

European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network

Work Package 2: Widening Access

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BRIEFING NOTE

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1. Context:

This briefing note is based on the brief data collection on widening access to information, guidance and counselling services for all citizens, particularly for young people at-risk of early school leaving, for adults (employed, unemployed and at transition), for active ageing. We plan to have a brief mapping of the integrated services (ICT tools and face to face services) to reach specific target groups as a background for the visit.

1.1. Members were asked to respond to the following questions:

- Please provide brief information on the guidance provisions (ICT tools and face-to-face) for young people at-risk of early school leaving.
- Please describe briefly the counseling services within universities.
- Do you have any provisions for the age group over 50 +If so, please describe these services and the tools used.
- Please give an example of an interesting practice in relation to the guidance provisions in higher education and for the target groups of youth at-risk and aging population over 50.

1.2. Thirteen members sent their responses: Austria, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Poland, Slovak Republic, Spain, The Netherlands and Turkey.

1.3 This brief analysis was an opportunity for reviewing and mapping the present situation in relation to the integrated services (ICT tools and face to face services) to reach specific target groups, particularly for young people at-risk of early school leaving, for adults (employed, unemployed and at transition), for active ageing.

1.4 The Council resolution¹ stresses the need for more easily accessible lifelong guidance services and improving access to services for the most disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, the Member States are invited to develop and offer web-based services parallel to the more traditional guidance service provision. The objective is to improve and restructure the national and regional guidance service delivery so that it supports an integrated approach to social inclusion, active citizenship, lifelong learning, full employment, future skills and qualifications.

1.5 Alongside the more traditional face-to-face guidance services offered by the education and employment sectors, the development of internet-based information, advice and guidance provision is winning more and more ground in Europe. Technology facilitates the service

¹ Council of the European Union (2008). *Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies*. 2905th Education, Youth and Culture Council Meeting, 21 November 2008. Available from Internet:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104236

provision as a combination of media (e.g. e-guidance, helplines, internet, etc.) and can be applied to meeting the needs of the users. However, the technology is not supposed to replace, but to complement the traditional forms of guidance. It also makes access to services more feasible and cheaper, and allows innovative, flexible and more cost-effective service delivery linked to self-access and self-help modes. Many countries consider in particular web and phone together as key drivers for enabling people to access services at a time, place and method most appropriate to their needs (Akkök, 2010)². There has been an extensive development of web-based guidance and counseling services in most European countries since 2006-2007.

1.6 The Cedefop study³ draws the attention to guidance measures and initiatives applied across Europe to support school completion and education-to-work transitions of young people at the risk of dropping out of mainstream education and training. It is important to promote career guidance, and parental involvement together with competent teachers, guidance practitioners, labour market actors, youth and social workers as well as health care providers is the backbone of support in the young person's life.

1.7 The integrated guidance service provision for the specific target groups in different member states are briefly summarised in this note.

1.8 Some resources relevant to the discussions in Copenhagen meeting could be:

- Cedefop (2010). *Guiding at-risk youth through learning to work: lessons from across Europe*. (Research paper; 3). Luxembourg: Publications Office. Available from Internet: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5503_en.pdf.
- Proposal for a Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving, Brussels, 31.1.2011.⁴
- Cedefop (2011) Lifelong guidance across Europe: reviewing policy progress and future prospects. Available from internet: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/18625.aspx>
- Plant, P& Sanchez, J.L (2011). Guidance for Older Workers in Denmark and Spain. *International Journal of Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 11:3-15.

2. The present state

2.1 Brief description of the guidance provisions (ICT tools and face-to-face for young people at-risk of early school leaving, for adults and for active aging.

There are face-to-face and ICT tools in different countries for early school leaving, it seems to be in the agenda of nearly all countries. Projects, new initiatives and policies are being developed to tackle with the needs of this group thus lifelong guidance, specifically at transitions have a significant role. Guidance provisions for adults need to be more integrated and differentiated. The provisions for the age group 50+ has good examples from several countries.

² Akkök, F. (2010). Reflection note European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network Work package 2: Widening access. Manchester, 1-3 February 2010. Available from Internet:

http://ktl.jyu.fi/img/portal/16803/WP2_Manchester_Reflection_Note_Fusun_Akkök

³ Cedefop (2010). *Guiding at-risk youth through learning to work: lessons from across Europe*. (Research paper; 3). Luxembourg.: Publications Office. Available from Internet: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5503_en.pdf

