



Innovative Education & Training

for a Specialist Children & Youth Coaching Workforce

Intellectual Output 1

Audit of the Children's Coaching Workforce in Seven European countries



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

A.J. Rankin-Wright, Julian North, Sergio Lara-Bercial, Marieke Fix, Nicolette van Veldhoven, Declan O'Leary, Sheelagh Queen, Kris Van der Haegen, Rafael Navarro, Sonia García, Pedro Lara-Bercial, Lolita Dudeniene, Ladislav Petrovic, Judith Balogh and Birute Statkeviciene.



www.icoachkids.eu @iCoachKidsEU

Disclaimer

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute and endorsement of the contents which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction – What is iCoachKids?	6
What will iCoachKids deliver?	6
The iCoachKids Team.....	6
What makes iCoachKids unique?	7
iCoachKids Project Events:	7
Audit of the children's coaching workforce in seven European countries	8
Introduction	8
Methods.....	9
Participants	9
Table 1: The sporting organisations and participants interviewed from the seven countries	9
Data Collection	10
Data Analysis	10
Results.....	11
Approach to sport coaching	11
Table 2: An overview of the approach to sport coaching in each of the seven European countries	16
Status and structure of children's coaching	20
Table 3: An overview of the structure of children's coaching in the seven European countries.	22
Children's coaching workforce characteristics	24
Education and development for children's coaches.....	25
Current and future needs of children's coaches	27
Table 4: An overview of the education and development for children's coaches in the seven European countries.....	28
Discussion and conclusion	31
References	33

Executive Summary

Millions of children and young people take part in sport and physical activity across Europe every day. However, the majority of their coaches are either not qualified or hold lower level generic qualifications that do not prepare them specifically to work with this age-group. iCoachKids (iCK) is an international, collaborative, multi-agency project aiming to support the development of a Specialist Children and Youth Coaching Workforce across the EU to ensure all youth sport participants have a positive experience led by suitably trained coaches.

The development of a suitably educated coaching workforce and the need to review and develop the ways that sport coaches are trained has been recognised as a priority area at the highest levels of European policy (White Paper on Sport, 2007; Communication on Enhancing the European Dimension of Sport, 2011; Work Plans for Sport, 2011-2014; 2014-2017). There are between 5 -9 million coaches in Europe (European Commission, 2016). It is estimated that around 80 per cent of these coaches work with children but less than half of these coaches are qualified, and very few of them hold a qualification specific to this population (North, 2009; Sport Ireland, 2013).

This report provides an overview of the characteristics of children's coaches, and the learning conditions in the seven European countries represented in the Erasmus project partnership - Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Specifically, the purpose of this exercise was to establish an understanding of the current approaches to sport coaching in each country, the demographic, and training characteristics of children's coaches, and the development and education opportunities available to them.

The key points to arise from this report include:

Lack of recognition/value of the children's coach:

Across all seven countries, the role of the children's coach was not, in general, as highly regarded/valued as the role of senior coaches and/or those coaches who coached professional athletes. This was in part, due to the low social status and public value attributed generally to coaches who were not coaching at a high performance/national level and the limited investment specifically aimed at this aspect of coaching. There was, however, a growing awareness as to the importance of children's coaches, the need to raise their profile, and better support, educate and develop them. There was agreement that creating awareness of what constitutes quality coaching for children was necessary across all countries, including in clubs, schools and for parents, to name a few (buyer-supplier demand). The intent of the iCK project is to contribute towards this increased profile of children's coaches and to provide the resource for governing bodies/sport federations and sport clubs to better support this workforce. Greater recognition, social and public value, attributed to children's coaches would also likely increase the career pathway opportunities available for these coaches.

Lack of regulation - (including a lack of licensing systems across Europe)

None of the countries had a defined children's coach role on a national level and there were no enforced minimum deployment requirements specific to children's coaches. Across the seven countries, there were also no specific qualifications (specific to coaching this group) or mandatory training needed to coach children. Creating awareness of quality coaching for children, as noted above, is likely to increase measures related to the regulation of children's coaches, including specific

education and development, at a national and governing body/sport federation level. In this regard, it is notable that, in lieu of a centralised, government-led approach, a number of governing bodies/federations across the seven countries have developed their own licensing and regulation systems.

Lack of education and training opportunities

Partnered with the increased awareness as to the importance of children's coaches across a number of the countries was the increased awareness of the need to appropriately educate and develop children's coaches at a national and governing body/sport federation level. Typically, those coaches who coached children tended to be beginners, or less experienced coaches, and often held low level, if any qualifications. Although in Hungary and Lithuania, all coaches were required to have a state recognised diploma/certificate and/or license to coach for any age group, and other countries strongly recommended minimum training standards for children's coaches, there was no specific education and/or development opportunities on a national level in any of the countries. The iCK project will therefore provide educational resources specifically targeted at children's coaches that will be freely available for all children's coaches, as well as any sport clubs, to access. The iCK curriculum needs to include the development of the child.

Lack of available data

Aligned to findings of previous European Commission sponsored projects, (Duffy, North, Curado, & Petrovic, 2013; North et al., 2016), there was very limited data available to provide an accurate quantitative summary of the children's coaching workforce in each country. This area has not been prioritised by sporting agencies on a national and local level in any of the countries. Collecting data to illustrate the demographics and characteristics of those coaches who are and are not coaching children is vital to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and current and future needs of the children's coaching workforce across European countries and across specific sports.

In sum, this audit of the coaching children's workforce confirms the need for iCoachKids to continue to raise the profile of children's coaches in the European Union, and to promote the creation of more robust education and regulation systems. This is the only way to maximise the potential of youth sport in society and guarantee positive sport experiences for children and young people across the Member States.

iCoachKids Expert Group

Leeds, June 2017

Introduction – What is iCoachKids?

Millions of children and young people take part in sport and physical activity across Europe every day. However, the majority of their coaches are either not qualified or hold lower level generic qualifications that do not prepare them specifically to work with this age-group.

iCoachKids (iCK) is an international, collaborative, multi-agency project aiming to support the development of a Specialist Children and Youth Coaching Workforce across the EU to ensure all youth sport participants have a positive experience led by suitably trained coaches.

This ambitious project is the result of a successful bid by Leeds Beckett University and the International Council for Coaching Excellence to the 2016 call of Erasmus+ applications under Key Action 2 (Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices – Strategic Partnerships for Vocational Education and Training). The project started in September 2016 and will be completed in August 2019.

