

**REVIEW OF THE EU 5-LEVEL STRUCTURE FOR THE RECOGNITION  
OF COACHING QUALIFICATIONS**

***CONSULTATION DOCUMENT VERSION 2***

FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE REVIEW GROUP OF THE EUROPEAN  
COACHING COUNCIL

AND THE BOARD OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF COACH  
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## Executive Summary

This document describes the review process that has been carried out to date on the EU 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications. The Review is being conducted by the European Coaching Council, a sub-committee of the European Network of Sports Science, Education and Employment (ENSSEE). The current document represents the second consultative draft and has been developed following feedback from delegates at the ENSSEE/ICCE Forum in Limerick in September 2005.

The need for the Review was identified by the members of the European Coaching Council, given that the initial structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications was first developed in 1999. It was also felt that there was a need to more fully engage with the international federations on the issue of coach education and qualifications. In a wider, global context the International Council for Coach Education has also indicated the need for a framework to guide the recognition of coaching qualifications between different countries.

In addition, there have been several wider developments within vocational education and training in the European Union that have significant implications for the way in which coaches are educated and their qualifications recognised. These include the Lisbon, Bologna and Copenhagen processes that have begun to chart new directions for vocational education and higher education in light of the emerging social and economic challenges facing the European Union. These processes have also initiated a proposed European Qualification Framework (EQF) and a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

The Review to date suggests three main changes in the 5-level structure:

- a. **Four levels are proposed rather than five:** The number of coaching levels has been reduced from five to four. This more closely reflects the nature of the coaching role and current training provision as identified by the international federations and the national competent authorities in coach education.
- b. **Four standard occupations are identified rather than one:** The revised framework recognises that within the professional area of coaching there is a diversity of standard occupations. Four main standard occupations have been identified: Coach of beginner players (child, junior, adult); Coach of participation/non-competitive players (child, junior, adult); Coach of talent identified/competitive players (child, junior, adult); Coach of full-time/high performance players.
- c. **Coaching competence and learning outcomes are more strongly identified:** In the initial framework, learning hours were central to the description of each of the levels. In the revised framework, greater attention is devoted to coaching competence and learning outcomes.

Detailed work has been carried out on the description of the standard occupations, for the purposes of consultation. A European Coaching Convention is proposed through which it is proposed that the framework for the licensing and recognition of coaches as proposed by the European Coaching Council is the European recognised mechanism that is affirmed and actively supported.

# REVIEW OF THE EU 5-LEVEL STRUCTURE FOR THE RECOGNITION OF COACHING QUALIFICATIONS

## 1. Background to the Review

Since its completion in 1999, the *European structure for the 5-levels of coaches' training*<sup>1</sup> has facilitated a gradual convergence towards a common European framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications. A number of countries have used the structure as a reference point for the further development of their coach education systems<sup>2</sup>, while the document has also been utilised by some international federations<sup>3</sup>. The structure outlined in the 1999 document is summarised in Appendix 1.

However, it has become evident that there are elements of the structure that have not been implemented or which have not gained full acceptance within the EU coaching community. For example, the nature and positioning of level 5 qualifications has been the subject of considerable debate. This debate has focused on the realisation that expert levels of coaching are derived from many years of on-the-job experience and cannot simply be attained through the completion of a degree course.

There is also a need to more strongly recognise the role of national and international federations in the education of coaches. While the initial document recognised this principle, International Federations were not centrally involved in its development. On a global basis, there has been increasing interest in the need for a comprehensive and transparent system for the recognition of coaching qualifications.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the trend towards competence-based learning suggests that the initial structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications needs to be revised in line with the latest thinking in this area.

It is also the case that the European context for the recognition of educational and vocational qualifications has changed significantly since the creation of the 1999 document. Some of the main changes in the European landscape that impact on the structure for coach education are summarised in section 4 of this document.

## 2. The Aims and Methodology for the Review

Taking the above context into account, the European Coaching Council (a sub-committee of the European Network of Sports Science, Education and Employment -ENSSEE) initiated a review of the European Structure for the 5-levels of coaches' training in 2004. The initial mandate for the Review was as follows:

- Review the EU Qualification structure for coaches, in light of the emerging structures for the recognition of vocational and educational qualifications in Europe and taking into account the needs and programmes of European/International and National sports federations.
- Make preliminary proposals on a revised structure for Coaching qualifications in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> European Sports Observatory, *European Structure for the 5-levels of coaches' training*, 1999

<sup>2</sup> For example, Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Hungary; Portugal; Ireland; Italy; United Kingdom have employed the framework as a reference point to varying degrees in the development of their coach education systems

<sup>3</sup> The European Handball Association has adopted the Rinck Convention, which seeks to align the coach education programmes of its member countries with a structure that has used the European Structure for the 5-levels of coaches' training as a reference point

<sup>4</sup> The International Council for Coach Education (ICCE), which is the world-wide umbrella body for coach education, considered this issue formally at its biennial Global Conference in Limerick in September 2006. Arising from that event, it is proposed that the current draft document will also be considered by the Board of ICCE in Magglingen, Switzerland on July 4. A number of international federations have also begun to consider the requirements for coach education, including the International Tennis Federation; International Amateur Athletics Federation; Federation Internationale Equestre Internationale; International Rugby Board.

