



CYPRUS PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



EUROPEAN LIFELONG
GUIDANCE POLICY
NETWORK

Presidency Conference

Lifelong Guidance 2020 4th European Conference on Lifelong Guidance Policy

24 October 2012, Larnaca, Cyprus

Summary of table discussions

Approved by Conference Delegates

Preamble

The 4th European Conference on Lifelong Guidance Policy – Lifelong Guidance 2020 – was attended by 121 representatives from 29 countries. The main objective of this Cyprus 2012 EU Presidency Conference was to examine the transversal role of lifelong guidance in meeting the Europe 2020 priorities. The agenda covered selected national examples and European-level syntheses of lifelong guidance policies, structures and services.

After the plenary presentations, the agenda consists of three rounds of table discussions with the following two fold purpose:

- to identify immediate next steps in amplifying the Council 2008 Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies in the light of Europe 2020 strategies;
- to reflect on which mechanisms and policy instruments at EU level could assist such developments.

The participants were invited to discuss the questions presented in the light of the conference background paper and the inputs of the invited speakers during the three sessions. This document represents a summary of the collective discussions of those present at the event. They do not bind any of the institutions which were represented. They are addressed primarily to policy-makers.

Session 1: National Lifelong Guidance Policy

Strengthening guidance in turbulent times: rights and responsibilities

- Presentation by Prof. Ronald Sultana, University of Malta

Questions:

1. What role should the state play, together with a range of service providers, in helping citizens develop the career management skills needed to navigate turbulent economic times? How can we ensure that the promotion of CMS does not inadvertently and unfairly lead to the responsabilisation of individuals for situations that are caused by macro-economic dynamics?
2. What are the implications for concrete and feasible next steps to be undertaken in 2013-20 with a view to further developing the career guidance policies and systems in the European Union and its Member States, in the light of the Europe 2020 strategies?

Summary of table discussions:

1. Lifelong guidance is not a replacement for structural responses to turbulent times. But it is a means of lubricating such responses, and attending to the needs of individuals, within their social context.
2. States need to develop strategies for lifelong guidance, supported by legislation and implementation plans.
3. Such strategies should include programmes for the development of career management skills, which should be developed jointly by education and employment bodies, and should start early in primary school. These should be linked to citizenship programmes, to assure links to social solidarity.
4. CMS programmes should be complemented by strategies for securing access to quality-assured personal guidance as a citizen entitlement. This should include targeted intensive support for vulnerable groups.
5. Lifelong guidance provision needs to be informed by comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date information on learning provision, on labour markets, and on the interaction between the two.

Session 2: Organisation of Lifelong Guidance Services

Integrated all-age guidance services

- Presentation by Ms Trina Neilson, Chief Executive, Careers Wales, UK

Questions:

3. How feasible and how desirable is an all-age service (across the policy fields) as a means of delivering an all-age lifelong guidance system? What alternative means are there for binding such a system together?

4. What are the implications for concrete and feasible next steps to be undertaken in 2013-20 with a view to further developing the career guidance policies and systems in the European Union and its Member States, in the light of the Europe 2020 strategies?

Summary of table discussions:

1. All age services and one stop shops (serving different target groups) are desirable, but not always feasible.
2. Where they exist they should be attentive to the distinctive needs of different target groups and different transitions.
3. Where services are more fragmented, there are a number of strategies that can be used to link them effectively together.
4. These include: common branding, common quality standards, common competence framework for practitioners, common access points, common CMS frameworks, common ICT strategies (including common databases).
5. To develop such strategies strong co-ordination mechanisms are needed both in national and regional levels. These need to include both government ministries and other representatives of civic society.

Session 3: Voice of Users

Expectations and perceived role of lifelong guidance by European citizens

- Presentation by Ms. Santa Ozolina, Policy Officer Employment and Social Affairs, European Youth Forum

Questions:

5. In what ways can the voice of users best be articulated, harnessed and utilised in the development of lifelong guidance systems?

6. What are the implications for concrete and feasible next steps to be undertaken in 2013-20 with a view to further developing the career guidance policies and systems in the European Union and its Member States, in the light of the Europe 2020 strategies?

Summary of table discussions:

1. Articulating, harnessing and utilizing the voice of users should be an integral component of lifelong guidance quality and evidence-base framework.
2. Efforts should also be made to articulate, harness and utilize the voice of non-users (potential users) of services
3. Such strategies should include both quantitative and qualitative methods, both data and stories (case-studies).
4. These data should be used for service improvement (including e.g. consideration of outreach strategies and of peer-to-peer guidance using social media), and for marketing strategies
5. Guidance practitioners should act as advocates for the voice of users, feeding back to institutions and policy makers ways in which their needs can be addressed.

24 October 2012, Larnaca, Cyprus

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