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This document has the following draft policy briefings provided by Ms. Francoise Divisia, Consultant for the ELGPN Task Group 2011-12:

Annex 1 Policy briefing on EU policy development on schools

Annex 2 Policy briefing on EU policy development on VET

Annex 3 Policy briefing on EU policy development on Higher Education

Annex 4 Policy briefing on EU policy development on Adult education

Annex 5 Policy briefing on EU policy development related to WP2

Annex 1

Françoise Divisia – Consultant for the ELGPN Task Group

## **POLICY BRIEFING on EU policy developments on SCHOOLS**

### **1 Background**

The Europe 2020, “A Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” proposes as target that “the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree”.

Education and training are considered as making a substantial contribution to the new strategy in several flagship initiatives. Reducing early school leaving is essential for social inclusion which is focused by the flagship initiative: “A European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion”. The initiative “Youth on the move” intends “to raise the overall quality of all levels of education and training in the EU...and improve the employment situation of young people. “An Agenda for new skills and jobs” asks for “a strong impetus to the strategic framework for cooperation in education and training” (ET 2020).

ET 2020, adopted in May 2009, constitutes the roadmap of Europe the field of education and training until 2020. One of the four priorities that it puts forward is the quality and efficiency of education which will be measured by benchmarks to be attained by 2020:

- the share of early leavers from education furthermore training should be less than 10% (at the current rate of 14.4% this would mean at least 1.7 million fewer school drop-outs);
- at least 95% of children between the age of four and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education (now 92.3%, achieving target would mean 250,000 more children in education);
- the share of 15-years olds with insufficient abilities in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15% (from around 20% for all three now. Achieving the target would mean 250 000 fewer low achievers).

The Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines for the economic and employment policies of the Member States invite the Member States to ensure learning mobility of young people and to prevent early school leaving .

Consequently the 2012 National Reform Plans (NRP's) and the Spring National Reports E&T 2020 devote an important part to the measures regarding school leaving and mobility.

## 2 Key developments in the EU policy processes

### 2.1 Early school leaving

**The Annual Gross Survey “Progress report on Europe 2020 by the Commission** (12.1.2011 COM(2011) 11 final; Annexe 1), in the analysis of the draft NRPs reveals that on average greater attention is paid to the analysis of current challenges and possible answers than to defining concrete reform plans and measures. Though all draft NRPs have set national targets for the reduction of early school leaving and that some Member States have set highly ambitious targets, it seems that Europe will likely fall short of the 10% target for 2020.

**A Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions: “Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda”** (31.1.2011) analyzes the consequences of early school leaving and gives an overview on the existing and forthcoming EU-level measures to tackle it. The high level of youth unemployment (20%) is the most serious consequence: 52% of early school leavers were unemployed in 2009.

The Communication underlines that early school leaving should be tackled by comprehensive policies based on **prevention, intervention and compensation**. Early warning systems, guidance and vocational orientation for young people are considered as key measures.

**Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving** (7.06.2011) sets a common European framework for effective and efficient policies against early school leaving. Two main actions are recommended to member states:

- To launch an analysis at national, regional and local level of the conditions leading young people to leave school, taking account of the type of education.

- To implement comprehensive national strategies against early school leaving by 2012, in line with their national targets. These strategies should comprise prevention, intervention and compensation

Prevention should be based on early schooling, flexibility of educational pathways, attractiveness of VET link between education and employment sector. Intervention includes inter alia developing early-warning systems for pupils at risk, networking with all the actors, empowering and professional development of teachers, mentoring for individual pupils. Compensation policies could include second chance education programmes and provision of various routes, of transition classes back into mainstream education system.

**The role of guidance is underlined to support students' career choices (intervention) and transitions (compensation).**

## 2.2 Learning mobility

**Council Recommendation "Youth on the move - promoting the learning mobility of young people"( 28 June 2011).**

A Green Paper on learning mobility for young people has been published by the Commission in July 2009 in order to launch a public consultation. The Recommendation is based on its results. It refers to young people in all learning and training contexts, at all levels, in all disciplines and it covers formal, informal and non-formal learning.

The main recommendations towards the Member States are focused **first on information and guidance** on opportunities for learning mobility, then on motivation, on preparation with regard to foreign language and intercultural skills, on administrative issues, on quality of learning mobility **including the provision of guidance to mobile learners**, on recognition between Member States of learning outcomes acquired in mobility experiences. It recommends Member States to pay a particular attention to disadvantaged learners, by providing **targeted information and support tailored to their specific needs**.

## 2.3 Early childhood education

**Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow (2011/C 175/03)**

Member States are invited to enhance the quality of early childhood education and care, essential for language acquisition, successful further lifelong learning, social integration, personal development and employability. It provides an opportunity for the early detection of learning difficulties and early intervention, it can help to identify young children with special educational needs and, wherever possible, facilitate their integration into mainstream schools.

#### 2.4 Thematic study on “Teaching reading in Europe; contexts, policies and practices – 11 July 2011- Eurydice – EACEA1

The study offers a comprehensive picture of reading literacy and identifies the key factors impacting on the acquisition of reading skills for 3-15 year olds. It shows that, though in 2009, one out of five 15-year olds in EU have reading difficulties, there is often a lack of focus on the groups most at risk for reading difficulties.