- Prepare a preliminary report, for consultation purposes, at the ENSSEE and International Council for Coach Education (ICCE) Forum in Limerick on September 2-4, 2005

The Review Group included representatives from the European Coaching Council (ECC); International Federations; European Olympic Committee; ICCE and ENSSEE.<sup>5</sup> The Review Group met on 6 occasions in Warsaw; Rio Maior; Limerick; Budapest; Barcelona; Valencia. The work was carried out in parallel with the Aligning European Higher Education Structures in Sport (AEHESIS). The ECC wishes to acknowledge the support of that project in facilitating meetings and in the consideration of potential curriculum models for coaching.

The objectives for the Review were further refined by the Review Group as follows:

- Promote a greater consistency of approach to the development of coaching qualifications across sports and the different EU countries
- Encourage the development of more relevant education and training provision to meet the needs of national and international federations, athletes and coaches
- Provide a transparent framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications within the EU, taking into account the wider EU developments in vocational and educational training and the need to more clearly define the relationship with the higher education sector
- Develop a framework that recognises the role of the non-university and university sectors in the education of coaches, in the context of emerging structures for the recognition of educational and vocational qualifications within the EU
- Raise standards and improve the quality of coaching
- Work towards a greater public recognition of coaching as a qualified, competent and regulated profession, which is integral to successful player development at all levels.

In addition to the above, it was recommended that quality assurance procedures should underpin all programmes receiving recognition with the revised framework. Equality of opportunity was also highlighted as a key underpinning principle of the framework, with a strong emphasis on the inclusion of minority groups, girls/women and disabled players and coaches.

The primary methodology employed by the Review was a desk and expert analysis of:

- the previous 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications
- emerging trends and needs within coach education in the EU and globally
- the changing context for vocational education and training within the EU

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<sup>5</sup> The composition of the Group was as follows: Chair: Dr Pat Duffy, sports coach UK and Chairman of the European Coaching Council; Mr Corrado Beccarini, CONI, Italy; Ms Jacqueline Braissant, Federation Equestre Internationale; Mr Bruce Cook, International Rugby Board; Dr Miguel Crespo, International Tennis Federation; Mr Christophe Debove, INSEP, France; Mr Elio Locatelli, International Amateur Athletics Federation; Dr Thierry Marique, Louvain, Belgium; Dr Ladislav Petrovic, Director, Coach Education, Semmelweis University; Mr Jose Rodrigues, Director, Rio Maior; Dr Agoston Schulek, European Athletics Association; Mr Ton Van Linder, European Handball Federation. External advisor: Mr John Bales, President, Coaching Association of Canada and President-elect of the International Council for Coach Education.

This analysis was supported by peer review through the AEHESIS project and by the appointment of Mr John Bales, President of ICCE, as external evaluator to the project.

Consultation with the national competent authorities in coach education, international federations and other agencies was also a key part of the methodology. As part of this process, an interim consultation document was developed and presented to representatives from ECC, ENSSEE and ICCE at the ENSSEE/ICCE Forum in Limerick in September 2005. Over 80 delegates participated in the sessions that considered the document and feedback was collated. The feedback indicated significant support for the general direction of the revised framework, thus providing a direction for the preparation of this second consultation draft.

### **3. The significance of coaching to the European Union**

The creation of a coherent, quality assured coach education and qualification system within the European Union will provide many tangible benefits. Coaches play a central role in introducing people to sport and in helping children, players and athletes to improve and achieve success.

Through the further development of coaching and coach education systems, pathways for greater numbers of participants will be widened and enhanced. The consequent contribution to the sporting systems and quality of life within the EU is significant. Suitably qualified and competent coaches are needed to work at all stages of player development. These coaches should be equipped to deal with the age, stage and individual needs of the participants with whom they work.

Within the evolving landscape of the EU, increasing attention is being paid to the vocational structures that exist in sport. Coaching is one of the key sub-sectors of sport and there is a pressing need to ensure that there is a comprehensive and quality assured system for the education, training and recognition of coaches within Europe. Such a system will provide the basis for establishing coaching more strongly as a regulated profession<sup>6</sup>, while recognising the strongly volunteer nature of coaching in many countries.

**Notwithstanding the high level of volunteerism in coaching, there are increasing numbers of part-time and volunteer coaches employed within Europe** (stats needed)

### **4. Changes in the EU context since the initial Review**

Since the initial 5-level qualification structure was developed, a number of changes in the European landscape have modified the context within which the education of coaches occurs. These changes have a significant bearing on the current review and four inter-related aspects must be taken into consideration:

1. The implementation of the 'Bologna Process'
2. The implementation of the 'Copenhagen Process'
3. The possible emergence of a future European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
4. The creation of an ECVET (European Credit Systems for Vocational Education and Training)

Each of these elements is summarised below and the main implications for the current review identified.

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<sup>6</sup> In this context, a 'regulated profession' is defined as a professional activity or group of professional activities access to which, and the practice of which (or to one of its forms) is directly or indirectly subject to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions concerning the possession of specific professional qualifications (see Appendix 2).