What will iCoachKids deliver?

iCK will use a learner-centred, community-based, collaborative approach to create innovative learning and development opportunities for those coaching children and young people. Here are some of the outputs of the project:

- An interactive online platform where coaches can share and learn from each other – January 2017
- FREE e-learning in the shape of three newly developed Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) – Summer 2018
- A repository of new and existing resources and materials from all over the world aimed at youth coaches and parents – January 2017
- Regular blogs and articles from expert international contributors – January 2017
- A European Coaching Children Curriculum – Autumn 2017
- A report on the nature of the Coaching Children Workforce across seven European Countries – Summer 2017
- A collection of case studies of good practice in the education and development of children and youth coaches – Autumn 2017

The iCoachKids Team

iCK is led by Leeds Beckett University and brings together a consortium of eight organisations including the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE), Sport Ireland, the Hungarian Coaching Association, Netherlands Olympic Committee (NOC*NSF), Universidad Europea in Spain, Lithuanian Sports University and the Royal Belgian Football Association.



What makes iCoachKids unique?

iCK was designed with a number of unique features:

- *A not-for-profit venture*: iCK aims solely to improve the education and development of children and youth coaches across the EU. It is For Coaches By Coaches.
- *A community of children and youth coaches and coach developers*: led by a broad group of organisations and individuals with a proven track record, iCK aims to bring all stakeholders together to collaboratively solve a common problem they will not be able to individually.
- *Evidence-Based*: all iCK outputs will be based on existing research or new studies conducted by the project partners during the life of the project.
- *A good fit for Formal Education*: the MOOCs will be developed based on learning outcomes, units of learning and credits thus suitable to be adopted by Vocational Education and Training and Further and Higher Education Institutions globally across the European Union. This will facilitate transparency, mobility and employability of children's coaches.
- *Contribution to Key Professional Competences*: by using ICT and being English-based, paired with subtitles in 5 other languages (including Arabic), iCK will contribute to enhancing coaches' overall employability and quality of life.
- *Available and accessible to all in the EU and beyond*: thanks to the iCK online platform, English language-based content and subtitles in 4 languages (French, Dutch, Spanish, and Arabic), coaches will be able to access training in a flexible and inclusive way thus breaking many barriers to education.
- *Integration of Migrant Communities*: by being English-based and providing subtitles in multiple languages spoken by a large proportion of migrant communities like Spanish, French, and Arabic, iCK will facilitate the integration of migrants and the contribution they can make to their communities.
- *Sustainable*: being member and community driven, iCK will continue to grow beyond the life of the Erasmus+ funding. Its outputs will be able to support coaches, coach developers and organisations involved in coach education for years to come.

iCoachKids Project Events:

iCK will deliver three international promotional events:

- Autumn 2017 – 1st iCK Conference: Coaching Children Workforce in the EU – Hungary
- Summer/Autumn 2018 – 2nd iCK Conference: European Coaching Children Curriculum - United Kingdom
- Spring/Summer 2019 – iCK Closing Conference - Ireland

Audit of the children's coaching workforce in seven European countries

Introduction

The development of a suitably educated coaching workforce and the need to review and develop the ways that sport coaches are trained has been recognised as a priority area at the highest levels of European policy (White Paper on Sport, 2007; Communication on Enhancing the European Dimension of Sport, 2011; Work Plans for Sport, 2011-2014; 2014-2017). There are between 5 -9 million coaches in Europe (European Commission, 2016). It is estimated that around 80 per cent of these coaches work with children but less than half of these coaches are qualified, and very few of them hold a qualification specific to this population (North, 2009; Sport Ireland, 2013).

However, currently, we know very little about the detailed characteristics of this workforce and notably about the political and logistic conditions in which children's coaching takes place. To partially fill this void, this report provides an overview of the characteristics of children's coaches, and the learning conditions in the seven European countries represented in the Erasmus project partnership - Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Specifically, the purpose of this exercise was to establish an understanding of the current approaches to sport coaching in each country, the demographic and training characteristics of children's coaches, and the development and education opportunities available to them.

The structure of the report is as follows. First, the methods of research are detailed, including the participants interviewed from each country, the data collection tools and the data analysis process. Following this, the results of the audit are presented under four main headings: (1) approach to sport coaching, (2) status and structure of children's coaching, (3) children's coaching workforce characteristics, and (4) education and development for children's coaches. The results are followed by a discussion and conclusion that highlight the significance of the findings for the wider iCoachKids project.

Methods

Participants

The research participants included the representatives from each partner organisation and a series of ‘experts’ recommended by them from additional organisations in each of the seven European countries (Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom). The participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The sporting organisations and participants interviewed from the seven countries

Country	Organisation	Representative
Belgium	The Royal Belgian Football Association	Kris Van Der Haegen Director of Coach Education
Hungary	Hungarian Coaching Association	Ladislav Petrovic International Advisor
	Hungarian Coaching Association	Judit Balogh Director of Basketball academy and Lecturer
Ireland	Sport Ireland	Sheelagh Quinn Coaching Administration Manager
	Sport Ireland	Declan O’Leary Coach Development Manager
Lithuania	Lithuanian Sports University	Lolita Dudeniene Physical Education Lecturer
	Lithuanian Sports University	Birute Statkeviciene Coaching Science Associate Professor and Lecturer
Netherlands	Netherlands Olympic Committee and Sport Federation (NOC*NSF)	Jan Minkhorst Programme Manager
	Windesheim University	Nicolette van Veldhoven Programme Manager
	Landstede University	Marieke Fix Lecturer
Spain	European University of Madrid	Sonia Garcia Lecturer
	European University of Madrid	Rafael Manuel Navarro Barragan Lecturer and coach
	Universidad Europea	Pedro J. Lara Bercial Lecturer
	National Sports Council	Jose Luis Sánchez Fernández Head of Sports Education
	National Sports Council	Pablo Cerezo Mata Head of Sports Promotion
United Kingdom	Leeds Beckett University	Sergio Lara-Bercial Senior Research Fellow in Sport
	Leeds Beckett University	Julian North Reader in Sport Coaching

	Leeds Beckett University	AJ Rankin-Wright Research Officer in Sport Coaching
	UK Coaching	David Turner Development Lead Officer for Children

Data Collection

The research study involved three main data collection stages.

Stage 1: A 'state of the nation report' was completed by a partner representative from each of the seven countries involved in the iCK project. These were statements provided on the coaching structure and the children's coaching workforce in each country. Questions were asked on the following topics: the regulation of sport coaching, qualifications needed to coach children, the delivery of coach education, the structure of children's sport, and the demographics of children's coaches.

