

Research Report

Authors:

Louis Moustakas

Dr. Karen Petry

Dr. Sergio Lara-Bercial

Institute of European Sport

Development and Leisure Studies

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1 Introduction

The primary objective of the PEAK project is to promote and support good governance in sport by delivering a set of coaching policy recommendations for use by national and European sport federations, coaching bodies and governments. Six guiding questions underpin this objective, and give shape and focus to the project:

1. What roles, responsibilities, and statuses do coaching currently hold in the overall sport strategies of national governments within the European Union?
2. What policies, programmes and decision-making processes currently exist in European countries to develop and enhance coaching systems; regulate coaching to improve its quality and ensure the safety of all participants in sport, especially children?
3. Do European and National Sport Federations have policies and programmes that aim to regulate or stimulate coaching development?
4. What are the best practices currently available for the inclusion of coaching development in an organization's strategic plan based on which criteria?
5. What evidence-based strategies and practices are available to increase opportunities for women in coaching?
6. What evidence-based strategies and practices are needed to enhance the effectiveness of good governance measures in the practice of sport coaching?

Current policies are lacking a guiding framework. The regulation of coaching, although increasing amongst EU countries, is very heterogeneous. Therefore, the PEAK project will be an important step in strengthening the policy foundations of sports coaching in Europe. The project also recognizes that, due to the different sport systems in Europe, standardized and universal policy recommendations cannot always be developed. However, using rigorous theoretical grounding and evidence, the project does aim to put forth a selection of general good practice recommendations for coaching policies in Europe. The goal of the following research report is to set the context and background for the project. This report aims to do so by providing a clear, accessible overview of the 'state of the art' in Coaching, and its related domains. Data is obtained from a variety of sources, including policy documents, academic literature, expert surveys and in-depth interviews. Ultimately, the results from this research report will help to establish recommendations related to the Framework for Good Practice and the related Self-Assessment Tool.

2 Methodology

2.1 Literature Review

A narrative literature review is used to obtain a comprehensive analysis of the current knowledge related to coaching systems and regulations in Europe. The goal of this literature review is to help identify patterns and trends within the coaching sector, especially as it relates to four key areas: the coaching system, coaching regulation, volunteering, and women in coaching.

2.2 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 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 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. More specifically, questions focused on national coaching systems, national coaching regulations, the situation of women in coaching, and the situation of volunteers in coaching. A link to the survey instrument can be found in Appendix 2.

2.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured expert interviews were undertaken with 11 sport representatives from 11 European countries – 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. Before the interview, all interviewees were explained the goal of the study and 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 and outlined 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 coun-

tries and shared the interview guide with the interviewees. These steps were undertaken 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 Literature Review

Investigations of sports coaching within the areas of policy or good governance have been limited (Pierre, 2013). Withsport’s tradition of autonomous leadership and management and almost complete self-governance, formal governance or policy processes became established in sport, and sport coaching, later than most other professional sectors (Geeraert, Alm, & Groll, 2014). However, sport coaching is an incredibly large and important sector that directly touches millions of children, youth and adults around Europe. And this number does not account for the countless coaches who work or volunteer with and without a formal qualification or for those countries where coach registration data is sub-optimal. Estimates point to a much higher number between 5 and 9 million coaches across the EU (Lara-Bercial, North, Hämäläinen et al., 2017). For comparison, in 2013, there were about 3.2 million primary education teachers in Europe (Eurostat, 2016).

Given the number and reach of sport coaches, as well as their role in shaping and educating youth as well as adults on the continent, it is imperative to better understand the overall policy landscape in which these coaches operate. In line with this, the following literature review begins the work of mapping out that landscape, namely by looking at the state of coaching systems, coaching regulations, volunteering in coaching, and women in coaching across Europe.

3.1 The coaching systems in Europe

The coaching system is a complex network of processes and mechanisms including the recruitment, education, development, deployment, employment, and recognition of coaches. However, knowledge of these systems in Europe, and how to enhance or develop them, remains limited. Based on previous work done in the European coaching sector, we can define the sport 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, North, Hämäläinen et al., 2017, p. 17). The notion of a coaching system implies a layered system whereby all parts are interconnected and contribute to the outcomes of the whole (Lara-Bercial, North, Petrovic et al., 2017). The people and organisations that are part of this system can be graphically depicted as a connected, multi-layered structure, as presented in Figure 1 below.