### 3 Involvement of ELGPN

#### 3.1 ELGPN has been alerted on the draft Recommendation on reducing early school leaving

In the adopted Recommendation, the role of guidance is underlined as a key element of comprehensive strategies comprising a mix of policies, as social policy and support services, employment, youth and integration policies. The three pillars of the framework, prevention, intervention, compensation imply guidance and counseling *“to support students’ career choices, transitions within education or from education to employment. It reduces poor decision-making based on false expectations or insufficient information. It helps young people to make choices which meet their ambitions, personal interests and talents”* (intervention). The third pillar, compensation could include “transition classes with a strong emphasis on guidance”.

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<sup>1</sup> Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, (EACEA) 2011.  
Website: <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>

### 3.2 The Council Recommendation on learning mobility of young people

Although ELGPN has not been directly involved, guidance is highlighted as the cornerstone of the success of learning mobility.

## 4 Implications for Work Packages

### 4.1 As regards Early school leaving (ESL):

**WP1:** Career management skills development is a key asset in preventing school leaving through empowerment of the students. It should be seen more as a tool for prevention and intervention than for compensation.

#### Themes

##### *Prevention*

- The identification of areas in CMS programmes that are more appropriate or more necessary for students that are considered to be “at risk” of early school leaving;
- Relevant training of teachers in pedagogy to make them think the students at risk of ESL as persons with resources, not persons with problems: How to build on learner’s experience?
- How to design CMS curricula and to assess learning of CMS in order to avoid a “deficit perspective” for students at risk? Is portfolio relevant as regards this issue? Which way should it be constructed to be valuable for vulnerable groups of students? How to ensure the right to privacy and to avoid a penalizing use of the portfolio for vulnerable students? Which kind of assessment of CMS should be the more appropriate for this target group?
- How to organize the partnership of teachers and guidance practitioners with PES to present information about the labour market opportunities and the structure of qualifications needed?

### *Intervention*

- How to involve all the stakeholders, including companies, in particular SME's? How to enhance links between education systems and economic sector within the CMS programmes?
- Role of PES in CMS learning with drop-outs;

#### **WP2:**

- What kind of specific support is needed for students at risk? What support for the young people who don't have the skills or tools to access web-based services?
- How to involve parents and provide them with the basic skills to access Internet services so that they can help their children?

**WP3:** The issue of early school leaving should not only be the responsibility of the educational staff. The Policy framework within the Council Recommendation points out that “horizontal coordination between different actors and vertical coordination through different levels of government are equally important”. The coordination of various guidance services and the cooperation of all stakeholders including PES, social partners and social workers is a crucial factor for prevention, intervention and compensation of early school leaving.

- It could be relevant that WP3 examines how the cooperation/coordination might be effective at the regional/local level on this concrete and particular issue in order to ensure the necessary synergy between all the stakeholders.

**WP4:** Measuring the quality of guidance provision for students at risk of early school leaving should be a priority, given the social consequences at stake, and the Europe 2020 target objective.

- The Recommendation asks for “the development of evidence-based and cost effective policies”. “The evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of existing policy measures aimed at reducing early school leaving is an important basis for improving strategies ”.
- It might be relevant to create indicators in order to help the countries be able to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of guidance provision among the existing policy measures.

## 4.2 As regards learning mobility

Each WP should include this topic in order to provide Member States with support regarding the implementation of the **Council Recommendation “Youth on the move - promoting the learning mobility of young people”**( 28 June 2011).

### WP1:

- “Encourage the provision of guidance to learners on how to make the best use of learning mobility in order to develop their knowledge, skills and competences” (Council Recommendation (§ 6 (f));
- “Encourage the provision of guidance to mobile learners after their return on how to make use of the competences acquired during their stay abroad” (Council Recommendation (§ 6 (g)).

### WP2:

- “Make information easily accessible to all young people regarding learning mobility, for example through centralized web portals and other web services, support centres, information and counseling services. The use of Internet-based services can also be helpful” (Council Recommendation (§1 (b));
- “Promote the added value of learning mobility among learners, their families, teachers, trainers, youth workers and employers in terms of self-fulfilment and the the development of professional, linguistic, social and intercultural competences...and future employability in the context of an increasingly global labour market” (Council Recommendation (§2 (a));
- “Support and enhance the visibility of contact points where individuals can obtain information on how their qualifications can be recognized and certified after their return from abroad” (Council Recommendation (§7 (d));
- “Provide disadvantaged learners, who may be deprived of opportunities for learning mobility, with targeted information on available programmes and support tailored to their specific needs” (Council Recommendation (§ 8);



**WP3:**

- “Encourage networking between the relevant organizations, stakeholders and other actors, in order to ensure a coordinated approach to motivating young people” (Council Recommendation (§ 2 (b));

**WP4:**

- “Improve the quality of information and guidance on national, regional, and local mobility opportunities and grant availability...” (Council Recommendation §1 (a)

## Annex 2

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### **POLICY BRIEFING on EU policy developments on vocational education and training (VET)**

#### **1. Background**

The role of VET for better skills development in Europe is particularly highlighted in the 2020 Europe strategy, in particular in two Flagship Initiatives:

- An Agenda for new skills and jobs
- Youth on the move

“A new impetus for VET” will help to promote “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” through the re-launch of Copenhagen Process.