Stage 2: Following this, semi-structured interviews were then completed with representatives from the seven countries and/or additional experts that the partners recommended. The purpose of this interview was to fill in any gaps on the state of the nation reports, and collate further detailed information focusing in particular on the approach to sport coaching, the children's coaching workforce, and the education for and development of children's coaches. The interview guide included the discussion themes: *Sport coaching status and structure*: the position (profile and status) of sport coaching, the coaching workforce, coach development, education and qualification programme, the organisation of sport coaching; *Children's coaching status*: the position (profile and status) of children's coaching, specific policies for/on children's coaches; *Children's coaching workforce structure*: children's coach roles, workforce, structure of children's sport; and *Coach development, education and qualification for children's coaching*: the characteristics and effectiveness of coach education and development mechanisms, strengths, weaknesses, current and future needs of children's coaches, deployment guidelines/qualifications.

Interviews were completed face-to-face, or on skype during March 2017 to May 2017. These interviews lasted between 17 and 53 minutes and were audio recorded for later analysis.

Stage 3: In an effort to collate quantitative data on the children's coaching workforce in each country, the partner organisations were sent a table to complete. Data requested included: the number of children participants, the number of children's coaches, the number of coaching hours delivered to children and demographic data including the gender, ethnicity, disability status, employment status and children's age group coached breakdown of children's coaches.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data from the state of the nation reports and the interviews were thematically analysed. This involved inputting relevant text into a pre-designed table with headings based on the questions asked on the state of the nation report and in the interviews.

Results

A high-level overview of the results that examine children's coaching in each of the seven countries – Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom - is presented under four main sub-sections: (1) approach to sport coaching, (2) status and structure of children's coaching, (3) children's coaching workforce characteristics, and (4) education and development for children's coaches.

Approach to sport coaching

Table 2 (pp. 14-16) provides a summary of the approach to sport coaching in each of the seven countries – Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

The position and status of sport coaching

The results suggested that the position and status of sport coaching varied across the seven countries. In Hungary and Lithuania, sport coaching was regarded as a highly established profession. Sport coaches in these countries needed a state recognised University diploma and/or certificate/license to coach. For the other five countries, the coaching workforce was largely voluntary. In Spain, although the coaches were largely volunteers, most were qualified, even if only to the first or second level, and the majority of coaches received honorariums or expenses. Coaches coaching in leagues organised by the sport federations in Spain were qualified based on sport federation competition requirements. In general, coaches in Spain had high social status and were respected by the sport community as central to it. In Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK, coaches were largely low skilled with relatively low public value. Children's coaches, in particular, often had either low level or no qualifications. The position of sport coaching had changed in the UK and in Ireland (over the last 10 – 15 years) with improvements in coaching systems and coach education, in part, as a result of a number policy initiatives in the 2000s that focused specifically on sport coaching in the UK (for example, *The UK vision for Coaching* (UK Sport, 2001) and *The Coaching Task Force: Final Report* (Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2002). In the Netherlands and Belgium, coaching was not, in general, recognised as a profession with only a very small percentage of paid coaches in professional or team sports (for example, tennis and football). Sport federations in Belgium were becoming increasingly aware of the importance of training coaches and there was a drive to ensure that all coaches were educated and qualified in the club setting.

National lead agencies

The UK and Ireland were the only countries that had national lead agencies responsible for working with sport governing bodies to recruit and educate coaches. UK Coaching (the national lead agency in the UK) also worked with other agencies, such as higher education institutions for example. Although there were no overarching agencies in the other countries, there were organisations that supported coaches and/or governing bodies/sport federations. For example, the Hungarian Coaching Association (Hungary) represented professional full-time coaches who were members. NLCoach, an advocacy group for coaches in the Netherlands was a member of the Netherlands Olympic Committee & Sport Federation (NOS*NSF), the umbrella organisation for sports and the Olympic Movement in the Netherlands, of which coaching was a part. In Spain, there were sport-specific coaches associations that safeguarded the interest of coaches and, in some cases, played a significant role in the provision

of informal education opportunities. Spain also had a National Council for Coach Education recognised by the Spanish Sport Council, yet its activities were limited.

Registration and licensing systems

Three of the countries had some form of national registration or licencing system – these were typically in Eastern Europe. In Lithuania, a licencing scheme was run by the Sport Department and the Lithuanian Sport Universities (16 institutions). In Hungary, national coaches were registered under one system employed by the government but this did not apply to coaches at lower coaching levels. In Belgium, both the two regional government structures, SportVlaanderen and the Administration de l'Éducation physique du Sport et de la Vie en Plein Air (ADEPS), had central registration systems as a record for all qualified coaches. The remaining four countries, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, and the UK did not have an established national registration or licencing system, although experts from the UK and the Netherlands talked about a move towards a single registration system in the future. Ireland were working towards establishing a database based on qualified coaches attending coach education courses.

Coach registration and licencing systems at sport level varied across the countries with different approaches taken by different governing bodies/sport federations. Across the countries, a small number of larger governing bodies/sport federations had their own licencing schemes based on regular continuing professional development (CPD) participation by coaches (Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, the UK). The expert from the Netherlands noted that these licencing systems were for coaches working on a national level (about 12 out of 75 sport federations had a registration/licencing system in the Netherlands). The two regional government structures, SportVlaanderen and the Administration de l'Éducation physique du Sport et de la Vie en Plein Air (ADEPS), in Belgium were working with sport federations to develop registration systems for all member coaches (including those coaches without qualifications) in each sport. For some sport federations in Belgium, such as The Royal Belgium Football Association, coach databases had already been shared with the regional government to develop an overarching system for registered coaches.

Government funding for sport coaching

A number of the experts talked about the impact constant political changes had on government funding allocated to sport coaching. The way funding was distributed varied from country to country. At the time of the interviews, in Belgium, the funding from the two regional governments SportVlaanderen and ADEPS for sports was dependent on quality frameworks for coaches in clubs - the more qualified coaches in a club, the more funding that club would receive. In Hungary, the state government were funding national level coaching for professional athletes and youth athletes in five sports as part of a high performance sport financing system aimed at improving competitive performance (basketball, football, handball, ice hockey, and volleyball). In Lithuania, physical education and sports were financed from state and municipal budgets, physical education and sport funds, enterprises, institutions and organisations, as well as funds received from sporting events, sports lotteries, and sponsorship. Sport in the Netherlands was largely funded by the lottery, but it was noted that there was no specific funding for children's coaches. Government funding in the UK was available through either a participation stream (and children's coaching came under this fund), or a performance stream – this was mainly for piecemeal interventions in coach education. In Spain, financial support was given to sport federations by the National Sports Council (as well as the

municipal subsidies and sponsors). In Ireland, governing bodies were funded by the government and Sport Ireland Coaching also provided financial support for coaching.

