Promoting recognition and validation of skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning

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Skills and qualifications
Council Recommendation on Non-Formal and Informal Learning 20 December 2012

• Member States agreed to put in place arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) experiences by 2018, enabling individuals to obtain a qualification (or part of it) on the basis of their validated experiences.
Elements of VN FIL arrangements:

- IDENTIFICATION
- DOCUMENTATION
- ASSESSMENT
- CERTIFICATION
Main principles of VNFIL arrangements:

- Linked to qualifications frameworks and in line with the EQF
- Same/equivalent standards of qualifications obtained through formal education
- Transparent quality assurance measures supporting reliable, valid and credible validation methodologies and tools
- Information and guidance available to individuals and organisations
- Special "focus" on disadvantaged groups/individuals (e.g. skills audit)
- Professional development of staff
- Use of EU transparency tools
- Synergies with credit systems
Key actors:

- **Member States**: to implement the Recommendation and report on progress
- **European Commission**: to support and work with MS (Inventory, Guidelines, PLAs) and report on progress
- **Cedefop**: to provide expertise to support the implementation of the Recommendation
- **EQF AG**: forum through which Member States and the Commission should cooperate to follow up to the Recommendation
**Stakeholder involvement:**

- Involvement of **all relevant stakeholders**
- Employers, youth organisations and civil society organisations to **promote and facilitate the documentation of learning outcomes** acquired at work or in voluntary activities
- E&T providers to **facilitate access to further learning and to award exemptions/credits** for NFIL
- Coordination between stakeholders in the education, training, employment and youth sectors and other relevant policy areas.
2014 European Inventory on validation

OUTPUTS

- 36 reports (covering 33 countries)
- 8 Thematic studies
- 2 case studies
- A survey of projects on validation
- A synthesis of main findings
- An executive summary

1. Early school leavers
2. Multi-level governance
3. Skills audits in the public sector
4. Validation methodologies
5. Guidance and counseling
6. Raising awareness
7. Competence assessment in the private sector
8. Research themes
Validation take up

12 countries
4 countries
5 countries
16 countries

No info
Contrasting trends
Stayed the same
Increased
Validation strategies

Does the country have a comprehensive national strategy for validation?

Source: 2014 European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning
Validation strategies

Does the country have a comprehensive national strategy for validation? 2014

Source: 2014 European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning
Validation strategies

Does the country have a comprehensive national strategy for validation?

- Increasing number developing a comprehensive strategy or reviewing
- Few comprehensive strategies:
  - Lack of measures to promote take-up
  - Too low visibility of the process
  - Lack of integration
  - Low involvement of non-educational sectors
  - Lack of links (public, private and third sector)
  - Coexistence of different regulatory frameworks

Source: 2014 European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning, country fiches
Are there mandatory requirements for validation professionals?

Source: 2014 European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning
Are certain sectors given priority?

Source: 2014 European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning
Is validation linked to qualifications frameworks?

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Is validation linked to qualifications frameworks?

Source: 2014 European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning
Stakeholder engagement?

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Stakeholder engagement

Source: 2014 European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning
In SUMMARY

- Increasing activity and commitment to validation
  - But data is still scarce
  - But public still unaware

- Big cross and within country differences
  - Fragmented picture
  - Coordination needed

- Education and training predominant
  - VET still leading
  - HE increasing
  - Private sector still limited

- Increasing stakeholder involvement
  - Private involvement limited

- Quality assurance to be further defined
  - Little evidence on evaluation and monitoring

- NQF developments relevant
  - Non–formal?

