



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union

European Lifelong Guidance Policies: Progress Report 2011–12

A REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE EUROPEAN LIFELONG GUIDANCE POLICY NETWORK 2011–12

SHORT REPORT



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ELGPN

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This is an independent report prepared by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), a Member State network in receipt of EU financial support under the Lifelong Learning Programme. The views expressed are those of ELGPN and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission or any person acting on behalf of the Commission.

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ISBN 978-951-39-4876-4 (printed version)
ISBN 978-951-39-4877-1 (pdf)

Printed by Kariteam
Jyväskylä, Finland 2012

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Acknowledgements

This report is the result of the collective efforts of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN). It reflects contributions from all of those participating in the network, in particular:

- The national delegations which defined their priorities within the ELGPN 2011–12 work programme, illuminating these themes from their own perspectives.
- The host countries of the Plenary Meetings, and also of the Thematic Activities with their examples of national policies and case studies to support mutual learning.
- The officials of the Cyprus Government who advanced the work of the ELGPN through their hosting of the EU Presidency Conference.
- The representatives of partner organisations who have participated in the work programme, including Mika Launikari (Cedefop), Helmut Zelloth (ETF), Karen Schober (IAEVG), Dr Gerhart Rott (FEDORA), Dr John McCarthy (ICCDPP) and Dr Wolfgang Müller (EU PES Network).
- The representatives of the lead countries for each Thematic Activity, who have provided leadership for the activity in co-operation with the ELGPN Co-ordinator and have managed the preparation of the relevant sections of this report:
 - WP1: Jasmin Muhic, Czech Republic.
 - WP2: Michel Lefranc, France; Gudrun Birna Kjartansdóttir and Dr Guðbjörg Vilhjálmsdóttir, Iceland.
 - WP3: Dr Peter Härtel, Austria.
 - WP4: Dr Tibor Borbély-Pecze, Hungary.
- The contracted experts who prepared prior briefing papers and reflection notes for the Thematic Activity meetings as well as drafting the relevant sections for this report:
 - WP1: Professor Ronald Sultana, Malta.
 - WP2: Professor Fusûn Akkök, Turkey.
 - WP3: Professor Peter Plant, Denmark.
 - WP4: Dr Deirdre Hughes, UK.
 - TG(a): Françoise Divisia, France.
 - TG(b): Professor Tony Watts, UK.
- Dr Charles Jackson, for his work on the ELGPN Glossary.

Thanks are also due to the representatives of the European Commission (Koen Nomden, Benoit Desjeux and Maike Koops from DG EAC; Manuel Hubert and Susanne Kraatz from DG EMPL) for their support in the implementation of the work programme; and to my colleagues in the ELGPN Co-ordination Unit (Marjo Halmiala, Outi Ruusuvirta, Tellervo Ahlholm, Lea Pöyliö) for their help and support.

Raimo Vuorinen
Co-ordinator, ELGPN



Overview

The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) was established in 2007, with the aim of assisting its member countries (including not only European Union (EU) member-states but also candidate countries and European Economic Area countries) and the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors.

The role and aims of the Network were endorsed in the second EU Council Resolution passed in 2008. In 2012 the ELGPN has consisted of 29 member countries (AT, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, GB, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), with 2 additional observer countries (BE, BG). The composition of their delegations is outlined in Annex 1. Through appropriate liaison arrangements, the Network also ensures regular contact with other relevant bodies and networks at European and international levels: the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), the European Forum for Student Guidance (Fedora) (now merged with the European Association for International Education), the European Centre for

the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the European Training Foundation (ETF), the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP), the Public Employment Services (PES) Network, Euroguidance, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the European Youth Forum.

During its three first phases (2007–12), the ELGPN has been co-ordinated by a team from Finland. The Finnish Ministry of Education and the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy designated the co-ordination task to the Finnish Institute for Educational Research at the University of Jyväskylä. This unit convenes the Network and supports the implementation of its initiatives. The ELGPN members appoint a Steering Group with six members to ensure effective management of the Network and to support the Co-ordinator in defining the priorities and budget allocation within the work programme. ELGPN liaises closely with the European Commission and with Cedefop and ETF. It also utilises the support of a number of contracted consultants.

Rationale and implementation of the 2011–12 Work Programme

During the initial phase (2008), the ELGPN focused mainly on establishing its structures and processes. The second phase (2009–10) was built around the four thematic activities identified in the 2004 and 2008 Resolutions: career management skills; access, including accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL); co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms in guidance policy and systems development; and quality assurance and evidence base for policy and systems development.

The 2011–12 Work Programme was designed to build on the experience and development of the first two phases and to improve the internal efficiency of the Network. During this period the Lisbon Strategy has coincided with the economic downturn, leading to a significant increase in both unemployment and under-employment across most ELGPN member countries. The awareness of the need for improved anticipation and matching of labour market skills appears in most recent EU policy documents proposed by the Commission and adopted by the Council, both on education and on employment. This provides a challenge to lifelong guidance services, but also potentially enhances the significance of the policy contributions they can make.

While maintaining a transversal overview of lifelong guidance policy development, ELGPN has examined how guidance as an integral cross-cutting element can contribute to EU policy development in six key areas in particular: schools, vocational education and training (VET), higher education, adult education, employment and social inclusion. The aim has been to deepen the interfaces with these policy areas and to shift the ELGPN activities from conceptual work to policy implementation, with more structured co-operation across the themes.

The relationship between the four themes of the ELGPN Work Programme 2011–12 is outlined in Figure 1. In brief, Work Package 3 (co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms) addresses the policy

process; Work Package 2 (access) and Work Package 4 (quality) examine two key cross-sectoral policy issues; Work Package 1 (career management skills) addresses the sought citizen outcomes; and the other part of Work Package 4 (evidence base) addresses the sought policy outcomes.

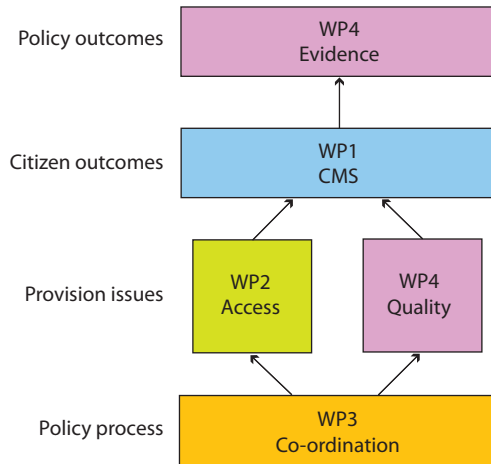


Figure 1: Model indicating the relationship between the Work Packages

These four thematic activities have been implemented through a consistent process. Each of the Work Packages has consisted of 14–22 participating countries (see Annex 2), plus one or sometimes two lead countries, and a contracted consultant to support the activity in co-operation with the ELGPN Co-ordinator. In each case, the programme included two separate thematic field visits and a third synthesis meeting. Each country identified the themes in which they wished to participate, and was asked to reflect in advance on how these themes could enhance the development of their national policies and practices, and their expectations and aspirations for the theme. In addition, the field visits provided opportunities for the host countries to influence their own policies and practices, and to involve key policy-makers within these processes. Time was also allocated to the development of the ELGPN 2011–12 outputs.

