process.

Sport organisations should be aware of the fact that athletes are confronted with conflicting requirements and needs at different levels of development (athletic, academic, vocational, psychological, psycho-social, social, financial) throughout each of the stages of a dual career. Some flexibility from sport organisations in working with other stakeholders will enhance further cooperation.

2.2.2. Sport academies and high-performance training centres

Sport academies exist in many modalities in EU Member States. Alongside schools, local multisport academies without boarding facilities deliver extra sport activities for talented athletes and talent identification in certain sports. Municipalities, schools and sport clubs are involved in these academies and local arrangements with all stakeholders involved are a key for their success. Clear objectives, definition of target groups and a link to regional and national talent programmes are recommended.

Local and regional sport academies set up by (professional) clubs and federations for selected talented athletes are common in the majority of Member States. It is only in a limited number of sports where private bodies other than sports clubs and federations are directly operating the training of talented athletes (mainly in tennis, golf and skiing). Even in those cases, a mix between private academies, national associations and clubs exists and may be different from one country to another. Besides the professional training of young athletes, special emphasis should be given to their personal development and all round education with the help of coaches, teachers and health experts. Sport academies should function according to time schedules which allow for the reconciliation of the highest level of sports training with school education.

In many Member States, National Olympic Committees or sport federations run (inter-)national high-performance training centres hosting different sports. The existence of such national training centres, where elite athletes train all year long, is essential in the organisation of the training of elite athletes. In general a critical mass of talented athletes of a country (starting from the age of 12) is gathered in one place or in a few places on a full time or part-time basis. National associations play a key role in the organisation of training, while the management of the training centre can refer to different types of bodies (Ministry of Education, Olympic Committee, private company). Athletes should benefit from high-quality standards for sports training, medical survey, education, and other supporting services, and

proper and transparent arrangements should be made internally or with services in the neighbourhood of the centre. Sport science laboratories run in cooperation with universities could provide significant support. Training programmes for the growing number of athletes from abroad, international training camps and sport apprenticeships could be offered in the centres, although the inclusion of the concept of dual careers for foreign athletes remains a challenge because of their different needs and backgrounds as well as potential linguistic and legal barriers.

Examples of good practice

The High-Performance Centre of Sant Cugat in Spain has an Athletes Care Service (SAE) giving individual attention to the transitions athletes can expect in the course of their lives, in particular at the end of secondary education, the end of university education, and upon their retirement from sport. First work experiences are facilitated in local companies near the Centre. The public high school (IES CAR) which is located inside the training centre offers lessons at adapted times for the training groups.

The Malmö Sport Academy of Malmö University in Sweden supports national elite athletes during the first year of their university education, thus facilitating their transition within the educational system and also their junior-to-senior athletic transition. A set of dual career supporting services including medical, physiological, nutritional, psychological and career assistance (e.g. career counselling and planning) are available for student-athletes. Grants provided to the users of the programme allow them 25 hours of expert assistance during the educational year based on an evaluation of their individual needs or personal choices.

Sport academies and (inter)national sport centres run by sport federations are often part of the sport policy of the national and regional sports authorities. Through financial frameworks and/or regulations, including operational specifications and quality control mechanism, transparency may be reached regarding the work process and output of these centres. For sport academies run by professional enterprises or clubs, these mechanisms are often not in place, but licensing systems of federations could give guidance. It is important that the position of athletes and staff in such sport communities should be regulated well, for example through education, an internal code of behaviour, the presence of an ombudsperson or agent with whom confidential matters can be discussed, and regular contact with athletes and their representatives including player associations.

Furthermore, the educational part of dual careers, in particular after the compulsory education period, needs more attention in sport academies and high-performance centres. They often do not feel responsible for competences needed for a career after high-performance sport. As a consequence, the engagement with higher education and vocational training institutes is seen as a necessity rather than an opportunity. Legislation, guidelines and licensing systems, if existent, should include the promotion of continuing education after compulsory education, which would be in line with national and European strategies on lifelong learning, and include this in agreements with the stakeholders in sports. Further education and training should be part of collective bargaining agreements for professional athletes in sport academies, in a similar way as in other professions.

2.2.3. Coaches and other members of performance teams

Coaches[12] play a crucial role at the start of a potential elite career in the identification (together with special scouts and parents), guided improvement and development of the talents of the young athlete. As the future of young athletes, both as sportsmen and as persons, is partly in their hands, it is essential that coaches are qualified at the appropriate level for the roles they undertake in this stage of the athlete's career. They also need to have the competences to understand different types of risks that may be faced by athletes, and not only the risks directly linked to sports training. The lifestyle of talented and elite athletes and the lifelong development of the athlete as a person should be included in their approach to the athlete.

At a later stage, experts managed by a head coach or performance manager, including different types of (assistant) coaches, (para-)medical and other staff members, operate as a team to guide the sporting activities of a talented sportsperson towards the elite level. Accordingly, head coaches or managers should manage their performance team and take care that athletes improve their technical, tactical, physical and mental capabilities, but also develop their personal, social and lifestyle capabilities through educational and career pathways. All staff of a performance team should view the athlete as a whole person and promote the development of life skills (e.g. effective communication, dealing with success and failure, time/stress management, etc.) in such a way that these skills are not only displayed within sport, but also in life and career development. Fair play and an environment where performance is improved through legitimate means, underpinned by a clear anti-doping philosophy, should be promoted.

This approach requires a mind-shift in sport governing bodies and organisations in many Member States so as to recognise the role of organisations representing coaches and other performance staff members in this perspective. A code of conduct, including the principles of dual careers, could be part of a collective bargaining agreement or individual contracts for well-qualified coaches and other performance staff members employed to work with talented athletes and elite athletes.

Member States are updating their regulations relating to the requirements necessary to become a coach, sometimes including other elite sport related professionals (qualifications, accreditation of educational providers, validation of non-formal learning experiences). These updates should be based on modernised professional profiles of specialised coaches and other performance team members for talented and elite athletes. The profiles, roles, tasks and needed competences, skills and knowledge described in the international coaching framework developed by the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) and the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) (2012), as well the national coaches frameworks developed in some EU Member States, could be helpful in this process. Qualifications to be gained through different types of educational institutes and federations should be compatible with National Qualifications Frameworks with reference to the European Qualification Framework (EQF). This approach will align

[12] The terms «coach», «trainer» and «instructor» have different meanings in EU Member States varying from a limited scope giving guidance on tactics during competition only, to a combined function including activities such as instruction, giving exercises during training sessions and being the manager of a team or guiding professionals. In these Guidelines a wide definition is used, based on the work of the European Coaching Council, in which all activities focused on guided improvement and long-term development of athletes are included. (European Coaching Council 2007)

coaching competences with the needs of talented and elite athletes and make them transparent in case coaches and other members of performance teams choose a job abroad or are recruited from abroad to run training programmes.

Coaches and other performance team members, either professional or volunteer, are in need of further education once they are qualified and at work, not only because of new methods of training but also in the perspective of a changing sport environment. Some Member States and sport organisations have already created further education systems in order to revalidate the licences of coaches, but systems are often still in development or not organised in an attractive and effective way. The concept of lifelong learning should be implemented in sport coaching and guidance, and dual career topics should be included.

Example of good practice
In the UK a qualification for Talented Athlete Lifestyle Support (TALS) has been developed by the Talented Athletes Scholarship Scheme (TASS). The qualification provides the necessary skills to enable professionals (e.g. coaches and performance managers) to guide and support athletes through their dual career and has a level equivalent to EQF level 4. The qualification is part of a Continuous Professional Development strategy for professionals in this field.

Many elite athletes have the potential and desire to become coaches or member of a performance team. However, it should not be assumed that excellent former athletes will make for example excellent coaches. There is a need for a pro-active and structured approach to support the transition from elite athlete to other professions in sport in which the relevant experience of athletes is recognised.

