

French National Lifelong Guidance Conference, 26–27 November 2012, Sèvres, France

by Lucas Prost

A seminar disseminating ELGPN result at the national level took place at the CIEP in Sèvres, near Paris on 26–27 November. Over one hundred people attended the event.

This two day seminar was a unique opportunity for France and its guidance specialists to get a broader understanding of the progress of ELGPN work over the last two years as well as a thorough introduction to the possible national work ahead in conjunction with the ELGPN.

During the first day, participants were given an overview of the ELGPN network and of the national and European contexts. During the second day, ELGPN experts presented the work of the four Work Packages. Their presentations were punctuated by the presentation of examples of tools already in place in France.



Many ELGPN collaborators also participated in the French National Lifelong Guidance Conference. Photo: Veronique Duchaud-Fusell

In order to make the exercise easier and more comprehensible, the ELGPN 2011–12 Progress Report and the Resource Kit have been translated into French. We are of the opinion that without these two translations, we would have missed our objective and not have been able to convince the greater part of the audience.

Moreover, we have decided to produce two version of the seminar proceedings, one in French in order to go on spreading the work of ELGPN in France, particularly in December during a national Euroguidance seminar where we will intervene and distribute the translations, and the other in English for the European members of ELGPN with the hope that the French report can be of some help in other countries.

International Conference – Back to Work, The Role of Validation of Competences in the Professional Counselling of Adults, 7 – 8 December 2012, Thessaloniki, Greece.

by Dr Tibor Bors Borbély-Pecze

Under the Leonardo transfer of innovation project seven¹, European institutes from six EU countries have been working together with the rationale of low employment rate of low-skilled migrants and mapping out of counselling and validation tools to help them. The final international conference was held in Thessaloniki Greece in early December 2012². ELGPN was invited to the conference as a partner Network.

During the first morning session of the conference, representatives of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning based in Hamburg introduced the main messages of the *Global Report On Adult Education 2012*³. Raúl Valdés-Cotera of the UNESCO Institute highlighted the global challenges

¹ The Romanian Institute for Adult Education (Romania), together with Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece), National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning (Denmark), Merseyside Expanding Horizons Ltd, (UK), German Institute for Adult Education (Germany), European Centre for Education and Training Ltd (Bulgaria), Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants (Romania)

²The website of the project can be found at <http://www.backwork.eu/>. A Moodle profile is also available at <http://www.backwork.eu/moodle/> and short films of the project are available in YouTube. The user guide can be found at

http://backwork.eu/moodle/file.php/1/user_guide.pdf.

³ The Report is available at

<http://www.unesco.org/en/confinteavi/grale>

of ageing, high overall unemployment and youth unemployment and urbanisation, which will advance further in the less developed countries, and linked these issues to validation and career guidance. He also referred to the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for 2015 and the role of education in this⁴.

UNESCO has issued six guidelines for validation⁵. It calls these recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA). In 2012, the guidelines are as follows:

1. Establishing RVA as a key component of a national lifelong learning strategy;
2. Developing RVA systems that are accessible to all;
3. Making RVA integral to education and training systems;
4. Creating a coordinated national structure involving all stakeholders;
5. Building the capacities of RVA personnel;
6. Designing sustainable funding mechanisms.

UNESCO distinguishes between three types of skills: foundation, transferable and vocational. Foundation skills such as literacy and numeracy are the first building blocks of further learning. Therefore, second chance schools and the like are important for young people who cannot earn these skills in regular primary schools.

With regard to the growing problem of urbanisation in the developing world, UNESCO is developing a *Global Learning City Index*⁶.

Pedro Moreno da Fonseca of Cedefop talked about a new Polish study on returning Polish migrants: 82% of them went abroad to work and 65% feel that they have no chance to mobilise their newly gained knowledge in Poland as they do not have official certificates or diplomas.

Dr Moreno da Fonseca also highlighted the new proposal for a Council Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning⁷. The final version invites the Member States to set up a national validation system by 2018. The proposal also includes elements related to career guidance services and the ELGPN Resource Kit:

- In 2004 the Europass framework was established, including the Europass CV and a portfolio of documents which citizens can use to better communicate and present their qualifications and competences throughout Europe. Other tools for documenting learning outcomes include the Youthpass for the Youth in Action Programme and sectoral skills and qualification passports developed under the European sectoral social dialogue.
- In the form appropriate to each national context, Member States are to ensure that information on validation opportunities is widely available (in particular to disadvantaged groups); that access to validation is affordable for citizens who wish to undertake a validation procedure; that appropriate guidance and counselling is available and affordable for citizens who wish to undertake a validation procedure; and that transparent quality assurance mechanisms are established and applied to the validation system in relation to both the assessment (methodologies and tools, qualified assessors) and its results (agreed standards).

The proposal sets out possible objectives for ELGPN activities in relation to validation system development. For instance, the Network could contribute to clarification of job profiles and competencies of guidance professionals and validators.