The ELGPN 2011–12 Work Programme further included a Task Group, with two sub-groups performing distinct tasks. Sub-group (a) focused on European education & training and employment policy analysis from a lifelong guidance perspective, while sub-group (b) worked on developing concrete tools for policy-makers; with support from two contracted consultants. The Task Group also focused on the ELGPN's communication strategy and governance, and the transversal elements of the Work Programme.

Key outcomes 2011–12

During the ELGPN Work Programme 2011–12, a principal aim has been to produce a Resource Kit for policy-makers to help policy-makers and other stakeholders to review existing lifelong guidance provision within their country or region, and to identify issues requiring attention and gaps that need to be filled, drawing from practices in other European countries. The aim of this Resource Kit is to support policy review and peer learning processes both within and between countries. Other outputs from the Work Programme have included ELGPN commissioned Concept Notes on flexicurity and on youth unemployment, as well as an ELGPN glossary on lifelong guidance policy development. All are available on the ELGPN website.

At national level, the ELGPN members have indicated examples of the catalytic impact and added value on their national guidance policy development (see Section 7). They have actively shared experiences in developing online services for guidance and in developing national strategies or other statutory documents in lifelong guidance. There has also been evidence of progress in the development of national co-ordination mechanisms.

In the context of Europe 2020 and other EU policies in education, training and employment, ELGPN has sought to have a stronger impact on relevant policy areas at EU and member-country levels, and to develop stronger tools and processes to help member countries in policy development and implementation. As part of this, ELGPN has strengthened its co-operation and participation with different working groups in the EU policy development process, in both education and employment sectors. An overview of relevant EU policy documents and processes is provided in Section 6. By establishing a forum for a dialogue on lifelong guidance as a cross-cutting theme across different policy sectors, ELGPN has effectively acted as a forerunner of the Europe 2020 working methodology. Moreover, as a member-state-driven network, ELGPN represents an effective example of the Open Method of Co-ordination.

In addition to the inspirations for lifelong guidance policy development in the ELGPN member countries, there has been emerging interest in the Network's activities outside the EU. In December 2011 Hungary hosted the 6th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy. The Symposium Communiqué recommended that, through ICCDPP and IAEVG, links should be strengthened between ELGPN and other symposium countries, to enable the strong collaborative structures and processes within ELGPN to be enriched by practices from countries outside Europe, for mutual benefit. It also recommended that such links should include, but extend beyond, global sharing of ELGPN publications and tools – recognising that good practice is based on sharing learning, not importing models.

Detailed descriptions of the Work Package activities are provided in Sections 2–5, and of ELGPN links with EU policy processes in Section 6. An evaluation of the key outcomes and perceived impact of the Network is covered in Section 7. Implications for the future of ELGPN are presented in Section 8.



Career Management Skills (Work Package 1)

Activities

WP1 members continued with their reflection on various aspects of career management skills (CMS), extending their discussions to consider (a) such skills in different contexts, and (b) the tools that could be developed in order to promote good practice in the learning and assessment of CMS. The goals for 2011–12 included:

- A greater emphasis on policy-related issues when considering CMS in different sectors and contexts.
- An identification of guidelines for CMS development, in order to assist member countries in developing their own CMS programmes and frameworks.
- An in-depth study of the key elements that facilitate or hinder the implementation of CMS programmes, leading to an identification of the appropriate policy environments that need to be created for successful CMS promotion.

- A focus on CMS with adults, in the context of Public Employment Services, and as offered by employers and trade unions.
- A focus on CMS programmes offered in higher education settings, including universities.
- A consideration of the training of guidance professionals and others involved in delivering CMS.

Having addressed both programme and teaching/learning issues during the first phase of the ELGPN's activities, the focus would now be on the assessment of CMS learning.

Key conclusions

In relation to the nature of CMS:

- CMS are important and can be useful, but cannot solve structural problems related to competitiveness. They can play a role, however, in a range of areas, including ones that are per-

haps not normally considered in discussions about CMS, such as: skills in dealing with new productive processes, health and environment-related skills, intercultural skills, management skills, creativity, and entrepreneurship – all of which are a cornerstone of employability and productivity, and essential to the process of economic modernisation. CMS also contribute to establishing a healthy life-work balance, and should not focus on employment to the exclusion of other aspects of one's life.

In relation to developing a CMS framework:

- The promotion of CMS is more likely to be successful when linked to the National Qualifications Framework and to the EU Key Competences framework.
- There is a need to have a broad perspective on CMS – not just preparing *for* work, but educating *about* work, so that individuals are aware of their rights.
- CMS should focus not only on the skills needed to choose and look for work, but also on entrepreneurship.

In relation to CMS in higher education contexts:

- Career management competences should be considered within the context of broader processes and dynamics that mark the area of higher learning in Europe, such as the Bologna Process. These dynamics include the emphasis on mobility, the shift away from teaching to learning, and the focus on employability.
- Student services – particularly guidance and counselling services – play a key role in supporting the shift to student-centred learning, to active and self-directed learning, and to developing competences that enhance employability.
- Awarding credit to CMS learning, in ways that contribute to overall certification in higher education, can reinforce the legitimacy of CMS programmes.

- Despite the different learning and curricular traditions, cultures and histories of higher education systems across Europe, common ground and common trends can be identified. These include the connections that are being made between teaching, student-centred learning, student services, and co-operation with employers. These connections lead to new kinds of learning settings which support work-related, self-reflective learning, underpinned by CMS.

In relation to CMS in Public Employment Service (PES) contexts:

- In PES settings, it is useful to differentiate between employment advisers who focus mainly on job broking and placement, and those with more advanced skills who provide deeper elements of career guidance, and who are usually more focused on personal assessment, on personal action planning, and on longer-term career development. The latter require targeted training in order to deliver CMS more effectively.
- In Public Employment Service settings, the focus on employability should not reduce CMS to an exclusive concern with 'immediacy', i.e. what works in the short-term to enable individuals to enter the world of work. Other aspects of their formation, such as active citizenship, or competences in creativity and critical analysis, are also important.
- Basic CMS that serve the unemployed in getting ahead in the employment queue include: mastery of reading, writing and mathematics skills, a sense of initiative and of creativity, the ability to be self-directed in looking for opportunities, persistence, flexibility and adaptability, optimism, risk-taking, knowing how to work in teams, and remaining open to learning.
- In some national settings, PES provide an all-age guidance service setting up a formal or an

implicit standard of CMS development. In such cases it is important to develop effective models of co-operation between the employment and the education sector, especially in respect to the need for a shared understanding of CMS development and related work methodologies. It is equally important for PES staff to build on the CMS that have already been developed by career guidance workers and teachers in the education sector.

In relation to the training of staff involved in delivering CMS:

- There is a noticeable shift away from an approach in the training of career guidance staff that is mostly based on psychology to one that is more constructionist and multi-disciplinary in nature.
- ‘Employability’ should be a central concept in the training of career guidance staff, supporting the melding of individual and organisational approaches, and emphasising the training of competences for life, not just for work.

