



## **“Success after performance in sport”**

**A declaration of *Regional Center for Dual Career Policy and Advocacy- DC4AC***  
**project funded by the European Commission**  
**through the Erasmus + Sport Program,**  
**action area Support for Collaborative Partnerships**  
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[www.eurolocaldevelopment.org](http://www.eurolocaldevelopment.org)

"CONSTANTIN THE PHILOSOPHER" UNIVERSITY IN NITRA  
– Faculty of Physical Education (CPU-FE) /  
<https://www.ukf.sk/en/faculty-of-education>

“INVENIO” ASSOCIATION (AINV) /  
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meeting at the DC4AC Final Event and Closing Conference  
in Napflio (GREECE) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2017

have endorsed the following **Declaration**:

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1. Comprehending the value of the Treaty of Lisbon – art. 6 and art.165 and the need for highly qualified employees on the European labour market, as stipulated by Europe 2020 Strategy,
  2. According to the priorities of the EU Work Plan for Sport: social values of sport, in particular health, social inclusion, education and volunteering,
  3. As already postulated in the EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes, recommended policy actions in support of Dual Careers in High-Performance Sport, approved by the EU Expert Group “Education & Training in Sport” at its meeting in Poznań on 28 September 2012,
    - a. that athletes often face challenges to combine their sporting career with education or work; the aim to succeed at the highest level of a sport demanding intensive training and competitions at home and abroad, which can be difficult to reconcile with the challenges and restrictions in the educational system and the labour market;
    - b. and that not only high levels of motivation, commitment, resilience and responsibility from the athlete, but also special arrangements being needed to avoid the situation where talented and elite sports people are forced to choose between education and sport or work and sport.
    - c. as well as that such ‘dual career’ arrangements should be beneficial for athletes’ sporting careers, allow for education or work, promote the attainment of a new career after the sporting career, and protect and safeguard the position of athletes”
  4. Agreeing that elite, talented athletes face multiple challenges in combining their sport with education or employment; these challenges persisting in the transition to a new career after their sporting one has ended. This being not only hard for the individual, but also a loss for society as a whole; and that, conversely, a successful combination of education, training or work with sport can enable an individual to reach his or her full potential in life; this being known as a “Dual Career” (DC), a complicated policy domain, which links multi stakeholder policy domains such as education, youth, health and labour market and having to connect these towards adequate career development of talents,
  5. Given that dual career arrangements are relatively recent in the majority of Member States and sports; and that in Member States where these arrangements have been developed for some time, they sometimes lack solid agreements between the sport system and either the educational sector or the labour market, lacking also a legal framework or a sustainable governmental policy,
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6. Assuming the general EU guiding principles:
    - a. that the protection of minors must be guaranteed;
    - b. and that every human being has a fundamental right to education;
    - c. and that the EU is a single market in which the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons is assured,
  
  7. Undertaking, consequently, the core principles for Dual Career that are at the heart of the quality framework:
    - a. that elite athletes in a situation of Dual Career need to be recognised;
    - b. that elite athletes have equal rights to education and employment, regardless of gender, ability, race or sport;
    - c. that every individual has the right to reach their full potential in education and in sport: access to all forms of education the athlete is qualified for must be guaranteed;
    - d. that mobility required for the sport should be guaranteed;
    - e. that the optimum combination of sport, education and/or work should be facilitated, regardless of the sport, learning path and/or working path concerned;
    - f. that the subject of Dual Career should be viewed from a development perspective and should be supported and promoted at every stage of the athlete's career;
    - g. that support for Dual Career is about supporting the individuals and it should therefore centre on them and their lives. This system is not generic; it varies according to the sport in question and other factors. Personal attention and actions are, therefore, needed at crucial transition points;
    - h. that the individual athletes also have a responsibility for their own development and career choices;
    - i. that Member States have an important role to play in creating an effective support system for Dual Career and its implementation through a full policy cycle, including design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation;
    - j. that the implementation of the quality framework must be feasible within every national configuration in the EU,
  