#### 4.1 The Copenhagen Process

The 'Copenhagen Process' is part of the wider EU 'Lisbon strategy' aimed at establishing '**common objectives of European education and training systems**'.<sup>7</sup> According to this strategy the European Union has set the goal of '**becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion**'.

Key points of the Copenhagen Process include:

- **European dimension of vocational education and training** (inter-institutional cooperation, partnerships and other trans-national initiatives)
- **Transparency, information and guidance** through the implementation and rationalisation of information tools and networks (eg. European CV, certificate and diploma supplements, Europass into one single framework)
- **Recognition of competences and qualifications** (by developing reference levels, common principles for certification, a credit transfer system, development of competences and qualifications at sectoral level, involvement of social partners)
- **Validation of non-formal and informal learning**
- **Lifelong learning orientation**
- **Quality assurance** (exchange of models and methods, as well as common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training).

The Copenhagen Process strongly signals the need for transparent, European-wide systems for the development and recognition of vocational qualifications. It also identifies the need for enhanced systems for recognising competence and non-formal and informal learning<sup>8</sup>, as well the significance of common criteria for quality assurance. Each of these dimensions is of fundamental significance to the current review, which seeks to provide a coherent European-wide dimension to guide the education and qualification of coaches.

#### 4.2 The Bologna Process

The 'Bologna Process'<sup>9</sup> is the result of an inter-governmental initiative, which extends beyond the European Union. It has the end-goal of setting up a European higher-education area by the year 2010 in which staff and students will be able to move easily and enjoy fair recognition of their qualifications. A set of main objectives has been defined in the Bologna declaration:

- A system of easily "readable" and comparable degrees, including the implementation of the diploma supplement
- A system based on three cycles, setting the basis of an over-arching qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area
- A strong attention paid to employability and the needs of the labour market

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<sup>7</sup> The Copenhagen process derives its name from xxxx, while the Lisbon process xxxxxx

<sup>8</sup> A glossary of terms currently in use within the European Union is provided in Appendix 2.

<sup>9</sup> The Bologna process derives its name from a declaration that was signed by the Rectors of Higher Education Institutions in Bologna on June 19, 1999

- A system of accumulation and transfer of credits
- Mobility of students, teachers, researchers
- Cooperation in terms of quality assurance
- European dimension of higher education.

A key objective of the process is therefore to gear higher education in Europe towards a more transparent and mutually recognised system that would place the varied national systems within a common framework. The framework would be based on three levels of qualification – bachelor, master and doctorate – and on the routes through which these qualifications have been obtained.

While a substantial element of the education of coaches occurs outside of the higher education sector, the Bologna Declaration has signalled a set of intentions and processes that will affect the overall framework for the recognition of qualifications within Europe, including coaching qualifications.

In cases where coaching and coach education are integrated or associated with institutions in higher education, the Bologna process will have a more direct impact. It is also the case that the proposed focus on employability and the needs of the labour market is likely to lead to a greater degree of interaction between the higher education sector and national/international federations than heretofore.

#### **4.3 The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**

Within the context of the Copenhagen, Bologna and Lisbon processes, EU Heads of Government requested, in March 2005, the creation of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF), that is a meta-framework<sup>10</sup> increasing transparency and supporting mutual trust. It would thereby enable qualifications frameworks and systems at national and sectoral level to be related more closely to each other – thus facilitating the transfer and recognition of the qualifications of individual citizens.

It is envisaged that the EQF will be developed and implemented on a voluntary basis, not entailing any legal obligations. EQF is not intended to replace national qualifications levels and is not intended to take over any of the established roles of national systems.

An EQF would consist of three main elements:

1. **A set of common reference points** – referring to learning outcomes - located in a structure of 8 levels. Each level will be specified in terms of descriptors including for example the mode, location, timescale, focus (knowledge, skills, competences) context of learning, assessment, quality assurance arrangements, guidance for learners, guidance for users of qualifications. This number of levels was based on analysis of evidence from research, and from the Bologna agreements of cycles in higher education.

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<sup>10</sup> A meta-framework is a means of enabling one framework of qualifications to relate to others and subsequently for one qualification to relate to others that are normally located in another framework. The meta-framework aims to create confidence and trust in relating qualifications across countries and sectors. It does so by defining principles for the operation of quality assurance processes, guidance and information and mechanisms for credit transfer and accumulation so that the transparency necessary at national and sectoral levels can also be available internationally.

2. **A range of support tools and instruments** addressing the needs of individual citizens (an integrated European credit transfer, an accumulation system for lifelong learning, the Europass).
3. **A set of common principles and procedures** providing guidelines for co-operation between stakeholders at different levels – in particular focussing on quality assurance, validation, guidance and key competences.

Within this shared framework, policy makers, education and training institutions and other providers will be able to better situate learning offers according to reference levels commonly understood in the wider Europe. In this way EQF will support the work of policy makers and experts at national and sectoral levels and provide 'a reading grid' facilitating comparisons and cooperation between national and sectoral frameworks and systems.

