Since the beginning of this year the Institute of Psychology (Department of Performance Psychology) is one of six European members in the project ‘Be a Winner in Elite Sports and Employment before and after Athletic Retirement’ (B-WISER for short). The goal of the project is to examine the ‘Dual Careers’ of elite athletes, focusing especially on the transition from the end of their careers to working life.

The project will investigate possibilities and limitations of support as well as the athletes’ special skills for the job market. The objective of this examination is to optimise the long-term employment possibilities of (former) elite athletes.

The first phase of the project focuses on existing structures and measures that support ‘elite sports and employment’. In the second phase skills that allow the athletes to combine elite sports and employment in accordance with the Dual Careers concept are identified. The goal is to enable a successful transition from professional sports to working life at the end of the athlete’s sporting career. The subsequent phases of the B-WISER project involve investigating the benefits for employers when hiring athletes and identifying and developing best practice examples.

The results of the project benefit universities, sports associations and umbrella organisations. Career advisers could also profit from the findings, as they may allow them to optimise the progression of Dual Careers in elite sports. This would also directly benefit the athletes themselves. The 400,000 EURO funding of the two-year project is provided by the EU’s Erasmus+ programme.

The ‘Vrije Universiteit Brussel’ is the project leader. Furthermore, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden are also participating in the B-WISER project. The coordination of the participating institutions (universities, national and international Olympic and Paralympic committees, elite sports centres, experts in career counselling, experts in employment and HR and international sport experts) is being carried out by Prof. Wylleman and his team at the ‘Vrije Universiteit Brussel’. The German Sport University Cologne is being represented by Dr. Babett Lobinger and Prof. Dr. Dr. Markus Raab.