

# PANORAMA

## **Guidance policies in the knowledge society**

Trends, challenges and responses across Europe

A Cedefop synthesis report



# Guidance policies in the knowledge society

Trends, challenges and responses across Europe  
A Cedefop synthesis report

Ronald G. Sultana

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# Foreword

The key contribution which career guidance can make to achieve four public policy goals – lifelong learning, social inclusion, labour market efficiency and economic development – is increasingly widely acknowledged. Guidance builds confidence and empowers individuals as well as making people aware of learning, work, civic and leisure opportunities. It promotes employability and adaptability by assisting people to make career decisions both on entering the labour market and on moving within it. Guidance also helps improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education and training provision and labour market instruments, by promoting a closer match to individual and labour market needs and by reducing non-completion rates. Such public policy goals are fundamental to attaining the Lisbon Council (2000) aim of making Europe the most competitive economy and knowledge-based society in the world by 2010.

The draft interim report on implementing of the Lisbon strategy, *Education and training 2010: the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms* (2004), identifies career guidance as one of four key actions to create open, attractive and accessible learning environments. It calls for strengthening the role, quality and coordination of career guidance services to support learning at all ages and in a range of settings, empowering citizens to manage their learning and work. To achieve this, the report calls for common European references and principles to support national policies for career guidance as a matter of priority.

The progress reports of the working groups (2003) established to follow up the Lisbon objectives, especially Group G (access, social inclusion, active citizenship) and Group H (making learning attractive, education, work and society) highlight the increasing importance of access to good quality guidance services in a lifelong learning context to help individuals make sense of the greater diversity of choices and opportunities available in non-formal as well as formal settings.

In 2001, the OECD launched a review of policies for career information, guidance and counselling services in which 14 countries took part. At the request of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, in 2002, Cedefop and the ETF extended the review to cover the remaining Member States and future Member States. In 2002, the World Bank undertook a related review of career guidance policies in seven middle-income countries. With permission from the OECD, the reviews carried out by Cedefop, the ETF and the World Bank were based on the questionnaire devised by the OECD. A total of 37 countries were covered (a mix of European, middle-income and non-European developed countries).

Each organisation involved in the review produced its own synthesis report. This Cedefop report is intended to add value to the work already done by providing an overview of the research results thus facilitating transversal and thematic analysis of guidance policy across Europe. Annexed to the main report is a short paper comparing and contrasting the career

guidance policy situation in Europe with that of middle-income countries and non-European developed countries. Cedefop owes a debt of thanks to the ETF, the World Bank and, most especially to the OECD, for their cooperation in sharing the results of their work which made the preparation of this report possible.

In addition to enabling policy-makers and practitioners to benchmark their activities, this report will serve as a reference document for the Commission's expert group on lifelong guidance and as a stimulus for debate and reflection.

Cedefop has three overarching priorities for the period 2003-06:

- improving access to learning, mobility and social inclusion;
- enabling and valuing learning;
- supporting partnerships in an enlarged EU.

Career guidance is a transversal element running across all three priorities. Cedefop has created guidance web pages to promote broad dissemination of the results of the work of the Commission's expert group on lifelong guidance:

([http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects\\_Networks/Guidance/](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/Guidance/)).

We have established a virtual community as a forum for discussion and exchange of views among the expert group and others active in career guidance:

([http://cedefop.communityzero.com/lifelong\\_guidance](http://cedefop.communityzero.com/lifelong_guidance)).

With the kind permission of the OECD and the ETF, we have also incorporated the results of the 29 career guidance policy reviews of European countries into our 'eKnowVet' database, part of our knowledge management system. This means that, in addition to being able to consult and print out each of the country reports, data can be extracted by theme (for example policy instruments; recent initiatives; roles of stakeholders; target groups; staffing, etc.) transversally across all 29 countries or by any selected subgroup of countries. Data from the report have also been included in the 'eKnowVet' database, accessible via the guidance web pages.

Cedefop will hold an Agora conference on 'Lifecourse guidance and counselling' on 4 and 5 October 2004 (<http://www.cedefop.eu.int/events.asp?Action=1>). Agora events provide an informal forum to encourage dialogue between researchers, policy-makers and social partners involved in vocational education and training.

Other forthcoming Cedefop work on guidance, initiated in support of the Commission's expert group on lifelong learning, includes:

- a study on quality criteria and guidelines for guidance services and products from a citizen/consumer perspective;
- a feasibility study on indicators and benchmarks in career guidance.

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## Executive summary

This report draws on the responses of experts from 29 European countries to a questionnaire survey on policies for career guidance. In 2001, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) launched an international review of policies for career guidance, that covered 14 countries, including nine EU Member States. The European Commission (EC), which had just published its communication on lifelong learning (2001a), was invited by the OECD to assist in the review. In follow-up to the communication and to obtain a comprehensive view of policies for career guidance in Europe, the EC sought permission from the OECD to use its review questionnaire in Member States, EEA, and acceding countries not taking part in the OECD study. Cedefop and ETF were requested to undertake the research. In a parallel initiative, the World Bank extended the purview of career guidance policies to seven middle-income countries, thus contributing to developing what is now the largest ever database on policies for career guidance internationally.

Each organisation involved in this review process – namely the OECD, the ETF, Cedefop and the World Bank – commissioned synthesis reports to tease out the main findings for the group of countries on which they focused. A synthesis of syntheses has also been produced, distilling the key findings in one short paper (Watts and Sultana, 2003) annexed to this report. This present report extends the synthesising exercise to the 29 European countries covered by the first three agencies, and is intended to complement and add value to the work already done on the OECD career guidance policy review by simplifying transversal and thematic analysis of guidance policy across the continent. In particular, it sets out to provide an account of the most significant developments, trends, challenges and issues, as well as strengths and weaknesses of information and guidance systems and policies in Europe. In so doing, the report identifies good or interesting practice with examples from the countries involved in the review. Policy-makers and practitioners will be able to benchmark their systems in relation to others, and review their practices against the efforts and experiences of colleagues across Europe.

The present report is divided into 10 sections, following closely the categories in the OECD review to simplify comparison between the different synthesis reports produced by the four organisations referred to earlier.

The **first section** provides a context for the report, by highlighting some key issues about guidance articulated across Europe, particularly in relation to the debates generated by the consultation process on the memorandum of lifelong learning. Several EU policy documents and reports are referred to and show how, both across Europe, and in the different States outside the EU, guidance has an increasingly broad appeal as a mechanism to promote several public policy goals. Commission activities with Member States that have an impact on guidance, by signalling strategic goals and funding cutting-edge initiatives, are described. The Commission's decision to extend the OECD review of policies for career guidance to the remaining European countries has enabled a comprehensive review of both the challenges and

policy responses. Some methodological issues arising from a comparative and transversal thematic analysis of 29 countries, with all their diverse economic, political, cultural and educational realities, are also addressed. It is argued, however, that in policy terms, there is much to be gained by considering the range of responses afforded by the different countries as, despite different starting points, all are required to face a broad set of similar challenges for policies for career guidance.

The **second section** draws on the survey responses to develop a composite definition of the term guidance, based on the way educational and career guidance is understood and practised in the 29 European countries. Distinctions are made between educational and career guidance and personal counselling, noting that, despite the difficulties of separating the two, the main focus of the report is on the information and advice offered to young people and adults for their choice of pathways in and through education and work. More specifically, guidance is defined as a right of all citizens to a set of interrelated services which should accompany decision-making throughout the lifespan. Such services are mostly provided by the State in the education and labour market sectors, though there is also increasing provision by community stakeholders and the private sector. Defining guidance as both a public and a private good, most countries are careful in emphasising that information and advice ought to serve both individual needs – by expanding their awareness of options and opportunities, and enabling them to make decisions wisely so they can have more fulfilling lives – and the needs of the society and economy.

It is these latter needs that constitute the focus of the **third section** of the report. Guidance is seen by governments as a mechanism to support public policy in three specific areas. First, it promotes lifelong learning goals by ensuring an adequate knowledge and skills base to meet the challenges of high ability societies in economic globalisation. Guidance can make a contribution to attaining such goals by helping the education and training system become more efficient, and by developing tighter links between the world of learning and the world of work, both within national contexts and, given the creation of a common learning and working space, across Europe. Guidance is also attractive to policy-makers because it can help address a whole range of labour market issues, it can improve labour market outcomes and efficiency, and it can support economic development goals. Policy-makers are therefore increasingly looking to guidance for support in addressing labour market shortages, tackling mismatches between labour supply and demand, reducing the effects of labour market destabilisation, dealing with unemployment, and improving labour mobility. Guidance also has a role to play in helping governments attain social equity and inclusion, by mobilising resources to reintegrate marginalised and at risk groups into education, training and work. A clear sign of the usefulness of guidance in policy terms is its dynamic nature across most of the 29 countries surveyed, where a growing range of national and European initiatives and innovations can be observed. Despite such dynamism, however, it often suffers from inadequate common vision across different sectors, with its potential greatly reduced due to fragmentation.

The fourth and fifth sections consider information and guidance provision to young people within and outside educational institutions, and to adults. The **fourth section** focuses on guidance services offered across all levels of schooling, noting that many of these services are concentrated in the lower secondary sector, though there is a visible trend for their extension upwards to the higher secondary as well as tertiary level institutions. As pathways become more diversified and complex, and as opportunities for reengaging with education and training multiply, so too traditional models of guidance become obsolete, with new emphasis placed on reaching more young people across their whole development. Most countries therefore report that guidance is increasingly becoming embedded in the curriculum, with career education reinforced by various experiential learning strategies such as work and course tasters, by group approaches supplementing face-to-face interviews, and by vastly improving access to information through the judicious use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Other countries recognise that this is the direction that they want their guidance services to move in, but are hampered by inadequate funding, and by lack of trained staff. All countries are concerned about the necessity of catering for the guidance needs of at-risk youth and about the imperative of finding ways of reintegrating them in education and training, though few cases were reported in the review of policies for career guidance warranting any optimism that school-based services have developed effective strategies in reaching this goal.

The **fifth section** examines the way the information and guidance needs of adults are being addressed across Europe, particularly – though not solely – through the public employment services (PES). The European employment strategy and the European employment guidelines enjoin the latter to provide in-depth guidance to clients, highlighting the role that guidance can play in routing clients through training and into jobs. Given the emphasis now being placed on lifelong learning, it is surprising to note that guidance services are still mostly available to only one particular group of adults: the unemployed. These are largely tended to by the PES, where the responsibilities of administering welfare benefits, registering clients and placing them in training and employment are so paramount that guidance functions become muted – even if one can detect a cultural change underway in many PES towards a more supportive and facilitative role, with the service becoming a gateway to guidance rather than a gatekeeper. Some countries are responding to this situation by reorganising their employment services so clients are screened, with the range of different services targeted in response to needs, freeing up specialised guidance staff to deal more effectively with those who require advice. In some cases, community-based partners as well as the private sector are providing supplementary or complementary services, to ensure adequate coverage of needs. Community-based guidance is proving to be particularly promising, with government outsourcing responsibilities and funding to groups that tend to be closer to the realities of specific categories of the unemployed, and whose response therefore is often more innovative, appropriate, and effective. Much less is being done to cater for the guidance needs of employed adults. Some countries foreshadow the kinds of developments we are likely to see progressively appearing across Europe. A few public employment services have restructured themselves to attract employed adults interested in changing their jobs, or who require advice in managing their careers. This is a big shift for such services, that find it difficult to combat

the lingering image they have among the general public as an office that deals exclusively with those receiving unemployment benefits. Some larger enterprises across Europe have begun offering guidance services to adults, both for the reasons already stated, and also to ease occupational mobility and flexibility at a time of restructuring or closures. Private sector and trade union involvement is still minimal, though the latter is becoming increasingly aware of the assistance it can provide its members in retaining their employability through retraining. In most countries across Europe, we find little good practice in catering for the needs of older workers, a particularly significant gap given the demographic trends in the 29 countries surveyed.

Other gaps in information and guidance provision are identified in **section six**. The different strategies being used in European countries to overcome such gaps, and particularly use of ICT to promote innovative and diverse ways to deliver guidance services to clients, are explored. The strategic use of ICT in several contexts had led to major shifts in the way guidance services are delivered, partly by encouraging clients to engage in self-service, self-help mode, and also by transferring information and services – hitherto only available in dedicated offices – to the site occupied by the client, be this the home, the school, or the workplace. Transferability of guidance services has been simplified by developing increasingly sophisticated software supporting guidance functions, and is particularly important for remote communities. The different country reports make it clear, however, that despite the great promise of ICT in delivering guidance services, there is still a serious digital divide between and within countries. Similarly diverse is the capacity of different European countries to exploit the opportunities presented by call centre technology which, in some contexts, has been developed extensively to offer personalised support in response to differentiated needs.

Much of the value of formally provided guidance is it can provide thorough, reliable, and objective information about educational and employment opportunities, in a way that connects with the client's own aptitudes and aspirations. **Section seven** explores the validity of this claim with the evidence provided by the country surveys. The volume of information made available to young people and adults has grown in most countries, with print-based material being supplemented – and indeed overtaken – by information presented in electronic format and on the Internet. This is also the guidance-related sector where private investment is most visible, with several companies producing handbooks and other products, particularly addressed to students. A major concern to most countries is, despite the increasing popularity and undeniable usefulness of electronic- and Internet-based information, much of it remains fragmented and unconnected, with different providers collecting different information, and creating data sets that cannot be consolidated to help users make better sense of the options and opportunities open to them. It is especially rare to come across guidance-oriented software or Internet sites that function as multidimensional, matrix-based management information systems, which connect educational and career information with labour market data. Quality standards for producing information are also missing in most countries surveyed, raising questions about the ability of several countries to provide users with information that is usable, reliable and up-to-date.



Sections eight and nine focus on the human and financial resources dedicated to guidance. As **section eight** makes clear, guidance is provided by a great diversity of workers, performing many roles with different levels of qualifications and training and range of competences they need to master. Further, there are important differences in the training and background of guidance staff working in the employment and education sectors, though both are burdened by a multiplicity of roles that make the boundaries of the profession hard to determine. In many countries, guidance staff belong to a truncated profession, only partially exhibiting those features normally associated with fully developed professions. They tend to lack a sense of identity as an occupational group, are poorly organised, and do not enjoy any particular status in the public eye. While this overall characterisation applies across most countries surveyed, many reports did signal significant developments which suggest the process of professionalisation may be picking up some pace, especially since there is a trend to increase the specialised training of staff, and organise and direct their further development through the activities of guidance associations and research.

**Section nine** looks at the sources of funding for guidance services in Europe. Most financing of guidance activities comes from the State, though there is very little information provided in the country reports on the volume of such provision, largely because the costs of delivering information, guidance and counselling services are often included in broader budgets that cannot be readily broken down and are therefore difficult to calculate. There is some private investment in guidance, and supplementary funding comes through EU programmes and, for a few countries, from such donor agencies as the World Bank. All this, however, is minimal compared to the outlay by the State, which uses a range of different modalities to direct funds to clients. Increasingly, however, the States in Europe tend to devolve funding to regions, to the municipality, or even to specific institutions, and some also outsource to community organisations and the private sector. While such a strategy is promising because it follows the principle of subsidiarity, encouraging local actors to draw on their resources to face up to challenges, country reports show that devolution in a policy vacuum can lead to costly overlap, poor coordination within and across sectors, a lack of comparable standards between regions, and consequently inequity in access to services and the types of services clients receive. These experiences suggest a critical and cautious appraisal of both market and quasi-market provision of guidance services, with the State maintaining the responsibility of ensuring that any services offered by other providers are sound and up to standard.

Concern with the role of the State is sustained in **section 10** of the report. This considers three key mechanisms linked to the steering of policy in the information and guidance field, namely legislation, developing of quality standards, and generating evidence to monitor quality provision and chart a course leading to improved practice. The country reports clearly show the State has a crucial role to play in all three areas, and with the social partners and stakeholders, it has responsibility for generating a strategic vision so guidance serves both the individual and society, in the overall goals associated with lifelong learning. The country reports, however, also show the State is mostly failing to provide such a vision, largely because of lack of adequate interministerial and national cooperation. Some countries have tried to overcome such obstacles by developing regional, governmental, and national forums

where representatives of different providers of guidance meet to ensure a clear sense of direction, and mobilise resources to achieve the established goals. This could include more targeted legislation to guarantee all citizens have access to guidance services throughout their lifespan, and strategic use of research to ensure the features of a quality service are carefully identified and effectively monitored. Such determined leadership on the part of the State is still generally lacking across most of Europe where, despite several promising initiatives, guidance does not yet, in policy terms, enjoy the high priority it merits.

In **conclusion**, the report presents some of the main trends of guidance in Europe, from the 29 countries surveyed. It argues that, collectively, the efforts of these countries in developing guidance and information systems that help face the challenges of a knowledge society provide a rich thesaurus of good and interesting practice from which policy-makers and practitioners can draw inspiration. Most importantly, this report is designed to help galvanise policies, systems and practices for career guidance further, encouraging a heightened degree of strategic and enlightened leadership that will benefit the individual, the economy, and society alike.

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# 1. Introduction – putting guidance on the agenda

*This section highlights the key issues and debates raised at European level by the European Commission and EU Member States on the contribution of information, guidance and counselling services to developing of lifelong learning and knowledge-based societies. It also highlights some main initiatives promoted by the Commission to support reflection on – and development in – the area of guidance, including its participation in the international review launched by the OECD.*

## 1.1. The interest and initiatives of the European Union in guidance

### ***Europe's commitment to lifelong learning***

At its meeting in Lisbon in March 2000, the European Council outlined its aspiration for the European Union to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world by the year 2010. Engagement in lifelong learning (LLL) was identified as one of the key ways through which such a goal could be achieved. Following publication of the *Memorandum on lifelong learning* (European Commission, 2000), a broad consultation process was launched across Europe to identify coherent strategies and practical measures that could foster LLL for all. Based on consultation input, the European Commission issued a communication entitled *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality* (European Commission, 2001a) that was adopted by the European Council (Education, Culture, Youth), and followed this up with the establishment of a working group which produced a *European report on quality indicators for lifelong learning* (European Commission, 2002a).