The Copenhagen Process<sup>2</sup> on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training launched in 2002 has supported the development of common reference tools: Europass, European Qualifications Framework, European Credit Transfer System for VET (ECVET) and European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET).

The priorities under the Copenhagen Process have been reviewed in December 2010 (Bruges Review) which defines strategic objectives for the period 2011-2020 followed by short term deliverables 2011-2014.

“The VET package” comprises:

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<sup>2</sup> Copenhagen Declaration”, Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training and the European Commission on enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training (30 November 2002); “Maastricht Communiqué on the future priorities of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (14 December 2004); “Helsinki Communiqué on enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training”(5 December 2006); Bordeaux Communiqué (26 November 2008).

- A Communication of the Commission “A new impetus for European cooperation in VET to support the Europe 2020 strategy”, adopted on 9th June 2010<sup>3</sup>, has proposed a vision for the future of VET:
  - The key role of VET in lifelong learning and mobility
  - Quality and efficiency of VET
  - Equity and citizenship – Inclusive VET
  - Innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship
  -
- The conclusions of the Council on the priorities for enhanced European cooperation in VET for the period 2011-2020 adopted at the 19 November 2010 Council of education
- The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020<sup>4</sup>

They underline the key role of guidance and counselling services and they call for:

- **“a close cooperation” between PES and E&T guidance systems, integrated guidance and counselling services**
- **Career management skills development**
- a “tasting approach” of guidance providing young people with an opportunity to get acquainted with different vocational trades and career possibilities
- accessible and targeted guidance services providing additional support at key transitions points for learners at risk of underachievement.

Besides, they stress the development of the learning outcomes approach which is the base of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credit Transfer System for VET (ECVET), the value of learning mobility and the use of EQF & ECVET, the use of work-based learning and risk-taking culture.

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<sup>3</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Europe economic and social Committee and the Committee of the regions : “A new impetus for European cooperation in VET to support the Europe 2020 strategy”- 9–6-2010- COM(2010) 296 final

<sup>4</sup> Communiqué of the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bruges on 7 December 2010 to review the strategic approach and priorities of the Copenhagen process for 2011-2020

They call for the development of forward planning tools to match skills and jobs, particularly in professions with skills shortages.

## 2. Key developments in the EU policy processes

2.1. Attractiveness of VET: Council Conclusions on excellence and equity in VET to be adopted under the Cypriot Presidency.

The results of the **Eurobarometer survey** on the attitudes towards VET in the EU have been published at the end of September 2011. It covers issues related to quality of VET provision, teachers and trainers, labour market relevance, permeability, entrepreneurship, status of vocational professions, guidance, career choices, factors and reasons for choosing VET as well as outcomes of VET for individuals and society.

Though VET has a positive image due to quality and strong employment prospects, 41% of respondents aged 15-24 would rather recommend general secondary or higher education as a preferable choice for young people, compared to 27% who would recommend vocational education and training. **Less half of all respondents aged 25-39 and 40-54 agree that young people receive enough career guidance. These results call for better information and counseling as regards VET pathways and enhanced cooperation between lifelong guidance services and VET systems.**

**The partnership with the economic sector is also a relevant way to make VET attractive:** a dedicated **Business-VET Forum** will be organised by the Commission every two years. It will be a platform for exchange between the VET sector, businesses and policy makers on a range of topics related to excellence, attractiveness, relevance and partnership between VET and employers. The first Forum is planned for 7-8 June 2012: It would be relevant to allow exchanges about the role of lifelong guidance.

The Commission will issue a **staff working document on the role of vocational excellence for smart and sustainable growth** in June/July 2012. An **Informal Ministerial meeting** (4-5 October 2012) should feed into the above mentioned **Council Conclusions on excellence and equity in VET** to be adopted under the Cypriot Presidency.

## 2.2 VET tools: state of art

### **ECVET**

In 2014 the Commission will produce the Report on the implementation of ECVET in the Member States. A Conference - "Europe goes ECVET" will include the results of ECVET pilot projects of 2010.

### **EQAVET (Quality in VET)**

The Report on the implementation of EQAVET in the Member States will be published by the Commission in 2013 and a Conference on EQAVET projects will be organised.

### **Handbooks/frameworks/networks**

#### *Vademecum/Policy Handbook on Work-based learning (WBL)*

- The publication of a policy handbook is foreseen for 2014 on the identification of successful models of work-based learning.

#### *Policy Handbook on Access to and participation in C-VET*

- This handbook will be published in 2013. It is one of the EU level support measures mentioned in the Bruges Communiqué and it aims at increasing the levels of participation in continuing training, and thus contributing to the benchmark of 15 % participation in lifelong learning of the working age population.

#### *Quality framework for traineeship (EMPL and EAC)*

- The Europe 2020 flagship initiative "Youth on the move" "proposes that a quality framework for traineeships should be proposed by the Commission. This joint project between Education (EAC) and Employment (EMPL) Commission directorates is foreseen in the second half of 2012.

#### *The network on "Quality assurance in VET and Adult Education" (QALLL)*

- QALLL is developing a mapping of current projects on quality assurance. The network is fully integrated in the political processes: EQAVET implementation, adult education action plan, participation in EQAVET annual forums, adult education events.

