

**Record of Key Issues raised at the ELGPN meeting in Lisbon:
CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS—WORK PACKAGE 1
28-29 March 2011
Including Reflections about the Way Forward**

A. FRAMING OF THE LISBON MEETING WITHIN THE OVERALL ELGPN GOALS AND PROCESS:

- 1. Present at the meeting:** Finland (1), Portugal (4), Croatia (3), Austria (1), Slovenia (1), Denmark (1), France (1), Latvia (1), Lithuania (2), Luxembourg (1), Italy (1), Malta (1); FEDORA (1); Germany NGF (1)—Raimo (ELGPN).

[Guest speakers from Portugal: Sara Ribeiro (PES sector); Nuno Viscaia (lawyer to the Portuguese Business Confederation); Teresa Andrade (counsellor, PES)].

- 2. Overall ELGPN context** to keep in mind during the field visit (based on input by Raimo Vuorinen and Jasmin Muhic):

- The goal for the first round of field visits: Members' views on [a] the overall structure, [b] changes for the CRTs, [c] glossary [d] additional tools (in the case of WP1: CMS catalogue, as well as Handbook as part of toolkit).
- In the second phase of the ELGPN work programme (2011-2012): focus on preparing concrete tools that can be used by Member States.

- 3. The field visits** for this year (i.e. Lisbon, and Toulouse in 14-15 November) therefore have two main foci:

[a] Consideration of some **thematic issues** that have not been addressed at great length in the first phase.

- In Lisbon, the focus is **CMS with adults** (in the context of PES, but also from the perspective of employers, and possibly trade unions); **CMS in higher education settings**; and the **training of guidance professionals** and others involved in delivering CMS.
- In Toulouse, the focus will be again be on the training of guidance staff (very topical given the planned overhaul of the training system in France); on CMS support with higher education students, and on the use of portfolios (PEC) as a method of assessing the acquisition of CMS.

[b] Consideration of **methodological issues**, such as:

- the further refinement and development of **Common Reference Tools**;
- the way the two **Task Forces** will work, in terms of producing outcomes related to WP1 work on CMS: i.e. the catalogue/inventory of CMS (TF1 led by Aleksandra Sokolova and Anne Froberg); and success factors and obstacles in the implementation of CMS policies (TF2 led by Helena Kasurinen and Miha Lovsin). Both

task groups will lead to tools that can be added to the ELGPN policy tool-kit as a whole.

- the development of **on-line tools** that can facilitate our work, in communicating both within WP1 members, and also with the rest of ELGPN.

B. CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS WITH ADULTS:

4. Reflection Note, based on study of *Career Guidance in PES in Europe* (Sultana & Watts, 2006): identified the contexts in which PES offered CMS, and how the trends that have been noticed in PES have an impact on the extent and nature of CMS provided. Key issues that emerged in the subsequent discussion included:

- The need to link CMS to the National Qualification Framework and to the EU Key Competence framework.
- The role that PES plays in delivering CMS not just to individuals, but also to groups and organisations.
- The need to differentiate between employment advisors 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 longer-term career development.
- The 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, particularly in a historical conjuncture where the security of the work contract is under threat, and where working conditions tend to plummet to the least common denominator in a Europe that privileges competition.
- The need of PES staff to build on the CMS provided within education sector.

5. Entrepreneurship and CMS: the focus of Sara Ribeiro's presentation was on the ways PES can provide CMS in order to support the transition into *self*-employment, and not just employment. The presentation and subsequent discussion included the following main points and issues:

- The practical ways in which entrepreneurship can be supported, through such strategies as micro-financing, facilitating bank guarantees.
- The need to foster entrepreneurship, even within the context of employment, given that the notion of a job for life is questionable.
- The problem of encouraging entrepreneurship in a context of high unemployment, and lack of public finances to support entrepreneurship through the state's underwriting of some of the risks involved, particularly given the large number of micro-businesses that fail within the first year. As the employers' representative pointed out later, the Portuguese government has agreed to provide social protection for entrepreneurs, which helps incentivise people to take risks and build more companies.
- The challenge for PES to reach out to those who have entrepreneurial potential, given that many who set up their own business are usually well educated, and the