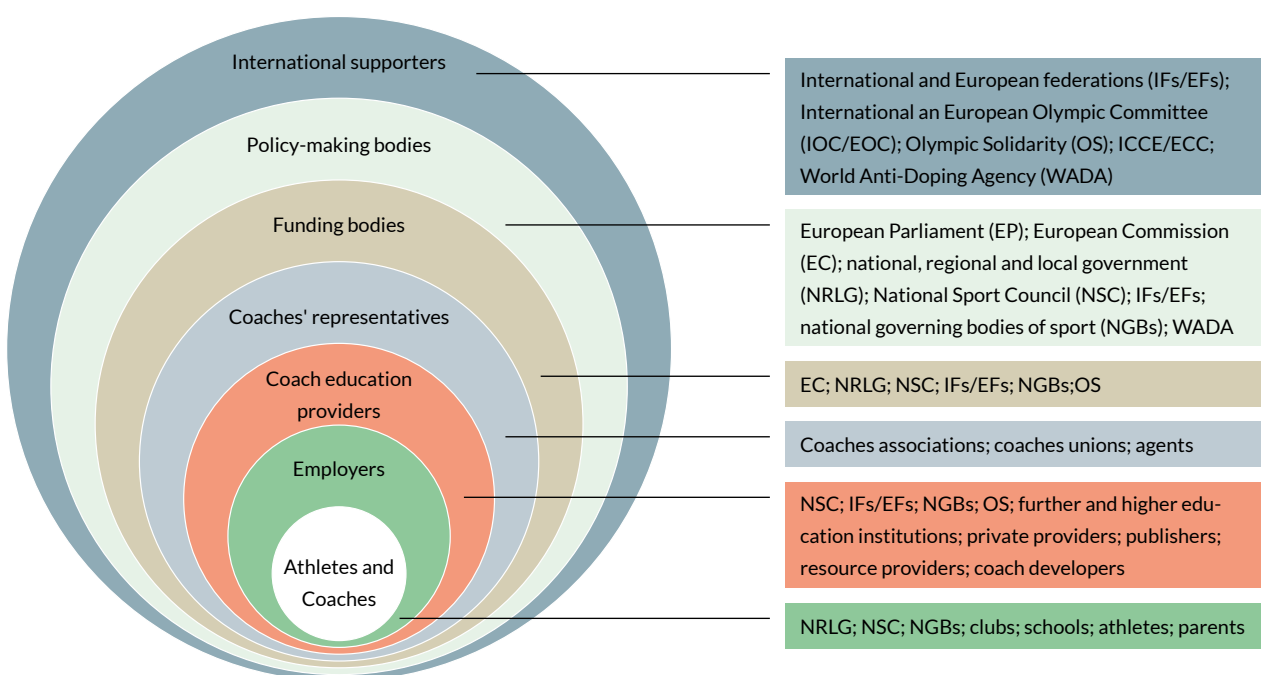


Figure 1. Graphical depiction of the coaching system (Lara-Bercial, North, Hämäläinen et al., 2017)

The different components of this system do not exist in isolation, but rather their exact shape, nature and level of interaction are hugely dependent on the political, social and cultural factors of a given country. For example, qualification frameworks, national legislation, funding streams and the overall structure of the sport system play a huge role in defining the coaching system (Lara-Bercial, North, Petrovic et al., 2017). Though there is to date little research on sport coaching systems in Europe, we know that there are important variations across the continent. Germany, for instance, has a centralized system where grassroots, elite, and international sporting responsibilities are held by the German Sport and Olympic Confederation (Petry & Hallmann, 2013). In contrast, the United Kingdom has a far more diffuse system, with these same grassroots, elite and international sporting portfolios split across a multitude of organisations, including the British Olympic Committee, various Commonwealth Games Associations, UK Sport and the four home country sport councils for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Gratton, Taylor, & Rowe, 2013). Regardless of the country-specific sport system, the European coaching sector ultimately recommends that any coaching system be fit for purpose and “takes into account the current enablers and constraints” in the individual country contexts (Lara-Bercial, North, Petrovic et al., 2017, p. 15).

3.2 Regulation of coaching in Europe

Much like with the broader coaching system, the specific rules and regulations related to sport coaching – including required qualifications, ethical standards, rights, and responsibilities of coaches – in Europe are both varied and largely unstudied (Taylor & Garratt, 2010). Part of this lack of understanding, as mentioned above, is borne out of the sheer variety of coaching and overall sport systems in various countries. Not only do these countries vary in terms of the organisation of the system, but they also greatly vary concerning their regulation. For example, France provides an example of a highly regulated system, whereby to perform certain coaching activities, including all paid coaching activities, the *Code du Sport* (2004) specifies that professionals must hold a certification or qualification guaranteeing their competence and the qualifications must be registered in the National Register of Professional Certifications. In contrast, the United Kingdom, although having a unified coaching qualifications system, does not yet have a national, multi-sport licensing system (Taylor & Garratt, 2008).

Another element adding complexity to the picture of coaching regulation in Europe is the special status often granted to sport more generally (Bogusz, Cygan, & Szyszczak, 2007). On the one hand, actors in sports, such as athletes or coaches, are subject to the rules and regulations of sport federations which often “have powers to make binding quasi-judicial decisions” (Bogusz et al., 2007, viii). On the other hand, there is an emerging perspective around the European Union that sport has become a major economic activity and, consequently, should be regulated as such, including as it relates to competition rules, employment rules, and other legal principles (Bogusz et al., 2007). This push and pull between the sport sector’s desire for autonomy and the state’s increased desire for regulation most likely contributes to highly differentiated levels of regulation on sport coaching, and sport more generally, across the European Union.

