



EU Joint Actions EUROPEAN GUIDANCE FORUM

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The Development of the National Forum in Germany

A conference on “Future of Guidance for Education, Career and Employment – Shaping and Networking” was organised by the Federal Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economy and Labour, the Federal Employment Agency (BA), the National Agency Education in Europe of the Federal Training Institute (BIBB) and the German Leonardo da Vinci Office, held on 7 and 8 July 2004 in Bonn. 150 organisations, stakeholders and experts of all areas of guidance in Germany took part in this important meeting. Main outcomes of the conference were a list of main areas for future activities and needs (a) survey on structures and guidance offers with identifying deficits opportunities for synergy; b) development of a common understanding and definition of guidance; c) improvement of accessibility of guidance and competencies for guidance users; d) catalogue of qualification and training requirements for counsellors and development of relevant study programmes; e) curricula for career management skills for all levels of education; f) strengthening of the portfolio approach and use of self assessment instruments; g) securing of the needed resources for guidance through stability in financial structures and involvement of different actors and stakeholders h) promotion of relevant research in guidance. The proceedings and main contributions are available under

[WWW.....](#)

Alongside this conference a first meeting for an initiative to create a National Guidance Forum with about 30 organisations and stakeholders of guidance including the social partners and consumer representations took place on 8 June 2004. The discussion dealt with the possible areas of guidance which should be addressed by this forum, main areas of work and urgent needs and tasks for future activities of the Forum (similar to the list above), a general statement of willingness of all participants to co-operate within a National Forum, and the appointment of a Steering Committee. This committee negotiated with the ministries to support the initiative with the funding of two research projects: the survey on nature and accessibility of all guidance offers in Germany (guidance atlas) and a study on quality and quality assurance of guidance. On 8 November 2004 there was a meeting of the Steering committee in Berlin where the reporter informed the members on this EU Joint Action Project, the work of the EU Experts Group Lifelong Guidance. The drafting of a Mission for the national Forum and a strategy was agreed.

The Steering Committee achieved from the Ministry of Education the promise for the funding of the two projects with an amount of 250 000 Euro. The author of this report assisted the ministry in the description of the content and the requirements of the studies. An invitation to bid was finally announced in March/April and the final decision on this was made in July/August 2005. This funding will also include a kind of administrative support of the National Forum and the organisation of professional meetings on relevant guidance topics.

Other main general activities during the first half year of the project were the preparation for and the participation in the initial meeting of the project partners in Krakow 25/26 Febr. 2004; the checking of the contract text, the search of and negotiations with a potential new operative partner in Germany to replace the dvb which had to cancel its participation. Permanent communications by email of the Steering Committee dealt with the development of the "Mission paper" for the National Forum. The Mission drafted by the author was widely discussed, a final version agreed between the Steering Committee and the working group (including the social partners). Final version is attached (English translation).

In general in Germany the situation of career guidance which is carried out by the Federal Employment Agency is not very encouraging. New legal tasks (Hartz IV) and other administrative circumstances led to a loss of the importance of career guidance within this agency although it is still a legal obligation. Thus, it is an important challenge for the initiative of the National Forum to raise awareness of the need and the high value of guidance in the public policy.

In autumn 2005 there were several **meetings** and communications of the **Steering Committee** for the Foundation of NF.

On **1. December 2005** a **workshop** of the broader initiative took place with the objective to discuss the ongoing development **of the research project** which focus 1. on a survey of existing guidance offers in Germany (Career Guidance Atlas) and 2. on the development of quality standards. The project was proposed by the Initiative NF and is financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and carried out by a Danish consulting company. This company supports also the NF initiative.

After the workshop an important **meeting of the initiative NF** took place also on 1. Dec. 2005 which can be seen as cornerstone in the foundation process. The key players of the NF initiative were represented. The **Mission Statement with the aims and principles of the NF** and future intended activities were discussed and finally *approved* as base for the future work plan. The participants argued for the creation of a **legal entity** as framework of the NF. This would be the best structure to include different members and also be entitled to get support by public funding. A **draft of Statutes for a formal association** which has to be registered at the Court was discussed for later distribution. A work plan for future activities was discussed, and a major professional conference focussing on "Counsellors Training in Germany"

proposed. A sub-committee of the Steering Committee for clarifying and preparing the legal needs of the foundation was appointed.

This sub committee finalised the necessary documents and spread out a **“call for foundation”** of the National Forum Guidance in Education, Training and Employment on 3. March 2006. This call was addressed to about **50 public and private bodies and organisations concerned with Career Guidance** in any form in Germany including the three ministries (education, labour and youth), representatives of Federal Trade Unions, Employers Organisation, Federal Chambers of Industry, Commerce and Handicraft, several universities which train counsellors, Rectors Conference of Higher Education Institutions, Federal Employment Service and Federal Training Institute, German Association for Counselling, German Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, German Association for Career Consulting, some research institutes, IAEVG, Consumers Foundation, Youth Help Organisations, Ministries of Education of Federal States and the Standing Conference of these ministries. The Call was attached by an answer sheet for the binding commitment, the Final Mission and the revised draft of the Statutes. An accompanying letter had earlier announced this action and indicated that a membership fee is expected in the amount of 75 € for individuals and of 400€ for organisations.