Delivery of coach education and qualifications

The broader structural arrangements for sport coaching in each country described above provide important context for coach education and development. Although it is not possible to offer a comprehensive review of coach education and development activities across the seven European countries, the following provide some important context for the later discussion of children's coaching.

Coach education in Hungary and Lithuania was predominantly delivered by accredited higher educational institutions and every coach must have a coaching degree to practice. Some larger sport federations in Hungary also delivered sport specific content for coach education but all education providers must be accredited by vocational/higher education authorities.

In the other five countries, coach education was primarily delivered by governing bodies/sport federations, although some further and higher education institutes and colleges delivered coach education as part of sport education degrees. In Ireland and the UK, national coach agencies, and some private organisations also delivered generic coach education. Coach education qualifications in Ireland were endorsed by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and Coaching Ireland, who supported governing bodies in training and assessing tutors. In Spain, a mixed-economy system was in operation. Courses were delivered by the national federation, the regional federations (which have autonomy in the area of education), and by private providers ('authorised coach education centres').

The experts in Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands, and the UK noted that a number of active coaches at lower participation levels did not have any qualifications. This was in contrast to Lithuania, in which all coaches held a state recognised certificate to coach, and to Hungary, in which very few coaches practised without the relevant state recognised certification (but it did occasionally happen). In Spain, all coaches who have coached in competitions that were organised and regulated by national and/or regional federations must have been qualified to the appropriate level (this is determined by the organising federation). There was, however, no requirement for coaches in schools and private academies to be qualified.

The majority of NGBs in the UK had signed up to the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC), which meant that qualifications across sports were comparable in terms of the level of national vocational qualifications framework and consequently the Regulated Qualifications Framework (the UK's national qualifications framework) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) (i.e., level 1s across sports signed up to the UKCC included similar learning outcomes and content, except for the sport specific sections). In Belgium, the qualifications in some sport federations, supported by the regional government, were also aligned with the EQF associated with different competition levels and age groups. Ireland had aligned their coach development model with the International Sports Coaching Framework (ICCE, ASOIF & LBU, 2013) and all qualifications were endorsed by the GAA and Coaching Ireland (the national lead agency for coaching). The NOC*NSF National Sport Coaching Framework in the Netherlands was aligned to the Netherlands Qualification Framework and the EQF. In Spain, all sport federations had signed up to an 'official qualifications' system but most were in a transition period and as a result, were still delivering old federation qualifications. The 'official'

qualifications were delivered at two main levels: medium and high (superior) degrees – 55% of the curriculum was prescribed by the official qualifications framework ('common block') and 45% was determined by the sport federation (sport specific part).

Regulation of sport coaching

1. Legal frameworks for the coaching profession

In the majority of the countries (n=5), there were no specific overarching laws or policies that made provision for sport coaching. However, some countries had policies specific to certain topics, which impacted on coaching. For instance, countries such as Ireland and the UK had safeguarding and child protection laws/policies that related to children's coaches. For example, legislation in the UK included The Safeguarding (Children's Act) and the Disclosure and Barring service protection of freedoms Act (2010) which required those working with children to be thoroughly vetted. In Ireland, any person working with children was also required to be vetted and to attend child protection training. This vetting process and training did not, however, relate specifically to sport coaches.

Some countries also had laws or policies that related to the wider sport context, but again these did not relate to the provision of sport coaching specifically. For example, in Spain, there were a number of autonomous communities that had different sport systems. The Law 10/1990 of sport indicated that the National Sports Council (NSC), in collaboration with the Autonomous Communities (regions of Spain), and sport federations could propose the minimum requirements for qualified coaches. The 'official' sport qualifications (noted above) were part of the general 1990 Education Law in Spain.

The legal situation in Hungary and Lithuania differed from the other countries, as coaches in these countries were required to have a state recognised University diploma and/or certificate/license to coach. The Government Bylaw 157/2004 (part of the Sport Law) in Hungary regulated qualifications that were required for sport coaching and also required governing bodies to have their own bylaws for qualifications aligned with coaching roles. It was noted, however, that there was no structure in place in Hungary to check whether all parties observed these guidelines.

2. Implications for the coaches' status, educational requirements, and deployment.

In the main, the lack of official regulation across most countries presented a complex and disparate picture. The resulting issues varied across countries. For instance, the lack of consistency in Spain across different autonomous communities with regards to coach education and development made the regulation of sport coaching across the country very complex. An exception was coach vetting. Due to recently emerged problems relating to child abuse and violent behaviours in grassroots sport, coaches in Spain were now required to have a criminal background check.

As previously stated, sport coaching was a regulated profession in Hungary and Lithuania, however, in the other countries, there were no national standards for the regulation of sport coaching and so this varies across governing bodies/sport federations (Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands, and the UK). Governing bodies/sport federations did issue guidelines with regards to the qualifications required to coach at various levels of the participant pathway or in different contexts. In Belgium, the two regional governments supported sport federations to develop guidelines and were also encouraging sport federations to qualify all coaches through funding incentives for clubs. UK Coaching,

the lead agency for sport coaching in the UK, advised that active coaches met the following minimum standards: appropriate age (18, but 16 for level 1 assistant coaches), appropriate insurance, safeguarding checks, fully inducted into the process and appropriately qualified. These standards were recommended but not regulated. In Spain, in Catalonia and Extremadura, regulatory laws existed that applied to coaching practice. Coaches in basic or intermediate level competitions were required to have the necessary qualifications including a bachelor degree.

Table 2: An overview of the approach to sport coaching in each of the seven European countries

	Belgium	Hungary	Ireland	Lithuania	Netherlands	Spain	United Kingdom
Position / status of coaching	Not recognised as a profession. Largely volunteer workforce.	Established profession.	Not recognised as a profession. Largely volunteer workforce.	Established profession.	Not recognised as a profession. Largely volunteer workforce.	Established profession. Largely volunteer workforce.	Not recognised as a profession. Largely volunteer workforce.
National lead agency for coaching	No overarching agency.	No overarching agency.	Sport Ireland Coaching	No overarching agency.	No overarching agency.	No overarching agency.	UK Coaching (formally Sports coach UK).
Coach registration and/or licensing system – national level	National system for qualified coaches.	National system for coaches employed by the government or receiving salary from any government projects.	No national system.	National system for qualified coaches.	No national system.	No national system.	No national system.

