



The EU Coaching Landscape Baseline Report 2020



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

coach force 21

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Acknowledgements

The CoachForce21 partners wish to thank the members of the European Commission Expert Group on Skills and Human Resources in Sport for their cooperation in the collection of data for this report. Special thanks must go to Mr Yves Le Lostecque (Head) and Miss Agata Dziarnowska (Policy Officer) of the Sport Unit of the European Commission for their continued support and assistance.

We would also like to thank partners in the Erasmus+ Project PEAK (Policy Education and Knowledge in Coaching) for their teamwork and contribution to this report. Specially, we would like to acknowledge Prof Karen Petry and Louis Moustakas from the German Sport University in Köln for their tireless work and professionalism.



The CoachForce21 Partners

Executive Summary

Not so long ago access to sport coaching was the prerogative of only those in performance sport. Nowadays, however, coaches work with a broad array of populations including children, young people, adults and senior citizens. The recognition of the role of the coach in 21st century society has therefore increased substantially in recent years (Council of the European Union, 2017; 2020). Nonetheless, there is still much to be done to maximise the capacity of the sport coaching system in the EU to fulfil its promise. Improvement to coaches' representation and status is a central element in this process.

CoachForce21 (CF21) is a three-year Erasmus+ co-funded project led by Leeds Beckett University (UK) and the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) with seven project partners: Trainerakademie Köln (Germany), Czech Olympic Committee (Czech Republic), Hungarian Coaching Association (Hungary), Polish Institute of Sport (Poland), Treinadores Portugal (Portugal), Professional Coaches of Finland (Finland) and the Hellenic Federation of Sports Coaches and Trainers (Greece).

CF21 aims to enhance the role, responsibility and status of sport coaches in 21st century Europe. The EU Coaching Landscape Baseline Report 2020 is the first step in this complex process. It provides a comprehensive 'state of the nation' analysis of the sport coaching system in the EU. The current state of key elements of the system across a large sample of member states has been collated to, for the first time, build a composite picture. The resulting overview provides valuable information as to what elements of the system appear to have made substantial progress and which require further attention.

Overall, it can be concluded that a majority of European countries have put in place the central elements that form the basis of optimal coaching systems. This includes the presence of an organisation charged with developing coaching (75%), a formal definition of coaching (79%) and the provision of laws specific to coaching (67%) and volunteering (62%).

Likewise, a small majority of respondents reported having set professional or occupational standards for sport coaches (66.6%). However, only 50% of countries indicated that coaching is on the official professional register of their country.

Another area of strength noted is the existence of a licensing system in every surveyed country. The conditions and regulations underpinning those licensing systems, however, are much less uniform. Overall, 46% of countries reported that their licensing system resides at a multi-sport, national level whilst for the remaining 54% this regulatory element was devolved to sport federations.

Finally, with regards to the status of coaching qualifications, 71% of countries reported having aligned their qualifications to their National Qualifications Framework which guarantees a specific level of quality and heterogeneity within and across Member States. The study also confirmed the wide range of coach education providers operating across the EU. Tertiary education institutions (87%), sport federations (75%) and vocational institutions (58%) were reported as delivering sport coaching qualifications in the majority of countries.

Despite a clear positive trend this research uncovered a number of remaining weaknesses.

Although 62% of countries reported having a national coaching register or database, only 37% were able to provide data regarding coaches' working status (i.e., full-time, part-time or volunteer). Moreover, just 45% could provide data related to the gender split of their coaches. Suggestively, only one country was able to provide reliable data on these two combined elements. If coaching is to continue to progress, more wide-spread and accurate data collection protocols will need to be implemented. Without clear baselines, it will be very difficult to get a sense of progress nor determine what the priority areas may be going forward.

An additional important area of weakness in the system is the lack of coaches' representation. In total, 15 countries (62%) reported not having a national association or union of coaches. Where these association existed, they were reported as having a modest impact and being involved mainly in coach education and development rather than representation. CoachForce21 is currently conducting additional research into this topic.

Overall, this research brings to the fore a key realisation – in the development of optimal coaching systems there is no single recipe that works the same for every country in Europe. Countries vary greatly in the level and form of the legal and professional regulation of coaching, how coaches are educated and what structures are in place to recognise and represent them. This need not necessarily be a problem. Each country's sport coaching system is embedded in a particular historical and social context which determines what it looks like and how it operates. The role of European projects such as CoachForce21 is to put forward a series of elements, components and best practice principles that will help each Member State design a coaching system that works for them. In doing so, pan-European occupational improvement in sport coaching appears to be the overarching goal rather than 'shoehorning' multiple realities into a single model of the 'ideal' coaching system.



Introduction - Project CoachForce21

CoachForce21 (CF21) is a three-year Erasmus+ co-funded project led by Leeds Beckett University (UK) and the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) with another seven partners: Trainerakademie Köln (Germany), Czech Olympic Committee (Czech Republic), Hungarian Coaching Association (Hungary), Polish Institute of Sport (Poland), Treinadores Portugal (Portugal), Professional Coaches of Finland (Finland) and the Hellenic Federation of Sports Coaches and Trainers (Greece).

CF21 has two main objectives:

1. Strengthening coach representation at national and European level through the provision of guidance and support for existing and developing Coaches' Associations in the EU
2. Bringing the Voice of the Coach to the fore of the Social Dialogue in Sport to foster Good Governance in the Sector.

To achieve the above, the partners will:

1. Develop a baseline picture of the current coaching landscape across the 27 Member States
2. Map the current impact of Coaches' Associations in the 27 Member States
3. Create guidance tools and resources for current and prospective Coaches' Associations in relation to the convening, governance, relevance and impact of this type of organisations.
4. Effectively engaging with coaches on the frontline, employers (i.e. clubs; local authorities; leisure providers, etc), national and international sporting organisations (i.e., federations) and national and international policy bodies (i.e., government departments; European umbrella bodies).



The EU Coaching Landscape Baseline Report 2020 addresses the first of these action points. This report is the first ever detailed exploration of the state of the nation of the European coaching system. As such, it is a significant milestone in understanding the past and present of this sector, yet most importantly, marks a departure point to guide future developments in this very important occupational area.

1. Sport Coaching in the European Union

1.1 The Role of the Coach in 21st Century Society

Everyday across the globe, millions of children, young people, adults and senior citizens engage in sport and physical activity pursuits. For some, participation is mainly about personal wellbeing and enjoyment. For some others it is about challenging their current levels of performance and trying to improve themselves. For a very small minority, sport is about Olympic and professional glory and accolades. The common denominator for many of these experiences is the presence of a coach who guides and supports participants towards their personal goals and objectives. Whilst not so long ago access to sport coaching was the prerogative of only those in performance sport, nowadays, coaches work with a broad array of populations and objectives. The recognition of the role of the coach in 21st century society has therefore increased substantially in recent years (Council of the European Union, 2017; 2020).