EQF could thus contribute to the strengthening of the quality of education, training and human resource development in Europe. It is evident that the elements and principles of the emerging EQF are of direct relevance to the current review of coaching qualifications. These include the proposed 8-level structure; the development of credit transfer systems and the enhancement of quality assurance and validation mechanisms. The revised framework for coaching qualifications should take these principles fully into account and should closely monitor emerging developments in the EQF initiative.

#### **4.4 The European Credit Systems for Vocational Education and Training**

The European Credit Systems for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is a European system of accumulation and transfer of credits designed for vocational education training in Europe. It enables the attesting and recording of the learning achievement/learning outcomes of an individual engaged in a learning pathway leading to a qualification, a vocational diploma or certificate.

A credit system makes it possible to divide a qualification into units of partial objectives. In this way, any person could accumulate, capitalise, transfer his/her achieved learning outcomes, to claim for their recognition and validation through individual learning pathways.

The technical principles and specification of the system are defined at the European level. The system is not intended to replace existing national systems for credit accumulation and/or transfer. National authorities, vocational Education Training providers, sectors or other competent bodies will cooperate in this field through a specific Memorandum of Understanding, essential to create the climate of trust in which credit transfer can operate.

The creation of a credit transfer system for coaching would appear desirable in this context. The formulation of a Memorandum of Understanding or Convention for the recognition of coaching qualifications and credits would facilitate such a system and would dovetail with the emerging ECVET process.

## **5. Guiding principles of the revised framework**

It is apparent, therefore, that the current Review of the 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications should fully align with the key principles emerging from the Copenhagen and Bologna processes. In addition, the revised framework should take full account of the emerging EQF framework and the ECVET process. Taking into account this context and the terms of reference for the review, a number of guiding principles were developed for the revised framework and these are outlined below:

## **A. THE PURPOSE OF COACH EDUCATION**

**Developing effective and ethical coaches should be a central feature of coach education programmes, underpinned by appropriate theoretical content**

Coach education programmes should equip coaches to carry out the various elements of their role effectively and ethically. The coach should be provided with education in practical and theoretical (scientific) areas, which is closely linked with their day-to-day work. The work of coaches should be underpinned by a strong Code of Ethics and Conduct designed to protect the safety, welfare and rights of all sports participants.

## **B. COMPETENCE TO DO THE JOB**

**Coach education programmes should equip coaches with the competence to do the job.**

The design of coach education programmes should be closely related to the needs of the labour market and/or the requirements of national/international federations. Coaches should be equipped to do the job, demonstrating and practising the skills that will enhance their effectiveness. It should also be recognised that the role of the coach varies according to the pathway stage of the children, players and athletes. Some coaches will play mixed roles across the pathway, while others work at specific stages. The training and qualification of coaches should take the potential for diversification or specialisation of role into account, based on a clear analysis of the labour market and the needs of the relevant federations.

## **C. LEARNING MODES**

**The format of coach education programmes should include a range of learning modes**

Coach education programmes should consist of a combination of competence-based training; formal coach education sessions; individual learning; e-learning; distance learning; supervised practice and recognition of prior learning. Theoretical, practical and on-the-job training should be essential features of all coach education programmes, underpinned by an adherence to the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

**Coaching expertise is built up through a combination of practical experience, formal training programmes and self-reflection**

Coach education programmes are one part of the overall development of coaching expertise. The primary element of developing coaching expertise comes from the practice of coaching, guided by well-structured education programmes and informed by the decision-making and self-reflection of the coach.

The design of coach education programmes should recognise prior learning and competence. Lifelong learning and a philosophy of continuous improvement should also be central features of coach education programmes.

Informal and non-formal learning should be recognised and validated.

## **D. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT**

**Coach education programmes should be designed so that the coach has the competencies to assist the players in achieving their goals throughout their appropriate stage(s) of development.**

Clear models of player development, both generic and sport specific, are central to the creation of player-centred coach education programmes. The alignment of player development models with coach education programmes will maximise relevance and effectiveness for the participating coaches.

## **E. THE COACHING CONTEXT**

**The context in which the coach will work, and the potential roles of the coach, should be taken into account when designing courses** (e.g. club, federation/association, school, regional, national, international levels).

### **Coaching includes paid and unpaid aspects**

The paid and unpaid aspects of coaching should be recognised in the development of the qualification structure. Recruitment and retention of coaches is an important consideration in the design of any coach education system.

## **F. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RECOGNITION OF COACHING QUALIFICATIONS**

**Coach education levels should be underpinned by systems of quality assurance and linked to national and European vocational qualification structures**

All coach education programmes should be underpinned by quality assurance systems that meet the appropriate national and international criteria.

**National and international federations, as well as the competent national authorities, have a central role in the education of coaches and tutors and in the recognition of coaching qualifications**

The application of any coach education framework within the EU must have the capacity for sport-specific adaptation. Greater cooperation between the university and non-university sector in the education of coaches and the recognition of coaching qualifications is encouraged.

### **Transparency, information and guidance**

The revised framework for recognising coaching qualifications should provide a transparent system to guide the design and recognition of coaching qualifications across the European Union and between sports.

