



ENSE

European Network of Sport Education

Sport Science, Education/Training and Employment in Europe *The role of ENSE*

The *European Network of Sport Education* is an international non-profit association established in 1989 in Luxembourg and currently registered in France, focused on sport education/training, and its relation with sport science and employment. It is a network of educational/training institutions, open to individual members, intended as the ideal meeting place for debating ideas and developing common initiatives.

Multiple opportunities are provided to that effect, via the virtual environment and through projects, meetings and events, encouraging exchanges, mobility, and the convergence of education and training systems for sport-related professions, with a focus on qualifications and employment, quality assurance, and the establishment of synergies between all partners and stakeholders.

ENSE currently has offices in Rome (*University of Rome "Foro Italico"*), Cologne (*Deutsche Sporthochschule*) and Vienna (*University of Vienna*), and a membership involving all EU countries and neighboring regions, with provisions for the establishment of Regional Chapters and National Delegates. Its Committees cover a variety of issues and areas related to the sport sector and involve well-known experts from the various countries and domains.

When the Network was established, 26 years ago, few organisations existed in the area, sport science and education, and the dialogue with sport training institutions were at their beginnings, and the idea of a European dimension of education had not yet been given the frame of reference later set by the Erasmus program and the Bologna Process. When this happened, the area of sport education was already organized and active with respect to internationalization, dialogue with stakeholders, and related issues, which had in fact already been promoted by the Network for several years.

Meanwhile, the impressive developments of sport science led to the increasing recognition of the value of sport for the individual and society. Eventually, the EU declared 2004 *European Year of Education through Sport*, the UN declared 2005 *International Year of Sport and Physical Education*, and in 2008 a UN Agency on Sport, Development and Peace was established, to promote sport as an instrument for education in the context of the *Millennium Development Goals*.

Sport Education was thus given a prominent place in the world agenda – an action the EU has more recently strengthened with the launch in 2015 of the *European Week of Sport*.

ENSE has been very instrumental in this process, coming to represent a central meeting point for education/training institutions and other main actors in the sport sector, promoting European meetings, dialogue and exchanges, surveys and cooperative programs, and a Sport Education Information Platform (*Sophelia*).

The Network's activities and outputs have in many cases become standard references. Examples are the *European Qualification Framework for the five levels of Coach Education*, European Masters, Diplomas and Intensive Programmes, the *Nomenclature of Sport Economic Activities (NEARS) and Occupations (NEORS)*, or the *Report on Sport Employment in Europe*, supported by the former DG X of the EU in 1999. Its Thematic Network AEHESIS – *Aligning a European Higher Educational Structure in Sport Science* (2002-2007), was nominated by the EU an Erasmus Success Story. Through it, the Network brought together some 90 organisations from 29 countries in a 4-year-long effort which resulted in the extensive mapping of existing study programs and the design of reference curricula in the four identified main areas: *Physical Education, Coaching, Health & Fitness, Sport Management*.

The Network also started several *Joint Curricula*, which played a major role in promoting mobility and cooperation, and set the scene for the development of full teaching programs, with degrees entirely valid in the various countries, academically and professionally, such as the *European Master in Health and Physical Activity* (Rome-Vienna-Cologne-Odense-Oslo), increasingly successful since over ten years, or the recent *Bachelor on Physical Activity and Lifestyle (PALC)*, etc.

This experience, particularly the reference curricula designed and some of the joint programs developed, have also been instrumental in several Tempus projects and other European interventions promoting the Bologna Process and an upgrading of sport science curricula in EU neighboring areas, such as the Balkans and Egypt. ENSE is currently contributing to the Tempus Program SPEED (*Sport Professions: Education, Employment & Development*) while playing a major role in the new project SPEACH (*Sport, Physical Education and Coaching in Health*).

These great developments resulted over the years in some differentiation within the originally unitary sector. As the oldest umbrella organisation in the European sport sector, the Network was the initial foundation and starting point for several, now independent, organisations and remains in good relation and partnership with them, in a spirit of continued cooperation and unity of intent toward common European goals.

