Applied sport psychology (ASP) service delivery rests on adequate training in ASP. To enhance future quality of ASP, attention should be drawn to education in the field. We examined programmes and courses that lead to ASP expertise in Europe and explored the possibility and objectives of a network of educators in ASP. Data were collected through a survey (N = 59; 30 European countries, 35 ASP education programmes) and analysed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. An overview of education in ASP in Europe is presented and discussed in terms of entry, structure, and completion of programmes and courses. In addition, perceived quality of programmes and a network for educators in ASP are discussed. Findings illustrate that education in ASP is available in most European countries, but programmes and courses vary widely in terms of level, size, and applied focus. Educators in ASP are interested in interacting, mainly with the objectives to form a network, collaborate and exchange (e.g. knowledge, staff, students, experiences, quality standard).

**Keywords:** educational programmes; applied sport psychology education; network; sport psychology educators; Europe

**Education and training in applied sport psychology in Europe**

Education in applied sport psychology (ASP) forms the bedrock of the quality of ASP service delivery. To further enhance the level of service delivery, education in ASP should be of the highest possible quality and widely available to students and professionals in the field.

The interest in ASP education by prospective students seems to increase and generally speaking, international mobility of students is a growing trend (e.g. Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Lasanowski & Verbik, 2007; Rodríguez González, Bustillo Mesanza, & Mariel, 2010). The interest in the European Master Program in Sport and Exercise Psychology (EMSEP; Strengel, in Hutter, 2012; Hadzigeorgiadis, in Sanchez, 2011) illustrates that this internationalisation trend also applies to sport psychology students. Therefore, students who want to pursue a career in ASP would benefit from an international overview of training and education in their field of interest. For Anglo-Saxon countries, such an overview exists in the form of a directory of graduate programmes in ASP, regularly compiled by Association for Applied Sport Psychology (e.g. Sachs, Burke, & Schweighardt, 2011). For most other countries, and specifically the European context, no overview of training and education is available.

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In the recent past, attempts have been made to identify education in the field of ASP globally (Morris, Allermann, Lintunen, & Hall, 2003), and in Europe (Wylleman, Harwood, Elbe, Reints, & de Caluwé, 2009). Wylleman and colleagues concluded that, while information on several ASP-related educational programmes in Europe is available, a detailed overview and description (e.g. organising institute, content, duration, eligibility) of programmes en route to ASP practice are lacking. Wylleman et al. suggested that FEPSAC, as the leading organisation for sport psychology in Europe, should develop initiatives to enable guidelines for high-quality education, take the lead in analysing ASP education programmes throughout Europe, and develop or support initiatives in ASP education. They felt these steps to be of particular importance for the European context, as research on ASP practitioners and their backgrounds is scant in Europe. The current study was undertaken under the patronage of FEPSAC and largely follows the recommendations of Wylleman et al.

Specialised education in ASP is relatively young. Therefore, educators are still learning how to best prepare students for practice. One way to further enhance our knowledge of effective teaching in ASP would be to tap into experiential knowledge of educators. Tod, Marchant, and Andersen (2007) interviewed both students and staff about learning experiences that they found to be helpful for professional development. Client interactions, relationships among teaching staff, supervisors and students and specific events outside of the training programmes were found to aid students in developing service-delivery competence. Keegan (2010) gives a personal report of how he teaches consulting philosophies to ASP students and shares his use of video material, role-playing, reflective practice and written assignments. These two examples illustrate that teachers, programme managers, supervisors and other educators carry a wealth of experiences and histories of trial and error with them. When these “experts through experience” are brought together to exchange their successes, mistakes, experiences and knowledge, they can learn about effective teaching from peers, and become inspired to experiment with new methods and apply new insights. Thus, we suggest that a network for educators in ASP should be established.

The study aims to provide an overview of education and training for ASP expertise in Europe. The resulting overview of available education may serve prospective students and professionals; and it provides a basis for future cooperation between educators, quality assessment and management in education and initiatives for continued professional development. In the study, many experts on education in ASP were contacted and possibilities for a network were explored. The study, as such, marks the start of the network for Educators in Applied Sport psychology (the EASY network), from which education in ASP is hoped to benefit.

Method
A survey was designed to collect information about available ASP education programmes. In an effort to contact as many prospective respondents as possible, we employed an extensive approach in contacting educators in applied sport psychology. The following institutes, associations, or persons were contacted by e-mail ($N = 242$): group-members of the European Federation of Sport Psychology (FEPSAC; $n = 22$), students of EMSEP ($n = 16$), national Olympic Committees ($n = 47$), national psychology associations ($n = 35$), national psychology student associations ($n = 32$), contacts derived from the World Sport Psychology Sourcebook 3rd edition (Lidor, Morris, Bardaxoglou, & Becker, 2001; $n = 42$), and additional personal contacts of the authors ($n = 48$). In addition, we posted announcements on the FEPSAC website and on the Facebook page of the European Network of Young Specialists in Sport Psychology. A total of 96 prospective network members were identified, located in 36 different countries in
Europe. A total of 72 of the prospective network members confirmed their involvement, interest, and/or expertise in ASP education and were sent the survey. Fifty-nine individuals (82% response of the 72 included participants) from 30 different countries completed the survey. All respondents confirmed to be (one of the) key-persons in education in their respective country. Mostly respondents were affiliated to universities, national federations or both. The vast majority of respondents are known to be strongly linked to the practice of sport psychology, that is, they are ASP practitioners and/or ASP researchers.

Respondents were asked if, and how, they would be interested to participate in a network for educators in ASP. Specifically respondents were asked about their objectives for, and expectations of, such a network, about issues they would like to discuss with colleagues, and about ways they could contribute to the network.