Whereas the position of high performance staff and coaches in national training centres, professional sports clubs and big sport organisations is often that of a full-time professional, this is not the case in other sports and in particular for coaches of disabled sportspeople. Coaches often have to combine their coaching with other work and face challenges with employers during specific training sessions and international events abroad. Coaches are often employed part-time or even only get reimbursement of their expenses. This 'blended' nature of the coaches' role suggests the need for a 'dual career' approach for coaches, including specific employment arrangements that are commensurate with the intensive nature of their role in supporting talented and elite athletes. If applicable, this can be done as part of the development of a collective bargaining agreement for professional coaches.

2.2.4. Supporting services

Most athletes can only develop dual careers if they benefit, alongside a balanced performance team, from effective supporting services. The conflicting requirements of sport, education and work, different legal and financial frameworks, a general lack of time and high pressure due to expected exceptional performance in sport make the availability of such services a precondition for success. Academic evidence has highlighted the importance of a strong support structure to help elite athletes achieve their sporting ambitions as part of their life-long strategy.[13]

[13] Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Lavallee & Wylleman, 2000.

Supporting structures need to be fully integrated in the sport, educational, vocational and lifestyle systems of the athletes rather than remaining isolated outside the sport context. They need to be based on direct contact with athletes, parents, coaches, performance directors and other stakeholders. Dialogue between counsellors, physiotherapists, doctors, coaches and education-based representatives should be organised so as to reach commitment through individualised action plans. Agreements should be reached with the parents or family representatives of young athletes, who are not only their children's legal representatives but also have often invested substantially in their development.

There is no preferred model to organise dual career supporting services because of the different history, responsibilities of stakeholders in sport and recognised competences in EU Member States. However, the interest of the athletes should be the starting point and conflicts of interest between organisations and athletes should be avoided. Services should be based upon sound scientific research and/or have the backing of scientific experts. Referral services through a network of specialists (e.g. financial, psychological, social, legal, social security) and online services related to educational and vocational development should be developed. Supporting structures and services which are linked to different policy areas need to be coordinated.

Dual career supporting services should be advertised among the community of athletes, coaches, sport federations and other stakeholders, in particular for athletes training outside specific education and sport structures for talented and elite athletes. Athletes outside the scope of specific educational institutes and high-performance training centres are often not aware of the existence of supporting programmes.[14]

Supporting services may notably include:[15]

— Psychological assistance including personal development training courses, career discovery, planning, development and coaching, lifestyle management, skills to prepare and cope with transition and change, crises interventions;
— Educational guidance and information;
— Employment guidance and information, preparation for a new job.

In a similar way as coaches, professionals and volunteers working in performance teams and professionals working in dual career service structures (whether independent or employed by a sport organisation, an institute or a private agency) should be competent and qualified to work with talented and elite athletes. They should respect the integrity of the athletes and be free from any criminal record in relation to child, physical or sexual abuse and have expertise related to the challenges faced by athletes during and after their sporting careers. Counsellors may well be former elite athletes who qualified for the job through an adapted educational pathway recognising learning experiences of the former athletes themselves.

Exchange of experience acquired in Olympic networks (Germany), in the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme – TASS (United Kingdom), in the Verein Karriere Danach – KADA (Austria) and in projects such as "Study & Talent Education Programme"

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[14] As demonstrated in the framework of the Athletes-To-Business project (EOC, 2011).

[15] Medical support including paramedical care and nutrition support as well as financial management and budget control can also be part of supporting services. See sections 2.5 and 2.6.

(Belgium), “Athletes Study and Career Services” (Finland) or “Tutorsport” (Spain) can benefit the further development of supporting services in Europe.

Guidelines for Action

Guideline 4 — Public and private sports authorities should support the implementation of dual careers of different types of athletes in the activities of national/regional sports organisations through formal agreements which require a clear strategy, planning of activities and involvement of athletes, and make the allocation of funding conditional upon the inclusion of the dual career concept in their activities. The safety and welfare of young athletes should be a requirement of such programmes.

Guideline 5 — Responsible sports authorities should recognise sport academies and high-performance training centres as part of a coherent system of provisions for dual career athletes, including student-athletes from abroad, based on agreements between stakeholders, and secure the implementation of dual career services in these institutes.

Guideline 6 — Sport academies and high-performance training centres should only be recognised and supported by public and private sport authorities if some minimum requirements have been fulfilled:

— Combination between sports training and general education in the framework of a lifelong learning strategy;
— Qualified staff (including specific qualification for disabled athletes);
— Supporting services including medical, psychological, educational and career assistance;
— Quality criteria for safe and accessible sport facilities and services;
— Transparency about rights of athletes (e.g. internal code of behaviour, ombudsperson);
— Collaboration with athletes’ social support network (e.g. parents).

Guideline 7 — Sport and educational authorities should promote the implementation of the dual career concept in contracts and codes of conduct for coaches and other members of performance teams. National sport organisations and international federations, as well as universities and vocational education and training institutes, should include the dual career concept in their education programmes for these professions.

Guideline 8 — Sport and public authorities should support stakeholders in dual careers to ensure that through supporting services and structures:

1) Expertise on dual career topics is available and accessible to all stakeholders involved;
2) Dual career support (including support for career transitions and crisis-management and coping interventions) is available to all recognised talented, elite and retired athletes;
3) The quality and content of supporting services meet the demands of athletes.

Guideline 9 — Members of performance teams and experts delivering supporting services should be competent and qualified and free from any criminal record in relation to child, physical or sexual abuse. Qualifications and certification for professions in performance teams and dual career supporting services should be part of the National Qualification Framework for educational institutes with reference to the European Qualification Framework. European branch organisations in this field could support this process.

2.3. Education

As the educational part of dual careers is a challenge for many athletes, personal support for athletes in the form of mentors, tutors and personal learning support systems has been identified as a successful tool for encouraging athletes to maintain their educational programmes. Tailor-made solutions should be found for (small groups of) athletes because of the variety of sports and the different preparations needed for each sport, the stages of development athletes are passing, and the variety in educational providers. Supporting services could promote the use of incentives to encourage young sportspersons to complete their education. Web-based directories can offer information on academic and vocational courses at national and European levels, educational resources and flexibility arrangements, facilities, coaches and high-performance information for individual sports. Such a resource tool for elite athletes should facilitate course choice and forward planning.

Despite positive measures taken to support individual student-athletes (and their parents), more specific and structural measures are needed. Many Member States have already taken these challenges seriously by supporting specialist educational institutions, programmes and methods to help young sportspersons balance their education and sport. These measures promote the implementation of dual careers, but also support indirectly the strategies of Member States on education (highly qualified workforce, the prevention of early school leaving) and sport. Furthermore, given the popularity of sport, they provide schools with opportunities to profile themselves and attract more students.

2.3.1. School education

There are currently several ways throughout the European Union for young athletes to combine school education and sports training. Many Member States have created a specific status which grants beneficiary athletes scholarships, flexible timetables and exam dates, and allows them to be absent for competitions.

A majority of Member States regulate sports classes in regular schools with a sport profile. For most sports, a sport profile of the school, including extra physical education and daily sport activities, has a positive influence on the child. More specific attention for certain sports is only recommended from the age of 10 years onwards. In Member States with active local sports clubs, these activities can be organised in close cooperation between schools and clubs. Although most schools allow students to have more sports classes per week, these classes are not specifically targeting elite athletes and are consequently not always suitable to their level of training. However, talented athletes benefit at least from more intensive training and are medically taken care of, while profiting from flexible arrangements.