In relation to the assessment of CMS learning:

- In assessing CMS learning, the emphasis should not only be on *savoir* and *savoir faire*, but also on the *savoir être* dimension, typical of a rounded education.
- Portfolios are an appropriate strategy to assess career learning, in that they facilitate critical reflection on the part of learners (whether young or adult), focus on process rather than merely on outcomes, and provide opportunities for learners to interact with others in order

to engage in meaningful career conversations. Furthermore, portfolios help to centralise information and reflection in one ‘physical’ space, enabling coherence in the learner’s thinking and research relating to employment.

- Some portfolios strive to look at career learning from a lifelong perspective. Such ‘lifelong’ approaches can support career guidance practices that give pride of place to approaches informed by constructivist psychology, with an emphasis on meta-cognition and on the co-construction of meaning on the basis of reflection on learning achieved in different life contexts.
- Currently the use of portfolios has been mostly present in the education area, notably within initial education. An effective utilisation of portfolios at points of transition between various education levels and from education to work remains a challenge. There is a need for integrated cross-sectoral policies to enable using portfolios as a tool for a CMS development in a lifelong perspective.
- Portfolio-type tools can function as alternative credentialing instruments, particularly for those students who might have been less successful in gaining formal paper qualifications. They therefore can contribute to the equity agenda through promoting accreditation of prior learning (APL).
- There are significant ethical challenges concerning issues of access to portfolio material. Some of these challenges are particularly serious in the case of digital portfolios.



Widening Access (Work Package 2)

Activities

The activities of WP2 in 2011–12 built on its previous 2009–10 outcomes and went more deeply into some topics: for example, the role of guidance in validation of non-formal and informal learning, and how to reach various target groups using ICT tools. The goals for 2011–12 were to work on:

- Widening access to information, guidance and counselling services for all citizens, particularly for young people at risk of early school-leaving, for adults at work and for active ageing.
- Access to higher education: in particular, transitions between VET and higher education, information for students and counselling services within universities.
- Providing access to adequate guidance and counselling services in the validation processes for non-formal and informal learning.
- The competences of practitioners, teachers, and other stakeholders.

- The use of ICT in the context of both sectoral approaches and integrated services for all ages.

Key conclusions

- The importance of validation of non-formal and informal learning is now widely recognised, but the level of implementation varies. Similarly, although the need for guidance services within these processes is well understood, the guidance support in most cases still needs to be developed, and at best is in progress. As stated in an ELGPN policy briefing: ‘the Commission identifies the lack of information, support and guidance: even in countries where more systematic procedures have been established, empowerment of individuals often remains low, partly due to ignorance and difficulties in using and understanding the procedures’.
- Guidance practitioners are one of the key practitioners in the validation process. Their role

starts with reaching out to engage and motivate the potential candidates for validation, then preparing the candidate for assessment, and finally guiding them after the assessment decision. Guidance practitioners have a role in informing individuals who volunteer for validation on the added value, on what to expect, on what standards are required, and on the outcomes. At the end of the validation process, individuals need to be informed about potential routes for further qualifications.

- A distinction can be drawn between guidance related specifically to assessment issues and more general guidance. These two processes will require different competences on the part of the professionals delivering the guidance.
- Services need to be accessible at different places in different localities, linked to using more centralised resources. It is accordingly important to improve national, regional and local guidance service delivery to support an integrated or comprehensive approach to social inclusion, active citizenship, lifelong learning, full employment, and future skills and qualifications.
- While more traditional services are widely used in member countries for almost all target-groups, online tools have been developed or are in the process of being developed in almost all of them. A good balance and a meaningful combination between traditional and online methods (following the principle: log in, walk in, phone in and look in) should be available, so as to make the overall guidance service delivery as attractive and useful as possible for all citizens.
- Developing integrated all-age information and guidance services and/or comprehensive services for all target-groups is a demanding task for member countries and calls for renewed institutional structures, a co-operative culture and new methods of working. Denmark is an example of a country where such services are available: face-to-face services are integrated

with the National Guidance Portal, e-guidance, youth database and Virtual Resource Centre; e-guidance is provided via e-mail, SMS, telephone and chat, and is accessible to everyone, though the main target group is those in formal education.

- The demands placed on guidance practitioners are constantly increasing, due to changes in society and reforms in education and employment policies. Furthermore, the working environments of guidance practitioners and their target groups are becoming more diverse all over Europe. This creates an increased need for continuing professional development on the part of guidance practitioners and teachers.
- The European Council considers guidance for older workers as an instrument for promoting active ageing. Some member countries, however, are developing services aimed specifically at those who are aged 50+ or in transition to retirement. For example, the Retirement Compass in Germany is a project specifically designed for adults in transition from work to retirement. In Spain, courses of cultural activation/motivation for people over 50 are available, within a more flexible concept of higher education than the traditional one, to promote skill upgrading of the ageing population.
- Currently, the unemployment rate is high in most countries. Guidance is one of the tools which make it possible to respond to unemployment both at a societal level (workforce balance, social inclusion policies) and at an individual level, recognising that some workers may want to leave work as they get older whereas others may want to stay on. This also calls for extended guidance provision for older workers, whether for retention or for phased retirement.
- Widening access needs to include all ages and domains, from primary-school pupils to the third age, and covering people engaged in voluntary work.



Co-operation and Co-ordination Mechanisms (Work Package 3)

Activities

The focus of WP3 is on co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms in guidance practice and policy development. WP3 aims at providing opportunities for:

- countries with existing fora or similar mechanisms to improve co-operation and co-operation in concrete areas of lifelong guidance, orientated to European policies as well as national priorities;
- countries with emerging fora or similar mechanisms to compare, to improve and to implement effective mechanisms with the support of countries which have experience in adequate policies and processes;
- countries without existing fora or similar mechanisms to find appropriate policies, processes and persons for a successful start and a sustainable strategy.

Key conclusions

With a view to improve co-ordination, co-operation, and, indeed, coherence in policies and systems for lifelong guidance provision, most European countries face the challenge of fragmentation and sectorising. Various career guidance and career development services have their own history, aims, methods, and budgets: they tend to work in structural silos. Nonetheless, they are responsible for providing parts of guidance in a lifelong perspective, which ideally would imply a seamless and coherent lifelong guidance system. At present, this is a vision for the future, rather than a reality, in most countries.

National, regional or local forums can serve as vehicles for improving coherence and avoid overlaps in lifelong guidance systems. It seems that:

- National forums benefit from linking with and building on similar regional structures in a two-way process.

- Highly different conditions prevail in the various countries in terms of forming and maintaining national (and regional) guidance forums.
- Decisive factors include: centralisation/decentralisation; top-down/bottom-up approaches; level of professionalism; and policy interests.
- Some basic difficulties still exist in convincing different ministries with different portfolios to co-operate, let alone to co-ordinate their efforts in a cross-sectoral manner.