### ***The contribution of guidance to constructing knowledge-based economies, and advancing active employment and welfare policies***

Both the communication and the report reinforce the lead given by the memorandum, which pinpointed information, guidance and counselling (henceforth guidance) as one of the key components of national strategies for implementing lifelong learning policies and a priority area for action at European and national levels. There is widespread consensus that meeting the challenge of ensuring easy access to good quality information and guidance about learning and working opportunities throughout Europe and throughout citizens' lives is central to constructing a competitive, knowledge-based economy, to advancing active employment and welfare policies, and to social inclusion. Recently, this same view was reiterated by another Europe-wide consultation process, which led to the white paper on *A new impetus for European youth* (European Commission, 2002b).

***The Commission's views about – and expectations of – guidance in the education sector...***

The role of guidance in contributing to several policy objectives of the EU has been highlighted in a spate of EU policy documents, with guidance being defined in the LLL communication as a range of activities designed to assist people to make decisions about their lives (educational, vocational, personal) and to implement those decisions. Both the Council (Education, Youth and Culture) resolution and the Copenhagen declaration of 2002 on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training call for: 'Strengthening policies, systems, and practices that support information, guidance and counselling in the Member States, at all levels of education, training and employment, particularly on issues concerning access to learning, vocational education and training, and the transferability and recognition of competences and qualifications, to support occupational and geographical mobility of citizens in Europe'. The expectations from guidance – both as a service to the individual and as a public policy tool, and across the education as well as the labour market sectors – are many (see Table 1). Guidance, for instance, is promoted as one of the activities that operationalise the strategic goals set by the Council of the EU for the *Future concrete objectives for education and training systems in Europe* (2001c), largely by assisting in broadening access to lifelong learning, increasing recruitment to scientific and technical studies, and motivating young people and adults to participate in and to continue learning. Elsewhere, guidance is upheld as an effective mechanism for simplifying cross-sectoral learning pathways that help improve the overall coherence of available learning (European Commission, 2001b). The Commission's communication on *Investing efficiently in education* (2003) acknowledged the role of guidance in improving matching and retention throughout the education and training sector.

***...and in the labour market***

In the labour market, the Commission and Member States also look to guidance for support in tackling three main obstacles hindering cross-border access to the EU labour market, namely inadequate occupational mobility, low geographical mobility and fragmentation of information and lack of transparency of job opportunities. Guidance has a strategic role to play, particularly if it provides wider access to information, is more transparently and coherently organised and is more present in the workplace where guidance services are still largely absent (European Commission, 2001a, 2002c). In another document, considering the role of the European public employment services in the labour market, the European Commission (2002e) highlights the role of guidance in supporting occupational mobility and flexibility among jobseekers and those already in employment. Similarly, guidance is called upon to assist in the Union's goals of increasing labour force participation and of

promoting active ageing by creating a supportive environment in an effort to integrate the inactive, the unemployed and older workers into the work force (European Commission, 2002d).

*Table 1: Guidance in European Commission documents*

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A review of recent developments in key EU policy documents (see McCarthy, 2002) shows that guidance has a broad appeal as a mechanism to achieve several central and interrelated EU policy goals. Guidance, duly reconfigured to cater for new realities – including non-linear, multiple entry points into education, training and work across time (lifelong) and space (Europe-wide) – is called upon to:

- (a) accompany the citizen throughout life, supporting transitions and promoting the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to be active contributors to, and participants in, the learning society/economy;
  - (b) connect clients with local, regional, national and European educational and occupational opportunities;
  - (c) be impartial while at the same time fostering science and technology as an attractive educational and occupational pathway;
  - (d) enhance social inclusion, through reengaging reluctant learners in educational and training tracks, and through acting as job broker for the unemployed;
  - (e) present up-to-date information that responds to client and employer needs, is transparent, user-friendly, and enables consolidation of knowledge across the educational and labour market sectors;
  - (f) cater for the individual and for targeted groups (e.g. women returners, persons with disability, long-term unemployed, unqualified school leavers, immigrants) in a way that responds to their particular needs;
  - (g) foster a personality package in clients that is functional to the labour market – including flexibility, mobility, entrepreneurship, and so on;
  - (h) establish itself more firmly in sites other than school or public employment service, including places of leisure and work;
  - (i) network with NGOs, voluntary and community-based providers to more effectively respond to clients with specific needs, including minority groups for instance;
  - (j) exploit more effectively the potential of ICT to attain many of the objectives stated above – including transparency, accessibility, permeability and connectivity – and to encourage clients to engage more proactively in constructing educational and occupational life projects;
  - (k) mobilise itself more professionally, improve pre-service and in-service training, and develop a set of sound quality indicators that are promoted and benchmarked across Europe.
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***Commission support for developing guidance through Europe-wide consultation on LLL...***

Much has already been done to guide and support the process of reflection and change in conceptualising and renewing delivery and practice of guidance. In the LLL communication, for instance, guidance workers will find several insights on how guidance can rise to the challenge of reimagining its role in supporting the knowledge society. The guidance profession is encouraged to develop strong partnerships with learning providers, insights into the demand for learning to raise awareness of the benefits of learning and encourage diversification of studies and non-traditional career and learning choices and to simplify access to learning opportunities by acting as a key interface between learning needs and the learning on offer and by helping learners find their place in increasingly complex learning systems. The Commission has also tabled useful pointers in identifying quality indicators, for benchmarking those aspects of guidance that could be promoted Europe-wide as worthy of emulation (European Commission, 2002a).

***... and through providing funding for initiatives***

The Commission with the Member States has also provided a range of funding opportunities to sustain the upgrading and updating efforts of guidance policies, systems and practices through European cooperation. European Social Fund resources, for instance, have been allocated to training guidance workers in several innovative projects. The Commission has promoted and supported a European dimension in guidance through its programmes such as Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, and Phare, enabling exchanges of good practice Europe-wide, and the further training of guidance workers. It has supported such initiatives as formulating the European CV, developing Ploteus as the EU's Internet portal of learning opportunities <sup>(1)</sup>, and mobilising the Euroguidance <sup>(2)</sup> network as a source of information, responding to the needs of guidance workers to be familiar with other countries' education, training, guidance and labour market systems and programmes. Similarly, a EURES website linking all public employment services in Member States is being developed with EU funding to ensure that information about skills shortages and surpluses per country and per region is more transparent and more easily accessible. Finally, as part of the follow-up to the Education Council's resolutions on LLL and enhanced European cooperation in VET, as well as in support of the Objectives process for

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<sup>(1)</sup> For further details, consult the Ploteus website: <http://www.ploteus.org/ploteus/portal/home>

<sup>(2)</sup> Euroguidance is the network of organisations/guidance centres in EU Member States, EEA and future Member States, funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme which was originally established under the Petra programme in 1992, and which inter alia organises transnational placement programmes for guidance practitioners in participating countries known as the Academia project. The Commission's expert group on lifelong guidance has identified close to 100 projects related to guidance that have received funding support through the various programmes of the EU, and most notably through Leonardo.

education and training systems in Europe, the Commission has established an expert group on lifelong guidance with a broad mandate to contribute to policy development in guidance in Europe <sup>(3)</sup>.

## 1.2. Background to the survey on the state of guidance in Europe

### *The impact of the OECD guidance review*

The Commission's and Member States' acknowledgement of guidance as a key component of strategies to advance the European public policy objectives of LLL, social inclusion, active employment and welfare policies, and developing the internal labour market has led to linking up with a major review of policies for career guidance that the OECD launched in 2001. The OECD used a dedicated questionnaire <sup>(4)</sup> which was returned by 14 of its country members <sup>(5)</sup>. Questionnaires were filled in by national experts, based on their in-depth knowledge of career guidance in their own country, and in most instances after extensive consultation with key decision-makers and providers. All but one of the countries involved (namely Finland) were also visited by an OECD expert team, which met with stakeholders to discuss various aspects that emerged from the survey, and drafted a country report summarising results from both the questionnaire and visit and making policy recommendations <sup>(6)</sup>.

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- <sup>(3)</sup> The first meeting of the expert group on lifelong guidance took place in December 2002. The expert group, set up by DG Education and Culture, and acting in support of the Objectives follow-up process, has the mandate to: (a) develop a common understanding of basic concepts and underlying principles for guidance; (b) reflect on the quality of guidance provision with a view to developing common guidelines and quality criteria for accreditation of guidance services and products from a citizen/consumer perspective, taking into account different policy contexts; (c) reflect on the European dimension of guidance for education, training and employment systems, in particular the convergence of existing European networks and structures in information, guidance and counselling; (d) consider how best the guidance needs of groups at risk of social exclusion can be addressed; (e) consider the role of guidance in broadening access for citizens to lifelong learning, motivating them to participate and continuing to learn; (f) consider the links between education, training and working life, in particular the development of education/workplace guidance partnerships for mutual learning.
- <sup>(4)</sup> The questionnaire focused on (a) key goals, influences, issues and initiatives in guidance; (b) policy instruments for steering services; (c) the roles of stakeholders; (d) targeting and access; (e) staffing; (f) delivery settings; (g) delivery methods; (h) career information; (i) financing; (j) quality assurance; (k) the evidence base.
- <sup>(5)</sup> The countries were: Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom.
- <sup>(6)</sup> Details about the review process, as well as national questionnaire responses, country reports, and briefing background papers on different aspects of guidance commissioned from experts, are all available on the OECD website: [www.oecd.org/els/education/careerguidance](http://www.oecd.org/els/education/careerguidance). The review was coordinated by Richard Sweet, together with Tony Watts. For an account of the process adopted, as well as of the main outcomes, see Sweet (2001, 2003), and OECD (2003).

***The role of the ETF and Cedefop in the international guidance review***

At the request of the European Commission, to have a complete picture of the situation in Europe, the European Training Foundation (ETF) <sup>(7)</sup> and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) <sup>(8)</sup> commissioned experts to use the OECD questionnaire to report on guidance provision in 11 accession and candidate countries (ACCs), and in the remaining EU Member and EEA States which had not taken part in the OECD review. The World Bank (WB) also used the same survey to collect information on the guidance systems in seven middle-income countries <sup>(9)</sup>. Involvement of these key partners in the parallel review – all using the same survey tool and coordinating their efforts through regular meetings in various forums – has resulted in the most extensive harmonised international database ever on policies for career guidance, covering a total of 37 countries <sup>(10)</sup>.

***The need for a European-wide analytic review of guidance policies and practices***

To obtain an overview of policies for career guidance in Europe drawing on the ETF, Cedefop, WB, and OECD studies, Cedefop contracted the present report <sup>(11)</sup>. This study therefore draws on the 29 questionnaire responses (and, where these were available, on country reviews), for the European countries included in the OECD, WB, ETF and Cedefop surveys referred to above <sup>(12)</sup>. It also draws on the ETF, Cedefop, WB and

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<sup>(7)</sup> The European Training Foundation review, coordinated by Helmut Zelloth, involved 11 acceding and candidate countries, namely Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. See Sultana (2003a) for an analytic review of the country responses to the guidance questionnaire. Besides writing the ETF synthesis, the present author was also responsible for responding to the guidance questionnaire in relation to Malta (Sultana, 2003b), and accompanied Richard Sweet on the OECD visits to Luxembourg and Spain. This, together with the fact that he is a member of the expert group on lifelong guidance, enabled him to have first-hand experience of different aspects of the guidance survey process.

<sup>(8)</sup> The Cedefop review, initially coordinated by Frederic Company and subsequently by Jennifer Wannan, involved five EU Member States, namely Greece, France, Italy, Portugal, and Sweden, and one European Economic Area (EEA) country, Iceland. For an analytic review of these 51 country responses see Company (2003). Cedefop also commissioned two reports from Belgium, one the French-speaking community and one covering the Flemish-speaking community, both are referred to in the present synthesis.

<sup>(9)</sup> The World Bank review includes Chile, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Africa, and Turkey. Poland and Romania had been covered earlier by the ETF, but the World Bank review process includes country visits. The World Bank survey was coordinated by David Fretwell, with Tony Watts as lead consultant. For a synthesis report see Watts and Fretwell (2003). A synthesis of guidance report syntheses covering the OECD, ETF, Cedefop and World Bank reviews has been written by Watts and Sultana (2004) – and can be found in an annex to this report.

<sup>(10)</sup> In addition to this, the policy visibility of guidance has been further boosted by Unesco's coordination of a separate project. In this case, the focus was on the role of guidance in vocational and technical education and training (Hiebert and Borgen, 2002).

<sup>(11)</sup> In drawing up this report, the work of the present author was greatly facilitated by the draft of the final OECD report coordinated by Richard Sweet and Tony Watts. I owe them both-as well as Jennifer Wannan from Cedefop, John McCarthy from the European Commission, Helmut Zelloth from the European Training Foundation, and members of the lifelong guidance expert group-a debt of gratitude for the constant support and insights they so generously offered. Thanks are also due to the national experts who completed the country reports, and who gave feedback on drafts of the synthesis report, to Helen Colley (University of Leeds), whose comments provided much food for thought, and to Frank Kavanagh from DG Employment and Social Affairs, for his comments on adult guidance.

<sup>(12)</sup> The 29 European countries are the following: Austria\*, Belgium (Flemish- and French-speaking), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic\*, Denmark\*, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany\*, Greece, Hungary, Iceland,



OECD synthesis reports. The key aim of the report is to improve transversal and thematic analyses of policies for career guidance across Europe, and to promote development of benchmarks, enabling European countries to gauge how well they are doing in guidance provision in relation to others, to share good and interesting practice, and to learn from each other's experiences.

***Challenges in carrying out a cross-European comparative study***

To achieve these goals, the study presents, compares and contrasts challenges, trends and responses on guidance across Europe. There are several methodological difficulties in carrying out a comparative analysis on this scale. The main danger in using Europe as a unit of comparison lies, of course, in downplaying the extent to which each nation State has its own traditions and history of provision, where the same terms and concepts can sometimes capture quite different shades of meaning within – let alone across – political borders. The dynamics of globalisation and Europeanisation lead to much convergence between States in guidance. Nevertheless, it needs to be constantly kept in mind that all guidance services reflect the economic, political, social, cultural, historical, educational and labour market contexts – as well as the professional and organisational structures – in which they operate (Watts, 1996a).

***Differences between the European countries surveyed***

There are several differentiating factors that suggest caution when generalising about European policies and practices for career guidance. Some of these factors have a particular bearing:

- (a) the first obvious ground for differentiation is that of the 29 countries included in this report, 15 are members of the EU, 12 are candidate or acceding members, while two, namely Iceland and Norway, as members of the EEA, have a close but different relationship with the Union. This means there will be a degree of divergence between countries in the extent to which policy-development in guidance has been influenced by EU programmes and initiatives and policy orientations, by the *acquis communautaire*, and by such common commitments as those laid down in the European employment strategy or the Social Charter;
- (b) a second distinction between the 29 countries concerns the 10 central and eastern European (CEE) accession and candidate countries that have only recently made the transition to a market economy, with obvious implications for the 'starting point, nature, and investment in,

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Ireland\*, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands\*, Norway\*, Poland+, Portugal, Romania+, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom\*. Countries marked with an asterisk (\*) were also visited by an OECD review team, and those marked with a plus sign (+) by a World Bank consultant. European countries not represented in this synthesis include Lichtenstein and Switzerland.

career development' (Fretwell and Plant, 2001, p. 1). Guidance may have started early in some of these countries – Poland, for instance, already had a fledgling service in 1918, while Latvia and Lithuania had already developed some provision in 1929 and 1931 respectively – but development was arrested by central State planning, which meant that labour demand and supply were tightly regulated, and citizens had little leverage to exercise choice. As the Budapest conference on guidance in central and eastern Europe noted, transition countries are now having to face up to the careerquake that occurred earlier in economically advanced countries, where old notions were 'shaken and in many cases destroyed', replaced by 'a new concept of career [...], redefined as the individual's lifelong progression in learning and in work' (European Training Foundation, 2000, p. 6). Over and above that, some CEE respondents to the guidance survey noted that vocational guidance tends to be regarded with suspicion, especially if it is associated with directive methods that recall the past. Yet another feature that characterises guidance in CEE countries is that guidance staff find it difficult to have access to reliable information about the labour market, when that same market is itself unreliable given the nature and pace of change it is going through;

- (c) third, there are major differences in the economic wellbeing of the different countries included in this report, with GDP per capita ranging from close to EUR 50 000 for Luxembourg, to less than EUR 6 000 for Romania. Unemployment levels also differ widely: the average for the EU is 8.4 %, with the lowest being for the Netherlands (2 %). In the CEE countries, on the other hand, the unemployment rate is as high as 19.9 % for Poland, and 18.1 % for Bulgaria. Clearly, such differences in wealth and labour market indices cannot be glossed over, even if it does not necessarily follow that the richest nations have the most highly developed policies for career guidance. Indeed, as we will have occasion to note, some of the most forward-looking practices in guidance are to be found in the least economically developed countries in Europe, and this is understandable both because the challenges for guidance are more pressing, and also because, in many cases, they are starting or relaunching their services. This enables them to benefit from the experiences of, and expertise in, older systems, while at the same time avoiding the internecine, turf-guarding dynamics – within and across sectors – that tend to paralyse guidance services in the older Member States. While, therefore, younger systems may enjoy some advantages, one cannot ignore different resource levels and labour market realities frame both the challenges that guidance has to address, and the strategies that can be developed in response. Indeed, GDP per capita relates to a series of

indicators that have an impact on guidance provision, including, for instance, levels of access to ICT;

- (d) fourth, and closely related to the above point, is in many middle-income countries – including some southern European States and regions, such as Malta, southern Italy and Greece, as well as CEE countries – there is a thriving parallel informal economy, much of it unregulated, where several people gain a living in semi-legitimate, highly entrepreneurial ways. These may be undeclared jobs or small businesses that help supplement regular incomes, into which much spare capacity is invested, and from which much occupational fulfilment is occasionally derived. These economic activities may also be the only ones available, with the formal labour market being unable to absorb workers within the regular regime of salaries and rights. Such contexts, of course, have major implications for guidance, which often has the formal economy as target and referent. It is not an insignificant limitation of the country reports submitted from all over Europe that none took the informal labour market into account <sup>(13)</sup>;
- (e) fifth, different histories, traditions, ideologies, and policy regimes have an impact on shaping the educational systems in the different European countries, with some – like Austria, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands – having strong early-streaming and tracking mechanisms that fail sufficiently to connect pathways, and that seriously limit the extent to which individuals and their families can choose or renegotiate educational and occupational trajectories. In some cases, differentiation is further increased by the presence of a strong non-State school sector – as in Malta, the Netherlands, and increasingly Sweden and CEE. This too has an impact on the demand for guidance and information;
- (f) a sixth differentiating factor relates to scale. Some European countries focused on in this study are large nations – Germany, for instance, has a population of over 82 million, and is the largest country in the European Union. In contrast, others – like Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta and Iceland – are micro-States, having well below a million citizens. Scale has several implications for guidance: geographic

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<sup>(13)</sup> This may be one of the unintended consequences of the generalisation of the use of the OECD questionnaire, which was initially developed with economically advanced countries in mind. On the other hand, it is reflected in the World Bank report by Watts and Fretwell (2003), which identifies the importance of the informal economy but finds few substantial guidance practices that attend to it. It needs to be pointed out, however, that the informal economy is not to be found only in low- and middle-income countries. It also thrives in depressed socioeconomic communities in highly advanced societies.

spread of settlements, for instance, with small, rural communities being particularly difficult to service. Additionally, large countries are more likely to have regional disparities in their labour markets; as a result, career information will have to be provided in ways that are sensitive to the ensuing differences in opportunities. At the macro level too, scale can matter when, for instance, it comes to managing a decentralisation process, and to developing strong local career service structures operating within the framework of a steering national policy. At the micro level, scale can also matter in shaping occupational destinations, not least because small, close-knit societies are more likely to develop extensive personal networks which can be as effective in unlocking opportunities as formal qualifications, if not more so.

