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GUIDANCE PRACTITIONERS INFORMATION AND TRAINING NEEDS  
WORKING WITHIN A EUROPEAN DIMENSION  
**WPA1 FINAL SUMMARY REPORT**

BY INSTITUTE OF ECONOMY AND MANAGEMENT  
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## INTRODUCTION

The following summary is based on the Report from the Phase A of the Ergo-in-Net project. It contains chosen conclusions from the survey carried out in France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy and Poland. The aim of the questionnaire was to gather reliable information about professional needs of people employed in educational and vocational counselling areas and who are working within a European dimension. There exist a lot of cultural differences between European countries, which together with rapid economic and social changes, and coming into being a common European labour market influence the field of their activity.

### 1. THE SAMPLE

The number of respondents and type of services:

#### France – 26 (8M, 18F)

- Education guidance centers called CIO relais Europe (centre d'information et d'orientation)
- EURES Services
- University guidance services SCUIO
- Employment authorities
- Education authorities at a regional level SAIO
- University Work Placement
- Regional Information Centres on life long learning CARIF
- Skill Assessment Centres

#### Germany 28 (12M, 16F)

- EURES counsellors
- Members of the German Euroguidance-Network (Europäisches Berufsberatungszentrum)
- Guidance counsellors of the German employment offices
- University guidance services
- Central office for placement (Zentralstelle für Arbeitsvermittlung)

#### Italy – 30 (8M, 22F)

- Government Employment Centres
- EURES Services
- Information centres for youth (Informagiovani)
- Private cooperatives offering information and guidance facilities
- Public information services about Europe
- Regional and provincial guidance offices

#### Poland – 30 (5M, 25F)

- Voivodship Labour Offices: Information and Vocational Career Planning Centres
- EURES Careers Advisers
- Academic Career Offices
- National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance within the framework of the EUROGUIDANCE network
- National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education

## United Kingdom – 30 (12M, 18F)

- Staff from the Euro Guidance Centre
- Eures Advisers
- University Careers Advisers
- Personal Advisers
- UK counsellors attending Academia placements
- University/ College Placement Officers

The most counsellors are women, in average over 70%. Very young counsellors in the age under 25 appear in Poland and in the UK. The eldest counsellors are present in all countries but the UK.

## 2. WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE GUIDANCE FIELD

There is obvious that reliability and quality of received information depends on work experience of counsellors involved in the survey. Professionals in the sample have the work experience spread till 34 years. They have been working 10 years in average in the guidance field as full time workers (82% of the sample), and 8 years in average as part time. Nobody deals with guidance service occasionally.

The professionals with the longest work experience come from Germany (44 years in average), and France (22 years in average), they differ significant from other countries as stated by ANOVA,  $F = 69.58$ ,  $p < 0.005$ . The situation in Germany is specific for in the Bundesagentur für Arbeit there is a lack of young employees due to the fact that the German labour office did not assume new guidance counsellors with academic qualifications during the last years.

## 3. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

The other important factor influencing the reliability and quality of received information concerns the professionalization of counsellors working within European dimension and in particular a kind of training they possessed:

- Special courses during the university studies – 19% of counsellors
- Special courses after graduating from the university – 20% of counsellors
- In service training or other kind of courses – 58% of counsellors
- Other learning experience in the field of guidance and advisory services (non-formal, informal) – 17% of counsellors
- Other – 10% of counsellors

*RECOGNIZING NEEDS IN METHODOLOGY, METHODS, INFORMATION AND RELEVANT MATERIALS FOR FURTHER TRAINING OF VOCATIONAL COUNSELLORS WORKING WITHIN THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION - results of the survey and conclusions*

## 4. NEEDS FOR FURTHER TRAINING

Vocational counsellors working within the European dimension feel that their competencies should be constantly developed fitting changeable conditions of European labour market, social and economic environment, organizations, education and work itself. They report needs for lifelong education and training in order to constant develop their professional skills and competencies.

It can be concluded from the survey that all counsellors are conscious of the changes and report needs for further training. The exceptions are 3 persons from France, 3 from Germany and 5 from Italy. Thus, the total interest for lifelong education and training among counsellors in order to develop their professional skills and competencies is over 92%.

The German guidance counsellors wish more competence and training in the following areas:

- Intercultural competences
- Language abilities
- Improved networks for counsellors
- Database with useful addresses for European guidance counsellors
- Transparency of qualifications for counsellors dealing with mobility
- Workshops about mobility in Europe
- Workshops inside the German network for European guidance to get more into contact with the colleagues in the different euroguidance centres in order to exchange ideas and experiences and to develop new projects
- More public relations for counselling services – inside and outside of counsellor's organisation
- Integral concept for the German Euroguidance Centres

## 5. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The counsellors mostly from Great Britain need an immediate training of info management on:

- Career paths related to the jobs and to qualifications
- The labour market
- Relevant mobility in EU
- The recognition of foreign professional qualifications

The Polish, Italian and French counsellors need to improve in significant way their information resources about offers of:

- Formal education and training
- Non formal and informal education and training

The German guidance counsellors report the highest importance to the information about:

- Formal education courses
- Professions and qualifications
- Recognition of job titles

All counsellors except to German shall consider within their action and strategic planning the training about national labour market, its dynamics and requirements.