But such forums may have different ambitions in terms of the ambition of commitments. Thus, with a view to operationalise forums on a practical level, the intensity in terms of the levels of linkages has been defined by WP3 as follows:

- *Communication*. This might include exchanging information, and exploring possibilities for co-operation and co-ordination.
- *Co-operation* between partners, within existing structures. This might be informal in nature, and based on a co-operation agreement, with decision-making powers being retained by each partner.
- *Co-ordination*. This is likely to require a co-ordinating structure, with operational powers and funding (and possibly a contract or legal mandate).

More specifically, with a particular focus on regional aspects of establishing coherence, such approaches may take several forms, all of which may facilitate co-operation and co-ordination across sectors, borders, and other dividing lines:

- *Intra-regional*: linkages within the region, across structural silos and different sectors.

- *Inter-regional*: linkages across regional boundaries.
- *Trans-regional*: linking several regions in thematic clusters.
- *Cross-national*: regional linkages across national boundaries.

A regional approach may be a fruitful way forward, in particular in countries with devolved and decentralised administrative structures, and may also serve to overcome difficulties in establishing or maintaining *national* forums: in such cases *regional* or even *local* forums may serve a number of lifelong guidance co-operation and co-ordination needs, without having a national umbrella under which to operate. Ideally, in most cases, a dualistic and holistic bottom-up *and* top-down approach will serve the purpose of linking national and regional/local guidance policies and priorities.

When developing co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms, a policy-making taxonomy may be helpful, distinguishing between:

- A *reactive* approach which mirrors and supports national/regional guidance policies.
- A *critical* approach which questions national/regional guidance policies.
- A *proactive* approach which formulates national/regional guidance policies.

These distinctions may help to create greater transparency regarding the expectations of the policy-making or policy-formulating roles of such forums. At present, most forums play a reactive or critical role to some degree, but few perform a truly proactive role in terms of formulating guidance policies, let alone actually implementing guidance policies.



Quality Assurance and Evidence (Work Package 4)

Activities

A key objective of the ELGPN is to develop operational tools to support concrete policy implementation. In 2011–12, WP4 activities involved reviewing quality-assurance systems and processes in member countries and examining their relationship to an earlier published Quality Assurance Framework. From this, key topics for development activities included: new strategies for policy-makers and others to develop and apply new methods for data collection and to design and implement a Quality Assurance and Evidence-base (QAE) Framework (2011–12). The goals for 2011–12 included:

- to build upon the existing Quality Assurance (QA) framework and focus on refining, designing and developing a small set of indicators that are measurable and can be applied in EU and national policy contexts;
- to design and develop the structure and content of a pilot project on learning outcomes measurement, covering at least five EU countries, with a number of selected service providers and users of career support services willing to participate, so that lessons can be learned and transferred to a wider audience;
- to strengthen the evidence base for lifelong guidance through inputs to national surveys, where appropriate, and establish strong links to EU and national policy, research and practice in relevant sectors;
- to ensure linkages are made to relevant developments in other ELGPN Work Packages (and with appropriate outside agencies) in order to achieve greater coherence and synergy of ideas and outcomes;
- to learn from each other by disseminating good and interesting policies and practices using the ELGPN website.

Key conclusions

- The balance between quality assurance and evidence should be strongly influenced by a small number of agreed quality elements, criteria and indicators for measurement that can be tested and applied in practice, supported by examples of possible data, as highlighted in the QAE Framework.
- A specific focus is required on investments in workforce development and capacity building, to ensure that policy-makers, practitioners and managers have sufficient knowledge, skills and competence to gather evidence and construct appropriate data-sets that can both inform policy decisions and withstand public scrutiny.
- The EU and national set goals of learning mobility and employability must be supported through stronger evidence-based policies and practices. This should include strategies for the validation of 'formal' and 'informal' learning and accreditation of careers practitioners. Close monitoring of careers practitioners' competence and capabilities is required to ensure that policies and practices keep up-to-date with the latest technologies, labour market trends, and new ways of working effectively with differing clients in differing contexts.
- There is an urgent imperative to improve knowledge and understanding of effective evidence-based policies, including quality-assurance systems and accountability frameworks. Investments made in lifelong guidance systems and services must demonstrate more clearly the added-value returns for individuals, communities and societies.
- The aims of quality-assurance systems and mechanisms are to improve efficiency in service provision, to increase institutional financial accountability and to create transparency from the perspective of the citizen. The latter is often neglected by both policy-makers and service providers.
- In many countries, quality-assurance frameworks have evolved which contribute to the gathering, analysis and presentation of data, helping to inform and develop lifelong guidance policies and practices. However, there is still a paucity of data relating to costs and benefits, broken down for analysis by specific target group(s) and/or by specific types of interventions. Lessons learned from EU policy-maker experiences and other allied sectors are crucial in developing more robust accountability data.
- With the exception of some Public Employment Services, few services if any have used data statistical modelling to analyse the immediate, medium and longer-term calculated savings to the public purse in the form of economic and/or social returns on investment.
- As fiscal arrangements tighten, there will be ever greater pressure from governments to justify expenditure on lifelong guidance services in relation to competing demands. So far, most countries have focused on the quality of service provision and improvements, with practitioner competence and impact of their work positioned centrally within the current dialogue. The QAE Framework data provide concrete examples of countries applying this to policy development activities.
- Those responsible for lifelong guidance services should be informed and supported to demonstrate both economic and social returns on investment, not only in practitioners' work with clients, but also in the context of demonstrating impact to maintain and improve the range and quality of such services.



EU Policy Developments

Over the current decade 2010–20, the challenge is to show that Europe is able to create ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’, in the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy. To this end, five EU headline targets are proposed. Three of these relate to the areas of education and training, employment and inclusion:

- 75% of the population aged 20–64 should be employed, including the greater participation of youth, older workers and low-skilled workers and the better integration of legal migrants.
- The share of early school-leavers should be under 10%, and at least 40% of the younger generation should have completed tertiary education.
- 20 million fewer people should be at risk of poverty by 2020.

To reach the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, a wide range of actions are required, through seven flagship initiatives. In four of these initiatives,

education and training are considered as making a substantial contribution to the Strategy:

- *Youth on the Move* is designed ‘to raise the overall quality of all levels of education and training in the EU’. With the aim to improve the employment situation of young people, this initiative calls for co-operation between universities, research and business, and for the modernisation agenda in higher education to include benchmarking university performance and educational outcomes in a global context. It urges the Commission and the member-states to promote the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.
- *Innovation Union* promotes excellence in education and skills development in order to ensure future growth from innovation in products, services and business models in a Europe faced with an ageing population. It urges member-states to ensure a sufficient supply of science, mathematics and engineering graduates.

- The *European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion* emphasises reducing early school-leaving.
- The *Agenda for New Skills and Jobs* states that people should acquire the skills needed for further learning and the labour market through adult learning, as well as through general, vocational and higher education, to enable the current and future workforce to be adapted to the new economic conditions. This should be achieved through a strong impetus to the strategic framework for co-operation in education and training (ET 2020).