	Belgium	Hungary	Ireland	Lithuania	Netherlands	Spain	United Kingdom
Coach registration and/or licensing system – sport level	Varied across sport federations.	Varied across sport federations.	Varied across sport federations.	Licensing scheme was run by Sport Department and Universities.	Varied across sport federations.	Varied across sport federations.	Varied across sport federations.
Government funding for sport coaching	Two regional governments funded sport clubs based on quality frameworks for qualifying coaches.	Government finance for youth and development athletes and coaches in five team sports, and high performance in 15 other sports.	Government funded governing bodies, and Sport Ireland Coaching.	Federal and local government budgets financed physical education and sports.	Sport was largely funded by the lottery.	Assessment based financial support was given to sport federations by the National Sports Council.	Government funding was from two pots – participation (Sport England) and performance (UK Sport). There was treasury and lottery expenditure.
Delivery of coach education	Mainly sport federations. Some higher education institution.	Accredited higher education and vocational institutions. Some larger accredited sport federations.	Mainly sport federations. Some higher education institutions.	Accredited higher education institutions.	Mainly sport federations.	National and regional sport federations. Some private organisations.	Mainly sport federations. Some higher education institutions.

	Belgium	Hungary	Ireland	Lithuania	Netherlands	Spain	United Kingdom
Qualification characteristics of coaches	Most coaches had no, or low level qualifications.	Every coach required to have state recognised (higher or vocational) qualification.	Most coaches had low level qualifications.	Every coach required to have a qualification.	Most coaches had no, or low level qualifications.	Most coaches were qualified, yet to lower levels.	Most coaches had no, or low level qualifications.
Qualification – educational frameworks	The SportVlaanderen and ADEPS coaching framework was aligned to the EQF.	The coaching framework was aligned with the national qualification scheme.	The coaching framework was aligned with the EQF.	The physical education programme was delivered through University degrees.	The National Sport Coaching Framework (by NOC*NSF) was aligned to the Netherlands Qualification Framework and the EQF.	Have moved to 'official' sport qualifications that all sport federations have signed up to but have yet to fully develop.	The coaching framework was aligned with the EQF.
Legal Framework for sport coaching?	No.	Government regulated system but no overarching legal regulation system.	No.	Government regulated system but no overarching legal regulation system.	No.	Some autonomous communities have regulatory laws.	No.
Minimum standards for deployment for sport coaches?	Largely down to sport federations.	Largely down to sport federation. According to the Sport Law each	Largely down to governing bodies, and clubs who	Largely down to national federation and some governing	Recommended by sport federations. Enforced in elite	Recommended by National Federations in competitions.	Strongly recommended by national coach agency

	Belgium	Hungary	Ireland	Lithuania	Netherlands	Spain	United Kingdom
		federation needs to create their deployment criteria: which coaching role needs which qualification.	deploy the coaches.	bodies. For Lithuanian institutions, coaches need a bachelor of sport degree. For private sport clubs, coaches may not need a bachelor degree but they do need a license of physical culture and sports activities.	and sub-elite sports. Not enforced in lower levels and children's coaching.	The only requirement in community competitions was to be an adult.	and some governing bodies but not enforced.

Status and structure of children's coaching

A key feature of this report is to understand the status and structure of children's coaching across the seven countries. This provides important context for the wider iCK project in terms of programmatic details and influence.

Table 3 (pp. 19-20) provides a summary of the approach to sport coaching in each of the seven countries – Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

Position / status of children's coaching

The experts across all seven countries noted that in general, the coaches who coach children were not as highly regarded/valued as coaches who coach seniors/adults and professional athletes. Children's coaches were often seen as beginner coaches and were often the least experienced coaches in sport clubs. In Hungary and Lithuania, although all coaches were required to be educated and certified to coach any age group, it was noted that children's coaches were seen as beginner coaches and were paid less than senior coaches. The UK expert noted that traditionally coaches would start coaching children and then move up through the age groups and either move to coaching adults or on to the talent pathway. The children's coach role was seen as the starting point for the coaching pathway (i.e., rather than a significant position itself) and children's coaches often held very low level, if any coach specific qualifications. In some countries (in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain in particular), children's coaches were more likely to hold higher educational qualifications (i.e. university degrees)

The current low position/status of children's coaching was reinforced in that none of the seven European countries had a defined children's coach role at a national level and there were no enforced minimum deployment requirements specific for children's coaches. It should be noted, however, that in Hungary and Lithuania, all coaches were required to have a state recognised diploma/certificate and to coach independently in the UK (i.e. not assisting another coach), clubs and governing bodies usually required coaches to have a minimum standard of training and qualification – although this was often not enforced. These requirements related to all coaches, rather than children's coaches.

Reasons for the lack of qualified children's coaches were attributed to the part-time and voluntary (Ireland, UK, Netherlands, Belgium) nature of children's coaches, and the fact that these coaches may hold a number of different roles within a club (Ireland; i.e., club chair, treasurer, etc). Further, sport coaching has historically been associated with high performance and there has been very little investment in this aspect of coaching. There has, however, been a growing awareness across a number of the countries as to the importance of children's coaching. For example, the expert for Belgium noted that there was an increased awareness as to the importance of children's coaches and the need to educate and recognise these coaches at both a government level and a sport federation level. This was also the case in Ireland, Spain and the UK. The experts also acknowledged that there were now specific coach education and training for children's coaches at a governing body level in some governing bodies/sport federations (See section below for more detail).

There were no specific laws or policies in any of the seven countries to regulate children's coaches' education and deployment. There was legislation and/or guidelines in a number of countries that apply to anyone working with children – these, however, did not relate specifically to sport coaches. For example, in Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK, it was recommended that sport

clubs vet anyone working with children or vulnerable people. In the Netherlands, the government covered expenses for this vetting. Sport Ireland was rolling out Garda vetting on a phased basis to all governing bodies of sport in Ireland¹. In Hungary, sport federations had specific ethical guidelines for coaches working with children. There were also a number of recommended training courses/programmes for children's coaches, for example in the UK, the Netherlands and Ireland, that included safeguarding issues and guidance for any person working with children. The experts cautioned that these training courses were not compulsory and the guidelines for sport clubs around vetting coaches were not always enforced in practice.

The structure of children's coaching (who and where)

The age groups for children being coached in all of the countries was often sport specific, dependent on competition structures or educational systems. In Belgium, Lithuania, and the UK, the age grouping for children's sport was largely based on the education systems in schools. For example, in Belgium, age groups were separated into primary school aged children (6-10 years, and 10-12 years) and then secondary school aged children and were coached in age groups of each year group. There were four educational stages in sports schools in Lithuania: primary education (5-10 years), sports specialisation (11-13 years), improving of sports skills (14-16 years), and high level of achievement of sports results (15+ years). In the UK, some guidance indicated that age groups should be linked to primary school key stages (5-8/9 years for fundamental movement skills and 8/9-12 years for sport specific skills with fundamental skills). In Ireland, there were three main types of children's coaches - a 5-12 years coach, a 12-14/15 years coach, and a talent development coach. A two-year age grouping structure was generally used in the Netherlands, Spain, and in Hungary for children's sport. However, age groups for children in Hungary could also be sport specific – based on competition systems and coaches tended to work with one age group, rather than progressing with athletes or teams. In Spain, at a competitive level there were two-year age-groups from 8-9 (Benjamín), 10-11 (Alevín), 12-13 (Infantil), 14-15 (Cadete), and 16-17 (Junior).