Further contributing to the disparate nature of sport and coaching regulation in Europe is that, for the most part, the European Union has no authority to enact policy or regulations related to the field. The European Union is authorized to coordinate or supplement the sport-related actions of the Member States, who still retain the primary authority. Indeed, Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) allows the European Union a specific, restricted basis for activities in the field of sport. Namely, the European Union can foster structured social dialogue with leading sport organisations and other sport stakeholders (Geeraert, 2016) as well as direct funding to certain sport policy priorities via the Erasmus funding mechanism.

3.3 Volunteerism in European coaching

Volunteering plays an important role in the provision of sport and sport coaching. This is particularly the case across the European Union. The sport sector is the largest voluntary activity throughout Europe (GHK, 2010). Nonetheless, the unique contexts of different countries imply that there is significant variability in the level and importance of volunteering across member states. For example, many Northern or Central European countries, such as the Netherlands, Finland, Germany or Belgium, report that more than 20% of the population take part in formal volunteering activities, whereas many Southern or Eastern countries, including Romania, Bulgaria or Cyprus, see that number dip below 10% (Eurostat, 2015). To some extent, these differences can be attributed to different cultural or social structures, though available data from throughout Europe also shows that people with higher levels of education tend to volunteer more (Eurostat, 2015).

Table 1. Participation in Voluntary Activities (Formal and Informal), by educational level, in 2015 for the population aged 16 and over (Eurostat, 2015).

	Formal voluntary activities				Informal voluntary activities			
	Total	Low (ISCED 0–2)	Medium (ISCED 3–4)	High (ISCED 5–8)	Total	Low (ISCED 0–2)	Medium (ISCED 3–4)	High (ISCED 5–8)
EU28 ⁽¹⁾	19.3	11.5	19.8	28.4	22.2	14.6	23.6	29.6
Belgium	20.4	13.3	18.5	28.1	20.8	16.4	21.0	24.2
Bulgaria	5.2	1.7	3.8	13.4	6.3	3.9	5.6	11.4
Czech Republic	12.2	39.1	11.5	18.4	16.6	11.4	15.8	23.5
Denmark	38.7	32.2	39.1	43.1	41.8	33.5	43.9	45.3
Germany	28.6	19.5	28.6	36.4	11.4	8.4	11.6	13.4
Estonia	16.4	10.4	15.5	21.1	25.5	20.4	24.6	29.7
Ireland ⁽²⁾	29.0	18.8	26.7	38.4	37.6	29.5	35.0	45.5
Greece	11.7	8.5	11.9	16.6	14.4	11.5	14.8	18.5
Spain	10.7	7.2	11.7	16.5	10.6	7.9	11.3	15.1
France	23.0	14.9	23.8	29.8	23.3	18.2	24.6	26.0
Croatia	9.7	4.8	10.2	16.6	17.2	10.1	18.2	27.1
Italy	12.0	8.4	14.6	16.8	11.2	8.0	12.6	17.1
Cyprus	7.2	3.2	6.4	12.2	2.6	1.6	2.2	4.2
Latvia	7.3	4.5	6.0	11.8	28.3	16.3	27.7	38.2
Lithuania	16.3	8.0	13.2	27.6	16.3	10.0	15.3	22.3
Luxemburg	36.7	26.7	39.6	47.6	30.3	25.3	33.3	33.5
Hungary	6.9	4.5	5.7	12.3	7.8	4.9	7.1	12.6
Malta	8.8	5.9	10.0	16.9	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.1
Netherlands	40.3	29.7	39.1	49.7	82.5	69.2	84.6	89.7
Austria	28.3	15.7	29.9	35.6	28.3	18.9	29.2	34.1
Poland ⁽²⁾	13.8	8.3	11.3	24.6	50.6	35.9	50.0	63.7
Portugal	9.0	5.9	13.4	16.7	20.5	16.9	24.6	30.6
Romania	3.2	2.1	2.7	8.2	3.2	1.6	3.2	8.2
Slovenia	30.4	18.7	30.8	38.5	54.6	40.6	55.1	64.0
Slovakia	8.3	4.5	7.5	13.6	18.8	13.9	18.1	24.6
Finland	34.1	24.5	33.7	42.0	74.2	61.7	77.1	80.0
Sweden	35.5	28.3	36.1	40.5	70.4	62.5	72.2	74.5
United Kingdom ⁽²⁾	23.3	13.5	20.3	35.0	19.2	11.8	17.1	27.1
Iceland	32.8	24.6	33.8	40.7	64.8	60.2	66.8	67.7
Norway	48.0	35.4	49.1	57.7	74.5	66.9	74.8	81.0
Switzerland	36.5	24.9	36.7	42.9	48.2	41.1	50.3	48.7
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	11.2	5.4	12.5	21.2	21.9	18.3	22.0	30.4
Serbia	5.2	2.4	5.8	8.2	12.4	8.0	13.2	17.3