ET 2020, adopted in May 2009, constitutes the roadmap of Europe in the field of education and training until 2020. One of its four priorities is the quality and efficiency of education, which will be measured with supplementary benchmarks to be attained by 2020:

- At least 95% of children between the age of four and the age for starting compulsory primary education to participate in early childhood education.
- The share of 15-year-olds with insufficient abilities in reading, mathematics and science to be less than 15%.
- The number of mathematics, science and technology graduates to be increased by at least 15% over the 2000 level.
- By 2020, 20% of all university graduates to have undertaken learning mobility as part of their university education.
- The participation of adults in lifelong learning to be increased to an average of at least 15% by 2020 (against a 2010 benchmark of 12.5%).

The Communiqué *The Bologna Process 2020 – The European Higher Education Area in the New Decade*, adopted at a Conference in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve on 28–29 April 2009, emphasises that ‘student-centred learning requires empowering individual learn-

ers and effective support and guidance structures in higher education’.

The Bruges Communiqué (Communiqué of the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bruges on 7 December 2010) on *Enhanced European Co-operation in Vocational Education and Training for the Period 2011–20* calls for:

- ‘Close co-operation’ between Public Employment Services and education and training guidance systems, leading to more integrated guidance and counselling services.
- Career management skills development and a ‘tasting approach’, providing young people with an opportunity to become acquainted with different career possibilities.
- Accessible and targeted guidance services providing additional support at key transitions points, especially for learners at risk of underachievement.

Within the Employment Strategy, the four *Integrated Guidelines for Implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy* (GL 7, 8, 9, 10) ask the member-states:

- To implement flexicurity policies (which combine flexibility and security within an integrated approach) and ‘to strengthen Public Employment Services with personalised services and active and preventive labour market measures at an early stage’. Such services and measures should be open to all, including young people, those threatened by unemployment, and those furthest away from the labour market.
- To ‘improve access to training, strengthen education and career guidance combined with systematic information on new job openings and opportunities’.
- To make efforts at promoting full participation in society and the economy and ‘extending employment opportunities’.

These documents constitute the framework for action. From them, the following priorities can be identified:

- Reducing early school-leaving.
- Increasing learning mobility.
- Making VET more attractive.
- Modernising higher education.
- Promoting adult learning and validation of non-formal and informal learning.
- Combating youth unemployment.
- Implementing flexicurity policies.
- Fighting poverty and social exclusion.



Evaluation

Evaluation strategy

The ELGPN evaluation plan for 2011–12 adopted a community-based evaluation approach, aimed at encouraging active participation in the evaluation process from all involved communities and stakeholders. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were utilised.

The summative evaluation was conducted as an online survey in May 2012. The questionnaire was sent to all ELGPN member and observer countries as well as its partner organisations. Responses were received from 28 of the 29 member countries, from one of the two observer countries, and from one partner organisation. The high response rate from member countries (96.5%) can be interpreted as an indication of members' commitment to the Network and its development.

Management of the network

The ELGPN Co-ordination Unit based at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, has been responsible for the day-to-day management of the Network. According to the summative evaluation survey, the ELGPN members appeared in general to be satisfied with the leadership and administration of the Network. Respondents were also very content with the way the Co-ordinator dealt with problems and difficulties. However, it was suggested that the management of procedures and deadlines, and the financial management arrangements, could be improved.

One of the main aims of ELGPN is to facilitate mutual learning and exchange of good practice between the member countries. ELGPN members were in general satisfied with their participation opportunities in the Work Programme: 90% of the respondents fully agreed or agreed with a statement to that effect. They also valued the contributions from the ELGPN consultants, their peers in other countries and the partner organisations. The Plenary Meetings

were viewed as important forums for cross-national communication between the members and for reflection on the Network outputs and future directions. Substantial work also took place within the thematic activities and at country level. Nevertheless, it was indicated that the Network would benefit from a continuous development of its working methods. It was noted, for instance, that the workload regarding data collection and reporting was too demanding, in the light of the available resources.

Learning outcomes from the thematic activities

Overall, the members of the four Work Packages (WPs) reported that they were content with the work carried out in these thematic groups. A large majority of country teams agreed that the outcomes achieved in their respective Work Packages were of high quality; all but one agreed that these outcomes had met their expectations at least to some extent. The members reported that the thematic activities and field visits had given them opportunities to learn about lifelong guidance systems and different options for organising the services. They had become more aware of the challenges and factors which influence lifelong guidance policy development and successful implementation of national initiatives. Members also felt that interaction in the thematic groups had given them an opportunity to review their national lifelong guidance systems, as well as to explore what worked and why in particular contexts. The field visits had helped them to reflect on the relative progress of their country in developing a national lifelong guidance system and on the level of engagement of national stakeholders in this process. During some field visits, practical examples of career guidance structures were enhanced by making connections to theoretical contributions. The contributions of contracted external consultants had helped to develop a coherent synthesis of the themes and to explore the interface with the sectoral policy areas. For the field-

visit host countries, organising the visit and presenting their national guidance system had proved to be a valuable learning experience.

More specifically:

- WP1 members reported that they had learned about the complexity of the career management skills (CMS) development process and had become more aware of the challenges in implementing CMS nationally. The implementation of CMS in national curricula, and the role of CMS in higher education as well as in the validation of non-formal and informal learning, were perceived as important learning experiences.
- WP2 members particularly identified the use of information and communication technologies in widening access as a valuable learning experience. The field visits had also given members opportunities to share experiences on different options for integrating guidance into processes for validation of prior learning.
- WP3 implemented a twinning activity on co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms with Germany and Greece, also involving Cyprus: an example of sharing experiences between countries at different stages in developing a national lifelong guidance forum. Countries in the process of developing national co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms indicated that they were able to compare the different practices in ELGPN member countries and to reflect on the processes underlying these mechanisms. On the other hand, some countries which already had national forums, or wanted to develop other type of representative structures, felt that the working method and content of WP3 had been somewhat repetitive.
- In WP4, differences between countries in their approaches to quality assurance and evidence-based policy making were the focus for mutual learning. Participants reported that it had proved difficult to develop a list of quality

indicators which could be used in its entirety in all member countries. However, the development of common indicators, alongside the comparison of different national surveys and the development of a pilot programme for evaluating the learning outcomes of guidance, were perceived to have been an important stimulus for deepening understanding of the quality aspects of national guidance systems. Participating countries had been provided with opportunities to discuss the quality indicators that were currently applied or could be applied at national level to support further investment in guidance services. They emphasised the relationship between the challenges in quality assurance and the distinctive context of the national lifelong guidance system.

Relevance of the ELGPN 2012 outputs

Overall, it appears that ELGPN member countries were satisfied with the Network and the general outcomes of its work. All respondents agreed that the ELGPN outcomes had met their expectations at least to some extent; 87% fully agreed or agreed that the outcomes achieved within the Work Programme were of a high quality; 77% fully agreed or agreed that the outcomes were relevant to their national context; and all agreed that they could use the outcomes in their national context at least to some extent.

ELGPN members regarded the briefing and reflection notes prepared by external consultants as very relevant and helpful in preparing for the field visits and supporting the implementation and evolution of the Work Programme. The reflection notes opened wider perspectives on the themes and complemented the discussions during the meetings. The targeted analyses and comprehensive accounts of the themes discussed were seen to be of high quality.