Other differences between the 29 countries, which may have an impact on the extent and nature of guidance services, include the fact that some have a relatively homogenous ethnic composition, while others have significant numbers of minority groups; and that religion and family play an important role in shaping young people's educational and occupational futures in some contexts, and much less in others. In attempting to consider guidance across Europe, therefore, one must not lose sight of the real geopolitical, economic, and cultural differences both between, and sometimes even within countries. Such differences have a significant impact on the way guidance is perceived, on how it is organised, on the challenges that have to be overcome, and on the issues that need to be addressed.

***Common challenges for education, labour market and social policies across Europe***

Despite such real differences, there is much that is common in guidance across Europe, and much that can be gained by considering guidance provision on such a broad scale. All European countries face a broad set of similar challenges for education, labour market and social policies that have implications for career guidance and information policies and systems. Across all of Europe we find governments committing themselves to upgrading the knowledge and skills base to address unemployment, meet the requirements of knowledge-based economies, and ensure that the supply and demand of labour are in harmony. All European governments firmly locate such economic goals within a social policy context that seeks to ensure equitable distribution of education and employment opportunities. To a greater or lesser extent, guidance provision is seen as an active measure to combat early school leaving, ease the fuller integration of at-risk groups into both education and the labour market, and to reduce poverty. Across Europe, too, we find governments shaping LLL policies that make pathways into education and work more diversified, flexible, and linked. The multiplication of further

education and training opportunities in different contexts and delivered in an ever increasing variety of ways leads governments to conclude that citizens should be guaranteed access to transparent information, supported by guidance where appropriate. In responding to similar challenges, governments are adopting various strategies of great interest to European policy-makers and practitioners since this helps them to situate better their own initiatives in relation to those of others, drawing inspiration from the range of alternatives piloted elsewhere. Policy-makers and practitioners already draw on the experiences and skills of their counterparts across Europe and beyond <sup>(14)</sup>. It is to developing such a European learning space that the present report hopes to contribute.

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<sup>(14)</sup> Several of the responses to the guidance survey referred to the fact that policies as well as strategies, tools, resources and training in delivering guidance services had been adapted from other countries. Much of this ‘borrowing’ seems to be as a result of bilateral agreements, and to depend on historic, linguistic or cultural ties between specific nations. Some countries most often sought for inspiration or assistance include Germany (on the part of Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania); France (French-speaking Belgium, the Czech Republic, Greece, Luxembourg, Poland); Denmark (Lithuania, Poland); Austria (Czech Republic, Luxembourg); the United Kingdom (Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia). Some countries have also adapted policies, practices, tools and resources from the USA and Canada (French-speaking Belgium, France, Latvia, Luxembourg). Increasingly, the exchange of successful practice is taking place on a multilateral basis, especially in the context of such EU-funded programmes as Leonardo.

## 2. Defining and interpreting guidance in Europe

*This section draws on the responses of the 29 countries involved in the guidance survey to develop a composite definition of guidance broadly applicable to all national contexts, and which will be used in relation to the different issues raised in the rest of the report. Questions on the what (what guidance is), the why (why guidance is offered), the where (in which settings guidance is offered), the who (who guidance services are delivered by) and the how (how such services are delivered) are briefly addressed, before being taken up in greater detail in subsequent sections of the report.*

### 2.1. The key ways in which guidance is defined

***Defining  
guidance  
simplifying  
choices leading  
to educational  
and occupational  
trajectories***

Guidance is defined in various ways across Europe (see Cedefop 1999, 2003, for instance). But essentially, the term is used to refer to a set of interrelated activities that have, as a goal, the structured provision of information and assistance to enable individuals and groups, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make choices on educational, training and occupational trajectories and to manage their life paths effectively. Often, guidance cannot be represented as a discrete activity or input, but tends to be embedded in other contexts, including learning activities of various kinds. Most of the guidance survey reports implicitly or explicitly conceptualise guidance as a pedagogical activity (see Table 2) <sup>(15)</sup> – a view they share with the Commission as the latter refers to guidance workers in a LLL context as learning facilitators who enable the acquisition of knowledge and competences by establishing a learning environment (2001a). If we had to draw a composite picture of guidance workers as represented in the different country reports, then counsellors promote a learning relationship by making available to clients useful and usable information about:

- (a) their own personal resources (abilities, interests, aspirations, ambitions, aptitudes – all of which can be clarified through an increasing range of assessment tools);

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<sup>(15)</sup> Most examples included in tables in this report are meant to illustrate ‘good’ or interesting examples of practice, though caution must be used in defining what is ‘good’, given that such a normative position tends to obscure the fact that successful practice is heavily dependent on context. The strategy of advertising ‘best practice’ should be placed within the context of the recent-and promising-policy instrument in the EU, i.e. the ‘open method of coordination’, which entails on-going national level experimentation, combined with EU-level monitoring, the exchange and publicising of good practice, and the activation of the social partners and civil society in policy formation, comparison and critique. The open method of coordination has increasingly served as a vehicle for policy development, particularly in the areas of employment policy and social inclusion policy (Overdevest, 2002).

- (b) educational, training and labour market opportunities (availability at local, regional, national and European levels; possible flows within and between pathways; options that each choice opens; equivalence in certification – including accreditation of prior experiential learning – as a passport to various courses and jobs; what different occupational families and individual jobs entail, both in the demands they make and the experiential and remunerative rewards they offer; and developing entrepreneurial and self-employment capacities).

Most importantly, guidance workers can provide training in the skills that clients need to integrate and manage this information, and to use it to clarify and further their life goals – though this particular input by counsellors was not highlighted to any great extent by respondents to the survey. Many did note, however, that as with all pedagogical relationships, there is an ethical dimension in delivering guidance services, where a professional code of conduct safeguards the client's best interests. This dimension is particularly strong when clients suffer from specific physical or social disadvantages. One of the most prominent images of guidance workers collectively portrayed by several of the country reports is that they are not simply technocratic functionaries serving as a vehicle for information dissemination <sup>(16)</sup>. Many in fact reported a discomfort when conflicts arose between the bureaucratic and the professional demands of their job, particularly in public employment offices. In the best of cases, guidance workers consider themselves as empowering and networked nodes, who use their information of – and contacts with – the education and labour market to ease the social inclusion of those at risk, and support all clients in crystallising and pursuing of life goals, in their search for more meaningful, fulfilling and dignified living, and in active citizenship.

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<sup>(16)</sup> A strong strand in the guidance/counselling tradition connects with critical humanistic approaches that have their roots in Enlightenment philosophy, and in critical theory in particular. Such a strand is predicated in three tenets. According to Aloni (1999), the first is philosophical, 'consisting of a conception of [the human] as an autonomous and rational being and a fundamental respect for all humans by virtue of being endowed with freedom of will, rational thinking, moral conscience, imaginative and creative powers'. The second tenet is sociopolitical, 'consisting of a universal ethics of human equality, reciprocity, and solidarity and a political order of pluralistic, just and humane democracy'. The third tenet is pedagogical, 'consisting in the commitment to assist all individuals to realise and perfect their potentialities and 'to enjoy', in the words of Mortimer Adler, 'as fully as possible all the goods that make a human life as good as it can be'.

Table 2: *Definitions of and roles for guidance*

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**Defining guidance in both the school and labour market sector in Greece and in French-speaking Belgium:**

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In Greece, Law 2525/1997 defines guidance in its contribution to educational goals and its relevance to addressing socioeconomic problems. Specifically, it charges not only guidance services but the whole school with the responsibility of helping students (a) explore and match their personal traits, abilities and skills, interests and plans for the future with contemporary opportunities and realities; (b) make wise decisions on their educational and vocational options; (c) learn about the world of work and the present working environment; and (d) learn how to find, process and use information. Royal Decree 405/1971, Article 29, establishes that in the labour market sector, the goals for guidance are to provide information on vocational training opportunities, to support young people and adults in making decisions regarding their training options, to assist them in finding placements in apprenticeships and continuous vocational training, to help clients develop job-seeking skills, and to place them in employment.

In French-speaking Belgium, a group of around 30 members from different sectors represented in the Education and Training Council produced the *Avis 78* about guidance, information and counselling in June 2002, and built on a 1992 Unesco document to define guidance as an activity which ‘enables individuals to become aware of their personal characteristics and to develop these in view of the choices that have to be made in education, training, and work, in all the different stages of their lives, where the development of the individual goes hand in hand with the responsibilities towards the community.’

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**Defining school guidance in Iceland:**

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A key report on guidance for the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture defined school guidance with reference to four main functions, namely: (a) preventive: with guidance staff carrying out research, referring, making suggestions of organisational changes, and offering preventive counselling to groups and individuals; (b) curative: with guidance staff assisting in finding solutions to personal problems that hinder individual pupils from gaining learning and growth from their educational experience; (c) informative: with guidance staff gathering and giving educational and vocational information, individually or through the career education programme in the school, either as a teacher or as a consultant to teachers; and (d) developmental: with guidance staff providing individual pupils with assistance in exploring educational attainment and vocational interests, and increasing understanding on how these elements come into consideration in the decision-making and career-planning process.

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## Defining guidance in the labour market in Portugal:

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Guidance in the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training – IEFP (Labour Ministry, Portugal) has, as a main objective, improvement of individual development through different intervention strategies which consider the needs and potential of each individual. This is achieved through:

- supporting the design and implementation of a personal and professional life project based on self-knowledge and on knowledge of opportunities in the surrounding environment. Guidance seeks to improve decision-making skills, as well as transition management skills;
  - promote acquiring or developing of attitudes and personal competences which expand the individual's abilities to relate to and act in socioeconomic scenarios marked by change;
  - support clients through educational counselling, developing interventions that target the behavioural and cognitive domains.
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***Terms used to describe providers of guidance services***

Countries used different terms to refer to the persons performing this complex and multidimensional activity called guidance. In the education sector, for instance, we often find reference to guidance counsellors (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland) <sup>(17)</sup>, information or documentation specialists (e.g. Greece), pedagogic advisers (e.g. Bulgaria), career education officers (e.g. Iceland), study counsellors (e.g. Finland), career path teachers and school godmothers (e.g. Czech Republic), learning path counsellors (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium) and education route officers (e.g. the Netherlands). In the labour market sector and in enterprises, those carrying out a guidance function can be referred to as employment counsellors/advisers, case managers (e.g. France, Greece, Malta), industrial psychologists (e.g. France), andragogues, defectologists (e.g. Slovenia), guidance technicians (e.g. Spain), skills auditors (e.g. France), mobility advisers (e.g. the Netherlands), mentors and coaches (e.g. Iceland), employment consultants (e.g. Finland), and portfolio officers (e.g. the Netherlands). Sometimes, these differences are not great and can be explained in peculiarities of translation from the mother tongue to English. Different terminology may also, however, signal different approaches to guidance, both in its role, and in what counsellors do. In England, for instance, the

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<sup>(17)</sup> Throughout the report, lists of countries illustrating the points being made are placed in brackets. In the report analysis phase, care was taken to be as comprehensive as possible in noting country clusters around trends and categories, however, for the purpose of this report only those countries that best exemplify a trend or a particular point are placed in brackets. This does not mean that the trend is absent from those countries not explicitly mentioned, simply that the tendency is particularly pronounced in those countries featured in the list.

government's attempt to draw a distinction between advice (referring to providing broad information and general advice) and guidance (referring to more in-depth interventions) was contested, because it was seen as an attempt to restructure the boundaries between individual and government responsibility, and as a strategy to ration resources.

***Distinguishing between educational and career guidance on the one hand, and personal counselling on the other***

In this report, an important terminological distinction is drawn between guidance on personal issues – often captured by using the word counselling, which denotes a more therapeutic function – and educational or career guidance. Many respondents to the guidance survey noted it was difficult to disentangle the two terms. This is partly because clients themselves do not necessarily draw the distinction between guidance for different aspects of life tasks which they experience holistically; partly because life challenges are complex affairs that impact on various overlapping concerns in a seamless fashion; and partly because guidance services targeting the different aspects of life concerns and transitions are often delivered by the same person or category of professional.

It is important, however, that for this survey, country experts were advised to focus on educational and occupational guidance, as far as this was possible <sup>(18)</sup>. Formalising the distinction, in the education sector, between guidance and counselling, has become an issue in some countries (e.g. Ireland, Malta, Norway), with some proposing to have two distinct categories of personnel catering for the different areas, each with its own training and certification route, delivering different, if overlapping, sets of competences. The Netherlands have already adopted this option. Most countries have however preferred to keep all three guidance functions together, providing a complementary array of specialised services to which a client can be referred (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Greece, Portugal). This debate is important because several countries have noted that personal counselling issues are crowding out career guidance (e.g. Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia). Norway's school counsellors report they spend as much as 80 % of their time on personal guidance. One reason for the focus on counselling may be that more and more young people play out their frustrations at school. The psychology background of many guidance workers in schools – and in many cases most are women – may also reinforce the focus on nurturing and therapeutic functions, against labour market guidance, particularly in schools.

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<sup>(18)</sup> The present report follows this focus, and uses the generic terms 'guidance' to refer to both educational and occupational guidance. When it is necessary to draw a distinction, the terms 'educational guidance', and 'career guidance' or 'occupational guidance', are employed.

## 2.2. Settings and roles for guidance

<b><i>Specification of roles and responsibilities of guidance services in legislative frameworks</i></b>	<p>In some European countries, guidance is defined as a right for all citizens, and is entrenched in law. CEE countries have only recently introduced references to guidance in their education or labour market legislative frameworks (e.g. Romania in 1995; Latvia in 1998, 1999 and 2002; Bulgaria in 1999 and 2001; Estonia and Hungary in 2000), because career guidance is innately linked to open market economic systems, and because much recent policy-making in these countries has been accession-driven, emulating good practice in older Member States. Some countries – such as Cyprus and Malta – do not have references to guidance in their laws yet, though they may have detailed service guidelines. As will be seen in Section 10, some laws only refer to guidance briefly, while others are quite detailed, contributing to defining roles and responsibilities.</p>
<b><i>Guidance-related activities in the education and labour market sectors</i></b>	<p>Many countries participating in the guidance review note that the key providers/funders of guidance services are Ministries of Education and Ministries of Labour. Other ministries are sometimes involved. In Flemish-speaking Belgium, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Culture, Youth and Civil Service, the Ministry of Economy, Foreign Policy and e-Government and the Ministry for Health and Welfare work alongside the Ministry of Education and Labour and assist in providing guidance services for special groups, including immigrants, refugees, disabled persons, and so on. In Finland, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health supports guidance services to special groups, including the handicapped, the mentally ill, drug abusers, and so on; Romania offers some of its guidance services under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Health; while the Czech Republic monitors guidance services offered by employers and employers' association through the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Most guidance provision, however, occurs in the education and labour market sectors, and much of the provision is catered for by the State, with the private sector having limited involvement. Increasingly, European countries report a wider range of settings for delivering guidance services, which they provide in an evergrowing variety of ways. By definition, guidance is becoming more widespread because of both demand (information and advice being increasingly needed to negotiate more complex and multivaried pathways) and supply (given the penetration of both ICT and other communications media in everyday lives).</p>
<b><i>Guidance provided by a wide array of workers</i></b>	<p>Guidance services are offered by a wide array of workers. Some have strong educational backgrounds, with foundation degrees in subjects that typically include psychology, education, social sciences, and economics. Increasingly, guidance practitioners follow up their undergraduate studies</p>

with specialised training in guidance, though this is far from being the case across all of Europe. Country reports note the knowledge base and range of competences required of guidance workers are broadening to reflect the educational, occupational and lifelong learning agendas in most countries. They also note that, increasingly, paraprofessional staff as well as various stakeholders are providing guidance services, partly in response to a heightened demand for service, and partly because ICT is changing the way services are delivered. All in all, there is a trend for guidance to be increasingly – if often implicitly – defined as a skilled profession demanding a specific and advanced knowledge and competence base.