## **6. The role and long-term development of the coach**

For the purposes of the review, coaching has been defined as **'the guided improvement, led by a coach, of sports participants in a single sport at identifiable stages of the player pathway'**.<sup>11</sup>

In order to review the existing 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications, it is necessary to develop a clear view of the roles played by coaches and the main stages associated with the development of coaching expertise. This approach will ensure a close relationship between the education and qualifications of coaches and the needs of the labour market.

The revised framework of qualifications for coaching has been developed on the basis that 'coaching a sport' is the main professional area<sup>12</sup>. The standard occupations within the professional area have been identified as follows:

1. Coach of beginner players (child, junior, adult)
2. Coach of participation/non-competitive players (child, junior, adult)

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<sup>11</sup> This definition has been adapted from the Aligning Higher Education Structures in Sport (AEHESIS) Coaching project which defined coaching as: **'the coaching of one sport specific discipline to clearly identifiable groups of sportspersons at specified levels and recognised by the appropriate national sports federation and/or competent national authority for the sport sector'**.

<sup>12</sup> It is recognised that coaches may coach in more than one sport. The training and qualification of such coaches should be clearly linked to the programmes of the relevant federations. Systems for recognising skills and competence that may cross the boundary from one sport to another should be considered. Some coaches play a multi-sport or multi-skill role, particularly in working with children. The framework for the training and qualification of coaches working in this context requires further consideration and has not been considered in this document.

3. Coach of talent identified/competitive players (child, junior, adult)
4. Coach of full-time/high performance players

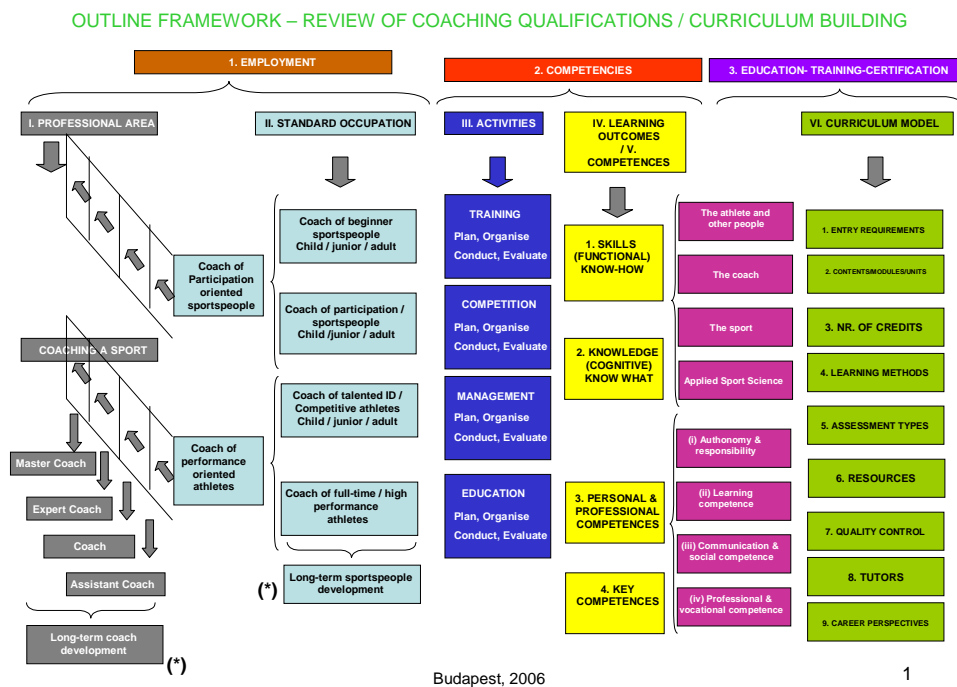
These standard occupations may exist discretely or in mixed roles and might also be aggregated further into a) coach of participant-oriented sportspeople and b) coach of competition/talent ID oriented sportspeople. The occupations may also be carried out in a volunteer; part-time or full-time context. Differences will exist in the nature of these roles between countries and from sport to sport. To maximise the clarity and effectiveness of the coaching roles, it is recommended that each sport/country have a clear specification of the curriculum and pathways for long-term athlete/sportsperson development.

It is also suggested that there are four main phases in the development of coaching expertise and these include early, middle, late, innovation.<sup>13</sup> These phases of coaching expertise can be translated into role definitions/coaching pathway stages that have relevance for both the labour market and coach education programmes, as follows:

1. Assistant Coach
2. Coach
3. Senior Coach
4. Master Coach

The specific application of these four levels will vary from sport to sport and country to country. The extent to which each of these roles applies to the professional areas identified above will also vary according to sport and country. However, it is possible to map the main roles, competences and learning outcomes against this framework. Preliminary work has been carried out on the proposed revised framework and is outlined in Figure 1, with a larger version presented in Appendix 3.

**Figure 1 – Outline framework**



<sup>13</sup> This classification is based on standard expertise literature (for example Ericson, 1994; Berliner, 2001). It is recognised that further research is required to more specifically identify the phases of associated with the development of coaching expertise).

