



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



DUAL CAREER SECOND MONITORING MEETING HELD IN MALTA

26TH – 27TH JANUARY 2017

OFFICIAL OPENING – Thursday, 26th January 2017

- During the official opening, Prof Alfred Vella, University of Malta Rector stated that the ESTPORT project and its aim of developing an innovative European Sport Tutorship Model for the Dual Careers of athletes caught his attention. The great majority of athletes are normal people who would benefit enormously from such an initiative that takes care of both their academic education and their sports training. Rector promised to advocate in favour of adoption of measures at the University of Malta to help student/athletes with both their studies and their training.
- Dr Andrew Decelis, Institute for Physical Education and Sport Director introduced and thanked the distinguished guests for attending the opening of this workshop and for their supporting in such projects. He said that athletes dedicate hours of their life to training to improve a fraction of a second, to be fit enough to compete in International events. Students also dedicate practically the same amount to excel in their studies and to get high grades. Therefore, student-athletes need a huge amount of support to ensure success in both areas. The benefits of promoting the dual career are many, and not just for the athletes, who will be more employable, having developed many soft skills such as time management, leadership, determination, but also for the sport as they are role models. This is extremely important in all Europe, but even more so in small countries like ours, where very few athletes earn a living from sport, where it is very easy to give up sport to do well in your studies. He also stressed the fact that this project is creating awareness about the support student-athletes need and that they need to be treated like a special group of students with specific needs.
- During the final greeting of the official opening, Dr Antonio Sánchez Pato officially thanked Rector, Dr Decelis and his team for the wonderful hospitality. He also greeted his colleagues of the ESTPORT project and the student-athletes who attended. He said that they are the main reason why the partners were discussing and looking for the best ways to make it possible for high-level athletes to combine their sport and academic career. He stated that the project started only two years ago, and for him these were two exciting years, full of workshops and meetings that have allowed him to improve his competencies and to increase his network of friends. This was the time to sum up the work to show to the relevance of the sport tutor figure, and how to implement that role in the universities. The

dual career is a "service" that universities should offer to student athletes, and can only be maintained over

time if it is a quality service. Dr. Pato insisted that there must be an institutional commitment to support dual career at all levels and by all stakeholders. He stated that it is quite clear that now the European Union is observing this project and waiting for the outcomes of the project, because it are demonstrating that it is possible to implement a model of dual career if all partners believe in it.

PRESENTATIONS BY EACH PARTNER REGARDING UPDATE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPORT TUTORSHIP PROGRAMME

- Dr Antonio Calderon (Catholic University of Murcia) delivered the first presentation regarding the update of the implementation of the sport tutorship programme. Dr Calderon indicated three principles that should be considered under the Sport Tutorship, namely integration, individuality and also proactivity. In practical terms, the model works with first diagnosing and identifying the specific needs of the athlete, then guidance and advice for eventual employment, and finally working together with the sports and the academic career. Student-athletes with scholarships during academic year 2016/17 totalled 325, mainly consisting of 230 attending first degree courses.
- Prof Emanuele Isidori, University of Rome Foro Italico Pro-Rector, stated that Foro Italico was basically examining scholarly literature and reflecting upon experiences and good practices in the dual career in both Italy and other countries. He also said it was vital to understand and interpret data and results from the two main workshops carried out in 2016 and to continue the analyses and interpreting data from the questionnaire Estport administered to the sample consisting of all University student-athletes. Prof Isidori pointed out that they have finally defined, structured and fully implemented a specific model for tutoring student-athletes (Dual Career Academic Support & Tutoring Unit - DU.C.A.S.T.UN) and piloted it on a group of 27 student-athletes. The model is based on the utilization of Web 2.0-based communication tools, the critical thinking and the mutual helping through learning and tutoring active communities. Feedback from student-athletes collected through surveys, interviews and questionnaires has shown the model is effective and highly motivating for their student-athletes.
- Dr Andrew Decelis said that during the initial phase of the project, 9 students and 3 tutors took part in a pilot project. Following that, a call for tutors and students was issued in September 2016 just before the commencement of the academic year wherein the University of Malta academic and support staff interested in supporting student-athletes were invited to attend a meeting to discuss the project. Through this effort, Dr Decelis pointed out that tutors were up to 9 whilst student-athletes totalled 18. Dr Decelis and Mr Mallia met up with both tutors and student-athletes individually in every faculty and also

had meetings with the respective faculty officers. At the end of the day, awareness was key to the success of this project and the support of student-athletes. Through the data collection and analysis of the post-test questionnaire in November/December 2016, one of the outcomes was that most of the student-athletes were not aware of arrangements such as deadlines for submitting requests to participate in International Games or Competitions.