Note: ¹ Estimated data
² Unreliable data

When looking at sport volunteering specifically, research shows that sport volunteers can represent anywhere between 1% and 16% of the total volunteering population (GHK, 2010). Indeed, sport clubs are predominantly run by volunteers and, in sport, 73% of volunteers participate in coaching activities (GHK, 2010). A recent report by the European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE) showed that up to 82% of sport organisations engage volunteers (European Observatoire of Sport and Employment, 2019). Despite these high numbers, many sport clubs report that filling sport coaching positions is challenging due to “the new demand for higher skills and qualifications. Many volunteers do not meet these requirements and do not have the time to undertake the necessary training to acquire the skills needed” (GHK, 2010, p. 191). Moreover, in the abovementioned EOSE report, 56% of organisations stated their expectations of volunteer and paid coaches were similar. These situational factors may explain why coaches are also by far the hardest role to recruit and retain personnel in the sport and physical activity sector (European Observatoire of Sport and Employment, 2019). Further compounding this issue is the fact that we currently do not have a detailed understanding of the decision-making processes of volunteers or the factors influencing their choice to pursue a qualification (Wilson, 2004). There does however exist more robust data on more general motivators for volunteering in sports or sports coaching.

Previous research out of the United Kingdom has shown that sport coaches’ motivation to volunteer is strongly linked to an enthusiasm for the sport as well as to the notion of “giving back to the sport” (Nichols et al., 2016). Involvement of one’s children, however, is a motivating factor that varies depending on the type of sport (Nichols et al., 2016). A German study on sports volunteering identified that the motive of shaping society had a negative impact on the decision to volunteer, as did human capital and gender. Paradoxically, once people engaged as volunteers, the total time committed was positively related to, amongst other things, having children, club membership, and the desire to shape society (Hallmann, 2015).

The level and type of support provided to these volunteers is also highly variable across the continent. The legal framework, structural and financial support for volunteering generally, and sport volunteering specifically, is different across the European Union’s member states (European Volunteer Centre, 2012; GHK, 2010). And, though the vast majority of coaches are volunteers, there is nonetheless a substantial and growing segment of part-time or full-time paid coaches (Duffy et al., 2011; North, 2009; Thompson & McIlroy, 2017). Studies commissioned by the European Commission show that there are over 3.5 million qualified coaches in the EU (pwc & CONI, 2016), and nearly 1.7 million individuals are employed in sport (Eurostat, 2018). Though we cannot extrapolate the number of employed coaches based on these numbers, it makes evident that many countries have a hybrid model of volunteer, part-time and full-time coaches (Duffy et al., 2011) and this reality needs to be taken into account when developing policy recommendations.

3.4 Women in European Coaching

Evidence from Europe and elsewhere suggests that women are significantly under-represented within coaching at all levels, although there is considerable variation between countries. Only one in ten accredited Olympic coaches are women (Norman, 2014), whereas, in the UK, only one in five qualified coaches are women (Sports Coach UK, 2011)¹. Similarly, in Germany, 10% of high-performance coaches and 13% of professional coaches are women, whilst in Finland, two-thirds of head coaching roles in team sports are held by men (Robertson, 2016). Additionally, some research has also shown that being a woman is negatively associated with engagement and time spent volunteering in sport more generally (Hallmann, 2015). These trends, however, are not unique to sport. Women in Europe are, on average, less active in the labour force and receive less remuneration than men (European Commission, 2018).

1 More recent figures in the UK indicate that up to 46% of the coaching workforce is made up of women (Thompson & McIlroy, 2017), yet the definition of coaching used for this study was much broader and inclusive than the definition used in the vast majority of other studies.

There are numerous potential barriers to increased participation of women in sport coaching. For example, lack of support systems and professional networks, inequality in coach education provision, and the gender-typing of tasks or sports can be significant obstacles (Ecorys, 2017). Research shows that there are numerous systematic and societal barriers to women in coaching, including the male-dominated nature of sports, the lack of training opportunities, and the lack of mentoring opportunities (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012). And these barriers can, in turn, reinforce negative self-perceptions amongst female coaches, who sometimes “have low self-efficacy, low perceived confidence and competence, and generally believe they are not qualified for the position, even when they possess a high degree of athletic and coaching capital” (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012).