A total of 42 respondents reported that an educational programme in ASP exists in their country, and were asked in the survey to provide information on the programme concerning: admittance of foreign students, language of teaching, mode of study, duration, attainment level, acknowledgement after graduation, tuition fees, ratio theoretical versus practical education, quality assurance, entry requirements, maximum number of students, internships, study load, supervision, strong points of the programme, points to be improved, emphasis on specific topics and miscellaneous suggestions or remarks (for a copy of the survey, see Appendix 1). We thus collected information on a total of 35 programmes. In Appendix 2 the name of the programmes, and the country and organisation or institute in which they reside, are provided (see Appendix 2).

Data from the survey were analysed quantitatively (i.e. by frequency) to identify common characteristics of ASP education in Europe and qualitatively (i.e. content analysis of open-ended questions) to identify strong and weaker points of programmes and to obtain information on the need for a network for educators. The majority of the survey questions were multiple-choice questions. Other questions were open-ended; the data from these questions consisted of numbers (maximum number of students and study load) or were assigned to categories by the authors (answer categories of entry requirements were bachelor/master/other, combined with sport science/psychology/both, answer categories for both internship and supervision were yes/no). Frequencies of the thus obtained ordinal and nominal data were analysed to identify common characteristics of ASP education in Europe.

The questions regarding the strong points, points to be improved, and the network were open-ended and allowed for elaborate answers. Citations were derived from the answers of the respondents to the open-ended questions and served as data-units in the analysis. Each citation consists of an independently interpretable and meaningful unit. In some cases, the citation consisted of a complete answer, in other cases the answers were split into multiple citations. This was done when an answer contained more than one meaningful unit and addressed more than one issue. As an example, when a respondent listed three strong points of their programme, this answer was split into three citations, each listing one strong point of the programme. The citations were analysed by the third author using Nvivo 10 software. The third author coded the citations using fine meshed open coding. Next, the structure of open codes and belonging citations was re-assessed by the first and third authors together and codes were revised and combined. Next, codes and citations were compared for similarities and differences, and overarching themes were formed (axial coding). The resulting themes and codes were again discussed with the first author, and, independently checked by the second author. The number of citations within the thus obtained themes and codes is used to describe common strong and weak points of educational programmes in Europe, and to describe common objectives and input for the network.
The information on the programmes, collected from the survey, was sent back to the respondents to check accuracy of the interpretation of the survey data. The information on 26 (74%) of the reported programmes was confirmed by the respondents; confirmation of the remaining nine programmes was not received.

Results and conclusion

The aim of the study is to provide an overview of education and training for ASP expertise in Europe. Information was gathered on 35 different programmes. Details of the surveyed programmes are presented in Table 1. The results will be discussed in terms of entry, structure, completion and perceived quality of programmes; a network for educators in ASP will be discussed, followed by a discussion of limitations of the study, practical implications and future directions.

Overview of ASP educational programmes

Entering programmes

Availability of education is limited to a certain extent, in terms of both existence of programmes and intake of programmes. First, in some European countries, ASP education is not available; students who want to obtain ASP education need to look abroad. Most \( n = 30; 86\% \) programmes accept foreign students. However, for the majority of these programmes \( n = 22 \), the student would have to speak the local language, because teaching is not (fully) in English. Zhang and Mi (2010) point out that "certain academic disciplines, most notably those that are linguistically demanding, may be more sensitive to language proficiency, or proficiency in language skills" (p. 373). It seems fair to say that the discipline of ASP is linguistically very demanding, among other things due to the key role of rapport and communication in ASP service delivery. The demands on the language proficiency of international students are therefore high.

Almost all \( n = 32; 91\% \) programmes have a maximum number of participants they admit, mostly set at 15—25 students. Whether this limited intake of students is a good or a bad thing depends on the perspective taken. From an educational point of view, small groups of students are desirable, or even necessary, to provide adequate training of skills and attitudes (whereas the transfer of knowledge might be less bound to student numbers). From an economic standpoint, the limited labour market for ASP practitioners may also advocate limited numbers of students to be admitted. However, the number of aspiring ASP students increases and the limited intake of students could form an obstacle for students to obtain their desired education. Moreover, as long as evidence-based selection criteria for ASP students are lacking, the field is at risk of educating the “wrong” students and missing out on talented ASP students (for a discussion on prerequisites of prospective students versus trainable competencies in ASP, see Fletcher & Maher, 2013).

The range of tuition fees for educational programmes in ASP is wide. Some programmes do not charge a tuition fee at all, while the tuition fee of other programmes varies from less than €1000, to more than €15,000. Especially, the higher tuition fees may create a barrier for ASP education for some students. Fortunately, a number of European educational programmes \( n = 8; 23\% \) are free of tuition, providing affordable routes towards ASP practice.

The majority of programmes \( n = 21; 60\% \) can be entered with a bachelor degree: 12 with a bachelor degree in either sport science or psychology, four in sport science, four in psychology. Two programmes require a master’s degree: three of these demand a master’s degree in psychology; three can be entered with a master’s degree in sport science as well. Other entry requirements were reported for eight (23%) programmes (e.g. a doctorate, an undergraduate degree of a
Table 1. ASP education programmes in Europe and accompanying information about entering programmes, programme structure and completion of programmes.