- Ms Samantha Thackray from Leeds Trinity University highlighted the fact that even though there are five different sport tutorship programmes from different universities, the Leeds Trinity one was similar to the University of Malta in the sense that they are both small Universities. However, student-athletes now totalled 16 from the initial 3 following extensive marketing, dissemination and also an improved utilization of sport tutors. She highlighted the fact that student-athletes are increasingly recognizing the support they are getting. This is being achieved through improved communication lines between staff and students making them feel more supported in their academic work. Leeds Trinity is now a University which student-athletes consider. They are also feeling supported and able to combine performance with their studies.
- Mr Charalambos Samantzis from Thessaly University stated that their sport tutorship programme was based on the integrated management structure and the intensive dissemination strategy. The initial stage of the implementation included awareness raising, recruitment process and the selection process. For the matching process, three stages were vital, i.e., preparation of the questionnaire, identification, tackling and mapping of the needs, and finally the allocation of the sport tutors. Institutional services for the sport tutor model includes constant information about changes in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, supporting learning material for requested courses and rescheduling of examinations according to their training programme. As for the dissemination actions, Mr Samantzis stated that they utilized an intensive marketing strategy, including a central presence in the research magazine of their University and a heavy presence in press and social media. The University's overall objective is to assess the progress of the selected student/athletes through their participation in various project initiatives.

Europa Community Limited was represented by Mr Leigh Robinson for this presentation. Mr Robinson spoke about the first evaluation meeting at UCAM, based on the open questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. The two day evaluation process was successfully accomplished with open and honest feedback, therefore creating very positive results with some room for improvement. A case study that was presented involved a 24 year old decathlete who was in his second year studying to become a teacher. Key feedback points included excellent communication with his sport tutor; sport tutor programme has had a real impact on student-athlete both academically and with his sport; student-athlete feels that service is very well structured and his sport tutor is easy to get in contact with. The Sports Service Department functions as a liaison between the student-athletes and the sport tutor and are responsible for all entry paperwork to the University for the student-athlete including sporting calendars. There was now a lot more pride and image for all of UCAM, not just for the athletes, but also for the

Alumni. The key strengths of the sport tutor model included the capability of UCAM to adapt to it and accept any challenges head on. Also, the image, profile and the brand return of UCAM since the project started had risen significantly, and of course the success at the Rio Olympics helped a great deal. Mr Robinson concluded that the project is operating very successfully at UCAM and the whole University is working hard together to provide a smooth, simple and very effective service for the student-athletes. Rio Olympics was a huge boost for the UCAM profile with 65% of Spain's medal haul being captured by UCAM athletes.

UPDATE OF THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT

Mr David Heiser was up next and presented the update of the financial management of the project. He gave explanations of the financial reporting procedure (project budget, staff cost calculation, time-sheet management, invoices and proof of payments, eligible cost) and all partners agreed on the supporting documents to be presented for a correct justification.

The partnership agreed on the reporting and payment periods. Every partner will have to send the next relevant financial report and supporting documents to UCAM until the 28.02.2017. UCAM will revise the documentation and no errors are detected, the payment will be issued to each partner without delay. UCAM will send a reminder with all relevant supporting documents to the partners in advance.

The partnership was informed that UCAM has identified an audit company to undertake the project audit in the month of July 2017 and that all financial reports and documentation has to be submitted to UCAM during June 2017 since the eligibility period of the project ends on the 30.06.2017.