***Guidance as a private good, serving individual interests***

Guidance has, in the past, has been criticised for helping to cool out categories of individuals and groups from educational pathways into shorter, vocationally-oriented tracks, thus contributing to class- and ethnic-based inequalities (Cicourel and Kitsuse, 1963; Watts, 1996b). Most country responses distance themselves from such a use of guidance, and instead centre their definition of – and goals for – the service around the needs of the individual. Sweden has guidelines for those working in compulsory schools specifically charging counsellors to work against any restrictions on the pupil’s choice of study or vocation based on gender or social or cultural background. Luxembourg opts for a view of guidance that helps individuals realise their potential, and to make satisfying educational and occupational choices. This, according to the Luxembourg survey response, is in contrast with the traditional view of guidance, whose aim was to sort and stream students and adjust them to the perceived realities of the labour market. The German respondents note that good guidance is always a ‘delicate balance between aspiration and realism’, and it is at its best when it ‘celebrates those aspirations which defeat supposed realities, and which are a dynamic force in the labour market’. In some countries (e.g. Denmark, Finland, France, Malta, Luxembourg, Portugal, Sweden), there is tension in the way guidance is defined in education, against the way it is defined in the labour market, with the former encouraging and highlighting the ‘aspirations’ of their clients, and the latter underscoring the ‘realism’ that clients must have when considering constrained options in employment.

Perhaps understandably, CEE countries are particularly firm in emphasising the priority of the individual over the needs of the social or economic system. For the Czech Republic, for instance, guidance has the responsibility of optimising opportunities for personal self-fulfilment when clients come to choose an ideal educational and career path, and providing them with strategies to deal with specific situations in their personal and occupational lives so that such self-fulfilment is attained.

***Guidance as a public good, serving public policy goals***

Despite a strong emphasis on the individual, however, all countries also noted that, as well as serving the individual, guidance had a responsibility to address several public policy objectives. In Portugal, for instance, career guidance is understood as ‘a means of assisting individuals in constructing and developing personal career plans involving finding employment or reemployment and career development satisfactory to the individual and society, thus facilitating the exercise of full citizenship’ (Ministry of Social Security and Labour). Danes, while carefully defining guidance as a ‘*soft* steering instrument’ where the individual is highly valued, and where the goal is to widen the range of personal choice, consider that in policy terms guidance can be seen in three main ways:

- (a) as a mechanism for making the education system work;
- (b) as a mechanism for managing the education system’s relationship with the labour market;
- (c) as a mechanism for supporting LLL and sustained employability for all.

The way guidance can contribute to the three public policy goals – learning, labour market efficiency and economic development, and social equity and inclusion – will be dealt with at length in the next section of this report.

### 3. Guidance and the challenges for public policy

*This section considers the way in which guidance can support public policy, focusing on three specific areas, namely lifelong learning goals, labour market and economic development goals, and social equity and social inclusion goals. It notes the increasing attractiveness of guidance for policy-makers, and the ever-growing range of services as well as initiatives in the field, highlighting its dynamic responses to the challenges posed by the knowledge-based society. The growing importance of guidance for public policy-makers.*

***The attractiveness of guidance for policy-makers***

The early introduction of guidance in several European countries suggests that public policy-makers have long recognised its usefulness in addressing policy challenges. Indeed, such recognition is signalled by most educational and career guidance activities being directly or indirectly funded by the State. Recently, however, the attraction of guidance as a measure to reach public policy goals has become even clearer. On requesting details of important developments over the past five years, most respondents to the guidance survey presented an impressive list of initiatives (see Table 3). In some cases the pace of change in guidance systems and provision is so rapid that some countries (e.g. France, Sweden) noted that within a year of writing the national report (i.e. by 2003), some aspects of the description had become outdated. Many initiatives reported in the country reports were launched and directly driven by Ministries of Education and/or Labour of the respective countries, and often with the support of EU programmes and initiatives. Other initiatives were taken by the social partners, community-based organisations, or by guidance professionals through their associations, often with the financial support of government. Partly in response to increased demand for services – Estonia, for instance, has seen a threefold increase in the number of students asking for guidance, while Latvia reports a 25 % increase in clients for its professional career counselling centre – but also to attain strategic goals, governments across Europe have invested more in guidance than before. Even with tight budgets, only a few countries involved in the guidance survey referred to significant cutbacks in the overall funding provided for guidance (e.g. Sweden reports a reduction of resources by 8 %; Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Poland note cost-cutting measures). Most reported an increase in the range and reach of services, though many also reported being concerned about the lack of adequate resources to support such momentum.

Governments invest in guidance because they are convinced that, besides being a private good, it is also a public good, in that it advances public policy goals for:

- (a) lifelong learning;
- (b) labour market and economic development;
- (c) social equity and inclusion.

Each of these is considered in turn below.

*Table 3: Guidance: a dynamic field in Europe*

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The following list of selected initiatives reported in the guidance survey gives a good sense of the dynamism in guidance in Europe, suggesting it has indeed become significant for addressing some of the key policy challenges that governments have to face:

- (a) promulgating of legal instruments promoting different aspects of career guidance (e.g. Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain);
  - (b) commissioning research and reports to investigate different aspects of guidance services, to improve them (e.g. Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Sweden);
  - (c) planning and implementing of reforms in guidance in education and/or labour market (e.g. Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, most CEE countries);
  - (d) extending guidance-related services in education (e.g. increase in school guidance staff in Iceland, Portugal; increasing service provision in Finland, France; developing the guidance-oriented school in Belgium, Greece, Denmark, Latvia, Portugal; introducing school-to-work issues across the curriculum in Austria, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia);
  - (e) strengthening the guidance function in public employment services (e.g. Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Portugal);
  - (f) extending (or consolidating) careers guidance services to new client groups, such as higher education students (e.g. French-speaking Belgium, Austria, Estonia, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania); students or registered unemployed with disabilities (e.g. Bulgaria, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia); those already in employment (e.g. Austria, Flemish-speaking Belgium, France, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Sweden, the United Kingdom); parents (e.g. Cyprus); ex-convicts (Denmark, Lithuania);
  - (g) improving access to services through regional provision (e.g. Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Spain);
  - (h) improving access to services, in practically all European countries, through ICT and Internet provision (see especially Finland, the Netherlands, Iceland, Sweden, the United Kingdom);
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- (i) developing new tools, such as aptitude testing services (e.g. France, Iceland, Poland, Romania);
  - (j) the shift to a tiered guidance service, encouraging clients to access information in a self-service mode, freeing up staff to engage in individual or group guidance sessions with those who have deeper needs (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom);
  - (k) drawing up professional qualification and service standards for career counsellors (e.g. Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia);
  - (l) increasing, across the board, opportunities for specialised initial and in-service courses, including courses offered at higher education level (e.g. France, Greece, Poland, Romania);
  - (m) establishing – or intensifying activities – career guidance associations (e.g. Austria, French-speaking Belgium, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania);
  - (n) improving cross-sectoral cooperation to provide a more effective service, and to make the best use of resources (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Hungary). EU initiatives such as Euroguidance networks, and funding projects through Leonardo and Phare programmes, have also improved cross-sectoral cooperation. Increasingly countries are embarking on strategies to build up an integrated career guidance system, through the establishment of national guidance forums or agencies (e.g. Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal).
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### 3.1. Lifelong learning goals

***Guidance as a strategy to ensure an adequate knowledge and skills base in the face of economic globalisation***

As noted earlier, the growing consensus across Europe is that, in economic globalisation, competitiveness can at least partly be maintained if the knowledge and skills base of the population is continually consolidated, extended and renewed <sup>(19)</sup>. Hence European governments are keen to ensure that as many citizens as possible remain engaged in education and training. For many governments, this is a sure way to upgrade skills and competence levels and to improve the human resource base of the country through developing people via lifelong career planning. Guidance therefore has an important role to play in national strategies for improving LLL, and is considered as both a private and

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<sup>(19)</sup> There are conflicting voices in the debate on LLL and the ‘education gospel’-as Grubb (2002a) refers to it-that it promotes, particularly on the assumption that economic success necessarily entails a high ability society. There is a low skills path to development (Brown, Green and Lauder, 2001), and numerous industry sectors-including the knowledge-intensive-not only retain but generate low-knowledge, low-skill, neo-Taylorised jobs simultaneously with knowledge-rich jobs (Borghans and de Grip, 2001; Casey, 2002).



public good as it contributes to both personal and social gains. This reasoning has been reinforced, in many European countries, by the national and Europe-wide debate that followed publication of the Commission's *Memorandum on lifelong learning*, where, as noted in Section 1, guidance issues feature centrally. Indeed, several country responses made direct reference to the memorandum, and reiterated many of the points raised there.

***Guidance's contribution to improving the efficiency of the education system***

Countries voiced their expectations for guidance in different ways and with different emphases in the responses to the questionnaire. They look to guidance services to improve the efficiency of their education systems. This could be attained through:

- (a) reducing failure rates and the number of student drop-outs (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark (see Table 4), Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain);
- (b) accelerating progress through the education system and having shorter graduation times, especially by reducing course transfers (e.g. Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Norway);
- (c) helping students make the appropriate choices between different subjects and school pathways, particularly increasingly individualised and diversified learning opportunities in post-compulsory education (all countries);
- (d) promoting more in-depth learning, particularly by using experiential learning approaches (e.g. Cyprus, Finland, Malta, Romania).

*Table 4: Denmark's strategy to tackle school drop-out through guidance*

In 1993, the Danish Ministry of Education implemented an 'education for all' policy which set itself the goal of having 90 to 95 % of all young people finish upper secondary education, with the rest being guided to a self-supporting life style. In the 'education for all' concept, educational and labour market policies are linked together, and guidance and counselling services are seen as a safety-net for 'at risk' young people who are likely to shun, or drop out of, non-compulsory education. Part of the overall guidance strategy is to make sure that young people about to leave compulsory education understand the value of further education. Another is to generalise the use of individual education plans for all young people, to improve students' ability to make more conscious and well-founded choices. In turn, this increases levels of motivation and decreases the drop-out rate and the number of inappropriate course choices. Individual education plans are supported by an 'education book' in which students record their achievements and their developing interests and aims. The plans have to be signed by the student, a parent, and the guidance counsellor. Municipalities are legally obliged to make contact with young people not in education and to offer them guidance at least twice a year up to the age of 19.

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**Guidance services promote a tighter link between education and work**

Several countries also look to guidance services to promote a tighter fit between education and work. This they attempt to do through:

- (a) teaching students about work, either directly through extra-curricular seminars (e.g. Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Portugal) or through a timetabled career education programme (e.g. Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Romania, Spain); or indirectly, by providing resources to regular teachers who address work-related issues in the subjects they teach (e.g. Greece, Iceland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom);
  - (b) coaching in such transition skills as writing a cv or handling interviews (most countries);
  - (c) providing a structured exposure to work for learning purposes, largely through entrepreneurship schemes (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, Malta, Norway), and work shadowing or work experience programmes (e.g. Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden, Romania, the United Kingdom);
  - (d) boosting recruitment to vocational options at upper secondary level, to address skills bottlenecks (e.g. French-speaking Belgium, Malta, Norway (see Table 5);
  - (e) raising the number of students who continue in further and higher education, particularly in areas where there is a perceived shortage (e.g. Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom);
  - (f) promoting ‘soft skills’ (communication skills, teamwork, creativity, etc.) that are increasingly required by employers (e.g. Belgium, Iceland, Finland, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom).
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*Table 5: Addressing mismatches in Norway*

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Norway carried out an evaluation of its school system in the 1994 reform of the upper secondary school reform. One emerging concern is the mismatch between the interest shown by young people in applying for vocational courses and the skewed gender distribution in the areas of study in upper secondary education. Because of this, in 1997 the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs initiated a focus on educational and vocational guidance in lower and upper secondary education, for which a process-oriented guide *Ungdom i valg* (‘choices for young people’) was produced with a booklet for pupils. Besides this, national education offices prepared action plans to strengthen the counsellors’ knowledge of upper secondary education, the *YoU* database was developed and the project *Bevisste utdanningsvalg* (conscious educational choices) was implemented.

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***Helping exploit Europe-wide study opportunities through guidance***

Guidance also has an important role to play in helping clients exploit the widening opportunities for study and work in Europea <sup>(20)</sup>. The Swedish compulsory school curriculum guidelines specifically state, for instance, that the school should strive to ensure all pupils are informed of opportunities for further education not only in Sweden, but elsewhere. European countries – to varying degrees depending on their status inside or outside the EU – take part in mobility programmes via Socrates, Leonardo, Tempus and Phare, and have set up structures to provide relevant information and advice. Member States and ACCs are linked in the Euroguidance network, as well as the web-based portal Ploteus. They may also have set up a coordinating structure for all mobility activities, such as Finland with its Centre for International Mobility (CIMO). In Flemish-speaking Belgium, the long-standing career fair (‘SID-IN’) has taken a more European character, providing information on study possibilities across the EU, as well as on the equivalence of certificates.

### **3.2. Labour market efficiency and economic development goals**

***Policy-makers expect guidance services to contribute to several labour market policy objectives***

Governments expect guidance services to address a whole range of labour market issues, to improve labour market outcomes and efficiency, and to support economic development goals. Responses to the questionnaire on such policy goals, while overlapping, can be grouped under several headings. Thus, countries look to guidance to:

- (a) address labour shortages and mismatches between labour supply and demand (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland (see Table 6), Sweden, the United Kingdom);
- (b) get as many adults back into learning and training as possible (e.g. Sweden’s five-year adult education initiative, the largest such campaign in Swedish history, launched in 1997; also French-speaking Belgium, the Czech Republic, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom);
- (c) improve labour mobility (e.g. Austria, Romania, Spain);

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<sup>(20)</sup> Student mobility is a major phenomenon, within Europe and the world. Ute Lanzendorf and Ulrich Teichler (2002) report that in the latter half of the 1990s, the number of foreign students in EU Member States coming from other Member States grew by 40 % reaching nearly 270 000 in 1999/2000. Further, with almost 490 000 students from outside the EU, the number of non-EU students studying in Europe had increased by approximately 15 % during the same period.

- (d) help prevent, or at least reduce, unemployment (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Germany, Spain, most CEE countries);
- (e) reduce the effects of labour market destabilisation (e.g. Denmark, most CEE countries);
- (f) help individuals adjust to change and uncertain futures (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, Luxembourg), as well as to changes in work patterns such as atypical work contracts, job swapping, and so on (e.g. Finland);
- (g) assist active labour market policies by helping reduce individual dependency upon income support (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Spain);
- (h) help deal with the effects of an ageing society, or in reducing early retirement (e.g. Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands);
- (i) help exploit available employment opportunities in the European economic space (e.g. Finland, Malta, Sweden);
- (j) support the notion of a lifelong career, as opposed to a lifelong job (e.g. Norway, Poland, the United Kingdom);
- (k) increase job satisfaction (e.g. Luxembourg).

***The special appeal of guidance for supporting labour market and economic goals in CEE countries***

Several labour market and economic development issues to which guidance services are expected to respond was highlighted by CEE countries, either in addition to the ones referred to above, or because they applied to their situation with a heightened degree of urgency. Thus, several CEE countries noted the challenge for their public employment services to work with the increasing number of unemployed, for whom the experience was a new one in the transition from a planned to a market economy. Similarly, CEE countries, more than other European countries, are experiencing rapid transformations of their economies, so that guidance services are called to assist in promoting new training and retraining pathways for both young and older workers, to encourage the latter to respond to new qualification requirements, and to develop appropriate skills profiles. This is particularly pressing given the expected new opportunities upon accession.

*Table 6: Guidance and human resource development in Poland*

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In Poland, the *national strategy for employment growth and human resources development* of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, published in January 2000, declared its intention to develop guidance to attain its objectives. It aimed specifically to:

- (a) add career counselling to the overall school goals at every level of education;
  - (b) introduce the principle of continuity of services in planning and career development;
  - (c) increase availability of career information for youth and adults;
  - (d) integrate career counselling systems for adults and young people;
  - (e) ensure high quality of individual services for career counselling by introducing uniform standards of services;
  - (f) ensure ongoing improvement of career counselling methods and information materials simplifying career planning for individuals;
  - (g) create a system of training and vocational development in career counselling;
  - (h) raise social awareness of the importance of continuing individual career planning aimed at improving employability on the changing labour market.
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### 3.3. Social equity and inclusion goals

#### *The role of guidance in helping attain social equity and inclusion goals in education...*

Responses to the questionnaire survey also indicated that several countries hoped to achieve social equity and inclusion goals through propitious use of guidance services, both in education and the labour market. In education, many argued that guidance could help identify and remotivate underachieving students, significantly lowering drop-out rates and catching those who slip through the net to move them back into education and training to improve their chances of labour market integration (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Slovenia, Spain, Latvia, Norway, Romania). Some, like the United Kingdom through its 'focusing agenda', have directed their services to cater for the needs of the disadvantaged and at risk to such an extent that other, regular students might be missing out on their entitlement. Similar concerns have been expressed in Spain. In contrast, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic were the only European countries to promote guidance for another sort of 'minority group', those with special gifts and talents. Several countries have programmes to encourage female students to consider courses and employment traditionally associated with males, thus addressing the problem of gender segmentation in the labour market.