- The service in Cyprus is mostly a face to face service. Young people at-risk of early school leaving are seen more often than the rest of the students and action plans are designed and implemented within the school units. Support is also provided by other educators, educational psychologists and special education teachers.
Apart from the use of EU tools like EURES, EUROPASS, the only tool that counselors use is that of the Career Gate Test K17 which is based on Holland's theory. Various other tests are used occasionally, the development of a computer based tool to cover all ages and all levels of competencies is within future plans.
- In Estonia, no specific services for young people at-risk of early school leaving were reported, thus two kinds of guidance networks which help young people during their studies until entering the labour market – career guidance services and specific provisions for youth with special needs -were mentioned. The career guidance services are provided to young people aged 7-26. The most important target groups are the students who graduate from basic or high school to support young people in their decision making and the service is mostly preventive. There are also guidance provisions for students with special needs, their parents, teachers and other specialists at educational institutions to prevent students from dropping out of school. Moreover, Pathfinder portal and other web pages provide information and guidance for youth in decision making.
- In France, the” Mission Locale”, a face-to-face service, supports social and professional integration of youth at-risk, support and follow-up platforms for early school leavers have been established for immediate provisions within the first 3 months after dropping out of school. This target group is directly contacted by the platforms which have counsellors from the Missions Locales, the Information and Guidance Centres and the general Mission for integration of the Ministry of Education called “Micro lycees”. In case of nonattendance and no contact with the students, a special group of teachers try to provide individual solutions or continuous education for these students, i.e “second chance”. As ICT tools, there are several provisions. A National website (ONISEP) provides detailed and complete information about courses and career, for secondary school students, teachers and parents and a new multimedia service “answer live” with telephone services, chat and mail has been initiated in 2010. Moreover, there is a tool that allows a precise measurement of the number of early school leavers.
- In Germany, in compulsory general secondary education various guidance provisions deal with young people at-risk of early school leaving. Guidance in the schools and the School Psychological Service organized across schools in the local community support the youth at-risk. In cases of truancy and early school leaving, there is a close cooperation between the schools, the youth social work system and other institutions involved. Moreover, the programme “Refusal of schooling – second chance” aims to support young people at-risk in finding their way back into the general school system. There are also provisions for young people at-risk focusing especially on the transition into the VET system. Germany has a number of programmes at Federal, Länder and municipal level as well as temporary projects with the aim of improving the young people’s vocational skills and abilities in order to enhance their chances of entering regular in-company vocational training. Moreover, programmes like coaching for the transition to work and educational chains are developed to reduce school-dropout and improve the transition into the dual training system in order to prevent skills shortages. For the young people who do not meet the requirements to enter vocational training or who have not achieved a secondary school degree, they may have year of vocational preparation in vocational schools which include work experience and practical training helping them to acquire vocational skills and capabilities as well as social pedagogical assistance and career orientation and guidance. The training aids and competence

agencies of the Federal Ministry of Families, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth target disadvantaged youth who could not be reached through mainstream institutions and programmes.

- Greece has an official database providing valid information to a broad target group (students of all education levels, their parents, graduates interested for post graduate studies, teachers, counselors, European citizens interested for studying in Greece) about learning opportunities and training possibilities available in Greece in all educational levels and all types of education, from kindergartens to post graduate programs and from general education to second chance schools. Moreover, there is an interactive multimedia guidance internet portal for adolescents to facilitate their access to information and career development services as well as a National Network of Counselors and Counseling Structures, an electronic communication ICT platform to facilitate professional development among the guidance practitioners.
- In Iceland, "Education is a work process" project has the goal (1) of widening access to high schools for youth especially under the age of 25,(2) to strengthen vocational schools and (3) to increase co-operation between schools and the industry. Transition from secondary education to adult education will become more flexible and school guidance will be more accessible with increased funding from the government. One important aspect of this project is to meet the needs of people who have dropped out of school and facilitate access to education for that group specifically in order to lower unemployment rates and increase opportunities for people with no or little formal education. This project is financed by the government and social partners within a more global project aiming at lifting the educational level of people in the labour market. Guidance in Iceland is mainly face-to-face, although counselors use e-mail in their work. No holistic and neutral ICT portal that delivers career information and guidance exists in Iceland.
- Latvia has the national educational opportunities database which provides information on all types of formal educational opportunities in Latvia, including remedial vocational education programmes for young people with incomplete primary education and training programs and for people with special needs. Different target groups have access to various ICT tools to explore the world of work that are linked with education opportunities. Furthermore, as a preventive measure, schools offer parents thematic sessions to involve them in the guidance process and to improve their knowledge and skills in supporting their children in making adequate career choices and career education practitioners are offered training seminars on different methods to prevent early school leaving.
- In Poland, career guidance consists in assisting the unemployed and jobseekers in selecting an appropriate vocation and workplace, and assisting the employers in recruiting the best possible candidates for a job with the use of standardised methods, ICT tools and Vocational Interests Questionnaire (VIQ) and a programme which serves to exchange professional information.
- According to the annual report of the EC examining performance and progress towards the common European objectives in education and training, Slovakia is one of the best performing country on benchmark relating to the rate of early school leavers (18 – 24) which is 4,9%. In the field of education, a number of policy documents were processed and reflected in a new legislation on education regulating the way of the organization of educational, psychological and special – pedagogical counselling and prevention facilities. It also regulates personnel, material-technical support and creating new workplaces. In educational facilities, provisions and social activities are carried on aiming at optimizing the educational, psychological, social and career development of children from birth to the completion of education. Special care is devoted to the children with special needs. Guidance and

counselling services are face to face also provided to the guardians of the children and to teaching staff.

- Spain has both ICT Tools and face-to-face services for the target groups. ICT tools are mainly on education and guidance provided by each Autonomous Community and a new portal with different interactive guidance tools that help both young and adult people find their pathways and support their transitions in life. A new “School Plan 2.0” to reduce early school leaving through the early introduction of ICT in education with the aim of all 10 year old pupils having their own laptop PC and the appropriate training to use it properly has been initiated. Face-to-face guidance provisions mainly take place in the guidance departments of the Public Secondary Schools. Schools with a high percentage of at-risk youth (at-risk of social exclusion, gipsy population) have special programmes for young people at-risk of early school leaving. In Spain, the guidance departments in schools of Adult Education for over 18 year old students, serve the drop-outs. Spain has taken measures to make the education system more flexible and therefore more adapted for young people at-risk of early school leaving with the new integrated VET system. There are also alternative programs for those students who are not able to complete the last two years of compulsory secondary education. Groups for Educative Compensation and Curricular Diversification are some other programs for the disadvantaged groups. Continuing training of the professionals is also in the agenda.
- In The Netherlands, at policy level, the early school leaving approach is integrated in ‘attacking early school leaving’. One of the principles of the programme is ‘Provide better career guidance and information, help students choose the right study programme, and offer them better counselling’. Another principle is to ‘Set up 20,000 tailor-made programmes for school dropouts aged 18 to 23 for “competencies acquired elsewhere” and make arrangements with large employers aimed at helping pupils obtain a basic qualification’. The involvement of professionals from the region (schools, local authorities, youth services, the business community, etc.) is essential to a targeted attack on the school drop-out rate.
- In Turkey, there are no ICT tools, specifically designed for this target group, however, face-to-face guidance provisions are available. Inventory for problem screening, Inventory for reasons of failure and Inventory for reasons of nonattendance are administered not only for the ones who are at-risk of early school leaving but also for those for those having social, emotional and adjustment problems. And also, interviews are conducted with the individuals who are at-risk early school leaving and their parents within the context of cooperation of school and family.

