



EU Work Plan
for Sport

2011-
2014

Expert Group "Education and Training in Sport"

Report from the 2nd meeting (28 September 2012)

**PARTICIPANTS:**

- Governmental representatives from the following Member States: AT, BE (Francophone Community), CY, DE, EE, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK (chair)
- European Commission: DG EAC
- Observers: ENGSO, EOC EU Office including IOC Athlete Commission, EU Athletes, ECC, EAS network, UEFA

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman thanked Poland for the excellent organisation of the seminar on 27 September 2012, which gave an overview of Polish initiatives in the field of dual careers of athletes. The Chairman welcomed the members of the Expert Group "Education and Training in Sport" (XG ETS) and the observers, who were present for the first time.

The XG adopted the draft agenda without comments.

2. PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT EU GUIDELINES ON DUAL CAREERS

The Chairman of the ad-hoc Group of Experts on Dual Careers informed the XG about the process which led to the preparation of the 4th consolidated draft of the Guidelines, including two meetings of the Group of Experts, endorsement of the Table of Contents in the first meeting of the XG ETS based on a progress report, and two consultation rounds. The methodology and format of the Guidelines were inspired by the successful 2008 EU Physical Activity Guidelines.

The Chairman pointed out that the main purpose of the guidelines is to address governments, sport governing bodies and education institutions at different levels that are in a position to establish sustainable policy, legal or financial frameworks in the field of dual careers. The Guidelines are not intended to be a manual for workers in the field, although they could function as inspiration for them as well. The Guidelines promote the idea of setting up a general framework for dual careers, taking into account that dual careers can only be made possible by developments in a number of different policy areas. The aim of the Guidelines is also to raise awareness and to share good practice examples.

The Commission (COM) explained the envisaged follow-up after adoption of the Guidelines by the XG ETS. The Guidelines are planned to be sent to the Council Working Party on Sport for a first presentation in December 2012 and follow-up will take place under the Irish Presidency in the 1st half of 2013, most likely in the form of Council Conclusions. The Guidelines have not been developed to become a binding instrument and respect the diversity of competences and traditions in Member States in the various policy fields involved; hence, formal adoption of the Guidelines should not be expected. However, they certainly could lead to initiatives in Member States and on the European level. In the longer term, a light monitoring mechanism might possibly be considered. Furthermore, it can be expected that the Guidelines will be helpful in the context of the implementation of the Sport Chapter of the proposed Erasmus for All Programme (2014-2020), which mentions dual careers as



a priority area.

3. DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT GUIDELINES (GENERAL ROUND)

The chairman of the XG ETS thanked MS for submitting written comments, which made it possible to identify the general concerns of XG members. He invited MS and observers to make general remarks.

In general, the draft guidelines were received positively because of the holistic approach, the athlete's perspective and respect for the diversity of approaches in the Member States and sport disciplines. However it was suggested that the number of guidelines could be diminished by combining some of them, that the order of the guidelines in the boxes could be based on priority, and that the addressees of the guidelines could be better defined. Some proposed guidelines could be part of the explanatory text but should not get the status of guidelines because they were not directly linked to the dual careers of athletes. Suggestions were made to include more examples of good practice and to elaborate more on the implementation of the guidelines, using existing networks such as the EAS network. Attention was asked for indicating more subgroups in the definition of dual career athletes, to position the needs of athletes with a disability in a more inclusive manner, and to underline the importance of a cross-sectoral approach. The realistic value of the guidelines, in particular for small and often 'poor' sport federations, was questioned. Strong opposition from some Member States was voiced against draft guidelines regarding very young athletes in primary education.

The chairman concluded that, taking into account the remarks made, there was a positive attitude to adopt the guidelines in the present meeting and that the remarks made could be accommodated without making any far-reaching changes to the structure of the draft.

COM indicated that because of the format of the guidelines more examples of good practice could not be included. It was suggested that in the future a database of examples of good practices could be set up by networks or through projects. Several experts warned that although good practices could have a high value in specific contexts, the diversity of sports and organisations for sport and education in MS made it difficult to implement them identically.

4. DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS ON GUIDELINES FOR ACTION (NATIONAL LEVEL)

The XG agreed to the introductory chapter and 2.1, indicating that cross-sectoral cooperation was essential but a real challenge at national level. It was suggested that more subgroups of athletes like professional and amateur athletes should be recognised and it was pointed out that the social dialogue was limited to professional sports. The status of amateur athletes should be integrated into the dialogue between athlete commissions and sport organisations as well.

It was questioned whether the position of athletes from abroad, excluded from National Training Centres or Youth Academies of professional clubs because of special regulations of MS and Federations, should be mentioned in 2.2.2., as this was



a problem on its own. It was agreed to signal the problem in the guidelines only, and give it a possible follow up at a later stage after adoption of the guidelines.

Regarding the position of coaches it was agreed that the position of coaches and other members of a performance team giving direct guidance to athletes during training and competitions, should be highlighted. Furthermore it was pointed out that the footnote on the term 'coach' should express the different definitions used in MS and that the reference to European frameworks in the text should be more precise. Finally it was decided that guidelines 8 and 9 should be integrated into the text as they were not guidelines for dual careers of athletes, but rather valuable suggestions for other policies.

The XG confirmed that specific attention for athletes with a disability was needed in the guidelines, but there was a preference to express this through a more inclusive approach at the beginning of the guidelines, defending the equal position of this group of athletes rather than asking attention for special needs. Where necessary in the different guidelines, the position of athletes with a disability should be mentioned. Guideline 10 would be integrated into guideline 1.

Regarding the education chapter, attention was asked for the Lifelong Learning strategy, the high number of overlapping guidelines and a better wording for guideline 18 on distant learning. 3 MS made a reservation to the text in 2.3.1 on primary education arrangements and the related guidelines 11 and 12. The promotion of specific dual career arrangements in primary schools for athletes from the age of 4 could not be accepted and was most probably against the line of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The intention of the Group of Experts to describe reality in early specialisation sports and ask attention for specific arrangements under strict conditions safeguarding the development of the child, could be understood, but should be drafted as exceptional and not starting for athletes from the age of 4. It was agreed to delete the separate section on primary education and the guidelines related to them, and to include early specialisation sports in a more general section about school education.

Regarding the health section, remarks made on the data protection of health records of athletes and the consequences of sport injuries for the after-sport career were accepted and would be integrated in the text.

Different MS opposed guideline 28 on pension rights of non-professional high-level athletes. There was no political support to introduce these rights. Due to the differences in pension schemes among MS, it would be difficult to give guidance on this topic. However, it was accepted to highlight the principles behind certain measures in MS on this topic, for example to compensate for late entry into the labour market, and as a consequence a lower pension in the future, by a temporary contribution of the State to the pension funds during sporting careers.

Regarding supporting services, attention was asked for the wording of guideline 29 so as to avoid that only national sport organisations could be supported, while the situation in a number of MS was differently organized.



5. Discussion and decisions on Guidelines for action (European level)

The XG ETS confirmed the importance of a European dimension in dual careers of athletes. Regarding guideline 34, clarification was delivered about the type of sport institutions mentioned. The guideline addresses sport educational institutes (formal and non-formal) to develop transnational curricula and educational programmes. It was agreed to delete guideline 35 and to replace 'external inspection' in guideline 36 by external monitoring. COM explained that guideline 33 could not be more concrete as a feasibility study on mobility and sport was launched recently and the results of this study could only be expected in September 2013.

Finally the XG was informed about the type of research mentioned in guideline 42, which would focus on the effect of transitions in European athletes' lives, the role of dual career arrangements in the MS regarding the development of young athletes in early specialisation sports, the effectiveness of measures and different models of supporting services in the Member States, and the re-entry process of European athletes into the labour market.