A number of factors have contributed to this raised interest:

- First, the growing recognition of the sheer size and scale of the coaching workforce has encouraged governments and sporting bodies to increase the level of attention and funding allocated to coach education and development. For instance, in the European Union (EU) alone it is estimated that between 5 and 9 million coaches service 100 million people on a daily basis (Lara-Bercial et al. 2017a). These figures can be easily put into context when compared to the 6 million teachers, 1.6 million doctors and 1.6 million police officers working across Member States (Eurostat, 2019). Sport coaches are therefore one of the largest workforces in Europe and, by extension, worldwide. Not surprisingly agencies worldwide have recently started to focus on increasing and improving coach education and development.



- Second, participation in sport has been consistently proposed by policy-makers as a useful tool in supporting the personal development of participants as well as an effective intervention to placate the impact of societal issues such as sedentarism, obesity, mass migration, youth anti-social behaviour, and social exclusion (European Commission, 2014; 2017). National and international agencies have acknowledged that achieving these goals without a suitably trained workforce will be difficult (Council of the European Union, 2017; 2020; European Commission, 2020).
- And third, existing threats to the integrity of sport like doping, match-fixing, athlete abuse and young athletes commoditisation have brought attention to the role of the coach as key in safeguarding and protecting athletes (European Commission, 2020).

To date, the main priority has been the appropriate education and development of coaches.

The European Commission has promoted the inclusion of coaching qualifications into National Qualification Frameworks and encouraged referencing to the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (European Commission, 2008). Improvements in this area would also serve to increase the employability and mobility of coaches (European Commission, 2017).

1.2 A System's View of Sport Coaching

From a broader perspective, however, organisations such as the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) have drawn attention to the need for a wider systems approach to the understanding and improvement of sport coaching. The publication of the International Sport Coaching Framework (ISCF; ICCE, ASOIF and LBU, 2013) signalled a step change in the way this is construed by placing the focus on the identification of the multiple stakeholders of the coaching system in any given country, sport or local context.



This notion has been further explored in the European Sport Coaching Framework (Lara-Bercial et al., 2017a)

which adapted the principles of the ISCF and contextualised them to the European landscape. The ESCF defined the coaching system as “the people, organisations, structures and processes that play a part in the recruitment, education, development, employment and recognition of coaches in a particular context” (Lara-Bercial et al., 2017a, p. 15). The notion of a coaching system implies a layered network whereby all parts are interconnected and contribute to the outcomes of the whole (Lara-Bercial et al., 2017b). The people and organisations that are part of this system can thus be graphically depicted as a connected, multi-layered structure (Figure 1).

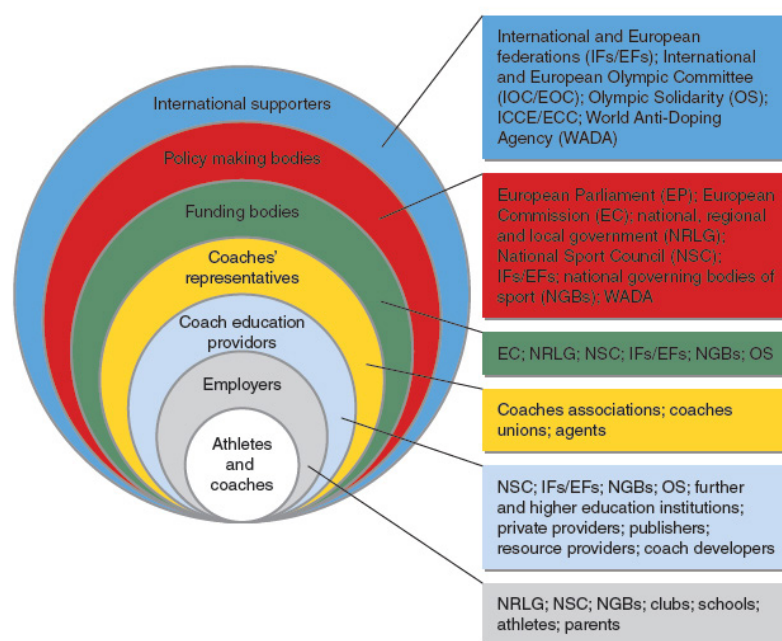


Figure 1. The Coaching System (reproduced from ESCF, Lara-Bercial et al., 2017a)

From a sport coaching perspective, adopting a systems approach has some key benefits (Lara-Bercial et al., 2017b). First, it encourages the identification of the outcomes sought as a result of the development of the whole system rather than its individual constituents. In relation to sport coaching, the ESCF proposes that these outcomes include adequate provision for the recruitment, education, development, employment, representation and recognition of coaching and coaches. This is key to moving sport coaching forward as a whole. Second, a systems view supports the identification of key stakeholders in a particular context as well as their roles, functions and interconnectivity. Third, it provides a reference point for the evaluation and assessment of the (non)existing structures, policies and processes involved in creating an effective and efficient coaching system. And fourth, it supports the identification of key priorities and areas for improvement so short, mid and long-term plans and strategies can be put in place. Following this process it is possible to, over time, create the optimal structures, policies and processes required to develop and sustain the coaching system.

1.3 The Coaching System in the EU

The systems view of coaching has been recently supported and promoted at the highest level of EU sports policy. The Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2017 selected the role and status of the coach in 21st century society as the key priority for the sport sector during that period. In keeping with the systems perspective, the EU working party in sport identified not only education and development as key priorities, but also the adoption of measures to support the recognition of coaching as a profession, promote cross-sectoral collaboration and facilitate the mobility of coaches across member states (Council of the European Union, 2017).

Amongst many recommendations, the Council proposed that Member States, the European Commission, the Sport Movement and all related stakeholders should: i) promote the broader role of the coach; ii) increase the number of competent coaches; iii) promote a learning outcomes approach to qualifications and their alignment with National Qualifications Frameworks as well as the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (European Commission, 2008); iv) develop guidelines on the minimum competencies required of coaches; v) increase research outputs in relation to all aspect of the coaching system; vi) make sport coaching more accessible as a profession; and vii) ensuring that all stakeholders in the system (from educators to employers) work together.