There are three main differences in the emerging framework when compared to the 1999 version:

- a. **Four levels are proposed rather than five:** The number of coaching levels has been reduced from five to four. This more closely reflects the nature of the coaching role and current training provision as identified by the international federations and the national competent authorities in coach education. This approach does not exclude the possibility of additional qualifications in coaching, particularly those offered at Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral level as outlined in the Bologna process.
- b. **Four standard occupations are identified rather than one:** The revised framework recognises that within the professional area of coaching there is a diversity of standard occupations. Four main standard occupations have been identified: Coach of beginner players (child, junior, adult); Coach of participation/non-competitive players (child, junior, adult); Coach of talent identified/competitive players (child, junior, adult); Coach of full-time/high performance players.
- c. **Coaching competence and learning outcomes are more strongly identified:** In the initial framework, learning hours were central to the description of each of the levels. In the revised framework, greater attention is devoted to coaching competence and learning outcomes. Further work is required in this area, including the agreement on a formula for identifying learning hours and the development of a coaching credit system.

## **7. Framework for the qualification and licensing of coaches**

Based on the experiences of sports federations, higher education institutions and the national<sup>14</sup> competent authorities in sports coach education, it is proposed that the overall framework for the recognition of sports coaching as a profession should take into account two main aspects:

1. qualification of sports coaches
2. licensing of sports coaches

### **7.1 Coaching qualifications**

A revised framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications is proposed, linked to the stages of development of coaching expertise. Table 1 provides an overview of the relationships between the revised proposed framework for the qualification of coaches and the EQF.

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<sup>14</sup> References to national sports authorities or national federations can also include local, regional, continental and international organisations (federations).

**Table 1: Overview of the proposed framework<sup>15</sup> for the qualification of coaches and the EQF**

Level	Role and qualification	EQF equivalent <sup>16</sup>
1 <sup>17</sup>	Assistant Coach	For discussion
2	Coach	For discussion
3	Senior Coach	For discussion
4	Master Coach	For discussion <sup>18</sup>

The outline competence framework for these qualifications is outlined in table 2.

**Table 2 Competence framework for coaching qualifications**

Activities	Tasks	Competences
The main activities performed by coaches are as follows:	Within each activity, coaches perform the following tasks:	The competences needed to successfully perform the tasks related to each activity include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Training:</b> To prepare sportspeople for competition by planning, organising, conducting and evaluating the appropriate programmes and sessions</li> <li>- <b>Competition:</b> To plan, organise, conduct and evaluate the appropriate events, tournaments, programmes and matches</li> <li>- <b>Management:</b> To</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Plan:</b> Ability to put together a step-by-step programme achieve a goal in a session, series of sessions, season, series of seasons</li> <li>- <b>Organise:</b> Ability to co-ordinate and make all the necessary arrangements to ensure that the goal will be achieved in an efficient and effective way</li> <li>- <b>Conduct:</b> Ability to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Knowledge:</b> the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially</li> <li>- <b>Skills:</b> the functions (know-how) a person should be able to do when functioning in a given area of work, learning or social activity</li> <li>- <b>Personal, professional,</b></li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> It is envisaged that this framework can be applied to any of, or a combination of, the standard occupations: Coach of beginner players (child, junior, adult); Coach of participation/non-competitive players (child, junior, adult); Coach of talent identified/competitive players (child, junior, adult); Coach of full-time/high performance players.

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that the EQF is still in development

<sup>17</sup> Induction experiences, programmes and courses for coaches prior to their entry into formal coach education qualification systems are considered important by many international and national federations in the recruitment and development of coaches. The existence of this 'pre-coaching' experience should be recognised in the further development of models of long-term coach development and related systems of education/qualification.

<sup>18</sup> The relationship between coach education qualifications at levels 1-4 and the Bologna levels of Bachelors, Masters and Degree requires further discussion. The AEHESIS (Coaching strand) will address this issue to some degree, however, the agreement of underpinning principles for this relationship is needed. Section 7.4 provides a pre-liminary analysis of how this issue might unfold.

<p>lead, direct or control people related to the sport</p> <p>– <b>Education:</b> To teach, instruct or mentor people related to the sport</p>	<p>carry out and execute the planned and organised task</p> <p>– <b>Evaluate:</b> Ability to study, analyse and decide on the utility, value, significance or quality of the above process</p> <p>– Research and self-reflection</p>	<p><b>ethical:</b> knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; and possessing certain personal and professional values</p> <p>– <b>Generic/underpinning/key:</b> Communication in mother tongue, communication in another language, basic competences in maths, science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, interpersonal and civic competences, entrepreneurship and cultural expression</p>
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Knowledge should include the following areas:

**1. Knowledge of the sport**

- a. Rules,
- b. Regulations,
- c. Facilities
- d. Equipment,
- e. Specific characteristics of different modalities.