#### *...and in the labour market*

Guidance services in the labour market are, in most European countries, often based on catering for the needs of marginalised groups and the disadvantaged, though concerns are also expressed that some of these categories are the most reluctant to use administrative services (e.g. France, Slovenia). Such groups include young people who leave school without any qualifications, and who are neither at school nor at work (all countries), long-term unemployed (all countries), those rendered vulnerable because of the restructuring of the enterprise they work for (e.g. Austria, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom), women returners (e.g. Czech Republic, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Spain), those living in remote areas (e.g. Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Spain), the disabled (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Romania, Spain), ethnic minorities, immigrants and asylum seekers (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden), gypsies (Czech Republic, Romania), prisoners and ex-prisoners (e.g. Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania), drug abusers (e.g. Finland), ex-servicemen (e.g. Denmark, Germany, Greece, Lithuania), and prostitutes (e.g. Italy). A common theme across many country reports is that, as in education, groups not considered to be 'at risk' are not being adequately catered for. Service gaps typically include young people and adults who are neither jobseekers nor students, employed workers needing information and advice on job mobility, and older workers. Most CEE reports also refer to guidance as a strategy for poverty reduction.

## 4. Meeting the guidance needs of young people

*This section looks at the various ways in which guidance services are trying to respond more effectively to the needs of young people at school. It first focuses on compulsory education, where guidance services are usually offered at the lower secondary level in a rich variety of ways including individual and group interviews, as well as input in and through the curriculum, and through experiential learning strategies. It then considers the special guidance needs of young people who drop out of school early, and who are therefore at risk of being marginalised in both training and work. Finally, it looks at guidance in higher education, where the challenge to cater for an increasingly diverse student population, in a setting where links between courses and occupations are becoming ever more complex, is becoming more pressing.*

### 4.1. The guidance needs of young people in schools

***The traditional mode of delivering guidance services at school*** One of the main settings for delivering guidance services is – and has been for a long time – the school, and indeed, that is where young people are most likely first to come across formally-provided guidance. Traditionally, school guidance services were likely to be concentrated at lower secondary level, targeted at students making choices about subject cluster that opened educational tracks which, in turn, led to groups or families of occupations. Given the lack of permeability between pathways in traditional education systems, such decisions were often irrevocable, high-stake ones, and guidance was often delivered based on one-to-one personal interviews at the key points where the educational system branched off into different tracks <sup>(21)</sup>. Little, if any, educational or occupational guidance was offered at primary school level, and when further and higher education was not yet open to the masses, there were few guidance services. Despite the many guidance systems across Europe, this section will show that most countries have moved away from this traditional model of guidance provision, extending its reach to the different school levels, and providing services in a richer variety of ways.

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<sup>(21)</sup> If we accept Boudon's (1974) elegant model to explain how social inequalities are created through educational systems, which according to him are exacerbated the more cut-off points there are, then guidance provided at such junctures is of great significance to reinforce-or to challenge-institutionalised reproduction forces.

***Changes in pathways into education and training question the usefulness of the traditional model of guidance***

In Section 3, we noted that guidance across Europe is marked by a sense of dynamism and change, with many countries introducing reforms in services in education and the labour market. A key impetus is also that lifelong learning is pivotal to the economic prosperity of individual nations and Europe, and such a conviction has important implications for restructuring educational and training systems. In most countries, learning systems are becoming more open, more flexible, and more closely linked. Young people in compulsory and especially post-compulsory education, as well as adults whether employed or unemployed, now have an increasing range of pathways into learning and training. In many countries, the mix-and-match options for access into further education and training are myriad, offering possibilities of full-time and part-time learning, delivered on site or at a distance, separate from or combined with work commitments, at times and via pedagogical methods most suitable for the client. Most importantly, traditional – and largely arbitrary – obstacles to further education are being eradicated, through such practices as accrediting prior learning that recognises experience and real competence. As access to education and training becomes more open and democratic, and as options multiply and become more complex, so too should young people and adults have ready access to transparent and timely information, supported where appropriate by guidance, so their choices are sound and beneficial to them.

***Guidance services at primary school are missing***

Many European countries involved in the survey of policies for career guidance have embarked on restructuring their school-based guidance services to bring them more in line with the needs of a learning society. Notions of lifelong engagement in education and training as well as lifelong careers (rather than lifelong jobs) logically require forms of guidance services that accompany all citizens throughout life, to be drawn upon when required, depending on the information and advice needs of the user, and the opportunities in the employment and training market. It has been argued that the skills required to manage a ‘life career’ in a learning society, as well as the personal stance that needs to be adopted, should be inculcated early on in a schooling (Sternberg, 1997). Such skills generally include a strong ‘meta-cognitive’ dimension, i.e. the ability to learn how to learn – a complex set of competences that enable individuals to identify their own learning needs, and to manage their own learning (Walbert and Paik, 2000). The image is that persons who take control of their own learning, are knowledgeable about the resources around them, and know where to get information and advice to transform service offers into opportunities that further their life goals. Such skills are particularly



invaluable for managing careers later in life <sup>(22)</sup>. Clearly, guidance has much to offer, particularly as school-based providers are often trained to help students overcome learning difficulties, and to coach study skills.

Few European countries, however, reported the presence of formally established guidance services at ‘primary’ school <sup>(23)</sup>. Those that have – such as the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Iceland, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain – stress psychological approaches that are curative and remedial in nature. Special help is offered to students experiencing difficulties, rather than as part of an overall strategy to encourage sound lifelong learning habits in all pupils, and the skills to manage their progression in learning and work throughout their lives. An initiative by the Greek Pedagogical Institute is particularly promising since it has developed guidance materials, aimed at students from kindergarten up to Grade 12, which teachers can integrate into their lesson plans. Work on career education in primary schools has also been introduced in some countries (e.g. Czech Republic, Denmark). In the Netherlands, some primary schools have introduced guidance-oriented portfolio systems. In Belgium there has been a shift from a predominantly psychological approach in caring for the child, to one that is more aware of, and responsive to, the effects of social, economic and cultural backgrounds in the individual’s progression through learning.

***Many guidance services are still focused on lower secondary level***

Guidance services are offered most intensively at lower secondary level, often during the last two or three years of compulsory schooling, when choices on subject clusters are normally made in most national systems of education. However, there is a clear trend across the 29 countries reviewed to expand guidance services vertically across all grade levels of lower and upper secondary school, so that it is no longer concentrated at particular cut-off points, but is developmental in orientation. An illustrative case is Finland where, in 2002, the National Board of Education issued new national curriculum guidelines which entitled students to access to guidance services throughout their secondary education, where previously guidance was only offered during the last three grades of comprehensive schooling.

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<sup>(22)</sup> Recent work on human capital (OECD, 2002) suggests that such career management skills may play an important role in economic growth. The OECD study suggests that less than half of earnings variation in OECD countries can be accounted for by educational qualifications and readily measurable skills. A significant part of the remainder may be explained by people’s ability to build and manage their skills, including career planning, job-search and other career-management skills.

<sup>(23)</sup> Different national education systems have different ways of defining ‘primary’ education—for Denmark and Slovenia, for instance, the primary education cycle lasts up to the age of 15.

***The difficulty of maintaining school guidance services that are based exclusively or mainly on personal interviews***

In most countries, individual, face-to-face guidance still predominates service delivery. Particularly in ACCs and some other European States (e.g. in the education sector in France, Iceland, Portugal, Luxembourg), this may largely be because many guidance staff have a background in psychology, which favours therapeutic, one-to-one approaches, often aided by psychometric testing and assessment. Many respondents noted the increasing impossibility of guaranteeing student entitlement to services, given staff resources, if student guidance needs were only handled through personal interviews. In some countries, resource allocation is worked out guidance staff-to-student ratios. Typically, the staff-to-student ratio is high (e.g. in Cyprus, Romania and Sweden it can be as high as 1:800; in Bulgaria, Ireland and Malta it is 1:500; in the Netherlands it is 1:300-400; while in Finland, it is 1:272, with trade unions finding this unacceptable and lobbying to bring down the ratio to 1:200). In others, the measure is the time formally allocated for guidance activities per week, which can be as low as one to three hours (e.g. the Czech Republic). Personal guidance has limitations other than those imposed by counsellor-to-student ratios. While the focus on individual self-fulfilment is positive, with guidance as an intervention in constructing occupational identity based on individual characteristics and aspirations, there is a danger that such an approach may obscure the way social and gender experiences structure desires and trajectories.

Group guidance and career education, delivered in, through, or outside the formal curriculum, helps the link between the personal and the social in the decision-making process, besides ensuring wider access to services. Such an approach is helped when, as in the United Kingdom, and to a lesser extent in Hungary and Malta, a room especially dedicated to guidance activities, furnished with open display units and equipped with relevant information in print and electronic formats, is available in schools or guidance centres contracted to service schools, as is the case in Flemish-speaking Belgium. Increasingly, the emergent model for career guidance provision is one where face-to-face assistance by guidance counsellors is only one element in a programmed approach to career development and decision-making. It also includes group guidance organised around specific themes and issues, career education curriculum delivery, ICT-based assistance, experiential learning in work places and communities, and extensive use of community members such as parents, employers, trade union organisations, and alumni.

***The increasing attraction of providing career education in and across the curriculum***

Introducing or reinforcing career education in or across the curriculum to supplement personal interviews was widely reported in the guidance survey <sup>(24)</sup>. The ‘school-to-work’ or ‘transition’ curriculum, as it has sometimes been referred to [though this is a limited model: many career education programmes start long before the school-leaving stage], may entail several elements, often including teaching about work and further education and training routes, self-awareness, and such transition ‘lifeskills’ as decision-making, self-presentation in curriculum vitae and selection interviews, and so on (van Esbroeck, 1997; Sultana, 1997). For reasons noted earlier, most systems target the career education curriculum to students in the last two to three years of lower secondary, though this is questionable given the increasingly high rates of students moving into further education, and evidence of the early formation of key attitudes to self and the world of work (suggesting the need for early intervention). As noted earlier, guidance services for younger students focus on helping them manage the transition from primary school and adapt to the different institutional culture and work demands of secondary schooling (e.g. Cyprus, Italy, Malta, Portugal, the United Kingdom). In stratified education systems which offer different pathways to students according to their academic achievement, those streamed in vocationally-oriented tracks are more likely to experience a career education programme than others, who might get less overall exposure, or percentage of time dedicated to occupational, against educational, decision-making (e.g. Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands). There are instances, however, where students in VET are less needy of career education and guidance since their occupational destinations are considered to be tightly linked to the skills or trades area they have already chosen (e.g. Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia).

***Models of curriculum-based career education delivery***

Four models of curriculum-based career education delivery can be discerned from the country responses, with some countries adopting more than one model simultaneously. First is offering career education as a separate subject in the curriculum, by formally allocating space in the weekly or semestrial timetable (e.g. Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Romania and Spain). Another is embedding career education within a more broadly-based subject, often social studies or personal and social education (e.g. Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland).

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<sup>(24)</sup> This stands in contrast to trends in the USA, for instance, where, according to Grubb (2002, p. 14), renewed stress on academic subjects and on high-stakes accountability measures, as well as the decline of traditional forms of VET have led to a diminishing priority being given to career education in the formal curriculum.

Third is for aspects of career education to appear in most or all the subjects of the curriculum (e.g. Denmark, Greece). Fourth is to have the career programme delivered through seminars and workshops (e.g. France, Malta, Poland), that may be addressed to same-age groups of students, or be theme-based and open to students from across several grades. Naturally, in decentralised education systems it is not uncommon for schools in the same country to choose different models for delivering the career education programme (e.g. Austria, Flemish-speaking Belgium, the Czech Republic, Spain, the United Kingdom), or for the same school to use more than one of these four approaches. Career education may be compulsory, often depending on the policy of the school and the extent to which management values the area. Increasingly, however, national curriculum guidelines mandate career education programmes, occasionally leaving it up to the school to work out the details of provision. This is the case with Flemish-speaking Belgium, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. Other countries do not impose an obligation on schools (e.g. Ireland, Luxembourg).

***Cross-departmental development and management of the career education curriculum***

Where the career education programme is offered across the curriculum, countries exhibit a range of modalities in which the area is directed and managed. In some cases, regular teachers are simply invited to include career-related themes in their subject, and the decision on the extent to which they do, and how, is left up to them. Guidance survey responses clearly show that often the outcomes are far from satisfactory, with teachers failing to help students see connections between the different elements of the programme that are dealt with in separate subjects (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden). Other countries have a much tighter context for such provision, with specialist guidance staff offering guidelines as well as resources to their colleagues, so the career education programme is delivered in a more integrated manner (Greece, Iceland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom). In Flemish-speaking Belgium, the Centre for Educational Guidance (CLB) can provide assistance to schools in implementing cross-curricular themes related to educational guidance.

Cross-departmental delivery strategies require a tradition of collegial, school-based curriculum development that is generally still missing in ACCs, most of which are accustomed to centralised curriculum planning. Few ACCs adopt a ‘whole-school approach’ to guidance. In other European countries, the best practice comes from contexts where students are encouraged or required to keep portfolios to record their career-related learning and experiences (e.g. the ‘job passport’ in Austria, the ‘education log’ in Denmark, or the ‘career choice passport’ in Germany). This

encourages students to connect what may initially appear to be disparate inputs by different teachers, and to reflect upon them. Luxembourg highlights that, even in countries where guidance services are still relatively weak, specific innovative projects in one or more schools, within school development planning, can lead to a whole-school approach that sees guidance at the heart of the school's *raison d'être*. In Flemish-speaking Belgium, the cross-curricular approach to guidance is underpinned and followed up in several ways: not only is curricular coordination in relation to guidance mandated by educational law, but it also serves as a quality criteria when inspectors are evaluating schools. It has become so central to defining guidance that schools strive to ensure it is present and occasionally it has become the focus of school-based curriculum development projects and research.

*Table 7: Teaching for entrepreneurship in Malta*

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The Malta cooperatives in schools (Scoops) initiative teaches secondary school students about work in an experiential manner, complementing other aspects of work education provided across the curriculum in such subjects as social studies, religion, home economics, and personal and social education. It provides students with an opportunity to organise themselves into cooperative units to run, manage and market their own creative projects, and develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to help them identify their occupational strengths and their potential contribution to the local labour market, and create for themselves a viable self-employment option. They are supported by a team of mentors, specially trained in setting up and running cooperatives. The curricular goals for the Scoops project are the following:

**Knowledge of:** the meaning and value of work; the duties and rights of the worker; safety regulations; the global economy and its effect on the local economy; the social and political history of the Maltese worker; workers unions and movements; the Maltese cooperative movement; social benefits of different categories of employees; the taxation system; the range of job vacancies available and their requirements; finding a vacancy; subsidies and financial schemes; and work ethics.

**Skills:** working in groups and self-control at critical times; planning and organisation; developing individual potential; discussing issues and negotiating deadlocks; time management; project management; evaluation of individual activities; presenting projects or business plans; finding solutions to problems at work; concentration; detecting dangers and concern for safety at work; interpreting regulations, instructions, orders and directives; choice of career; handling an interview; writing a curriculum vitae and presenting a portfolio; financial management of earnings; keeping up to date with one's field of work; preparing for temporary unemployment; awareness and experience of information technology; literacy and numeracy.

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**Attitudes:** appreciate that business requires long-term planning; appreciate that motivation in education is important for a future career; generate respect for all trades and professions; appreciate the need of workers to join groups; appreciate the importance of accountability and initiative; appreciate lifelong education.

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***The value of work experience in helping students understand the occupational implications of their educational choices***

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Many countries provide ‘work shadowing’, ‘work experience’, ‘work visits’ and forms of work simulation to connect their career education programmes more directly and experientially to the world of work. Of course, many secondary level students are already involved in the ‘twilight economy’ of after-school, weekend and holiday labour, but the jobs they hold, while helping to develop various skills, serve more the purpose of ‘earning’ than of ‘learning’. Structured experiences provided by the school, when well planned and followed up, hold great potential in helping young people understand some of the occupational implications of the educational choices they make, and aspects of working life more generally (Miller, Watts and Jamieson, 1991). Several countries reported that students have between one to two week supervised work placements or ‘work tasters’ prior to making their choice of subjects. This is the case in Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany (see Table 8), Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Other countries, notably Austria, French-speaking Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands and Slovakia have similar, though perhaps less extensive, provision. While in many cases the organisation of such activities is not mandatory, and depends on the initiatives taken by individual guidance staff or schools, there are instances where there are strong central policy leads in this direction. Estonia and Latvia, for instance, organise an annual ‘work shadowing day’ at national level.

There is some evidence that these kinds of activities are on the increase, and not only in vocational school settings. Cyprus, for instance, has introduced a one week placement in work contexts for Grade 11 students, and is planning to introduce summer work placements as well. Lithuania has introduced 15 hours of work experience at Grade 11 and another 15 hours at Grade 12. The Moratti draft law is proposing the introduction of work experience in Italian schools. Other countries have developed school programmes that encourage students to set up businesses, helping them learn entrepreneurial skills experientially under the guidance or mentorship of established members of the business community. Latvia, Estonia and Ireland, for instance, participate in junior achievement. Ireland and the United Kingdom have the young enterprise scheme, while Malta has also developed the Scoops (Coops in schools) initiative (see Table 7). Sweden and the United Kingdom use mentoring schemes to match adults with young people for various purposes, including coaching in relation to career plans.

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Table 8: *Work experience programmes in Germany*

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**Workplace visits and work experience in Germany:**

Exploratory visits in enterprises are an integral part of vocational orientation in all *Länder*, and generally involve an element of work experience. Companies are increasingly appreciating the value of this form of contact between schools and industry, and there are a growing number of partnerships between schools and enterprises. Preparation for workplace visits and work experience generally takes place during the key vocational lessons, but they also increasingly feature in other subjects, such as chemistry, physics, German or geography. As a rule, practical placements last between one and three weeks, and several *Länder* have published comprehensive teaching guides and didactic support material on practical placements. There are extensive health and safety provisions for legal and insurance-related reasons. In some cases, practical placements can also be spent in other European countries, with the aim of making pupils familiar with the practical side of vocational training and work in other Member States of the European Union.