The majority of sport coaching for children across the seven countries took place in sport clubs (private and community) with some coaching also taking place in schools as part of physical education lessons and/or extra-curriculum activities. In Lithuania, however, children mainly received coaching from physical education teachers in sport schools, as well as sport clubs. Sport lessons in the Lithuanian sport schools had to be paid for and prices for this were dependent on the city council and the sport. For example, tennis lessons were more expensive than track and field lessons. An exception to the payment of these classes was made for children with disabilities and children who attended sport schools with two or more siblings – children with these circumstances did not have to pay for the sport lessons.

In the Netherlands, approximately 80% of children aged up to 12 years were registered as members of sport clubs. It was noted that this membership decreased to 37% between 12-18/20 years and the expert noted that a big challenge was to retain children aged 12 years and above. School sport had more relevance in primary schools in Spain and after that, the majority of sport coaching for children took place in sport clubs.

¹ http://www.sportireland.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/Garda_Vetting/ [Accessed on 26th May 2017].

Table 3: An overview of the structure of children’s coaching in the seven European countries

	Belgium	Hungary	Ireland	Lithuania	Netherlands	Spain	United Kingdom
Position / status of children’s coaching	Not as highly regarded/valued as senior coaching. Seen as beginner coaches.	Not as highly regarded/valued as senior coaching. Seen as beginner coaches and are paid less.	Not as highly regarded/valued as senior coaching. Seen as beginner coaches.	Not as highly regarded/valued as senior coaching. Seen as beginner coaches and are paid less.	Not as highly regarded/valued as senior coaching. Seen as beginner coaches.	Not as highly regarded/valued as senior coaching. Seen as beginner coaches unless coaching performance development.	Not as highly regarded/valued as senior coaching. Seen as beginner coaches.
Defined children’s coach role?	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Specific policies/laws for children’s coaches	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Who do children’s coaches work with? (Different age groups, stage groups)	Often sport specific. Based on school education system.	Often sport specific. Each age group covers 2 years.	Mostly sport specific. Based on school education system.	Often sport specific. Based on school education system.	Sometimes sport specific. Each age group covers 2 years.	Often sport specific. Each age group covers 2 years.	Often sport specific. Based on school education system.

	Belgium	Hungary	Ireland	Lithuania	Netherlands	Spain	United Kingdom
Where are children being coached?	Mainly in sport clubs.	Mainly in sport clubs. In schools.	Mainly in sport clubs. In schools.	Mainly in sport schools.	Mainly in sport clubs.	Mainly in sport clubs. In schools (mainly primary schools).	Mainly in sport clubs.

Children's coaching workforce characteristics

There was very limited demographic data available to provide an accurate summary of the children's coaching workforce in each country. This has been evident in two previous European Commission sponsored projects (Duffy, North, Curado, & Petrovic, 2013; North et al., 2016) – with sporting agencies often prioritising different data collection concerns.

Quantitative data for the total number of children's coaches and the number of children's coaches per employment status, gender, age, ethnicity, disability status and by children's age group was not available for the seven countries. Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK were able to provide some data, however, most of this was based on qualified coaches who had previously attended coach education courses and did not include all coaches who were coaching children without qualifications or account for those qualified coaches who were no longer coaching.

It was difficult to identify the strengths and weaknesses for the children's coaching workforce across the seven countries, due to the limited data to evidence the demographics and characteristics of those coaches who were and were not coaching children. The qualitative data collated through the expert interviews provided an anecdotal picture of the children's coaching workforce in each country. The following information therefore represents speculations from the experts, rather than evidence based demographic data.

In Hungary, a large number of children's coaches in clubs were thought to be former athletes/players and/or sport coaching graduate students. In school clubs in Hungary, the coaches tended to be physical education teachers. It was noted that the involvement of parents as coaches was rare in Hungary and absent in Lithuania, unless they had a licence to coach and/or a coach diploma. In contrast, in the other five countries, children's coaches were thought to include parents, youth coaches (who were participants/athletes at sport clubs), physical education teachers, ex-players/athletes, and/or students studying for sport degrees.

Across all seven countries, it was predicted that there were more men that coached, in comparison to women. This prediction was supported by the quantitative data available for Ireland and Spain. For Belgium, Lithuania and the Netherlands, although women were underrepresented as coaches across most sports, it was noted that there were more women coaching in some sports, for example in swimming, gymnastics and in volleyball (Belgium). The experts for Hungary, Ireland and the UK thought that more women coached children than men. In the Netherlands and Hungary, younger assistant coaches (aged 16-24 years) were more likely to coach children due to the lack of adult volunteers. These younger coaches were more likely to be women in Hungary. It was further noted that although some women may have chosen to coach at this level, others may have found it difficult to progress within some sport clubs.

The ethnicity of the majority of children's coaches was thought to be White in the Netherlands, White in the UK, and White Irish in Ireland. There was no quantitative data to provide evidence for the ethnicity of children's coaches in each country. It was noted that Ireland was dominated by a native Irish population with a very insular culture and little diversity in terms of ethnicity. The majority of coaches in Hungary were predicted to be White Hungarian, although some coaches were noted to be from former Yugoslavian countries, for example Serbia. At the professional level in Hungary, there were thought to be more foreign coaches, but this was not the case with the youth teams.

The gap in the children's coaching workforce for the Netherlands was for the 12-18 year-old age group. The expert from the UK noted that they needed to do more to retain children's coaches (due to parents dropping out), employ sport coaching graduates working with children, and raise the profile of the children's coach.

Education and development for children's coaches

Table 4 (pp. 25-27) provides a summary of the approach to coach education and development for children's coaches in each of the seven countries – Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

Details of children's coach education

Across all seven countries, no specific qualifications were needed to coach children and there were no deployment guidelines required to coach children. As previously noted, in Hungary and Lithuania all coaches must have a state recognised diploma and a licence to coach, but there was no current mandatory training or qualifications specific to coaching children beyond the sport coaching diploma. From September 2017, however, a university sport coach degree is planned to be launched in Hungary in which students can choose to specialise as a 'youth coach', 'performance coach' or a 'conditioning coach'.

