



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Actual status of Dual Career of Athletes in DC4AC Countries – National Reports

Final version, June 2017



SUMMARY

Introduction.....	3
Romania.....	4
Hungary.....	7
Italy.....	12
Slovenia	17
Slovakia.....	31
Greece.....	35
Bulgaria	37

INTRODUCTION

The DC4AC project (*Regional Center for Dual Career Policies and Advocacy*) is a project funded by the **European Commission** through the **Erasmus + Sport Program**, action area Support for Collaborative Partnerships - Grant Agreement 2015-2954. It involves eight entities from 7 countries of the European Community: Romania, Hungary, Italy, Greece, Slovakia, Slovenia and Bulgaria.

The project is complementary to the European Union's efforts to ensure a secure future for athletes at the end of their sports career and aim to facilitate replicating and application of the European Commission guidelines on dual career for talented and elite athletes (the so-called dual career).

Dual career concerns the possibility for talented, professional and elite athletes to build an educational or job path simultaneously with a sport career, because they face challenges in conciliating intensive training and competition with education or work. In 2012, European Union published the first edition of the European Guidelines on Dual Career of Elite Athletes¹, thanks to the work of many professionals that since times are working on this issue. The publication sign a first step toward an increasing awareness on the theme of dual career of athletes, and this become one of the mayor issue of financing in sport.

The DC4AC project's general aim is to develop a functional organism, the **Regional Center for Dual Career**, being an excellence pole for dual career awareness, monitoring, evaluation and research in involved Countries. Moreover, the project aims at understanding the athletes' actual needs and expectations concerning dual career and the current opinion of some main sport authorities about the situation of dual career in their respective countries. Another aim concerns exploring the actual situation on dual career's good practices developed in each Country involved, and creating concrete tools, such as workshop, campaigns, e-learning platform in order to facilitate the dual career of athletes from a practical point of view.

The present document is a collection of national reports on the actual situation on dual career of athletes, involving facts and issues from **Romania, Slovenia, Greece, Hungary, Slovakia, Italy** and **Bulgaria**.

The document is organized into six main sections, one for each Country involved in the project; each main section comprehend a number of sub-sections describing the different dual career issues and possible solutions.

¹ Download the English version here: http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/sport/library/documents/dual-career-guidelines-final_en.pdf

ROMANIA

The DC situation in Romania and facilities for talented and elite athletes

Dan Boboc – National Institute for Sport Research, Bucharest

Introduction

Due to a perimated approach to sport in general, Romanian sport governing bodies are more oriented toward performance in sport than finding the best solution to combine athletes' training with education and/or work and helping them to have a coherent exit from their sport career.

The Romanian sport federations tend to get involved only in the sport career of athletes. Much in the same manner, the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Romanian Olympic and Sport Committee put the emphasis on training, continuous improvement in sport performance. There are only a few real initiatives regarding dual career of athletes, which will be described in the next paragraphs.

On the other hand, Romanian athletes face a lacking awareness, information and education regarding the possibilities and opportunities of following a dual career while they are active in performance. Their needs, the specific requirements to which they are subjected, their lifestyle (centralized training periods and repeated tournaments), turn athletes into a vulnerable social category, less informed and less adapted to the real life. More than this, coaches, sport clubs and even the parents are putting a lot of pressure on young athletes for top results, but nobody thinks what those athletes will do at the end of their career or in case of injury which prevents them to continue a sport career.

There is very little information and action in Romania regarding dual career of athletes. Most of Romanian champions, European, World or Olympic champion, are the result of a centralized training system which has assured them the basic human development, the educational background and the sports facilities. At the end of their sport career, in the best of cases, the athlete becomes a coach by obtaining a degree in sport and physical education and/or a license to train athletes.

Other particular case are the ones tied to powerful sport clubs, as Steaua Bucuresti and Dinamo - belonging to the Ministry of Defense, respectively to the Ministry of Home Affairs, which provide a larger support to their legitimated athletes by employing athletes in their structures during sport career and sometimes even after. Unfortunately, only high level athletes are beneficiaries of this professional re-conversion after quitting sport. The sport clubs rely on the fact that in this way they can motivate athletes for higher results during their sport career.

However, the athletes who have performed at international and Olympic level are generally absorbed by the sport system after ending their sport career, so they get to work for national Federations or in other sport organizations. Some relevant recent examples may include:

- Elisabeta Lipa, 5 times gold Olympic medalist, two times Olympic silver medalist and one bronze, has led until recently the Ministry of Youth and Sports;
- Mihai Covaliu, gold and bronze medalist at two editions of the Olympic Games, is currently President of the Romanian Olympic and Sports Committee,
- Camelia Potec, gold medalist in Athens 2004 is currently President of the Romanian Swimming Federation.

Education facilities and opportunities

In terms of early education Romania has more than **80 High Schools with special sport program**, most of them directed to one or two performance sports only. They accept to support the young athletes programme, being flexible regarding the program implied by participation in training camps and/or competitions.

After graduating highschool, athletes choose to apply for an University degree, mainly in Physical Education and Sport. There are **23 Faculties of Sport and Physical education**, quite evenly distributed in all main regions of the country.

According to the Government Decision 1004/2002 there is ***no examination at the enrollment in higher education*** (sport and physical education faculties) for athletes who achieved international performances and their studies are free of taxation.

Two special orders of the Ministry of Education (order 5159/1998 and 4799/2010²) establish that:

- athletes have a ***frequency exemption***, commensurate with the level of performance;
- a ***baccalaureate exam special session*** will be held for the high school graduates selected in the national teams and preparing for the Olympics or other major international sports competitions;
- a ***prolonged or open examination session*** (higher education) is suggested for performance athletes engaged in major competitions;
- all athletes have ***free accommodation*** in student campus.

The **Romanian Olympic and Sports Committee** has a long-term collaboration with ADECCO in implementing a project called *Athletic Career Programme* on 8 years (2012-2020) for offering ***vocational formation*** to athletes withdrawing from high performance.

² For more information, see: <http://oldsite.edu.ro/index.php/articles/14187>

Sport facilities and opportunities

Sport and Physical Education law (69/2000³) and a Government decision (1447/2007⁴) establish:

- the State must provide *appropriate conditions for training and competing* an also sport equipment and *free medical services*. There are 9 state-financed regional training centers which are fully dedicated to performance sports, for talented and elite athletes;
- *daily allowances and other incentives* for performance athletes that are part of national and Olympic teams.

Social integration of former athletes

Romania lacks of concrete initiatives and legal framework regarding dual career of athletes. However, some support measures and actions are worthy of being mentioned:

- athletes who have won a gold medal at European or World Championship and those with any medal in the Olympic Games, have the right to request a *life annuity at their retirement* (law 69/2000); the annuity is paid by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and comes without taxation;
- the Professional and Amateur Football Players Association in partnership with National Trade Union Bloc and National Authority for Youth and Sports has conducted a project of *social security and professional re-conversion* of athletes (2009-2011) called *E-learning for social partners*; project targeted: active athletes, athletes near the end of their career and retired athletes, in all sports, regardless of gender;
- the same Professional and Amateur Football Players Association has initiated and developed a project named *Academy online* (2010-2012); actually, a platform for distance learning dedicated to former football players, through which they can *specialize in sport-related areas* as sport marketing, sport management, by covering 10 courses modules;
- a pilot project of formatting of more than 20 senior *athletes as entrepreneurs* was in action, as a direct result of the *DC4AC project*, with the implication of Romanian Rowing Federation.

³ For more information, see: <http://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gi3dmnru/legea-educatiei-fizice-si-sportului-nr-69-2000&d=2017-03-27>

⁴ For more information, see: <http://mts.ro/despre-noi/legislatie/acte-normative-in-vigoare/hotararea-de-guvern-nr-14472007-2/>

HUNGARY

Development and system of athletes' dual career in Hungary

Mariann Bardocz-Bencsik, Judit Farkas, Tibor Kozsla – University of Physical Education, Budapest

Introduction

In Hungary, sport and education has been going hand-in-hand since 1777, when physical education was put into the elementary school curriculum as a recommended subject. Since 2011, it is set in the Public education law, that elementary and secondary school students have to have daily curricular physical education (PE) classes⁵, while the extra-curricular sports programmes are also well-organised in the all-day school system. The local sports partnerships are flourishing, as the school sports facilities are not able to serve all needs of the morning-time PE and the afternoon's sport programmes. All major sport federations and clubs have received multiplied financial resources to be able to cover the extra costs generated by the raising demands.

High-level sport has deep roots in Hungary, especially in some traditional summer Olympic sports, such as fencing, kayak-canoe, swimming, water polo and handball. In the all-time summer Olympic medal table Hungary is ranked 8th, which means the highest percentage of Olympic medallists compared to the countries' population among the most successful sporting countries.⁶

Three major areas of intervention

This boosted PE and sports system calls for more actions in the field of athletes' dual career. Firstly, to keep as many secondary schoolers in competitive sports as possible by making them/their parents feel that it is possible to well-balance study and sport. Secondly, to help the graduates of the general education system to continue their studies in the higher education or the vocational education and training (VET) system. And thirdly, to help athletes to enter the job market.

Stay in!

The first challenge we can identify in Hungarian sport, like everywhere in Europe, is to guide the parents and the young athletes (aged 12-16) before or when they raise the question: "study or sport?". But before listing the preventive or reflective measures that clubs, coaches, schools take, it is important to bring in a less objective parameter, namely the fact that "ordinary" school's directors and teachers have a generally positive approach towards those students who require more flexibility in their schedules and assessment/examination. Based on international practices, over 60 special sports schools have been established since 1963, where the well-known combination of studying and sport is realised by applying a special timetable to serve the daily 2-3 times sports practice and yet, still have all the subjects

⁵ Collection of current legislations: http://net.jogtar.hu/jr/gen/hjegy_doc.cgi?docid=A1100190.TV

⁶ The all-time summer Olympic medal ranking: http://www.allcompetitions.com/og_medcnt.htm

taught in contact lessons. That seems to be a methodological challenge to supplement regular classes by e-learning/on-line education in the elementary and secondary level – so far.