| Programme | Entry requirements | Maximum amount of students admitted | Admittance of foreign students | Language of tuition | Tuition fee (€) | Study load (ECTS) | Study mode | Average duration (months) | Ratio practical and theoretical education (%) | Study supervision | Formal supervision | Attainment level | Quality assurance | Acknowledgement as ASP practitioner |
|-----------|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Austria   | MaBo              | 25                                 | Yes                            | Local               | 2500–5000       | 8               | PT          | 6–12                  | 90% :10%                                   | Yes            | Yes             | Cert           | Yes            | Yes                         |
| Belgium   | MaPs              | 10                                 | Yes                            | Local               | 2500–5000       | PT              | 18–24      | 70% :30%                          | Yes            | Yes            | P–Ma           | Yes            | No                          |
| Croatia   | BaPs              | 30                                 | Yes                            | Local               | <1000           | 2               | FT          | 0–6                   | 70% :30%                                   | No             | Ma              | Yes            | No             | No                          |
| Czech Republic¹ | Other³ | 25                                 | Yes                            | Local               | No tuition fee  | No tuition fee | Both        | 12–18                | 50% :50%                                   | No             | Other           | No             | No             | No                          |
| Czech Republic² | Other³ | 15–20                              | Yes                            | English             | No tuition fee  | 3–6⁴                     | Both        | 12–18                | 60% :40%                                   | No             | Other           | No             | No             | No                          |
| Denmark   | BaSS              | Vary-ing                           | Yes                            | Local               | No tuition fee  | 120             | FT          | 18–24                | No                                         | Ma             | Yes             | No             | No             | No                          |
| Finland   | BaBo              | 15                                 | Yes                            | English             | No tuition fee  | 120             | FT          | 18–24                | 40% :60%                                   | Yes            | Other           | No             | No             | No                          |
| France¹   | BaSS              | 20                                 | Yes                            | Local               | <1000           | 120             | PT          | 18–24                | 40% :60%                                   | Yes            | No             | Ma             | Yes            | No                          |
| France²   | BaSS              | 110                                | Yes                            | Local               | <1000           | 60              | FT          | 6–12                 | 50% :50%                                   | Yes            | Ma             | No             | Yes            | Yes                         |
| Germany¹  | BaBo              | 10                                 | Yes                            | Local               | <1000 – 2500    | 120             | FT          | 18–24                | 60% :40%                                   | Yes            | Ma             | Yes            | Yes            | Yes                         |
| Germany²  | BaBo              | 12                                 | Yes                            | English             | 2500 – 5000     | 90              | PT          | 6–12                 | 90% :10%                                   | No             | Other           | Yes            | Yes            | Yes                         |
| Greece¹  | BaBo              | 15                                 | Yes                            | English             | 2500 – 5000     | 120             | FT          | 18–24                | 40% :60%                                   | Yes            | Yes            | Ma             | Yes            | No                          |
| Greece²  | BaBo              | 2–4                                | No                              | Local               | No tuition fee  | 120             | FT          | > 24                 | 30% :70%                                   | Yes            | Ma             | Yes            | Yes            | Yes                         |
| Ireland   | BaBo              | 20                                 | Yes                            | Local               | 2500 – 5000     | 90              | FT          | 12–18                | 40% :60%                                   | No             | Ma             | Yes            | Yes            | Yes                         |
| Italy¹    | BaSS              | 30                                 | Yes                            | Local               | <1000 – 2500    | 24              | PT          | 0–6                  | 70% :30%                                   | No             | Ba             | Yes            | No             | No                          |
| Italy²    | BaPs              | 20                                 | Yes                            | Local               | 2500 – 5000     | 60              | PT          | 6–12                 | 40% :60%                                   | Yes            | Yes            | P–Ma           | No             | No                          |
| Norway    | Other              | Vary-ing                           | Yes                            | Local               | No tuition fee  | 180             | FT          | > 24                 | 50% :50%                                   | No             | PhD            | Yes            | No             | No                          |
| PE4EP²    | Other              | 15                                 | Yes                            | English             | <1000 – 2500    | 4               | FT          | 0–6                  | 60% :40%                                   | No             | Cert           | Yes            | Yes            | Yes                         |
| Poland¹  | MaPs              | 22                                 | No                              | Local               | <1000 – 2500    | 11              | PT          | 12–18                | 60% :40%                                   | Yes            | Yes            | P–Ma           | Yes            | Yes                         |
| Poland²  | MaPs              | No limit                           | No                              | Local               | 2500 – 5000     | FT              | > 24                 | 80% :20%                                   | Yes            | Yes            | Ma             | Yes            | Yes                         |

(Continued)
Table 1. Continued.

