



EU Work Plan
for Sport

2011-
2014

Expert Group "Education and Training in Sport"

Report from the 1st meeting (13 January 2012)

**PARTICIPANTS:**

- Experts from the following Member States: AT, BE (Flemish and Francophone Communities), CY, DE, DK, FI, FR, HU, IR, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, UK
- European Commission: DG EAC

1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission (COM) thanked AT for the excellent organisation of the seminar on 12 January, which gave an overview of Austrian initiatives in the field of education and sport. COM welcomed the members of the Expert Group "Education and Training in Sport" (XG ETS), which was created by the Council in adopting its European Union Work Plan for Sport for 2011-2014. It built on and replaced the former informal EU Working Group on Education and Training in Sport. The new Expert Group reports to the Council. It was expected to perform its work in accordance with the Work Plan, as a general framework, and a Work Schedule, which would be adopted by the Expert Group itself. The new Expert Group was expected to elect its own chairperson and to decide on the format of its meetings.

COM noted that 22 Member States (MS) had appointed experts for this XG, of which 20 MS were present. The status of the members of the XG was that of governmental experts. One registered representative per MS could apply for reimbursement of travel costs from the 2nd meeting onwards. MS would be informed about reimbursement regulations and registration of governmental experts by COM ahead of the 2nd meeting.

COM reiterated the relevant sections, including actions, for education and training in sport, in particular on dual careers and the implementation of EQF, in the EU Work Plan, the 2011 Communication on sport, and the Declaration on Sport of the European Council of 2008. COM informed that an ad hoc Group of Experts on Dual Careers had been established to draft EU Guidelines on Dual Careers. A draft of these Guidelines should be discussed by the XG at its meeting in September 2012.

The XG adopted the draft agenda without comments.

2. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

COM informed that one Member State (UK) had submitted its candidature for the chairmanship of the XG ETS and referred to the CV of Mr Guy Taylor that had been distributed to the XG prior to the meeting. Mr Taylor informed the XG that he had stepped down as General Secretary of the EAS network so that he could function optimally as chair of the XG. Noting his valuable experience in the field, the XG unanimously elected Mr Taylor as the group's chairman.

3. ADOPTION OF THE WORK SCHEDULE

The chairman invited the COM to present its proposal regarding the Work Schedule for the XG ETS. COM noted that the EU Work Plan for Sport identified the social values of sport as a priority theme for EU level cooperation in sport. Annex I



specified two actions in the field of education and training: "Prepare a proposal for European guidelines on dual careers", and "Follow-up to the inclusion of sport-related qualifications in NQFs with reference to EQF". The XG ETS had been tasked to produce the relevant documents by end-2012 and mid-2013, respectively.

COM presented the draft Work Schedule, which identified three main deliverables for the XG and outlined, for each deliverable, a concrete schedule of tasks to be achieved in four meetings until mid-2013. To ensure progress, the work on each deliverable should be coordinated by a lead expert from a MS, who would work closely with the chairman and the COM.

The outcomes of the work on these deliverables would be successively presented to the Council Working Party on Sport (WPS) by a specific target date. The deliverables should pave the way for possible future EU level activities in the field of sport and education and, in particular, dual careers. All deliverables would feed into the Commission's final report on the implementation of the EU Work Plan, to be submitted by the end of 2013.

The XG discussed whether a separate expert seminar on the implementation of EQF was needed in view of the state of play of the implementation in several MS and the specific expertise needed, which was only partly represented in the XG. The XG agreed on a specific expert meeting on EQF as an activity linked to the 2nd meeting of the XG.

Regarding the choice of a lead expert per deliverable, the XG agreed the following:

1. Guidelines on Dual Careers – Commission (COM chairs the ad hoc Group of Experts on Dual Careers drafting the Guidelines)
2. Report on follow up to the inclusion of sport-related qualifications in NQFs with reference to EQF and related topics such as validation of non-formal and informal learning and the modernisation of directive 2005/36 – Belgium (Flanders)
3. Proposals for future EU level work in the field of education and training in sport – Chairman.

4. DECISION ON OBSERVERS

The chairman introduced the discussion on the role and possible participation of "other participants", in line with Annex II to the EU Work Plan for Sport. COM presented a list of 12 organisations that had specifically expressed their interest in participating as observers in meetings of the XG ETS.

The XG classified the interested organisations in three different categories: possible permanently observing organisations, organisations with a specific expertise and interest in a certain topic to be discussed in the XG, and European sport organisations representing a specific sport discipline.

MS thought that, in general, the meeting should be open and transparent and information discussed should be shared with the public and the sport movement, while also noting that the meetings should remain efficient. There was agreement that, depending on the topic, experts/organisations could be invited on an ad-hoc



basis if there was a mutual interest. In principle, most sport-specific European organisations could be represented by sports umbrella organisations EOC and ENGSO. In the case of UEFA and IRB, this was slightly different as they had their own system of youth academies linked to professional clubs and coach education. Observer status for both organisations was accepted for specific topics of mutual interest.

From among the organisations that had expressed interest in participating in the XG ETS, the XG agreed to grant permanent observer status to the following organisations:

- European Olympic Committees (EOC) EU Office;
- European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO);
- EU Athletes.

The XG agreed to grant an ad hoc observer status for the topic of Qualification Frameworks to the following organisations:

- European Network of Sport Science, Education and Employment (ENSSEE);
- European Observatory for Sport and Employment (EOSE);
- European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA).