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***Exogenous and endogenous models of career guidance provision***

Guidance services and career education programmes are delivered in schools in one of three ways. They can be wholly school-based, with one or more guidance counsellors working on their own or with a team of professionals that could include psychologists, social workers, and others. Alternatively, they can be provided by an agency based outside the school, which can either be public or private. Finally, there can be a partnership in service provision, which includes both school-based and external input. It appears that the third model is the one proving to be most attractive in several European countries.

Those systems which are closer to the wholly school-based models (e.g. Malta) run the risk of having tenuous links with the labour market, and tend to privilege personal and educational rather than career guidance. On the other hand, there were several examples of school guidance systems that call on external agencies to provide career guidance. Latvia, for instance, refers students to professional career counselling centres; in Lithuania, guidance is delivered to students by labour market training and counselling personnel; students in the Czech Republic, Germany and Luxembourg get guidance service support from the public employment service; in the United Kingdom, strong external support is provided by the careers service (or in England by Connexions), a service that helps students in the transition to work. Such external support from providers who are more knowledgeable about the labour market may help students develop a truer picture of the opportunities and constraints in the world of work. They are also more likely to focus on providing occupational guidance. But there may be shortcomings with this model. Providers may

emphasise realism at the expense of encouraging aspirations. They may also inadvertently give the message that career guidance is a ‘frill’, a mere addendum to the more serious business of schooling, and unconnected to core curricular concerns. These risks are reduced if external agencies are seen as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, school-based provision.

***Partnership models in school-based guidance provision***

Practically all country reports noted the trend to reinforce school-based guidance provision by involving external partners. In-house partners include form/class teachers and regular subject teachers who teach aspects of the embedded career education curriculum. In some cases (e.g. Latvia) the deputy director in charge of extra-curricular activities has responsibilities for guidance as well. External stakeholder input generally involves employers and representatives of employer organisations, and (less often) of trade unions. They provide information – which they may present in person, or through materials that are print-based or accessible by electronic means and on the web – about different aspects of the world of work during seminars, career fairs, and other curricular and extracurricular activities. Fairs, in particular, have, across most European countries, become an important manifestation of such partnerships, and are events that give high visibility to guidance in the community. Employers are also involved in offering students work experience/shadowing placements. Other forms of input are made by the community, including parents, alumni, and members of non-governmental organisations, all of whom may be asked to speak about their own occupational experiences, as well as to focus on specific aspects they have knowledge of in the world of work. Some countries have been particularly successful in forging such partnerships (e.g. Austria, French-speaking Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom). In many others, however, the involvement of external partners is sporadic and dependent on the personal initiatives of individuals, rather than part of any institutionalised mechanism for coordination, delivery and policy-making.

## **4.2. The guidance needs of out-of-school and at-risk youth**

***Strategies to integrate young people into education, training and employment***

While guidance services at school are generally offered comprehensively to all, there is also targeted provision for those students who are considered to be ‘at risk’. These typically include those who leave school early without any qualifications, and who thus find themselves constantly on the brink between unemployment and unskilled, low paid work, if not petty criminal activity. While several education ministries across Europe



have striven to cater for such students – many have set up second chance schools – guidance services have not been particularly successful in developing effective strategies to respond to the needs of such young people. As the case of Slovenia suggests, this may be partly because guidance services are associated by such youths with the system they resist or have abandoned – which is why the innovative use in Flemish-speaking Belgium of peer guidance counsellors, particularly when these themselves are ex-school drop-outs, may be particularly promising.

The various country responses suggest that the aim of reintegrating such young people within education and/or training programmes as quickly as possible is more likely to be attained if the service is offered outside school, but in cooperation with it, either by public employment services, or by community associations with which young people are more likely to identify and feel at home. Public employment services in several countries involved in the survey (e.g. France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Sweden), many of them acting under a common understanding of the problem as articulated within the European employment strategy, have adopted a broadly similar approach based on early intervention. At-risk youth are offered a range of individualised approaches where personal, educational and occupational guidance are woven together, and where prevocational programmes – including courses in basic literacy, self-confidence building, and job seeking – help insert clients into training, and eventually into jobs <sup>(25)</sup>. Often such interventions are supported by the European Social Fund.

Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own futures by drawing up an individual action plan, and often are obliged to work through this with a guidance officer as part of a mutual obligation arrangement. Such early intervention is mandatory in some countries (e.g. Denmark, Italy, Sweden), where the relevant municipal authorities are obliged by law to make contact with, and offer guidance to, young people who have dropped out of schooling and lack any formal qualifications. In the best cases, public employment services as well as community associations work hand-in-hand with guidance staff from schools to ensure that resources are pooled in the interests of young people at risk.

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<sup>(25)</sup> It is important to note that this is a deficit approach to at-risk youth, assuming that the failure to be integrated in the labour market is caused principally, if not wholly, by their own lack of specific attributes. There are, of course, other approaches to youth unemployment, which focus on demand rather than supply and therefore on economic and labour market deficits (e.g. Wolf, 2002).

### 4.3. The guidance needs of higher education students

***The increasing need for guidance services at the tertiary education level***

Several countries note that higher education students have, over the past decade or so, greatly increased, and have consequently become a much more heterogeneous group than before. They are no longer all the same age, with the same basic abilities and the same orientation to learning, as they were when universities were elite institutions, catering for about 2 % of the population (Halsey, 1991). Increasingly, their age, experience and background vary, and it has become more necessary to provide a much broader range of guidance services to meet the growing diversity of student needs. In a Europe which actively promotes student mobility – through such programmes as Socrates and Leonardo, the European credit transfer system (ECTS), and the harmonisation of the degree structure as part of the Bologna process – foreign/exchange students are increasingly present on campuses, and have special guidance needs which also have to be attended to.

In addition, the number of higher education establishments has increased, both in quantity and in type of institution, to cater for more students who have different expectations from higher learning programmes. Many institutions have also adopted modular structures of course delivery, giving students a great deal of flexibility in designing their own programme of studies, for their own learning needs and occupational goals. Such individualised pathways make the links between courses and the graduate labour market more complex. All this diversity and extended opportunity both create challenges for career guidance, and make it more necessary and relevant.

***Developments in career guidance provision at tertiary education level***

Country responses from across Europe show that guidance services tertiary education have either already been stepped up (e.g. the French SCUIOs – the joint university information and guidance services), or are being developed. Germany, for instance, has passed a Framework Act for Higher Education which requires institutions of higher education, including universities and *Fachhochschulen*, to inform students and applicants of the opportunities and conditions of study and on the content, structure and requirements of study courses, and to assist students by providing subject-oriented advice. Many German institutions of higher learning have established central student counselling services, while 50 out of about 350 universities have set up their own careers services to ease the transition between study and graduate employment. Guidance staff in the Nordic countries have established the Nordic forum for higher education career services to help their own professional development, while the United Kingdom has an Association of graduate careers advisory services, which, among other activities, is supporting

development of certificate and diploma courses in higher education career guidance. Others still have underdeveloped services in this sector, but are establishing or strengthening them. Austria is a case in point here, as are Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Norway. In Finland and Ireland, recent evidence showing there is a link between guidance provision in higher education and student retention has proved to be a particularly motivating factor in stimulating investment in guidance services at this level.

***Pressures to develop guidance services in tertiary education institutions***

Many developments are spurred on by client demands. Where the State or the university administration fail to provide services for which a need is felt, students themselves have sometimes mobilised to find alternative ways of accessing guidance. In Finland, for instance, higher student associations train peer tutors both nationally and locally, organise career information fairs with stakeholders, and are represented in key national working groups involved in guidance. The National Union of Students in Austria has set up an advisory voluntary service providing information about university life, housing, finance and other practical issues, as have their Slovene counterparts.

Sometimes, tertiary education institutions develop their guidance and information services because they have to compete with other establishments for students. In their attempt at boosting recruitment, often in contexts where funding follows students (e.g. Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom), institutions of higher learning have become increasingly aware that they have to provide such information as details of courses on offer, learning pathways that can be followed, resources available, and career opportunities at the end of a programme of study. This may put guidance staff in an awkward situation, as they may be expected to attract and retain students in their own establishment, even if this is not in the best interests of their clients.

Information is provided to prospective students in handbooks and guides made available in a range of formats, including print, CD-ROM, and online. Much material is produced either by the State (centrally or by the regional administration, as in Spain, for example), or by the institutions themselves, though increasingly the private sector is playing an active role, either under contract (as in Austria, the Netherlands) or on a commercial basis (as in the United Kingdom). It is uncommon, however, for such material to feature information about student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, and rates of successful placement of graduates, which might render the guidebooks and handbooks more helpful in making choices between different institutions. The only example reported in this regard concerned a government-funded publication in the

Netherlands. Some universities do, though, organise and publish the results of tracer studies of graduates to be in a better position to guide students on likely employment trajectories after finishing a course (e.g. Estonia, Malta); in some cases such studies are carried out on a nationwide basis (the United Kingdom, Ireland).

***Modalities of  
guidance service  
provision in  
tertiary  
education***

There is much disparity in the guidance services offered in institutions of higher learning, both between and within countries. First, their location varies. They are sometimes outside the institution, offered by an external agency that caters for the guidance needs of students, as in the case of Austria's network psychological student counselling service. More frequently, guidance is offered in-house, as the 'Laboratoire d'ergologie at the Université Libre de Bruxelles'. In some cases, services are based in faculties or departments (e.g. Denmark, Greece, Italy, Norway, Sweden), while in others they are constituted as a separate service offered centrally (e.g. France, Poland, Romania, the United Kingdom). Sometimes both modalities are available (e.g. Ireland, Sweden). In this case central services fulfil a broad guidance remit, often including different aspects of student welfare. On their part, faculty-based services – often offered by an untrained member of the academic staff – take on responsibilities which can include induction, study support, and providing information on graduate employment opportunities. Sometimes, faculties also develop strong networks with potential employers which help placements for work experience or graduate employment purposes.

Whatever the modality of provision, the guidance survey confirms findings of an earlier study by Watts and van Esbroeck (1998) which indicated that much of the focus in European universities is on educational rather than occupational guidance, largely as a result of the broad remit they may have to fulfil. Assistance and advice on course choices are often integrated with personal counselling, that typically includes guidance on stress management. Increasingly, however, higher education institutions are under pressure to develop a range of career management and student employability skills. This occasionally produces forms of work experience or internship (e.g. Spain, the United Kingdom), and the keeping of portfolios recording learning of work-related competences (e.g. the United Kingdom). We also find the development of job brokerage and graduate placement services designed to help students facing tight and competitive graduate labour markets.

## 5. Meeting the guidance needs of adults

*Outside educational institutions, career guidance and information is mainly addressed at unemployed adults, to insert them into training tracks for reintegrating them into employment as quickly as possible. This section highlights the career guidance needs of such adults, noting the way different European countries provide services through public employment offices, as well as community-based organisations. It then focuses on another group that, in a knowledge-based society, also has guidance needs, namely adults in employment. Despite some services offered by public employment offices, at workplaces, by trade unions, and by the private sector, it is clear there are still important gaps in provision for this group.*

### 5.1. The guidance needs of unemployed adults

***Public employment services as the main providers of career guidance services for unemployed adults***

Unemployed adults are the main recipients of career guidance across Europe. Often, the providers are public employment services (PES). While European PES offices share much the same goals and methodologies of similar services worldwide, those in EU Member and accession States have tended to adopt common policies in dealing with unemployment, in relation to the targets and priorities established by the European employment strategy. Such concerted strategy building is promoted by the network of European public employment services. The latter's joint statement on their role in the labour market (2002) promotes guidance as an effective tool for assisting jobseekers. Increasingly the aim following the Luxembourg Summit has been to 'activate' clients who are required to develop a personal action plan with the support of PES staff. Indeed, the European employment strategy and the European employment guidelines not only have had a major impact on the customer orientation of the PES, but enjoin the latter to provide in-depth guidance to clients. European countries involved in the guidance survey target a whole range of unemployed persons considered to need special support, including the long-term unemployed, women returnees, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, young people with no formal qualifications and work experience, and (less often) asylum seekers and ex-convicts.

***PES staff often have to fulfil multiple roles***

Despite the overall framework driving PESs in Europe highlights the role that guidance can play in routing clients through training and into jobs, and that clear cultural change is underway in many PES towards a more supportive role, with the service becoming a gateway to guidance rather than a gatekeeper, the survey nevertheless suggests that this guidance role is often underdeveloped, and subordinated to other tasks which take precedence in the broad remit of responsibilities that PES staff have to shoulder. Thus, several European countries, in particular acceding

countries, report that their PES focus is on training for employability, on information giving, and on job brokerage. They also report that the guidance function in their work often ends up being muted. PES staff are typically overburdened with multiple roles (e.g. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Slovakia), and the fact that the criterion for evaluation of provision tends to be the rate of successful job placements of clients skews services towards brokerage and networking with potential employers. Staff are also involved in channelling the unemployed towards training and retraining tracks, and often they administer income support schemes for clients.

***Towards more specialised roles in providing guidance***

This multiplicity of roles is exacerbated by the trend of establishing ‘one-stop shops’ (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom), where clients can more readily have access to the whole range of PES services at the same site. While clients might find this convenient and practical, the multitasking implications for staff lead to potential role conflict, since they have both to encourage clients to take them in their confidence, while at the same time policing provision of unemployment benefits. It becomes difficult for guidance staff to find a resolution between the norms of professionalism and administrative demands.

While some countries are keeping the roles and tasks of PES staff integrated (e.g. Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Spain), others are reforming their services so different categories of unemployed are better served by specialised provision. The most notable case is Greece, which is privatising its PES (the OAED – the Manpower Employment Organisation) and distributing its different roles to four different companies. One of these companies will focus specifically on information and guidance services. Another country retaining a separate and highly professionalised career guidance service within its PES is Finland. In acceding countries, Poland (through its Poviats labour offices and its 51 centres for career information and planning in *Voivodship labour offices*), Lithuania (through its Labour exchanges and its Labour market training authorities) and Slovenia stand out in the extent to which they offer employment counselling over and above the range of information-based services common to many PESs.

***Modalities of provision within public employment services***

One option for public employment offices that have not separated the different roles and functions is to organise their service in tiered levels. This can help them cope with the diverse needs of clients, and free time and resources for guidance (see Austria in particular, but also Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom). There are typically three levels or tiers of service. At the first level, PES users have

access to information in a self-service mode, through the use of dedicated materials or online. A second tier provides group-based help, which can include job clubs, sessions that help clients recover self-confidence and motivation, or that teach them basic literacy skills, how to write curriculum vitae, how to sit for interviews, and a range of other employability skills. A third tier provides personal guidance to those perceived to need it, and/or who feel they can benefit from it. Management of the service in this way not only contributes to more efficient use of resources through screening, but also enables some role differentiation, with semi or paraprofessional categories catering for basic information and advice needs, while others with more professional training in guidance provide the third-tier services.

***The increasing importance of ‘self-help’ as a mode of guidance provision***

Linked to developing tiered services is the shift to a self-service mode which frees staff from dealing with information requests that can be easily handled by clients themselves <sup>(26)</sup>. A key example is Sweden, which has set up several ‘Infotheques’ to enable open and unaided access to information. Other reports highlight this shift to self-help strategies include Flemish-speaking Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France (see Table 9), the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. Most countries report a major investment in developing websites that not only provide information on job vacancies, labour market trends, and occupations more generally, but also include diagnostic instruments such as interest inventories and self-assessments of work values and skills.

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*Table 9: Open access and self-service guidance in Flemish-speaking Belgium*

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In 2001, the PES in Flemish-speaking Belgium, the VDAB, introduced a system of universal services with the aim of (a) increasing use of self-assessment and self-direction instruments by people looking for work or interested in changing their employment, and also (b) to increase the independent use of information by employers. MY VDAB is the next step in evolving a generation of tools to support client independence and use of an electronic portfolio. In fact, MY VDAB integrates existing instruments, such as the file manager, information on vacancies, curriculum vitae, training possibilities, and so on, and brings them online so people can manage their own profiles, and analyse and compare the information about themselves with other data sets. VDAB also has a *cliëntvolgsysteem*, which allows follow-up of clients in the different stages across the pathways they embark on. For others to have access to the files the client must first give permission to the VDAB. A manual supports the user in exploiting the *cliëntvolgsysteem*.

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<sup>(26)</sup> Greater emphasis on the individual as an active agent rather than a passive recipient within the guidance process was already noted by Watts, Guichard, Plant and Rodriguez (1994) in their survey of educational and vocational guidance trends in the European Community.

***Career guidance services for unemployed adults offered by community-based organisations***

Unemployed adults may have access to career information and guidance in other settings than those provided by the PES. Most often, community-based organisations provide services to specific groups, especially if they are the target of national equity policies. Few initiatives were reported for ACCs, where the key provider remains the State. Other European countries (e.g. Belgium, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Sweden), however, reported an increasing number of projects which community-based associations organised on their own (either as self-financed initiatives, or more often through outsourcing by the PES), or in cooperation with a public agency (e.g. Luxembourg's *Femmes en Détresse* project; the adult educational guidance initiative in Ireland, which targets unemployed adults who wish to take up education and training). Typically, such initiatives cater for unemployed adults who suffer from social or physical disadvantages: community-based organisations that work with them are considered to be closer to the realities of these target groups, and therefore potentially more effective in responding to their needs. Clients might also feel more comfortable with such forms of provision, which tend to be built around personal rather than bureaucratic service cultures (Bezanson and Kellett, 2001).