- Cost and bureaucracy a barrier
European Guidelines - 2015 update

- European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning were published jointly by the European Commission and Cedefop in 2009

- Guidelines will be published end 2015
10 Key questions

1. Have the purpose of the validation initiative been clarified?
2. How does the validation initiative respond to the interests of the individual citizen?
3. Have steps been taken to coordinate and target guidance and counselling services?
4. Are mechanisms for coordination of relevant stakeholders in place, so as to avoid fragmentation and ensure a coherent approach?
5. Are validation arrangements linked to national qualifications frameworks and how does this impact transparency and access?
10 Key questions (cont)

6. Are the outcomes of validation referring to the same or equivalent standards as those used for formal education and how does this affect its value and currency?

7. Are validation arrangements linked to quality assurance arrangements and how does this influence trust and credibility?

8. Which steps have been taken to strengthen the professional competences of validation practitioners?

9. What is the role of validation in education and training systems; in relation to the labour market; and in the voluntary sector?

10. Which tools and instruments can be used (and combined) for identification, documentation and assessment of learning?
The Validation Guidelines
A practical tool

10 interconnected steps

- Clarify the purpose of the validation initiative
- Identify how the initiative responds to the interests of the individual citizen
- Make sure that guidance and counselling is coordinated, targeted and in place

- Take steps to coordinate relevant stakeholders to avoid fragmentation and ensure a coherent approach
- Ensure the visibility and sustainability by linking arrangements to national qualifications frameworks
- Strengthen the value and currency of validation outcomes by referring to the same or equivalent standards as those used for formal education

- Strengthen the trust to and credibility of validation by linking to quality assurance arrangements
- Take steps to strengthen the professional competences of validation practitioners
- Systematically reflect on the role of validation in different sectors as well as on the relationship between validation arrangements in these sectors

- Clarify the tools and instruments to be used for identification, documentation and assessment of learning
Looking ahead

• **2016** – Light update of the European Inventory

• **2018** – Update of the European Inventory

• **2018** – One-off national reports. Political response to the Council Recommendation

• **2019** - Commission's report to the Council Reports on the experience gained and implications for the future, including if necessary a possible review of the Recommendation.
Skills Agenda for Europe

Preliminary ideas for discussion
Overall Goals

• Increase skills levels in Europe as a means to better lives and jobs...

• ... and boost competitiveness & support fair and balanced growth reaping the full benefits of digital & technological advancements

• Policy initiative next year
Specific Objectives

• Delivering higher & labour market relevant skills by mobilising and engaging relevant stakeholders

• Improving visibility, recognition and use of available skills

• Improving understanding of skills needs and trends in the Labour Market
Context

Commission 2016 Work Programme

5 President's Report and Social triple-A for EU

European Semester

Inter-DG / cross-sectorial product
For individuals AND for the economy!

Skills for individuals
- Raise basic skills levels
- Gain LM relevant skills
- Show skills to employers

Skills for the economy
- Address skills shortages
- Link business with education
- Promote mobility
Main areas of focus

- Tackle low skills
- Boost relevance and quality of E&T
- Visibility and recognition
- Improve skills intelligence
Tackle low skills

skills audit → validation ↓ 2d chance education
Deliver more and relevant skills

Key competences for LLL

VET mobility

Digital

Soft

Transversal

High-level

Entrepreneurial

Work-related

Higher Education Agenda

Business – education partnerships

Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
Boost work-based learning

More apprenticeships
- European Pact for Youth, EAfA
- Boost EIB's loans to SMEs

More mobility
- Reinforce funding for Erasmus+ to support mobility
Facilitate skills recognition

Stronger EQF

Common principles for quality assurance & credit accumulation
Non-EU qualifications
European core profiles for qualifications
International sectorial qualifications
Improve services to individuals and business

- Learning opportunities abroad
- Cross-border recognition practices
- Skills demand (EU Skills Panorama)
- Skills documentation
- National qualifications frameworks
- Career guidance
- Vacancies (EURES)

Flexible
Relevant
User-Friendly
Interoperable
Online/Digital
Better skills intelligence

Sector Skills Alliances

Integrate anticipation tools
More effective EU funding for skills?

SKILLS
Thank you for your attention

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
E2 – Skills and Qualifications