Since their publication Member States have continued to work to adopt the Council's recommendations and put them into practice. This has been supported through the development of an Expert Group on Skills and Human Resources Development in Sport which brought together all EU country sport leads with experts from relevant stakeholder groups between 2017 and 2020. The Expert Group had two main objectives: i) sharing good practice between Member States; and ii) develop guidelines for the minimum skills and competencies of coaches. This work was also driven by the choice of the Croatian Presidency of the Council (first half of 2020) to again focus on the figure of the coach as the priority topic for sport, especially in relation to the development of a competent and qualified coaching workforce across the EU (European Commission, 2020). The council conclusions from the Croatian presidency (Council of Europe, 2020) encourage Member States to: i) support the educational dimension of sport; ii) promote access to diversified learning paths for coaches; iii) implement the guidelines for minimum requirements in skills and competences; iv) support the development of comparable data collection systems; v) support, promote and disseminate research into coach learning and development; and vii) develop lifelong learning systems for coaches.

1.4 Time to Take Stock

This study and report provides a comprehensive baseline of the status of the sport coaching system in the EU. It does so by collating the current state of key elements of the system across a large sample of member states to build a composite picture. The resulting overview provides valuable information as to what elements of the system appear to have made substantial progress and which require further attention. Without this insight it would be impossible to provide a baseline for similar evaluations in the future. This knowledge will also inform the ongoing work of national and international stakeholders thus contributing to the overall development of coaching.



2. Baseline of the Status of the Coaching System in the EU

2.1 Methodology

The study used a mixed methodology comprising of an online expert survey and a series of semi-structured interviews.

2.1.1 Expert Survey

An online expert survey was undertaken with sport representatives from 13 EU Member States - Belgium (FL), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia - who were identified via the European Commission's Expert Group on Skills and Human Resources Development in Sport (EC XG). The EC XG is one of two Expert Groups established under the EU Work Plan for Sport 2017-2020. Each member state is invited to send a representative to the Expert Group Meetings. These representatives can come from a range of backgrounds, including Ministries, Sport Organisations or academic institutions. For the purposes of this survey, the representative either answered the survey directly or referred the survey to a colleague with additional expertise related to sport coaching.

The survey instrument aimed to obtain a baseline of information regarding the coaching landscape in the EU, and therefore focused on mapping the legal, structural, regulatory and demographic situation of coaching at the national level in the respective countries. Survey questions were designed based on the key features and elements of the coaching system highlighted across policy documents and academic research. A link to the full survey instrument can be found in appendix 2.

2.1.2 Expert Interviews

Semi-structured expert interviews (were undertaken with sport representatives from a further 11 countries in Europe – Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom - who were identified via the European Commission's Expert Group on Human Resources Development in Sport. EC XG representatives either participated in the interview directly or referred the researchers to a colleague with additional expertise related to sport coaching.

Interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes and were conducted by five separate interviewers. Prior to the interview, the goal of the study was explained and respondents were informed that their responses could be used in the context of this research report or other research activities. During the interviews, the interviewers were assisted by a fellow researcher noting relevant information or quotations. The use of a separate researcher to take notes was done to minimise the disruptions to the interview. No formal recording or transcription of the interviews took place. This was done in light of the inherent cost-benefit trade-offs in the recording and verbatim transcription of interviews. Recordings can create discomfort for interviewees and inhibit the openness of responses (Al-Yateem, 2012). And, given the mixed-methods nature of this research, it is possible to validate and triangulate results from interviews with other sources, therefore minimizing the need for actual transcription (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006).

A semi-structured interview guide was designed including questions and potential sub-questions related to the legal, structural, regulatory and demographic situation of coaching in the respective countries. Prior to each interview, the interviewers reviewed literature and policy documents relating to the respective countries and shared the interview guide with the interviewees. These steps were undertaken in order to obtain as much information as possible before the interview and to allow for more time during the interview to deviate from topics present in the interview guide and facilitate a more in-depth exploration of relevant topics. The full interview guide can be found in appendix 3.



3. Results and Discussion

For the purposes of this results section, data from both methodologies is combined and aims to present a broad overview of the coaching systems and policy landscapes in Europe. When relevant, this summary data is supplemented by quotes or other qualitative information extracted via the in-depth interviews. All countries that were the subject of an in-depth interview are also accompanied by a detailed country report, and these full reports can be found attached as a separate appendix to this report.

Results are presented according to thematic, namely structure of the coaching systems, regulation of the coaching system and the role of volunteers. An overview of responses provided per country is provided in appendix 4. For economy, referencing is avoided. Please consult the individual country reports for access to specific details and references.

3.1 The Structure of the Coaching System

As outlined in the introduction, the coaching system refers to “the people, organisations, structures and processes that play a part in the recruitment, education, development, employment and recognition of coaches in a particular context” (Lara-Bercial, North, Hämäläinen et al., 2017b, p. 17). This section of the survey and interviews thus explored the presence of the following features of the system:

- A definition of coaching
- An organisation(s) responsible for coaching
- Laws related to coaching
- Laws related to volunteering
- A national professional association/union of coaches