| Programme | Entry requirements | Maximum amount of students admitted | Admittance of foreign students | Language of tuition | Tuition fee (€) | Study load (ECTS) | Study mode | Average duration (months) | Ratio practical and theoretical education (%) | Practical internship | Formal supervision | Attainment level | Quality assurance | Acknowledgement as ASP practitioner |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Portugal¹ | BaBo               | 25                                 | Yes                            | Local†                | 1000 – 1500     | 120             | PT           | 18–24                    | 40% :60%                                      | Yes                 | Yes              | Ma              | Yes              | No                      |
| Portugal² | BaPs               | 20                                 | Yes                            | English              | 1000 – 2500     | 30              | PT           | 0–6                      | 70% :30%                                      | Yes                 | Yes              | P-Ma            | Yes              | No                      |
| Romania   | BaPs               | 20                                 | Yes                            | Local                | < 1000 – 1500   | 120             | FT           | 18–24                    | 40% :60%                                      | Yes                 | No               | Ma              | Yes              | No                      |
| Russia    | Ba                 | 15                                 | Yes                            | Local                | 5000 – 10000   | 5               | PT           | 18–24                    | 50% :50%                                      | Yes                 | Yes              | Ma              | Yes              | Yes                     |
| Spain     | BaBo               | 30                                 | Yes                            | Local                | 10000 – 2500    | 30              | both         | 0–6                      | 50% :50%                                      | Yes                 | Yes              | Ma              | No               | No                      |
| Sweden    | BaBo               | 15                                 | Yes                            | Local†                | 15000 – 2500    | 60              | PT           | > 24                     | 60% :40%                                      | Yes                 | Yes              | Ma              | Yes              | Yes                     |
| Switzerland | MaBo            | 25                                 | No                             | Local†                | 10,000 – 15,000 | 30              | PT           | > 24                     | 50% :50%                                      | Yes                 | No               | Other           | Yes              | Yes                     |
| The Netherlands | MaBo        | 18                                 | Yes                            | Local                | 10,000 – 15,000 | 60              | PT           | > 24                     | 80% :20%                                      | Yes                 | Yes              | P-Ma            | Yes              | Yes                     |
| Turkey    | BaBo               | 12                                 | No                             | Local                | No tuition fee  | 60              | PT           | 18–24                    | 40% :60%                                      | Yes                 | Yes              | Ma              | Yes              | No                      |
| United Kingdom¹ | Other   | 75                                 | Yes                            | Local†                | 5000 – 10,000   | both           | > 24                     | 70% :30%                                      | Yes                 | Yes              | P-Ma            | Yes              | Yes                     |
| United Kingdom² | Other² | 20                                 | Yes                            | Local†                | 5000 – 10,000   | 180             | PT           | > 24                     | 40% :60%                                      | No                  | Ma               | Yes             | No               | No                      |
| United Kingdom³ | Other³ | 400² 20³ 20³                     | Yes                            | Local†                | > 15,000 – 20,000 | both           | > 24                     | 40% :60%                                      | No                  | P-Ma             | Yes             | No               | No                      |
| United Kingdom⁴ | Other⁴ | 15                                 | Yes                            | Local†                | 2500 – 5000     | 180             | both         | 12–18                    | 40% :60%                                      | Yes                 | Yes              | PhD             | Yes              | No                      |
| United Kingdom⁵ | BaBo   | 160                                | Yes                            | Local†                | 5000 – 10,000   | 120             | both         | 6–12                     | 50% :50%                                      | No                  | Yes              | Ma              | Yes              | No                      |
| United Kingdom⁶ | BaBo   | 25                                 | Yes                            | Local†                | 5000 – 10,000   | FT              | 12–18                    | 30% :70%                                      | No                  | Yes              | Ma              | Yes              | No                      |

Note: When more than one programme is available in a country, the programmes are numbered in superscript (e.g. Czech Republic¹ and Czech Republic²). BaSS = Bachelor degree in Sport Sciences, BaPs = Bachelor degree in Psychology, BaBo = Bachelor in either Psychology or Sport Sciences, MaPs = Master’s degree in Psychology, MaBo = Master’s degree in either Psychology or Sport Sciences, PT = part-time, FT = full-time, Cert = certificate, Ma = Master level, P-Ma = Post-master level.

All information is up to date as per April 2015, except the information in italics, which were not confirmed by April 2015.

¹The programme contains more than one level, different entry requirements apply for different levels.
²Bachelor phase.
³Master phase.
⁴The PE4EP programme has no clear residence country, because it is a FEPSAC initiative, which takes place in France, but is coordinated in Belgium. The PE4EP programme is therefore identified as PE4EP, instead of a country.
BPS approved programme, additional demands, specific courses, or respondents reported different entry requirements for different levels in the programme). The results show a variety in type of programmes and corresponding target groups for education. Programmes that can be entered with a bachelor degree could be considered basic, foundational education in sport psychology, whereas programmes and courses that require a master’s degree or have specific entry requirements offer specialisation in sport psychology, beyond the foundational level. In addition, there was one 4 European Credit Transfer System credits (ECTS) programme that caters for continued professional development, the PE4EP. The course requires three to five years working experience as an applied sport psychologist or as an elite coach. The importance of continued professional development in sport psychology seems to be becoming more and more acknowledged in the field of sport psychology. Therefore, educational initiatives to support such continued learning should be encouraged.

The results indicate that over half of the programmes accept students from both sport sciences and psychology (i.e. \( n = 15 \) out of 27 programmes that specify a bachelor or master’s degree as entry requirement). This illustrates that both multi- and mono-disciplinary entry policies are applied. The kind of education background that is required to enter programmes links to the long-standing debate about appropriate educational backgrounds in sport psychology (e.g. Gardner, 1991; Silva, 1989; Taylor, 1994). More recently, Aoyagi, Czech, Portenga, Metzler, and Poczwardowski (2009) noticed an interdisciplinary trend in the design of ASP curricula. Aoyagi et al. refer mostly to the North-American situation, but the entry requirements in Europe in this study suggest a similar pattern of interdisciplinarity in ASP education.

**Programme structure**

The intensity of the ASP educational programmes, in terms of study load and mode of study (part-time or full-time), varies widely. Some “programmes” appear to consist of only a single course or a few courses (2–11 ECTS; \( n = 6 ; 17\% \)). Most other reported education (\( n = 25 ; 71\% \)) is more extensive, having a range in study load of 24–180 ECTS. 4 Programmes of mid-range size (between 24 and 90 ECTS; \( n = 13 ; 37\% \)) are mostly offered in part-time mode (\( n = 9 \)). The bigger programmes of 120 or 180 ECTS (\( n = 12 ; 34\% \)) are usually offered in full-time mode (\( n = 7 \)). The PE4EP programme, the only programme explicitly directed at continued professional development, has a study load of four ECTS.

Although all reported programmes offer education in ASP, their applied focus varies. The reported ratio between applied education and theoretical education ranges from 30% applied:70% theoretical to 90% applied:10% theoretical. The fact that the lowest ratio reported was still 30% applied education strengthens our confidence that we have successfully contacted educators in applied sport psychology, as opposed to merely sport psychology researchers or educators of purely theoretical courses in sport psychology. In addition, the programmes with these lower ratios have a large study load (i.e. over 60 EC). Even though the majority of teaching can be considered theoretical in these programmes, due to the size of the programmes, the practical content in the programme seems still substantial. Last, the programmes with lower ratios applied versus theoretical education are mostly programmes that can be entered with a Bachelor degree, supporting the perception of these programmes as foundational education, as opposed to specialisation or continued professional development education.