2.2 The services in universities

All members responded have counselling provisions in higher education to support the students for better self-exploration, exploration of the labour market and developing employability skills as well as supporting students for mobility.

- In Austria, there is a new Project to facilitate transition to higher education providing decision-making support to high school students regarding their choice of further education, focusing on self-perception with a questionnaire targeting the individual’s interests. In the final year of vocational education, to support the students to deepen their experiences and gain practical insight into studying in different educational settings and how vocational education can be put into practice, emphasis is placed on personal talks and on supporting young people to make contact with relevant institutions. Moreover, there are counseling services in every university town and also individually by universities themselves. In addition to the counseling services, there are various information tools provided by different institutions.

- Cyprus has counseling departments within universities covering all the needs of the students.
- In Estonia, higher education institutions mainly provide career information and counselling to help students in gaining success in to the labour market and in personal life by conducting meetings and creating opportunities to exchange information between students and employers. Also the centres organize different lectures, presentations and job fairs. Higher education institutions focus on current students, employers and alumni.
- The LRU law in France places high importance to career guidance at the same level as teaching and research. The SCUIO (common university service for information, guidance and vocational integration for higher education conducts a survey on the employability of graduates 30 months after the graduation. Moreover, the provision, “active orientation” has been generalised to all universities in 2009, with the objective of improving the understanding and exploration of the future students, their abilities and their choice for future studies.
- In Germany, by legislation higher education institutions are supposed to provide information and guidance to university students and applicants and to co-operate with other actors in this respect and two official online portals offer orientation about academic education opportunities. Germany provides services at different levels and organisations. Central Counselling Services, maintained by nearly all institutions of higher education, provide students with orientation and information on programmes as well as counselling regarding learning difficulties, personal problems. These services are provided by face-to-face counselling and ICT tools. Guidance and information on subject-related matters are provided by designated professors or scientific staff, career services/centres, student support service, foreign exchange office of the universities and special higher education teams reflect the comprehensive level of services provided.
- Greece has Career Liaison Offices in Universities and Technological Educational Institutions supporting students and graduates in the transition phase from education to employment. Services offered by the Career Offices include liaison services linking Universities-Technological Educational Institutions with the labour market, provision of information about postgraduate studies and scholarships in Greece and abroad, individualized and group counselling.
- Student Counselling and Career Centre in the University of Iceland (USCCC) provides career and academic counselling to students thus promoting personal academic and career growth, provide supervised training and practicum for master students.
- Student support provision at the Latvian University is based on a model that allows the integration of all support services for students, including education, career, psychological issues and assistance to people with disabilities. The e-career tool has been developed to allow employers who are registered users of the database to establish direct contact with applicants in whom they are interested. In order to expand communication channels with young people social networks - Twitter, Skype are used.
- In Poland, the academic career centres are organizational entities of universities supporting students and graduates looking for the right type of employment. Centres provide information about the labour market and opportunities to improve professional qualifications, to collect, classify and provide access to job offers, internships and work practices, to keep a database of students and graduates interested in finding a job and to assist employers in recruiting suitable candidates for vacant posts and internships. The majority of academic career centres operate as autonomous university units.
- In Slovakia, counselling in higher education supports the employability of students and their personal development. Each university provides students and other people information and counselling services related to the study and possibilities for graduates of study programs in finding a job.

- A common framework has been developed in most Spanish universities and all universities have counselling services as “Information and Guidance for Employment Services”. They provide services for welcoming and recruiting of new students, information and management of grants, scholarships and mobility within Europe and guidance support for students in their search for employment, information about the labour market and their employability, support in developing their personal learning and working pathways.
- The Netherlands has an initiative on students starting with university. The project ‘Study choice conversations, what is effective?’ explores the motives of study choice of students who wanted to start studying at the university. The results were promising, with many positive side effects reported.
- Turkey has Career Counseling Centers within universities to support the career development, job seeking skills and job placement of the students. Also, there are Health and Guidance Services in the universities to provide services for physical and psychological health.

2.3 Brief description of the services and tools used for the age group over 50+.

In many of the respondent countries, there are services being developed for adults and in some in the process of development for the age group over 50+. The Retirement Campus of Germany as a web-based system is specifically designed for adults in transition from work to retirement. In Spain, courses of cultural activation/ motivation for over 50 year old people are available with a more flexible concept of university than the traditional one more skill upgrading of the aging population.

- There are no established counseling services for the age group of 50+ specifically focusing on the transition period from working life to retirement in Austria. There are, however, several offers providing support for older employees. The Austrian Public Employment Service offers counseling for unemployed persons aged 50 or older, including advisory services on vocational training . A non-profit organization addresses Viennese women aged 50+ offering counseling on work life, unemployment and advanced training.
- In Cyprus, the public employment sector deals with people of all ages and supports all citizens towards changing a career or reentering into the market. Statistical information and openings are available and through a specific, structured interview. This service supports all ages including the age group of over 50.
- There is no special service for the age group over 50+ in Estonia, but according to the national strategy, current youth information and counselling centres will be equipped with the relevant methodology for working adults by 2013.
- In France, no specific public services are available for this target group. On the other hand, the law obliges enterprises and occupational organisations to reach collective agreements for the working conditions of the senior workers.
- The **Retirement Compass** is a new tool for people at the transition from work to retirement in Germany. It has been developed as part of the Federal programme, Local Learning, in the city of Leipzig to support people to prepare for their retirement and to plan their future activities. However, guidance provisions are rarely used by older people. The Retirement Compass, therefore, creates an occasion for guidance and actively encourages the use of guidance provisions. The compass is constructed in such a way that it may be accessed and handled easily. It involves a reflection upon the working life, a clearing of interests and a planning of steps. It also includes an overview over local education and guidance opportunities as well as contact points for associations and voluntary commitments. After a small piloting in the

public administration of the city of Leipzig, the compass has been adjusted and is now being advertised and piloted in a broader range.