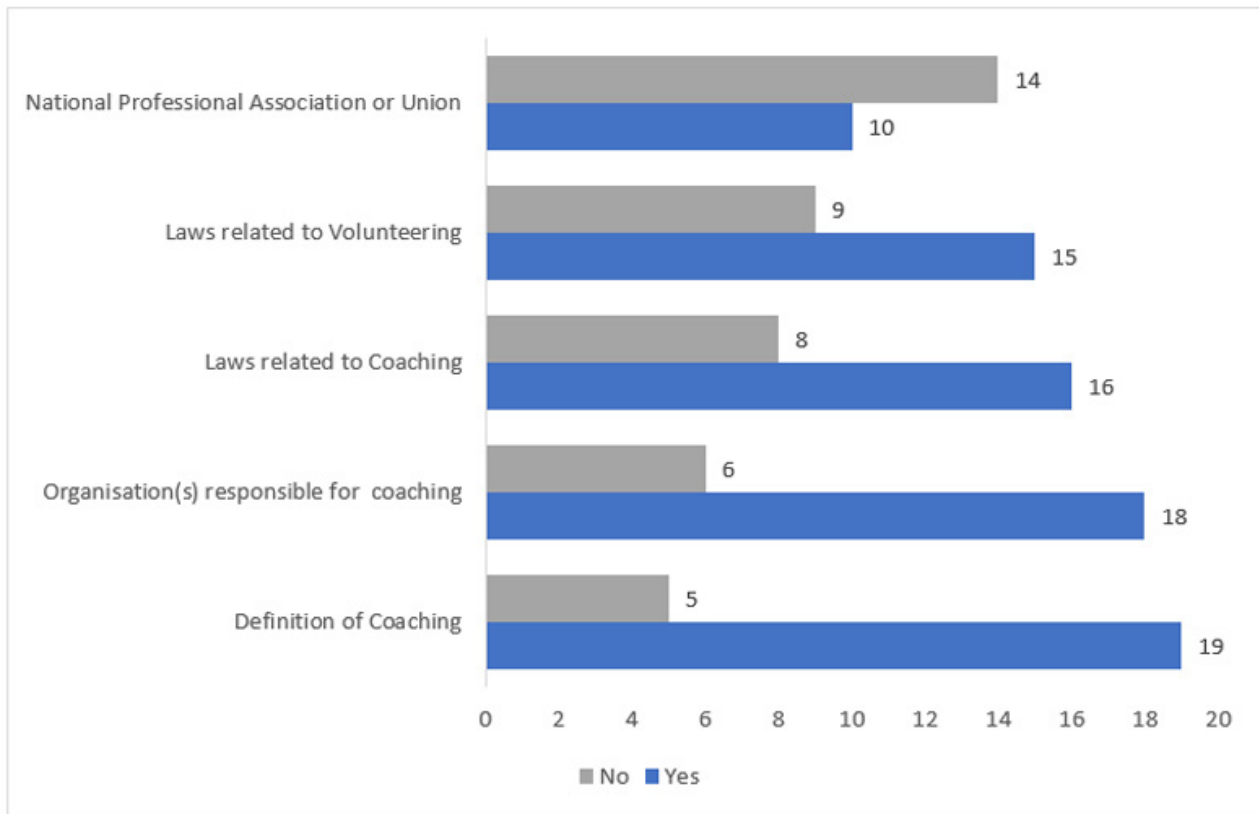


Figure 2. Summary of results related to the structure of European coaching systems.

Overall, most countries in Europe have in place the standard building blocks of an optimal coaching system. A majority of respondents, 75% (n= 18), report that they have an organisation or group of organisations – be it at the Governmental or Non-Governmental levels – responsible for coaching in their countries. Similarly, 79.1% (n= 19) of respondents report that their country has a formal definition of coaching.

In Ireland, for one, Coaching Ireland provides a broad definition of coaching as a whole, stating that “coaching is a process that provides guidance, feedback and direction to empower participants or performers to achieve their goals in their chosen sport or physical activity”. Other countries, such as France or Germany, offer more elaborate definitions and even distinguish between different types of coaches.

For instance, the German system distinguishes between coach (Trainer/in) and an instructor (Übungsleiter/in). The former is defined as the person who is planning, offering and leading sports-specific coaching in a club and supervises the athletes in competition, whereas the latter offers multiple sport activities. With regards to the skill level, both the coach and the instructor are recognized equally, and both are able to acquire the same qualification levels, except the A-level and graduate study diploma, which can only be acquired by coaches.

Other system-related metrics are more varied. 16 countries (66.7%) report having laws that relate specifically to sport coaching, while another 15 countries (62.5%) report having laws that relate to volunteering. Though, in the case of countries without laws that explicitly connect to these areas, interviewees have reported that coaching or volunteering are often at least indirectly covered by other legislation, such as that related to labour regulations, education or child protection.

One area that appears weaker, however, is the representation of coaches via national professional associations or unions. In total, 14 countries (58.3%) report not having such a national, multi-sport association to represent coaches. Some respondents, such as Slovakia, noted that certain sports have their own sport-specific coaches associations. Only 10 countries - Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom - report having a national professional associations or union. When interviewed, experts from these countries often noted that these associations contained weak structures and provided limited services. For example, the interviewees from Estonia stated that their association is simply not a “key driver for the development of coaching”. Similarly, the representative from Switzerland noted that their coaches association, Swiss Coach, lacks the financial resources to truly be influential.

3.2 The Regulation of the Coaching System

In terms of the regulation of coaching in Europe, the picture is also very diverse. When speaking of regulation, we are referring to the rules that underpin the existing procedures and processes within the coaching systems, especially as it relates to coach education and deployment. Here, this includes:

- The presence of a licensing system for coaches
- The professional standards required of coaches
- The level of professional regulation and alignment of coaching qualifications
- The tracking of coaches

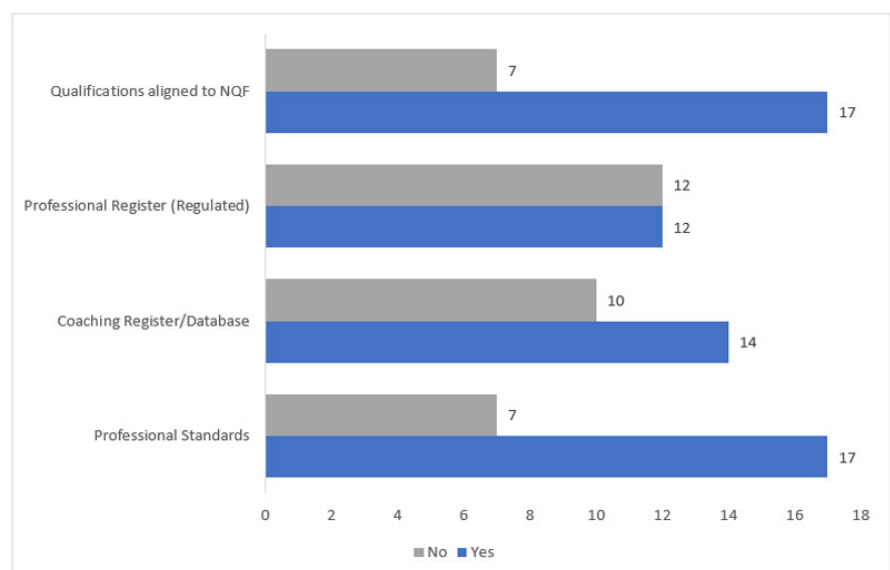


Figure 3. Summary of results related to European coaching regulations.

On the issue of tracking via a national coaching register or database, 15 (62.5%) respondents reported having some sort of national coaching register or database while six respondents further noted that their database were made available to the public. However, upon further analysis, the depth and precision of the data reported leaves much to be desired. About only one third (n=9, 37.5%) of the respondents can provide data related to the working status of their coaches (e.g. full-time, part-time or volunteer), while less than half of respondents (n=11, 45.8%) could provide data related to the gender of their coaches. And only one respondent, Flanders, could provide data related to both gender and working status.