### 2.3. Commission Proposal of a Council Recommendation on Validation of informal/non formal learning (draft to be produced before the end of 2011)

The consultation on the promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning<sup>5</sup> that the Commission launched in December 2010 has highlighted a large consensus about the importance of making skills and competences gained through non-formal and informal learning more visible and about the need for further action at European level.

Among the main remaining problems to tackle, **the Commission identifies the lack of information, support and guidance: even in countries where more systematic procedures have been established, empowerment of individuals often remains low, partly due to ignorance and difficulties in using and understanding the procedures** (*cf Policy Briefing related to the role of guidance within the process of validation of informal/non formal learning from EU perspective*).

The proposal will call member States to develop comprehensive and coordinated arrangements for validation by 2015 linked to the National Qualification Framework, quality assurance mechanisms, **guidance support**, portability of validation outcomes.

### 3. Involvement of ELGPN

ELGPN has not yet been consulted on the forthcoming documents, in particular the proposal on validation, though the role of guidance in validation of informal/non-formal learning is a crucial key of success.

The ELGPN outcomes should feed into the Vademecum/Policy Handbook on Work-based learning (WBL), more particularly the Policy Handbook on Access to and participation in C-VET, the Quality framework for traineeship (EMPL and EAC), the network on "Quality assurance in VET and Adult Education" (QALLL) , mentioned above. All of them should include a guidance dimension.

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<sup>5</sup> Directorate General for Education and Culture- Consultation on the promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning – From 1.12.2010 to 9.02.2011 - EAC-VALIDATION-CONSULTATION@ec.europa.eu

## 4. Implications for Work Packages

### 4.1 On VET

#### WP1:

- CMS should be more VET oriented;
- CMS and learning mobility : CMS should include information related to mobility advantages and opportunities , including the recognition of the learning outcomes acquired in the mobility time, through EQF and ECVET;

#### WP2:

- better information and counseling as regards VET pathways,
- information and counselling on mobility systems: EQF & ECVET,
- sharing information on surplus and shortages of skills in EU ,
- access to entrepreneurship

#### WP3:

- enhanced cooperation and coordination between lifelong guidance services and VET systems.
- enhanced cooperation with the economic and business sectors

#### WP4:

- Evaluation criteria, descriptors and indicators in quality processes for VET and lifelong guidance systems

### 4.2 On Validation of informal/non formal learning

Given the key role that validation of non-formal and informal learning looks set to play in current EU education, training, employment, social inclusion and youth policies and its strong links with the European Qualification Framework and the ECVET system based on a learning outcomes approach, **given that guidance & counseling is a vital element for success, it is fundamental that ELGPN provides inputs to the future EU developments.**

These inputs should be included in the CRT's:

The existing Common Aims and Principles (annexes A,B,C) refer to validation of non-formal and informal learning but they do not propose specific principles for the

specific content of guidance and counseling within the process of validation, nor the new Common Reference Points ( Annex D).

**A clear distinction between guidance related to validation/assessment issues and the general process of guidance should be made.**

**Thus, a specific Reference Point should be devoted to guidance related to validation/assessment issues.**

**The results of ELGPN work on these issues could be recorded in a “Counselling Charter for Validation of informal and non-formal learning” which would be a kind of “tool-box”, annexed to the future EU Recommendation.**

**WP1 :**

- PORTFOLIOS / CMS / EUROPASS : Relevance of the portfolios development to validating informal/non-formal learning as they allow the individual candidate to contribute actively to the collection of evidence: link with the development of CMS; link with Europass (towards the EU project of an integrated Europass Skills Passport)

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**WP2:**

- Access to guidance and counseling for validation at workplace: different steps from information to support for work experience analysis and counseling on further training pathways inside and outside the company); information of employers and unions representatives; funding aspects;
- The use of ICT-based systems for information exchange between candidates and counselors;
- Balance between collective and individual information & counseling within the process of validation

**WP2 and WP3:**

- Cooperation/coordination/networking between general guidance services and the validation providers: building a specific guidance & counseling platform at regional/local level?

**WP2 and WP4:**

- Quality of guidance and counseling is crucial to quality assurance in validation process



- Competences/content of training for the counselors / quality standard for counselors in validation process
- Creating of indicators to measure the quality of guidance and counseling in validation of informal/non-formal learning process.

## Annex 3

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### **POLICY BRIEFING on EU policy developments on Higher education**

#### **1. Background**

##### 1.1 The Bologna Process

In order to build a European Higher Education Area more competitive and attractive by 2010, a series of reforms has been launched, based on the three overarching objectives of the Bologna process: introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate), quality assurance, recognition of qualifications and periods of study.

Every second year, a meeting of the Ministers responsible for higher education in the 46 Bologna countries aims to measure progress and set priorities for action through a Communiqué.

At the Conference of Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in April 2009, a new roadmap, the Communiqué “the Bologna Process 2020 – The European Higher Education Area in the new decade”<sup>6</sup>, has been adopted. It underlines that “*student-centred learning requires empowering individual learners*”: the Leuven Communiqué stresses that effective support and guidance structures are needed in Higher Education.

The next Ministerial Meeting to take stock of progress and to drive the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve agenda forward, will be hosted by Romania in Bucharest on 26-27 April 2012.