- Greece, in the context of the "Common action plan for the development of vocational guidance and counselling services in education, initial training and employment" plans the development of an interactive multimedia guidance internet portal for adults.
- Latvian State Employment Agency (SEA) constantly expands the active employment measures in close co-operation with local governments and social partners in order to make them more available and suitable for the needs of customers. To increase competitiveness and facilitate integration into the labour market unemployed, job seekers and those individuals at-risk of losing jobs may participate in various skill raising activities organized by SEA and its website provides information on career issues (educational and job opportunities) as well as offers on-line self-assessment tests and questionnaires.
- In Poland, people aged 50+ are considered as people in a special situation on the labour market and therefore many actions undertaken within the scope of active labour market policies are directed to them, i.e. aiming at restoring the elderly, who remain in unemployment or at-risk of unemployment, to the labour market. Reducing labour costs resulting from the employment of elderly workers, assistance of labour offices to employers and employees regarding job matching, career guidance and career information, support for employers investing in professional development of elderly workers and for the elderly workers who wish to update or change their professional qualifications, improving the attractiveness of the participation of the elderly in the professional activation programmes offered by labour offices are some of the activities specifically for the aging population.
- Slovakian National Program for the Elderly is a governmental approach of the Slovak policy concerning principles and practices to promote opportunities and ensure public access to lifelong learning as one of the options of self-fulfillment, gaining mental and physical balance and a good usage of their leisure time. In 2000, the Association called Forum for Helping Senior Citizen's was established and it focuses on providing guidance and counselling services to older people in social and educational areas.
- Spain has Schools of Adult Education with a Guidance Department within each school for over 18 year old population that may embrace the drop-out student population coming from Secondary Schools. Moreover, special exams and entry requirements for those over 40 years and courses of cultural activation/ motivation for over 50 year old people are available with a more flexible concept of university than the traditional one. Also, guidance teams at some Local and National Employment Offices support this group.
- The Netherlands has no specific provisions for guidance for older people. However, there are some sectors who have guidance projects which are very profitable for this group, such as the Project in the career guidance for the construction sector provides opportunities for the older population as well.
- Turkey has Job and Career Counselling Services of İŞKUR (The Turkish Employment Organization) serving all adults and the national web-based Career Information System established serve all the target groups within a lifelong guidance perspective including adults. With a new regulation, Public Training Centers will be assigned guidance practitioners and services for adults will be developed.

2.4 Interesting practices

The interesting practices provided are mostly on provisions for youth at-risk, higher education and several on the age group 50+. Specifically, some of the themes of the interesting practices are on effective employment measures over 50+, learning to work, work to retirement, mobile youth information centre, career counseling in higher education, networking, best practices,

research and communication between EU partners in relation to education, training and employment. They are highlighted in red in country responses in Annex 1.

3.1 Themes for the study visit

The general theme of the visit is widening access to information, guidance and counselling services for all citizens, particularly for young people at-risk of early school leaving, for adults (employed, unemployed and at transition), for active ageing

- The use of ICT in the context of both targeting approach and integrated services for all ages: to what extent and how?
- Access to Higher Education : in particular the issue of transitions between VET and Higher Education, the information of the students, the counselling services within Universities
- The competences of practitioners, teachers, and other stakeholders

4. Key Messages

4.1 Countries have made a clear commitment to reducing inequalities between groups by enhancing guidance provision to at-risk groups as to ensure that they, among all other citizens, have the opportunity to participate in learning and working, to reach their potential and utilise their individual capacities, as well as to receive responsive and appropriate education and training.

Moreover, multichannel delivery mechanism, a combination of different types of services (e.g. online and face-to-face) that complement each other and in doing so better meet the needs of a diverse target groups are in the agenda of Member States. Countries have been developing more cost-efficient service delivery systems based on new information technology as it offers remarkable opportunities to meeting increased demand at a reasonable cost. However, more attention in the countries should still be paid, *on one hand*, to making sure that the overall service provision also manages to cater for the needs of people who do not necessarily have the skills or tools to access web-based services, and *on the other hand*, to eliminating unnecessary duplication of online services provided by different sectors and actors.

4.2. Information, guidance and counselling services should be open to all citizens, regardless of their educational attainment, labour market position, skills base or overall life situation. The European Union aims to remove entry barriers to services as well as to provide support for the individual lifelong learning and career management processes. From an individual service user's perspective, systemic rigidity in guidance provision can be considered as something that prevents his/her smooth movement across sectors, systems, service structures, institutions and/or support programmes when looking for information, guidance and counselling on learning and career opportunities.

Annex 1 Interesting Practices and Projects

Austria

Higher education:

The “Studienchecker” project supporting young people in their choice of studies (<http://www.studienchecker.at/>) is an interesting example.

Youth at-risk:

Career catching counsellors project, Austria (Guiding at-risk youth through learning to work Lessons from across Europe, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010, page 25)

Career catching counsellors project has two main aims:

- To provide guidance and support to young people (aged 14-16) looking for an apprenticeship, and/or young people deciding their future study or career plans;
- To establish a network of all key partners in the region.