In response to these statistics and challenges, many sport organisations have implemented programmes to encourage the participation of women in coaching (Ecorys, 2017). However, even when sports organisations formally promote more diverse participation, some research suggests that these initiatives are limited to “tick box” exercises and number counting (Leanne Norman & Rankin-Wright, 2018). Nonetheless, the importance of encouraging greater participation of women in sport coaching is however widely understood. Indeed, “there is a wide acceptance of the notion that women coaches, as visible role models, can provide inspiration and encouragement to girls and women to take part in sport and sustain their participation” (Ecorys, 2017, p. 49). Indeed, there is already some evidence that role models may influence areas such as participation or leadership, but “Interaction intensity, long-term commitment, as well as cultural and personal relevance” are important factors that can influence the overall impact (Meier, 2015).

4 Results and Discussion

In order to further understanding the nature of coaching policy in Europe, data was collected from expert surveys and expert interviews from various national representatives connected to the sport and coaching sectors. For the following, data from both methodologies were combined to provide a summary of the different sport coaching systems and policy landscapes in Europe. This summary data is supplemented by quotes or other qualitative information extracted via the in-depth interviews. The 11 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 and discussed in connection with the sections in the above literature review. As such, results are presented according to the four main thematic areas of this research, namely coaching systems, regulation, volunteerism, and women in coaching. Further, an overview of responses obtained by country experts (both from the expert surveys and interviews) is provided in the Appendix.

4.1 The coaching systems in Europe

As outlined in the literature review, 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., 2017, p. 17). Using this as our basis, with the data collected through our research, we can draw some conclusions about the definition, legal basis, and organisational framework surrounding coaching in Europe.

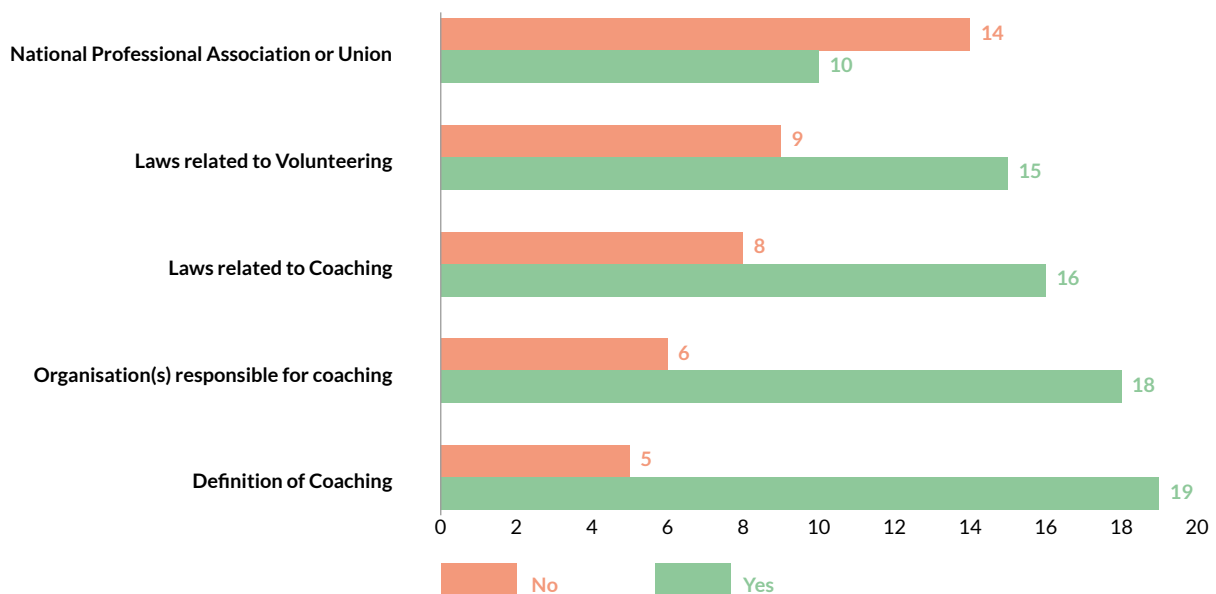


Figure 2. Summary of results related to European coaching systems.

Overall, we see that most countries in Europe have the standard building blocks of a 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 training 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 can 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. 18 countries (75%) report having laws that relate specifically to sport coaching, while another 16 countries (66.7%) 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 Germany, noted that there is a Coaching Commission within their Olympic committees, whereas others, such as Slovakia, noted that certain sports have their own sport-specific coaches associations.

Only nine countries – Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom – reported having a national professional associations or Union. When interviewed, experts from these countries often noted that these associations were weak and little active. 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.

4.2 Regulation of coaching in Europe

In terms of the regulation of coaching in Europe, the picture is also incredibly diverse and varied. 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, that includes the tracking of coaches, the presence of a licensing system for coaches, the professional standards required of coaches, as well as the level of professional regulation and alignment.