In early specialisation sports, more intensive training starts in general between the ages of 6 and 11 and may demand special arrangements at primary school level, similar to those for dance or ballet. The combination of sport and education can often be organised in a natural way since there are no long training stages or competitions abroad on the agenda while homework and exams are often non-existent, but special facilities and adapted residence may be necessary. Research on athletes' development in these sports emphasises some benefits of early specialisation (e.g. using favourable periods in motor development, having more time to prepare for the demands of high-performance level) and also some relevant costs (e.g. increased risks of low enjoyment, injuries, burnout, and premature dropout). Therefore, if specific dual career programmes involving primary schools are organised, conditions for young athletes should be aimed at that strengthen the benefits and compensate for the costs of early specialisation. These might include a specific environment including professional coaches educated in training young athletes in a holistic way, close cooperation with young athletes' families, mutually adjusted training and study schedules, close cooperation with local clubs, dual career support services and a monitoring system focusing on safeguarding the physical and mental development of the child and prevention of injuries and burnout.

Example of good practice
Young athletes in tennis, swimming and gymnastics in Flanders (Belgium) can obtain the status of "promising young athlete" which allows them to be absent from primary school during 6 hours a week for training and to be absent for 10 half-days per year in order to participate in sports competitions

Many Member States favour the combination of sports and academic training in special sport schools or sport colleges (often in upper secondary education) where young athletes may benefit from an educational programme adapted to their sports training. Educational programmes are taught around training sessions and periods. These structures allow for flexibility, which is convenient since each sport has different requirements. However, students must generally follow the same educational programmes as in regular schools and facilities are not always accessible for student athletes with a disability. For athletes, the various types of specific arrangements are of great value (e.g. extended education by one year, a specific school guide or coordinator, supplementary tutoring at school and through telecommunication networks, study buddy schemes, specific delivery of written assignments and adapted organisation of exams and tests). Schools are encouraged to use Internet-based tools and communication channels between students and teachers in view of athletes' stays abroad for longer periods.

Examples of good practice
In Denmark, one hour of supplementary tutoring at school is financially supported for each day of absence by Team Denmark and the NOC, when athletes attend activities for the national federations.

In Sweden, 51 upper secondary sport schools for 16-19 year old athletes patronised by the Swedish Sports Confederation are functioning across the country. These schools are adjusted to the requirements of particular sports, coordinate student-athletes' training and study schedules, provide athletes with opportunities to travel for competitions/camps, as well as with good sport facilities and support from

professional coaches. The educational programmes at these schools allow athletes to continue their education after graduation at university level.

Results of evaluations of existing sport schools and sport classes indicate that student-athletes are not always better off in academic and sport results compared to talented athletes at regular schools. The success of sport schools and classes depends on many factors including the quality of flexibility arrangements, cooperation with the sport federations regarding the profile and qualification of coaches and the content of training programmes. Quality also depends on the selection of schools and monitoring mechanisms in place. An accreditation system for schools which are keen on functioning as sport schools could be considered. Exchange of experiences within and between Member States, taking into account the specific position of the school and sport in every national sport and education system, could improve the effectiveness of sport schools and special colleges. The position of elite athletes with a disability, often neglected in evaluations of the different systems, should be part of this exchange of experiences.

2.3.2. Vocational education and training

Opportunities for the implementation of dual careers in the vocational education and training (VET) sector should be further explored. For many talented athletes, vocational education forms the educational part of their dual career. Specific arrangements therefore need to be developed which should ideally be part of a legal or policy framework for all VET institutes in a Member State. Students should be allowed to prolong their vocational education and training due to elite sport. This requires that both the employer and the educational institute have a flexible attitude. VET institutes should have the primary responsibility for ensuring that personal education plans are produced in collaboration with the employer and the student. In cases where there is a need for supplementary tutoring to ensure the student achieves the required competences, the educational institute should be in a position to offer such tutoring.

Positive experiences in Member States where youth academies of professional sport clubs already cooperate with VET institutes, leading to sport-related qualifications such as sport instructor or coach, show that dual career arrangements should not be limited to flexibility only, but may also include a curriculum leading to a profession in sport.

Example of good practice
The Johan Cruyff College offers tailor-made study programmes for elite athletes from all kinds of sports in five "Regional Vocational Education Centres" administered by the Netherlands Ministry of Education. Student athletes and retired athletes may qualify as (assistant) coach, event organiser or for a profession in sport marketing (EQF levels 3 and 4).

VET institutes sometimes offer important elements toward the development of professional athletes, e.g. in the form of applied theory on training, contracts and labour conditions, a foreign language, communication and media training, medical care, prevention of injuries etc. Through the vocational education system, substantial apprenticeships in the sport sector are already developed in some Member States.[16] In-service training in the framework of a work contract with an employer (e.g. one day of education and four days of work per week) and traineeships abroad may be other models allowing dual career athletes to benefit from training on the job.

Example of good practice

In England the Sector Skills Council 'Skills Active' operates the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence programme in vocational education, which focuses on structured training and development across a number of sports for talented young athletes (aged 16-19), who have the potential and opportunity to excel in their sport, either competing internationally or securing a professional contract. The programme currently serves approximately 2,500 athletes in 20 sports, including disability sports. It is designed to enhance the athletes' ability to plan, apply and evaluate their development in the appropriate technical, tactical, physical and psychological aspects of their sport and also addresses wider issues such as lifestyle, career development, communication and health and safety.

In reality not many VET institutes in Member States offer vocational programmes to become an elite athlete as a profession because of the short-term career of a professional athlete, but other institutes such as youth academies of professional clubs do. Formalised cooperation between stakeholders from professional clubs/teams and VET institutes is increasing and should be promoted.[17] The starting point for such cooperation should be the description of the necessary competences (knowledge, skills and responsibilities) for an elite professional athlete. National athlete organisations (e.g. members of EU Athletes, FIFPro and athletes' committees) could be invited to contribute to the formulation of such profiles as part of the social dialogue related to VET in the Member States. Profiles should include the development of decision-making and responsibility on the part of the athlete as well as of transferable skills that can be taken to other aspects of their lives.

2.3.3. Higher education

The combination of education and training often becomes complicated when athletes would like to combine higher education with their sports career. More transitions are often taking place at this age as students move to another town away from home and family, make new friends, change clubs and have to make new training and sport arrangements. A substantial investment is needed in all domains. In most Member States, opportunities for pursuing an academic education and a sports career are not planned.

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(16) E.g. in Austria, Netherlands, France, United Kingdom, Spain.

(17) Some countries have a dual VET system consisting of guided learning on the job and specific days at the educational institute, run and paid by the industry and by the educational sector respectively. The professional sport sector seems to be absent from these dual systems.

Sports and Physical Education Faculties in Member States are adapted to training since their subjects are all sport-related. They generally lead to teaching and training jobs in sport and physical education.

Some countries only have sports faculties as an adapted means for athletes to access upper education. In some cases, a sports faculty may not be the best path to follow as a dual career. If more sports have to be combined in the curriculum, the specific discipline of the athlete may suffer due to an overload of physical training and injuries, having a negative influence on the athlete's sport performance. However, it could be examined whether in the framework of a bachelor's degree in applied sport, the scientific preparation of professional athletes could be recognised as an element of the curriculum.