## 6. INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP WORK WITH CLIENTS

The British counsellors differ in reported needs to other counsellors from the sample. They do not report any needs for courses and trainings in the field. However they may be asked as to not rest on laurels in the following aspects of individual and group work with clients which they assess as important but no or limited training needs:

- Interviews
- Guidance on giving information, actualizing, correcting, and clarifying
- Training of work seeking ability (letter of motivation, auto presentation, qualification interview with employers etc.)
- Educating on labour market
- Educating on professions, jobs and work environments

The French counsellors have reported that:

- Into their action plan should be put:
  - Guidance and counselling
- Into their strategic planning are likely to be put:
  - The other important needs for training on the education about the labour market and about professions, jobs and work environments.

The representatives of the three countries, Poland, Italy and France, indicate as a priority, the following two courses for counsellors on:

- Helping the decision making process – e.g. Individual Action Plan
- Monitoring clients' career development and evaluate the effects of counselling (quality of counselling process).

German counsellors indicate the most important topics in this context as:

- Guidance
- Counselling
- Helping people to find a job
- Assurance of transparency
- Interviews
- Helping decision making

There is to conclude that all the counsellors from the French cluster as well as from the Polish-Italian-French one treat the professionalization of their work as life long learning process. They assess high their needs for professional trainings to update their knowledge and develop own skills for better servicing the clients on individual and group sessions. They consider different aspects as to immediate training or as to be put into their action or else strategic plan.

## **7. ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND CHOSEN ASPECTS OF NETWORKING**

Over 60% of respondents did report their experience in using particular career assessment tools. A bit less that is about 55% assessed the chosen aspects of networking

The Italian and French vocational counsellors working within European dimension understand usefulness of the Portfolio method for careers of their clients and they feel strong need to learn about it as soon as possible. They have just reported that they are looking for trainings opportunities on the method. They also consider to put into the action plan the trainings on Interest Inventories, and Career Development Measures as well as to put into the strategic plan the training on Aptitude, Achievement, Comprehensive and Companion Measures, and on Computer Assisted Career Guidance Systems. In other words they appreciate the role of testing and assessment in European guidance servicing but they need trainings to develop their professional competences.

The Polish vocational counsellors show familiar attitudes of to their Italian and French colleagues. The Polish counsellors need to improve in significant way their skills on Computer Assisted Career Guidance Systems, and they need to take achievable learning opportunities on Aptitude, Achievement, Comprehensive and Companion Measures, Career Development Measures and Career Portfolio Methods. They also consider putting the training on Interest Inventories into their strategic plan of professional development.

The French and Italian counsellors believe that information tools on European mobility are very important and they need to put trainings on European Community site and on the PLOTEUS into their action plan of professional development.

The counsellors from Poland and Italy have pointed out all the aspects on networking as important or very important and they appreciate immediate trainings in the field.

The British counsellors show quite opposite to the previous two. The British colleagues did not report any needs for changes as to the assessment tools. They do not use much methods of Testing and Assessments and some of them do not use any relevant tools. They suggest however some needs as to the following issues:

- Eures Website
- EXODUS database of International Careers Information (produced by Careers Europe)
- Ploteus Website
- Information about other sources of information and training for advisers
- Equivalency of qualifications
- Labour market information
- Support organisations in other European countries

German guidance counsellors aren't strong users of test batteries. With some exceptions they don't have a psychological background. Almost 30% of them said that they feel a strong or very strong need of further information or knowledge about PLOTEUS. As very important for the daily work are considered the WebPage of the European Union, of Ploteus and of EURES. The Eurodesk network is not very known among the German counsellors. The following other networks were considered important by single counsellors:

- Euro-Info-Centre, a network of the European chambers of industry and commerce and the chambers of handicraft
- Europa Info Point, a network of the European commission providing information about important European issues

## 8. EU LABOUR MARKET

The number of counsellors from Poland Italy and France coming from almost all relevant work settings like public authorities, SMEs, group of companies, training organizations, regional consortiums, universities report the need for immediate training on issues related to contacts with organisations which deal with mobility, topics on the socio-professional insertion, and the possibilities of ICT use to facilitate placement of labour force in the European labour market. These professionals want also to put into their action plans such topics for training like how to make contact with employers, how to provide training of self-presentation, and how to make contacts with foreign companies, and topics related to the socio-professional insertion.

Some counsellors from the UK and France, mainly the staff of EURES Services, Regional Information Centers on Life Long Learning, and Skill Assessment Centers do not assess temporary any needs for professional development.

The German counsellors feel still a strong need of more knowledge and information about:

- The use of ICT tools and data bases in concern to the daily work on EU labour market
- Contacts to enterprises in the EU

## 9. CHOSEN ASPECTS OF EDUCATION & REHEARSAL

The British counsellors working mostly in EURES services, universities, and European organizations are eager to deep their professional knowledge on issues concerning labour markets in other EU countries in relation to the issues of education and rehearsal. They have reported the need for including special course on the topic in their strategic plan for professional development.