Transfer One

With such a deep-rooted strong relationship between education and sport, the topic of dual career couldn't have been ignored. In dual career there are two transfers: the first is when the athlete leaves compulsory education, therefore is highly recommended to continue education in either on a vocational or a higher education level. The second transfer happens when the athlete finishes his/her sporting career and needs to find his/her place in civil professional life. Both transfers are challenging as for the first one, the athlete has to be motivated and encouraged to go on with studies even when it is not compulsory anymore. For the second transfer to happen smoothly, he/she needs to plan ahead, as in sport, retirement can happen from one day to another due to injuries or the termination of a sporting contract. Hungary has been having systems for both transfers, which makes it easier for athletes to prepare for civil life.

To make the first transfer easier, the Hungarian Olympic Committee (HOC) built up a system in which elite athletes can conduct both their athletic career and their non-sporting professional career. The "Olympic Pathway Programme" has been launched in May, 2002. The programme is based on an agreement - signed by higher education institutions and the HOC – expressing the mutual will to provide special conditions for high-level athletes in getting into and conducting studies on tertiary level in Hungary. The reception of the initiative from the side of education institutions was highly positive as all invited colleges and universities signed the agreement with the HOC, which means that currently 30 higher education institutions take part in the programme⁷.

The content of the bilateral agreement varies due to the different profiles of participating colleges and universities, but the purposes and the objectives of the programme and the responsibilities of the HOC are always the same.

The participating athletes should be in the pool of national athletes preparing for Olympic Games or be in the first line of the under 18 years old generation. They can request their education institution to provide them special benefits based on the fact that they take part in the programme. These benefits can be for example: to abolish or reduce their tuition fee (in case the athlete was not accepted to the top 30%, where students' fees are waved); to have a flexible timetable and exam schedule which is compatible with their training and competing schedule; to ask for a tutor who can help them in catching up with their studies; to get dormitory room for a reduced price or for free of charge; to use the education institution's sporting facilities.

The programme is mutually beneficial for all parties involved: there are more athletes in higher education, which is a promotion for the college or university; there is less athlete-student drop-out from education institutions; and the programme is a good practice that the HOC can showcase at an international level. Another aspect to highlight is the transparent and documented way how athletes can receive the flexibility regarding their study and exam schedule. Since universities have different regulations, it is important to legally support such flexibility, also avoiding personal factors, when a disagreeing faculty would demand presence at classes and exams. By signing an agreement by the rector of the university and the

⁷ The homepage of the Hungarian Olympic Committee: <http://www.mob.hu/egyuttmukodesi-megallapodasok-1>

president of the HOC, the internal regulations are changed accordingly, making it safe for all actors, and most importantly: the special treatment of high-level athletes is transparent and documented.

At the start of the programme, 43 athletes participated in it, while in 2013, 408 athletes benefited from it. Even though, it is getting more popular, there is still a great need for it to be promoted, as many athletes are not aware of it. It could also be enlarged, involving not only the representatives of Olympic, but non-Olympic sports as well.

A very recent tool to support high-level athletes in their full concentration of preparation for sports competitions is the university scholarship programme called “Sportcsillagok”, Sports Stars. This is a governmental programme, run by the Ministry of Human Capacities.⁸ It provides outstanding financial security and thus, allows them to better concentrate on sport and study by covering the recipient’s tuition fees and living expenses.

So far, such a transfer is not solved for general VET studies, partly because vocational studies can give less flexibility in school presence and there is no significant demand from high-level athletes. However, sport-related VET studies are becoming more and more successful, after the recent change in school structure and financing scheme. Secondary school students can earn EQF⁹ Levels 4 and 5 coaching qualifications in one sport, their own sport by taking extra 1500 hours by following the VET sports coaching programme in those specialised and selected secondary schools, where such classes are opened. This very high number of contact hours and the validated knowledge (recognition of prior learning outcome from the 8-10 year of relevant sports) gives a great start to the job market, of course with a supervised coaching praxis.

Transfer Two

To make the second transfer happen, there have been two minor programmes in Hungary. In 2005, the HOC signed an agreement with Adecco, a world-known recruiting company to give support for high-level athletes in career building and national or international job placement. There have been another programme supporting the second transfer, it was a cooperation between the Hungarian Sports Confederation (HSC) and AXA Zrt., an insurance company. The agreement was signed in 2005 and provided career opportunities for athletes at AXA. As the HSC ceased its operation in 2012, the programme has come to an end.

In a non-formal interview, a dual career officer - who has been and is in contact with hundreds of athletes who benefited from the Transfer One programmes - stated, that high-level athletes are not so much keen on being supported in finding regular jobs by the dual career office/programme. There has been a long-time tradition that formerly successful athletes rather invest into small or larger scale businesses and become self-employed. At the same time, none doubts that in the future, just like until now, all athletes look for the opportunity to take part in seminars/courses, where their CV-s are upgraded, their general/transversal skills and competencies are tested and documented in order to have a

⁸ The announcement to apply for the scholarship on the homepage of the government:

<http://www.kormany.hu/hu/emberi-eroforrasok-miniszteriuma/sportert-felelos-allamtitkarsag/hirek/magyar-sportcsillagok-osztondij-2015>

⁹ The information page of European Qualifications Framework on the homepage of the European Commission:

https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f%5B0%5D=im_field_entity_type%3A97

proof of the legendary soft skills sportspeople possess: teamwork, concentration, dedication, perseverance, commitment, managing anxiety, managing emotions, managing time, etc.

Resources to grow and learn

A European Union-funded preparatory action project entitled “Athletes2Business” lead by the EU Office of the European Olympic Committees on the dual career of athletes was running in 2010-2011 with the participation of the Hungarian University of Physical Education (that time Semmelweis University). The project examined different national systems on dual career, including the Hungarian one. Four comprehensive questionnaires - for athletes, sport organisations, educational institutions and businesses – were put together and were analysed. The Hungarian analysis brought great and sometimes shocking findings. Efforts have been appreciated but also, former athletes of the older generation made bitter comments about how much athletes have been left alone when no income was made and family supported them only financially. The results of the survey clearly showed that existing dual career programmes, such as the Olympic Pathway Programme meant a big relief. The overall project outcome was much more complex, partly e.g. leading to the creation of the EU Guidelines on Dual Career. This project provided a great exposure for the Hungarian system as the findings of the research were disseminated in various ways throughout Europe.

Another international resource is from networking with similar sports and educational stakeholders in general and also via the European Athlete Student Network (EAS), the European dual career network. Conference participation, shared research and European projects proved to be beneficial. We got informed about best practices and took part in the dissemination on pieces of information gathered by EU-funded projects.

Policy support for management of national/club-based dual career programmes

In 2013 and 2014 a nation-wide project was conducted to prepare the quasi Hungarian White Paper on Sport. This has been the latest example of the evidence-based policy-making on a national level in order to revise the 2007 Hungarian Sports Strategy. Among many topics, dual career has been researched. The project team collected and analysed data used in the implementation process of the EU document on dual career. The *EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes Recommended Policy Actions in Support of Dual Careers in High-Performance Sport* was issued in Brussels on 16th November, 2012¹⁰.

The 36 European guidelines has been taken one by one, got analysed based on compliance or non-compliance with the existing Hungarian practice, the mapped state-of-play and/or legal regulations. In case of non-compliance with an EU guideline, recommendations have been made addressing relevant stakeholders. All key issues and levels of the areas of sport, education, health and employment have been addressed, meaning that in case of a design or launch of a dual career action plan, any sports organisation can refer to the Project outcome

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/documents/dual-career-guidelines-final_en.pdf

by following the *Hungarian Guidelines on Dual Career – Recommended Policy Actions*¹¹. Since the target group is the Hungarian sports and education sector, the language of the publication is Hungarian (the tables of compliance analysis and recommendations are on p. 18-31).

Summary

With such a deep-rooted strong relationship between education and sport, the topic of dual career have never been ignored in Hungary – although it was not that widely spread and was not called as it is today. After the identification of personal and sports organisation based difficulties from mis-matching high-level sports and studies/employment, a proper response was required in order to keep the integrity of the sport system. For instance, to avoid the mass drop-out of young athletes (aged 12-16/18) because of the misleading conception of not being able to balance sports and study or in later years, to have the chance to study and access the job market as their non-athlete peers.

The Hungarian dual career system is under continuous development due to the fact that all stakeholders have realised how important is to address the topic in an effective way. Not only the sporting world – lead by the HOC – and the governmental sector make great efforts to develop and enlarge the system, but they are supported by domestic academia and relevant international stakeholders too. Most importantly, their joint efforts get more and more athletes into the system, as the general purpose of the dual career concept is to support athletes in making good professional decisions “off the field”.

