

Work Package 1: Career Management Skills
Synthesis Meeting, Malta 27-28 March 2012
Report by Ronald G. Sultana

Members present: Austria (1), Croatia (2), Czech Republic (1), Denmark (2), Finland (1 + ELGPN co-ordinator), Germany (1), Italy (1), Latvia (1) Lithuania (2), Luxembourg (1), Malta (2), Norway (1), Portugal (1), Slovenia (1), ETF (1), FEDORA (1). Also in attendance as additional observers: Slovenia (4), Malta (2).

Goals for the meeting: Feedback and decisions regarding the main outputs of the ELGPN as a whole –i.e. the *Progress Report*, the *Tool Kit*, and the *Glossary*—as well as of the outputs of the two WP1 task forces—i.e. the *CMS Catalogue*, and the *Thematic Study on Success Factors and Obstacles in Implementing CMS policies*. In addition, proposals regarding the next phase of the ELGPN’s activities were also on the agenda.

Note: The following is an overview of the main discussion points as well as decisions reached at the Synthesis Meeting. As agreed, the proceedings are generally organised thematically, rather than on reporting who said what. Members are invited to suggest modifications to this Synthesis Meeting report by Sunday 8 April, so that a final version can be sent in time to WP2 members, prior to their meeting in Warsaw 10-11 April 2012. Members were also invited to send any specific comments and suggestions regarding the different outputs of the ELGPN to the WP1 consultant by Wednesday 4 April, so that these could be integrated in the present report.

1. Background and context:

- 1.1. Raimo Vuorinen, ELGPN coordinator, provided a detailed overview of the activities and achievements of the network since its inception, focusing in particular on the outcomes of the third phase that will come to an end in October 2012. He identified the key EU documents that the ELGPN was striving to relate its work programme to, noting that while the first two Guidance Resolutions in 2004 and 2008 had focused mainly on education and within the perspective of the Lisbon Agenda, now the key target was broader, relating to the European Commission’s cross-cutting flagship initiatives (e.g. the *Europe 2020* strategy, *New Skills for New Jobs*, and *Youth on the Move*). This provided a new background for ELGPN initiatives, and would be reflected in the new Guidance Resolution that would be proposed during the Cypriot Presidency.
- 1.2. Proposals regarding the future work programme of the ELGPN will be discussed in section 7 of this report. The ELGPN coordinator however provided important information both at the outset of the meeting, as well as in introducing each aspect of the Agenda, in order to help WP1 members better understand the context of discussions to be pursued at the Malta meeting, and decisions to be made at the next network plenary meeting in Copenhagen (24-25 April 2012). Specifically, the following items deserve to be highlighted:

- 1.2.1. The EU grant to the ELGPN for 2013-2014 was ensured.
- 1.2.2. The proposals by Hungary and the Czech Republic to take up co-ordination of the network after Finland were both viable ones, and there was the possibility that both countries would take on a joint co-ordination role. This matter would be decided in Copenhagen.
- 1.2.3. The next work programme might see a restructuring of the Work Packages, with a focus of the implementation of the Tool Kit. Detailed discussions around this item appear in Section 7 of this report. Members could make further comments on the Initial Suggestions for the ELGPN Work Programme 2013-2014 using Googledocs, with country comments to be included by 13 April 2012.*A synthesis of comments will be presented at the 10th Plenary Meeting in Copenhagen.
* <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ox9LKJfr-v6UxXDUa4nVkQetSg-N9qg3vyFw3XqNWby/edit>
- 1.2.4. The possibility of collaborating with the OECD in order to repeat the influential policy review of career guidance was being explored. This would ensure a much better flow of reliable data that would help the ELGPN in its activities.
- 1.2.5. A full-scale external evaluation of the ELGPN would be carried out in 2013/2014. An internal evaluation of the network is taking place, along the lines set out in the document titled “ELGPN 2011-2012: Evaluation update, 12 March 2012”.
- 1.2.6. Communication between ELGPN members is being encouraged in order to consolidate the work that is being done in the different work packages. The communication tool that is being used is LINKEDIN, to which 115 members have already signed up.
- 1.2.7. WP members are encouraged to take part in the forthcoming IAEVG conference that will take place in Mannheim*, and which will be strongly policy oriented. Members can use ELGPN travel money to attend, on condition that they take part in an ELGPN-related event organized at the conference, or that they help to disseminate ELGPN outputs.
* <http://www.iaevg-conference-2012-mannheim.com/>