The approached organisations should answer until 15. May 2006.

Meanwhile the German Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance organised a **political hearing on the “Future of Career Guidance in Germany”** scheduled on **26. April 2006** in the Federal Press Office under the chair of former President of the Parliament, Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth, and participation of invited political parties, representatives of relevant ministries and public bodies and main organisations which also are represented in the NF initiative. This important professional event was attended by about 250 participants , educational authorities and the ministry of labour, practitioners associations, parents representatives, researchers and counsellor trainers. The former President of the parliament underlined the meaning of guidance for the social and economic development in Germany, and also focussed on the necessity to consider the special needs in guidance of migrants, disabled and disadvantaged. One of the chairs of the NF steering committee, Dr. Bernhard Jenschke, emphasized in his speech the European activities and suggestions in career guidance and used the opportunity for a broad information and communication on the National Guidance Forum Initiative. This conference have had an enormous impact on the dissemination of the NF idea and its concrete development.

The German ***thematic conference of the Joint Actions Project European Guidance Forum 11-13 may 2006 in Potsdam*** was also linked to the NF and key players of the NF initiative took part in this conference which is documented on the web page: lifelongguidance.net of the project.

In between **21 organisations, unions, associations and representatives from counsellor training programmes and well recognised guidance experts** (among them the Federal Training Institute BIBB, the German Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance dvb and the German Association for Career Guidance DGfK, the trade union Education and Science and the union for the Public Services, representatives of the universities Heidelberg, Dresden and Mannheim) have formally declared their **willingness to join the National Forum**.

The **Federal Ministry of Education** encouraged the foundation of the legal association and announced its further support. The **Federal Ministry of Labour** indicated that it will support the NF and probably join as Supportive member. Also the **Federal Employment Agency** (Bundesagentur fuer Arbeit) supported in a letter of intent the initiative and indicated to join in 2007 when their process of restructuring the guidance service is completed. Many other relevant organisations want to wait until the formal foundation act and indicated then to join.

The meeting of the **Steering Committee on 17. June 2006** dealt with the final discussion of the legal Statutes of the NF and the additional needs to check them by a lawyer and the Tax office, the potential membership and the official foundation for which the date 27. September was fixed. We also succeeded to have an attractive meeting venue in the Federal Press Office of the government. To finalise the legal needs meanwhile negotiations with a law office and the related Tax office took place to gain the privilege of tax exemption.

In a **meeting on 7. September 2007** with the **Federal Education Ministry** the NF initiative was again reconfirmed by the head of the department as an important means to follow up the European Ministers Resolution to strengthen guidance in Germany. The planning of a major professional conference on the guidance needs in Germany in the second half of 2007 was agreed and the NF offered to take care for the organisational work. The participation of Germany in the European Guidance conference in Finland November 2006 were discussed and the follow up of the European Initiatives (role of Handbook for Policy makers, CEDEFOP publication "Improving lifelong guidance policies") were underlined in the meeting with the ministry.

The last **meeting of the Steering Committee on 7. September 2006** in Berlin discussed the installation and structure of a **web page**. Two domains with the names : www.Nationales-Forum-Beratung and www.Forum-Beratung were

already reserved. Information on the NF will be soon publicly presented there. A Press information will be prepared for the foundation. The Ministry of Education has agreed to open the founding assembly on 27. September with a welcome and encouragement address for the NF.

Before the foundation a smaller **conference on 26. September 2006** will take place in connection with the first presentation of the **outcomes of the research project** (dealing with a survey of existing guidance offers in Germany and the development of quality standards for guidance delivery and counsellor qualification) which was launched according a proposal of the NF initiative and funded by the Ministry of Education. This conference will again make visible the professional expertise of the NF and its importance for the further development of guidance in Germany.

After this conference the official **foundation act of the National Forum Guidance in Education, Career and Employment** will take place during an assembly on 27. September 2006 in the Federal Press Office, Berlin.

As one of the chairs of the Steering Committee I want to add a final remark and outline that this results could only be achieved through an enormous permanent **networking with the key players**. After the elections in autumn last year the government changed and it could have been that the ambition of the ministries decline as consequence of changes in political priorities. Therefore, the **achieved results and the final foundation of the German National Guidance Forum on 27. Sept. 2006 are important outcomes of the participating experts and also the activities within this European Guidance Forum Project** in the framework of the Joint Action programme. Through the communications and networking of the actors in the project the European Guidance initiatives were communicated and the importance of Career Guidance and the willingness of policy makers and key players in guidance were increased to contribute to strengthen and improve Career Guidance and its quality in Germany. With the formal foundation ceremony of the National Forum the core aim of the Jojnt Actions Project will be achieved in Germany after two years of intensive work.

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