¹¹ <http://sportmenedzsment.hu/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Oktat%C3%A1s-k%C3%A9pz%C3%A9s-%C3%A9s-k%C3%A9pes%C3%ADt%C3%A9sek-a-sportban-%C3%A9s-sportol%C3%B3i-kett%C5%91s-karrier-a-k%C3%B6z-%C3%A9s-fels%C5%91oktat%C3%A1sban-bros%C3%B4r.pdf>

ITALY

Dual Career in Italy ...and what should be done in future

Chiara D'Angelo, Eleonora Reverberi, Chiara Corvino – Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano

Introduction

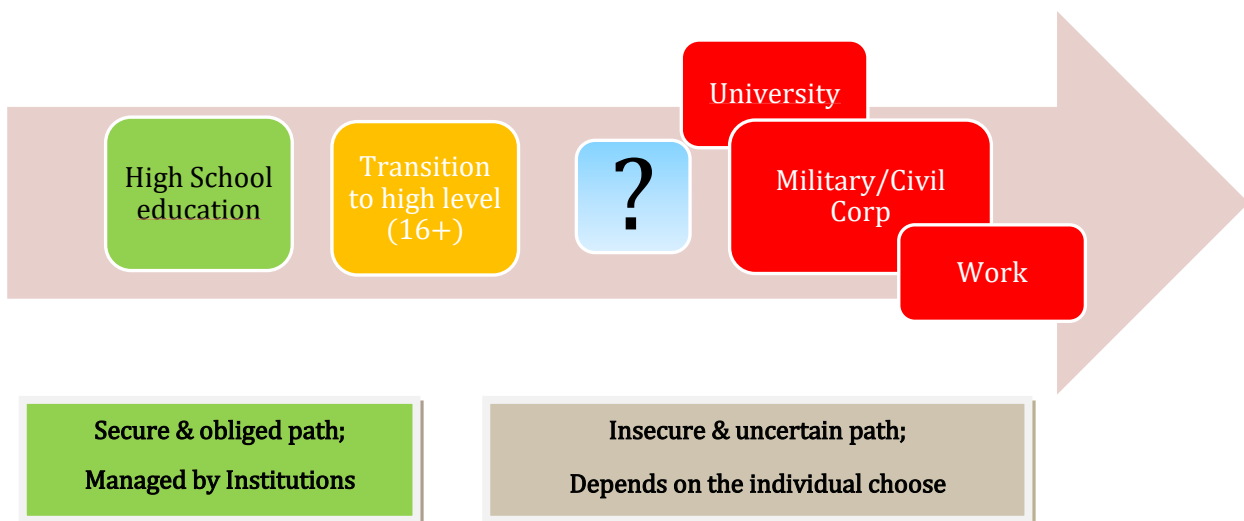
In Italy dual career is seen into two different ways:

1. As an **institutional issue**, where the main actors are Universities, National Olympic Committee, Federations, University Sport Centre (CUS) and Associations of Players/Athletes, that help athlete in developing his/her DC path through particular policies, because athlete don't care about it his own;
2. As an **individual issue**, where the main actor is the athlete and his/her personal inclinations or family background that are responsible in choosing and doing his/her personal path.

It has never been recognized as a mix of the two options, even if both are important for DC.

We can describe DC in Italy trough the following scheme: at the very beginning, when the athlete is at the Primary and Secondary School he/she is obliged to go to school, and so DC is seen as a regular and clear path. The athlete goes to school and the family and the Club/Federation has to help him in finishing it.

When the athlete does the transition to high level sport (becoming professional athlete or top level athlete), at any age, he/she must choose what to do between go to University, enter a Military/Civil Corp or go to work. Most frequently the athlete chooses the second one, because is the only solution that allow him/her to continue training at high level and pay him/her to do it.



Study at University or working are often seen by Federations as a distraction for the athlete, and mostly of them don't encourage them toward. This second period in the athletic career is seen as very uncertain and insecure for the athlete, and we understood that athletes choose to enter a Corp because they don't are in the opportune conditions to evaluate the other options. Frequently the many commitments they have from athletic training, competitions and medical care, are seen as conflicting with the timetable schedule of University or – worst – work market, and they see as the only option for them to enter a Corp to sustain themselves. In other cases, the athlete enters a professional Club (soccer, basketball, rugby and other team sport), but rarely he/she can continue to study or work, because the sport became his/her main work.

From Sport authorities' words we can identify two sides of the coin about DC in Italy: the first regarding athletes and their approach to DC and the second concerning the Italian sport system. Let's analyse each one through interviews output.

Athlete's approach to DC

- Athletes don't think about their post career till the end of it or in case of serious injury, except very few cases;
- Those few cases that think about their future career are helped by family (usually characterized by a social context of wellness) or by cultural context of specific sport, that cannot assure them a life-long earning (like some team sports do). In some cases, they realize they could not reach the highest levels of their sport, and so they are happy with their level of sport and think about other context of their lives;
- Athletes are effectively a different *type* of student or workers and need more recognition in educational and work system, while actually they don't have any social or institutional rights;
- Post career depends on the type of sport and on the «*sport specific culture*». There are sports – like soccer or basketball, especially in the major leagues - that require a great amount of time and energy to athletes to face all the obligations they have to deal with (training, competition in the whole Country and abroad, sponsor events, public events, and so on) and so, given the great amount of money athletes gain, they don't need to find other incoming sources. In other, minor, sports, athletes have to deal with training and competition in Italy and abroad, but given the fact that the sport itself has a little visibility, they have more free time, are less payed and have the possibility to study and feed other aspects of their lives. Often in the sport context itself that encourage the study at University (Fed. Of Rowing) or the entrance in Corp in order to have a work after the retirement (especially individual sport);
- Sport context is the «natural» way out for elite athletes, even if it couldn't be possible for all, nor wanted by all;
- A new figure is emerging: *athlete's personal agent/manager* (especially for team sport), a person that cares about athlete's interests, payments or registration, and that have a great influence on them. Athletes often entrust them completely, because they don't have any competences in money-management or in the management of other

aspects of their lives and so they develop a personal and very strong relationship with these figures. Some sport authorities ask themselves what role has specifically this new figure for DC of elite athletes, and some suggest they have to be trained also in helping athletes in dealing with this aspect.

Italian DC system

Italian sport system is recognized as one of the main aspect of influence in DC of elite athletes. Below we'll explain each actor identified in the system and its role.

Sport Institutions – the main sport institutions in Italian sport system are Clubs (for professional level), Associations (for amateur level) and Federations (for elite and professional level). Each sport is intrinsically different from others, so each Federation has a peculiar structure and practices to manage elite athletes. Not all sports are classified as “professional”, so not all athletes can be classified as “professional”. Here we are the main aspects emerged from interviews.

- ✓ Associations (mainly) and Clubs organize and manage *grassroots* sport, while Federations only *elite* sport, so maybe the aims of the two could also not be aligned, and grassroots sport often cannot give Federations the best talented athletes;
- ✓ Military Corps enlist and manage the majority of elite athletes, especially the ones of individual and Olympic discipline, so non-Olympic sport athletes have difficulty to continue training;
- ✓ Sport context usually see education or work as a distraction from athlete's training and, except in few cases, usually don't encourage University/working career for athletes, except for careers within the sport context (as coach for example).

Educational System – with this expression we mean the whole Public School System in Italy, from Primary School to University, where there are serious problems with the teaching of sport, because time dedicated to this subject is always lesser. The management of sport is entirely in the hands of Clubs and Associations. In little words, we can say that:

- ✓ There is little education to sport in the entire Italian Educational System;
- ✓ There is no *culture of flexibility* for athletes in educational system, and often teachers see sport as a distraction from school and don't help young athletes in combining the two things;
- ✓ Private School or University are more free to face peculiar situations of athletes or create specific projects dedicated to them.

Work market – is identified mostly as the world of “employees” and not “independent” business.

- ✓ Work market don't accept easily athletes and their needs (except as *testimonials* or in family business). Giving the fact that athletes aren't recognized as a peculiar class of

people, firms and organizations cannot accept their obligations with trainings and competitions, so they don't want to assume people that require special timetable or work management. Consequently, the only way to face this problem for athletes are two: enter a Corp or set a personal business.

- ✓ The majority of our sport authorities (with a pair of exceptions) don't know about the existence of programmes of vocational guidance for athletes;
- ✓ The majority have difficulties to see athletes on other contexts different from sport one, so for them is natural that retired athletes find an occupation in sport context.

Financial & Health care – this is the unknown-area ever.

- ✓ Sport authorities said that there are no instruments or programmes of financial assistance for athletes, in particular for non-professional ones;
- ✓ There are only 5 Associations of athletes/players, all of team sports. The other Associations of athletes are little active.

DC: What has been done...

- There are a certain number of projects that help athletes in building a dual career path (managed by Federations, Universities or Associations of players), but given the very little communications between different actors, they don't know each other and hardly make networking;
- There are two more *Erasmus + Sport* project in Italy and this is a good signal that an awareness is emerging on the theme;
- There are two proposals of *e-learning platform* for athlete-student (one in an Erasmus+ project and another in a Ministerial project), that confirm the importance of this new online way to guarantee education for athletes;
- The most active institutional actors on this theme are:
 - the Italian Olympic Committee (one Erasmus+ Sport project, one Lifelong Learning, one experimentation at regional level with the project "Sport&Work" and the recent national project called "The New Season");
 - University Sport Centre (CUS), that since years ensure student-athletes scholarships and resources for training and study at the same time;
 - Military or Civil Corps, that give the possibility to a large number of elite athletes to train and gain some money and a work after their retirement;
 - Federations – even if not all - that has the resources to ensure their elite athletes a way to combine study and train, especially in teen years.

... and what should be done in future.

- Raise awareness of athletes about DC;

- Create an online platform for education and a tutorship program for athlete-student in High School and University;
- More interest from educational system in elite sport (University Team and scholarships for athletes);
- Federations have to establish links with Ministry of Education to apply shared policies for athlete-student;
- National Olympic Committee should establish a unique classification of elite athletes and develop better policies;
- Work system should be aware of the value of an athlete and help who want to enter and develop a career out of sport (i.e. internships).

