

## Exploring Sport Management in Italian Higher and Vocational Education

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Synopsis:

Sport is a labour market. It can be estimated that 390.000 workers are employed in the sport sector in Italy considering only those who have a primary occupation. Additional 600.000 workers are active in sports related professions and - in general - in the sport industry even without any directly sport related competence. Rate of increase in sport employment in the last decade have been higher than in other sectors (1-2% per year), but most of the jobs in the sector are not stable, neither well paid, and career opportunities are very limited. Women employment is increasing and part time occupation decreasing (17,8%).

Both for sport and sport related occupations the access to the profession is not regulated by law, except for skiing instructors and other mountain professional (law 91/81). To work as a coach in a club belonging to the sport movement or in a Federation, a qualification from a National Federation is generally required. No formal education is generally required to work as sport manager or fitness instructor. Social dialogue is very limited since there are very few constituted representatives of the social partners, with the only exception of football. this paper aims to give an overview of the education system in national sport sector

Abstract:

Vocational Education and training in sport in Italy is mostly under the responsibility of the CONI (Italian NOC) and of the National Sport Federations: those are bodies competent to deliver qualifications and set rules. The only relevant exception is the qualification of skiing instructors and mountain guides that is delivered by the regions in conjunction with a specific body of the skiing federation. Sport Federations are also the key training providers.

There are however multiple training providers active in the field. The role of the regions is increasing since they have by law the competency for vocational training, with an increase of training programs and regulations at the regional

level. 37 Universities are also active in the field, delivering bachelor degrees in sport science and master degrees in sport management, adapted physical education and sport coaching, normally with limited impact on the labour market. Private bodies, including professional associations are also active in the training market (e.g. diving, sailing, golf, etc.)

152 training programs are currently reported:

- 27 programmes of Level I (by 15 different providers)
- 23 programmes of Level II (by 19 different providers)
- 27 programmes of Level III (by 23 different providers)
- 38 of level IV (by 30 providers)
- 37 of level V or V+

As critical points, the following aspects can be reported: there is no difference among training for voluntary or professional workers and the key principles of Copenhagen declaration and EQF – Framework (Including the European dimension, recognition of competences and qualifications, validation of informal and non-formal learning, quality assurance) are not significantly implemented. Afterward, there is no external quality assurance system, and no general procedures to recognize non formal and formal learning. CONI is developing a new National Qualification System for coaches, based on a competence framework and including a Credit point system.

All the above mentioned critical points determine negative effects on the qualification of sport operators. Indeed, over-qualification is widely present and so are skill gaps and skill shortage. In addition, an over-matching among training course provided by Coni/Nsf's and Universities can be highlighted.

Both for sport and sport related occupations the access to the profession is not regulated by law, with the exception of skiing instructors, mountain guides and few other operators (law 91/81). In order to operate as a coach in a club belonging to the sport movement or in a Federation, a qualification from a National Federation is generally required. Therefore, excluding the internal training path of each Nsf, there are not specific procedures for certifying qualifications and skills in connection with the public system of general education and vocational training.

Without referring to a clear and well-defined process of recognition, it can be generally maintained that, no formal education is required to work as sport manager or fitness instructor.

Finally, the limited social dialogue among provider agencies, representatives of workers (there are very few) and national institution must be considered as a point of weakness for the whole sector.

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