- formally educated do not tend to resort to PES for support. It is also difficult to identify who has the potential to be an entrepreneur.
- The need to constantly keep in mind that Portugal, like many other countries, has to deal with macro-economic and structural issues, and this needs to be balanced, within a PES context, with the extent to which individuals are held personally responsible for their unemployment. These are structural issues experienced at the individual level, but which cannot be solved by the individual.
- 6. The view of a counsellor in a PES local office** (Teresa Andrade, from the *Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional*)—helped to connect the discussion to the everyday work of a member of PES staff, with duties which include guidance, coaching and selection interviews, counselling, coaching interviews with individuals and groups, many of which provide opportunities to focus on CMS.
- Often, within a PES context working with unemployed, the main goals involve motivating, mobilizing, encouraging, promoting, and pointing out to opportunities that enhance basic competences in the work field.
 - Basic CMS that serve the unemployed in good stead in getting ahead in the employment queue include: mastery of reading, writing and math 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, remaining open to learning.
- 7. The view of employers**—as articulated by Nuno Viscaia, a representative of the *Portuguese Business Confederation*:
- While CMS are important and can be useful, they cannot solve structural problems related to competitiveness. They can play a role, however, in a range of areas, including ones that are perhaps 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, entrepreneurship—all of which are a cornerstone of employability and productivity, and essential to the process of economic modernisation
 - From this perspective, CMS can be seen as a way for a country to consolidate and increase its investment in human capital—but such skills need to be learnt early on in life.
 - Both employers and employees should have a basic foundational set of CMS—such as in languages, in health and safety—but different groups might require different sets of CMS, on top of the foundational ones, in response to contextual demands.
- 8. CMS with young adults in higher education contexts:** Gerhart Rott, as representative of FEDORA, noted that career management competences should be considered with the context of broader processes and dynamics that mark the area of higher learning in Europe, including the Bologna Process, for instance. Among these one can mention:
- the emphasis on mobility, the shift away from teaching to learning, and the focus on employability.

- key reports have highlighted the important role of student services—particularly guidance and counselling services—and how these can support the shift to student-centred learning, active and self-directed learning, and to the development of competences that enhance employability.

Three projects provided a very concrete illustration of how CMS have been integrated within higher education settings, including:

- the University of Wuppertal, which focused on the skills needed to transfer and apply knowledge from one context to another, and which led to the institutionalisation of interdisciplinary cooperation between professors and the Central Student Advisor and Counselling Service (ZSB), focusing on the development of key competences and CMS. The University also integrated CMS courses and work experience in the curriculum.
- the University of Reading, where undergraduate courses include credited CMS, with CMS being seen as supportive of learning and of employability, and which includes such elements as work experience, personal development planning, and lifelong learning.
- The Portfolio of Experiences and Competence (PEC) in France, where a virtual platform helps identify competences (related to learning, professional and personal experiences) and communicates them to the world of work. Higher education students are supervised by teaching staff and careers advisers.

Despite the different learning and curricular traditions, cultures and histories of education systems across Europe, one can identify common ground and common trends. These include the connections that are being made between teaching, student-centred learning, student services, and cooperation with employers. These connections lead to new kind of learning settings which support work-related, self-reflective learning, underpinned by CMS which are explicitly part of the universities' quality culture.

- 9. The training of Career Guidance staff at the University of Lisbon:** here the presentation did not focus specifically on CMS, but rather provided information about the professional preparation of CG staff more generally, through the provision of two postgraduate training routes with the department of Psychology, namely a *Masters in Psychology of Education and Guidance* (focusing on *educational context*, with study units on psychological intervention, vocational psychology, psychological assessment in guidance, and vocational counselling), and a *Masters in Psychology of Human Resources, Work and Organizations*, focusing on *work context* (with study units on work and organizations, strategic development of human resources, personal development and career counselling, models and interventions in career development and management). Key issues that seemed most relevant given WP1 focus included:
 - The shift away from an approach that was mostly based on psychology to one that was more constructionist and multi-disciplinary.

- The important role played by a lengthy internship, which entailed detailed reflexive exercises under the supervision of a tutor
- ‘Employability’ as a central concept in the Masters in Psychology of Human Resources, which brought together a mix of individual and organisational approaches, and which emphasised the training of competences for life, not just for work.

C. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES—THE POLICY-MAKERS’ TOOL KIT:

10. The refinement and development of the Common Reference Tools: on the basis of the presentation of the three CRTs, and discussion between participants, the following points can be made:

- A general agreement exists that these 3 CRTs are useful, and that rather than starting from scratch, one should build on what we already have. The value of the CRTs should be seen in relation to the extent to which they support the policy-making and implementation process.
- The Aims and Principles are sound, but while the remaining CRTs should be based on them, they need to be packaged differently in ways that are more meaningful and accessible to policy makers. The ELGPN needs to find a more ‘pedagogical’ way of presenting the material to make it user-friendly.
- There is a tension between recognising the need for a short, reader-friendly version of the CRTs that can be easily read by ‘policy-makers’, and a level of detail that connects the abstract principles to the specificity of MS (e.g. confidentiality has different ramifications in small states; the CRTs are likely to work out differently in federal systems like Germany). The levels as outlined in the new tool (the Common Reference Points) are too normative, and cannot be applied to every context. Neither is there universal agreement with them (e.g. formal assessment of CMS is presented as the last level, as if this were what countries should aim for—which is not necessarily the case).
- If the ‘policy-makers’ are high level ones, then a short and sharp approach, possibly adopting quantitative measurements, benchmarks, and indicators would be helpful.
- For middle-level policy makers (or technical supporters—hence critical *enablers*—of the policy making process), a greater level of detail would be helpful.
- This greater level of details would entail providing examples to illustrate what is meant by the different levels in the new CRT (i.e. Common Reference Points for building a LLG system). The examples of good practice—as well as obstacles encountered—would need to relate to the 4 priority areas of the LLG Resolution, and connect to the 6 sectors that the ELGPN is focusing on in the second phase of its work (i.e. schools, VET, adult education, higher education, employment, and social inclusion). In terms of the contribution of WP1, case studies illustrating different themes could be collected (e.g. in relation to how CMS are taught; how CMS are assessed, how CMS staff are trained, how CMS are integrated into national Guidance strategies).

- An ICT platform could be developed in order to have both a succinct presentation of the CRTs, but with links that take lower-level policy makers to the details that are supportive of the policy-making, implementation, and evaluation processes (e.g. examples of interesting practice from different MS).

11. The Glossary as another element in the Tool-Kit: The ELGPN aspiration to produce a Glossary was widely endorsed, with the advice being that it should define terms commonly used in the career guidance ‘community’ The Glossary should not be presented as a list of authoritative definitions, but rather as a basis for discussion in different MS, and with a view to building communication bridges between education and labour market sectors, and with policy-makers.

12. The CMS Catalogue/Inventory as a new CRT: on the basis of extensive discussions, consensus was reached in relation to the goal for *Task Force 1* to produce, with the help of input from WP1 participants, as well as with the support of all ELGPN members:

- A CMS catalogue, consisting of an organised presentation of themes that serve as a resource for MS who wish to develop a CMS framework. The spirit underpinning the catalogue would not be normative, but rather suggesting options and scenarios, from which MS can ‘mix-and-match’ according to their needs, and understanding of their own situation.
- The catalogue would have a preamble, setting out the rationale, as well as the principles around which the themes are organised. It could also include a set of options in relation to the teaching and assessment of CMS.
- The organising principle for the meaningful ‘packaging’ and presentation of the catalogue of CMS is still to be defined, and would need to be grounded in the kind of (limited) data collected. The material could be organised, for instance around a lifecourse perspective, or on the six sectors that provide the most important contexts for learning CMS.
- The list of CMS that feature in the catalogue could be generated on the basis of a review of existing blueprints and frameworks, and after consultation with different MS representatives, who will be asked to share information regarding CMS in their countries, and in different sectors.
- Care will be given to ensure that the catalogue represents European values, such as those represented by the European Social Model.

13. Success factors and obstacles in the implementation of CMS policies: The goal for TF2 was stabilised in terms of intended outcomes. These entailed a series of steps, including:

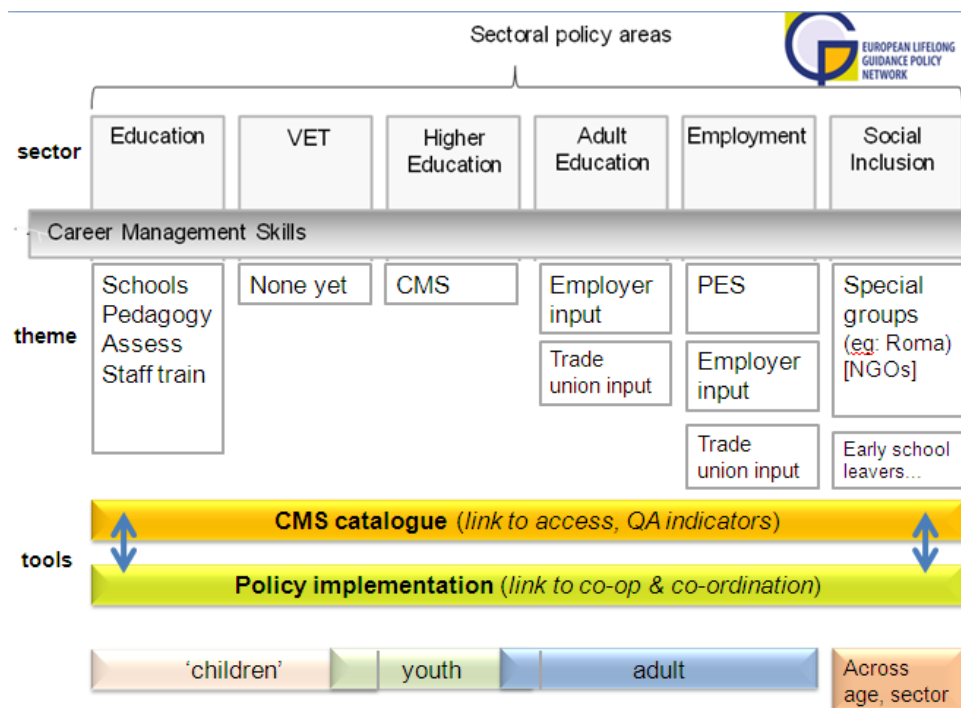
- The analysis of policy implementation studies, in order to become more aware of the factors that determine policy implementation. Attention will be given to the different stages in the policy-making and implementation process (*agenda setting*, i.e. convincing policymakers that CMS do indeed require attention; *formulation*, i.e. informing policymakers of the options and building a consensus; *implementation*, i.e. complementing government capacity; *evaluation*, i.e. collating quality evidence and channelling it into the policy process). Deeper knowledge of the different stages will

lead to capacity building for ELGPN members, rendering them more influential in the policy process.

- In addition to learning from already available studies, further data (including country case studies) will be collected in order to learn about enabling and obstructive factors in implementing CMS in different MS. Data will be gathered [a] on the basis of the key categories developed in the first part of the study, [b] through the use of focus groups, and [c] through the use of Connect Pro, the communication platform that is being used to facilitate ELGPN dialogue.
- The first two stages of the task, together with the analysis of concrete examples of the policy process in different MS in relation to the implementation of CMS, would then lead to the formulation of evaluation criteria and indicators of an effective CMS policy.

D. REFLECTIONS ON WP1: NEXT STEPS

- The situation as it currently stands with WP1, in terms of both the WP1 goals, and the overall aspirations of the ELGPN, is represented in the diagram below.



- The diagram [a] highlights the focus, in the second phase of the ELGPN work programme, on the six different contexts in which CMS are taught; [b] shows the different themes that have been, to a greater or lesser extent, covered by WP1 up till now; [c] shows the two new Common Reference Tools that we will producing (i.e. the CMS catalogue, and the Policy Implementation success factors); and [d] shows how our work output connect vertically to each other, as well as transversally with the other Work Packages.

- Despite the fact that the diagram shows the different areas/themes we have tackled thus far, we need to ensure that the same depth of discussion we had regarding CMS taught in compulsory school contexts is maintained in relation to the other contexts, as well as other themes. The Lisbon visit had to allocate a good proportion of the time available to a discussion of the methodology to be followed by the two Task Forces. This is important because the work of the TFs will provide material which will enable us to achieve two valuable concrete outcomes. We did not have enough time to delve deeper into the issues around CMS in PES settings and higher education settings (by extensive discussion of the Reflection Note, of Gerhard Rott's rich presentation, and of our collective experiences). Future visits and meetings should strive to deepen the discussions, particularly in relation to themes that we have not yet addressed in sufficient depth, including [a] assessment of CMS (both in terms of assessing learning outcomes, and in terms of the effectiveness of CMS in supporting transitions), [b] the role of CMS in preventing early disengagement from school, and [c] the training of staff to deliver CMS.
- Some of these themes will be addressed in the visit to Toulouse. There needs to be clarity around the specific goals for the peer learning event, particularly in relation to the way physical presence in the country can contribute to experiencing examples of interesting practice in relation to different facets of CMS.
- Further clarity and purposefulness should be developed in relation to the ELGPN's desire to have an impact on the policy making and policy implementation process. It is important to [a] identify very clearly the policy-making level we are targeting; [b] present material that is user-friendly, in a language the policy-maker understands; [c] understand that part of the language of policy-makers is 'evidence', hence a need to establish clear benchmarks and indicators, when and where applicable; [d] be clear about the goals we are trying to attain, and why these are important; [e] establish connections with Europe-wide processes that would strengthen our agenda (including, for instance, the European Skills Passport, which could include CMS in the profile of skills they are integrating in the ESP).