First provisional reflections ...

- There is a great need of a definition and a census of elite athletes in Italy
- How can we impact on a theme that is few present in athlete's mind?
- Who can develop policies for athletes – student/worker and how?
- There is a need for more communication and cooperation between Institutions
- Association of athletes/players are a new actor that works specifically for helping athletes in DC
- Sport authorities have little knowledge of European Guidelines on DC.

SLOVENIA

Dual Career of Athletes in Slovenia

AUTHORS: UNIVERSITY OF PRIMORSKA, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Sport represents one of the pillars of society and its dynamics. On the one hand it is considered a private good and on the other hand it is a public good due to its widespread effect on society (for instance presenting the nation on the international sporting events). Top class sport is sport at the highest level, defined by the strive for top achievements in different sports, while also having an important role for society, nation and individual.

Athletes nowadays commonly face the challenge of combining the sports career with education and/or work. Top class sport requires complete devotion, which results in athletes having to work around all other activities, including education and training. A status of elite athlete is obtained through intensive trainings and competitions home and abroad, which is difficult to combine with the demands of the education system and job market. Many athletes consequently drop out of school, take it up after the end of the sport career and find themselves in crisis in the life after sport.

Due to premature termination of education, athletes often have lower education than their non-athlete counterparts, and are consequently less equipped for future career and forced to take on lower paying jobs. After schooling, athletes must face entry into the job market, searching for employment and adapting to the new circumstances. Elite athletes have a limited time-span of their career at the highest level in the years that coincide with the time generally spent in education and acquiring profession. Coordination of sport and studies involves a great deal of sacrifices, as athletes must focus their time and energy on sport achievements, whereas they are often absent from the educational process. Schools tend to provide certain adjustments to facilitate easier acquiring of education for athletes. In Slovenia, such regulation are legally binding in the elementary and secondary school, however the regulations are not as established at the higher education level (Goltnik Arnaut 1995). In the higher education institutions, the adjustments are, even though stated, not systematically organized and thus left to interpretation of an individual institution.

Professionalization of sport has had a great effect on the situation of modern sports actors. Once a free-time activity became an obligation for athletes. Despite the fact that the field is regulated, the issue of salaries for the sport achievements remains largely unsolved and even though it holds all the signs of an occupation, its place in the labor and social legislation is inadequate. Systems like club transfers and strong policy of paying according to effect or achievements make sport profession unequal to any other occupations.

Being an athlete in Slovenia

An athlete, as specified in the Sports Act (sl. Zakon o športu) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 1998) is a person registered at the national sport federations that competes in the official competitive systems of specific sport federations. A status of elite athletes is

furthermore acquired with an international sport achievement of the highest level, however not necessarily does an elite athlete also has a status of professional athlete. Elite athlete must thus represent Slovenia upon invitation and are obliged to follow international and national sport federations' rules and the set norms and ethnical provisions in sport.

An elite athlete is entitled to:

- health insurance,
- accident insurance,
- maternity,
- pension and disability insurance,
- adjustments to operating liabilities of the educational program.

Athletes in Slovenia are categorised in the following manner by the Olympic Committee of Slovenia: 1) perspective class athlete, 2) national class athlete, 3) international class athlete and 4) word class athlete with established criteria for each classification. Status is attributed on a yearly basis or biannually in case of greater achievements. The criteria are specified for each sport discipline individually (see Pogoji, pravila in kriteriji za registriranje in kategoriziranje športnikov v Republiki Sloveniji (Olympic Committee of Slovenia 2013).

An additional status that can be acquired by athletes is the status of a professional athlete, which is available to the athlete under the following provision: 15 years of age, active career in sports, membership in the national sport federation and a residence in the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 1998). The status is regulated and the registry of professional athletes is held by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. A professional athlete is an individual providing for himself in sport and holds a contractual arrangement with a sport organisation and receives a salary for his work. Sometimes athletes are self-employed and receive a salary.

Legislation facilities

The current **Sports Act** (sl. Zakon o športu), formed 18 years ago in 1998, brought tax relief of athletes' revenue. However, it did little beyond that regarding their formal labor legislation with circumstances only getting harsher in the time of economy crisis. The new law is being prepared at the moment, with current and former athletes still having a very little say on the matter and several critics by the sport associations aimed at an even greater control over sport by the government. The new law should be adopted within 2016. Current **National Programme of Sport of the Republic of Slovenia - NPS 2014-2023** (sl. Nacionalni program športa 2014-2023) regulates the principles of sport activity, the content and scope of accompanying activities (physical education, sports and recreational activities, professional sport, quality sport, sports students and sports people with disabilities), developmental and expert approach to sport, sport management and broad criteria for financial scheme. NPS is currently the main strategic document in Slovenian sport, accepted by the Slovenian Parliament and the Sport authority as well as the Olympic committee of Slovenia. NPS thus defines public interest in sports and creates conditions for development of the sports field and sets the support of elite and perspective athletes throughout their active career and after its end.

In 2014, Slovenian government adopted **Bridging Insurance of Professional Athletes Act** (sl. Zakon o premostitvenem zavarovanju poklicnih športnikov (ZPZPŠ)) aiming to facilitate an easier transition of elite athletes into the so-called civilian life. The law proposed tax-free funds, gathered from sport clubs and athletes themselves, who would be after the end of the career entitled to receiving annuity or a single pay-out in specific cases. The law targets professional athletes with an established agreement with the sport association, member of the sport federations. On a voluntary basis elite athletes and athletes, working abroad could also access the scheme.

Agreement for employment of elite athletes and coaches (sl. Sporazum o zaposlovanju vrhunskih športnikov in trenerjev) was signed in 1996 by the Ministry of defence, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and Olympic Committee of Slovenia - Association of Sports Federations on the other side. (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport 2013). The agreement enables employment of elite athletes and coaches in the Slovenian army, police and customs.

Education facilities

The sport career path may be associated with significant issues when entering the labour market and education plays a crucial role in overcoming this issue. In spite of that, in a professional sport career education tends to get side-lined due to many obligations within active participation in competitive sport.

There are tendencies to enable athletes a simultaneous education along their sport career, which would enable them to facilitate the transition to the labour market after having ended their competitive career. As the athletes can start intense preparations at a young age, already in high school or in some sports even earlier, there are some options to help them combine sport with education, such as student-athlete statuses, and sport or even football sections/classes in some schools. Those are appointed to students who are intensively engaged in sports and training, and provide an adjusted schedule in order to help athletes carry out all their obligations. In spite of the adopted measures, the workload tends to be too much for some students, thus resulting in a significant drop-out rate and premature termination of sport career.

Care for athletes at primary and secondary education level

There are different models of coordination of school obligations and sports careers that provide young athletes with more equal opportunities for education in primary and secondary level. Young athletes can apply for the student-athlete status, several secondary schools provide sport classes and graduation or final exams can be completed under special conditions.

In several Slovenian high schools, athletes have the option to enrol in the so-called sport classes, which offer many forms of coordination of school obligations and sport career. The aim of the sport classes is to provide students-athletes such conditions of schooling in high school program in a manner that they can combine the requirements of school and sport and at the same time be successful in both areas. The ultimate goal is a successful graduation at

the end of schooling while the conditions for success in sport are constantly ensured. Conditions for enrolment in sports classes are: completed primary school, appropriate school success and sports achievements. Sport classes include:

- smaller number of students in each class;
- teaching and sports coordinators as support in coordinating athletic and school requirements;
- individual assistance;
- more physical education classes;
- personalized teaching methods and forms of learning;
- foreseen assessment;
- adjustment of schedules and adjustment of some content according to the needs of training - part of training can be implemented in school;
- possibility of increased absence from school;
- enrolment to the next year under special conditions;
- exams at the end of the school year;
- an extension of the student status for two years,
- the possibility of repeating the same year for more than one time;
- the option to enrol in graduation preparatory course;
- accommodation at dormitory or home and
- individual learning assistance in athletes' spare time in sports classes at the student dormitory (Lajh Rauter, forthcoming).

One of the strategic objectives of Current National Programme of Sport 2014-2023 of the Republic of Slovenia is to keep the number of sport classes in high schools, increase the quality of their work and establish sport classes in at least five technical and vocational secondary schools (National Programme of Sport 2014-2023, 2014).

Care for athletes at universities

While secondary education offers some athletes-friendly solutions, the systematic approach is lacking in the higher education. Slovenian public universities offer top athletes the opportunity to facilitate their studies with the student-athlete status. Each university has its own rules on the assignment of the status but these rules do not differ significantly. The student-athlete status can be awarded to the categorised athletes and consequently athletes can enjoy the following benefits:

- less compulsory attendance at lectures and seminars;
- additional exam periods for which the student athlete agrees with professors individually;
- facilitated conditions for progression to the next year of study and
- possibility to complete assignments of previous years of study or in other groups, etc. (Sember 2013)

Despite this formally regulated mechanism, many universities provide adjustments of academic and sport obligations that depend on informal or individual negotiations between professors and individual students athletes.

Student-athlete status

Promising athletes and top athletes in secondary schools can apply for the student-athlete status. Learning requirements for athletes who have such status are formally regulated and adapted. Students get individual adjustment of learning commitments that include adaptation of school obligations. This status can be obtained with the submission of an application including a certificate of membership in a sports club, sports achievements, a certificate of categorization and achievements in competitions, and a certificate of the status of an elite athlete and categorization obtained by the National Olympic Committee¹.

The individual adjustment of learning commitments determines:

- extent of adjustment of school obligations,
- extent of compulsory attendance,
- deadlines and methods of knowledge assessment,
- deadlines and methods of fulfilling other obligations,
- deadlines for notification of the competent authorities on not fulfilling the individual learning plan and
- other rights and obligations of school and students.

