

## A critical analysis on the current situation of dual career of athletes in Italy

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### Abstract

In Italy, student-athletes have been recognized recently with the School reform in 2015, while at European level the Guidelines on Dual career of elite Athletes (EU Expert Group, 2012) widely describe what each stakeholder (sport organizations, school, labour market, national and international institutions) should do to facilitate it. Despite the interest is growing (Guidotti et al., 2013; Guidotti, Lupo, Cortis, Baldassarre, & Capranica, 2014; Migliorati, Maulini, & Isidori, 2016), knowledge about the situation in Italy is limited (Henry, 2013). We set up an explorative study to understand: 1) what is currently done in Italy, 2) their characteristics and gaps, and, 3) what do stakeholders think about Italian situation. We set up a two-step research: we have a desk analysis to map current projects and then, we interview 19 Italian opinion leaders, to understand their opinion about DC situation and compare the two studies.

We identify 29 projects on DC: 8 by Federations, 6 by Universities, 4 by Ministers, 4 by athlete's Associations, 3 by Companies and 4 funded by EU. The services offered are: 1) financial incentives/scholarships 2) vocational training 3) flexible study plan and tutoring, 4) medical and psychological support and 5) accommodation. The majority of project are dedicated to sport-school conciliation for talented and elite athletes, while only six to transition to post career. Stakeholders consider athlete's manager a new key figure in athlete's career/dual career, but not aware about it; while something is changing in School system, labour market is still far from sport and hardly ready for athlete's necessities; athlete's associations are crucial in raising awareness initiatives for post sport career, but still little diffused and supported.

DC is a rising issue in Italy, but knowledge and actions toward are limited. Many stakeholders work on DC, but their communication is limited, and there is no homogeneous action. It's necessary to sensitise managers toward their importance of dual career, especially in less known sports; psychological services are underdeveloped and unknown, thus it's necessary to improve knowledge and practices. We suggest asking for athlete's opinion about their DC experience and what should be done according to their necessities.

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