**2. Knowledge of the people in the sport**

- a. Athletes and their stages of development,
- b. Coaches themselves and their stages of development,
- c. Other fellow coaches,
- d. Parents and entourage,
- e. Officials and agents,
- f. Referees,
- g. Schools, clubs and federations
- h. Media

**3. Knowledge of sport sciences as related to the sport**

- a. Technique; tactics; physical; and mental aspects of the sport
- b. Medicine, nutrition, first aid, injury prevention
- c. Methodology and pedagogy (didactics)
- d. Psychology and sociology
- e. Biomechanics
- f. Periodisation and planning
- g. Training theory
- h. Lifestyle
- i. Sport-specific model of athlete development

Further work is required on the classification outlined above, as well on the specific skills to be carried out by coaches of participation and competition/talent ID oriented sportspeople (See Appendix 4 and 5).

## 7.2 Recognition of coaching qualifications

It is recommended that all national competent authorities<sup>19</sup> in coach education oversee, recognise and, if needed, conduct the sports coaching qualification programmes. These authorities may identify different public or private organisations or agencies to deliver these programmes, as recognised coaching education agencies.

These recognised coach education agencies can be federations, universities-higher education institutions or public/private institutions/agencies as identified by the national competent authorities that will follow the guidelines set by the authorities.

Given the sport specific nature of coaching, the unique position of national federations in the conduct of coach education programmes is recognised.

The revised structure for the recognition of sport coach qualifications should consist of three primary strands:

1. Federation-based education
2. Higher Education-based education
3. Other recognised coaching education agencies -based education
  - i) **Federation-based education.** This strand is delivered, recognised and/or validated by federations at various levels of responsibility (local/regional/national/continental/international).
  - ii) **Higher Education-based education.** This strand is delivered, recognised and/or validated by institutions of higher education and/or other post second cycle institutions (e.g sports academies).
  - iii) **Other recognised coaching education agencies-based education.** This strand is delivered, recognised and/or validated by national competent authorities or by public or private organisations recognised by them. These organisations can be public or private institutions/agencies recognised by the national competent authorities.

**Co-operation between the strands:** Cooperation between these strands is recommended with a view to maximising the quality of coach education and the maximisation of resources.

**Mutual recognition:** It is recommended that all strands should be recognised by the rest of parties involved in the process for the following purposes:

- i) **Recognition of Federation, Higher Education, and recognised coach education agencies-based education by the National Sports Authorities:** It is recommended that this strand should be recognised by the national competent authorities for the purposes of integration into their education system and for the recognition of the experience and qualifications of coaches seeking further education in a non-university context.
- ii) **Recognition of Federation and recognised coach education agencies-based education by the Higher Education institutions:** It is recommended that these strands should be recognised by universities and

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<sup>19</sup> The national competent authority is the government-designated agency responsible for directly overseeing coach education programmes in one of the EU member states, within the context of the overall sports sector and the wider vocational framework.




higher education institutions for the purposes of integration into their courses and for the recognition of the experience and qualifications of coaches seeking further education in a university context.

- iv) **Recognition of Higher Education institutions and recognised coach education agencies-based education by the Federation:** It is recommended that these strands should be recognised by federations for the purposes of integration into their courses and for the recognition of the experience and qualifications of coaches seeking to obtain their coaching licence.

It is recommended that where joint-working occurs the parties cooperate in all aspects of the education process, regardless of the agency involved in delivery. Dialogue should occur early in the planning process, before the coach education process starts.

Table 3 provides an overview of the proposed framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications between the federation, higher education and other sectors.

**Table 3 Outline framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications between sectors**

	<b>National Competent Authorities recognise</b>	
		
<b>Federation-based education</b>	<b>Public or private coaching education agencies</b>	<b>Higher Education based education</b>
<b>MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF ALL QUALIFICATIONS FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES</b>		

Criteria for recognition should be developed by each strand, using the Draft Curriculum Framework outlined in Figure 1.

### 7.3 Coaching Licence

As part of the process of moving coaching towards the status of a regulated profession, it is recommended that all coaches should hold a coaching licence<sup>20</sup>. The sport-specific coaching licence should act as a registration and recognition system overseen and validated by the sports federations and, if needed, by the national competent authority. The coaching licence will be the primary criteria for the recognition of the coaches' mastery of the practical demands and competencies of sports coaching.

It is recommended that the sports coaching licence be issued by the relevant sport federation, with the recognition of the national competent authority. Appropriate systems and infrastructures will be needed within federations and EU member states to underpin this development.

<sup>20</sup> It is recognised that prior to formally taking up coaching, coaches may undertake a period of informal induction. The nature of this induction, or pre-coaching experience, will need to be identified within each sport, based on the model of long-term coach development that exists in the sport.

It is envisaged that a coaching licence will be a mandatory requirement to coach, with the timescale for this provision to be discussed and agreed.

The first step of licensing is the attainment of a formal qualification.

The achievement of a sports coaching licence will derive from a combination of the following:

- i) **Coaching competence:** Demonstration of competence to coach at a given level of expertise (assistant coach, coach, expert coach, and master coach) to:
  - Child or adult beginner sportspeople
  - Talent identified/competitive sportspeople
  - High performance sportspeople
  - Participants of all ages and skill levels not following the high performance route
  
- ii) **Coach education:** Completion of a systematic course of study which challenges discipline, commitment and willingness to learn on the part of the coach (to include a specified minimum number of hours with a tutor; self-study/distance learning; supervised practice), taking into account sport specific differences and which is recognised by the relevant national competent authorities and the federations.