The individual adjustment of learning commitments of a student-athlete is prepared by the school in coordination with students' parents, sports club or a national sport federation (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, 2009).

Special graduation examination arrangements

Students-athletes have the possibility to complete the high school graduation examination in two parts instead of one if they attend a major international sports competition (Olympic games or world championships) in the time of graduation examination.

Distance learning

The distance learning for elite athletes in form of e-learning or e-studying is being conducted from 2002 by Olympic committee of Slovenia and in the current year 2015/2016 it is being carried out in three high-schools Gymnasium France Prešeren in Kranj, Gymnasium Šiška Ljubljana and II. Gymnasium Maribor (Olympic committee of Slovenia 2016). The system provides pupils with athletic obligations a system of e-learning with access to internet connection for limitless usage of school programmes that teachers adapt for such purposes. Pupils can use this system if they are away from school for more than 50 % and are entitled to individual classes with teachers. School involved in the project also provide a specific sport coordinator, responsible for the student athletes' sport and educational development (Olympic committee of Slovenia 2016c).

The experience from II. Gymnasium Maribor as stated in the annual plan (II. Gymnasium Maribor 2015) describes 15 pupils of 2nd, 3rd and 4th year included in the programme of distance learning in the current year 2015/2016, while project itself is on-going since 2008.

The project aims to ensure development in sport and education areas through a mixed system of partly e-learning and partly traditional classroom learning.

Tutoring for young athletes

Tutoring in sport can be defined as systematic management of athletes throughout their sports careers. In this regard, the athlete is considered an integrated personality for whom personal development, formal education and other acquired skills are necessary for a normal transition from sports to other professional career. In the study year 2014/2015, Slovenian Olympic team led a pilot project *Tutoring for young athletes*. The aim of the project was to prepare a model of Slovenian Olympians' tutorship that comprises a systematic guidance in the educational field of young athletes and at the same time ensuring conditions to build elite sports career. The tutor – Olympian stimulates a young athlete at the end of formal education, monitors, motivates and partly controls his achievements. He or she controls the development of athletes' competences through the whole career and offers individual or group education and consulting for career options. Olympians have a chance to transfer their knowledge, experience and skills to the young unexperienced athletes. In this way, they help the young athletes to achieve better sports results as well as grater school success. One of the important aspects of the Olympians' tutorship is the wider field of knowledge, acquaintances and experience that are not tied only to sport and formal education but to a lifelong learning and a continued quality life after the sports career has finished (Robnik 2015).

The project thus provides individual/group counselling, lectures, workshops and knowledge transfer from Olympian elite athletes to aspiring perspective young athletes. The project strives to present career counselling and planning to the young athletes and encompasses the following goals:

- finishing education,
- solving social problem,
- easier transition to employment,
- support for top sport achievements,
- development of personal abilities,
- guidance of young athletes during career (Robnik 2015).

Scholarships

From 1999 Olympic Committee of Slovenia, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and Foundation for financing sport organisations in Slovenia award scholarships for Slovenian athletes who achieve exceptional results already in the youth category. In the current year of study 2015-2016, 207 athletes received sports scholarship (Olympic Committee of Slovenia 2016d). Most of the scholarships require formal education, which indicate the development of dual careers.

Employment facilities

During their active involvement in sport, athletes can potentially face significant problems as sometimes they stay without contracts, their salaries are not being paid and can consequently lack basic social security. Those problems can transcend in the life after the end of sport career.

Within the Sports Act and the National Programme of Sport of the Republic of Slovenia 2014-2023 however, there are direct and indirect provisions made aiding the employment of perspective and established elite athletes, which are:

- inclusion of the sports career in the working years;
- a pension/annuity plan for athletes with exceptional results (medal at Olympic games, World Championship, European Championship of world record);
- employment of athletes in the public sector.

Top class sport requires substantial funds and therefore welcomes companies to support sport and through sponsorship provide for athletes, especially at top level. From the company's point of view sport can be a marketing opportunity, and consequently commercial sports attract the most sponsorships. Due to the small market in Slovenia, the extent/height of sponsorships are limited and mostly available only to the strongest sports and internationally recognised athletes and sport events.

Professional sport career

Distinctive differences between professional athletes and other professions are obvious in the forms of employment or employment relationships by athletes concluded with the employers at the sports clubs and associations. They represent a variety of precarious forms, from student work to work on different contracts, which are rather common in team sports. Such contracts and athletes' compensation systems put sportsmen in an unjust and illegal position.

Slovenian sport is characterised by various precarious and unstable forms of employment or contractual relationship with a leading share of self-employment statuses as sport clubs are inclined not to take on the responsibility regarding social and pension security of the athlete. Even more, considering the relatively short span of athlete's career and the potential revenue from athlete's transfer, clubs do not give out permanent contracts, despite the fact that consecutive short-term contracts are illegal. The system of transfers

and compensation strongly violates athlete's freedom to choose their employer. Although formally athlete holds the decision, they are often limited by the interests of clubs and sports representatives, agents or managers who have a crucial role in this.

Precarious position of the athletes, who are therefore not guaranteed equality of labour and social rights in the same manner as more stable forms of employment, is somewhat blurred with the above-average earnings in sport. Needless to say, a large share of athletes find themselves in the harsh economic situation, which of course also have an impact on the sport, whereas this image can be blurred by the portrayal of high-paying athletes, high amounts of transfer and similar.

As athletes' contracts they have made with the clubs do not provide any social security in case of loss of income, Footballers' Union of Slovenia formed a fund for the athletes who have not received their salaries.

A situation in which full-time professional athletes are limited to a short-time precarious contracts is not typical only for Slovenia, but the current situation in our country can also be understood as a consequence of a neglect of the subject area.

Public sector employment

On a systematic level, the Slovenian legislation foresees employment of elite athletes in the public sector, more specifically, public services such as national police, army and customs. The employing scheme lies in the Agreement for employment of elite athletes and coaches (sl. Sporazum o zaposlovanju vrhunskih športnikov in trenerjev), signed by the Ministry of defence, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and Olympic Committee of Slovenia - Association of Sports Federations on the other side. The agreement was signed in 1996 and adjusted in 2007 and 2013 (Olympic Committee of Slovenia 2016c).

Such employment is however mostly reserved for only top athletes and thus there are currently 2114 athletes employed within this scheme: 63 elite athletes and 6 coaches employed at Ministry of defence, 30 elite athletes employed at the Ministry of the Interior and in Ministry of finance (Financial administration of the Republic of Slovenia) 15 elite athletes (as of November 2015).

As stated, such employment is limited to the top athletes with exceptional results at the international level, and as such contracts are signed each year and are terminated after the end of the career. The agreements set out the following requirements:

- Sport achievement – the essential rule based on international sport achievement, as the employments are reserved for athletes of international or world class and in some exceptions of perspective class. This requirement must be fulfilled by at least 75% of athletes included in the scheme.
- Priority sport disciplines – Due to sport competitive needs of ministries the following sport disciplines have certain advantages: disciplines that are part of national or international sport games of the individual ministry, disciplines that comprise regular training at an individual ministry. This requirement must be fulfilled by 25% of athletes included in the scheme.
- Needs of an individual ministry – each ministry can require athletes of specific abilities in order to improve the activity of their employees. This requirement must be fulfilled by 25% of athletes included in the scheme.
- Employment of coaches – upon OCS's proposal coachess of the national teams can also be granted public sector employment with regard to their previous and future achievement at the highest level sport event. This requirement can be fulfilled by up to 10% of athletes included in the scheme (Olympic Committee of Slovenia 2016).

Due to the high demand for these positions, the Olympic Committee takes charge of priority list of athletes to fill these positions. The list was prepared by sport federations and was based

on the athlete's placement on the highest level sport competitions. In addition to the conditions stated above, the potential employees must have completed secondary education, Slovene nationality and be of certain age. Athletes and coaches received a monthly salary from 800 to 1000 €, while the length of the employment is defined according to the status, giving the athletes of national class a one-year contract, athletes of international class a two-year contract and athletes of world class a three-year contract. The scheme ensures a certain level of social security to the athletes competing at the highest level. In spite of that, athletes remain critical towards harsh conditions and competition to obtain this kind of employment. The employment within this scheme is however in line with the needs of the athlete's sport career and their obligations are limited to promotion of the profession.

After the end of the career, in spite of potential appropriate credentials and qualifications, they usually do not have the possibility to prolong the career in the public sector and must therefore search for a new career.

Adecco scheme for former elite athletes

Worldwide a specific project "Athlete Career Programme³" for employment of elite athletes was developed and realised in several countries⁴ by the recruitment agency Adecco. In Slovenia the programme was supported by Olympic committee of Slovenia, from 2005 on. The programme reacts to the void of employment prospects of elite athletes, who can face limited employment possibilities due to the lack of education and work experience outside of sports. The programme provides athletes with guidance and counselling regarding employment planning, education, networking, marketing athletes' abilities, job search tools, recognition of athletes' abilities and presentation of athletes in curriculum vitae.

The programme comprises four steps:

1. Transition to employment lecture, which offers psychological support and guided analysis of knowledge and abilities and includes preparation of job search tools (CV, cover letter and mock interview)
2. Personality analysis in regard to motivations, abilities, needed trainings, financial needs, mobility and availability.
3. Definition of athlete's professional profile, their goals and needed training/education are assessed, a personal employment plan is prepared and job interviews with potential employers are conducted.
4. Employment: Candidates are included in education/trainings and introduced in regional Adecco offices as well as Adecco clients.