The XG agreed to grant an ad hoc observer status for the topic of dual careers to the following organisations:

- European Athlete as a Student network (EAS);
- European Coaching Council (ECC).

The XG agreed to grant an ad hoc observer status on topics of mutual interest to the following sport-specific organisations:

- International Rugby Board (IRB);
- UEFA.

The XG decided against an observer role for ENAS and EUPEA.

5. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF SPORT AND EDUCATION

COM informed the XG about recent developments in the field of sport and education, in particular on the proposal of the Commission to include a Sport Chapter in the new EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for 2014-2020. Furthermore it could be expected that initiatives in the field of education on the modernisation of universities and the promotion of greater numbers of higher education graduates will have positive effects also on educational institutes in the field of higher education and sport in MS. Preparations for a possible draft recommendation on the validation of informal and non-formal learning had still not been finalised.

COM also informed the XG about 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 in the future. Proposals would be negotiated with the Member States and the European Parliament and a final decision was expected in 2013. In the meantime pilot projects on professional cards and European platforms had been launched. More information



could be found on the Commission's website (DG MARKT) and documents could be distributed to XG members who showed interest. COM indicated that the database on regulated professions already had improved substantially and that contact points in the MS were supposed to get a direct information function toward citizens and organisations.

6. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE AD-HOC GROUP OF EXPERTS ON DUAL CAREERS

COM gave an update on the activities of the ad hoc Group of Experts on Dual Careers, which had held its first meeting in September 2011 in Brussels. A preliminary table of contents had been agreed and tasks had been divided to draft the different chapters. COM had received the majority of contributions and had started to draft a first consolidated version, to be discussed in May 2012 at the 2nd meeting of the ad hoc Group. Wherever applicable, a national and a European dimension would be described, guidelines proposed and good practices mentioned. COM explained that the group of experts proposed a wide definition of dual careers including the careers of identified young talented athletes (who are not yet at the highest level), the combination of study or work and sport for elite athletes, as well as reintegration into the labour market after the sporting career. It was also mentioned that not only athletes but also coaches were facing challenges to combine their coaching activities with their daily work. The XG endorsed the proposed table of contents for the Guidelines and the wide definition of dual careers.

In a tour de table MS informed the meeting about new developments in the field of dual careers such as an accreditation system for educational institutes with high-level athletes, recognition of specific courses, introduction of special scholarships, further research on the position of athletes at universities or academies, the match between universities and specific sports, the education system of youth academies of professional clubs, the development of sport-related legislation to protect specific positions of athletes and their dual careers, actions against high numbers of drop outs in sport, the need for a network abroad for student athletes at university level in particular for small MS, recognition of qualifications for the profession of councillors of high-level athletes, after-career arrangements such as the presented KaDa scheme in Austria, cooperation with labour market placement companies, specific long-term arrangements with public and private companies on the recruitment of former high-level athletes, a golden network of companies, and a pension plan for former athletes. Attention was also requested for experiences outside the EU, e.g. in the USA, with the recruitment of high school students/athletes.

The draft Guidelines on Dual Careers were expected to be discussed at the XG meeting in September 2012.

7. EQF

COM pointed out that it was positive that all Member States had taken voluntary action to respond to the invitations made by the Council Recommendation on EQF. MS pointed out that a lot of progress has been made in particular on the shift to learning outcomes and making use of the common descriptors on knowledge, skills and competences to define levels of qualifications, and the inclusion of the topic in



the dialogue with social partners. A lot of work had still to be done in many MS but there was confidence that the process would make progress.

COM expected that all coach/instructor and sport management courses taking place in formal education institutes would be covered well if the different sport sectors were involved in the discussions at national level. However, this was not the case in all MS.

The meeting confirmed that the position of the non formal education systems of sport federations, agencies and institutes vis-à-vis NQF and EQF was more challenging. Where coach education systems of the sport movement led to State recognised qualifications (often certificates on the basis of sport-specific legislation prepared by the Ministries of Sport), the link to NQF/EQF could be expected in the future, as it had already been established successfully in FR, IE, MT, BE (Flanders) and the UK. Interesting developments in these countries were reported on the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning, but there was also doubt about the methodology used in the referencing to EQF. MS reported different developments as to how the accreditation of lower qualification levels of sport federation courses (levels 1-3) should be formalised.

However, in MS where the sport movement is autonomous and qualifications are not legally recognised by the government, the situation differs from Member State to Member State. The sport movement in some MS was still hesitating about the advantages of such a change and preferred to make reference to levels set by the international sport movement.

COM reported on its involvement as an observer in a project of the International Coaching Council working on a global framework of qualifications based on EQF descriptors.

The XG confirmed the need for a specific expert meeting about the topic of sport qualifications and the relation to NQF and EQF, where good practices and future challenges could be discussed in depth. The XG agreed to hold such a meeting combined with the next XG meeting in September 2012. COM informed the meeting that it would ask the MS to identify a national expert for this meeting.

8. AOB: Date and place of next meeting

The XG ETS decided to continue the format of a combination of a seminar and a formal meeting of the XG hosted by one of the MS. Poland had offered to host the next meeting in September 2012. In principle, it would start with a meeting of experts on EQF on Wednesday, 26 September in the late afternoon or evening, which would continue on Thursday, 27 September in the morning. This could be followed by a seminar on initiatives in the field of sport and education in Poland on Thursday, 27 September in the afternoon. The formal XG meeting would then take place on Friday, 28 September 2012. The details of the arrangements needed further discussion and confirmation could be expected in late February 2012.