Example of good practice
Within its Master's programme in Physical Education, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel developed the individualized study path "Elite Sport Career". This study path enables elite athletes not only to avoid the possible physical overload and injuries related to courses requiring a high physical effort, but teaches them also how to apply the theoretical knowledge and applied skills acquired in the courses of their PE programme (e.g. sport psychology, biomechanics, anatomy, management) to the analysis, evaluation and continued development of different aspects of their own dual career. In this way, elite athletes prepare for a post-athletic career as e.g. coach, sport manager, PE teacher or fitness manager, but also actively use the acquired competences to optimise their own dual career while at university. Elite student-athletes have been shown to gain better academic results than the average student population at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Most Member States entitle elite athletes to benefit from specific advantages taking into account the specificity of their condition. But universities are autonomous and therefore entitled to regulate the status and support allocated to elite athletes and to set up their own arrangements on flexibility in timetables, distance learning, tutors etc. Some universities across the Member States have specific policies or programmes in place to facilitate the entry for elite sportspersons. Either the Ministry of Sport or the Ministry of Education, depending on the Member State, has put these policies in place. Athletes must meet specific criteria to qualify for facilitated entry requirements, which vary between Member States but typically centre on a top-three placing in the Olympic Games, World Championships or European Championships. A number of Member States have an incentive scheme where 'bonus' points, based on sporting performance, may contribute towards entry requirements.

Example of good practice
French regulations require universities to favour enrolment of elite athletes. They may benefit from the status of employed students, from an extension of the duration of their studies, from the granting of bonuses for exams, or from authorised absences. Furthermore, each year 20 elite athletes have access to schools that organise courses for physiotherapists without an entry exam, recognising the informal

learning experiences of athletes. Elite athletes may also benefit from specific arrangements to qualify for the National Certificate of Sports Instructor. However, they can only qualify for the certificates if they fulfil the general requirements related to the examination.

Practice often shows that existing measures are not sufficient (no policy of the university, too much dependence on individual arrangements) and that many elite athletes cannot study efficiently if they want to reach the elite level on the sports side, especially if they are 'punished' by restrictive measures related to the extended duration of the study. It could be of interest in countries which have no legislation in place to come to a general agreement between sport stakeholders and (interested) higher education institutes and define a statute of a student-athlete in higher education, accepted and respected by all partners. This would increase transparency so that athletes could know which specific arrangements to expect when and where.

Alternatively an accreditation system could be developed to identify and select institutes or faculties of higher education with proper dual career arrangements in place. The use of student sport services on the university campus for regular training could be one of the elements of such arrangements.

2.3.4. Distance learning

The development of a range of flexible forms of education delivery is critical to meeting the needs of student-athletes in all types of education. Distance learning (or distributed learning) in particular may provide student-athletes with flexibility in terms of the timing and location of their sporting and academic activities. Student-athletes may equally profit from the development of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) in many educational institutes and the advent of cheap and functional means of providing tutorial support via the Internet. However, distance learning programmes require a heavy investment of resources for the development and testing of materials prior to the launching of a module. Costs can be reduced if educational authorities and institutes develop platforms, curricula and programmes together.

Guidelines for Action

Guideline 10 — Public authorities and stakeholders should develop a framework for dual careers in sport and schools in which specific arrangements (e.g. flexibility, adapted curriculum, e-learning, supplementary tutoring, the use of facilities and sport services and supporting services) are included.

Guideline 11 — Educational and sport authorities could consider setting up specific opportunities for early specialisation sports in the school education system for young athletes under strict conditions that protect and safeguard the physical and mental development of young athletes, preferably in close cooperation with local clubs and with a transparent monitoring system.

Guideline 12 — Public authorities and stakeholders should develop a framework for dual careers in sport and vocational education and training (VET) institutes in which specific arrangements (e.g. flexibility, adapted curriculum, e-learning, supplementary tutoring, the use of facilities and sport services and supporting services) are included.

Guideline 13 — Educational and sports authorities should promote cooperation between professional sports academies and VET institutes to organise dual careers in an effective and attractive way, including for students who have completed compulsory education.

Guideline 14 — Educational and sports authorities should encourage stakeholders in sport and institutes of higher education to develop and implement dual career pathways, including the content of the curriculum and the use of facilities and supporting services.

Guideline 15 — Public authorities should support the development of an accreditation system for educational institutes with a sport profile and involved in dual careers of student-athletes, taking account of the specific characteristics of the different types of education.

Guideline 16 — Educational authorities should promote and support cooperation among educational institutes to develop learning curricula, programmes and materials using either a shared Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as a platform, or a shared protocol to be adopted for local VLE platforms.

2.4. Employment

2.4.1. Combination of work and sport

As part of their employment and sport policies, Member States have structures in place to provide advice and support to athletes in their career planning, including programmes with agreed arrangements between companies and athlete staff to balance sport schedule demands with business needs.

Some Member States allocate a number of posts within the public sector specifically to athletes. In some countries, top athletes can work for the government and public institutions, or positions are available in the military, the border police, the forestry sector and/or the customs service. Different models exist, varying from athletes getting training for a function in these services, having a part-time job or being available for marketing and publicity. In general, athletes are very positive about these opportunities. However, retirement from sport often also leads to a departure from the public service due to a lack of longer-term career perspectives.

The introduction of systems of financial support to athletes in Member States has enabled an increasing number of sportspersons to become full-time athletes. However, a substantial number of elite athletes still need to earn a steady income through part-time or full-time employment to supplement sport-related funding. For these athletes, flexibility in employment is essential to combining their sport and employment and achieving the right balance. However, combining the practice of high-level sport with employment in a non-sport sector can be challenging. Employers may not understand the pressures and physical demands that high-level sport places on an athlete and fear the risk of sport injuries that may affect the performance and attendance of athletes at their workplace. On the sport side, self-imposed performance pressure and pressure from coaches can limit the amount of flexibility and understanding for work outside of sport. In order to succeed, flexibility on the part of both employers and coaches is needed.

Examples of good practice
In Germany, a national pool of companies offers traineeships and employment that are compatible with full-time competitive sport. The Sports Aid Foundation provides financial compensation for the loss of earnings to companies which employ athletes.

The Gaelic Athletic Association and the Gaelic Players Association cooperate in a player welfare programme that allows Gaelic football players and hurlers from across Ireland access to a career development programme that includes a "Career Start-up Package", a "Career Development Package", "Business Mentoring", "Business Start-up & Development" and "Up Skilling".

Incentives need to be offered to companies to recruit athletes with special attention to female elite athletes and elite athletes with a disability. Athletes need to be trained to understand the labour market and how they can make a positive contribution to the objectives of their employers through their competences and learning experiences in sport. Businesses are attracted by shared values and engagement in sport sponsorship. To approach non-sport sponsors and business associations, sport organisations can seek the help of chambers of commerce, business associations and companies which already work with athletes. Sponsorship contracts should ideally include a clause on dual careers, with enterprises committing to offer career opportunities to sportspersons fulfilling the profile requirements. In advance, sport organisations should develop a benefit package (incentives, increased publicity etc.) to leverage their engagement with businesses where the added value of elite athletes for non-sport employers, the commercial exposure of athlete-employing companies as well as the transfer of athletes' soft skills to business skills are promoted.

Examples of good practice
Team Denmark has established cooperation with a 'golden network' of a wide range of companies, offering world-class athletes flexible jobs.

In close cooperation with Olympic Committees in several Member States, Adecco offers part-time positions with in-built flexibility to take account of athletes' schedules.

2.4.2. Transition to the post-sport career

The transition to the post-sport career or athletic retirement is the one inevitable transition for athletes that mixes athletic context (e.g. reasons for termination in sports, athletic career satisfaction) with non-athletic context relevant to starting a new life after sports. Retired athletes have to accept retirement and adjust to the status of a former athlete, start/continue studies or work, reconsider their personal identity, and renew their lifestyles and social networks. Research has confirmed that several factors are "weighted" in the decision-making process and become responsible for an athlete's decision to terminate his sporting career. Some of these factors relate to sport (e.g. de-selection, stagnation, injuries) and others to the future life (e.g. job offer, wish to start a family). The more the athlete retires in the context of future plans, the easier his/her retirement process is likely to be.