##### 1.2 Higher education in the new Strategy Europe 2020

Europe 2020 highlights higher education as a key policy area for jobs and economic development. In this context, Member States agreed that 40% of young

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<sup>6</sup> Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education – Leuven/ Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009

people (aged 30-34) should have a higher education qualification or equivalent by 2020.

Other EU-level objectives for higher education include the education benchmark for 2010 to increase the number of mathematics, science and technology graduates by at least 15% over 2000 level and the Bologna process objective that, by 2020, 20% of all university graduates should have undertaken learning mobility as part of their university education

- The Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines for the economic and employment policies of the Member States ask the Member States to increase the participation in tertiary or equivalent education and to set this priority in their 2012 National Reform Plans (NRP's).
- The Flagship initiative “Youth in the move” call for cooperation between universities, research and business, for the modernisation agenda of higher education (curricula, governance and financing) including by benchmarking university performance and educational outcome in a global context. The Flagship Initiative: "Innovation Union" urges Member States to ensure a sufficient supply of science, maths and engineering graduates...
- The strategic framework for European co-operation in education and training ('ET 2020'), adopted by EU Education Ministers in May 2009, building on the 2006 Communication ['Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation'](#), underlines the need to promote the modernisation agenda for higher education to improve the quality and efficiency of education and training,.

## 2. A new agenda for modernisation of Europe's higher education systems

The Communication of 20 September 2011 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – **“Supporting growth and jobs - an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems”**.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Doc. 14198/11 + ADD 1.

The main areas for reform identified in the new agenda are:

- to increase the number of higher education graduates;
- to improve the quality and relevance of teaching and researcher training, to equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences they need to succeed in high-skill occupations;
- to strengthen the "knowledge triangle", linking education, research and business
- to create effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence.

The draft Council conclusions on the modernization of higher education are to be adopted at the next education Council on the 28th November 2011. The draft underlines the crucial role of higher education to boost growth and economy through its link with research . Strengthening the "knowledge triangle" between education, research and business is a condition for growth and jobs.

For Member States, the focus is on:

- progressive pathways from VET to higher education and to develop recognition of prior learning and experience;
- better access for disadvantaged and under-represented groups by providing more transparent information on educational opportunities as well as better guidance in order to ensure the right choice of study; decreasing drop-outs rates, in particular by providing relevant post-entry support;
- use of graduate employment data (including tracking graduate employment outcomes) in course design, delivery and evaluation;
- tackling stereotypes still faced by women in reaching the highest levels in education and research;
- strengthening links between higher education institutions, employers and labour market institutions in order to improve the match between skills and jobs;
- Learning mobility.

On the Commission's side, the action will tend inter alia to ensure a better labour market intelligence by improving data on higher education employment outcomes and "by providing specific guidance on specific and transversal skills and overcoming skills matches".

### 3. Involvement of ELGPN

ELGPN has not been involved in the discussion of the **draft Council conclusions on the modernization of higher education**.

There is very few mention of guidance. However, lifelong guidance should be a key element of the modernization agenda of higher education:

- The quality of information and of guidance services, particularly the provision of relevant post-entry support within higher education institutions would help in decreasing higher education drop-out rates;
- The development of career management skills and access to adequate information by women in order to make them able to reach the highest levels in post-graduate education and research should help to tackle stereotyping and to dismantle the barriers still faced and consequently to liberate untapped talent.
- Improving the match between skills and jobs.

### 4. Implications for Work Packages

**WP1** has focused the reflection on CMS in higher education settings in its first field visit in Lisbon. In the line with the main elements of the modernization agenda of higher education, a specific work could be relevant :

- about the continuity of career management skills development between secondary education and higher education, through the issue of transition between VET and Higher Education,
- the gender issue (see above)
- the integration of learning mobility in CMS

**WP2** has introduced the topic of guidance services in universities in the second field visit in Copenhagen. The field visit was focused on: Guidance in transitions from youth education/VET to higher education, information of the students, the counseling services within Universities.

In order to help Member States to work with the higher education institutions, the reflection of WP2 could deepen the following subjects:

- Which specific information and counseling to improve access for disadvantaged and under-represented groups? Which specific counseling and post-entry support to prevent drop-out?;

- Information and counseling for the recognition of prior experience processes within universities.

**WP3:**

- How to develop cooperation/coordination of guidance services of universities with the other actors in order to better respond to the needs of the economy and of the society? How to develop a partnership policy and the local networking of lifelong guidance services, including universities ?
- How to develop a common culture of counseling between all the actors in the field of lifelong guidance including the guidance services providers within universities?

**WP4:**

- The issue of quality of information and counseling by guidance services within universities: which indicators? Use of graduate employment data. How to train the practitioners?

## Annex 4

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### **POLICY BRIEFING on EU policy developments on adult learning**

#### **1. Background**

In 2001, the Commission delivered a communication for “Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality”: *“When planning for a year, plant corn. When planning for a decade, plant trees. When planning for life, train and educate people.”* Chinese proverb: Guanzi (c. 645BC)

The Communication gives as definition that lifelong learning should encompass the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning and urges Member States to implement lifelong learning strategies.

One of the **5 benchmarks**, adopted by the Council in 2003 to be achieved by 2010, stated that 12.5% of the adult population should participate in lifelong learning.