As can be inferred from Appendix 2, the majority of programmes and courses are positioned within university settings. Others are organised by other organisations, such as centres, companies or federations. The reported ratio between applied education and theoretical education seems mostly higher for education that is positioned with other organisations than universities.
The majority (n = 23; 66%) of programmes include a practical internship. In 19 of these programmes, students receive formal supervision during their internship; four programmes provide a practical internship that is not formally supervised. Yet, one other programme was reported to offer formal supervision, but no practical internship. In total, 12 programmes (34%) do not provide a practical internship. Interestingly, there is no clear relation between offering a practical internship and the reported applied focus of programmes: Some programmes report a high degree of applied teaching but do not provide a practical internship, but other programmes focus highly on theoretical teaching and do include a practical internship.

Programme completion

Different educational levels are obtained with the different programmes. Attainment levels are, to a large extent, related to entry requirements. The most common path in ASP education in Europe is entry with a bachelor degree and graduating at master’s level (n = 17; 49%). Four programmes that require a bachelor degree for entry lead to different attainment levels than master’s level (e.g. post-master level). For the few programmes requiring a Master’s degree to enter (n = 6; 17%), the final attainment level is diverse. Three programmes lead to a post-master level, one to a certificate, one to a qualification on master’s level, and one to a specific national post-degree. Of the remaining programmes (with other entry requirements than a bachelor or master’s degree, n = 8), two programmes are reported to lead to a PhD.

Apart from attainment level, it is interesting to see whether graduates of the programmes obtain recognition as ASP practitioners (e.g. licensure). Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996) have described the differences between accreditation, registration and licensing in ASP practice. Morris et al. (2003) criticised these definitions and descriptions, and also pointed out that some of these terms are used differently in different countries. Moreover, it is unclear whether respondents are familiar with the definitions by Zaichkowsky and Perna. In the survey of diversity in terminology, corresponding usage and interpretation were anticipated. We therefore surveyed whether education programme lead to some kind of official acknowledgement as sport psychology practitioners by governing bodies, as opposed to inquiring the exact type of acknowledgement (i.e. accreditation, licensure or registration). This is in line with studies differentiating between practitioners with, and practitioners without credentials (e.g. Lubker, Visek, Watson, & Singpurwalla, 2012; Sanchez, Godin, & De Zanet, 2005; Woolway & Harwood, 2015).

In 14 programmes included in the current study (40%), graduates obtain official acknowledgement as sport psychology practitioners. These findings seem to fit the reality in Europe as described by Sanchez et al. (2005) who concluded that ASP practitioners with and practitioners without credentials coexist. Morris et al. (2003) concluded that certification or licensure of sport psychologists is not that common, and even rare when looking at certification or licensure by psychology-related bodies. The results of the current survey suggest an increase in professional acknowledgement in comparison to the findings of Morris et al. Programmes that want to establish accreditation, licensure or registration were advised by Morris et al. to collaborate with national organisations in establishing an officially recognised status for ASP practitioners.

Perceived quality of programmes

Respondents were asked to reflect on strong points, and points to be improved of their programme. The analysis of answers resulted in 13 codes and 9 themes of codes for reported strong point of programmes. With regard to points of improvement of programmes, 15 codes and 4 themes of codes emerged. One respondent addressed a strong point and point to be improved in one citation (i.e. “Pure theoretical focus is both a positive point and a negative”).
In Table 2, the codes and overarching themes of codes are outlined, and numbers of citations for each theme and code are reported.

Quality assurance institutes can provide an expert and objective judgement of the quality of educational programmes. UNESCO (2010) defines quality assurance as “the systematic review of educational programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained” (para. 1). Examples of quality assurance institutes for education are the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the UK, and the joint Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie [NVAO]) for Belgium and the Netherlands. The vast majority ($n = 30; 86\%$) of the programmes are reported to have a quality assurance institute that judges, and thereby guards, the quality of the programme.

| Answer category | Themes | Codes |
|-----------------|--------|-------|
| Reported strong points of programmes | Applied focus (22) | Combination of theoretical and practical education (11) |
| | | Applied focus of a programme (9) |
| | | Applied seminars (2) |
| | Staff/educators (14) | Staff/educators (14) |
| | Internationalisation (7) | Internationalisation (7) |
| | Supervision (5) | Supervision (5) |
| | Education itself (4) | Education is evidence based (2) |
| | | Emphasis on both sport and exercise psychology (2) |
| | Network or cooperation with partners (4) | Network or cooperation with partners (4) |
| | Participants (4) | Different education backgrounds of students (3) |
| | | Interaction with students (1) |
| | Organisation (3) | Organisation (3) |
| | Set-up (3) | Set-up (3) |
| | | Pure theoretical focus is both positive and negative (1) |
| Reported points to be improved | Study load (9) | More lecture hours (3) |
| | | Longer duration of the programme (1) |
| | | Collective sessions (1) |
| | Specific components (7) | More practical work (3) |
| | | More supervision (5) |
| | | Improvement of way theoretical modules are taught (1) |
| | Administrative issues (5) | Research skills (1) |
| | | Organisational issues (1) |
| | | Accept only a number of students (1) |
| | | Accredit a full programme (1) |
| | | Turning the programme into licensing (1) |
| | | Facilitating administration (1) |
| Internationalisation (4) | | Offer English language workshops (1) |
| | | Offer more courses in English (1) |
| | | Integrated tuition fee policy for countries participating in EMSEP (2) |

Note: Numbers indicate the number of citations in each code or theme.