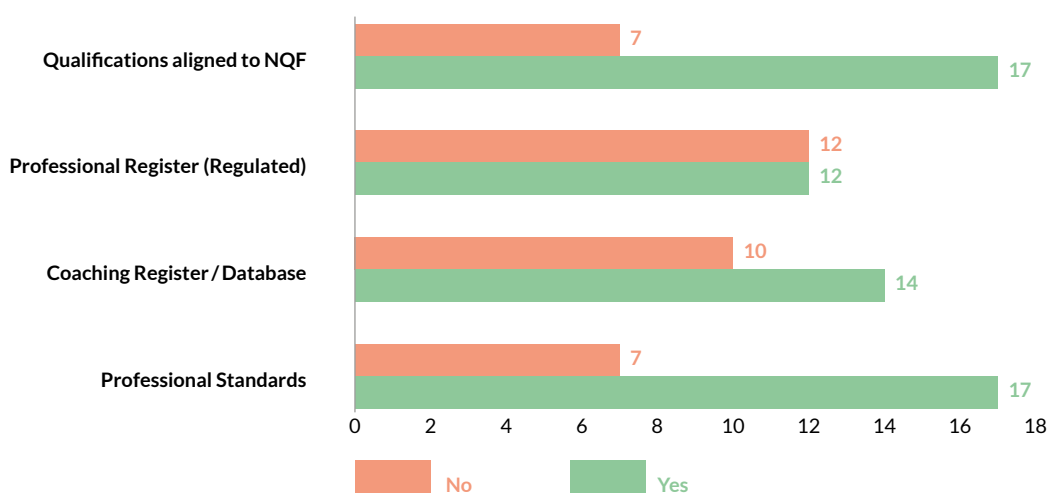


Figure 3. Summary of results related to European coaching regulations.

On the issue of tracking via a national coaching register or database, though 15 (62.5%) respondents report having some sort of national coaching register or database while six respondents further note that their database is 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 (n=11, 45.8%) of respondents 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, but one suspects that the data there would 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 reports the exact same number for full-time, part-time and volunteer coaches. And one bigger country reports having only 40 qualified coaches, which would seem unrealistic given that country's sport participation and international sporting success.

All countries report 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 not all sport federations 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 responses and information provided, countries are roughly 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 (n=17, 70.8%) also report having set professional or occupational standards for sport coaches 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 (NQF), which enhances the comparability of qualifications and mobility across Europe. In total, 17 respondents (70.8%) report having aligned their qualifications to the NQF. We also see that 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 in a third (n=8) of the included countries.

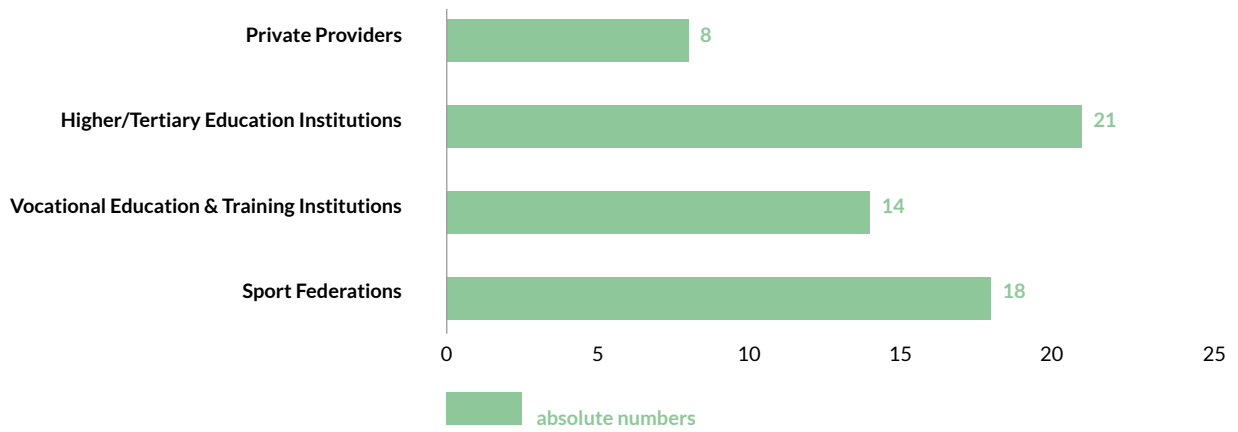


Figure 4. Organisations delivering coaching qualifications (multiple answers possible)

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, but the potential for research is severely limited by the lack of adequate data provision. For instance, without comprehensive and reliable data, it is difficult to assess the uptake of a coaching licensing system or the extent to which coaches are meeting existing professional standards. Though it is not specifically the purview of this report to make recommendations, the results related to data provision are so striking, it is immediately evident that countries must improve their data collection and data provision system.