In the framework of the **“Education and Training 2010”** programme, the Commission had launched Action Plans on Adult learning through two Communications : *“It is never too late to learn (October 2006)<sup>8</sup>* and *“It is always a good time to learn” (September 2007)<sup>9</sup>* which highlighted the importance of adult learning and called on Member States to remove barriers to participation, to increase overall quality and efficiency in adult learning. The European Parliament Resolution of 16 January 2008 on adult learning: *“It is never too late to learn”*, the Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on adult learning<sup>10</sup> invite Member States to *“closely cooperate in identifying and removing barriers to adult learning”*.

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<sup>8</sup> Commission Communication *“It is never too late to learn (October 2006)- Doc.14600/06- COM(2006) 614 final*

<sup>9</sup> Commission Communication *“It is always a good time to learn” (September 2007) – Doc.13426/07- COM(2007) 558 final*

<sup>10</sup> Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on adult learning – (2008/C 140/09)

The (bi-annual) 2010 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme<sup>11</sup> note that “Some progress has been made in increasing adult participation in education and training, but not enough to reach the 2010 benchmark of 12.5%. 77 million Europeans aged 25-64 (close to 30%) still have at most lower secondary education”.

“Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality” remains the first objective that the **Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)** adopted 12 May 2009) intends to address for the period up to 2020. Promoting adult learning is one of the objectives and a benchmark has been adopted with a view to increasing the participation of adults in lifelong learning on an average of at least 15% by 2020.

The **guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States**<sup>12</sup> call for lifelong learning of those within and outside employment, "ensuring every adult the chance to retrain or to move one step up in their qualification.

*The Europe 2020 flagship initiatives:*

- An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs : people should acquire the skills needed for further learning and the labour market through general, vocational and higher education, as well as through adult learning;
- Innovation Union, promotes excellence in education and skills development in order to ensure future growth from innovation in products, services and business models in a Europe faced with an ageing population;
- “Youth on the move” urges again the Commission and the Member States to promote the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

## 2. The Draft Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning

The draft resolution will be adopted by the ministers of education at the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council on 28-29 November 2011.

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<sup>11</sup> OJ C 117, 6.5.2010, pp. 1-7.

<sup>12</sup> OJ L 308, 24.11.2010, pp. 46-51.



It gives first a broad definition of adult learning: *“the term adult learning covers the entire range of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities – both general and vocational - undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training”*.

Five priorities are proposed to the Member States:

- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality,
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training,
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning
- Enhancing the creativity and innovation of adults and their learning environments
- Improving the knowledge base on adult learning and monitoring the adult learning sector.

**The focus is first on information and guidance** as the means of making people aware and motivated, in particular the low-skilled.

The other recommendations concern the role of employers and work-place-based learning, promoting flexible learning pathways including better access to higher education, informal and non formal learning validation, quality assurance and professional development of adult education staff, better match between educational provision and labour market needs, learning opportunities for older adults, facilitating the acquisition of transversal key competences, such as learning to learn, a sense of initiative, promoting better use of ICT in adult learning....

### 3. Involvement of ELGPN

ELGPN has put forward some points missing in the Recommendation:

- In the first priority, the resolution focuses on guidance systems in order to increase the participation of adults in lifelong learning : it should be more relevant to underline the necessity of lifelong guidance in line with the Resolution of 21 November 2008 on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies.
- Career management skills should be explicitly mentioned in the first priority: "Promoting the development of career management skills for adults in order to help citizens to better manage their training pathway".
- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality implies guidance throughout life.

#### 4. Implications for Work Packages

The Four WP's are highly concerned by the adult learning policies, within the twofold approach which is the characteristic of an adult learning system: the individual involvement / the collective responsibility.

**WP1:** CMS is the key factor in the involvement of individuals

- Promote the development of career management skills in adult learning at EU level (Working Group) and within national systems, involve all stakeholders, e.g policy makers, training providers, social partners, employers...
- Encourage PES to use new methodologies in order to make persons more active in their own development: What would be required as specialized training by PES staff?
- Propose content and methods of CMS training for adults, adapted to their needs, in particular at workplace?
- Portfolios as an assessment tool for CMS? as a basis for EUROPASS and the transparency of qualifications ? Thus as a tool preparing mobility of workers in Europe?
- Balance between short-term (employment) and long term (lifelong learning / employability) goals.

**WP2, WP3, WP4:** Access, coordination of lifelong guidance services, quality constitute mainly a matter for collective responsibility.

- Outreach and learning opportunities are increasingly being targeted at those with the lowest levels of qualifications
- Quality assurance has been raised as an important issue in adult learning ,
- Evidence-based policy-making in the field of adult learning calls for comprehensive and comparable data on all key aspects of adult learning, for effective monitoring systems and cooperation between the different agencies, as well as for high quality research activities.

## Annex 5

Françoise Divisia, Consultant to ELGPN Task Group

### **Policy Briefing related to the role of guidance within the process of validation of informal/non formal learning from EU perspective**

#### **1. Background and main steps**

The validation of learning acquired through work and life experiences has been a cornerstone of EU lifelong learning policy.

In 1995, the European Commission's White Paper Teaching and Learning proposed a common European approach to the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

This proposition has been emphasized in 2001 in the *Communication "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality"*<sup>13</sup>: "Valuing learning" was the first priority for action while "Information, Guidance and Counselling" was the second one. At this stage, no link was mentioned between the two processes.