Resources assisting athletes in the transition to the post-sport career should consist of:

(a) Retirement planning in advance (i.e. when the athlete is still active in sport);
(b) Voluntary termination;
(c) Multiple personal identity and positive experiences in roles other than the athlete role (e.g. as a student or an employee);
(d) Effective social support from family, coach, peers, player associations and sport organisations.

All of these can facilitate athletes' subjective control over the retirement process and their active coping strategies in dealing with major transition issues. Alternatively, an exclusive athletic identity might cause an identity crisis (i.e. self-misinterpretation), while a lack of support from coaches, sport peers, players' organisations and sport organisations may lead to additional difficulties with retirement planning and further adaptation. The more the athlete focuses exclusively on sport (e.g. working on a professional contract), the more the athlete is vulnerable in the transition to the post-sport career. These findings confirm the need for dual career programmes to empower athletes during their sporting career in their preparation for the post-sport career, facilitate their adaptation to life after sport and help them to avoid crisis-transition scenarios.

There is growing awareness in most Member States that although the majority of athletes are successful in the transition to a new life or career, measures should be taken to avoid personal crisis and loss of value for society and the labour market. Athletes often face financial challenges and the integration of athletes into the labour market may also be accompanied by psychological struggles due to a changing lifestyle and a major decrease in public attention. Public awareness is often limited to athletes representing the country in national teams and overlooks the professional team sport players playing in leagues, who often have a moderate salary and no regular contacts with national sport organisations. For these working athletes, player associations can play an important role.

Some Member States provide guarantees of employment or preferential recruitment based on sporting performance. No EU country has a policy for the recruitment of retired elite athletes in the public sector as these positions are reserved for current rather than retired sportspeople. Very few EU Member States offer direct incentives (e.g. tax incentives) to private companies to employ former athletes.

A majority of Member States support initiatives from sport organisations, academy networks and Olympic Committees in the field of supporting services, in particular with job placement companies and major sponsors. Such services can be continued and strengthened by:

— Providing (retired) elite athletes with opportunities to meet-and-greet with employers and to gain information about jobs, expectations and requirements in enterprises;
— Monitoring available jobs and making information available to (retired) elite athletes;
— Establishing a liaison officer for relations with human resources departments of interested employers;
— Establishing opportunities for flexible internships, (part-time) employment, short-time employment, graduate trainee programmes and mentoring by senior business managers;

— Establishing a local and regional network of partnerships with interested enterprises, complemented with a network of recruitment partners;
— Identifying possibilities for elite athletes to develop their vocational competences while in another region/country (e.g. for training camps, after a club transfer, for a competition period of long duration);
— Organising specific events (e.g. seminars, conferences, workshops, networking events, job markets) to assist athletes in gaining insight into a vocational career in combination with, or after, their sporting career.

Example of good practice
The Finnish "Sports Academy Network" informs athletes about the services available to them including additional advice on job placement services (www.huippu-urheilija.fi).

2.4.3. Social dialogue

Social partners can play an integral role in policy setting and implementation of a dual careers agenda. As with continuing vocational training, the employees in sport represented by player associations and the employers can be involved by means of collective bargaining or participation in joint committees or boards of institutions that may be designed to govern dual careers.

Social dialogue is not as developed in elite sport as in other sectors as commercialism and professionalism are relatively recent phenomena in many sports. At the European level, a European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee exists in the football sector and the European Commission proposed a test phase for a sectoral social dialogue committee in the wider European sport sector[18]. At an informal European social dialogue meeting in June 2011, the European social partners, EASE (European Association of Sport Employers) and UNI Europa Sport, agreed to include the topic of dual careers in their future work programme. There are many examples of provisions for dual careers in social dialogue at the national level.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)[19] points out that market failures arise in the market of training that prevent an efficient sharing of the costs and benefits of training between employers and employees. Alongside low-educated and older workers, it may be appropriate to add high-level athletes to the list of affected workers. This is due to the short-term nature of sporting careers. Sport employer organisations should ideally provide time for athletes to educate and train for a career after they end their sporting career, but this aim is difficult to achieve in practice since it provides no benefit for the current employer.

As commercial interests grow in sport employer organisations and governing bodies, so does the short-term performance pressure (for both the athlete and the sports organisation). This pressure also decreases the likelihood that time or energy will be set aside for such long-term priorities as dual careers. This dynamic can be exacerbated by coaches, also under increased performance pressure, who may see any activity that is not focused towards success on the field as a distraction. Individual athletes should not be stigmatised if energy or time is spent on interests or education outside of the athletic workplace.

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[18] Communication on Developing the European Dimension in Sport, European Commission 2011.

[19] OECD, Employment Outlook 2003 – Towards More and Better Jobs.

For professional athletes, the setting up of a collective bargaining agreement, which would apply to all sports, could be discussed between European sports organisations representing clubs and elite athletes with the co-operation of the sports movement. This should lead to a reduction of the differences existing between contracts executed by different elite young athletes, who could be provided with a more efficient protection regarding social aspects.

Guidelines for Action

Guideline 17 — Public authorities in sport and employment should set up a network of complementary public and private partners enabling elite athletes, including athletes with a disability, to combine in an optimal way their athletic and vocational careers in public services (military, police, customs etc.) and private businesses.

Guideline 18 — Public authorities should invite chambers of commerce and businesses to actively cooperate with sport organisations to raise awareness of dual careers in the labour market and encourage partnership with the business world.

Guideline 19 — Public authorities and stakeholders in sport and education should promote balanced pathways for retiring athletes so that they can prepare for, initiate and develop a vocational career after the end of their sporting career

Guideline 20 — Social partners should include dual careers on the agenda of the social dialogue at national and European levels (profiles of competences, education, services).

2.5. Health

The mental and physical health, safety and welfare of athletes underpin their dual careers. Illnesses and injuries can restrict their ability to cope with sports training and education. They can also have a serious emotional impact (depression, anxiety, boredom, exclusion from team environments) as well as financial consequences (loss of competition money, playing bonuses, appearance fees). Measures should be taken to ensure that athletes are not exposed to undue risk. While the sport authorities have a duty of care for athletes, the decision-making of athletes themselves should be respected.

2.5.1. Psychological assistance

Alongside more predictable transitions, athletes also face non-normative transitions such as serious long-term injuries, a change of personal coach, interruption because of altered priorities such as pregnancy, or the consequences of a positive doping test, as well as transitions which were hoped for but did not materialise, such as going to the Olympic Games. Sometimes athletes are obliged to stop their careers or are victims of sexual harassment. Such transitions can have a huge impact on the quality of an athlete's life and participation in competitive sport. Athletes therefore have to learn to cope with career transitions. Education and preventive interventions can help athletes become better aware of forthcoming transitions and develop in a timely manner re-sources for coping with them. Crisis-coping interventions should help athletes to analyse the crisis situation and find the best available way to follow an effective strategy.

Psychological assistance, which is a crucial part of supporting services, is a rapidly developing discourse in applied sport psychology, aimed at helping athletes to overcome transitions in their careers inside and outside of sports through specific interventions. Combining sport with other activities in life, balancing lifestyle to reduce stress and enhance wellbeing, seeing a sporting career as only a part of a life career are among the central tenets of career assistance. This assistance should have a focus on teaching athletes life skills applicable both in and outside sport and provide enhancement, support and counselling.

2.5.2. Medical support

Medical support is crucial and should include both regular follow-up and full medical check-ups in order to identify signs of health problems which may not be evident "on the field". Some Member States have detailed legal regulations on medical surveys while others do not have any mandatory rules and surveys are left at the discretion of sport organisations. Regarding nutrition, only a few Member States have rules; these are generally issued by sport organisations. Attention should be paid to eating disorders among young (female) athletes in sports where light body weight is an advantage, such as gymnastics, figure skating, endurance sports and weight class sports.