Although the focus is on supporting young people to access apprenticeships, the counsellors will also support young people to access employment or further training, if this is what they want to do. The emphasis is on providing a solution to individual needs, which relies heavily on close collaboration with relevant partners (Interview, Marion Höllbacher, 2009).

The network involves a variety of different organisations and individuals across multiple sectors: the Styrian provincial government; schools and other educational institutions; employer organisations; individual companies; trade unions; and the labour market service. It is run by the Styrian Economic Society (*Steirische Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft*, (www.stvg.at/stvg/index.html)) in cooperation with the Federal State of Styria and is cofinanced by the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture and the European Social Fund (ESF).

The network delivers a range of initiatives, working with young people, parents, schools, companies and institutions in the region. For instance, they maintain databases of apprenticeship opportunities, coordinate work experience placements, hold information evenings for young people and parents and provide support and resources for student advisors and teachers in schools.

The project also runs drop-in centres for young people who are in need of information and support. At the centres, counsellors guide young people making decisions about their future, both through individual guidance sessions and through longer-term one-to-one support (<http://www.berufsorientierung.at/berufsorientierung.nsf>).

The project aims to help young people to choose the right apprenticeship/traineeship for their needs and interests and to access appropriate support in their local area. The activities undertaken by the project also help the counsellors to place the right young people with the right company for their apprenticeship; therefore it is important to build good working relationships between schools, young people and the companies offering traineeships and apprenticeships. Intensive contact with parents and cooperation with regional institutions are also seen as important elements of the project, as they maximise the support and opportunities available to young people.

In relation to practical support for young people, a fundamental part of the project is individual information interviews. They encourage young people to make practical and proactive decisions about their future and to avoid potential uncertainty. Intensive contact with parents and cooperation

with companies and regional institutions are also seen as important elements of the project, as they maximise the support and opportunities available to young people. The first contact with young people is often achieved through public relations activity targeted at schools, for example, through regional media, or referrals.

Career catching counsellors also give presentations in schools to explain what the service offers; following this, young people access the service on a voluntary basis. The counsellors also support in school vocational guidance teachers and deliver their own lessons as well on specialist subjects, such as interviews. By contacting young people while they are still at school, the project helps to identify and support young people who are at-risk of dropping out.

The project has developed a number of activities and tools to help motivate and prepare young people for the labour and apprenticeship market. It also offers activities that seek to improve access to guidance and information. Specific initiatives include the creation of a database of apprenticeship opportunities and coordination of work experience placements. The project has also created networks of employers willing to speak at schools, information evenings for young people and their parents, and support and resources for school student advisers and careers teachers.

The Career catching counsellor project is a model in Austria for further development of guidance projects intending to ease transitions from school into the labour market and it has been chosen as a best practice model by the OECD. The impact of the project has been positive and, according to the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the percentage of young people searching unsuccessfully for an apprentice position has decreased since the introduction of the project.

Estonia

From higher education one very good example - from the year 1991 every spring an event called “Key to the future” (Võti Tulevikku) takes place. This event brings together employers and students. On the first day, there’s usually a career fair where companies present themselves with their stands. At the same day celebrities give seminars and discussions on actual topics. On the second day, the workshops take place where students have an opportunity to briefly familiarize with a company and solve problems provided by them. This is a good chance to get direct contact with the most companies. In addition to workshops, there are trainings at the same time. So this event gives to the employers and students an opportunity to get together so that in future the entering to the labour market will be a natural way of their life.

France

The ministry of higher education has built a website to inform students about courses in universities and employability of students, now linked with another one dedicated to helping with the registration process of secondary school students at universities, and to optimize this process, this portal is for “post baccalaureate registration (bac is the post secondary school leaving exam) facilitates access to better information about courses and careers in higher education.

Each university has a portal of information with particular attention paid to inform future students and providing heterogeneous data about the employability of former students.

A portfolio is a new tool in higher education; it includes informal and non formal skills and can be later validated by PEL (VAE). The portfolio of experiences and skills (PEC) takes into account the gender question and that of the social origin but also the handicapped, the early school and early higher education leavers.

Germany

Youth at-risk:

Federal Programmes Educational Chains and Coaching for the transition to work for at-risk youth

With the aim to prevent drop out and early school leaving as well as to ensure the successful transition from school to vocational education, the Educational Chains (Bildungsketten) initiative of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research connects existing programmes and tools. It particularly combines the programme “Coaching for the transition to work” of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) which aims to support the transition from general into vocational integration in the dual system as well as to prevent drop-outs in both systems with other programmes, projects and tools.

Following the motto “Certificate and connection - Educational Chains to the vocational education certificate” the initiative supports young people to prepare for their general school certificate and their vocational education. The central idea of the initiative is to use existing programmes that have proved to be successful and to connect them like links in a chain in order to ensure transparency and continuation. In addition to the programme “Coaching for the transition to work”, the initiative involves the following projects and programmes:

- the senior expert programme (VerA – Initiative for Vocational Education) supports and guides young people in their first year in vocational education and helps them to accustom to the new system, a period which is particularly critical for drop-out. Senior experts may accompany the young person till the end of vocational education. The senior experts are elder professionals who work voluntarily as coaches in a one-to-one tandem model.
- The career orientation programme (BOP Berufsorientierungsprogramm) which supports practical experiences in companies as part of the career orientation process. For 2 weeks pupils work in 3 different fields where they can try out different professions.
- The programme *Jobstarter* which supports regional projects to increase the number of vocational education opportunities in local companies.
- The programme *Jobstarter Connect* which tests modules for vocational education to ease the transition into dual vocational education for those young people who could not transfer successfully into dual vocational education after school.
- The special programme *coach@school* aims at these schools, who are not part of the coaching for the transition to work programme. Coaches in this programme work voluntarily in the schools similar to the senior experts.