Since then, validation of non formal and informal learning has been identified as a European priority in education and training field as well as in employment sector.

The European social partners underline that the recognition and validation of competences and qualifications is a shared objective in the '*Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications*' (14 March 2002)<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup>Communication from the Commission of 21 November 2001 on making a European area of lifelong learning a reality [[COM\(2001\) 678](#) final – Not published in the Official Journal].

<sup>14</sup> Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) , Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE), European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest (CEEP) 28 February 2002

Common principles on the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning were adopted in May 2004<sup>15</sup> within the framework of European co-operation in vocational education and training (Copenhagen Process).

In March 2006, in the context of the Education and Training 2010 work programme, a Cluster on Recognition of Learning Outcomes was established for mutual learning and systematic follow-up of the common principles.

The conclusions of two peer-learning activities on effective practice in validation processes (Brussels, January 2007 and Paris, July 2007) have led to produce European guidelines for the validation of non-formal and informal learning published by the CEDEFOP in 2009<sup>16</sup>.

## **2. The role of information, guidance and counselling is highlighted as a pivotal element of the validation of non-formal and informal learning process**

The “Common principles” stress that the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning serve the needs of the individual learner and particularly should meet the specific needs of the individuals who seek integration or re-integration into education and training, the labour market and society. It implies obligation for the stakeholders to provide guidance, counselling and information about these systems and approaches to individuals.

Two peer learning activities on effective practice in validation processes (Brussels, January 2007 and Paris, July 2007) have contributed to take forward the EU Common Principles through the development of European guidelines for validation.

The French PLA devoted one of the three workshops to discussions on guidance and counseling as a vital element in making a successful application and thus an element which contributes to the quality of the system as a whole.

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<sup>15</sup>Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non formal and informal learning – 18 May 2004-  
Internet: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/validation2004\\_en..](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/validation2004_en..)

The main points from the French practices were the following:

- Counselling is essential to the process as that is too hard to do it on your own, especially for learners at lower levels
- Candidates need to be motivated, encouraged to realize the depth of their experience and to reflect on it
- Candidates should be helped to infer the knowledge, skills and competences from their experience for comparing to the components/units of the qualification and to be able to give a clear evidence of the whole for the jury of assessors.
- The role of the counselors includes the following tasks: motivate people, get the right balance of evidence, act as a facilitator for the reflection of the candidate about the value of his/her competences; however, he should not be too helpful; the counselors should be in a trusting relationship with the individuals;
- They need specific training and qualification; they need specific tools for those specific tasks.

An example of “counseling charter” has been presented. Drawn up by some public bodies, it promotes partnership and networking between the institutions issuing validation in order to create a common Internet portal, training courses for counselors, exchange of practices, methodological modules.

The European Guidelines, drawn up from the peer learning cluster activities, devote an important part to guidance and counseling<sup>17</sup>.

The main principles might be summed up as follows:

- The potential candidates and those in the process should receive impartial and informed advice, moreover tailored to their needs at different phases of the process.
- Before the decision, the candidates should be informed on the added value, the objectives and standards to reach, the form that the evidence of learning outcomes has to take.

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<sup>17</sup> European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning – European Commission and CEDEFOP p.53 §5.3

- At the end of validation, the candidates will want to receive information and advice about further training, qualifications or jobs.
- A follow-up is needed during all the process .

The document recommends to use ICT-based systems for information exchange between candidates and counselors. **It makes a clear distinction between guidance related to validation/assessment issues and the general process of guidance. These two categories require different skills from the practitioners/professionals providing the guidance and counseling.**

The guidelines document explains the role of the counsellor in the validation process<sup>18</sup>: *“In fact, part of the role of the counsellor is often to work with the candidate to appraise the breadth and depth of evidence of learning in relation to assessment criteria/standards”, which implies to have a clear understanding of the standards involved”.*

The counsellor also has to prepare candidates for the assessment process, the procedures, how to present evidence of learning; this requires the counsellor to have a broad knowledge of the assessment process. They have to offer impartial but useful advice, independently from the assessment process itself. To fulfil this role, counsellors should have at least a deep knowledge of the validation process, an understanding of the labour market needs and requirements in terms of competences, an exhaustive information on the training provision.

### **3. Further developments: a new impetus towards validation of informal/non formal learning**

A new impetus has been given to the implementation of validation of informal/non formal learning by the adoption of new tools as the European Qualification Framework (EQF), the credit transfer for VET (ECVET), entailing the shift to learning outcomes.

The fact that the focus is put on the knowledge, skills and competences, regardless of where, how the learning has been gained and the time spent for it,

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<sup>18</sup> European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning p.67 §8.1

make it easier the implementation of systems for validation of informal/non formal learning.

This momentum has been reinforced at the political European level by a series of EU documents that stress the role of non-formal/informal learning: the May 2008 Council Conclusions on adult learning<sup>19</sup>, the May 2010 *Council conclusions on competences supporting lifelong learning and the ‘new skills for new jobs’ initiative*<sup>20</sup>, the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in Education & training (2009), underlining that non-formal and informal learning plays a key role in making lifelong learning a reality.