The education offered for children's coaches varied across the seven countries. In Belgium, general children's coach education was being delivered through a national 'multimove project' supported by the regional governments in collaboration with a number of universities. The Netherlands also had a national programme that included specific courses for coaches working with children on how to train children and how to develop a facilitative environment for coaching children. This was funded by the government and promoted by sport federations. The lead national agencies in Ireland (Coaching Ireland) and the UK (UK Coaching) recommended and delivered generic training for children's coaches including safeguarding. Coaching Ireland were awarded government funding for one year to develop and implement a 12-hour programme for children's coaches. This programme, comprised of centralised modules, was being delivered by trained tutors through local sport partnerships directly to coaches, rather than through governing bodies. UK Coaching offered two face-to-face workshops including 'How to coach fundamentals of movement', and 'Coaching children 5-12: the next generation'. These totalled six hours of continuous professional development (CPD) for children's coaches across all sports.

In Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK, a number of sport federations had also designed and delivered their own independent children's coach courses and qualifications as part of continuing professional development (CPD) for coaches. For example, in the UK, The Football Association delivered a number of independent youth award modules for coaches². The experts noted that these courses varied in terms of content and quality. Although in Spain, there were no specific qualifications and courses for coaches working with children, the beginner levels of the medium official qualification were aimed at 'youth sport'. All the content of these levels was child related and typically, coaches holding this qualification were only allowed by their federations to coach participants in the younger categories.

² <http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/coach/courses> [Accessed on 23rd June 2017].

Strengths of children's coach education

One expert representing Ireland noted the key strengths of children's coach education to be that the modules provided evidence based practice for working with children. They reported that the feedback from coaches had been positive in terms of their behaviour change towards coaching children following the education.

In the Netherlands, there was a strong cooperation between sport federations and vocational studies for developing courses relevant for children's coaches, for example safeguarding. The extensive vocational training delivered to every coach by the University coach education system in Hungary was noted to be a key strength, and specifically the strong theoretical background to education, including subjects such as anatomy and biomechanics.

Weaknesses of / gaps in children's coach education

The weaknesses, or gaps, noted in the Hungarian education system were that there was no specific qualification or licence for children's coaches and the actual modules for coaching children as part of the vocational degree were limited. A similar weakness was discussed for Lithuania, as only a very small part of the university course was dedicated to coaching children and the course focused predominantly on coaching elite athletes. The experts in Hungary and Lithuania noted that there was limited practical elements to the children's coaching training currently offered by Universities and sport federations (putting theory into practice). As noted above, however, from September 2017, a University sport coach degree will be launched in Hungary in which students can choose to specialise as a 'youth coach'.

The experts in Ireland explained that, although a number of governing bodies offered education for children's coaches, these modules did not align with the guidance provided by the International Sport Coaching Framework and there was no quality control across the courses to identify the child-centred element of the content. As a result, a lot of these governing body courses were very similar to existing level 1 coach qualifications, rather than having been modified to target children's coaching. This challenge of modifying courses was also discussed by the UK expert. Weaknesses identified with the 12-hour programme delivered by Coaching Ireland were that coaches were not supported or tracked in terms of how much learning they put into practice following the course.

The UK expert noted that the education in governing bodies did not provide adequate training for coaches to coach children. Qualifications in the UK have also tended to advance coaches through the performance pathway, rather than focusing on children as a target population. The key weakness or limitation in the Netherlands was one of resource in that smaller sport federations could only offer generic coach education courses once or twice a year. The experts for Spain noted the weaknesses to be the lack of CPD available for children's coaches.

Current and future needs of children's coaches

The key current and future needs for all seven countries were coaches who specialised in coaching children (i.e., as a distinct professional pathway), and specialist education for developing children's coaches.

One expert for Hungary noted that this education needed to include psychological and pedagogical knowledge, and that coaches would benefit from a national education scheme based on current successful governing body/sport federation schemes. The expert for Belgium felt that coach education needed to facilitate a change in the attitudes of children's coaches, particularly during competitions and games. For the Netherlands, education was key to create the correct environment to retain children as sport participants and particularly those children aged between 12-18 years old. The expert for the UK noted that children's coaches needed a greater awareness of the research on coaching children and support to then put this into practice with their own coaching. In Ireland, the expert stated that children's coaches needed greater individual guidance and support to understand what children needed and how this aligned with their role. Crucially, the content of education needed to be centred on children, rather than on the sport or governing body.

Additional suggestions to meet current and future needs of children's coaches included a forum to share coaching experiences and best practice (Belgium), easily accessible resources for part-time children's coaches (Lithuania), and recognition and reward for coaching children to retain these coaches and their expertise (UK). The experts in Spain noted that rather than a curriculum (understood as describing the learning programme in full: i.e. what was to be learnt, content and method of delivery and assessment), countries and sport federations would benefit from a description of the professional profile of the children's coach. Each country and/or governing body/sport federation could then decide how best to help coaches achieve this.

The experts from the Netherlands noted that the iCK project needed to advocate systems building and resource investment in children's coaching around educational and safeguarding principles. The clubs in the Netherlands were aware of the need to educate and develop children's coaches but were unsure how to approach this. The clubs needed practical tools in order to facilitate this education process.

For Lithuania, it was anticipated that there may be a move to a voluntary coach model in the near future (5-10 years) to increase coaching provision as part of a wider sport for all movement. The curriculum produced from the iCK project would support this volunteer model to facilitate the education of those coaches without University diplomas.

Table 4: An overview of the education and development for children’s coaches in the seven European countries

	Belgium	Hungary	Ireland	Lithuania	Netherlands	Spain	United Kingdom
Children’s coach development and education	<p>General children’s coach education was delivered through a national ‘multi move project’ in collaboration with universities in Belgium.</p> <p>Some sport federations delivered children’s coach education courses.</p>	<p>From September 2017, a University sport coach degree will be launched in which students can choose to specialise as a ‘youth coach’.</p> <p>Some sport federations delivered children’s coach education courses.</p>	<p>Coaching Ireland delivered general children’s coach education courses.</p> <p>Some governing bodies delivered children’s coach education courses.</p>	<p>The university sport coach degree was the same for all coaches.</p> <p>Some sport federations delivered children’s coach education courses.</p>	<p>Most sport federations delivered children’s coach education courses at different levels.</p>	<p>None - other than the lowest levels of coach education qualifications that were centred on youth sport.</p>	<p>UK Coaching delivered general children’s coach education courses.</p> <p>Some governing bodies delivered children’s coach education courses.</p>
Deployment guidelines/qualifications needed to coach children?	<p>No specific qualification needed.</p> <p>Some federations had specific qualifications to</p>	<p>Largely down to sport federations.</p> <p>According to the Sport Law each federation must create their deployment</p>	<p>No specific qualification needed.</p> <p>Some governing bodies had specific qualifications to</p>	<p>No specific qualification needed.</p>	<p>No specific qualification needed.</p> <p>Some federations had specific qualifications to</p>	<p>No specific qualification needed.</p>	<p>No specific qualification needed.</p> <p>Some governing bodies had specific qualifications to</p>