Other areas, such as level of coaching or type of sport coached, were not tracked in this study. Given the above, it would be plausible to assume that accurate data may also be lacking. Furthermore, even when countries track most of the above data points, there are significant problems related to the quality and validity of the data reported. One country, for example, provided data for full-time, part-time and volunteer coaches, but the total of those three categories did not equal the numbers they provided for the total number of coaches, or the number of active or qualified coaches. Another smaller country somehow reported the exact same number for full-time, part-time and volunteer coaches. And one bigger country reported having only 40 qualified coaches, which would seem unrealistic given that country's sport participation and international sporting success.

Elsewhere, all countries reported having some form of coach licensing system. The conditions and regulations underpinning those licensing systems, however, are much less uniform. Some countries, such as Romania or Ireland, devolve the responsibility of licensing to individual sport federations, who in turn are left to develop and implement their own licensing system. This also means that, in some cases, not all sport federations within a country may actually have licensing systems. Other countries, such as Italy or Finland, organise licensing according to different levels or streams, and individual sport federation qualifications are then made to align with these established levels or streams.

Overall, based on the responses and information provided, countries are evenly split between national and federation-managed systems, with 11 countries (45.8%) reporting that licensing system resides at a multi-sport, national level and another 13 countries (54.2%) reporting that their licensing system is devolved to the sport federation level.

A majority of respondents also report having set professional or occupational standards for sport coaches, with 17 respondents (70.80%) indicating that their countries do indeed have such standards. It should be noted that, even when such formalised standards are absent, certain elements, such as background checks for coaches working with youth, are present in most countries. The number of countries that report that coaching is on the official professional register of their country – or, in other words, a regulated profession – is similar, with 12 respondents (50%) indicating in the affirmative.

For the most part, coaching qualifications are also aligned with various National Qualification Frameworks, which provides a quality assurance element, enhances the comparability of qualifications across sports and nations and fosters coach mobility across Europe. In total, 17 respondents (70.8%) reported having aligned their qualifications to the NQF. Moreover, a wide range of providers are recognised for the delivery of sport coaching qualifications. Tertiary education institutions (n=21, 87.5%), sport federations (n=18, 75%) and vocational institutions (n= 14, 58.3%) are reported as delivering sport coaching qualifications in a majority of countries. In contrast, private providers have not received widespread recognition in this regard and respondents indicate that they deliver qualifications only in a third (n=8) of the included countries.

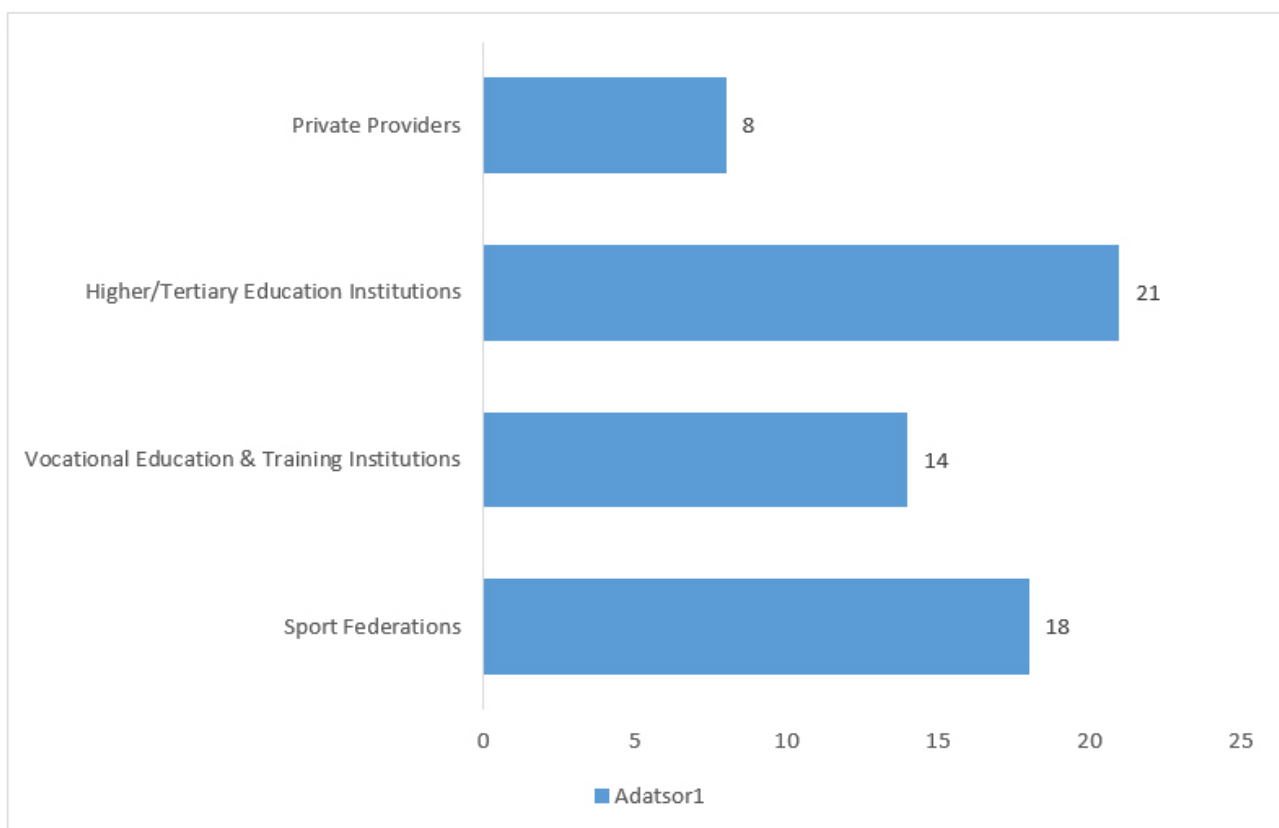


Figure 4. Organisations delivering coaching qualifications

Ultimately, these findings generally echo previous work that has suggested that these disparate systems lead to a lack of widespread application of a 'right to practice' and 'fragmented career structures' (Duffy et al., 2011). Overall, there is also clearly a need for deeper research and analysis in order to establish good practice within coaching systems. However, the potential for research is severely limited by the lack of sufficient and reliable data. For instance, with the current intelligence it is difficult to assess the uptake of a coaching licensing system or the extent to which coaches are meeting existing professional standards. Figure 5 below shows the extent to which EU countries gather demographic data about coaches.