The safeguarding of the development of young athletes, particularly those of primary school age and disabled athletes, should have high priority. Measures should therefore be taken to offer them the right regular medical care and nutritional surveillance and to prevent them from doping. In view of likely changes in environment and entourage in the course of athletes' careers, public authorities may consider issuing health records which would be delivered to each elite athlete upon the beginning of his/her high-level sports training and which would remain the athlete's property.

For athletes combining their sport with work, extra measures are needed from public authorities responsible for public health schemes by recognising sport injuries or a bad health condition related to participation in sport (osteoarthritis, back problems) in the context of the work outside sport. Coverage or compensation for an injury as a "work injury" should not be denied due to the existence of previous conditions that were a result of intense participation in sport.

2.5.3. Prevention programmes

An inevitable aspect of competing and training at the highest level is the risk and occurrence of overtraining, burnout and injuries, which may range from minor, short-term strains and setbacks to the need for long-term rehabilitation or even accelerated debilitation later in life.

The importance of being able to swiftly receive appropriate care of high quality so as to minimise long-term effects is vital to any injured or over-trained athlete. The cost of and geographical distance from provisions should not be factors that detract from the ability of a high-performing athlete to access care. Treatment, however, should not be the sole concern. Reducing the risk of any injury or crisis in the first place should be considered just as important. Screenings can identify weaknesses which may lead to increased risk of injury. Corrective work can then be implemented to address such weaknesses and thus have a positive effect on performance. In addi-

tion, education in the areas of technique, recovery from participation/travel, safe use and quality of equipment and surfaces, and nutrition will help athletes to cope with the physical effects of their sports, including after their sport careers, and should therefore be included in the educational part of their dual careers.

Guidelines for Action

Guideline 21 — Sports, health and educational authorities should jointly support the development of health and psychological assistance, preventive and education programmes for athletes in the areas of life skills, injury prevention, healthy living, nutrition and recovery techniques as an element of the educational part of the dual career.

Guideline 22 — National sport organisations, health insurance schemes and the medical profession should improve communication based on athletes' health

records, in full respect of data protection rules, to ensure a better flow of information about injuries as well as quick and accurate referrals to medical specialists at national and international level.

Guideline 23 — Public health authorities are invited to consider the revision of insurance provisions so as to provide employers, athletes-workers and retired athletes with added employee protection regarding sport-related injuries.

2.6. Financial incentives for athletes

Many reports and studies confirm that high-performance athletes and their families often face long-term financial challenges, frequently from an early age. Training and sports equipment require large investments, often provided totally or partially by parental support. The significant time devoted to practice and competition also frequently detracts from earning potential. Scholarships, fees and other compensation measures are often indispensable for talented young athletes whose families cannot afford to have them living away from their homes.

There is a very wide range of different models of how athletes can get financial support in EU Member States, based on (legal) frameworks on compensation of costs, scholarships, minimum income or income depending on sporting results, and sponsorship. In the educational stage of a dual career, scholarships and specific fees for recognised talented athletes are the main sources of income. For elite athletes other income models are accessible because of contracts, prize money and sponsorships. Conversely, social security, pension plans and insurance are a great concern because of the vagaries of an athlete's career, the potentially young age of retirement and strains of sport competition, which frequently do not fit in with standard health and social security schemes.

2.6.1. Scholarships

A majority of Member States offer sport scholarships to students to support them financially throughout university and enable them to combine higher education with their sporting ambitions. The source and size of the scholarships vary considerably. Whether academic, sporting or both in nature, scholarships are often indispensable to ensure that dual career athletes can concentrate on their two main areas of focus – sport and education.

Dual career scholarships can be developed. Apart from certain eligibility criteria, they may require on-going compliance with certain rules pertaining to academic and/or athletic performance. It should be considered that a scholarship should not give an athlete special status or treatment over fellow students other than what is required to help him/her balance the challenges he/she faces in pursuing a dual career. The following elements could be included:

— Financial assistance for certain sport-related expenses (e.g. sporting equipment or travel to sporting competitions);
— Payment of tuition fees for specific education programmes;
— Supporting services.

Scholarship programmes may include criteria to incentivise athletes to excel academically or in sport in return for reward. They may also include budgets for student-athletes planning to travel abroad (for sport and/or education). Contributions of private undertakings to scholarships could be promoted through tax deductions.

Examples of good practice

The University of Lisbon supports students who simultaneously obtain academic and sport success by offering them an annual scholarship (€400). To receive this financial support, the student must pass the academic year and obtain the title of "National" or "European" University champion by representing the University of Lisbon. At the "annual university gala of sport" students receive their scholarships from the Rector as a public recognition for excellence in sport and study.

TASS (Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme) is a UK scholarship scheme aimed at talented athletes aged 16 upwards who are pursuing both sport at elite level as well as education. Delivered through a network of universities, schools and colleges nationwide, it brings national federations and educational institutions together and provides strategy, staff development and funding to support athletes pursuing dual careers. A typical scholarship will consist in part of financial assistance for competition expenses, travel, sports equipment and coaching, together with the provision of a network of support services in the areas of strength and conditioning, physiotherapy and medical support/insurance and lifestyle/educational support.

2.6.2. Other financial support

In a number of countries athletes who do not receive scholarships or have regular income, are supported by a national programme for elite athletes, while others receive support from the lottery.

Examples of good practice

Sport Aid Austria supports 460 Olympic and non-Olympic athletes in 5 different categories including special categories for juniors and women.

Around 3,800 talented and elite athletes in Germany get support from Sport Aid with a total budget between € 10 and 12 million per year (65% from donations, events, funding; 20% from the lotteries and 15% from a sport stamp).

In Bulgaria athletes in the national elite athletes programme in preparation for the Olympic Games receive a monthly support (depending on medals won). An Olympic medal winner gets a sport pension.

In most Member States, athletes may only be entitled to receive a fee or compensation if other financial recourses are limited and if they sign a contract. Sometimes national associations or sport clubs allocate scholarships to young athletes. In professional sports, the contracts are signed within professional collective sports arrangements and the compensation will be granted by a club. In some sports and countries, young athletes enter into contracts with their national associations while in other countries, a compensation may be awarded to the athletes by the State in the form of financing based on sports results or scholarships granted independently from sports results or payment upon participation in competitions. Exchange of good experiences and principles behind the various national support systems could help sports authorities and stakeholders to set up, or further develop, a more coherent system of financial support in which the different stages of dual careers are recognised, including a limited period when supporting services are continued after an athlete has stopped competing.

2.6.3. Social security, health protection and pension plans

Despite the public perception of the highly paid professional/elite athlete, reality shows that only a minimal number of athletes are financially independent. Most athletes will rely on public support at some stage during their athletic careers or transition to another career. Sources of risk include: unstable labour contracts or short-term funding streams based on performance that result in reliance on employment, unemployment assistance or family funding; injuries which cut short or hinder the athletic career and may become chronic, affecting also the post-athletic work career and resulting in higher health care costs over the course of athletes' lives; and lack of financial resources during the transition from an active athletic career to the labour market, which may result in reliance on unemployment funding for support and retraining.

Elite sports require intensive physical efforts, injuries of young athletes may be frequent and accidents leading to the end of a profitable career may occur. A 2008 working conditions survey of professional basketball players funded by the European Commission reported that more than 50% of players reaching the age of 31-35 had suffered a major injury requiring them to miss work for 6 weeks or more. It is therefore recommendable that measures are taken in every Member State to ensure efficient social protection of talented and elite athletes while they are training and competing.

In some Member States there is no specific fund or scheme open to young athletes in case of injury during their training period. In other countries, there may be State funds, schemes through sport associations, other public or private funds, or private insurance contracts. It should be analysed whether private insurance coverage, which is very costly for a young athlete, is sufficient.