Courses of study may take place within federation, national competent authorities, and higher education based programmes or a combination of them. Other courses of study may be considered based on their contribution to the competence and knowledge framework outlined in this document.
  
- iii) **Coaching practice:** Practical involvement in sports coaching for a specified period and with specified groups of sportspeople or coaches.
  
- iv) **Recognition of prior learning:** Recognition of the accredited learning, current competence and experience that are specific and applicable to the sports coaching context.

The coaching licence may be specifically issued to coaches working in different stages of long-term sportspeople development (beginner, talent identified, high performance and professional) and at the different stages of long-term coach development (assistant coach, coach, senior coach, master coach). The licence may be issued for a given period of time and may be renewed after a successful completion of continuous education activities.

Where possible, the coaching licence may include the benefits of coaching insurance, legal assistance, access to continuous education programmes, resources and other benefits. Table 4 provides an overview of the proposed framework for the licensing of coaches.

The licensing of coaches should be seen as part of the wider process of the establishment of coaching as a regulated sector/profession within the physical activity/sport family. Further research is required to ensure that the development and positioning of the coaching profession takes account of experiences in other relevant areas and the emerging legislative frameworks within the European Union.

**Table 4 Framework for the licensing of coaches**

	<b>National Sport Authorities recognise</b>	
↓	↓	↓
<b>Federation-based education</b>	<b>Public or private coaching education agencies</b>	<b>Higher Education based education</b>
<b>MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS</b>		
↓		
<b>COACHING LICENCE ISSUED BY THE FEDERATION or the national competent authority and recognised by the national competent authority</b>		

Depending on the level and nature of the coaching qualification, the qualification may itself be regarded as the coaching licence initially. In such cases, it is envisaged that the maintenance of the licence would be contingent upon professional development activities within specified timescales.

The manner in which licensing is applied will vary according between sports and countries differences, although it is recommended that the licences for senior and master coaches should be comparable between sports and between countries.

Licences should specify the sport; level of expertise and standard occupation of the coach.

#### **7.4 Coaching courses within the Higher Education Sector<sup>21</sup>**

It is recommended that courses in coaching within the higher education sector recognise the definition of coaching adopted within this document. Courses that include coaching in their title, should seek to equip students with the skills to coach in a sport, or a number of sports, to a specified level. Table 5 provides an outline example of how such an approach might operate where 1, 2 and 3 sports respectively are included within the coaching programme.

<sup>21</sup> This section draws heavily from the work of the Coaching strand of the AEHESIS project.

**Table 5 Possible curriculum models in the higher education sector  
Bachelor's degree in coaching, with a specialism in one, two or three sports**

<b>N of sports/coaching level</b>	<b>Assistant</b>	<b>Coach</b>	<b>Expert Coach</b>	<b>Master Coach</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X (possible)</b>	-----
<b>2</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	-----	----- -
<b>3</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X (possible)</b>		

All of the above levels would be subject to the licensing criteria identified by the national sports federation. Sport specific content should be delivered in a manner that is in line with the specification of the national federation. Federations will need to develop guidelines for the inclusion of sport specific coaching in higher education programmes. Adequate opportunities to engage in practical coaching during the course and through and work experience should be provided. Other curriculum models might include coaching as an element with other professional areas within physical activity/sport. Two examples are provided below:

1. Bachelor's degree in sports science with a specialism in coaching and one other area from physical education; health and fitness; sports management (maximum coverage of two sports and subject to the licensing criteria of the national federations)
2. Bachelor's degree in sport science with introductory specialisms in coaching one sport; physical education; health and fitness; sports management (maximum coverage of one sport and subject to the licensing criteria of the national federations)

## **8. Coaching convention**

It is proposed that the relevant national authorities and the federations sign up to a Coaching Convention for the recognition of coaching qualifications and licensing which states the following:

1. Coaches play a central role in providing sport experiences for sportspeople of all ages and skill levels
2. To fulfil their role, coaches must have appropriate competence and training, taking into account the target group(s) with whom they are working
3. Coaches are expected to be as concerned with the well being of the sportspeople as they are with optimising performance.
4. Coaches should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being, and treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or political conviction.
5. Coaches are expected to work in an open and co-operative manner with all individuals responsible for the welfare and performance development of the sportspeople.

6. Coaches should develop and maintain a high standard of training; their action, whilst conducting training sessions, should reflect scientific knowledge and current expertise.
7. Scientific principles should be applied in every level of coaches' training.
8. Responsibilities and professional competence should gradually build up from the initial levels of coaches' qualification to the final ones.
9. All coaches should hold a coaching licence that is recognised by the national competent authority and the relevant federation.
10. The framework for the licensing and recognition of coaches as proposed by the European Coaching Council is the European recognised mechanism that is affirmed and actively supported.
11. A formal review mechanism will be established to provide a basis on which coaching qualifications can be reviewed against the ECC framework.
12. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a licensing system that will have international recognition and currency.

The contents of this document will be the subject of further consultation in 2006 and early 2007, with a view to adopting a European Convention on the Recognition and Licensing of Coaches in Rio Maior in September 2007.