  8. Having agreed upon that the subject of Dual Career is tapping into a great variety of other disciplines and policy domains, such as education, sport, health, social welfare and economic affairs; for this reason, ownership for Dual Career being not always seen as the responsibility of one stakeholder alone, and so tending to be diluted or even forgotten, and that thus this policy area involves many stakeholders: sports and education ministries, sports associations, employers unions, employees unions, sponsors, clubs, high-performance centres, ambitious coaches and parents, plus local initiatives by all these stakeholders,
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9. Acknowledging that, at this stage, there are hardly any countries with quality control mechanisms in place to assess the impact of policies and programmes for Dual Career; and that introducing these mechanisms will secure more effective policy making on Dual Career for the athletes of the future;
  10. On top of this, the subject of Dual Career being often seen as the responsibility of the education sector and sports sector alone, focusing on “medal winners” in sports; behind every medal winner being thousands of athletes who train just as hard, but who lack the same genes or luck as the champion, and yet still need to be helped through a good system for persuing Dual Career as well, a group often forgotten, estimated to be at the size of approximately 120.000 talented young Europeans, who give at least ten – fifteen years of their lives to perform sports at elite level, at high costs and risks,
  11. Conclusioning that there is a variety in policies and programmes for Dual Career across Europe;
    - a. a diverse ownership, a skills gap versus an education gap, Member States differing in the extent of their initiatives and policies; as in the main actors on the scene: sometimes these are sports or athlete organisations, sometimes education centres, and sometimes it is the government;
    - b. that there are no consistent definitions and, so, there is room for a European-wide framework; at present, even the definitions for Dual Career– including underlying terms such as “athlete student”, varying between EU countries
  12. We, the institutional partners within this framework of the DC4AC Project, Project funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus + Sport Program, action area *Support for Collaborative Partnerships*, Grant Agreement **2015-2954**, complementary to the European Union's efforts to ensure **a secure future for athletes at the end of their sports career**, aim to facilitate replicating and application of the European Commission guidelines on dual career for talented and elite athletes,
  13. Following the conclusion of the DC4AC Project, we, the project partners, commit ourselves in the following key areas:
    - **Dissemination and exploitation of the DC4AC project results**  
Promoting initiatives to support or implement social and educational actions in line with the DC4AC Project to progress the Qualification Framework at the EU level, within the Member States, in coherence with the lifecycle of athletes and to assure a soft transit to professional life after their sporting career.
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- **Cooperation**

Developing close links within the DC4AC partnership as well as with all interested parties, and sport stakeholders at local and European level.

- **Sharing best practices**

Encouraging the exchange of good practices and sharing the DC4AC approach with all interested parties and sport stakeholders in other EU Regions and Member States.

- **Promoting new collaborative projects and European partnerships**

Developing and promoting new project ideas and new partnerships, in line with the DC4AC project.

We will in particular focus on the following specific objectives:

- To promote the social and educational function of sport;
    - To fight against violence, racism and intolerance in sport;
    - To promote social inclusion, equal opportunities;
    - To promote health-enhancing physical activities supporting active ageing;
  - To foster lifelong learning for athletes and thus to optimise the training conditions for athlete/students and to assist career transition for retiring athletes.
    - To develop and improve the conditions needed for sustainable dual career programmes allowing for tailor-made arrangements for talented and elite athletes throughout Europe, either in their position as a student-athlete or employee-athlete.
    - To act as a link between educational institutions and sports organisations.
    - To develop research projects in the field of sport and education.
    - To advance a specific dual career scholarship programme for the education.
  - To find and unite partners who are involved in high performance sport and education and to cooperate with other European and international dual career networks to bring together stakeholders in dual career.
    - To identify and exchange the best practices between countries and institutions and to keep a registry and to inform about.
    - To establish a monitoring and evaluation system to follow the progress regarding the issues of dual career.
    - To help promoting cooperation and thereby encourage exchange between institutions, coaches, teachers and students.
  - To sensitise stakeholders to create the right environment for dual careers of athletes, including an appropriate policy, legal and financial framework.
    - To present suggestions to the decision makers about the conditions for improving high performance sport and education.
    - To advocate for athletic and vocational career in public services (military, police, customs, etc.)
    - To raise the awareness on dual career for the labour market stakeholders.
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- To support the development of a national legal framework of financial support for student-athletes.
  - To help implement employee protection regarding sport participation and injuries.
  - To create on a specific status for non-professional high-level athletes, granting a minimum of health protection and pension rights.
- To include dual career on the agenda of the social dialogue to ensure profiles of competencies, education and services.
- To participate in discussions and debates on sport on local, national and European level.
  - To organize seminars, conferences and workshops for coaches, sport managers, teachers, as for athletes.
  - To raise awareness on dual career, as to support athletes' commissions and national athletes organisation to spread information on dual career.
  - To give support to national organisations on dual career.
14. We forward the need of imperative assumed action, concerted and coordinate efforts from public and private bodies and organizations, and the sport stakeholders in respect of dual career for athletes.
15. We address the national authorities to adopt a set of minimum quality requirements, which could function as a reference point for Dual Career services and facilities; and, thus offering transparency and guarantees on quality, safety and security for athletes, with a quality label and/or accreditation system for facilities and dual-career services at national levels.
16. We support by the national authorities the introduction of a set of common quality criteria by which all countries in the EU can measured the level and effectiveness of policies and programmes for Dual Career and, consequently, securing a more stable and level playing field for athletes across the EU.
17. We recommend that formal agreements have to be made with educational institutions to ensure their support for DC. All support is adapted to the needs of the individual athlete and considers the Dual Career as part of a whole-life development plan, taking into account the well-being of the individual athlete.
18. We advocate that sports facilities should be situated close to educational facilities, to facilitate athlete mobility. This proximity also improves communication and cooperation between relevant stakeholders. Entourages, including parents, staff and coaches, are kept aware and informed about the athlete's dual career.
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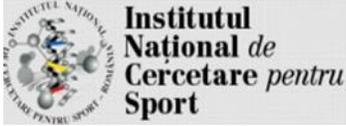
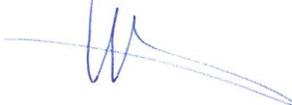
19. The establishment of a DC decision makers network is encouraged. This is relevant since sharing knowledge, best practices and developing systems together has proven more powerful than every Member State on its own.
20. Overall, DC services are most effective when they provide individual support, promote athlete mobility, are enshrined in formal agreements, combine facilities (e.g. education and training in the same place), and encourage professionalism, awareness, interaction and monitoring.
21. Our project report shows that there is a need for a Europe-wide framework on support systems and facilities for Dual Careers, which could be deployed uniformly in individual Member States. The success of such a framework depends strongly upon how it is implemented. In this respect, we recommend:
  - a. That the national authorities adopt this framework into an easily accessible online tool for all stakeholders. This will enable them to assess elements of an effective system for Dual Careers and thereby compare the quality of their own services with others and share best practices easily. Athletes and coaches in particular should be made aware of this tool, so that they can assess different providers of education and training in their own and other countries.
  - b. That the national authorities support the development of a network of national contact points to implement and monitor the quality framework in their own domestic contexts, to guarantee the quality of stakeholder assessments and self-assessments and to provide statistical monitoring of athletes.
  - c. Furthermore, additional research, specifically targeted at the level of the services for athletes with Dual Careers, could support effective policy making for Dual Careers.
22. We conclude with a strong recommendation to focus on a monitoring tool and (self) assessment of Member States with regard to their policies and programmes for effectively combining Dual Career. In doing so, it is our aim to make sure that the current estimated 120.000 athletes per year can successfully combine education, training or work with sport to enable each athlete to reach full potential in life.

Nafplio (GREECE, European Union), June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017

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