2. The CMS Catalogue prepared by Aleksandra Sokolova and Anne Froeberg

- 2.1. The discussion about the CMS Catalogue revolved around two main concerns, namely [a] what could be done at this stage (section 2.2), and [b] what could be achieved in the next phase of the ELGPN (section 2.3).
- 2.2. **What can be done now:** The CMS Catalogue is still in Draft form, and requires further editing in terms of:
 - 2.2.1. Having suitable introductory and concluding sections that set out the purpose of the Catalogue, as well as clarifying the fact that it is based on a small number of

responses and that it therefore requires further input by EU member states. The examples presented therefore constitute the beginning of an empirical base, and the goal is to expand these over time in order to ensure validation. It should also be made clear that the framework is not comprehensive, but that at this stage it provides signposts to those countries wishing to develop a CMS programme.

2.2.2. Including additional country-specific case studies that help potential users better understand how the framework can be used to develop a CMS programme. Members are invited to send case-studies, using the current tabular format in order to place their own material. The current format could also be useful in identifying gaps that need to be addressed in the next version.

2.2.3. Packaging the material in one rather than several columns to facilitate reading: in its current format, the table is too comprehensive and difficult to comprehend.

2.2.4. Ensuring a better balance in the representation of the places where CMS are learnt: in the current version, insufficient attention is given to CMS learning in PES settings, and at work. There could also be further CMS learning contexts, and not just 'career education' and 'other'. One possibility was to organise the material under the titles 'Learning', 'PES', 'Work' and 'Other' settings. It might also be useful to use the same headings as used in Table 1 in the CMS chapter of the Tool Kit (i.e. CMS learning in 'Initial Education', 'TVET', 'Higher Education', 'Adults and Unemployed', and 'At Risk groups') in order to have more consistency across the Tool Kit. Another option would be to organise around 'employability skills' rather than in terms of the institutional contexts in which CMS are learnt.

2.3. **What could be done in the next phase:**

2.3.1. The question was raised whether the title 'Catalogue' is appropriate, given that the contents suggest that it is more of an 'analytic framework' that can be used to generate a 'Catalogue' of career management skills. It will become a Catalogue in the next phase if key competences are identified which could fit in the structure provided. WP1 could perhaps consider the present Catalogue as a first step in generating a European CMS framework.

2.3.2. In relation to the latter, any effort to produce a 'European' catalogue of CMS needs to keep in mind that the EU is heterogeneous, and that the tool produced cannot have a normative function.

2.4. **Decision regarding the place of the revised CMS catalogue in the Tool Kit:** that it be included as an Annexe.