The scientific outcomes of the project and the conference proceedings are published as a special issue of the *Medimond International Journal*⁸.

⁴ More information on the MDG can be found <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

⁵ The guidelines are available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002163/216360e.pdf>

⁶ For more information, please see <http://uil.unesco.org/home/news-target/developing-a-framework-for-the-unesco-global-learning-city-index/818bb722fb43d10a3b1f1743d786ea24/>

⁷ The proposal can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/informal/proposal2012_en.pdf

⁸ The publication can be found at http://www.medimond.com/proceedings/moreinfo/201207_index.pdf

The sixth meeting of the Thematic Working Group on Quality in Adult Learning (TWG), Brussels, Belgium, 18–19 December 2012

The meeting discussed the draft structure of the policy guidelines which will inform and guide both the Member States and individual providers on the provision of high quality adult learning. The meeting also agreed on the content of three Peer Learning Activities which will be implemented during the spring 2013. The content of the ELGPN Resource Kit 2012 will feed the discussion in Malta on 15–16 May 2013 during one of the PLAs, which will examine in more detail the validation of non-formal and informal learning as well as the quality of guidance provision in adult learning.

Commission Communication on Rethinking Education

The European Commission adopted the Communication on Rethinking Education on 20 November 2012. Rethinking Education aims to help Member States to deliver informed and evidence-based policies, clearly demonstrating how education must contribute to the drive for growth and jobs.

The Communication is a contribution to the European Commission Annual Growth Survey. It sets out a number of policy priorities, focusing on the delivery of the right skills for employment, increasing the efficiency and inclusiveness of education and training institutions, new approaches to funding and working collaboratively with relevant stakeholders.

The Communication calls for:

- Strong focus on transversal skills and basic skills at all levels, especially entrepreneurial skills
- New benchmark on foreign language learning: by 2020, at least 50% of 15 year olds should have knowledge of a first foreign language (up from 42% today) and at least 75% should study a second foreign language (61% today)
- Investment in building world-class vocational education and training systems and increased levels of work-based learning
- Improved the recognition of qualifications and skills, including those gained outside of the formal education and training system

- Increased access to education via open educational resources. Technology must be fully exploited, in particular the internet.
- Support to recruit and develop well-trained, motivated and entrepreneurial teachers
- Funding targeted to maximise return on investment. Debate at both national and EU level is needed on funding for education - especially in vocational education and higher education.
- Partnership approach - both public and private funding is necessary to boost innovation and increase cross-fertilisation between academia and business at all levels.

Full information on the Communication and the seven Staff Working Documents on related key themes can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking_en.htm.

The EU Commission Communication Moving Youth into Employment

The European Commission adopted a Communication "Moving Youth into Employment" on 5 December 2012. In the Communication, the Commission urges Member States to introduce their Youth Guarantee schemes in the course of 2013.

The aim of the Youth Guarantee is to ensure that all young people up to the age of 25 receive a quality offer of a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The proposed recommendation urges Member States to establish strong partnerships with stakeholders, ensure early intervention by employment services and other partners supporting young people, take supportive measures to enable labour integration, make full use of the European Social Fund and other structural funds to that end, assess and continuously improve the Youth Guarantee schemes and implement the schemes rapidly.

To facilitate school-to-work-transitions, the Commission also launches a consultation of European social partners on a Quality Framework for Traineeships so as to enable young people to acquire high-quality work experience under safe conditions. Furthermore, the Commission announces a European Alliance for Apprenticeships

to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships available by spreading successful apprenticeship schemes across the Member States and outlines ways to reduce obstacles to mobility for young people.

The Communication is available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&langId=en&newsId=1731&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news>

Update from the Co-ordination unit

It gives us great pleasure to be able to inform you that the ELGPN 2013-14 Grant Agreement between the Commission and the University of Jyväskylä has been completed and signed by both parties. We would like to thank all the national ELGPN teams for their efficient co-operation in getting the application documents to us on time. This allowed us to complete the application and the subsequent agreement in the planned timeframe.

The New Year will not only bring the new 2013-14 ELGPN Work Programme but the Co-ordination unit will also work on improving the ELGPN website and the database. More information on the website development will be available in the next ELGPN Newsletter.

The ELGPN Glossary developed during the 2011-12 Work Programme will also be laid out in the style similar to the rest of the ELGPN Products and published online as a part of the ELGPN Tools series. This work will begin in January 2013.



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Finally, the staff of the Co-ordination unit would like to thank all ELGPN members, partner and consultants for a busy ELGPN year 2012 and look forward to an exciting and inspiring 2013 with you. Enjoy your hard-earned break!

Upcoming events

12th ELGPN Plenary meeting and the 1st Policy Review Meeting, Dublin, Ireland, 27 – 28 February 2013

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Please note that the ELGPN Co-ordination unit will be closed 24 December 2012 – 1 January 2013 for a Christmas break.

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