	become a youth coach.	criteria: which coaching role needs which qualification.	become a youth coach.		become a youth coach.		become a youth coach.
Strength	Strong focus and campaign of the sport federations to have a tailor-made approach for children's training with specific CPD for children's sports.	All children's coaches had to have a certified diploma/license. There was a strong theoretical background to the education.	Sport Ireland Coaching – Coaching Children Programme modules provide evidence-based practice for working with children.	All children's coaches had to have a certified diploma/license. There was a strong theoretical background to the education.	Strong cooperation between federations and vocational studies for developing children's coaches courses.	Focus on youth sport in lower level qualifications.	Coaching UK offered 6 hours of CPD for all children's coaches across sports.
Weaknesses / gaps	No specific training/ qualification for coaching children across all sports.	No specific training/ qualification for coaching children, except for some larger sports.	Not enough quality control over education modules. To date only small numbers of coaches have completed child specific training.	Limited course content focused on coaching children. Courses focused predominantly on coaching elite athletes.	Smaller federations could only offer generic coach education courses once or twice a year.	No continuous education provision.	No quality control over education modules in governing bodies.
Children's coaches needs	Specialist education.	Specialist education.	Specialist education.	Specialist education.	Specialist education.	Safeguarding and protecting children and	Specialist education.

						creating a safe climate.	
--	--	--	--	--	--	--------------------------	--

Discussion and conclusion

The report has provided an overview of the characteristics of children's coaches, and their education and development conditions, in the seven European countries represented in the Erasmus project partnership - Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Specifically, the report has provided an overview of the current approaches to sport coaching in each country, the status and structure of children's coaching, the children's coaching workforce characteristics, and the education and development for children's coaches.

The key points to arise from this report include:

Lack of recognition/value of the children's coach

Across all seven countries, the role of the children's coach was not, in general, as highly regarded/valued as the role of senior coaches and/or those coaches who coached professional athletes. This was in part, due to the low social status and public value attributed generally to coaches who were not coaching at a high performance/national level and the limited investment specifically aimed at this aspect of coaching. There was, however, a growing awareness as to the importance of children's coaches, the need to raise their profile, and better support, educate and develop them. There was agreement that creating awareness of what constitutes quality coaching for children was necessary across all countries, including in clubs, schools and for parents, to name a few (buyer-supplier demand). The intent of the iCK project is to contribute towards this increased profile of children's coaches and to provide the resource for governing bodies/sport federations and sport clubs to better support this workforce. Greater recognition, social and public value, attributed to children's coaches would also likely increase the career pathway opportunities available for these coaches.

Lack of regulation - (including a lack of licensing systems across Europe)

None of the countries had a defined children's coach role on a national level and there were no enforced minimum deployment requirements specific to children's coaches. Across the seven countries, there were also no specific qualifications (specific to coaching this group) or mandatory training needed to coach children. Creating awareness of quality coaching for children, as noted above, is likely to increase measures related to the regulation of children's coaches, including specific education and development, at a national and governing body/sport federation level. In this regard, it is notable that, in lieu of a centralised, government-led approach, a number of governing bodies/federations across the seven countries have developed their own licensing and regulation systems.

Lack of education and training opportunities

Partnered with the increased awareness as to the importance of children's coaches across a number of the countries was the increased awareness of the need to appropriately educate and develop children's coaches at a national and governing body/sport federation level. Typically, those coaches who coached children tended to be beginners, or less experienced coaches, and often held low level, if any qualifications. Although in Hungary and Lithuania, all coaches were required to have a state recognised diploma/certificate and/or license to coach for any age group, and other countries strongly recommended minimum training standards for children's coaches, there was no specific education and/or development opportunities on a national level in any of the countries. The iCK project will therefore provide educational resources specifically targeted at

children's coaches that will be freely available for all children's coaches, as well as any sport clubs, to access. The iCK curriculum needs to include the development of the child.

Lack of available data

Aligned to findings of previous European Commission sponsored projects, (Duffy, North, Curado, & Petrovic, 2013; North et al., 2016), there was very limited data available to provide an accurate quantitative summary of the children's coaching workforce in each country. This area has not been prioritised by sporting agencies on a national and local level in any of the countries. Collecting data to illustrate the demographics and characteristics of those coaches who are and are not coaching children is vital to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and current and future needs of the children's coaching workforce across European countries and across specific sports.

In sum, this audit of the coaching children' workforce confirms the need for iCoachKids to continue to raise the profile of children's coaches in the European Union, and to promote the creation of more robust education and regulation systems. This is the only way to maximise the potential of youth sport in society and guarantee positive sport experiences for children and young people across the Member States.

References

- Department for Culture Media and Sport. (2002). *The Coaching Task Force – Final Report*. Division, S. a. R. London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Sport and Recreation Division.
- Duffy, P., North, J., Curado, J., & Petrovic, L. (2013). *CoachNet: The further development of a coordinated network for Sport Coaching in Europe. A report for the European Union*. Leeds: Leeds Metropolitan University and the International Council for Coaching Excellence.
- European Commission. (2007). *White Paper on Sport*. Brussels, COM, 391 final.
- European Commission. (2011). *Developing the European Dimension in Sport*. Brussels, COM, 12 final
- European Commission. (2011). *EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Commission. (2014). *EU Work Plan for Sport Report 2014-2017*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Commission. (2016). *Study on sport qualifications acquired through sport organisations and (sport) educational institutes*. European Union: Luxembourg
- ICCE, ASOIF & LBU. (2013). *The International Sport Coaching Framework, v1.2*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics
- North, J., Hämmäläinen, K., Oltmanns, K., Petrovic, L., Minkhorst, J., Lara-Bercial, S., & McIlroy, J. (2016). *CoachLearn: Enhancing coaches' learning, mobility and employability in the European Union: Report#3 (appendix 1): Sport coaching workforce data collection across five countries*. Leeds: Leeds Beckett University on behalf of the European Union.
- North, J. (2009). *The Coaching workforce 2009-2015*. Leeds: Sports Coach UK.
- UK Sport (2001). *The UK Vision for Coaching*. London, UK Sport.