***Other sources of career guidance for unemployed adults***

Adults, whether unemployed or in part-time employment, can also access career guidance services if they are enrolled in higher education institutions or in other forms of adult education and training. Some institutions have developed guidance services targeted specifically at mature students, including women hoping to return to the labour market after a period of time out for child rearing. Increasingly falling within the remit of guidance services are 'second chance' schemes which try to help the entry of undereducated but highly motivated adults into higher education and training tracks, through accreditation of prior and experiential learning. In some cases, such accreditation is based on a guidance-oriented dialogue, where individuals are helped to identify and value the knowledge they have acquired informally. Some countries have taken this strategy on board at national level – England, for instance, has established regional adult, information, advice and guidance partnerships to encourage poorly qualified and low-skilled adults to return to education. France, Norway, Portugal, Flemish-speaking Belgium and Greece have also made strides towards developing systems of assessment of prior learning, or *bilan des compétences*.



## 5.2. The guidance needs of adults in employment

*In principle, public employment services offer career guidance to adults in employment as well*

In various sections of this report, reference has been made to the EU's commitment to LLL as a key strategy in maintaining competitiveness in a global economy. That commitment filters through several areas of public policy within Member and accession States. The *Joint statements of the European public employment services on their role in the labour market* (European Commission, 2002e for instance, underscores the responsibility of national PESs to support LLL by assisting individuals throughout their working lives to promote occupational mobility and flexibility). This survey however shows that career guidance for adults, within the EU and across Europe more generally, is narrowly focused on the unemployed. Few countries have developed strategies to help working adults to sustain employability by regularly reviewing new opportunities for improving their skills. As the Danish survey report notes, PES offices tend to be associated with unemployment queues and doling out welfare benefits, serving little to attract employed adults who feel the need for occupational guidance. Some countries (e.g. the Netherlands, Norway) have redesigned their PES offices to structure the flow of unemployed away from the main entry, and resourced them also to prove inviting to the employed. There are also some signs that there is a shift towards the career information and guidance needs of employed adults in some countries, with growing awareness of the need to ensure that adults who are not jobseekers or students, but who wish to reengage in learning or to develop their careers, do not fall through the cracks (see Table 10). Potential demand for such services is amply illustrated by Austria, where in 2001 the number of adults accessing services in the 56 regional career information centres ('BIZ' centres) grew by 15 % compared to the previous year, bringing up the percentage of adult 'BIZ' users to 47 % of all clients.

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*Table 10: Lifelong guidance support in Germany, France and Greece*

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In March 2001, Germany's alliance for jobs, training and competitiveness (comprising the Federal Government, employers' associations and trade unions) made a commitment to improve the framework for LLL within a vocational context. As part of this work, a project is being conducted by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) which is looking at, among other things, the concept of educational coaching. This is designed to help workers review their learning needs in relation to the further qualifications and other learning opportunities available and their career path plans.

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France has developed much experience and expertise in carrying out skills auditing through its *Centres Interinstitutionnels de Bilan de Compétences* (CIBC). These skill review centres draw up audits for jobseekers and employees wishing to change jobs, and pave the way for further training for employment flexibility. Clients may refer themselves to such centres, or they may be referred by their own employers or other guidance-related agencies.

In Greece, information and counselling centres for women's employment and social integration have been set up, with EU funding, by the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI). The centres offer services specifically to women, both to the unemployed and those in vulnerable employment sectors and wish to change jobs. The centres have developed a tool for identifying women's needs. Named *To Tychero Trifylli* (the lucky clover), this guidance tool, adapted from one used by French counselling centres, explores the needs of women in three basic categories: personal development, knowledge of the professional sector, and methods of seeking work.

In Portugal, since November 2000, a national system of recognising, validating and certifying prior learning (RVCC) has been implemented through a network of centres. Adults, either employed or unemployed, are offered a three-tiered service, namely information, counselling and complementary training, including accreditation of competences. Referral services are provided by guidance providers, enterprises and public bodies. By 2006, the network is expected to consist of 84 RVCC centres, present throughout the country in relation to density of population and school levels.

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***Enterprise-based career guidance services offered to employed adults***

Some large enterprises provide career information and guidance services in-house, either through their own personnel in HRD departments or by buying services from specialised external agencies and consultants (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom). This they may do for one of three reasons:

- to help career development within the company;
- to guide employees towards training in skills areas that management envisages will become necessary for the company's growth – this may entail training needs assessments;
- to support workers who will be made redundant or outplaced, by offering them access to retraining routes and alternative employment.

Few guidance reports from ACCs and small nation States in Europe made any reference to such services. Larger countries were more likely to indicate the incidence of such practices, especially where the State supports such initiatives through including career guidance provision within expenditure allowable against training levies (e.g. the

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Netherlands), through awarding a quality mark to enterprises that invest in developing their own employees (e.g. the Netherlands, the United Kingdom), and through making PES guidance staff available to companies, particularly small and medium-sized ones that do not have the capacity to develop guidance services in-house (e.g. Germany).

***The role of trade unions in providing career guidance services***

Trade unions can have direct and indirect input to, and impact on, guidance services for adults in employment. Indirectly, they may stimulate guidance provision for their members by negotiating for career paragraphs (e.g. the Netherlands) in the collective bargaining process. This is especially critical in contexts where major restructuring and privatisation make redundancies likely, and where information and guidance support systems can be of benefit in directing workers into retraining and alternative employment routes. In addition, some trade unions are themselves providers of guidance services (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Greece, Iceland, Spain, Sweden). In most cases, such provision is informal, offered by union staff who have no specific training in the field (e.g. Cyprus, Estonia, Malta, Romania), but whose potential for effectiveness should nevertheless not be underestimated, especially since low-qualified and low-skilled workers are more likely to feel comfortable making use of such services rather than those offered through employer-managed structures. In some countries, unions have become more aware of this potential, and have launched training courses for shop stewards to act as education ambassadors, learning representatives or learning advisors, encouraging workers to access education and training opportunities (e.g. Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom).

***The role of the private sector in providing career information and guidance***

The private sector has a limited but expanding role in offering career guidance services. Increasingly the private sector publishes further education and training guidebooks and handbooks, often on contracts outsourced by government. Apart from this, however, in most European countries the private sector's role tends to be limited to finding, selecting and placing personnel in highly qualified and specialised labour niches. In the CEE countries, such private employment services have started appearing in the last decade (e.g. Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia), and it is only in Poland that they are established in any significant number. Typically, private-sector services have a job brokerage and head hunting function, and the guidance function is underdeveloped. The private-sector career guidance market is small in Denmark and Ireland, for instance, though it is more extensive in French-speaking Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In general, there does not seem to be much enthusiasm for individuals to pay for career guidance services, and the main way a market or quasi-market has developed has been through purchase of services by large companies or

through the transfer of public funds via outsourcing. This survey clearly shows there is an information gap on the extent, nature and costs of private sector guidance.

### **5.3. Gaps in the provision of guidance to adults**

***The increasing policy priority of information and career guidance provision for older workers***

Gaps in provision have already been identified for employed adults, particularly those not in education or training, and those in small and medium-sized companies unlikely to have the capacity to offer guidance services in-house. Other adults who might benefit from career information and guidance services, and who are presently not catered for, are older workers. There are at least two reasons why this group is important. First, for the clients themselves, while retirement can be pleasant in many ways, it can also be a challenging time personally, financially, and consolidating identity and fulfilment around non-remunerated activities. Leisure guidance is in fact part of the rainbow of counselling services that, in a learning society, should accompany persons through their full development. It may include elements of educational guidance, given the impressive range of learning opportunities that many European countries make available to their senior citizens, including universities of the third age (e.g. France, Malta), and cultural tourism specifically designed for the retired. Second, provision of guidance services to older workers is also important when seen in view of the State's more direct interests. At one level, there is evidence that active ageing tends to cut down health bills (World Health Organisation, 2002).

At a different but related level, Europe's ageing population is posing serious challenges, threatening levels of labour force participation and placing pressures on existing pension provision. One policy reaction across Europe has been to extend participation of older workers in the labour market (European Commission, 2002e). Guidance could have a role to play in encouraging such participation, and in helping individuals to manage more flexible transitions to retirement.

## 6. Widening access through more innovative and diverse delivery

*This section identifies the different strategies being used across Europe to widen access to guidance services. In particular, the role of ICT in promoting innovative and diverse ways in delivering information and advice to clients is explored. Other forms of communication, including call centre technology and creative use of media, are also considered. Despite improved access, this section notes there are gaps in service provision. It also highlights that, while the new information and communication technologies hold much promise in guidance, there is a significant digital divide between and within countries, and this has to be considered if access is to be guaranteed across Europe.*

### 6.1. Widening access to guidance

***Several European countries have widened access to guidance services, but gaps still remain. The issue of improved access is of special concern to the Commission***

Responses obtained from the survey of policies for career guidance clearly indicate that several countries are trying to broaden access to career information and guidance to a wider range of client groups, using diverse and often innovative strategies. Responses also indicate some of the gaps in provision across several European countries, though there are examples of good practice which signal ways in which these gaps can be addressed. The issue of access has been highlighted by the Commission's deliberations on the role of guidance in supporting LLL and the objectives for education and training. The Commission's LLL communication (2001a) emphasises the need for guidance to be organised as an open service that is continuously and locally accessible for all; as a client-centred service which reaches out to citizens and follows up on their needs rather than waiting for them to come; and as a diversified service offered through such non-formal and informal channels as NGOs and community-based associations so disadvantaged groups are more effectively reached. Reporting on young people's views on guidance services in the white paper *A new impetus for European youth* (European Commission, 2002b), the Commission also notes the emphasis young people placed on having access to user-friendly guidance systems easily accessible in places where they spent their time.

***Trends in delivering guidance which have a positive impact on service access across Europe***

Access has been improved in several ways. Guidance, for instance, is increasingly acknowledged to be a right to which all citizens are entitled throughout their lives, and not just an ancillary service aimed at those in crisis or unemployed. There has been a diversification in the sites in which guidance is offered (not restricted to institutional sites, but also available at leisure sites, in the community, and in the home), in the providers (not just the State, but also community-based and private

services), and in modality of provision (not based solely on one-to-one input, but also on group-based, curricular and self-service modes of delivery; not homogeneous but differentiated according to specific client needs). Many developments have already been noted in previous sections. Others will be explored in subsequent sections.

## 6.2. Strategies to widen access to guidance and information

### *The role of ICT in widening access to career information and guidance*

Underlying all these trends is a change in the way guidance staff perform their work, largely – though not solely – as a consequence of the use of new information and communication technologies. As will be shown in the next section of this report, ICT has become increasingly harnessed across most European countries to support and complement traditional forms of guidance, such as face-to-face interviews, assessment tools, and printed career information materials. It is used to disseminate more widely information about occupations, and also to support several guidance functions via CD-ROM software, career navigation systems, or the Internet.

Typically, ICT applications help clients increase their **self-awareness** (i.e. by developing knowledge about themselves, which can then be related to learning and work opportunities); to increase their **opportunity awareness** (i.e. by providing access to databases about learning, training and working); to simplify **decision-making** (i.e. by helping clients narrow options by balancing opportunities and feasibility); and to support **transition learning** (i.e. by assisting clients to implement decisions, based on skills needed to apply for jobs, sit for interviews, secure education and training grants, and so on). In the more sophisticated systems, several of these different functions are available to the user, with the software more fully and comprehensively reflecting and supporting the complex nature of career decision-making. At a more basic level, CD-ROMs and especially the Internet are used to make much information about educational programmes and institutions, as well as labour markets, available at the touch of a button. Again, the more sophisticated websites have the capacity of linking different databases together to support a multidimensional approach to decision-making (see Watts, 2001; Offer, 1997). Most frequently, however, ICT tools reproduce the traditional matching model of guidance, with the main difference that it is the client who is responsible for the matching.

***The role of ICT in widening access by encouraging a different approach to service provision***

ICT can help widen access to guidance in two important and related ways. First of all, it encourages a **different approach** to service provision, where self-help takes precedence over direct delivery by professionals. As has already been noted earlier (see Section 5.1.) when discussing the shift to a tiered service model, clients can carry out much initial self- and opportunity-related exploration and assessment thanks to ICT, prior to asking for a face-to-face interview if necessary. Many employment services (e.g. in Flemish-speaking Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden), as well as guidance offices and career information libraries in schools and tertiary education, are good examples of this highly significant shift.

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*Table 11: Private-sector ICT-based guidance in Finland*

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In 1999, *Helsingin Sanomat*, the newspaper with the widest circulation in Finland, made career services available to all citizens on the Internet. The newspaper's website <http://www.oikotie.fi> offers a multitude of career planning and job search tools and services. All services, including online self-assessment exercises, e-mail guidance counselling, a curriculum vitae wizard, and an option to forward applications to employers online, are free of charge.

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***Bringing guidance services to the client through the use of ICT***

Secondly, ICT **brings information and guidance services to the client**. Increasingly, computer terminals – often linked to the Internet – are available at non-institutional sites. As Kress (2000) has noted, boundaries between spaces dedicated to learning, working, and leisure are becoming blurred. Young people and adults can access many guidance-related services in bars and cafés, youth and community centres, and at home. Several countries (e.g. Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, the United Kingdom) have set up Internet points in leisure and public spaces in the community, with links to sites that offer assistance in discovering aptitudes and interests, and in matching profiles with opportunities for further education and employment. E-mail queries can be quickly sent to a central information bureau, or to the communication offices of educational institutions and enterprises. This has important implications for mainstreaming guidance in the seamless flow of life, helping remove the stigma that it has occasionally had, particularly when it was seen as a peripheral service to be used by those who either could not manage their lives effectively or had become marginalised through unemployment. It also has important implications for overcoming barriers of service delivery to the remoter regions in countries that have scattered populations, particularly when the software used permits several functions

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referred to earlier, including interactive sessions with counsellors, and where Internet connections provide a portal into a broad and flexible network of interlinked services. Distance career guidance is therefore increasingly on the agenda (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden).

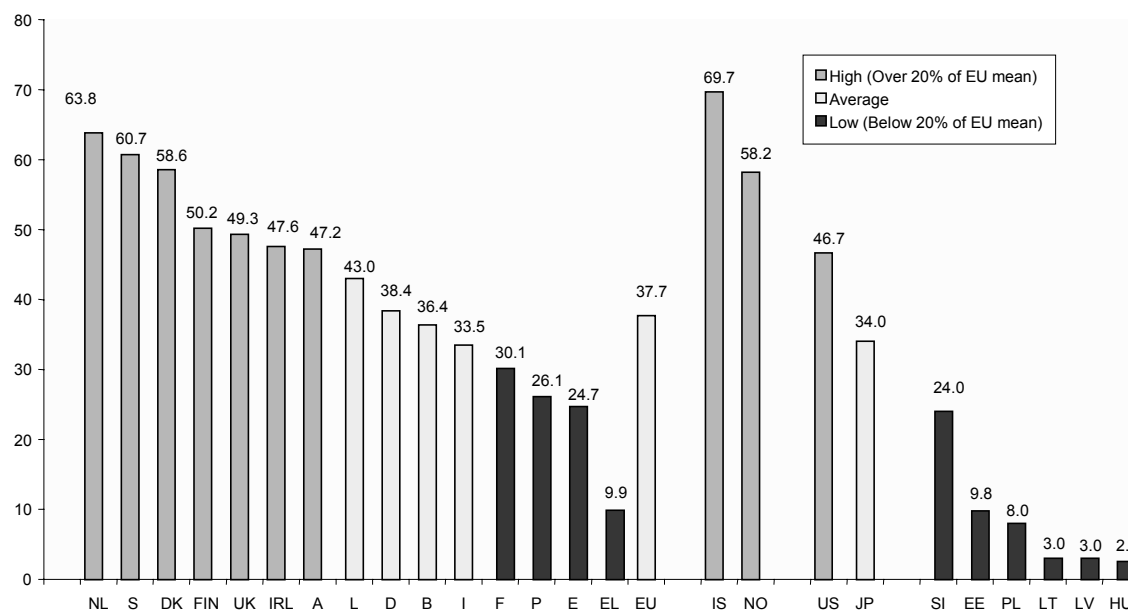
***The digital divide  
in access to ICT  
across Europe***

Despite the opportunities that ICT offers, there are nevertheless important issues to consider in attempting a cross-European survey of guidance provision. The first and most obvious concerns differential access to hardware, software, and Internet connection. The digital deficit is particularly serious when one considers the situation in many CEE countries (see Figure 1). But the digital divide is present across Europe in other ways, affecting poorer groups, older people (who may feel uncomfortable with new technology), and those living in remote areas (where penetration of telecommunication services is lagging behind the more urbanised zones). In addition, skills in using ICT, as well as costs and bandwidth access, differ greatly between, and sometimes even within, countries in Europe, all of which affect the extent to which opportunities made available by new technology can be exploited. Certain cultural contexts within Europe predispose people to shun the rather impersonal approach to guidance. Others might still prefer to consult information in traditional print format, even though the information is available electronically. This is reported to be the case with Romanian students, and Tricot (2002) reports the same pattern for French students, though there is an assumption that it is a transitory phenomenon.

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Figure 1: Differential access to ICTs across Europe



**Definition**

Percentage of households who have Internet access at home. All forms of use are included. Population considered is equal to or over 15 years old. This indicator is identical to Structural indicator 2.3: Level of Internet access.

**Interpretation**

Internet use by the domestic population is a measure of the ability to access an enormous wealth of data online, including business-to-consumer e-commerce and government-to-citizen online services. In the future, much more sophisticated measures of Internet use will be needed. Better data is needed on what the Internet is used for and if the population is aware of several efficiency enhancing uses.

