

**THE ROLE OF SPORT FUNCTIONARIES IN ATHLETES' DUAL CAREER****Ilvis ABELKALNS***University of Latvia, Latvia, e-mail: ilvis.abelkalns@lu.lv*

As stated in the EU regulation (White paper in sport, 2007), also the EU Commission considers that sport can be better used as a means of social integration in EU and national policies, actions and programs. This includes the contribution of sport to work place creation and economic growth, economic recovery, especially it applies to Latvia. Non-profit sport activities contribute to social cohesion and vulnerable social group integration, so this can be considered as social services of general interest.

According to the international research, one-third of all young and talented athletes 10 to 17 years of age each year decide to discontinue sport trainings, because they believe that sport takes too much time and prevents from other things in life (Guidelines on Dual Careers ..., 2012).

This means that more attention should be paid to the process of applying management functions for elite athletes' to manage their dual careers.

The empirical study aim is to identify and analyze the Latvian sport functionaries' views on elite athletes' support possibilities in education and sport development.

In the Article the Author used Qualitative methods: there was done normative document analysis, sport functionaries' interviews to get the information, opinions and beliefs about elite athletes' support possibilities in the study and sport development process which is important to the effective management of dual career.

Summing sport functionaries' interview opinion analysis, the author concludes that elite athletes need education to form a way of thinking, a better understanding of themselves, which is also important in order to achieve high results in sport.

The majority of respondents recognized that their represented sport federations do not have special support programs for elite athletes. To be able to successfully connect studies and high performance sport, must be created the right environment (infrastructure, study and training plan, etc.) for athletes to save time and energy. Elite athletes also support this environmental significance.

**Keywords:** dual career, elite athletes, sport, education.