3. The Thematic Study on CMS Policy Success Factors prepared by Dorianne Gravina and Miha Lovšin

- 3.1. The Thematic Study was seen to be a useful and worthwhile addition to the network's reflections on the challenges of policy development and implementation, with implications not only for WP1, but also the other work packages, and particularly so for WP3, given that successful implementation required close co-operation and co-ordination between several actors. Similarly, WP4's QA framework has 'CMS policy development' as one of its quality criteria, and a deeper knowledge of the policy development and implementation process was therefore relevant to the whole network. The following points could be taken into account when preparing the next draft of the Thematic Study:
 - 3.1.1. The relatively weak response to the questionnaire sent by the authors means that only some of the analysis is based on empirical data, with insights from a review of the relevant literature providing the rest of the material presented. Countries are encouraged to contribute further information to consolidate the empirical basis of the study.
 - 3.1.2. Care should be taken to focus not only on the macro and meso levels, but also on the micro level as well, i.e. on the practitioners, teachers, and actors who are the 'front liners' in implementation. A variety of factors that facilitate implementation should also be considered for inclusion in the study, including incentives, commitment, additional burdens, etc.
 - 3.1.3. Success factors that facilitate implementation, and obstacles to implementation, are often the opposite sides of the same coin. However, it might be wise to also maintain a focus on the hindering factors, not only because part of the success in implementation is overcoming factors that hinder implementation, but also because it is important to highlight the kinds of obstacles that are likely to arise (e.g. competing priorities).
 - 3.1.4. As far as possible, concrete examples should be given of how specific factors contribute to successful policy implementation. This facilitates understanding, and members are invited to contribute further examples, thus strengthening the study with a broader empirical base, thus enhancing credibility.
 - 3.1.5. Some further work needs to be done on the packaging and presentation of the obstacles and enabling factors, possibly relating them more closely to policy elements in the Tool Kit and in the ELGPN's reflections over the past two phases. One example of this is the extent to which co-ordination and co-operation are critical to the success of policy implementation, and reference could be made to the outputs of WP3.

3.1.6. The synthesis should be structured differently, with the numbered titles coming first, and the narrative explanation following.

3.2. **Decision regarding the place of the Thematic Study in the Tool Kit:** that the revised study be adopted as another input to the series of concept notes prepared by contributors to the ELGPN, and uploaded on the network's website. However, only the revised synthesis, outlining the key messages, will be included as an Annexe to the Tool Kit.

4. Feedback about the Tool Kit:

In relation to issues raised by co-ordinating team:

4.1. WP1 members felt that the Key Features of a LLG system could be maintained in their present format. However, further case studies should be added in Section 2.7. No country present at WP1 meeting volunteered any case study in this regard.

4.2. No further details were required in Sections 1 and 2 within Chapters 3-6.

4.3. Regarding the way Policy Steps are presented (Section 3 in Chapters 3-6): members felt that ideally there would be more consistency, and an effort will be made to restructure Table 1 (Progression continuum of policy steps leading to CMS implementation) in two columns, relating the material more directly to CMS. Members did not think that there was any need for greater levels of detail.

4.4. WP1 members agreed that it would be useful to have a short version of the Tool Kit. This would be produced in such a way that it could fit in a short, printed handout to facilitate dissemination, and to enable translation into different languages. The short version should have an introductory section to place the material in context.

In relation to further issues that arose out of the discussion of WP1:

4.5. WP1 members felt that the chapter on CMS read well, but that we would be able to include further case studies for each of the different sectors, with ideally two case studies per sector for ALL the work packages. The following countries offered to send additional case studies, following the same format agreed to: Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Portugal, and Slovenia. The Czech Republic would re-write its case study in a more narrative format, so that its style is consistent with the rest. These additional case studies will also ensure that there is a better balance in the representation of countries in the Tool Kit. Members are encouraged to forward their case studies to WP1 leader and consultant by Wednesday 4 April if possible.

4.6. All the case studies in Chapter 3 should also be vetted closely to ensure that they are closely related to CMS. Some of the case studies were more operational rather than policy-oriented, and might need to be edited in order to ensure better consistency given the goals for the Tool Kit.

- 4.7. In terms of the section “Questions that policies need to address”, reference to the training of CMS staff in different sectors should be made.

5. Feedback about the Progress Report:

- 5.1. A number of points were made by various members of WP1, and the following will be inserted directly into the draft Progress Report as amendments. These include:
- A new bullet on the balance between life and work as an essential component of CMS.
 - The issue of accreditation should be mentioned in the section on PES contexts.
 - The section on ‘next steps’ should refer to *policy* development in CMS, rather than to the work that WP1 will need to do in the next phase of the network.
- 5.2. WP1 members agreed that Section 3 (“Policy Developments”) needed to be shortened. A further recommendation was for the policy updates to be linked and cross-referenced to the ‘policy continuum’ sections outlined in the Tool Kit, so that there is a greater sense of consistency and the material is more holistically presented.