The Europe 2020 Strategy calls for the promotion of “*the recognition of non-formal and informal learning*” within two flagship initiatives: Youth on the Move and the Agenda for New Skills and jobs. The Bruges Communiqué goes beyond in proposing the deadline of 2015 “*to develop national procedures for the recognition and validation of non formal and informal learning, supported as appropriate by national qualifications frameworks*”.

The validation of non-formal and informal learning is particularly considered as a key element of Adult learning: in the 2006 Communication from the European Commission “*on Adult Learning: It is never too late to learn*”, in the 2007 “*Action Plan It is always a good time to learn*”, especially for low-skilled and low-qualified adults. In 2008, as a support to the implementation of the Action Plan, the Commission established a Working Group, including a focus group on ‘Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning’.

Informal and non formal learning recognition is focused on as well in the Employment sector: the Communication from the Commission “*Annual Growth Survey; advancing the EU’s comprehensive response to the crisis*”<sup>21</sup> and the 2010 Integrated Guidelines for the economic and employment policies recommend the Member States to “*take into account learning in informal and non-formal contexts*” ( Guideline 9)<sup>22</sup> .

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<sup>19</sup> Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on adult learning

<sup>20</sup> Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on competences supporting lifelong learning and the ‘new skills for new jobs’ initiative

<sup>21</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European economic and social Committee and the Committee of the regions Commission “*Annual Growth Survey; advancing the EU’s comprehensive response to the crisis*” 12.1.2010 (COM(2011) final

<sup>22</sup> Recommendation for a Council Recommendation of 27.4.2010 on broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and of the Union Part II of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines

Besides, the recognition of skills and competences is clearly within the scope of the 2011 European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship.

Currently, around 80 million of European citizens have low or basic skills, whilst it is forecast the 16 million jobs will require high qualifications by 2020.

Validation of non formal/informal learning should play a key role in this context. But across the EU, much more should be done to make validation a practical tool for all interested citizens.

These challenges lead the Commission (DG EAC ) to go further, although many developments on the validation of non formal/informal learning are tangible at European and Member states levels<sup>23</sup>.

Among the main remaining problems, **the Commission identifies the lack of information, support and guidance: even in countries where more systematic procedures have been established, empowerment of individuals often remains low, partly due to ignorance and difficulties in using and understanding the procedures.**

**On the 1st of December 2010, the Commission launched a consultation on the promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning<sup>24</sup>. The purpose was to collect views on whether further action is needed, what type of action is required and which policy priorities should be given attention.**

The European Commission services intend to prepare a report on its results, which will be published on the website of the Directorate General for Education and Culture in the first semester of 2011.

Current proposals for further action are:

- the introduction of an integrated Europass Skills Passport recording the full range of formal, non-formal and informal learning
- a proposal for a draft Council Recommendation on the promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning in 2011, in the framework of the Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative “Youth on the Move”.

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{SEC(2010) 488 final}

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the 2010 Update to the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and informal learning

GHK Final Report

<sup>24</sup> Directorate General for Education and Culture- Consultation on the promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning – From 1.12.2010 to 9.02.2011 - EAC-VALIDATION-CONSULTATION@ec.europa.eu



#### 4. Potential contribution of the ELGPN work

Given the key role that validation of non-formal and informal learning looks set to play in current EU education, training, employment, social inclusion and youth policies and its strong links with the European Qualification Framework and the ECVET system based on a learning outcomes approach, **given that guidance & counseling is a vital element for success, it is fundamental that ELGPN provides inputs to the future EU developments.**

These inputs should be included in the CRT's.

The existing Common Aims and Principles (annexes A,B,C) refer to validation of non-formal and informal learning but they do not propose specific principles for the specific content of guidance and counseling within the process of validation, nor the new Common Reference Points ( Annex D).

**A clear distinction between guidance related to validation/assessment issues and the general process of guidance should be made.**

**Thus, a specific Reference Point should be devoted to guidance related to validation/assessment issues.**

**The results of ELGPN work on these issues could be recorded in a "Counselling Charter for Validation of informal and non-formal learning" which would be a kind of "tool-box", annexed to the future EU Recommendation**

*Some proposals on related issues:*

##### WP2:

- Widening access to guidance/counseling for validation in the whole territory: conclusions from the Utrecht Peer Learning Event (?);
- Access to guidance and counseling for validation at workplace: different steps from information to support for work experience analysis and counseling on further training pathways inside and outside the company (cf. example of DANONE in France); information of employers and unions representatives; funding aspects;
- The use of ICT-based systems for information exchange between candidates and counselors;

- Balance between collective and individual information & counseling within the process of validation

#### **WP2 and WP1:**

- PORTFOLIOS / CMS / EUROPASS
- Relevance of the portfolios development to validating informal/non-formal learning as they allow the individual candidate to contribute actively to the collection of evidence: link with the development of CMS; link with Europass (towards the EU project of an integrated Europass Skills Passport)
- Digital portfolios/CMS: text, audio, graphic, video-based presentation...

#### **WP2 and WP3:**

- Cooperation/coordination/networking between general guidance services and the validation providers: building a specific guidance & counseling platform at regional/local level?

#### **WP2 and WP4:**

- Quality of validation depends on quality of guidance and counseling
- The quality of practitioners is critical to the quality of the validation process.
- Define competences/content of training for the counselors
- Define quality standard for counselors in validation process
- Create indicators to measure the quality of guidance and counseling in validation of informal/non-formal learning process.