Many members found the ELGPN policy briefings helpful in enabling them to follow guidance-related developments in the sectoral policy areas. The brief-

ings were perceived also to be valuable in reminding the thematic activities of common objectives and achievements. The briefings gave all ELGPN members and national stakeholders an opportunity to learn quickly about relevant guidance-related policy developments. Some members translated the briefings into their national languages. However, some countries with a national co-ordination unit for EU affairs did not see the briefings to be so relevant.

The main output of the Work Programme, the Resource Kit, was perceived to summarise the heterogeneous issues identified in the implementation of the Work Programme and to integrate them into a coherent package. The Resource Kit reflected the main themes of the Work Programme and presented useful steps for developing a national lifelong guidance system. Members saw it as a relevant updating of the 2004 EU common reference tools for lifelong guidance, taking into account the new Europe 2020 priorities. The kit illustrated the contextual differences between the countries, which were implicitly integrated in its tools. However, some members indicated that the Resource Kit was too general in nature, offering limited practical solutions to the problems policy-makers were facing on a daily basis. Other members felt that this was still work in progress, representing an important first step towards preparing a more elaborate tool for policy-makers and other stakeholders to review existing lifelong guidance provision in countries and regions.

It should be noted that the strong element of collective participation in the production of the Resource Kit involved some compromises in terms of technical quality and consistency. The Network consists of a heterogeneous group of national representatives with varying roles and professional backgrounds. This provides a rich range of professional and policy perspectives, but these may not always be applied evenly. For example, the selection of the national case studies were based on the proposals of the Work Packages rather than on consistent and agreed quality criteria. As a whole, the Resource Kit represents a tangible product for use at national

and regional levels in member countries, but may need improvement following field testing during the 2013–14 Work Programme.

In the process of preparing the Resource Kit, the Work Packages developed other complementary tools to support its implementation. WP1 collected data from member countries to develop Guidelines for Career Management Skills Development, as well as a description of success factors in the implementation of lifelong guidance policies: these outputs are intended for use in developing and implementing career development programmes in the education system and public employment services. WP4 produced a detailed proposal for a Quality-Assurance and Evidence-base (QAE) Framework, plus a Careers Service Impact Inventory to examine the impact of career services at institutional level: these tools can be used as a basis for developing national benchmarks on lifelong guidance.

The members indicated a number of ways in which they planned to use the Resource Kit. Some countries will translate the tools into their national language. In some, the tools will be used by national forums or working groups comprising policy-makers and national experts. The various sections of the kit allow countries if they wish to choose particular fields of work without necessarily dealing with the whole national guidance system at once. Other members indicated that the Resource Kit will be used in reviewing national lifelong guidance strategies, in national educational reforms, in defining priorities for national ESF projects, and in developing training programmes for guidance practitioners.

Impact at national level

During its two first phases, ELGPN facilitated sharing of good practices and mutual learning between European countries. One of the goals during the 2011–12 Work Programme was to strengthen impact at national level.

The participating countries designate their representatives in the network. The working assumption is that each national delegation will include both governmental and non-governmental representatives. One of the goals in 2011–12 was to strengthen the national representation. As in the previous phases of ELGPN, the member countries adopted different strategies for involving relevant ministries. Of the 29 country delegations, 27 included a representative of the education ministry; 15 included representation from the ministry of labour/employment. The number of NGO representatives (30 delegates from 15 countries) represented an increase from 2010 (17 delegates from 12 countries) (see Annex 1). ELGPN members were aware that in some cases the national team involved in the Network did not have the relevant mandate necessary to influence national policy systems. Some members indicated that their country's membership of ELGPN has influenced the level of knowledge, changed attitudes and developed new possible solutions, rather than directly shaping the development of policies. In some cases, due to national workloads, changes in staff or cuts in national budgets, the designated national ELGPN representatives had limited resources for contributing to the thematic activities and for disseminating the outcomes at national level.

Most members reported that during the 2011–12 Work Programme they had more interaction with national policy development and practice than during the previous two ELGPN phases (2007–10). The ELGPN representatives contributed to many national policy seminars (AT, BG, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, IE, IS, IT, LT, NL, NO, PL, SE, PL, PT, SI) and to national events in conjunction with ELGPN Plenary Meetings or field visits (HU, MT). These events provided opportunities for policy-makers to be updated on international developments, as well as allowing the host countries to showcase their national policies. ELGPN national delegations also organised working-group meetings to support their national contributions to the Resource Kit. In addition, the ELGPN materials were translated into

national languages to inform national stakeholders on the progress of the thematic activities.

ELGPN also impacted on communication and co-operation between different ministries and other organisations in its member countries. Examples included raising important questions and challenges, and proposing specific steps that policy-makers ought to consider, such as the role government should play in shaping the characteristics and qualifications of guidance practitioners (EL). In Poland, the involvement of national delegations in ELGPN activities resulted in developing measures which made co-operation at central level more efficient. In the UK, ELGPN issues were considered as part of regular UK Governments careers policy forum meetings. In some countries, the 2011–12 activities have reinforced existing co-operation between ministries (CZ), and have expanded communication with the academic community (PT). Co-operation between ministries has been operationalised in national forums, in the development of national frameworks (SI) or in jointly organised projects (DE). The ELGPN has also strengthened the role of Euroguidance centres in implementing national activities (IT). But in some countries where the composition of national delegations changed, communication with key stakeholders had to start again from the beginning.

The members provided a number of concrete examples where the Network had acted as a catalyst for national policy development, or where ELGPN products had been used in the national context. The WP1 outcomes were used as a concrete set of guidelines for guidance interventions in developing a national CMS framework (PT) or supported the development of CMS programmes as part of national curriculum development (LU). Countries added CMS programmes as a new curriculum subject (ES, HU) or included CMS development in their national lifelong guidance strategies (FI), national lifelong guidance quality standards (HR) or preparation of national legislation on education (LV). The WP1 products were used in developing the compe-

tences of professionals and teachers responsible for promotion of CMS (HR).

The mutual learning during the ELGPN thematic activities inspired policies for widening access, especially through the development of national online guidance services (DE, DK, FR, HR, HU, IS, LV, PL, PT), of national services within educational settings (PL, SI) or of non-stop guidance centres (NL).

ELGPN impact on the development of national co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms was particularly significant during the previous phases of ELGPN. By the end of 2010, most member countries had established or were in the process of establishing national guidance forums or other co-operation mechanisms. During the 2011–12 Work Programme, a national forum or a cross-ministerial working group was established in Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland and Sweden. In Norway, the work of ELGPN fed directly into the establishment of a new National Unit for Lifelong Guidance which focuses on co-ordination of guidance in different sectors, widening access and developing the evidence base and quality development for the services. In the Czech Republic, the ELGPN influence was particularly visible on enhanced co-operation at regional level.