In Table 2, the codes and overarching themes of codes are outlined, and numbers of citations for each theme and code are reported.
A network of educators in ASP (EASY-network)

In the study, we explored the possibility and objectives of a network for educators in ASP. Respondents who indicated that there is currently no ASP education in their country \(n = 17\) were also included in this part of the study. These 17 respondents may not be experts on education in ASP, but they are able to provide information about the potential contribution of a network to countries where there is currently no ASP education.

Respondents \(N = 59\) were asked about their expectations of, and objectives for, a network. Most of the obtained citations related to “establishing a network and collaborations” \(46\), “sharing information about ASP education” \(24\), “enhancing education in ASP” \(19\), “establishing European standards” \(9\) and “ASP practice” \(34\). Next, respondents were asked what kind of issues they would like to discuss with colleagues. Two discussion domains emerged from the answers: ASP education \(41\) and ASP practice \(20\). The ASP education issues can be categorised in “didactical issues” \(17\), “content and structure of education” \(12\), “networking and cooperation” \(6\), and “accreditation and guidelines for ASP education” \(5\). The citations that relate to ASP practice can be categorised in “issues concerning service delivery” \(9\), “tools and methods in ASP practice” \(5\) and “specific issues in sport” \(6\). Last, we asked respondents how they could contribute to the network. Answers can be categorised as “networking and being an active member” \(12\), “offering expertise in ASP education” \(15\), “offering expertise in ASP practice” \(14\) and “offering collaboration in research” \(5\).

In instigating the study, we hoped that the overview and the resulting network would provide ASP educators with possibilities to learn and develop. Respondents seem to share this line of thinking: They frequently indicated that sharing and obtaining information, knowledge and experiences are their objectives for the network. Moreover, respondents listed a wide range of issues they would like to discuss with colleagues, for example, didactical issues or the guidance of trainees. The reported “issues to discuss” form an inspiring draft for the agenda of future meetings and exchanges between members of the EASY network. Overall, the results indicate that educators in ASP are interested in networking, deepening and/or broadening their expertise and to contribute to the competence of colleagues.

Limitations of the study

Efforts were made to obtain information from all European countries, and to contact as many people involved in ASP education in Europe as possible. Per programme, and often even per country, only a relatively small number of people are able to provide information on ASP education. The pool of prospective participants was therefore small and thus made it very difficult to cross-validate the obtained information. This may have resulted in a possible bias of the results. To minimise the threat of providing incorrect information, we have sent the respondents an excerpt of Table 1 with the information we obtained from their responses. The information was then confirmed or corrected by the majority of the respondents (the information provided in Table 1 is confirmed by one or more respondents for 74% of the programmes, information for which confirmation was not received is reported in italics).

It should be kept in mind that respondents provided information on the programmes they were themselves involved in. This is thought to have resulted in accurate information on the characteristics of the programmes, but may have biased the reflections on strong points of programmes, and points to be improved.

The inclusive approach of the study dictates that the survey allows for a wide diversity of education systems, terminology, organising institutions, and so on. Open-ended questions were included in the survey, and too strict definitions avoided in the questions and answers options.
A “one-size-fits-all” list of answer options would fail to reflect the situation of each programme accurately. The benefit of the chosen approach is that information is not “lost” because respondents drop out when the survey is not applicable to their education context. As a downside, however, respondents may have had different understandings of concepts surveyed. For example, the meaning of the “applied” in ASP may have varied between respondents.

Despite the broad, inclusive approach of the survey, information was gathered mainly from university-based programmes. Some programmes that are positioned outside university (e.g. in collaboration with federations or Olympic committees, or at privately owned companies) were included, but the programmes contacted are mostly at graduate and post-graduate level. The only exception is the PE4EP programme, which is explicitly directed at ongoing training for professionals. Other continued professional development programmes, or in-service training courses may exist, but were not included. It could be that (potential) respondents may have understood that the survey asked about university degree programmes, because of the nature of the questions, and, consequently, shorter in-service training courses were not reported.

**Practical implications**

Fletcher and Maher (2013) offer a critical review of the current state of competency literature in ASP and conclude that “if applied sport psychology is to become an accountable field, it must gain a better understanding of competence and its implications for the training and development of practitioners” (p. 266). It is hoped that communications on ASP-related education, such as this study, will further develop insight into training and education in ASP, form a first step towards transparency and comparability, enhance networking with all relevant educators in the near future, and contribute to the visibility and identity of sport psychology as a professional discipline. The provided overview of educational programmes in ASP can help prospective students locate programmes and obtain information. Moreover, the overview may help educators locate and contact colleagues. Metaphorically speaking, it is in the DNA of the professional fields of both sport psychology and education to look for room for improvement. When educators become more knowledgeable and competent, the quality and design of the education they provide are thought to develop accordingly. The overview and the initiated network may provide professionals with possibilities to learn and grow, by bringing together “experts by experience”. Respondents shared this line of thinking; they frequently indicated that they want to share and obtain information, knowledge and experiences. Moreover, respondents list a wide range of issues they would like to discuss with colleagues, such as didactical issues or the guidance of trainees. Overall, the results show that educators in ASP are interested in deepening and/or broadening their expertise and contribute to the expertise of colleagues.

**Future directions**

While the interest of students in sport psychology education in general, and in ASP practice in particular, is increasing, (substantial) education in ASP is not yet available in all European countries. Availability of ASP education can be enhanced by increasing the amount of educational programmes in ASP. This would especially be valuable in countries or regions where there is currently no education in ASP. Responses to the survey suggest that some respondents are contemplating to start an ASP educational programme. They indicated that they would appreciate help in doing so, for instance, from experienced colleagues and through international mentoring or support. Respondents with experience in ASP programmes offered to share their expertise on education, or even help with the set-up of new programmes. This illustrates how
cooperation may lead to a better coverage of ASP education throughout Europe. It also illustrates the potential power of the network, when the needs of some parties are matched by supply from others.