Another way of efficiently protecting talented and elite athletes may consist in recognising that athletes mentioned on lists established by the relevant sports associations practise a dangerous activity, which would place them under specific regulations similar to those applicable, for example, in France to firemen. This results in better insurance coverage.

Good practices in the field of injuries exist in some countries upon the initiative of the State or the Olympic Committee, where elite athletes, upon obtaining a sports licence, benefit from an injury insurance coverage, whether through the competent sports association or their club.

Examples of good practice
In Luxembourg, the State subscribes an insurance policy protecting all athletes who own a licence issued by a national sports association. This insurance covers injuries related to sports activity.

The Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) introduced the Provident Fund for Athlete Insurance SPORTASS, which provides insurance cover and welfare payments for sports injuries. SPORTASS applies to professional athletes who are members of the 'Olympic Club'.

National regulations on this theme vary from one country to another and efforts should be made to generalise the coverage of young athletes by insurance policies. For example, Member States may choose to have a minimum insurance scheme subscribed by sports associations, to allow any injured athlete to get an indemnification. They may also opt for a system in which the award of a scholarship entails health insurance coverage.

For professional athletes and sports, this type of measures could be a theme for the social dialogue and could be included in collective bargaining agreements applicable to European professional athletes.

Example of good practice
In Italy a "Fondo" was collectively bargained as a "pre-pension" fund by the Italian basketball players association (GIBA), the Italian basketball league and the federation (www.giba.it).

Regarding social security and pension plans, young professional athletes benefit from the general scheme of social security in a number of Member States, sometimes already from the age of 15. For amateurs, most countries do not have any specific plan with regard to their social security and pension plans. In the Czech Republic, the social security and health insurance premiums for pupils and students are paid by the State, including for student-athletes. In other Member States specific provisions have been launched for elite athletes. There are specific social security regimes for professional sports such as football, cycling and basketball.

In Denmark, professional athletes may subscribe to pension plans with favourable tax regulations and spend the money on an education programme or to establish their own business. Some countries oblige young athletes to subscribe to private insurance policies or pension plans. The French government launched a funding scheme in 2011 to support high-level amateur athletes by paying social security and pension contributions during their sports career. Between 2,500 and 3,000 sportspersons will benefit from this provision. The system compensates for the years that are 'lost' during full-time sports careers, when no pension contributions can be paid.

Guidelines for Action

Guideline 24 — Public authorities and sport stakeholders should set up, or further develop, a coherent system of financial support for student-athletes in which the different stages of the dual career are recognised.

Guideline 25 — Within a coherent system of financial support for athletes, sports and educational authorities should develop and support a specific dual career scholarship programme for the educational stage.

Guideline 26 — Public authorities should create a specific status for non-professional high-level athletes (multi-sport status), granting them a minimum of health protection.

3. The European dimension of dual careers in sport

3.1. Training and study abroad

Athletes represent one of the most internationally mobile parts of the European population. They frequently travel abroad for sports training and stages, competitions (including long tournaments), and/or studies. International activities are increasing in all sports and starting at a younger age, as illustrated for example by the Youth Olympic Games (15 – 18 years) and international youth championships in several sports. Athletes generally consider this mobility as temporary, having the intention to come back to their countries of origin. As a result, many aspects of dual careers have an EU dimension.

A lack of cooperation between sport federations and educational institutes at European level often makes the combination of education or vocational training with sports training or participation in sports competitions very challenging. Difficulties are faced in particular by athletes and coaches in sport disciplines with a high training frequency, athletes in disciplines with a need for specific facilities for longer temporary periods (e.g. winter sports, international tournaments in individual sports such as tennis), athletes in team sports with a diversity of educational backgrounds and athletes from smaller EU countries who cannot combine their preferred type of education and their sport in their home country because of a lack of high-quality facilities (in sport and/or higher education). Sometimes talented athletes with a foreign passport do not have access to specialised schools and services in talent programmes in Member States.

Student-athletes often experience organisational barriers to continuing their dual careers abroad. For example, when travelling for sport-related reasons, many student-athletes have to take a break from their education or try to study on their own since it is hardly possible for them to find educational support in the other country. When coming back to their educational setting in the home country, these student-athletes typically find themselves behind other students and often experience a lack of understanding and support from their schools or universities. On the other hand, when student-athletes travel abroad for educational purposes they may experience a lack of opportunities to continue their sports training in the new country. When

they return to their home countries, they find themselves behind their sport peers and often experience a lack of understanding and support from their coaches and sports organisations. The consequences include premature dropouts from sport or even incomplete education followed by low employability.

Closer cooperation, promoted by the European Union and European sport organisations, among high-performance training centres and between these centres and selected or accredited educational institutes in EU Member States could enhance and facilitate the mobility of talented and elite athletes. In this way they could fulfil their dual careers in specific European dual career locations. Cooperating sport and educational institutes could be registered in a database available for athletes, coaches and sports bodies.

Example of good practice
The Portuguese Winter Sport Federation involves the National Institute of Sport to contact athletes' schools and appoint tutors who keep in touch with the athletes and provide educational and psychological support while they athletes are training abroad and also when they return.

3.2. Curriculum development at EU level

Mobility of dual career athletes could be enhanced by the implementation of EU bachelor's and master's degrees in the field of sport, with different academic institutions and high-performance training centres contributing to a common curriculum. The European Union promotes cooperation in the development of common curricula through programmes such as Erasmus, where pooled resources can generate curricula to the benefit of providers (through enhanced resources) and consumers (through enhanced quality of programmes). The development of a shared curriculum to support the field of elite sport in areas such as sport science, management, policy and coaching offers significant potential for drawing together the strengths of different national systems, promoting economies of scale in the identification, production and review of curriculum planning and materials.

Competition between national systems to provide educational support which may provide a competitive advantage for certain athletes would have to be overcome to engender cooperation. Such cooperation might benefit disproportionately smaller EU Member States which would be likely to benefit most from the pooling of expertise.

Developing common distance learning programmes or even simply common elements to programmes at, for example, baccalaureate and degree levels could equally support the further development of common curricula and the mobility of student-athletes, provided that certain elements of the curriculum are available in all cooperating educational institutes. In smaller Member States where the resources do not exist to allow the development of materials, a Virtual Learning Environments platform for distance learning or for a whole programme, shared with other Member States, would allow student-athletes to opt for the European curriculum or even remain part of their national education system while training and competing internationally. In addition, where seasonal variations in the demands of competition and training exist (e.g. one semester spent largely at 'home', the other engaging in international commitments), it may be possible to integrate distance learning and other forms of provision in a 'blended learning' approach which allows student-athletes to benefit from a mixture of face-to-face and distance learning methods and to interact with one another as part of a learning community.

Some distance learning projects in this field have been launched but results have so far not been convincing in terms of quality, level, accessibility, interactive character and languages. It seems to be difficult for international sports organisations to find the right cooperation mechanisms in the European distance learning market.

3.3. Quality framework

Quality control of the implementation of dual career programmes is necessary to assure the quality of measures and interventions in the longer term. Some external and internal control mechanisms exist in some Member States, but they are often fragmented. In some Member States the legal and policy frameworks for national training centres are subject to external control, including evaluations and inspections. More often governments make use of the framework of financial arrangements in the field of sport, for instance by making grants conditional upon a quality system.

While there is a long tradition of quality control in the education sector, in sport this sort of mechanisms is often neglected. Quality standards should exceed the obligatory criteria for compulsory education and include sport training, supporting services and (accessibility of) facilities.

Regular independent evaluations should cover the quality of services and facilities (sport and boarding). Facilities should be safe, accessible for elite athletes with a disability, and allow young athletes to train and study in good conditions. Structures should be in place to deal with conflicts or misbehaviour in a discrete manner. Evaluations should include consultations with the athletes, their national federations and any funding agencies to ensure that the type and level of delivery e.g. of supporting services is appropriate and facilitates dual careers.