The counsellors from Franca Italy Poland and UK like to update their knowledge in relatively short time putting into their action plan the following issues:

- Education and training systems of other EU countries
- Education and training systems of pre-accession EU countries

- Recognition of vocational titles
- Recognition of educational titles
- Legal aspects related to mobility
- Inter-cultural communication

The counselors who represent public authorities, regional consortia and universities are eager to develop continuously their knowledge, methodology and methods of counseling. They believe that the educational and rehearsal issues in various countries and local cultural settings are one of the most vital aspects of European guidance.

The German counsellors score highest the following items:

- Recognition of educational titles
- Recognition of vocational titles
- Education and training systems
- Intercultural communication
- Knowledge about companies offering jobs or traineeships for students
- Intercultural communication

#### 10. RANKING CHOSEN ASPECTS OF GUIDANCE WITHIN A EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Ten aspects were chosen to rank from the most important to the least important. The higher rank means the less importance (Table 1). The guidance practitioners working on the European dimension believe that counseling the issues related to the labour market in Europe is the most important for their work. Next they indicate job search strategies, lifelong learning opportunities for EU guidance practitioners, professional skills for guidance within a European dimension, applying for a job in Europe, transparency of foreign qualifications.

As the least important they indicated the social issues.

Table 1. Rankings of chosen aspects of guidance within a European dimension

Chosen aspects	Rank sum
Labour market in Europe	458
Job search strategies	545
Lifelong learning opportunities for EU guidance practitioners	581
Professional skills for guidance within a European dimension	586
Applying for a job in Europe	597
Transparency of foreign qualifications	598
Intercultural communication	613
Working experience in foreign companies	675
Networking opportunities	686
Social issues (health insurance, social insurances, wages, taxes...)	708

There is interesting to recognize how much the ranks differ between countries within particular items. The Kruskal-Wallis H test indicates the following additions.

- **Intercultural communication**

Rather weak difference between judgements in particular countries. The only difference appeared, where the Polish counsellors believe that **intercultural communication** is a bit more important than think the British colleagues.

- **Working experience in foreign companies**

The French counsellors consider **working experience in foreign companies** as more significant for vocational guidance within European dimension than the Polish colleagues. Next, British and Italians suppose also the item as more important.

- **Transparency of foreign qualifications**

The French counsellors think about **Transparency of foreign qualifications** as more significant for vocational guidance on European mobility than the colleagues from all other countries. Next, Polish professionals assume also the item as more important than Italians. There are no differences between the Italian and British as well as Polish and British believes on the item.

- **Social issues**

The British counsellors consider **Social issues** as more significant for vocational guidance within European dimension than the colleagues from Italy. All other professionals assume the item as less important and of the least special meaning.

- **Labour market in Europe**

The European counsellors consider **Labour market in Europe** as equally significant for vocational guidance within European dimension. All the professionals suppose the item as the most important for clients and also of the significant meaning for development of European transnational guidance.

- **Job search strategies**

The British counsellors think about **Job search strategies** as more significant for vocational guidance within European dimension than their colleagues from France and Poland. Next, the Italian professionals assume the item as more important than the French. There are no differences between the Italian, and British as well as Polish colleagues. Also French and Polish counsellors assume the importance of the item F on a similar way.

- **Applying for a job in Europe**

There are almost all significant differences between judgements in particular countries. The two exceptions are the similar judgements in France and Italy as well as in Italy and Poland. The British counsellors think about **Applying for a job in Europe** as more significant for vocational guidance within European dimension than the all other colleagues from France, Italy and Poland. Next, the Polish professionals assume the item as statistical more significant than French colleagues.

- **Networking opportunities**

The European counsellors consider **Networking opportunities** as equally significant for vocational guidance within European dimension. All the professionals suppose the item as the less important for clients and for development of European transnational guidance.

- **Lifelong learning opportunities for EU guidance practitioners**

The French counsellors consider **Lifelong-learning opportunities for EU guidance practitioners** as a bit more significant for vocational guidance within European dimension than the British colleagues. However, all the professionals suppose the item as one of the most important for development of European guidance services.

- **Professional skills for guidance within a European dimension**

The French, Italian and Polish counsellors consider **Professional skills for guidance within a European dimension** as more significant for vocational guidance within European dimension than the British colleagues. Nevertheless all the professionals suppose the item as the one of the most important for clients and for development of European guidance

## 11. QUALITY EVALUATION

The practitioners working within European dimension reported whether they currently monitor the effects of guidance activities. Almost 31% of counsellors reported that they do not provide any monitoring of guidance activities effects. However, about 63% of vocational counsellors monitor the effects of their service sometimes or on the regular base.

There is a great need for quality measures like questionnaires, and different methods, which will be available to guidance practitioners working on European dimension to facilitate future real monitoring and quality evaluation.



This summary report was produced in January 2005 by *Czesław Noworol* of the Institute of Economy and Management - Jagiellonian University in Krakow (Poland). It is based on the national reports produced by the "Ergo-in-Net" project's partnership.