All these programmes and tools have been coordinated so that they become more efficient. This prevents also that young people spend time waiting for placements in the dual vocational education system or in continuing projects and initiatives. In addition, parents, teachers, social workers, guidance practitioners and vocational education teachers gain a professional framework for networking and cooperation.

The Educational Chains programme contains 3 stages. It starts with an analysis of potential in the 7th or 8th year in selected secondary general schools. The analysis focuses on key competences and assesses interests and strengths of the pupil. The results of this analysis constitute the basis for individual curricular and extra-curricular measures. It works like a compass for a structured and systematic career orientation process.

The second stage involves the intervention of an Educational Coach who on the basis of the results of the analysis of potential develops an individual support plan for those young people at-risk. They are

selected in cooperation with teachers and social workers. Intensive coaching starts one year before reaching the secondary school certificate and continues into the first year of vocational education in order to ensure the continuation of vocational education in the company. The coaches guide the young people; they help with problems and difficulties.

During the career choice process (constituting the 3rd stage) the coaches support the young person with all related activities; they help choosing work experience placements and support preparation and evaluation of those experiences. In this way the young people start to make vocational experiences. They test their interests and talents and gain confidence and optimism through personal experience in the world of work. The coaches further assist the young people with information research including the use of internet resources and the Career Information Centre in the EA.

The whole process is supervised by the career counsellor in the EA who is responsible for the integration process of the young person. Hence, at all times the young person can make an appointment with the career counsellor in the EA. The educational coach encourages the young person to make use of this service as early as possible. The educational coaches, who are based in lower secondary schools, also cooperate with parents, teachers, voluntary mentors and other organisations and partners who may be involved. The coaches are experienced in the dual vocational education system as trainers or social education workers.

All these activities are of course supported by online resources for career orientation such as www.planet-beruf.de or www.berufe.tv.

In 2008 the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) initiated the programme educational coaches, which is organised with the FEA. Since then it has been extended to run at 1.000 schools supporting about 20.000 young people. The initiative Educational Chains by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research complements and expands the programme since 2010 reaching many more young people through the different programmes involved.

Aging population over 50

The *Retirement Compass* (*Ruhestandskompass*) is a new tool for people at the transition from work to retirement. It has been developed as part of the federal programme Local Learning (Lernen vor Ort) in the city of Leipzig. It aims to support people to prepare for their retirement and to plan their future activities. In the light of the changing demographics and the future manpower shortage elder people are becoming increasingly important as active citizen. However, guidance provisions are rarely used by older people. The Retirement Compass therefore creates an occasion for guidance and actively encourages the use of guidance provisions. The compass is constructed in such a way that it may be accessed and handled easily. People may use it on their own but the compass openly communicates the possibility of guidance.

The compass involves a reflection upon the working life, a clearing of interests and a planning of steps. It also includes an overview over local education and guidance opportunities as well as contact points for associations and voluntary commitments. As the retirement compass is part of the programme Local Learning, it is connected to a strong focus on cooperation and coordination of the educational services and provisions available. The aim is to improve transparency and access for all senior citizens. This also includes an even distribution of educational institutions over all areas of the city. After a small piloting in the public administration of the city of Leipzig, the compass has been adjusted and is now being advertised and piloted in a broader range. As the new tool has just been launched there is no data on the use of this tool, yet. The introduction is currently accompanied by an evaluation which will provide data on the use, the usefulness and the effects of the Retirement Compass.

Greece

Counseling and Guidance Services via internet are provided by several Career Liaison Offices in Universities and Technological Educational Institutions e.g.

<http://www.cso.auth.gr/Default.asp>

<http://career-office.uoa.gr/>

<http://career.admin.uoi.gr/>

Greek Workers' Confederation (G.S.E.E) – Information Centre for the Employed and Unemployed - KE.PE.A. <http://www.kepea.gr>

Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Employment and Recruitment Office
<http://services.acci.gr/jobfinder/>

Hellenic Confederation of Professionals Craftsmen and Merchants – Web Platform for the Unemployed and Businesses http://www.gsevee.gr/index.asp?a_id=521&nnid=2749

Iceland

The University of Iceland, the largest of its kind in the country with about 13.600 students, is the only one, which has formalised its services to students with handicap or special needs. Students can apply to its Career Counselling Service for special study circumstances and special examination procedures. Special study circumstances include the provision of information on curriculum in good time to allow sufficient preparation, flexibility in programme arrangements and personal progress, recording of lectures and a choice of suitable location for instruction. Adjustment of examination procedures include the extension of exam time, private exams, reading and writing assistance and finally alternative examination form, such as multiple choice, brief written responses or oral exams in place of long essay-type examinations.

Latvia

Unemployed over 50 can use variety of effective employment measures offered by SEA. As one of the measures is subsidized employment for unemployed. The objective of the measure is to provide employment for unemployed in the workplaces that are co-financed by the State in order to facilitate a better understanding of labour market needs/requirements by direct insertion in a permanent job. Within the scope of the measure unemployed persons with disabilities, if necessary, can receive services of occupational therapists, sign language interpreters and assistants.

- Jobs creation for youth. The project aims to integrate young unemployed (aged 18 to 24 years old) in the labour market, while encouraging employers to create sustainable jobs, giving employer state grant to cover partially trainee wages and/or create jobs for young people with special needs, thus contributing to involvement of young people in permanent employment. Thus a young unemployed person have a possibility to have a job contract for 9 months and work under employer's supervision, developing skills and abilities, obtaining work experience.
- Vocational training and professional upgrading programmes are offered to unemployed using „the coupon method”. Young people with incomplete primary education can participate in different programmes (enrolling students without previous education requirements).

Measures to increase competitiveness in labour market.