In Slovenia, a specific trait was focused on younger athletes who are just entering the professional world of sports, in order to better equip to become athletes with prospects where education plays a crucial role (Olympic committee of Slovenia 2016b See: <http://stara.olympic.si/fileadmin/dokumenti/kariera/zaposlovanje/Zivljenje-po-sportni-karieri.pdf>).

Annuity scheme for retired athletes

Active athletes have only little perspective regarding their future as it can be difficult to find a place in the field of sports after retirement from active sport career. Athletes aim for a retirement plan and an annuity for the time spent in the national team, which is to some extent included in the Bridging Insurance of Professional Athletes.

Ministry of Education, Science and Sport adopted the measure based on which deserving athletes should be awarded annuity plan already in 2002. In spite of the given legislative rules, the law is not enforced and the application have not been reviewed since 2012. A new interdisciplinary team was established in 2015 in order to prepare a new legislative measure (Lajh Rauter forthcoming).

Status of implementation of the EU Guidelines on Dual Career of Athletes

Authorities at the national level have recognised a personal interest in public sector employment of elite athletes, in which they followed examples from other EU Member states. The NPS furthermore aims for employment of 150 athletes/coaches in the public sector until 2023, in line with the EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes (National programme of sports of the Republic of Slovenia 2014).

Dual career has been an on-going project of EU Member States, the implementation of dual career bears benefits for athletes, sport careers and education system. The regulation of the field enables transition to new career after the end of active sport involvement and protects the position of elite athletes. (Sember 2013) Moreover the White paper on sport (European Commission 2008) recommends that Member States recognise the need to provide "dual career" sporting and academic training for young sportsmen and sportswomen, from the outset, in order to ensure that professional sportsmen and sportswomen can reintegrate into the labour market at the end of their careers – with special attention to the education of the youngest.

EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes were prepared for policy makers as grounds for establishment of the national guidelines. The Guidelines comprise legislative and financial framework for dual career initiatives which would form an environment where athletes could realise their career in sport and after it. The Guidelines aim to sensitise the relevant authorities in the field of sport, education and employers. Furthermore, Guidelines react to the high mobility of athletes and suggest a system of education beyond border aiding to the smaller countries with limited possibilities of combining high quality training and education (European Union 2013).

Even though they are not a binding document, the resolutions of Guidelines are to some extent implemented in the Slovenian system, more specifically in the following areas and measures, such as distance learning, Development of human resources in sports, Employment of athletes in public sector. In spite of the stated, the further development in the field is still limited with the lack of funds.

Relevant recent projects in the field of athletes' dual career in Slovenia

- ✓ Dual career project (sl. Projekt Dvojna kariera)

Project “Dual career” was established under the authority of Olympic committee of Slovenia and it strives to help athletes in their sport career and study choices and thus aims to strengthen the link between high school and enrolment in the university programmes.

- ✓ Human resource development in sport (sl. Razvoj kadrov v športu)

In the scope of the project, measures for diminishing the division between the acquired knowledge and the job market requirements. The efforts will be projected into development of young top level personnel and established experts (coaches). Furthermore, the project aims to contribute to dual career of elite athletes and their target-oriented and “soft” transition from top class competitive career into the career of sport experts, contributing to further development of sport in Slovenia. The project aims for connection of the academic and research work with expert work of the elite coaches in practice and thus enable direct transfer of new knowledge, as well as the growth and development of the personnel, aimed to work with the younger population (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport 2016).

- ✓ Distance learning (sl. Učenje na daljavo)

The programme was developed by Slovenian athlete trade union, with the help of European Commission and Professional Footballers’ Association and the main programme was carried out by UCN Denmark from Aalborg (DNK).

- ✓ AFTERMATCH– Life beyond sport

The AFTERMATCH project is an Erasmus + action aimed at contributing to the realization of one of the priorities of the EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes, by focusing on “transversal skills” acquired during the practices of high-level sport activities by athletes. They will be exploited towards three different targets:

- a) young athletes, by preparing them for a second career before ending their sport performance;
- b) with ex-athletes, by making them discover how the transversal skills acquired during sport performing can be used in a creative way in the labour market;
- c) with sportive associations/ coaches, in order to raise their awareness about being not only “coaches” but also “educators” for young athletes, with the task of preparing them for a second alternative career (Aftermatch 2016)

- ✓ Possibilities of education and development beyond sport career of elite athletes. (sl. Možnosti izobraževanja in razvoja izven športne poklicne kariere vrhunskih športnikov)

The project was developed within the employment scheme Creative path to practical knowledge (sl. Po kreativni poti do praktičnega znanja). The project aims to contribute to a systematic overview of the possibilities of dual career of Slovenian athletes, their experiences, the role of the relevant persons (coaches, parents, sport federations) in the development of dual career and the position and practices of educational institution as well as the teaching staff towards adapting study programme to the needs of elite athletes. The project included all stakeholders, involved in elite athletes’ development that have the influence on coordination of dual careers. The aim of the project was to acquire information on the possibilities of

coordination of the dual career from the standpoint of elite athletes, coaches, higher education institutions, parents and sport federations.

LITERATURE AND SOURCES

B. Stambulova, Natalia and Tatiana V. Ryba (eds.). 2013. *Athletes' careers across cultures*. New York: Routledge.

Caput Jogunica, Romana, Vrbek, Biserka and Sanja Čurković. 2014. *Athletes and education: What should we do to support athletes in dual career development?* 7th International Scientific Conference on Kinesiology, 2014, Opatija, Croatia.

Caput-Jogunica, Romana, Čurković, Sanja and Gordana Bijelić. 2012. *Comparative analysis: Support for student-athletes and the guidelines for the universities in southeast Europe*. *Sport Science*, 1, 21—26.

Cecić Erpič, Saša. 1998. *Spremljanje razvoja življenjskih struktur in življenjskega zadovoljstva v zgodnji odraslosti: primerjava med bivšimi vrhunskimi športniki in nešportniki*. Magistrska naloga. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani.

Cecić Erpič, Saša. 2002. *Konec športne kariere: razvojno psihološki in športno psihološki vidiki*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za šport.

Corrado Lupo, Flavia Guidotti, Carlos E. Goncalves, Liliana Moreira, Mojca Doupona Topic, Helena Bellardini, Michail Tonkonogi, Allen Colin and Laura Capranica. 2014. *Motivation towards dual career of European student-athletes*. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 15 (2), 151—160.

Dual career motivation and athletic identity on elite athletes Cristina López de Subijana, Maria Isabel Barriopedro and Isabel Sanz. *Revista de Psicología del Deporte* 24, Suppl 1, pp. 55-57.

European Commission. 2008. *White paper on sports*. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0198+0+DOC+XML+V0//SL> (30th May 2016).

European Union. 2013. *EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Geraniosova, Kristina and Noora Ronkainen. 2014. *The Experience of Dual Career through Slovak Athletes' Eyes*. *Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research*, LXI.

Goltnik Arnaut, Alenka (Ed.). 2015. *Možnosti izobraževanja in razvoja izven športne poklicne kariere vrhunskih športnikov*. Celje: Fakulteta za poklicne in komercialne vede in Javni sklad Republike Slovenije za razvoj kadrov.

Guidotti, Flavia, Cortis Cristina and Laura Capranica. 2015. *Motivation for a Dual-Career: Italian and Slovenian Student Athletes*. *Kinesiology Slovenica*, 21 (3), 5—20.

Henry, Ian Paul. 2013. *Athlete Development, Athlete Rights and Athlete Welfare: A European Union Perspective*. *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30 (4), 356—373.

Lajh Rauter, L. (forthcoming): Programi dvojne kariere in prilagajanje športnikov na življenje po koncu športne kariere. Magistrska naloga. Univerza na Primorskem, Fakulteta za management. Koper.

Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. 2013. Agreement on employment of elite athletes and coaches. Available at: <http://www.olympic.si/sportna-kariera/zaposlovanje/sporazum-o-zaposlovanju-vrhunskih-sportnikov-in-trenerjev/> (30th May 2016).

Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. 2016. Letni program športa v Republiki Sloveniji za leto 2016 (Yearly plan of sport in the Republic of Slovenia for the year 2016).

Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. 1998. Zakon o športu. Available at: <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=121122> (2nd June 2016).

Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. 2015. Pravilnik o merilih za sofinanciranje izvajanja letnega programa športa na državni ravni. Available at: <https://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=121122> (2nd June 2016).

Olympic Committee of Slovenia. 2013. Pogoji, pravila in kriteriji za registriranje in kategoriziranje športnikov v Republiki Sloveniji. Ljubljana: Olimpijski komite Slovenije.

Pravilnik o prilagoditvi šolskih obveznosti dijaku v srednji šoli, Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, 2009. Available at: http://www.sckr.si/tsc/sips/documents/pravilniki/pravilnik_o_prilagoditvi.pdf (15th June 2016).

Robnik, Petra. 2015. Statusne pravice športnikov: dvojna kariera vrhunskih športnikov: programi za mlade športnike. Interno gradivo. Ljubljana: Klub Slovenskih Olimpijcev.

Sember, Vedrana. 2013. Značilnosti dvojne kariere slovenskih športnikov. Diplomsko delo. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za šport.

Tekavc, Janja, Wylleman, Paul in Saša Cecić Erpič. 2015. Perceptions of dual career development among elite level swimmers and basketball players. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 21, 27—41.

Webpages

II. Gymnasium Maribor. 2015. Letni delovni načrt. Available at: http://www.druga.si/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/LDN-2015_16.pdf (3rd June 2016).

Aftermatch – project webpage. 2016. Available at: <http://www.aftermatch.net/> (3rd June 2016).