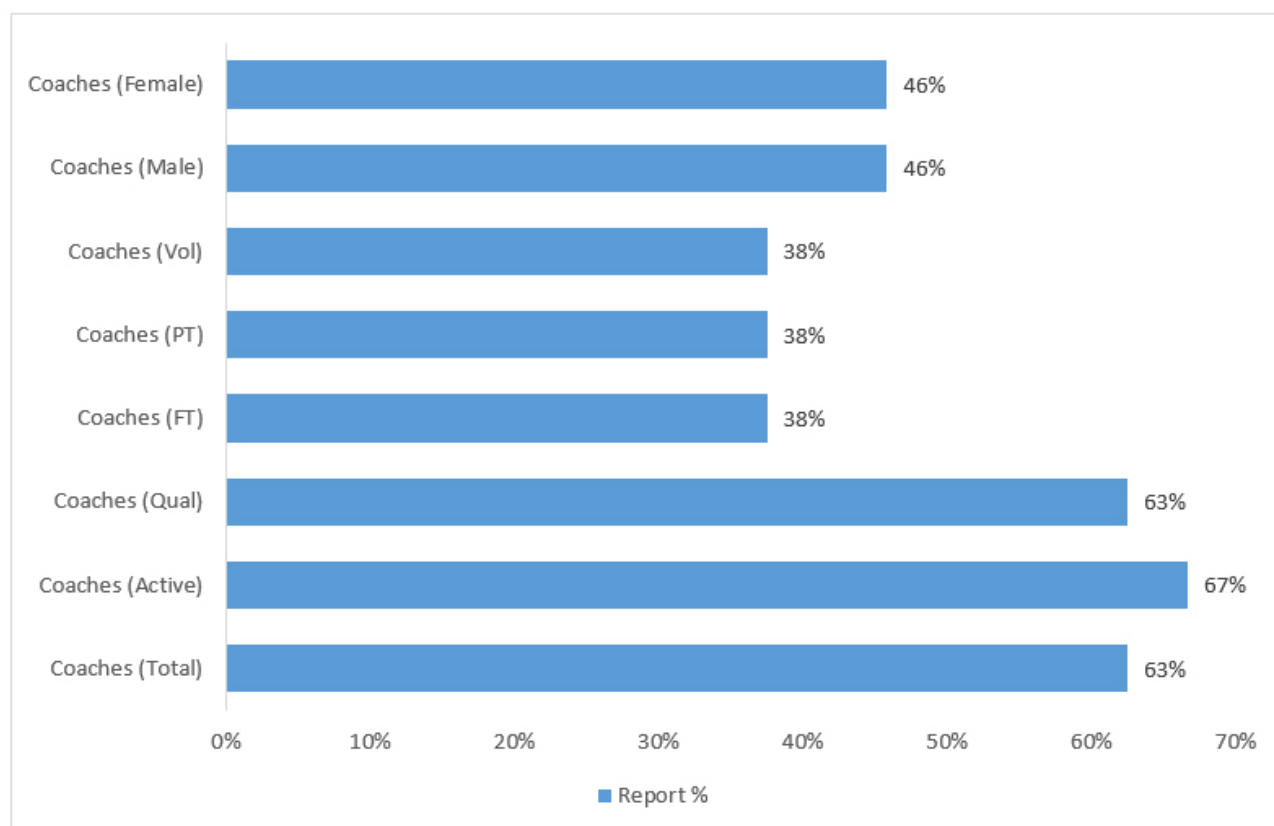


Figure 5. Overview of the percentage of countries reporting selected coaching demographic data.

3.3 The Role of Volunteers in Coaching

Volunteers account for 70% of the coaching workforce (North, 2009). The legal framework and support for volunteering generally, and sport volunteering specifically, is different across the European Union's member states (European Volunteer Centre, 2012; GHK, 2010). As mentioned above, 15 respondents (62.5%) indicate having a national volunteering law. However, only nine countries (37.5%) - Belgium (FL), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Ireland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom - can currently provide statistics on the numbers of volunteers in coaching.

There are also important differences in how volunteering is valued and incentivised across Europe. Estonia, for example, has one of the lower volunteering rates in the EU and part of the reason for that is the reported lack of programmes or policies to support volunteering. Similarly, in Portugal, interviewees reported that, although volunteering provided social and networking benefits, it is ultimately viewed as an obligatory "rite of passage" to get on the "paid coaching ladder". Other countries, such as Germany or Finland, provide more comprehensive support, such as tax breaks or training opportunities, while others still, such as France, even allow certain volunteers to receive a form of payment.

4. Conclusion

4.1 An Overall Positive Trend

This report presents a valuable baseline of the current status of the coaching system in Europe. Overall, it can be concluded that a majority of European countries have put in place the central elements of robust coaching systems. This includes the presence of an organisation charged with developing coaching (75%), a formal definition of coaching (79%) and the provision of laws specific to coaching (67%) and volunteering (62%).

Likewise, a small majority of respondents reported having set professional or occupational standards for sport coaches (66.6%). However, only 50% of countries indicated that coaching is on the official professional register of their country.

Another area of strength noted is the existence of a licensing system in every surveyed country. The conditions and regulations underpinning those licensing systems, however, are much less uniform. Overall, 46% of countries reported that their licensing system resides at a multi-sport, national level whilst for the remaining 54% this regulatory element was devolved to sport federations.

Finally, with regards to the status of coaching qualifications, 71% of countries reported having aligned their qualifications to their National Qualifications Framework which guarantees a certain level of quality and heterogeneity within and across Member States. The study also confirmed the wide range of coach education providers operating across the EU. Tertiary education institutions (87%), sport federations (75%) and vocational institutions (58%) were reported as delivering sport coaching qualifications in the majority of countries.

4.2 Areas for Improvement

Despite a clear positive trend signalling the efforts of the European Commission and Member States to improve sport coaching as an occupation, this research uncovered a number of remaining weaknesses.

In relation to the monitoring and tracking of the workforce, although 62% of countries reported having a national coaching register or database, only 37% were able to provide data regarding coaches' working status (i.e., full-time, part-time or volunteer). Moreover, just 46% could provide data related to the gender split of their coaches. Suggestively, only one country was able to provide reliable data on these two combined elements. If coaching is to continue to progress, more wide-spread and accurate data collection protocols will need to be implemented. Without clear baselines, it will be very difficult to get a sense of progress nor to determine what the priority areas may be.

Finally, an important area of weakness in the system is the lack of coaches' representation. In total, 15 countries (62%) reported not having a national association or union of coaches. Where these association existed, they were reported as having a modest impact and being involved mainly in coach education and development rather than representation. CoachForce21 is conducting additional research into this topic.