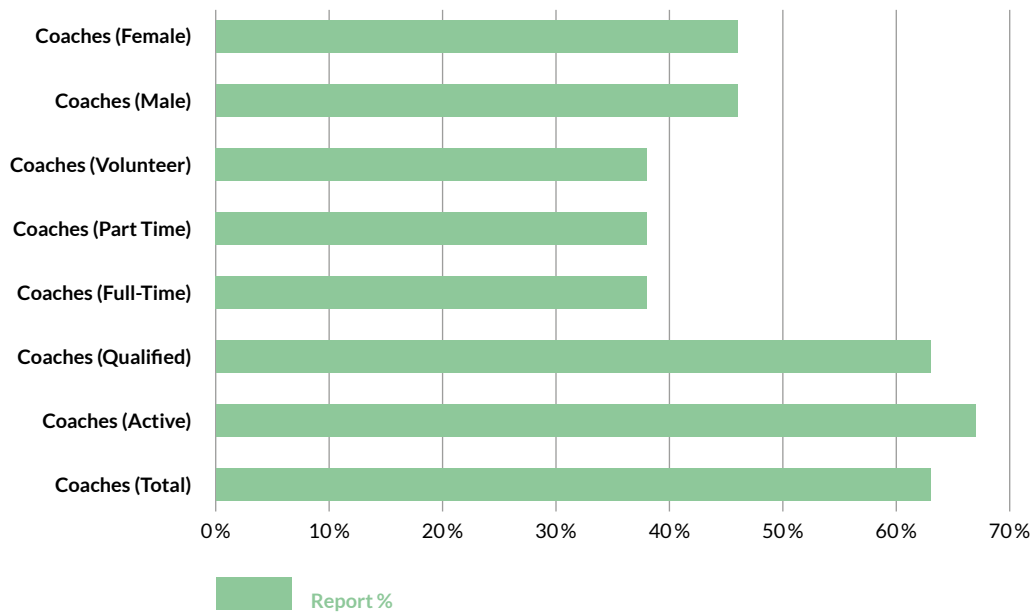


Figure 5. Overview of the percentage of countries reporting selected coaching demographic data.

4.3 Volunteerism in European coaching

As indicated in the literature review, 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, while only nine respondents (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 incentivized 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. What is consistent from both the interviews and the literature, however, is the large extent to which volunteers underpin sport and sport coaching throughout the European Union.

4.4 Women in coaching in Europe

Evidence from Europe suggests that women are significantly under-represented within coaching at all levels, including the elite and grassroots levels (Hallmann, 2015; L. Norman, 2014; Robertson, 2016; Sports Coach UK, 2011). Findings from this research only reinforce this evidence. As mentioned above, only 11 respondents (45.8%) – Belgium (FL), Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom – were able to report on the total number of coaches per gender. Of the numbers that were provided by the respondents, we see a significant disparity between male and female coaches. In the reported numbers, women account for 1057698 of reported coaches (28.97%), whereas men account for 2593412 of the reported coaches (71.03%).

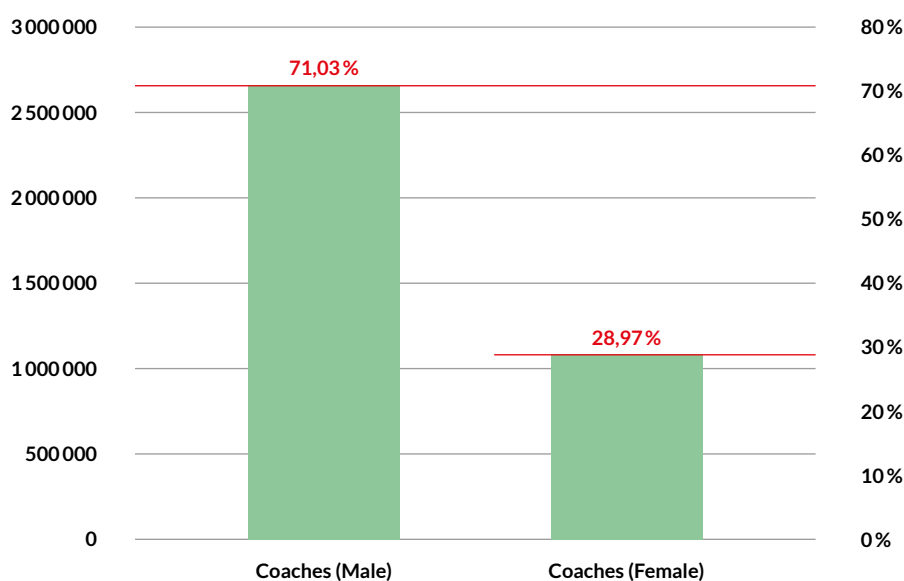


Figure 6. Total number and percentage of coaches per gender for 6 countries.

Furthermore, there are highly uneven levels of support provided to women coaches across the investigated countries. Only five countries (20.8%), namely Belgium (FL), Croatia, Finland, Ireland, and the United Kingdom indicated that there is some kind of national-level programme or policy related to women in coaching. For instance, the Flemish respondent noted that they have engaged in promotional activities to encourage women in coaching and that they implement gender-neutral recruitment policies for their coach developers. In Ireland, the country has a Women in Sport Policy and have identified coaching as a priority area in that policy. And, in the United Kingdom, UK Coaching has, since 2014, run the ‘Women into High Performance Coaching’ programme.