The labour market policy of Latvia gives its contribution to a development of learning society and the economy. Implementation of the active employment policy measures plays an important role in the labour force activation. The State Employment Agency (SEA), constantly expands the active employment measures in close co-operation with local governments and social partners in order to

make them more available and suitable for the needs of customers. Competitiveness improvement measures addresses the unemployed, employed people at-risk of losing jobs. The activities include individual counselling and group sessions (courses, seminars, lectures):

Courses:

- Communication skills development (36 academic hours);
- State Language Skills Development (36 academic hours);
- Business and business basics (36 academic hours);
- Accounting and business taxes (36 academic hours);
- Business writing skills (24 academic hours);
- Work in the EU institutions - the opportunities for application, applying and preparation for the interviews (24 academic hours);
- Learning/study techniques (24 academic hours);
- Building self-confidence and awareness of their individuality (16 academic hours);
- Learning and job-search motivation - a successful competitive basis (16 academic hours);
- Learning and job-search motivation - a successful competitive basis (train-the-trainers course) (16 academic hours);
- Addressing psychological barriers - learning the national language (16 academic hours);
- The art of negotiation and argumentation (16 academic hours);
- Effective usage of E-services (16 academic hours);
- Selling skills -basics (16 academic hours);
- Basics Economics for families (16 academic hours);
- Public speaking skills for young people (16 academic hours).

Seminars (8 academic hours):

- How to find a job;
- How to prepare for a job interview;
- CV video creation;
- Evaluation of job evaluation and initiation of labour relations;
- Business etiquette;
- Skills to work challenges;
- Self-employed persons, the legal issues;
- Introduction to business or business start-ups;
- Developments of business plan- basics;
- Accounting for self-employed persons;
- Micro-business, development and rights;
- Types of transactions in business;
- How to succeed in network marketing;
- Household budgeting;
- Family budget and saving;
- Youth and the modern labour market;
- Emotional Intelligence;
- Communication and problem solving abilities;
- Conflict management and effective communication;
- Customer service by phone.

Lectures (5 academic hours):

- Using social networks in the job-search process;
- Psychological barriers in job search process;
- You are young but want to earn money?;
- Stress and its management;

- Labour rights;
- Occupational safety and health;
- Social rights.
- Individual counselling
(1 academic hour):
- Psychologist;
- Lawyer;
- Social worker;
- Insolvency consultant;
- Business Plan Consultant

Poland

Example of good practice in educational programmes directed to young people at-risk of social exclusion

In Poland, there are Voluntary Labour Corps (pol. Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy, OHP). The Voluntary Labour Corps is a state budget entity supervised by the minister competent for the labour issues. The Voluntary Labour Corps fulfils the duties of the state in the field of employment policy and in the field of counteracting the marginalization and the social exclusion of young people, as well as in the field of training and education of young people. The Voluntary Labour Corps has a network of specialized stationary and mobile units providing a range of services for young people within the scope of vocational guidance, job matching, as well as assistance in active job seeking:

- mobile vocational information centres (pol. mobilne centra informacji zawodowej),
- youth employment agencies (pol. mlodziezowe biura pracy),
- job clubs (pol. kluby pracy).

Each year more than 550,000 young people are covered by the above-mentioned activities.

Between 2009 and 2013 the Voluntary Labour Corps is carrying out a project co-financed by the European Union within the European Social Fund programme – Priority I Measure 1.3. “The Voluntary Labour Corps as the provider of the labour market services”. This project is compliant with the main activities undertaken to support young people entering the labour market. The activities of the project will be directed to 25,000 young people aged between 15 and 25, including 600 unemployed and 2,440 people professionally inactive. The following persons will benefit from the assistance: unemployed or people seeking a job with different level of education and qualifications (or with no qualifications), requiring an assistance on the labour market; students and graduates preparing to enter the labour market and requiring an assistance in terms of professional counselling, job matching and vocational training; people at-risk of social exclusion, concerned by the question of parental care neglect, coming from socially unadapted environment.

On the territory of the entire country, a network of the following units operating on a complementary basis will be set up:

- youth career centres (pol. mlodziezowe centra kariery, MCK),
- job matching centres (pol. punkty posrednictwa pracy, PPP),
- vocational training centres (pol. osrodki szkolenia zawodowego, OSZ).

thereby increasing the level of access of young people to a range of services regarding vocational guidance and professional information, as well as job matching and training. Those who will benefit

from this the most are the young people in a difficult situation, living in small towns and villages. The beneficiaries of this project will also include 365 people employed by the Voluntary Labour Corps. New entities – youth career centres, job matching centres and vocational training centres – will be established on the basis of the agreements concluded with the self-governments which – responding to current social needs – will provide office space to the service provision by the Voluntary Labour Corps.

One of the main objectives of the programme is:

- to raise the awareness of young people about the importance of planning their vocational and educational development
- to create the awareness and the “TREND” among young people to plan their educational and professional career,
- to organize the EDUCATIONAL EVENTS with the participation of local partners

When initiating a project, the following problems encountered among young people were taken into account:

- problems in operating within the educational and vocational sphere,
- hindered access to services and information about the labour market,
- difficulties in making the educational and vocational choices,
- difficulties in entering the labour market and in maintaining the employment,
- lack of competences in career planning and one’s own professional development scheduling, as well as lack of the ability to actively seek a job,
- lack of the information regarding entrepreneurship and labour market.

Within the framework of the project, many didactical materials were prepared, which were targeted at the Voluntary Labour Corps personnel – books, interactive games and information booklets for young people.

The project delivery is an activity undertaken in order to combat marginalization and social exclusion, as well as to improve the professional and vocational situation of the young people.

Example of good practice – aging population over 50

The Solidarity of Generations Programme was adopted in 2008, with the aim of increasing professional activity of persons aged 50+.