Many respondents mentioned that they would like to exchange staff and students between programmes. This objective can be supported by The Erasmus+ mobility fund. This fund offers grants for both student and teacher mobility between universities (see e.g. http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/staff_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/study-mobility_en.htm). Other desired objectives of the network may be harder to achieve. Respondents suggested to work towards European standards for either ASP education or ASP practice. Accreditation of high-quality educational programmes, or establishment of quality standards, could provide a strong impulse for quality advancement in ASP education. However, to agree on standards or criteria for ASP education that do justice to the specific qualities of all programmes, is not an easy task. The overview of educational pathways shows similarities between programmes, but it is also clear that ASP programmes in Europe are far from uniform. Due to contextual, educational and cultural differences, international uniformity in ASP education may not be feasible, nor desirable. Attempts should be made, however, to make comparison between programmes easier. The current study provides a first step in this process by giving an overview of education pathways and indicating similarities and differences. In general, significant progress has been made to make national education systems more transparent and comparable in Europe, as a result of the Bologna declaration (see e.g. Krejšler, Olsson, & Petersson, 2012). The objective of the Bologna declaration was not to make education uniform, but to adopt a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, to establish a system of credits and to eliminate obstacles for free mobility of staff and students (van der Wende, 2000). It seems fruitful to adopt this approach in the further international development of ASP education as well.

Quality of ASP education could be enhanced and monitored through cooperation between programmes. First, programmes could mutually inspect each other’s quality. For example, educators could consider peer review of teaching methods, assessment methods, quality assurance systems in supervision, and so on. Although not suggested by the respondents, another step we propose to consider, based on the findings of the study, is to share the expert judgements of programmes. Almost all educational programmes included in the study have a system of quality assurance in place; there are independent institutes involved to provide an expert judgement of the quality of the programme. Such an exchange can provide educators with valuable information on good practices of other institutions. Moreover, when judgements are shared, a set of shared quality measures might evolve from these expert judgements, which may provide a first basis for international accreditation standards.

The first practical challenges from here on are to further disseminate the available overview and information, to expand both the information and the network, and to keep the available detailed information up to date. Next, the network needs a proactive contribution of network members and an infrastructure for interaction to provide added value for ASP education and educators. In this process, FEPSAC should ensure a strong supporting influence (in line with Seiler & Wylleman, 2009; Wylleman et al., 2009). In addition, it would be worthwhile to undertake a similar initiative to explore which continued professional development education or in-service training courses are available. The only programme reported in the current study is that of PE4EP, which has a close alliance with FEPSAC. Future efforts could additionally aim at providing an overview of more continued professional development programmes and in-service training possibilities.
Conclusion

We provided information on ASP education programmes in Europe. This information is hoped to serve prospective students who are looking for education routes to obtain ASP expertise. In the near future, we will disseminate this information further, preferably also online, and will take care of keeping the information as up to date as possible. If educators wish to have information on their programme included in our overview, or want to become involved in the EASY network, they are invited to contact the first author.

Notes

1. The definition of ‘applied sport psychology’ has been topic of debate in the literature (see e.g. Wylleman et al., 2009). In the current study, we consider education in applied sport psychology to refer to programmes and courses that provide students and professionals with knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for the professional practice of sport psychology. We see the practice of sport psychology as “ principally concerned with the application of theories, principles, and techniques from psychology to induce psycho-behavioural change in athletes to enhance performance, the quality of the sport experience, and the personal growth of the athlete” (Vealey, 1994; Williams & Straub, 1993; as cited in Anderson, Miles, Mahoney, & Robinson, 2002, p. 434). Education in applied sport psychology does, in the current study, not refer to educational sport psychology services for athletes, coaches, teams, and so on.

2. One programme did not specify the type of bachelor degree required.

3. 1 ECTS equals 25–30 hours of study, an academic year corresponds with 60 ECTS.

4. Three programmes in the UK are either not credit bearing, or were not able to report a study load in ECTS.

5. The numbers between parentheses refer to the amount of citations for each code or theme mentioned.

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Appendix 1

Content of survey sent to respondents

**Information respondent**
- Name:
- Country:
- Is there any education in applied sport psychology in your country? Yes/No

**General information**
- What is the name of your organisation/institute?
- What is the name of the educational programme in the native language?
- What is the name of the educational programme in English?
- What is the address of your organisation/institute?

**Organisational aspects of the educational programme**
What are the entry requirements? * For example, a bachelor degree in psychology or a master’s degree in sport science and other requirements.

What is the maximum number of students admitted to the programme?

Can foreign students be admitted to the programme? Yes/No

What is the language of instruction? English/Other … …

What is the study load of the programme (in European Credits (EC))? … …

What is the study mode? Full-time/Part-time/Other … …

What is the (average) duration of the programme? 0–6 months/6–12 months/12–18 months/18–24 months/More than 24 months

What is the final attainment level? Bachelor/Master/Post-master/Ph.D./Other … …

Are the graduates of the programme acknowledged as applied sport psychologists? No/Yes, accredited applied sport psychologist/Yes, licensed applied sport psychologist/Yes, registered applied sport psychologist/ Other … …

How much is the tuition fee? * For the total programme

There is no tuition fee/less than € 1000,-/between € 1000,- and € 2500,-/between € 2500,- and € 5000,-/ between € 5000,- and € 10000,-/between € 10000,- and € 15000,-/more than €15000,-

Educational programme

How would you describe the distribution between practical and theoretical education?

Does the programme contain a practical internship?

If yes, how many hours does the practical internship entail?

Is there any formal supervision during the practical internship?