4.3 Not a One Size Fits All

This research brings to the fore a key issue which is not new in European policy circles: even when looking only at top-line, national-level data, there is no consistent recipe that works the same for every country in Europe. Countries vary greatly in terms of the level and form of legal and professional regulation of coaching, how coaches are educated and what structures are in place to recognise and represent them. This, however, is not unsurmountable. At European Commission level, there is an explicit understanding that each country's sport coaching system is embedded in a particular historical and social context which determines its structure and operation. The work of the Commission and of European projects such as CoachForce21 is to put forward a series of elements, components and best practice principles that will help each Member State design a coaching system that is fit for purpose. In doing so, pan-European occupational improvement in sport coaching appears to be the overarching goal rather than 'shoehorning' multiple realities into a single model of the 'ideal' coaching system.

4.4 Where to next?

Despite the relatively positive picture offered by some of the above figures, the reality is that in many of the dimensions covered by the CoachForce21 survey, there is enormous variability between countries and in some cases, ambiguity in their responses. Further exploration is warranted.

For instance, at the system level, the content of the definition of coaching and the infrastructure and responsibilities of the coaching lead organisation could provide further depth. Better understanding the nature of the professional standards and licensing systems applied in various countries would also provide valuable insights. Though the academic and coaching communities can certainly make important contributions by researching these topics, it is also made clear here that further research and understanding is severely limited by the lack of available and reliable data. Hence, a call to action is made to the European Commission and Member States to drive the improvement of data collection and tracking of coaches.



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6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1: Survey

The full survey instrument can be found here: <https://forms.gle/P9zsUtFG7GETvG1K8>

6.2 Appendix 2: Interview Script

Topic Title + Questions
1. The Sport Culture
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would you say your country has a culture and tradition of sport? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. That sport really matters to people? b. Why yes/not? 2. Who are the key organisations in sport in your country? (i.e., sport council, ministry, federations, clubs, NOC, etc) 3. How is sport regulated in your country? How would you describe the structure of the sport system? (i.e., sport-related laws, which organisations oversee sport, etc.)
2. Definition & Status of Coaching
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does a definition of coaching exist in your country? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Who provides that definition? b. Who is considered to be a coach in your country? c. What roles are linked to this definition? (i.e., leader instructor, trainer, manager) d. Is coaching linked at all to Physical Education? 2. What would you say is the social standing of coaching in your country? (i.e., high/medium/low) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What evidence is there to suggest your assessment? (i.e., level of government/federation support, etc) b. What has been the main driver for the elevation/demotion of coaching in your country? (i.e., performance targets, participation targets, health agenda, schools, private providers, social agenda, etc) c. Is there a value gap in coaching? How much are coaches valued?
3. Coaching Governance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there an organisation or consortium of organisations in charge of coaching? (e.g. a Coaching Association, Sport Federation, etc.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where does this organisation reside? (i.e., independent, ministry, NOC, etc) b. How is the leadership of the organisation chosen? c. How is this organisation funded? d. What are the competences of this organisation/these organisations? (i.e., regulation, licensing, education, promotion, etc) e. What is the history of this organisation? (i.e., how did it come to be?) f. Are there differences between Olympic and non-Olympic sports?

4. Regulatory Status of Coaching

1. How is coaching regulated in your country?
 - a. Are there any laws/regulations pertaining coaching?
 - b. Is this regulation made effective through central government, through regional government or through governing bodies of sport?
 - c. What do these laws cover? (i.e., education, employment, etc)
 - d. Is coaching on the professional register?
2. How much of an appetite is there in society/politics for change/development of coaching as a profession?
 - a. What would it take in your country for this to change/improve?
 - b. What has/hasn't worked? Why?
3. What is the professionalisation of coaching trajectory in your country?
 - a. Tightening? (i.e., Portugal)
 - b. Loosening? (i.e., UK)
 - c. Steady/No Change (i.e., Hungary)
4. Could coaching ever be a fully regulated profession in your country? If yes, what would that look like?
5. Are there different regulations for different sub-sectors of the coaching labour market? (i.e., high performance, professional sport, extreme sport, youth sport, disability, certain sports only, etc.)
6. What wider structures (i.e., societal, educational, etc) support/undermine coaching?
7. What is the legal status of volunteering in your country?
 - a. Is there a volunteering law?
 - b. What's the official definition of volunteering?
 - c. Are there policies designed to support, recognise, incentivise, regulate and protect volunteers in sport?
 - d. What are the perceived benefits and drawbacks of volunteering in coaching?

5. Coaching Workforce Regulation

1. What are the legal requirements to act or be employed as a coach?
 - a. Are there occupational/professional standards for coaching? Who provides them?
 - b. Are there minimum standards for deployment/employment in place? Who provides them? How are they monitored?
 - c. Are there any vetting systems for coaches?
 - d. Do coaches require public liability insurance? Who provides it?
 - e. Is there a code of practice/ethics for coaches?
 - f. Is there a licensing system? How does it work?
 - i. How long does the licence last for?
 - ii. What do coaches have to do to renew it?
 - iii. How much does it cost?
 - g. Are any of the above different for different sub-sectors of coaching labour market?
2. Is there a coaching register/database?
 - a. Who does it include? (i.e., qualified coaches, active coaches, paid coaches, professional coaches?)
 - b. Is it publicly searchable?

6. Coaching Workforce Employment

1. What are the key drivers for coach employment in your country? (i.e., performance, community, health)?
2. How are coaches typically employed? (i.e., by public institutions vs by private providers vs by clubs ; through a company vs self-employed, etc)
 - a. Who pays for coaching now?
 - b. Who is likely to pay for it in the future?
 - c. What is the professional trajectory of coaching going forward?
3. Is there a clear career pathway/structure for coaches?
4. Is there guidance in relation to rates of pay for coaches?
5. What employment rights do coaches have? (i.e., minimum wage, pension, holidays, etc)
6. What, if any, are the perceived barriers to women in coaching? Are these level-specific (e.g. grassroots versus HP)? Are they being addressed?
 - a. What policies or programmes are in place to promote and/or support women in coaching?
 - b. What equality laws exist that are actively applied to the sporting context?