Participation in WP4 has been a significant stimulus to the development of national quality-assurance systems in lifelong guidance in many member countries. The development of commonly agreed quality criteria or standards at national level has been a parallel process with ELGPN in Germany and Lithuania. Croatia and Denmark have been expanding quality criteria across sectors. Hungary, Ireland, Norway and Portugal have national initiatives to enhance the current feedback mechanisms and create a more consistent evidence base for lifelong guidance policy development. In general, the WP4 products were welcomed by members as a major tool to support national development and as a strong basis for future ELGPN programmes. The quality-assurance framework can help to evaluate national guidance systems and to identify issues requiring attention and gaps that need to be filled. To achieve these goals, the

tools need to be translated into national languages and promoted among relevant stakeholders.

ELGPN as a member-state-driven network

During the first two phases the added value of the Network has been related to the fact that EU member-states face broadly similar challenges and problems. The establishment of the ELGPN was an initiative by the EU member-states through the Open Method of Co-ordination. It has been a mechanism to promote structured co-operation between its member countries and parallel international collaborative projects with mutual interests.

One of the goals of the 2011–12 Work Programme was to gain stronger political influence for the Network on EU policy processes. In 2011–12 ELGPN was invited to contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives in relevant networks and to EC-led thematic working groups. However, despite its acknowledged role in the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–13, the ELGPN does not have an explicit channel for direct interventions in policy development. Consultation on key policy documents has often been informal: for example, through members' contacts with bodies which have a national mandate in the key policy processes (e.g. educational committees or employment committees). The current mandate is not clear and there are different expectations of the role of ELGPN in this respect among the Network members.

The ELGPN Work Programme is endorsed by the Plenary Meeting before submission to the European Commission and is designed to cover the activities for the two-year contractual period. In practice, during the implementation of the Work Programme, needs have emerged among the Network members that have required immediate reactions to EU guidance-related policy developments. These efforts to co-construct policy directions across Europe have produced some potential tensions among the Network Members. One of the challenges relates to the

different ways in which different languages conceptualise lifelong guidance and related terminology. The national definitions of different activities reflect the different cultures, institutional contexts, delivery modes and competence profiles of career practitioners. Since the participating countries are at different stages of policy development and have distinctive issues to address, it is at times difficult to agree proposals that meet the needs of all ELGPN members. Sometimes the tensions between government departments or the level of decentralisation place restrictions upon the effective implementation of coherent national lifelong guidance policies. In addition to the EU level of guidance policy development, there is emerging interest in some countries to develop cross-border clusters with similar interests.

The inputs from ELGPN member countries to the Network activities vary. The contributions of each country to the 2011–12 activities are presented in Annex 2. The levels of acceptance of ELGPN at national level and the levels of involvement in ELGPN activities are linked to the composition of the national delegation and the workloads of national representatives, as well as the current phase of national developments. Where the composition of the national team changes, this can limit opportunities to contribute effectively to Network activities, especially where no briefing takes place as part of a managed handover.

Some countries indicate that, because they are at a relatively early stage in developing national guidance systems, they feel they have learned more in ELGPN than they have felt able to contribute. However, some of the issues they have raised have helped to shape the discussions of the ELGPN in fruitful ways. Such countries tend to want ELGPN to have a stronger policy role than do countries with a longer history of guidance policy development. They would like more support from ELGPN for their national initiatives. For other countries, this kind of active role, e.g. defining minimum levels for quality standards, might be viewed as challenging their autonomy in national lifelong guidance policy development.

Conclusions

The key strength of ELGPN continues to be the strong ownership of its activities expressed by the national delegations. It has built its infrastructure and has identified targets for lifelong guidance policy development. The third phase of its life (2011–12) has

been devoted to the development of concrete tools to help EU member-states and other participating countries to promote better-informed and more effective policies related to lifelong guidance. According to the members' evaluation responses, these goals have been largely met.



Vision for the future

Lifelong guidance is inherently ‘transversal’, in the sense that it crosses different sectors, in two main respects. Lifelong guidance provision is distributed across educational, labour market, social and health provision, under different ministries and other jurisdictions (schools, tertiary education, public employment services, social partners, the voluntary sector, the private sector). In addition, one of the key roles of such services is to help individuals to move effectively across sectors in the course of their personal and career development. Effective policies for lifelong guidance therefore need to involve a number of different authorities and stakeholders.

As a member-state-driven network, the ELGPN represents a major development in support of national lifelong guidance policy development in Europe and an innovative form of the Open Method of Coordination within the European Union (EU), which could be applicable in other areas too. From a wider EU policy perspective, the creation of the ELGPN has helped policy-makers to meet the challenges they face in enhancing national reforms through

implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy, as well as the tools supporting the strategy (including the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), and others). The added value of the ELGPN is not directly visible to citizens, but benefits them through its impact on how national lifelong guidance systems are developed.

In developing the 2013–14 ELGPN Work Programme, the working structure of the Network should be modified according to the new needs of the Europe 2020 master strategy and its seven flagship initiatives. ELGPN as a network must foster the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy in the EU as well as in the member-states. Of the five Europe 2020 ‘headline indicators’, three (1, 4, 5) are potentially linked directly to the further development of European lifelong guidance systems and policies, and are only reachable if lifelong guidance is examined as a cross-cutting element between the current governmental sectors of the EU administration as well as the member-states’ governmen-

tal structures. Lifelong guidance requires actions in multiple fields and should be integrated in key EU funding programmes and be addressed in all relevant political dialogues.

The first six years of ELGPN (2007–12) have created active collaboration between relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies across its member countries and other relevant networks, as well as with the relevant units of DG EAC and DG EMPL. The ELGPN Work Programme 2011–12 has developed a Resource Kit which can be used in Network member countries in support of the development and implementation of European lifelong guidance systems and policies and of related economic, social and political goals. Based on prior ELGPN experience, the further work will concentrate on three main activities:

- dissemination and application of the Resource Kit in each member country, with support from clusters of other countries (Policy Review Clusters);
- work of output-oriented Thematic Task Groups (TTGs);
- review and further development of the Resource Kit, possibly to inform the development of a European Framework for Lifelong Guidance Policies and Systems Development.

Based on the ELGPN outcomes and main action fields of the Europe 2020 Strategy and flagship initiatives, the following possible tasks are suggested for the output-oriented TTGs:

- To produce a series of analytical policy briefings on European education & training and employment policy developments from a lifelong guidance perspective (continuation of the similar work carried out in the 2011–12 Work Programme).
- To develop a handbook for policy-makers which would pull together the key existing evidence on the impact of career development

services, and provide a guide to the possible elements of accountability frameworks (with examples), in collaboration with ICCDPP and other relevant research networks outside Europe (see below).

- To explore the possibility of developing a *European Framework for Lifelong Guidance Policies and Systems Development* incorporating possible indicators, to develop the technical basis for such a framework, and to establish an appropriate ELGPN process using the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) model.