UPDATES OF PROJECTS ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS – SPORT TUTOR

- Dr Calderon (UCAM) stated there was a need to help student-athletes to achieve academic and sports excellence. Training for the sports tutors is essential whilst the academic performance of the student-athletes must be observed. Google Drive is being used by UCAM as one of the common tools to easily interconnect the sports tutor with the student-athletes. Student-athletes value the importance of the sport tutor as high and see it very necessary to complete their studies. In general, both sport tutors and student-athletes emphasize the importance that the figure of the former and his actions to be further developed and institutionalized.
- Prof Emanuele Isidori (Foro Italico) pointed out that through a structured conversational process intended to facilitate open and intimate discussion called 'World Café', his University recognizes that the student-athlete completes the intrinsic and internal values that sport as a human practise bears to humankind. Therefore, Foro Italico University recognises that the student-athletes play a very important function for our society, and consequently they are rewarded for this role. In a nutshell, it is not the athlete that they reward but the athlete's dedication as a person to sport and to its internal and intrinsic goods. More than the sports tutor's

competencies, Foro Italico University student-athletes appreciate their friendship and their capability of motivating, supporting and emotionally stimulating them.

- Dr Decelis said that during the sport tutor workshops, some students shared their positive experience related to resolving certain course issues via their tutor's help. He stated that students felt more confident that they can do well in their course and can obtain guidance in matters concerning their studies. Regular communication with their respective associations is vital as both training programmes and schedules might need to be more flexible. A proposal was also put forward to extend the duration of the courses, wherein extensions for a year and their implications were also discussed. Under-usage of ICT at University was discussed, particularly needed when students are abroad.
- Ms Thackray said that through this project, sports tutors were now introduced and communication channels were also developed so that the sport tutors would be the first point of contact for the student-athletes.
- Prof Athanasios Koustelios (Thessaly University) stated that their PE Department decided to support five elite student-athletes. He said that the ultimate goal of the sport tutor programme was to facilitate the integration of athletes into the University context, by maintaining their sport career performance.

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS – DUAL CAREER

- In the conclusions for the dual career workshops, Dr Calderon stated that the student-athletes claim the following: to manage the methodologies and tools to the requirements from each sport and academia; flexible tools that allow a smooth interaction with teacher; and to work to improve the athletes' organization and planning capacities to favour the sport and academic performance. The student-athletes perceive sport as a vehicle to study at UCAM and the latter can benefit from the exposure given by the athletes.
- Dr Alessandra Fazio (Foro Italico) pointed out that they used two questions as a starting point for the Dual Career workshop: What are the best e-tools that can be utilized to mentor student-athletes and what are the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing e-tutorship in assisting dual-career and post-career student-athletes? 91.3% of the sample of 29 student tutored by DUCASTUN claimed that they were fully satisfied with the face-to-face and online tutorship. Via the new tools provided by Web 2.0, both dual career athletes and post-career student-athletes can develop skills for their future work and be supported in their retraining.
- Dr Decelis mentioned that during the dual career workshop where 18 student-athletes together with 5 tutors were present, the importance of having a tutor per faculty was highlighted. The need for the University of Malta to consider student-athletes as regular students with different needs was also vital. Student-athletes gave individual contributions about their sport discipline,

including their hours of training, demands of the course and the challenges they are facing. Amongst the latter, some students mentioned the clashes of lectures with their training, particularly due to the fact that certain faculties have lectures after 5 pm. Other challenges that were brought forward were the lack of proper facilities at University and lack of professional help when it comes to nutritional and psychological support.

- Ms Thackray stated that by the time they organized the Dual Career workshops, student-athletes had increased from 3 to 12 and so consequently it was important to highlight the support offered to them, to combat issues raised in previous workshop and to launch the new Athlete Support Package.
- The basic stages of implementation of the sport tutorship model, as Mr Samantzis (Thessaly) stated, were that the selected elite students-athletes had the chance to provide their input about the sport tutorship model. Significant conclusions and major difficulties were revealed in order to be highlighted and consequently adopt relevant measures. Using technology for immediate and distant contact such as skype and the formulation of students-athletes personal portfolio including the setting of objectives and goals was extremely important.

