



PROfessional GRowth through Education in the Sport Sector by pursuing a Dual Career

Beyond the Finish Line: Empowering Athletes for Life After Sport



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Completion of Work Package 2: Profiling Possible Career Paths and Identifying Athletes' Missing Skills

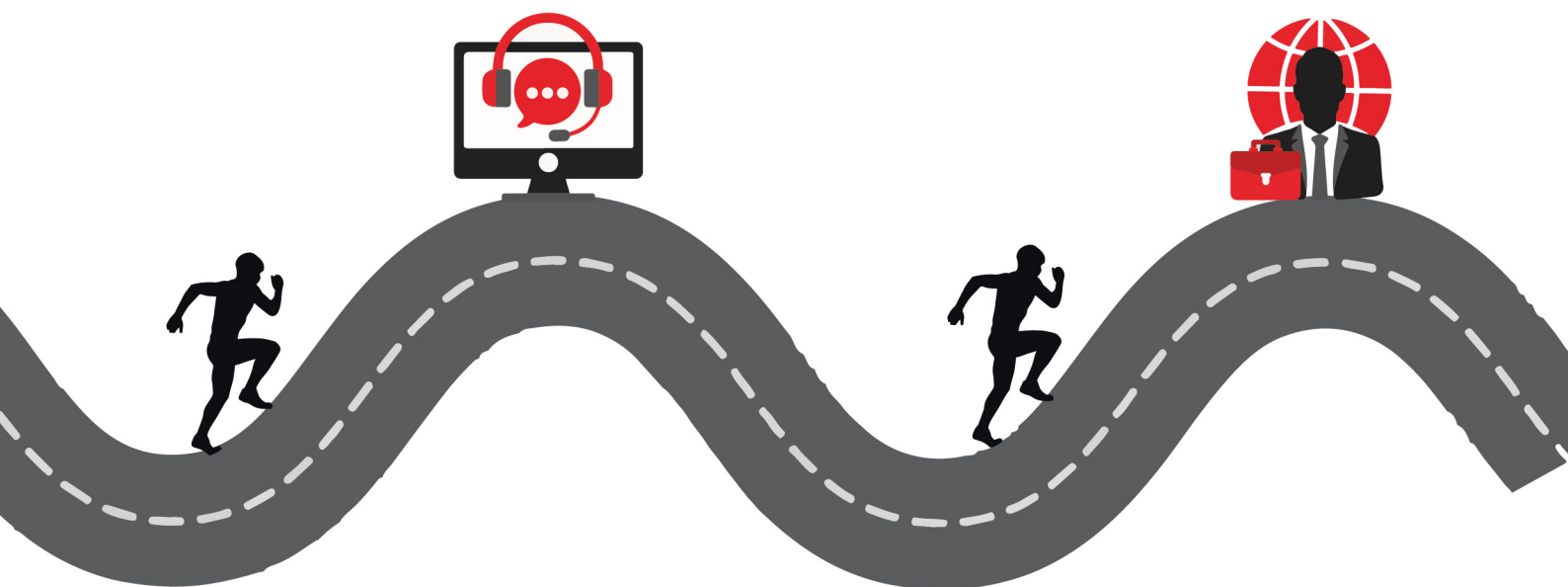
The PROGRESS DC consortium is pleased to announce the successful completion of **Work Package 2 (WP2)**, a foundational stage of the project that provides the evidence base upon which all upcoming training, advisory, and platform activities will be built. WP2 focused on understanding the realities of dual career support across Europe, identifying the transversal skills athletes possess, detecting skills that require further development, and exploring the challenges athletes face when transitioning from sport to the labour market.

WP2 consisted of five tasks, two of which — **(ASIT Tool)** and **(Final Analysis Report)** — constitute key deliverables that have now been officially submitted. The insights gained through WP2 will be directly used to design and refine the training curricula of WP3 and WP4, as well as guide the structure and content of the PROGRESS DC online platform (WP5).