Dual-Career quality framework research. Report summary. Available at: http://www.blosokics.be/topsport/Documents/151214_Dual_Careers_Research_Report_Summary.pdf (15th June 2016).

National programme of sports of the Republic of Slovenia. 2014. Available at: www.mizs.gov.si/.../Sport/NATIONAL_PROGRAMME_OF_SPORT (5th June 2016).

Olympic Committee of Slovenia. 2016. Available at: <http://www.olympic.si/> (3rd June 2016).

---. 2016b. Life after the end of sport career. Available at: <http://stara.olympic.si/fileadmin/dokumenti/kariera/zaposlovanje/Zivljenje-po-sportni-karieri.pdf> / (30th May 2016).

---. 2016c. Study, e-learning, e-study. Available at: <http://stara.olympic.si/sportna-kariera/izobrazevanje-na-daljavo/> (3rd June 2016).

---. 2016d. <http://www.olympic.si/sportniki/sportne-stipendije> (15th June 2016).

World Olympians Association. 2016. ACTIONS: WOA launches 2016 NOA Development Grants. Available at: <http://olympians.org/news/536/woa-launches-2016-noa-development-grants/> (3th June 2016).

SLOVAKIA

Dual Career issues in Slovakia

Jaromír Šimonek – Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra

The situation in the support for dual career of athletes in Slovakia is quite clear, but in fact unfavourable. There exist very little information about actions taken to support DC of athletes. There do not exist any federal projects, university projects, agencies projects, sport associations projects or ministerial projects. Despite the fact that the Slovak Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport received the recommendations from the European Commission about implementing the dual career guidelines, nothing has been done so far in the area of preparing legislative and regulative changes related to dual career of top athletes in sport.

Main legislative facilities for DC

On 1st January 2016 it comes into force the **Act on Sport** N° 354/2016 Coll.¹², amended as of November 2016¹³, that legally stipulates the following chapters:

- sport competition
- subjects in sport (professional, amateur, talented athlete, coach, administrator, etc.)
- legal relationships upon performing, organizing, managing, administering and supporting and developing sport
- solving disputes in sport
- competences of public administration bodies in sport
- measures against negative phenomena in sport (doping, hooliganism, xenophobia, racism, etc.)¹⁴.

Based on the Act on Sport, sport clubs and unions have to guarantee contract on talented athlete sport preparation, a 3-year-long professional contract. By this contract talented athlete agrees to perform sport on behalf of the sport organization and the sport organization agrees to provide sport preparation and education of talented athlete. Based on this contract the sport organization agrees also to provide health/medical care and regeneration for the talented athlete. It also allows for and facilitates education of the student-athlete. After the termination of the contract the talented athlete has to agree to sign professional contract with the sport club. In case of failing to sign the professional contract, the talented athlete is obliged to refund all the expenses spent by the club during the last contract.

¹² (<http://www.noveaspi.sk/products/lawText/1/85423/1/2>)

¹³ (<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2016/354/20170101>)

¹⁴ (<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2016/354/20170101>)

Educational support

The Act on Sport establishes a new type of school, the **Secondary sport school**, that offers secondary professional education and would include only pupils with the talent for sport. This section of the Act on Sport will come into force on January 1, 2019. Secondary sport school would provide:

- **comprehensive secondary education** (e.g servicing and maintenance of sport facilities)
- **secondary general education** (the current secondary grammar school – study programme 7902 J 77 – sport)
- **complete secondary professional education** (e.g. sport management, sport organizer, sport expert, etc.).

This type of secondary school would be focusing merely on:

- Pupils with sport talent – all classes would be sport classes
- More than one specialization in a sport class
- Certification from the particular sport union on the level of performance of the sportsmen would be required for enrollment.

Compulsory requirements on sport schools - each sport school has to provide the following for the talented student-athletes:

- Regeneration (quality and regularness)
- Testing of sport performance (regularness + ranks)
- Theoretical preparation
- Psychological support
- Tutoring.

Universities/sports faculties' support

To prepare elite athletes for post-athletic career (coach, sport manager, PE teacher or fitness manager), student-athletes are offered the following special arrangements by universities (especially faculties of sport):

- flexibility of timetable,
- adapted curriculum,
- e-learning programmes,
- distant education,
- supplementary tutoring,
- individual tempo of learning,
- the use of facilities and sport services,
- other supporting services such as: free accommodation at dormitories, catering,
- sport scholarships,
- special rewards and honors awarded by deans and rectors of universities.

Employment support

Athletes have different facilities for working into the following state bodies:

- the government,
- public institutions,

- the armed forces,
- the police,
- the border police,
- the forestry sector,
- the customs service.

The new Act on Sport stipulates explicitly the definitions of terms in sport, among them: professional athlete, elite athlete, talented athlete, etc., thus providing legislative framework for tax levying and starting business of athletes.

Financial support

The Slovak state provides support of dual career of elite athletes also through financial donations from the national budget.

Sport centres administered and financially supported by different ministeries provide preparation of elite athletes, employment and social provision of elite athletes in the following three centres:

1. National Sport Centre (under the Ministry of Education, Research, Science and Sport - in 2016 alloted 2.526.016 €)
2. Police Sport Centre (under the Ministry of Internal Affairs – in 2016 alloted 2.200.933 €)
3. Dukla Sport Centre (under the ministry of Armed Forces in 2016 alloted 5.078.494 €)

Main projects and initiatives concerning DC

Erasmus + sport project DC4AC

The main objective: to actively promote at regional level the principles, guidelines and best practices of Dual Career of Athletes; to coordinate the national efforts in Central and Est European participating countries with the aim to allow talented athletes and elite athletes to combine higher education studies or work and high level sport.

Objective No. 1: Raising awareness about the needs of dual careers in professional and non-professional sports

Objective No. 2: Active lobby and good practices dissemination

Objective No. 3: Continuous learning test programme

Athlete Career Programme (ACP)

Since 2008, the Slovak Olympic Committee cooperates with the personal company Adecco Slovakia on the ACP project. Project's previous name was Master 2000, it is an European project of International Olympic Committee in collaboration with Adecco, one of the most

important Company of placement in Slovakia and in the World. It's dedicated to national/international athletes/former athletes that gain results in Olympic/Paralympic Games, World/European or National level, or involved in Teams of maximum leagues (League A or B) of each sport. The ACP Athlete Career Program is focusing on the support of elite athletes (Olympians, representatives) when transiting from professional sport career into the civil life.

The requirements for access are:

- To be unemployed
- Having the middle school educational title
- To be strongly motivated toward work.

GREECE

Aspects of Dual Career for Athletes in Greece

Christina - Irene Karvouna – European Institute for Local Development, Thessaloniki

Sports in Greece are quite widespread and popular. Nevertheless, the sport orientation of young people decreases with the passage of time. Additionally there is a lack of actions and creative opportunities in our country.

Most athletes usually start their sport career from early childhood after their parent's inducement. When it comes to this, athletes register in equivalent sports club. Specifically, in high competitive sports athletes are provided with:

- Protection and safety, consolidation, boost of mental health of athletes
- Improvement of athletic performance through physical preparation and training
- Selecting, defining and directing the participants in sports

The motivation given to athletes to approach the success is to enhance the desire of the individuals and to avoid failure.

Legislative Framework

The regulation related to athletes and sports is based only at the law 3479, 2006 (FEK A "152", Establishment, organization and operation of sports trade associations and other provisions). Besides, includes "organizing and conducting regular training seminars of administrative and cooperation with such centres, for after-football training footballers". This provision applies to all high level athletes of all sports.

Generally, in our country athletes are amateur and belong to associations of amateurs. Sports that have professional contract are only football, basketball and volleyball. Nevertheless, none of the sporting federations have programs to support a second career. Additionally, professional athletes in course of their careers have health insurance and no pension insurance.

In Greece, the support of State contains:

- Designation to public sector
- Facilitations to military service
- Bonus for entrance in tertiary education

Decision Makers: Little things have been done by Decision Makers (General Secretariat of Sports, Hellenic Olympic Committee, sport associations, etc) regarding the implementation of the European guidelines for dual career of athletes

Educational Support

Distinguished athletes (high performance – European, World and Olympic medallists) have the chance to continue in higher education by favouring certain undertakings.

Employment support

Regarding to potential jobs for athletes there is no considerable support for a Dual Career. But after the end of their career there is support for the transition to the job level:

- Some of them give exams for continuing their career as coaches or build e relevant with sport career.
- A majority of them get directly employed in public sector
- Few athletes who participate Olympic Games and claim medals have special provision and rights. In case they claim positions 1 to 6 at the Olympic games They will be hired as public employees

General conclusion

Dual Career of Athletes is the direct concern of the athletes who want to study and work in parallel with their sport career. There is support in the education and training process, but there is not any support in the employability part. It is obvious that there is a lot of space for improvement in the fields bellow:

- Educational system for sports facility
- Creation of sports centers
- Increase of public sector
- Creation of motivation
- Creation of athlete health card

Generally, in Greece there is a lack of interest by the state and sport agencies for a strategy for a sustainable career for athletes. Besides, the “EU Guidelines on dual career of athletes” has not been implemented satisfactory by Greek sport associations and sport authorities. Additionally, the financial crisis in Greece holds back the development of new opportunities.