Other TTGs might produce commissioned papers on selected topics. Examples include:

- social inclusion, poverty reduction and the role of lifelong guidance services;
- active solidarity/ active ageing and role of lifelong guidance policies;
- new EU mobility tools (e.g. EQF, ECVET, ECTS, ESCO, Europass) and the role of lifelong guidance in linking users with these tools;
- the role of lifelong guidance in policies on early school-leaving (prevention, intervention, compensation);
- funding (how lifelong guidance is financed, and by whom);
- language and concepts (conceptualisation of key terms related to lifelong guidance in different European languages, and how this reflects different ways of viewing the concept of lifelong guidance and the policies, structures and services required to operationalise it; to be linked to a multi-lingual thesaurus to sit alongside a further revised version of the ELGPN Glossary).

In order to maintain the quality of the Network products, each of these groups will need technical support from external consultants.

The International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy (Budapest, 5–7 December 2011) invited the ELGPN to strengthen links between

EU member-states and parallel international initiatives in lifelong guidance policy development. As recommended by the Symposium, the TTG on impact evidence (see above) could develop a handbook for policy-makers in collaboration with ICCDPP and other relevant research networks outside Europe. ELGPN could also encourage OECD and/or Cedefop to repeat the influential country reviews conducted in 2001-03, taking advantage of other data sources now available. Preparatory work for these reviews could be carried out in 2013, enabling an initial series of reviews to be carried out in 2014, with the possibility of extending such reviews to most of all member countries in the subsequent 2015–16 Work Programme. ELGPN should also work closely with the European Commission to investigate the possibility of co-operation with OECD in relation to the PISA and PIACC results.

As key principles for its future work, the Network should guarantee access to its activities to all member countries, and maintain their strong commitment to and ownership of these activities. There is a strong consensus to support the transversal nature of lifelong guidance, while strengthening its impact within

the key related policy sectors. ELGPN should seek a stronger role in participating in the EU policy processes.

The European Commission will continue its subsidy for the Network from the Lifelong Learning Programme during 2013–14. The challenge for ELGPN is to demonstrate the value of its continued existence through its impact on policy developments. The Commission has indicated its intention to conduct an external evaluation of the Network during 2013. The outcomes will be useful in reviewing the future of the ELGPN, including its structure and goals.

In the next phase of the ELGPN's work, it will be important to identify all relevant tools, measures, parallel networks and initiatives involving DG EAC and DG EMPL, so that these can be linked to lifelong guidance policy at EU and member-state levels. Lifelong guidance has tended so far to be an abstract idea, although education, employment and social inclusion policies have often addressed it. The development of a European Framework for Lifelong Guidance Policies and Systems Development could help to establish it as a policy area in its own right.

Annex 1: Composition of national delegations and contact points in ELGPN 2011–12

		Ministry of education or national agency (EDU)	Ministry of labour or employment (LAB)	Ministry of social affairs (SOC)	National forum (Forum)	Euro-guidance (EG)	Other (Other)
Austria	AT	1	1				5
Croatia	HR	3	3				
Cyprus	CY	3	2				
Czech Republic	CZ	1	1				1
Denmark	DK	3			2		
Estonia	EE	1		1			1
Finland	FI	1	1				1
France	FR	5					
Germany	DE	2			1		
Greece	EL						2
Hungary	HU	1	2				1
Iceland	IS	1					2
Ireland	IE						2
Italy	IT		1				2
Latvia	LV	2	1	1			1
Lithuania	LT	1	2			1	
Luxembourg	LU	1	1				3
Malta	MT	2					
Norway	NO	1	1				4
Poland	PL	1	2				
Portugal	PT	3	2				
Romania	RO		1				1
Slovakia	SK	1		1		1	
Slovenia	SI	1					3
Spain	ES	4					
Sweden	SE	2	1				
The Netherlands	NL	1				3	
Turkey	TR	3					
United Kingdom	UK	3					1
Belgium (Obs.)	BE	1					
Bulgaria (Obs.)	BG	1					
Total	113	50	22	3	3	5	30

Annex 2: ELGPN member countries' contributions to ELGPN 2011–12 activities¹

		WP1 CMS	WP2 Access	WP3 Co-operation and co-ordination	WP 4 Quality	Task Group	ELGPN Steering Group	ELGPN Plenary Host
Austria	AT	x	x	x, LC		x		
Croatia	HR	x		x				
Cyprus	CY		x	x, FV		TGM	x	x
Czech Republic	CZ	x, LC	x			x		
Denmark	DK	x	FV	SM	x	TGM	x	x
Estonia	EE		x		x, FV			
Finland	FI	x	x			x	x	
France	FR	x, FV	x, LC			x		
Germany	DE	x	x		x			
Greece	EL			x	x	x		
Hungary	HU				x, LC	x, TGM	x	x
Iceland	IS		x, LC		x	x		
Ireland	IE	x			x, SM			
Italy	IT	x		x				
Latvia	LV	x	x			x		
Lithuania	LT	x			x			
Luxembourg	LU	x			x, FV	x		
Malta	MT	x, SM						
Norway	NO	x	x	x, FV	x			
Poland	PL		x, SM	x			x	x
Portugal	PT	x, FV			x			
Romania	RO			x				
Slovakia	SK	x	x					
Slovenia	SI	x			x			
Spain	ES		x	x			x	
Sweden	SE	x			x			
The Netherlands	NL		x, FV		x			
Turkey	TR		x	x				
United Kingdom	UK	x	x		x			
Belgium (Obs,)	BE	x	x	x	x			
Bulgaria (Obs,)	BG	x	x	x				
PES network							x	
ETF				x			x	
CEDEFOP							x	
Euroguidance							x	
ETUC							x	
Fedora		x			x		x	
IAEVG					x		x	
ICCDPP							x	
Total		22	19	14	18	19	6	4

¹ LC= Lead country, FV= Field visit host, SM= Synthesis meeting host, TGM= Task group meeting host



EUROPEAN LIFELONG GUIDANCE POLICY NETWORK (ELGPN) aims to assist the European Union Member States (and the neighbouring countries eligible for the Lifelong Learning Programme) and the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors. The purpose of the Network is to promote co-operation and systems development at member-country level in implementing the priorities identified in EU 2020 strategies and EU Resolutions on Lifelong Guidance (2004; 2008). The Network was established in 2007 by the member-states; the Commission supports its activities under the Lifelong Learning Programme.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SHORT REPORT is to communicate the outcomes of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) during 2011–12 to relevant policy-makers and stakeholders at both European and national levels. A full report is also available.

The ELGPN represents a major development in support of national lifelong guidance policy development in Europe. The ELGPN currently has 29 member countries (AT, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR, UK), with 2 additional countries as observers (BE, BG). The participating countries designate their representatives in the Network, and are encouraged to include both governmental and non-governmental representatives. As a Member-State-driven network, it represents an innovative form of the Open Method of Co-ordination within the European Union (EU).

The report describes the work undertaken by ELGPN during 2011–12, including evaluation of its impact at member-country level. Members report that participation in the Network has enriched their awareness of possible responses to common challenges and given them a fresh perspective and new insights into their national provision. A key strength of the Network has been the strong ownership of its activities expressed by the national delegations. The report also analyses relevant policy developments at EU level, and outlines a vision for the future. In particular, it indicates the components of the Europe 2020 Strategy which are relevant to lifelong guidance, including its headline targets and flagship initiatives.