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS – POST-TEST SURVEY DATA

- Dr Sánchez Pato (UCAM) mentioned that there were a lot of results emerging from the post-test survey data but he was presenting the main findings. The sample of the post-test survey was 36, with the 55.6% being female, average age was 26.14, 88.9% being single, and with nearly 9 out of every 10 athletes competing at National Championships level. Nearly 70% of the sample was studying at first degree level, and half the student-athlete sample claimed that they also work. One-third of the sample claimed that their studies interfered with their athletic performance whilst approximately 64% indicated that their athletic performance interferes with their studies. Two-thirds of the student-athletes sample indicated that daily training and competitions were on a par as regards the most difficult aspect for them to coordinate with their studies. Also, two-thirds of the student-athletes sample confirmed that the interaction between their sport tutor and the Sports University Service was good to facilitate their dual career.
- Dr Fazio (Foro Italico) said that in their case the student-athlete sample of elite athletes totalled 26, with 65.4% being female with an average age of nearly 22 years. Nearly 8 out of every 10 student-athletes claimed that they chose to study at University to increase their eventual job prospects. 77% claimed that their studies interfere with their athletic performance and 58% stated that their sport discipline interferes with their studies. Nearly two-thirds claimed that lecturers do not implement learning and teaching strategies that promote a dual career. Half of the students either strongly agree or agree that their academic commitment interferes with their training. All the student-athletes identify themselves with their sporting lifestyle so they fully project themselves into their sport-related jobs.
- In the Malta sample, Dr Decelis said the sample was of 6 student-athletes who were involved in the pilot study, with 4 males and 2 females and the age bracket was 19 to 25 years. Two-thirds

claimed that their studies do not interfere with their athletic performance whilst 5 out of 6 stated that their athletic performance interfered with their studies. Five out of six student-athletes claimed that their studies was more important for them than their athletic career mainly because they needed a good job to earn a living. All the student-athletes showed that they wanted their sports tutor to advise them on change in exam dates whilst 80% wanted them to help them solve administrative issues.

- Ms Thackray (Leeds Trinity) indicated that the key findings were the following: combined approach between academics and the Sport Department; student-athletes are looking for academic and personal support and are now beginning to place their studies as being more important; and finally, the support available is now being understood by student-athletes.

For the Thessaly sample, Prof Koustelios (Thessaly) stated that they had 5 student-athletes, with 2 males and 3 females, with an average age of 20.6 years. All of them competed in National Championships and one of them was a professional athlete. They all believe that studies interfere with their athletic performance whilst 80% believe that athletic performance interfere with their studies. 80% plan further studies whilst 20% want to be employed in the area of their study. All of them find it difficult to coordinate their daily training with their studies and also plan to continue to be involved in sport.

WORKSHOP – UPDATE OF COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ACTIONS

Mr Robinson (Europa Community) was glad to note that the ESTPORT website had great statistics and the number of visitors was on the rise, going up from just over 38,000 in the first year to 79,000 in 2016. Another social media doing extremely well was Twitter and @EstportEU now had 1536 followers from 187 in the previous year.

He insisted that it was important for the partners to send regular dissemination activity reports so that they can feed information out through their channels but mainly to keep the ESTPORT website up-to-date with the latest information. Also it was important for the partners to send information on any events that they might be attending at which they intend to promote the project.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION : STUDENT-ATHLETES OF ALL THE PARTNERS - Friday, 27th January 2017

Mr Francisco Canovas Alvarez, one of the sport tutors at UCAM chaired the round table discussion. He first asked the student-athletes to introduce themselves and to indicate their sport discipline. The following were the names & respective sports disciplines;

Ms Sofia Toro (UCAM) – Sailing

Ms Carlotta Andracchio (Foro Italico) – Roller skating

Ms Anastasia Galiatsatou (Thessaly) – Basketball

Ms Maria Luigia Belcore (Foro Italico) – Athletics

Ms Rebecca Hewson (Leeds Trinity) – Athletics

Ms Grace Moore (Leeds Trinity) – Gymnastics

Ms Daniel Magro (University of Malta) – Bowling
Ms Amy Micallef (University of Malta) – Swimming

The first question that the student-athletes were asked to express themselves about was “How do you consider yourself, amateur or professional?”