6. Conclusions and next steps

The chairman concluded that taking into account all the remarks and suggestions to improve the text and guidelines, the guidelines could be considered adopted and no new meeting was necessary to discuss the final text. The meeting agreed to finalise the process through a written procedure:

- XG members could send their additional comments on the 4th consolidated version in line with the discussions in this meeting till 12 October 2012. Chairman and COM would redraft the guidelines based on the comments made at the meeting and the additional comments submitted thereafter.
- At the end of October 2012, the XG would receive the 5th consolidated version of the guidelines for a last consultation by mid-November 2012.
- The Chairman and Commission would finalise the text and in late November 2012 the text would be sent to the Working Party Sport of the Council.
- If the CY Presidency agreed, the first presentation of the guidelines would take place in December 2012 in the Working Party Sport by the Chair of XG ETS, after which the Irish EU Presidency in 2013 could take over the further discussions and decisions leading to Council Conclusions.

The chairman thanked the XG for the active participation in the discussion and high-value contributions. Furthermore he thanked the Group of Experts which had delivered such a high-quality draft that the discussion could be finalised in this meeting.

7. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF SPORT AND EDUCATION

In view of the absence of the lead expert on EQF and sport, COM informed the XG about the meeting of the ad-hoc Group of Experts on EQF and Sport which had taken place in Poznan on 26 and 27 September. The meeting had brought together experts from the national level and representatives of European organisations which had taken the initiative to set up European frameworks to make qualifications of coaches



and instructors more transparent. Presentations about the national level had confirmed the observation made in the first XG ETS meeting that a lot of progress had been made in particular to define levels of qualifications based on occupational standards. However, in MS where the sport movement is autonomous and qualifications are not legally recognised by the government, the situation still differed from Member State to Member State and the link to the NQF was still a challenge. An exchange of information with the international organisations representing the sector had been very useful and should be continued.

To deliver a first draft of a mid-term report on the State of Play regarding the inclusion of sport qualifications in NQF with reference to EQF (the deliverable), the ad-hoc Group of Experts had decided that an inventory should be sent out to all MS to make country fiches more comparable than the fiches received so far. A template would be developed and sent out in mid-October 2012; MS would be invited to send replies by 30 November 2012. On the basis of this information the lead expert on EQF, supported by COM, would prepare a document with the first findings and recommendations to the XG ETS in mid-January 2013. It would also include topics such as the role of international frameworks and conventions in the field of sport, supportive mechanisms needed for further implementation, and the consequences for sport legislation and funding criteria at national level.

As the overlap of experts between the EQF group of experts and the XG ETS was high, the ad-hoc group of experts had decided not to have any separate meetings anymore but to bring the topic directly on the table of the XG ETS at the end of January 2013.

COM informed the XG also about other recent developments in the field of sport and education:

- A questionnaire was sent to all national contact persons of the Eurydice network in the National Ministries of Education on the subject of Physical Education at school. The Eurydice Network, part of the Education agency of the Commission (EACEA), provides information and analyses on European education systems and policies in order to support and facilitate European cooperation in this field. Contact persons have been informed that, if necessary, additional information could possibly be found by consulting the experts of the XG ETS. Results will be reported at a future meeting of the XG.
- COM launched the proposal for a recommendation on validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences on 5 September 2012, which would now be discussed in the Council's Education Committee. The proposal respected the role of sport in informal learning, but neglected the role of coach education systems of sport federations.
- The proposal of the Commission to modernise Directive 2005/36 on regulated professions, which could have consequences for the free movement of professionals in sport such as ski and snowboard instructors, was still in negotiation with the Member States and the European Parliament and a final decision was expected in 2013. In the meantime pilot projects on professional cards had been launched, including mountain guides, but not for ski



instructors, as they did not reach an agreement.

8. Date and place of next meeting

Ireland offered to host the next meeting of the XG in Dublin in January 2013.

In principle, it would start with a seminar on initiatives in the field of sport and education on Wednesday, 30 January, in the afternoon. The formal XG meeting would then take place on Thursday, 31 January 2013. The details of the arrangements needed further discussion and confirmation could be expected in late November 2012.