An overview of the organisational developments of ENSE and its subgroups and related organisations in the European sport sector is provided in the table below.

The development of ENSE with former subgroups and related organisations

Year	Organisational development
1989	Establishment of the “European Network of Sport Science in Higher Education (ENSSHE)”
1993	“European Association of Sport Management (EASM)” established as separate organisation
1994	“Vocational Fitness” considered a subgroup of ENSSHE
1995	“European College of Sport Science (ECSS)” and “European Committee for Sports History (CESH)” established as separate organisations
1996	ENSSHE selected by the EU to be the Thematic Network for research, training and the study of qualifications and employment in the field of sport
1997	“European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE)” considered a subgroup of ENSSHE
2001	ENSSHE becomes the “European Network of Sport Science, Education and Employment (ENSSEE)” “European Network of Fitness Associations (ENFA)” established as separate organisation renamed “European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA)”
2002	EOSE established as separate organisation
2003	Start of the project “AEHESIS - Aligning a European Higher Education Structure in Sport Science”
2005	“European Coaching Council (ECC)” considered a subgroup of ENSSEE
2007	End of the AEHESIS project Launch of the European Sport Education Information Platform SOPHELIA that bundles up-to-date information about sport education in Europe as a result of the AEHESIS project
2008	The AEHESIS project gets nominated an “ERASMUS Success Story” by the European Commission
2009	ENSSEE’s 20 th Anniversary and 10 th Forum in Ragusa/ Italy
2015	13 th Forum in Rome/ Italy and adoption of new statutes - ENSSEE becomes the “European Network of Sport Education (ENSE)”

ENSE's role in this complex and diverse organisational environment is defined through four factors:

- A. the Network's expertise in the area of sport education;
- B. its network character and membership constellation (involving Universities, Sport Federations, Olympic Committees, other training organisations);
- C. its relationships to several other European organisations and stakeholders; and
- D. the composition and combination of an Executive Board with academic and professional background and expertise working on voluntary basis with the goal to develop the sport sector, supported by a Council and Committees, and a professional office dealing with the day-to-day-business, the communication between all members and other stakeholders, and the updates of the web environment.

Future activities are:

1. Promote the cooperation among the different stakeholders and organisations in the European sport education sector.
2. Make use of existing networks and information channels (ENSE's platform, newsletter, etc.) to reach the European sport education community.
3. Promote and strengthen the relation between research, education and training in the sport sector.
4. Maximize alignment between the educational program of Higher Education and NQF/EQF in the context of a clear occupational map for the sport sector.

This unique position makes ENSE the ideal partner and initial contact for the EU's new competencies in the field of sport and especially the area of sport education, which is outlined as one of the priority subjects in the future EU strategy. With its already existing or planned infrastructures - such as a vast database of contacts, a regular newsletter, and an updated website, in addition to its regular meetings and projects, and its history and successful background - ENSE could be the driving force behind an enhanced cooperation within the sport sector and the European Commission.

With the Lisbon Treaty and the White Paper on Sport, and with its workplan on Sport 2014–2017, the whole European sport sector has been put in a new frame. The new competencies assigned to the European Commission in the sector as well as the specific promotion program under ERASMUS+ already changed and will continue to change the sport sector in the near future.

ENSE would like to express its intention to become a valuable partner for the European Commission Sport Unit by sharing its knowledge and expertise in sport education. Furthermore, ENSE could provide tools and services as distribution channels and a live and vivid network active in the sector to facilitate projects and cooperation. The current composition of the Network (Universities, European and International Sport Organisations, National and International Sport Federations, etc.) offers great opportunities to implement results and outcomes in the most direct and efficient way.

With its expertise, ENSE could also be the point of reference for educational institutions in relation to the implementation of their research and educational policies in the new framework set by the Lisbon Treaty, the White Paper on Sport, the Bologna Process, or Education and Training 2020.

ENSE is looking forward to the future of the European sport sector and would be glad to actively participate in the development of the European dimension in sport.

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