The general feeling given by the student-athletes was that they felt professional when it came to training, in the sense that they trained each and every day. However, on the other hand, they felt they were amateurs, with the exception of Anastasia, as they were not paid to practise and compete in their respective sports disciplines.

The second question put forward by Mr Alvarez was “Does your athletic performance interfere with your study; what is the balance you found between the two dimensions?”

Sofia, Carlotta and Anastasia stated that their sport discipline involves a great amount of travelling and so as a consequence, it negatively affects their studies. They stated that after a typical day of travelling and competing, they are drained out and the last thing they have in mind is to study. Rebecca was the exception to the rule here as she said that she found no problem with finding the right balance between her athletic performance and studies as most of her training was concentrated during weekends. Amy pointed out that she does not have the same problem as most of the other student-athletes as regards to travelling as Malta is a small country and thus training facilities are pretty close. Nonetheless, she still faced problems as she gets to wake up very early in the morning to train, then attend a whole day of University lectures, and train once again after the said lectures. This was causing her problems with finding the right balance between her athletic performance and her studies.

Another question put forward by Mr Alvarez was “What is the level of difficulty to adjust your sporting life with your academia?”

As regard to Sofia, it was hard at the beginning as most of her teammates were older than her and they already had their jobs settled, whilst she had to leave her city to train for two years for the Olympic Games preparations, so she had to eventually quit her studies. However, this completely changed when she got a scholarship from UCAM and now she can cope with adjusting to her sport life together with her studies as she may now study on-line and listen to the lectures through internet. If you are an elite student in Spain, the government helps a great deal in the sense that there is a law that states that you are not obliged to attend the lectures. Carlotta and Maria Luigia, the Italian student-athletes, said that this was not possible in their case as in Italy, students have to attend 75 per cent of the lectures and it goes down to 50 per cent of the lectures if you are a national athlete.

The next question for the student-athletes was “Do you have any support from your family to study?”

Sofia mentioned that when she attended a public University, her family supported her studies financially. However, most of her teammates who don't have a scholarship like her are only supported by their respective families when it comes to their studies so they end up quitting training. Anastasia said that her parents support her in both studies and sports but priority is always given to the former. Both Rebecca and Grace said that they find a great deal of help from their families even if they now live on campus, as long as there is the right balance between studying and training. Amy stated that initially she had taken one year off just to concentrate on her training as swimming was an early development sport. However, her parents were worried that she wouldn't eventually commence University, so now was getting support from her family and her coach to find the right balance.

UPDATE OF RESEARCH AND HANDBOOK: COMBINING METHODOLOGY, GUIDELINES, BEST PRACTICES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES

As regards to the update of research and handbook, the participating universities agreed on the following outcomes;

- 1) Chapter one: The Introduction would be taken care of by the University of Rome Foro Italico
- 2) Chapter two: The ESTPORT model would be done by the Catholic University of Murcia
- 3) Chapter three: The Methodology (steps and procedures to implement the model in a new context) were to be done by The University of Malta, University of Thessaly, Leeds Trinity University and University of Rome Foro Italico.

In this chapter each partner will have to address: (a) contextualization (brief explanation of their respective institutional context, approximately 100 to 150 words); (b) methodology (steps and explanation of the main features of each step) i.e., Institution awareness: for our institution it was extremely important to raise awareness about the need of a figure like the sport tutor. What we did was...; (c) barriers and difficulties (list and explain each of them); (d) recommendations and lessons learned from your experience (bullet points and brief explanation) and (e) sustainability (a short paragraph explaining how the model that was implemented in your university is going to be sustainable).

- 4) Chapter four: ESTPORT model 2.0 (enriched by the different methodologies exposed in chapter three) – done by University of Thessaly, UCAM and Rome Foro Italico.

- 5) Chapter five: conclusions and summary (UCAM and Rome Foro Italico).

6) Appendix: one page summary of the survey results (pre and post). Here each partner will have to explain by a narrative of the main improvements after the application of the sport tutorship model. You only have to briefly explain the differences in the "Academic life", "Sport life" and "Sport tutor".

It was important to remember that this is a one page summary so everyone should feel free to select the questions from the survey that they consider most relevant to report.