Resources

Website resources:

www.dualathletescareer.gr/

www.acadimies.gr/site/article.php?aid=1831&cid=19%20

www.elleda.gr/sites/default/files/praktika_13.pdf

BULGARIA

Dual Career of Athletes in Bulgaria

Georgi Yakaliev and Yordanka Petrova – NGO My World, Bulgaria

In the Bulgarian elite sport, priority is mainly placed on sporting results and there is a lack of a legal framework about DC, as well as a sustainable government policy. The status of a "student – athlete" is not clearly defined and this puts those students, and their careers, seriously affected. In June 2016, the Bulgarian Minister of Youths and Sports declare its intention to make the DC one of the key issues during the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU in 2018. Many stakeholders declare their full support the development and implementation in Bulgaria the DC Guidelines, although few of them read the Guidelines, or have clear idea what the DC is: many them confuse the DC with the Swiss model of dual learning or the combination of education and training in a vocational school with in-company training, (i.e. apprenticeship-based system). Another misunderstanding regards the connection of DC with a post athletic career in the sport field (i.e. becoming trainers, coaches, sport teachers, work in the Police, Army or Security Companies), that is often preferred for career development by former professional athletes after completing their sport career or for talents that have failed to materialize for one reason or another.

Bulgarian sport governance

The main legal act that regulates the public relationships concerning the physical education and sports in Bulgaria is the Bulgarian **Physical Education and Sports Act (PESA)** . It lists the state's competence towards sports, regarding all the aspects of sport organizations, from grassroots sport to elite and Olympic athletes, from sport organizations work to education of experts and financed projects. In accordance to Art. 7 from the PESA, the basic directions of the national policy in the field of sports are approved by the Council of Ministers (CM), that as well annually provides the necessary funds for the development of the physical education and sports due to the State Budget Act of Republic of Bulgaria, where financing of the sports activity is stipulated.

PESA distinguishes **amateur and professional athletes**; their status is determined by the regulations accepted by the relative sports federations. The criteria for distinguishing the types of athletes is whether they receive a financial reward for their sport activity or not. Amateur do not receive remunerations, while professional athletes receive remuneration on the grounds of a labour contract or due to their professional activity, in accordance to art. 13 of the Ordinance.

PESA recognizes **three basic kinds of sports organizations** in Republic of Bulgaria, as listed below.

- 1) Sports Club. Voluntary associations of citizens, registered as non-profit legal persons, which develop and promote physical education and sport and carry out training and competition activities of one or more sports (Art. 11, par. 1 from PESA). Sports clubs must be registered as joint-stock companies - professional sports clubs, or as non-profit associations - professional sports clubs. After registration as a legal entity, the sports clubs are obliged to apply for membership in the respective federation (Art.10, pat.6 from PESA).

2) Sports Federations. Voluntary associations of sports clubs from one or similar type of sport, which coordinate the development, practising and administration of the respective sport on national level and represent their members before the state and international sports organisations. (Art. 14, par.1 from PESA). It is an obligation of the sports federations to be granted a license by the competent state body. Together with gaining a sport license, the respective sports organization receives some powers in the field of the sports activity developed, listed in Art 19 from PESA.

3) National Sports Organizations. Voluntary associations of sports clubs and/or sports federations which coordinate their activities in a specific subject of activity in the system of physical education, sports and social tourism, and interact with the state and with the international sports organizations in forming and implementing the national sports policy. National sports organizations shall be registered as non-profit legal persons for the public benefit and participate principally in the development, implementation and reporting the results of the fulfilment of the National Programme for the development of physical education and sports.

Other related documents on dual career in Bulgaria comprise:

- **National Development Programme 2020:** “Providing a dual career to talented athletes - quality education and sports training”;
- **National program for the development of physical education and sports 2013 – 2016:** The DC is mentioned as: “Development and implementation of flexible learning paths, allowing the realization of "dual career" - education and sport”.

So, as you can see above, the dual career still is still just an intention, or declaration, from policy and legislation point of view.

Education system, career guidance, vocational education and training (VET)

In Bulgaria, the two bodies responsible for Vocational Education and Training (VET) are the Ministry for Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The Ministry for Education and Science has the overall responsibility for the entire school system and is the main policy-making body with responsibility for the budget, and control over Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET). The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry for Education and Science are both responsible for adult education, often referred to as Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET). The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, work to assure and maintain the quality of the vocational education and training of young people and adults. It aims to do so according to the labour market needs, to develop the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy. The Agency also cooperates with social partners in implementing coordinated policies for lifelong learning, continuing vocational training, and in introducing successful European practices. The main aim of Agency is to provide access to work related training for the unemployed, and expand the access to vocational education for all citizens, according to the needs of the labour market. It is currently also working to develop the State Educational Requirements (standards) for acquiring qualifications.

Financial support

The financing of the sports has two main origins in Republic of Bulgaria: settled in the state budget, respectively in the municipal budgets, as well as from the specially established state company –

Bulgarian Sports Totalizator. PESA settles the sports activities which are financed from state budget funds and the sports activities financed from the money collected from the Bulgarian Sports Totalizator. (a state recipient of the rights and the obligations of the existing before its incorporation the state owned so called “money lottery”, which was a company that carried out lottery, toto and lotto games, especially betting over the results of sports games).

The resources for the sports organizations are provided based on contracts for sports development, by taking account of the social importance of sports activities which are being supported.

Professional qualifications and employment support

The requirements for the professional capacity and qualifications of sport education specialists performing sport pedagogical and sport training activities and offering sport training services in the system of education and sport have been specified in Regulation No. 2 of 25 October 2011. The sport pedagogical specialists in the system of physical education and sport include the following positions:

1. Instructor;
2. Assistant-coach;
3. Coach;
4. Senior coach;
5. Head coach.

Related DC projects

S2A Sport - From Strategy to Action: Supporting the professionalization of sport organisations through the definition of work-based competencies and the development of fit-for-purpose training for Sport Administrators

<http://www.s2a-sport.eu/> ; <http://nsa-erasmus.com/en/s2a-sport/>

One of the key parts of the S2A project is the implementation of the “7 Step Model” for the development of industry-led occupational standards, specifying the standards of performance, and defining the precise knowledge skills Sport Administrators need to perform effectively, as well as the production of a corresponding training programme handbook and material that will be tested and piloted. Overall, the end goal will be to change and modernise existing training programmes, to equip those working or volunteering as Sport Administrators with the right skills and so to contribute to building the capacity and effectiveness of sport organisations across Europe. Duration: from September 2015 to February 2018.

VSPORT +: Strategies for a Competent Workforce

<http://www.its.edu.mt/industry-research/our-projects/past-projects/vsport-project.html>

The project aims are: ensure a successful dissemination of the LLL Strategy at all levels to reach all relevant stakeholders, encourage and support the transfer and implementation of the LLL Sport

Strategy at all levels and stimulate changes within vocational education to ensure it fit for purpose and aids employability and mobility.

The 7 steps model (<http://www.vsportplus.eu/wp/lil-strategy/7-steps/>) provides a framework for the development of a strategic approach to ensure that vocational education, training and qualifications (VET system) exist to support the development of this workforce and to also ensure that the sector of Leisure and Sport delivers its potential. Indeed, the model aims to bring together the education and employment stakeholders in a collaborative approach, to ensure that VET provision is fit for purpose and in line with the needs of the workforce. It is funded by EACEA – LLLP – Multilateral Projects and had a duration of 29 months, from 2011 to 2014.

Conclusions

Although all necessary elements of the dual career system exist in the country (except legislation and political approach), Bulgaria still suffers from:

- Lack of capacity in the field – there are only few people from NSA and Ministry that deal that deal with DC;
- Still no, or poor, coordination between institutions, stakeholders, ministries, parliament, although all necessary elements of the DC exist for the successful implementation.
- Athletes and stakeholders do not understand correctly the meaning of DC – almost all of them think that the DC is prolongation of sport career as a trainer, coach or working in security companies;
- No clear vision of the scope of athletes to be covered by the DC system;
- Good national practices to follow.

For Bulgaria, it is necessary to apply a European dimension to the principle of the dual career, and to make efforts to go beyond purely national frameworks, (i.e. to offer young talented athletes the best provision possible for balancing sport and study, as well as the best possibilities for training and transition for their post-sports careers).

Measures to implement the DC policy in Bulgaria so far are mainly by supporting the dual career of athletes in sports schools. On the territory of the country there are 24 sports schools, where the training is carried out through specialized curricula and programs aimed at supporting the process of building the athlete, sport achievements and create the opportunity for a successful career after the end of the sport. The conditions for a dual career of elite young athletes in sports schools are related to the implementation of forms of training other than daily (individual, combined, self-sufficient), flexible sessions and exams schedules, and the enhancement of the quality of vocational education. The new Pre-school and School Education Act effectively applies to students with outstanding talents in sports schools the combined form of education. It ensures that 100% of the training hours are provided by specialized training and gives the opportunity to reduce the number of attendance classes in other subjects from the curriculum. There is still no sustainable solution in terms of financing the implementation of individual and combined forms. Lack of funding prevents the effective implementation of forms of training for which additional financial resources are needed to pay the work of pedagogical staff, in view of the fact that the scheduling schedule is different from the weekly timetable. As a result of cooperation between the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of

Education and Science and the NSA "Vasil Levski" from the school year 2011-2012 in the sports schools, there is a training for acquiring a third degree of professional qualification in the professions from professional field Sport: "Assistant Coach", "Fitness Assistant Instructor" and "Organizer of Sports Events and Championships". The implementation of the approved curricula for training in sports schools is a prerequisite for attracting promising young athletes and for their successful realization in life.

In order to overcome this imbalance, it is necessary to adopt a number of legislative measures apart from those already existing in the Physical Education and Sports Act - Olympic medallists, World and European Championships, to be admitted to higher schools without a competitive examination, as per Higher Education Act. This could happen by proposal of the Minister of Physical Education and Sports after a decision of the academic staff of the higher school (Article 25, paragraph 5 of 02.08.2013).