In addition, the transparency of the quality of facilities and services from stakeholders involved in dual careers could be improved. A quality label could be an appropriate instrument to safeguard the balance between sport and education at schools and training centres. Athletes and parents coming from other Member States are often unaware of services provided and internal regulations. A European framework of minimum requirements could be developed either by the sport movement or by independent organisations (e.g. CEN, the European Standardisation Committee) so that sports organisations could make reference to these requirements formulated at European level.

Considerable concerns have been expressed at European level about the position of young talented athletes, in particular from third countries. Young professional athletes in training centres of professional clubs do not always have access to education and supporting services. Some young athletes may therefore get into precarious situations, especially if they do not fulfil the expectations and drop out without any guidance. They may end up without resources and with no means to go back to their countries of origin.

Regulations relating to the protection of minors differ considerably between Member States and sports. In professional sports such as football and basketball, many minors have been recruited in the past by foreign clubs which did not allow them to pursue school and/or vocational education. The situation has somewhat improved, but it remains crucial to follow up on these issues through European social dialogue

discussions among the various actors (national sports associations, professional leagues, clubs, athletes' organisations).

Guidelines for Action

Guideline 27 — The European Commission is called upon to stimulate cooperation between national sport training centres and educational institutes from different Member States in order to support the development and availability of dual career policies for student-athletes from other Member States.

Guideline 28 — The European Union is called upon to consider creating opportunities within its programme for education and training to provide financial and organisational support for the development and implementation of dual career mobility networks of cooperating sports organisations and educational institutes on behalf of student-athletes who move from one Member State to another.

Guideline 29 — The European Commission is called upon to encourage and support the leading educational institutions and universities in Member States, in partnership with sport stakeholders, to participate in transnational consortia to develop shared curricula and educational programmes for elite sportspersons. Such programmes could involve common degree programmes, common modules within degree programmes, or shared curriculum resources.

Guideline 30 — Sports and education authorities, sports organisations and educational institutes should promote regular internal control and external monitoring of dual career facilities and supporting services including sport and academic results, qualifications and further education of staff, safety and accessibility of facilities and services, and functioning of internal codes of behaviour.

Guideline 31 — Sports authorities and national sport bodies should consider developing a national quality label for dual career services and facilities with reference to a European framework. The European Commission is called upon to support the development of a European quality framework for dual career services and facilities in collaboration with the representative bodies in this field.

4. Dissemination, monitoring and evaluation

4.1. Public awareness

The concept of dual careers can only be successfully implemented if athletes and their entourage (from coaches to parents) are aware of its importance. Approaching the matter from different angles (EU, Governments, sport governing bodies) will spread the message faster and in a more efficient way. Coordination between the different partners will be one of the key success factors. Existing networks can make an important contribution to disseminating the concept of dual careers.

Example of good practice
The International Olympic Committee has been passing the message of the importance of dual careers to athletes, coaches and athletes' entourage since 2008. This approach has been disseminated around the world to 69 International Sports Federations (IFs) and 205 National Olympic Committees (NOCs).

Actions at governmental level, including national sport agencies and councils and educational institutes, can make athletes, clubs, coaches and directors of educational institutes aware of the importance of dual careers. Young athletes including disabled athletes should get the message that it is possible to combine sport and education and that they can profit from it. Communication can focus on the success of the dual career athlete and the benefits of lifestyle management and life balance. It can take the form of information targeted at athletes and their relatives, press releases about new developments, advertisements, posters etc.

4.2. Dual career networks

The four transnational dual career projects supported in the framework of the EU's 2009 Preparatory Action in the field of sport illustrated on a small scale the value of cross-sectoral cooperation and innovative partnerships and approaches to spread good practices, to foster learning across national borders, to raise awareness at national and international level and to develop new ideas about challenges in specific sports or smaller EU Member States. The implementation of the dual career concept depends to a large extent on the existence of networks with a high level of expertise that bring together athletes' organisations, educational institutions, sports organisations and private enterprises at national and international level and can provide concrete and practical guidance.

One or more European networks representing all the main dual career stakeholders would be a good basis for further development of dual career policies in the EU. In view of the useful role already played by the existing networks, networks active in the future should not supplant the existing networks but rather build on them. The exchange of information and good practice in the EAS (European Athlete Student) Network provides a useful model to emulate. The European Olympic Committees, athletes' and coach organisations and career assistance organisations should continue playing an active role.

In the framework of EU funding streams for sport, the European Commission should provide support to the European activities of dual career networks. Project grants should be awarded on the basis of applications following a specific call for proposals. It should be kept in mind that the topic of dual careers is not an isolated topic that could be addressed exhaustively by networks created for that purpose. Organisations such as the European Association of Sport Management (EASM), the Association of Sport Performance Centres (ASPC), the European Federation of Sport Psychology (FEPSAC) and the European Network of Academic Sport Services (ENAS) could also play a useful role.

4.3. Research, monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of policy actions for the promotion of dual careers should be monitored at national and, potentially, EU level. Indicators should be developed and could yield important information on policy implementation processes and outcomes at national level.

Indicators related to dual careers are not yet included in existing monitoring systems in the areas of sport and/or education in most EU countries. Recent research[20] has

[20] Bosscher & Bottenburg, SPLISS (2011), Radtke & Coalter (2006), Aquilina & Henry (2007).

investigated elements of dual career programmes based e.g. on comparisons between different models at secondary school level or between a limited number of countries. Further research should be promoted, covering the most pertinent areas such as athletes' transitions between adjacent levels of dual career programmes, dual career experiences of transnational athletes, the safeguarding of the development of young athletes in different Member States, the long-term impact of dual careers on the national and international sport environment including athletic, academic and vocational achievements, employers' perspectives of the employability of (former) elite athletes, the competences of professionals active in career counselling programmes and the effectiveness of dual career supporting services.

Guidelines for Action

Guideline 32 — Sports authorities should coordinate actions in cooperation with sports organisations to raise awareness among coaches, athletes and their entourage about the importance of dual careers and to support the setting up of representative athletes' committees and national athletes' organisations and their incorporation in the respective boards of sport organisations or social dialogue structures. Sport authorities should promote existing athletes' committees and organisations to spread information on dual career services to individual athletes during training and competitions.

Guideline 33 — The European Commission is called upon to support one or more European dual career networks bringing together stakeholders representing athletes, sports organisations, educational institutions, supporting services, national authorities, coaches and businesses, in order to further the dissemination and implementation of these Guidelines.

Guideline 34 — Sports and education authorities should have a monitoring and evaluation system in place, in cooperation with sports, education and athletes' organisations, to follow progress regarding the implementation of dual career policies. They should notably monitor the effectiveness and quality of the system of educational institutes with a sport profile, sport academies or sport centres run by federations, Olympic Committees or private companies and clubs. They should also support corresponding research.

Guideline 35 — The European Commission is called upon to support research regarding the international dimension of dual career programmes, in particular regarding the effects of transitions in athletes' lives, the safeguarding of the development of young athletes in early specialisation sports, the effectiveness of measures and supporting services in the Member States, and the re-entry process of European athletes into the labour market.

Guideline 36 — The European Commission is called upon to consider monitoring key developments in the field of dual careers of athletes at national and European level and to evaluate the implementation of these Guidelines on the basis of pre-defined indicators after four years.

ANNEX: List of experts

These Guidelines on Dual Careers were drafted by an ad-hoc Group of Experts consisting of the following experts:

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(5) Alison Brown, TASS — Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme, United Kingdom
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The Group of Experts was chaired by the Sport Unit of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, which also played the role of a secretariat. The EU Expert Group "Education and Training in Sport" appointed the members of the Group of Experts, supervised the drafting process and agreed the final text.

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