The programme includes the entire package of activities covering a broad spectrum of initiatives which emphasise the increase of professional activation of persons aged 50+ (partly also aged 45+). The programme will be implemented until 2020 and its strategic goal will be to reach the employment index of the persons aged 55-64 on the level of 50%.

The implementation of the Solidarity of Generations Programme is financed from 7 sources, including: Labour Fund, Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund, European Social Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, Social Insurance Fund, Pre-Retirement Fund, State Fund for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities.

Slovak Republic

Youth-at –risk

A very good example of an interesting practice in relation to the guidance provisions for the target group of young people is the Association of Youth Information and Counselling Centres in the Slovak Republic which covers 21 Youth Information Centres situated in every region and one mobile

Youth Information Centre – Infomobil. Youth Information Centres are specialized institutions with the main objective to provide information for young people from different areas of life and they also provide career counseling based on the actual client's needs. Their activity is in accordance with European Youth Information Charter. The Association support new and effective methods of spreading out information for youth. Therefore, in 2010 it started to establish so called Information points – Infopoints across the whole Slovakia, mainly, in the areas with the high frequency of young people, students and unemployed. The aim of Infopoints is to secure free of charge access to information and counseling from various aspects of life for young people through freely accessible, subject-oriented information materials. Up to now, there were 6 such Infopoints established.

“Infomobil for the Third Century” – Infomobil is a unique project focused on a mobile spreading out information and counselling for young people. It lasts from 2008 and in 2010 the total number of respondents was around 29 894. For the purposes of this projects, an older bus was bought and technically adjusted in a way young people could discuss their problems concerning for example drugs, abuse, harassment or racism with qualified workers.

“Meet the Street” – a project aimed to increase young people's initiative and participation in school life, community and region activities. More than 150 videos were recorded containing their opinions and reactions on everyday life in their communities. Through this project, it is possible both to react on young people's needs and advocate their interests on higher levels so they can be actively involved in the community life.

It is possible to find more information on: www.ulica.icm.sk , www.youtube.com/icmmladym

Higher Education

“Career counselling project at Technical University in Kosice“ – the aim was to establish Guidance and Counselling Workplace at University to provide information and diagnostic counselling services; to realize guidance and counselling programs through individual as well as group counselling (Career days at Technical University, Analyses of labour market Needs, Complex Psychological and Diagnostical Intervention, etc.). Other activities of the projects were focused on training of career counselling advisors. The main aim of the project was to optimize the preparedness of students to labour market (employability of students), providing information on further education possibilities and professional perspectives of students.

“Career Counselling” – the aim was to implement free of charge compulsory optional subject for students at Technical University in Kosice (East Slovakia). The subject was focused on development of students' competences to actively manage their career – to gain knowledge about the relationship of career, qualification and labour market.

“Career Services” – Career Centre at University in Banska Bystrica (Central Slovakia) offered for university graduates following services (finding and selecting of best candidates according to the needs of employers; outplacement; completion of competence profile of candidates and possibilities of further education pathways.

“Creation and Accreditation of a Bachelor Study Program – Career Counselling” – creation, accreditation and realization of a unique combined bachelor study program at University in Nitra (West Slovakia) in a study field – Social Services and Counselling specialized on Career Counselling. The strategic aim stems from actual needs of the society and intensive linkage of the sphere of education and employment.

Age group 50+

„PanEuropean Older People's Learning and Employment Network“ (PEOPLE) - the aim of this project is to begin the process of networking best practices, research and communication system between EU partner organization (Great Britain, France, Spain, Czech Republic, Slovakia)

addressing the topics of ageing and promoting interests of older people of working age (50-65), especially in relation to education, training and employment.

“Grundtvig – Older Peoples’ Minds Mobilization” – developing a common professional terminology that relates to education and support in using information and communication technologies (web platform). It was also focused on showing ways of improving knowledge, skills and competences with regard to the age.

“50+” – K.A.B.A Association realized a guidance and counselling project with the aim to help risk group of registered unemployed job seekers aged over 50. The method was a combination of individual and group counselling and work therapy in workshops supplemented by educational and counselling activity focusing on marketing and entrepreneurship. All applicants participated in this projects received psychological and balance diagnosis.

“Third Age Universities” – in the field of older citizens’ education, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic provide support to the establishment of Third Age Universities by particular high schools, increasing the number of students – seniors and creation and realization of educational programs focused on various areas of life.

“50+ Citizens’ Participation in Creation of their Lives” (SAGE+) – With the message of turning a silver challenge into a golden opportunity is this project focused on finding out more about the actual needs of 50+ people, using the experiences and knowledge of 50+ unemployed people and to make them confident that they are still valuable to us, involving 50+ people into social planning and the arrangement of their lives. The main aim of the project is to transfer SAGE training solutions for people to work as participation facilitators with people aged 50+ (geographically, culturally and in terms of language).

<http://www.pracapreseniorov.sk/> - web portal which is specifically oriented on giving older people opportunities for employment and increasing their credit on labour market because of received knowledge, skills and competences during their worklife. This portal provides job opportunities for senior citizens as well as guidance and counselling services. It serves as a mediator between labour market and senior community in Slovakia.

The Netherlands

- The regional approach of early school leaving – example of municipality ‘s-Hertogenbosch
- The project career guidance in the construction sector

See for both examples
http://www.euroguidance.nl/52_766_ELGP_N_Study_Visit_Netherlands_WP2_18-20_April.aspx

Turkey

Within the context of a campaign of the Directorate General for Primary Education called "The Girls' Education Campaign", compensation programs and guidance services have been provided for the children overaged. Various projects are carried out by the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Security and UNICEF for the street children. The children taken from streets are placed in formal, non-formal education institutions or work. They are provided educational and vocational guidance.