6. Feedback on the Glossary:

- 6.1. The draft Glossary provoked several comments from WP1 members. General comments are presented below. Members will be sending any more specific comments to the ELGPN coordinator by Wednesday 4th April, including suggestions as to which terms needed to be added or dropped. The main concern of the WP1 members focused on evaluating the Glossary from the perspective of its relevance to the ELGPN, particularly given the fact that there were several other Career Guidance Glossaries available.

General comments:

- 6.1.1. The Glossary should relate more closely to ELGPN work. As such, it should mainly if not exclusively focus on terms used in the Tool Kit and other ELGPN products (e.g. Reflection Notes). It should be included as an Annex to the Tool Kit, and help readers ‘decode’ the material in the Tool Kit and other ELGPN products. Words that have never been used in the work done by the ELGPN should probably be removed. Words that are central to the work of the ELGPN Work Packages (e.g. career education) should feature prominently.
- 6.1.2. The Glossary should define terms with reference to a Career Guidance context. There are too many terms that are defined without an attempt to identify their relevance to guidance.
- 6.1.3. The Glossary does not use definitions that the ELGPN has been using, and which are also present in the material that the network has produced over the past years. A case in point is the definition of CMS.

6.1.4. A strong case was made for the need to move away from a 'dictionary' approach to one that acknowledges the competing definitions around several terms used in career guidance. A dictionary tries to stabilise and harmonise meaning, striving for a pan-European consensus. A critical glossary, on the other hand, tries to capture the competing definitions around key concepts in a particular field. This encourages a more three-dimensional approach to phenomena, and also acknowledges that career guidance, as a social practice, is perceived, defined, and practiced differently in different EU member states. It was acknowledged, however, that this might go beyond the remit and TOR of the consultant engaged in this task.

6.1.5. The discussion in 6.1.4 above needs to be taken into account when it comes to deciding whether the Glossary should be translated into different languages. Here again, the notion of translation was contested, in that certain meanings and perceptions could not properly and faithfully be translated, given that terms acquired specific meanings in specific contexts. Countries however were free to decide to translate the Glossary if they felt that this was useful to them.

6.1.6. Efforts should be made to show the link between different terms.

6.2. A suggestion was made that short definitions would be placed in the Annex of the Tool Kit, but that the full version of the Glossary could be placed on the ELGPN website.

7. Feedback on the ELGPN 2013-2014 work programme:

7.1. The discussion was organised around two main issues, i.e. [a] the work of the ELGPN as a whole, and [b] CMS-related activities and goals. For each of these two key issues, the focus was on [a] the substantive work to be done, in terms of main topics, themes, and goals; and [b] the organizational structures and methodologies that were best suited to facilitate the successful implementation of the work programme. The discussion took place following a detailed overview of the context provided by the ELGPN coordinator, who explained that the current document "ELGPN Work Programme 2013-2014: Initial Suggestions" had the status of a tentative proposal submitted by Hungary in its bid for coordination of the network, and that the future work programme had to be endorsed by all members at the 10th ELGPN Plenary meeting in Copenhagen.

7.2. Comments regarding **the future work of the ELGPN as a whole:**

7.2.1. The three key aims outlined for the fourth phase (i.e. to focus on quality of LLG systems; to develop deeper evidence-based policy and practice; and to strengthen the impact of the ELGPN's work) were endorsed. In relation to the third goal, members expressed the hope that such strengthening would be done through other ways as well.

7.2.2. A concern was expressed that by dropping the WP focusing on 'access', the network risked losing sight of the social and political issues that were of critical

importance, particularly at a time of economic recession. WP1 members agreed that it was crucial for the network not to be taken up by merely technical issues, and that the work programme should be seen within the context of the macro structures and contexts that shaped policy and practice – even if, as a country delegate, one cannot stand outside the policy framework that is set by government. If the social and political aspects of career guidance did not feature as a specific concern, then the network should make sure that they were consistently present as a cross-cutting, transversal theme (e.g. access, citizen involvement, entitlement should strongly feature in a Quality framework). In addition, it was clear that some of the work packages had already given attention to the social agenda (e.g. WP4 is considering developing an ethical code of conduct that takes into account service provision in times of precarity).