1. Mapping the European Dual Career Landscape



The first stage of WP2 involved a comprehensive **desk research** process across Cyprus, Greece, Poland, and Romania, aiming to identify existing best practices, policies, and support mechanisms related to dual careers. The findings indicate that although dual career principles are recognised across Europe, **none of the partner countries currently implements a fully coordinated national strategy.**

- **Cyprus** shows fragmented support, mostly through scholarships and informal academic flexibility.
- **Greece** provides certain legal benefits to elite athletes but lacks structured, long-term dual career programmes.
- **Romania** references dual career principles in national strategies, yet without operational tools or stable funding.
- **Poland** demonstrates promising approaches via university-level flexibility and counselling systems, but still lacks nationwide structures.

Across Europe, ten best practices were documented, including initiatives from Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands, Cyprus, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Romania, and Poland. These examples highlight flexible education, mentorship, psychological support, and skills development as core pillars of effective dual career systems. They serve as important reference points for shaping the future activities of PROGRESS DC.



2. Athlete Skills Inventory Tool (ASIT)

A central output of WP2 is the development of the **Athlete Skills Inventory Tool (ASIT)**, a structured instrument designed to assess athletes' transversal, digital, and sustainability-related competences. The tool was based on four European competency frameworks:

EntreComp, LifeComp, DigComp, and GreenComp.

The deployment of the ASIT across the consortium countries produced a clear and detailed competence profile:

Key Strengths Identified

Athletes across all countries demonstrate consistently strong competencies in:

- **Motivation & perseverance**
- **Self-awareness and self-efficacy**
- **Ethical and sustainable thinking**
- **Creativity and critical thinking**
- **Collaboration and emotional regulation**
- **Learning through experience and adaptability**

These strengths reflect the mindset and behavioural traits cultivated through professional sport and form a solid foundation for future career development.

Skill Gaps Identified

The ASIT results also highlighted recurring areas where additional support is needed:

- **Financial literacy and resource mobilisation**
- **Planning, initiative-taking, and strategic thinking**
- **Self-reflection and communication**
- **Advanced digital skills** (networking, content creation, digital identity management)
- **Sustainability competences** (critical environmental thinking, future-focused action)

The findings indicate that while athletes possess strong personal and interpersonal skills, additional training is required to support their employability in modern labour markets.





3. Insights from Former Professional Athletes

The third research phase of WP2 included **qualitative interviews** with former athletes from Cyprus, Greece, Romania, and Poland. These interviews highlighted the lived experiences behind the data.

Across countries, athletes emphasised:

- The importance of **early career planning** and access to flexible education
- The emotional and identity-related challenges experienced after career termination
- The value of transversal skills such as **time management, resilience, leadership, stress management, teamwork, and discipline**
- The lack of **structured institutional support**, resulting in reliance on personal networks
- The need for **career counselling, psychological support, and financial stability** during career transition
- The benefit of aligning sporting and academic pathways to improve post-sport outcomes

These narratives underline the necessity for structured Dual Career Advisers, tailored support, and coordinated national systems—core objectives of PROGRESS DC.

4. Final Analysis Report

The Final Report integrates all research phases into a comprehensive analytical document. The report offers:

- A comparative view of dual career systems in the four countries
- Consolidated quantitative results from ASIT
- Deep qualitative insights from athletes' personal experiences
- Recommendations for training, advising, and policy development

The report concludes that athletes already possess a strong value-driven foundation shaped by sport, but face fragmented systems, limited formal support, and consistent gaps in strategic, digital, sustainability, and financial competences.

5. Why WP2 Matters for the Next Stages of PROGRESS DC

WP2 provides the **evidence base** required for:

- Designing the **training curricula for Dual Career Advisers (WP3)**
- Developing the **training modules for athletes on transversal and digital skills (WP4)**

The project will now move forward with the development and piloting of training materials, aligning all interventions with the concrete needs identified through WP2.

The WP2 findings ensure that all upcoming activities are **evidence-based, targeted, and aligned with real athlete needs** across Europe.

Project Website:
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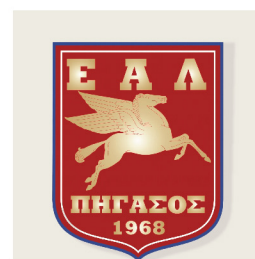
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