As for the countries without national-level programmes or policies, some do however report that they have special commissions dedicated to the topic, such as Slovakia, whose Olympic committee has a Women and Sport Commission, while some countries also note that individual sport federations do have programmes designed to encourage women in coaching. Overall, these numbers should be treated with some caution though, as they somewhat simplify a complex issue and do not take into account the work, presence and influence of federations, coaches associations, working groups, sport clubs and municipalities, amongst others. Nonetheless, they do make evident that women in coaching is not necessarily a priority at the national level in many countries.

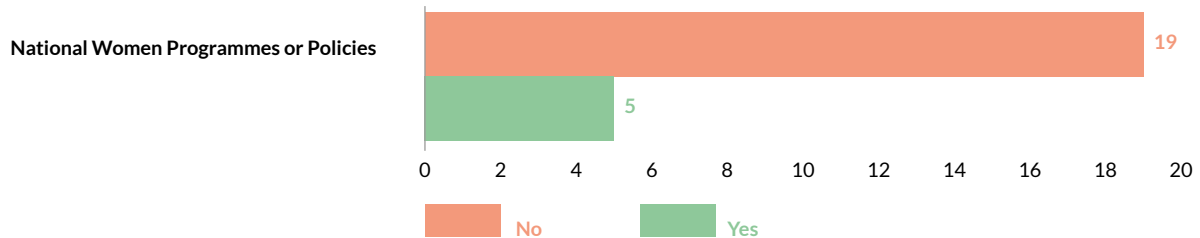


Figure 7. Number of countries provided national women in coaching programmes or policies.

Beyond a lack of programmes or policies addressing women in coaching, there is also a lack of clear, evidence-backed understanding of the facilitators and constraints faced by women in coaching. Interviewees provided a variety of answers when asked about the challenges faced by women in coaching, ranging from work-life balance to cultural stereotyping, but no interviewee was able to point to research or data from their country to help inform their answers. The issue of women in coaching is also not equally valued across the investigated countries, with one respondent noting that women “have access without any restriction to training for coaches” and another interviewee stating that “the current issue (of women in coaching) is not big enough to be supported by regulation”.

5 Conclusion

First and foremost, it is clear that even more research and questioning is needed to better understand the coaching policy landscape on an individual and European level. Though this report answers important first questions and presents a valuable baseline related to coaching policy in Europe, many areas would benefit from further exploration. At the system level, the content of definitions and the responsibilities of the assigned 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. And, of course, better understanding the facilitators and constraints faced by women in coaching would allow countries to design more and better programmes to address the existing gaps. 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 data. Many countries are simply unable to provide reliable data about the number or characteristics of their coaches.

This research also brings to bear the fact that even when looking only at top-line, national-level data, there is no consistent recipe for coaching policy in Europe. Countries vary greatly in terms of the level of legal and professional regulation of coaching, of the representation of coaches, of support provided to volunteers, and of support provided to women in coaching. Moving forward, the results from this research will be combined with analysis from best practices in the field of policymaking to help set forth an approach for a Framework for Coaching Policies and a related Self-Assessment Tool that can be used by policymakers across Europe.

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7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: In-Depth Country Reports

Due to the size and volume of the reports, these are attached as separate files.

7.2 Appendix 2: Survey

The full survey instrument can be found here

7.3 Appendix 3: Interview Guidelines

Topic Title + Questions	Comments
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.)ns oversee sport, etc.)	<i>Have put this in as a warm up question, but also to try and get a sense for how important sport is in each country</i>
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	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How is coaching regulated in your country?<ol style="list-style-type: none">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. grass-roots 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

We need to discuss if we deal with this here or whether we do something separate for the whole Coaches Association piece.

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?

7.4 Appendix 4: Overview of survey and interview 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 Women Programmes or Policies	National Professional Association or Union
Belgium (FL)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Bulgaria	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Croatia	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cyprus	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Estonia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Finland	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
France	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Germany	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Hungary	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Ireland	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Latvia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Lithuania	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Luxembourg	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Malta	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Netherlands	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Poland	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Romania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Slovakia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Slovenia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
United Kingdom	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

8 Partners

European Elite Athletes Association (EU Athletes):

<https://euathletes.org/>

Finnish Olympic Committee:

<https://www.olympiakomitea.fi/>

Foundation of Sport Education and Information:

<https://www.spordiinfo.ee/Tutvustus-2>

German Sport University Cologne (GSU):

<https://www.dshs-koeln.de/en/institute-of-european-sport-development-and-leisure-studies/>

International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE):

<https://www.icce.ws/>

International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE):

<https://www.icsspe.org/>

Sport Ireland Coaching:

<https://www.sportireland.ie/coaching>

Swiss Federal Institute of Sport Magglingen (SFISM):

<https://www.ehsm.admin.ch/en/home.html>