7.2.3. Given that the main reason for the ELGPN's establishment was to have an impact on national contexts, the issue of national representation in the ELGPN is quite central. It was of critical importance to have members who are personally involved in policy development in their own countries, and to therefore find ways of ensuring this, and of implementing the criteria for membership as outlined in the Governance Document of the ELGPN. It would be helpful to have a data base with the names of people in each country who are involved in policy making in career guidance. It would also be helpful if the ELGPN facilitates the sharing of experience between different members, so that we learn from each others' efforts to communicate with and influence policy makers. It is vital that in the next phase, the issue of how the network's debates are acknowledged and validated by policy makers is seriously considered.

7.2.4. While the "Initial Suggestions" document was helpful, some felt that the focus of debate should not be on which work packages should remain, but rather on what, from our perspective, is of critical importance in career guidance, given the situation in Europe. A debate on this should be encouraged as a preamble to discussing which Work Packages would need to be set up in order to address the key themes identified. The nature of Work Packages should also be carefully reconsidered, in terms of their dual function as task oriented groups that produce specific outputs, and as facilitating learning processes through peer learning. The function of the latter in helping attain high quality goals is possibly questionable, and one suggestion is that it might be more productive to have smaller working groups focusing on particular issues, with interaction between larger groups taking place on-line. This would change the nature of the network, but could potentially lead to better quality outcomes. Another option considered was to have BOTH larger Work Packages, which were seen by many to fulfil an important role, but with smaller task groups being set up within each Work Package. This would entail a different distribution of funding and resources (including consultant expert support), in ways that would support higher quality work that is achieved in the smaller task groups. It is important to acknowledge that the work done to produce outputs is often over and above

members' everyday responsibilities. There is therefore a need to match the allocation of funding and resources in relation to outputs expected, and to find a just way of distributing the available funds, with a more realistic correspondence between actual work load and budget allocated.

7.2.5. Once different work packages were set up, it was crucial that these do not operate in separate silos, but communicate with and connect to each other. Up to now, this interaction has been achieved through the Task Group, through members attending sessions in two Work Packages, and through the ELGPN co-ordinator sampling meetings of all four Work Packages. In the next phase, the Hungarian proposal is suggesting the setting up of a 'Development Team' that follows up on all activities, and to issue regular reports about main conclusions reached. Work Package leaders should also be encouraged to report more frequently to each other, though some of the linkages between themes are becoming more obvious now that the outputs are at an advanced stage of readiness. Feedback by individual members is necessary but not sufficient, and a structure which enables discussion between groups as well as between the whole network is also important. Opportunities should be created to ensure that the outputs of each Work Package are discussed in depth by all.

7.3. Comments regarding **future CMS-related activities and goals:**

7.3.1. While a work programme is set up for WP2 and WP3, there is no specific agenda set out for WP1, with CMS just being outlined as the title of a work package (p.2). Concrete goals for this WP needed to be set out, as in the case of the other two work packages.

7.3.2. One set of specific agendas for the WP focusing on CMS would be [a] the development of CMS learning in different settings, and [b] Quality assurance of CMS. Other related suggestions included [c] the development of a detailed Catalogue on the basis of the framework that was outlined in this phase of WP1, and [d] the measurement of CMS learning. Both process and outputs were important, and here again it was emphasised that it was vital to integrate a consideration of social justice and social equity issues.

7.3.3. There was a general consensus that over the next phase, there was a need to make the discussion around CMS more concrete, to provide examples of the competences that CMS include, and to present examples that would help in making CMS more transparent to policy-makers, and to trainers of career guidance practitioners. The way to attain these goals was probably to develop the CMS Catalogue into a more detailed outline of the actual career management skills that are needed in different contexts, focusing not only on work, but also on life-wide concerns. Developing a catalogue that takes into account special target groups, such as early school leavers and immigrants, would also help to reinforce the social equity agenda.