7. Coaching Workforce Representation

1. What type/level of coach representation is there in your country?
 - a. Single-sport coaches' association
 - b. Multi-Sport coaches' association
 - c. Unions
2. What role do Coaching Associations play in your country?
 - a. Advocacy and Representation
 - b. Legal Support
 - c. Education
 - d. Other?
3. How is the voice of the coach recognised in your country? (i.e., NGBs, Coaching agencies, NOC, CAs?)
4. Do coaches really have a voice in your country?
 - a. How do coaches get heard?
 - b. What leverage do coaches have in your country?
 - c. Is there a voice/representation gap?
5. What recognition/reward mechanisms are in place for coaches? (i.e., stipends, awards, tax exemptions, etc)

8. Coaching Workforce Development

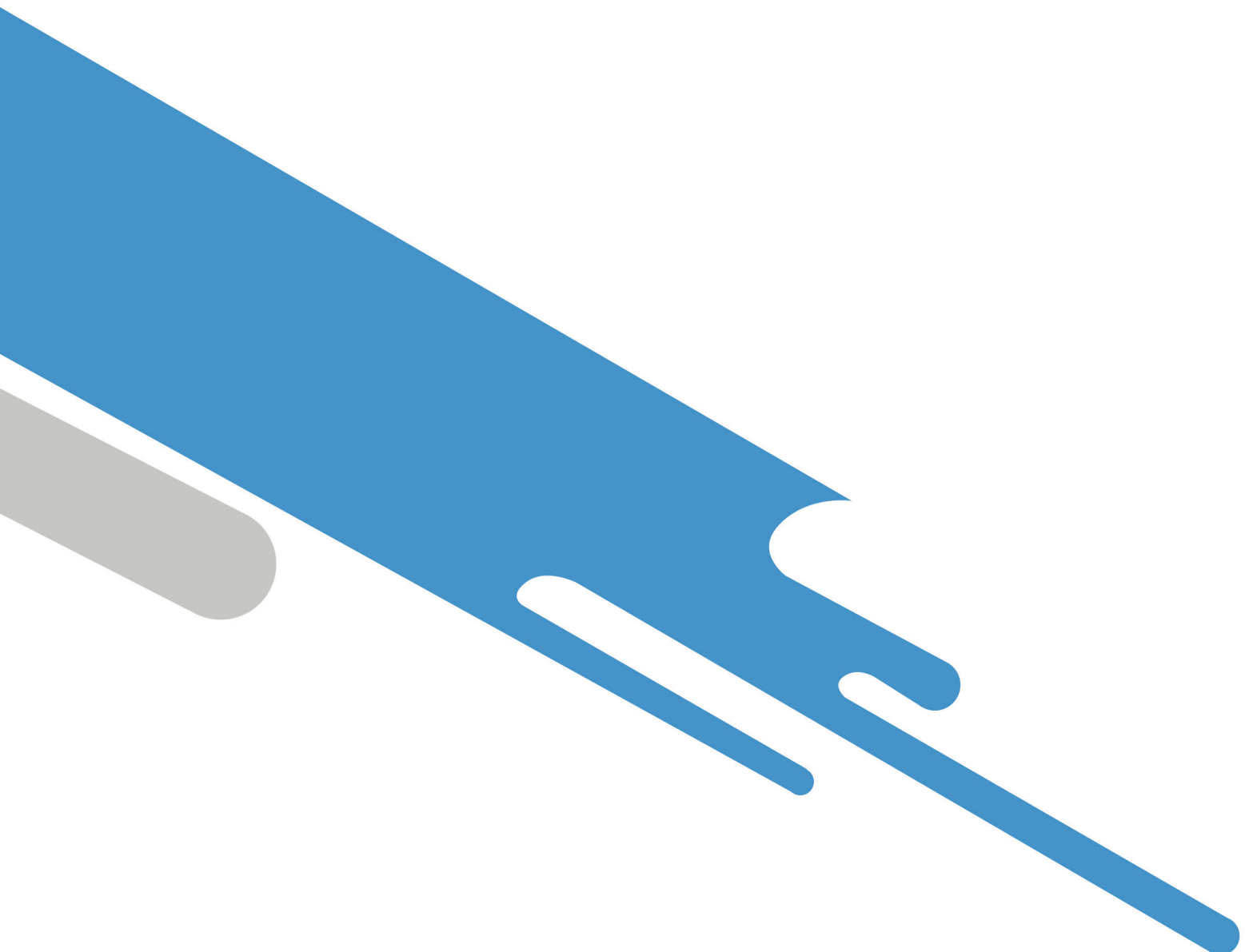
1. How do coaches get qualified in your country? (i.e., federations, HEI, FE, private providers?)
 - a. Are qualifications different based on the provider?
2. What qualifications are available to coaches?
 - a. Levels
 - b. Length/Hours
 - c. Formats: face to face, online, etc
 - d. Practicum period?
 - e. Assessment types?
3. Are these qualifications part of a general Coaching Qualifications Framework, or are they independent/different for each sport?
4. Are coaching qualifications aligned with the general education system?
 - a. Are they on the NQF/sectorial framework?
 - b. Are they aligned with NQF/EQF but not on it? Why?
 - c. Are they completely independent of NQF/EQF? Why?
5. Are qualifications built by domain?
6. What provision for non-formal learning or RPL is there?
7. What are the pre-requisites for coaches to access each qualification?
 - a. Age
 - b. Previous education
 - c. To go from one level to the next
8. What quality assurance mechanisms are in place for the qualifications?
9. Who are the coach developers and how are they trained and supported?
10. Are there any formalised benefits/advantages associated with coaching (e.g. continuous learning opportunities, travel, allowances, etc.)?
11. Is there a connection between HEI and the coaching family?
 - a. Is coaching research-informed?
 - b. How does coaching research reach practitioners?

9. Coaching Workforce Demographics

1. How many coaches are there in your country?
2. How many of them are qualified? To what level?
3. How many coaches are actively coaching?
4. What's the split between FT, PT and volunteer coaches?
5. What's the split between male and female coaches?
6. What's the split between coaches working in male/female sport? What's the split between age groups?
7. What's the split between domains? (i.e., children, adolescent, participation, adult participation, performance development, high performance)
8. How many coaches work in disability sport?
9. What is the evolution/trend in these demographics over the last ten years?

6.3 Appendix 3: Overview of Country Responses

	Definition of Coaching	Organisation(s) responsible for coaching	Laws - Coaching	Laws - Volunteering	Professional Standards	Licensing System	Coaching Register	Professional Register (Regulated)	Qualifications on NQF	National Professional Association or Union
Belgium (FL)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Bulgaria	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Croatia	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Cyprus	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Estonia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finland	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
France	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Germany	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Hungary	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ireland	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Latvia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lithuania	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Luxembourg	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Malta	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Netherlands	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Poland	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Romania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovakia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Slovenia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
United Kingdom	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes



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