If yes, how many hours of supervision per student?

What would you consider strong points or selling points of your programme?

What would you consider points to be improved for your programme?

Does the programme emphasise certain topics?

Is there an accreditation-, certification- or quality assurance institute which provides an expert and objective judgement of the quality of the educational programme? Yes/No

Do you have any additional suggestions or remarks?

EASY-network

What are your expectations of the EASY-network?

What are your objectives regarding the EASY-network?

Which issues would you like to discuss with colleague educators?

In what ways do you think you might contribute to the network?

Do you have any additional suggestions or remarks regarding the network?

Appendix 2

The name of the organisation or organising institute of ASP education programmes and the name of the programme in the native language.

| Organisation/institute | Name of the programme |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Austria                | Center of Mental Excellence GmbH | Modulserie “Sportpsychologisches Training/Coaching im Leistungssport” |
| Belgium                | KU Leuven, Faculty of Kinesiology & Rehabilitation Sciences & Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences | Permanente Vorming Getuigschrift Praktijkgerichte Sportpsychologie (interfacultair programma) |
| Croatia                | The University Centre for Croatian Studies at the University of Zagreb | Psihologija sporta |
| Czech Republic¹       | Palacký University in Olomouc, Faculty of Physical Culture | The cluster: psychologie télesné výchovy psychologie sportu |

(Continued)
| Organisation/institute | Name of the programme |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| **Czech Republic**²     | **Masyryk University** | The cluster: Exercise psychology, Sport psychology, Psychology of handicap – giftedness |
| **Denmark**             | **Aarhus University, Denmark** | **Idræt** |
| **Finland**             | **University of Jyväskylä** | Master’s Degree Programme in Sport and Exercise Psychology |
| **France¹**             | **University of Pau and Pays de l’Adour** | Master Expert en préparation physique et mentale |
| **France²**             | **L’Unité de Formation et de Recherche en Sciences et Techniques des Activités Physiques et Sportives, Lyon 1** | Master de préparation physique et mentale et Réaéthlétisation |
| **Germany¹**            | **Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Philosophical Faculty II, Dept. of Sports Science** | Angewandte Sportpsychologie |
| **Germany²**            | **Flow and grow** | Performance and contextual coaching |
| **Greece¹**             | **University of Thessaly** | Μεταπτυχιακό δίπλωμα στην Ψυχολογία της Ασκησης και EMSEP |
| **Greece²**             | **University of Athens, Department of Physical Education and Sport Science** | Μεταπτυχιακό Πρό grammα Σπουδών “Φυσική Αγωγή και Αθλητισμός” – Εξειδίκευση: Αθλητική Ψυχολογία |
| **Ireland**             | **University of Limerick, Exercise and Performance Psychology** | MSc. in sport, exercise and performance psychology |
| **Italy¹**              | **University of Tor Vergata, Faculty of Medicine, Dept of Motor Sciences, Roma** | Coaching |
| **Italy²**              | **Inter-University Center “Mind in Sport Team”** | Master in Psicologia dello Sport |
| **Norway**              | **Norwegian School of Sport Sciences** | Bachelor in sport science, specialising in training, coaching and sport psychology. |
| **PE4EP**               | **Vrije Universiteit Brussel** | Psychological Excellence for Elite Performance (PE4EP) |
| **Poland¹**             | **Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw, Poland** | Studia Podyplomowe Psychologia Sportu |
| **Poland²**             | **1. Department of Sport Psychology, Polish Olympic Committee** | Programme Ustawicznego Kształcenia Psychologów Polskiego Komitetu |
|                        | **2. Section of Sport Psychology, Polish Psychological Association** | Olimpijskiego and Certyfikat Psychologa Sportu: a/ klasy II b/ klasy I c/ klasy Mistrzowskiej- Superwizora |
|                        | **3. National Centre Research & Applied of Sport Psychology, Gdansk University of Physical Education & Sport** | |
| **Portugal¹**           | **Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias and Faculty of Human Movement, Technical University of Lisbon** | Master in Sport Psychology |
| **Portugal²**           | **ISPA – Instituto Universitário** | Pós-graduação em Psicologia do Desporto e da Actividade Física (versão separada para Psicólogos e treinadores) |
| **Romania**             | **Romanian Association of Sport Psychology** | Masterat de Psihologie Sportiva |
| **Russia**              | **The Pedagogical Institute of Physical Culture and Sport** | Спортивная психология |

(Continued)
| Organisation/institute | Name of the programme |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Spain                  | Diplomatura de Postgrado en Psicología Aplicada al Rendimiento Deportivo |
| Sweden                 | Att arbeta som idrott psykologisk rådgivare and Att arbeta som psykologisk rådgivare med grupper och organisation inom idrott och arbetslivet |
| Switzerland            | Postgraduale Weiterbildung |
| The Netherlands        | Postacademische Opleiding tot Praktijksporthyschoolog |
| Turkey                 | Egzersiz ve Spor Psikolojisi Yüksek Lisansı |
| United Kingdom¹        | Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (QSEP) |
| United Kingdom²        | MSc Sport and Exercise Psychology, MSc Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology and BSc Sport and Exercise Psychology |
| United Kingdom³        | Part of BSc. Sport and Exercise Science: “Applied Sport Psychology”, MSc. Psychology of Sport and Exercise and Professional supervised training route: BPS Stage 2 Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology |
| United Kingdom⁴        | BSc Sport and Exercise Psychology, MSc Psychology of Sport and Exercise, MSc Sport and Exercise Psychology (British Psychological Society Accredited) |
| United Kingdom⁵        | Sport and Exercise Psychology (BSc hons) |

Note: When more than one programme is available in a country, the programmes are numbered in superscript (e.g. Czech Republic¹ and Czech Republic²).