Source: European Innovation Scoreboard Report (2002), p. 36. Available from Internet: <http://trendchart.cordis.lu/>

***The potential of call-centre technology in widening access to guidance services***

Other technologies that have opened up new opportunities for guidance service delivery are call-centres. While several countries report that call-in services are associated more with help-lines and hot-lines providing crisis support (for a range of problems such as domestic violence, child abuse, attempted suicides, rape, substance abuse), they are nevertheless being used to good effect in some career guidance contexts, with clients being able to telephone in queries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Lithuania; see also Table 12 for details of the United Kingdom’s ‘learndirect’ service). Other countries – including Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway – are planning to develop call-centres, suggesting this may become a way through which guidance services are increasingly delivered nationally and locally.

Table 12: *Providing guidance through call-centre technology in the United Kingdom*

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The learndirect service in the United Kingdom was launched in 1998, and its core is built around call-centre technology. There are two call-centres in England (in Manchester and Leicester), one for Northern Ireland, and smaller centres in Scotland and Wales. The learndirect initiative is funded through the University for Industry, and aspires to offer free and impartial advice that can assist adults to access further education and training opportunities. Such information could include, for instance, availability of funding for learning, and childcare facilities to support parents with young children. Call-centre help lines are open all year until 10 in the evening to ensure as much accessibility as possible. Over five million people have called learndirect since it opened. There are three tiers of staff: information advisers handle basic information inquiries; learning advisers handle inquiries of those who need more than basic information; lifelong learning advisers deal with more complex inquiries and requests for help. All staff levels receive special training, and all have access to an online database of information on some 600 000 education and training courses, at all levels, as well as a wide variety of other printed information. The online database can be accessed directly at <http://www.learndirect.co.uk/>, and is updated monthly. An online diagnostic package can be used to assess interests and preferences as part of the website. There have been over 10 million hits on the site since it opened in 2000.

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***Other ways through which access to guidance has been simplified***

Other forms of communication have increasingly made guidance services more accessible to a wider range of people. Some modes of communication are not innovative in themselves – rather, it is their marshalling in the service of guidance that should be highlighted. Many countries make use of television, mass media, road billboards, and other advertising strategies and outlets, to ensure that information on further education, training and employment opportunities reach the community. This may be part of a regular, ongoing strategy, or may be targeted in time and focus with the intention of promoting specific action. An example would be the annual initiative in Flemish-speaking Belgium called *De grote leerweek* (Adults' learning week). Here, the mass media networks with several partners active at community level to reach specific target groups. In many countries too, several newspapers feature supplements on careers, as well as on education and training courses, besides advertising job vacancies and labour market trends. Particularly interesting is the innovative use of mobile, peripatetic counselling teams to cover communities hard to reach, or because there are not enough resources to cover demand (e.g. Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Hungary, Latvia, the United Kingdom). The case of Latvia is particularly instructive as a creative example of still providing a service, despite resource limitations. Thus far, the country has managed to establish professional career counselling centres in only 19 of its 26 regions. But its mobile teams cater for the needs of the other seven.

## 7. Providing career information more effectively

*This section raises several issues on producing guidance-related information, whether in print or ICT-based. In particular, the challenge of ensuring transparency, accessibility and usability of information, and of developing national standards to monitor provision, is addressed. Attention is also given to cross-sectoral cooperation in producing guidance-related information, essential to avoid overlap or incompatibility between databases. Private sector input in educational and career guidance is also considered.*

### 7.1. The challenge of providing useful and usable guidance-related information

***Reliability and validity as necessary but not sufficient features of career information systems***

Much educational and career guidance involves assisting clients in making informed choices. It is the soundness of this information – in validity and reliability – that should, in principle, distinguish professional guidance services from information provided to individuals by other, more informal sources, such as family and peer networks. However, that professionally-provided information is more valid, objective, reliable and comprehensive, or to put it more simply, that it corresponds more closely to reality, does not necessarily mean it is of use to clients. Indeed, research presents us with quite a different picture, alerting us that informal sources tend to be more influential than formal ones, with young people and adults alike (Arnold, Budd and Miller, 1988; NICEC, 1996)<sup>(27)</sup>. Theories that focus on the ways human beings process data (*inter alia* Chapman and Mählck, 1993) remind us that, like all pedagogical events, the reception and use of information depends on several factors, including:

- (a) the extent to which it connects to the recipient's prior experiences and frameworks of relevance;
- (b) the extent to which such information is perceived to be useful in solving or at least addressing present problems or queries.

This is particularly true in the information age – or rather, information dump, as Grubb (2002a) refers to it – where people are constantly bombarded by a surfeit of data, much of which is not even requested. Not only that, but, as Tricot (2002) has noted, much of this information is largely provider-driven –it highlights information that the provider wants

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<sup>(27)</sup> In addition, there is no guarantee that labour market databases, however sophisticated, capture the complex dynamics of entry to local employment opportunities, especially in contexts where there is a parallel thriving informal job market, which by definition is at least partially hidden.

to present – rather than consumer-driven – working from questions which individuals want to ask. The Education and Training Council in French-speaking Belgium is perhaps exemplary in the attention it has given to such matters, carefully defining the nature of information suitable in guidance, distinguishing objective information from information that aims to advertise, pointing out the difference between information and guidance, and promoting the education of citizens so they have a critical approach to information (*Avis* 78, 21 June 2002, Guidance and information on education, training and work).

***The promises – and pitfalls – of ICT-based career information***

These and related issues about the nature, quality and intelligent and critical use of information are particularly pertinent when considering information provided through ICT, which differs from print-based data in one essential manner, namely, that it invites the user to shift from a linear reading of text, to one hyper-linked to related data. At the click of a button, readers are deviated from one focus to another, gaining access to associated worlds of facts, images and sounds. Only the most steadfast and those with sharp information management skills are capable of rerouting themselves back on track, making use of unexpected insights vicariously developed to make wise decisions. This is important, not only because it reminds us that self-service approaches to information require the back-up of skilled personal support, but also because ICT is rather uncritically touted as the panacea to plug information gaps. As already noted above (Section 6.2), and in all the country reports, there is much that commends the use of ICT in career information. Not only does it help widen access, but it also dramatically reduces the production costs associated with print-based alternatives; it permits quick, cheap and regular updating of information; it eases links to personal assessment tools and other relevant resources; and it has features to search and trawling through much diverse material, less accessible in print form. Despite such advantages, it remains a tool that requires both basic skills (e.g. in reading), and more sophisticated ones (e.g. confidence in manipulating the technology, ability to access information in a systematic manner), and therefore raises serious equity issues, particularly if provision is not complemented by skilled support, as well as by alternative sources and channels of information (Offer and Sampson, 1999; Grubb, 2002a).

***Problems with transparency and fragmentation in providing career information***

Other issues come into play in providing information that is valid, reliable, timely, contextual, relevant and useful. Several countries involved in this survey acknowledge that providing adequate career and labour market information is a public good, which should be freely available to all for reasons of equity and efficiency. This echoes the European Commission's concern – expressed in its *Action plan for skills*

*and mobility* (European Commission, 2002c) – about the need for education, training and labour market data to overcome their tendency to be (a) fragmented, and (b) lacking in transparency. As pathways into education, training and work become more diversified and complex, so clients need to have access to clear road maps that help them navigate systems of provision, with full knowledge of which options they open and close when embarking on a particular track.

This kind of transparency and complexity cannot be handled by one-dimensional tools, which would be akin to trying to find new destinations with old maps. In contrast are multidimensional, matrix-based management information systems which privilege synergy between different databases, connecting educational and career information with labour market data such as vulnerability to unemployment, current and projected supply and demand, and average earnings compared to minimum salary. Some systems, for instance, in Greece, Finland, Hungary, Iceland and Lithuania, also have an experiential component, enabling users to get a feel for the occupation they are investigating, through the possibility of downloading short films and interviews with workers.

Such systems are, however, not very common in the guidance field. In many cases, CD-ROMs and websites nothing more than a replica of print-based materials, giving more importance to cramming information in rather than designing it in ways that render it useful to specific groups of users. This is especially true for the ACCs, although some advanced systems are being developed in Hungary, Poland and Romania, thanks to World Bank aid (see Table 13). Bulgaria, Cyprus and Slovakia too are making progress, benefiting from EU funding.

*Table 13: Multidimensional career information systems in Poland*

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Poland has developed a multidimensional career information system – ‘Counsellor 2000’ – integrating the most recent developments in artificial intelligence, stimulating the client’s efforts by linking information management with decision-making strategies. Information about educational and training pathways, and the relevant occupations they lead to, is linked to the personal profile of the client using the system, itself developed after accessing self-assessment tools available on the same software. In addition, the system has been adapted so it can be targeted at particular groups of users, such as persons with disabilities.

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## 7.2. Producers of guidance information

### ***Problems caused by lack of cross-sectoral cooperation between producers of career-related information***

Another reason to explain the fragmentation of education and career information provided by guidance-oriented services, other than the technical one referred to above, is lack of cross-sectoral cooperation. In most countries, much of the formal responsibility for providing career and labour market information lies with the State: government agencies collect the information, organise it, and disseminate it. Often, however, different ministries collect different information, creating data sets that cannot always be consolidated to help users make better sense of options and opportunities. It is not unusual for governments to produce several overlapping databases, which together provide only partial coverage of what is available – French-speaking Belgium, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, to mention just a few cases. Even more striking is the situation in Germany, where the Federal Employment Service has separate databases on occupations (BerufeNET), training opportunities (KURS), apprenticeship and training vacancies (ASIS), and job vacancies (SIS) – all unconnected to available career selection programmes (such as *Mach's Richtig*) and other self-exploration programmes, although they are presently being integrated within a web portal.

The problem is compounded in countries with decentralised federal governments like Belgium, Germany and Spain, where each region might develop its own systems which, while possibly being more relevant to users since they reflect local labour market realities, do not facilitate either student or worker mobility across the whole territory. The challenge for the EU is still greater, in view of the goal of creating a common space for a more efficient and equitable human resource deployment, with the Euroguidance network and ESTIA <sup>(28)</sup> and the Ploteus portal being steps in this direction.

### ***Initiatives to combat fragmentation of information***

Some countries have started taking measures to combat fragmentation. Different initiatives have involved:

- (a) establishing a platform of common standards and specifications agreed to by different ministries responsible for data collection (e.g. Estonia);
- (b) formalising agreements, or promulgating laws, specifying the nature of the coordination that must exist between different ministries in

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<sup>(28)</sup> ESTIA is the website of the Euroguidance network in Europe.

delivering guidance services, and encouraging cooperation between and among institutions at national, regional, district and local levels (e.g. Bulgaria, Slovakia);

- (c) setting up agencies comprehensively to manage career information systems (e.g. Onisep in France (see Table 14); Formabanque in French-speaking Belgium; the Careers and Occupational Information Centre in the United Kingdom; the Foundation for VET reform in Estonia; the Open Society Fund in Bulgaria). In many cases, such agencies are external and government-funded. Sometimes such agencies are privatised (e.g. the National Career Service Centre in the Netherlands), or their activities are partially or fully outsourced to the private sector (e.g. the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Spain).

*Table 14: Integrating guidance information systems in France*

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The French IDEO (*Information documentation edition* Onisep) project was launched in 2001, and its goal is to develop a system of information engineering for publication purposes. The project sets out systematically and regularly to renew databases used in guidance, and to link them to automatic publishing methods. Onisep (*Office national d'information sur les enseignements et les professions*) is working on a new fast computer-based network to maximise exchanges of information on the Internet, while ensuring that data transfer is fully secure. Onisep works with CEREQ (*Centre d'etudes de recherche sur les qualifications*), a public organisation supervised by public education and employment services, whose task is to develop expertise in such areas as statistics, certification, integration, occupational outlets, training-employment links, and so on.

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***Private sector involvement in producing career information***

Besides the State, other producers of career-related information include the private sector and educational institutions. The private sector has not invested much in the information market in ACCs, with the exception of Romania and, to a lesser extent, Slovakia. More ICT-based initiatives on the part of the private sector were reported by other European countries, though the focus is largely on educational and occupational guides and handbooks, which seem to be the best guarantee for a return on an investment through direct sales, and/or through featuring advertisements – though it may also constrain their comprehensiveness and objectivity. Educational institutions increasingly have websites promoting their establishments. Here, as is to be expected, objectivity tends to suffer since the goal is to commend the school to potential clients. In the best cases, education institution websites have links to other further education and employment-related data.

***Purchasing and adapting career information systems***

Not all countries find it feasible to produce their own information. Many accession countries, but also smaller states such as Luxembourg for instance, adapt software and even print-based material from elsewhere. The United Kingdom-produced Adult directions has proved popular with Slovakia and Slovenia, who have adapted it, under licence, to reflect their national realities, integrating it with national educational and employment databases. Romania has translated and adapted Interoptions, a Canadian test of vocational interests, while France has adapted some of its guidance tools from the USA. Luxembourg's career information centres (BIZ) make use of material – including detailed descriptions of occupations – produced in Germany.

***Establishing standards in information provision***

In the developing market of career information, the State remains not only the main provider, but often the only one who can play a part in establishing standards for information from the different sources, although professional guidance associations may also make an input (Plant, 2001). Standards such as those defined above – including validity, reliability, accuracy, objectiveness, comprehensiveness, relevance to target group, timeliness, and so on – have been formalised in a number of European countries. Some regulate the quality of information provided through legal measures and instruments (e.g. Estonia's Public Information Act); others have developed strategies to ensure accuracy through systematic comparison of data from different sectors (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, Lithuania); while yet others have developed quality standards and guidelines (e.g. Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands, Slovenia), with groups of experts monitoring the production of data along set criteria. In some cases (e.g. Poland) clients are asked to comment about the user-friendliness of the information package they have been provided, particularly when this is web-based. More rarely, as with Bulgaria, material is trialled with target groups and evaluated by experts. Several other countries, however, still have to make progress in quality-assuring the large quantities of educational and career-related information produced.



## 8. Staffing career guidance

*This section provides review of the profile of workers engaged in offering guidance. There is a great diversity among the guidance corps across Europe, in the initial training they receive, the qualifications required to enter the field, the range of competences they master, and access they have to ongoing professional development opportunities. There are also important disparities in the profiles of those working in the education sector and those in the labour market sector. The section concludes by noting several emerging trends and issues which provide further insights in the portrayal of guidance staff across Europe.*

### 8.1. Portrait of a truncated profession?

***The diversity of career guidance staff across and within European countries***

The career guidance labour force in Europe is marked by great diversity in the extent and nature of professional training required prior to entry, the range of competences its members have to master and use on-the-job, the overlap there is between their role and other roles, the progression pathways offered, the salaries it is able to command relative to other professions, and the status it enjoys among the community it serves. Much diversity is evident not only between European countries, but within them as well, indicating that we have a truncated and not fully realised process of professionalisation <sup>(29)</sup>.

While career guidance can trace its origins to the early 20th century, it has not yet become professionalised in Europe largely because its ranks draw on other, often more strongly established professions, with which guidance staff might identify more strongly. Typically, career guidance workers have a background in, or spend part or even much of their time as teachers, psychologists, counsellors, information mediators, and human resource specialists. Access to the profession is not strongly regulated also contributes to weak professional framing, as does lack of cooperation between those who work in education and labour market sectors, which further fragments the field.

***The age and gender profile of those providing guidance***

The fragmentation and undefined boundaries of the profession partly explain why respondents to the survey of policies for career guidance found it difficult to provide anything but very approximate figures when asked to state the number of guidance-related workers in their respective countries. The overall picture is even more difficult to grasp because several are involved in guidance only part-time. Keeping in mind these

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<sup>(29)</sup> Lortie (1975) had made the same evaluation of the partial professionalisation of teachers. I owe the term ‘truncated profession’ to him.

limitations, and that no relevant information was provided by some countries, while others gave only partial information, the total number of staff involved, with guidance in the 29 European countries reviewed, is estimated at around 126 000.

Most respondents could not assemble reliable information about the age composition of the career guidance labour force, but all signalled that the profession attracted women in the main – indeed, the percentage is between 80 and 95 in Hungary, Iceland, Poland and Romania – though there is a tendency in all countries for women to be less strongly represented in the labour market sector than in the education sector. Such gender clustering could be explained by the work being associated with nurturing, and many recruits are from psychology, a discipline which also tends to attract women in the main (UNECE and UNDP, 2002). Feminisation of the profession has implications for occupational identity, the way it is defined (e.g. a focus on the personal counselling rather than on the labour market analysis aspects of practice), the degree of unionisation among practitioners, the status accorded to the activity by society, and consequently the salaries and resources it is able to command.

## **8.2. The initial and continued training of guidance workers**

### ***The varied training and qualifications required of career guidance workers***

Established professions generally have a clear framework regulating entry and qualification routes leading into clearly-defined occupational roles. They are also generally supported by a network of professional associations and training and research organisations. While such boundaries are often used to ensure occupational closure, thus controlling supply to ensure competitive wage structures, they nevertheless have a positive effect in improving quality service. Many associations are presently involved in harmonising regulatory and qualification equivalence frameworks for their respective professions to better exploit the opportunities presented by open EU borders. In contrast, guidance workers who, ironically, are increasingly called upon to promote such Europe-wide mobility and ‘boundaryless careers’, have a most disparate background in training and qualifications (Watts, 1992), which has serious implications for the quality of service offered – a point also made in the Commission’s report on *Quality indicators for lifelong learning* (European Commission, 2002a). An attempt to overcome such disparity has been made by Austria, Germany, Hungary and Poland, which are working together on a Leonardo da Vinci programme that will lead to equivalence in certification for their career guidance staff. Concern about standards of professional qualifications is particularly justified in the case

of several European countries where a person can, in some sectors, offer formal career guidance without having any specific training in the field at all, or where a few hours of in-service training, often offered in-house, are deemed to suffice (e.g. France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg).

Other countries – including many CEE countries – are much more demanding, either requiring or encouraging guidance workers to have a masters degree (e.g. Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Poland, Romania), although this may be in psychology rather than in career guidance as such. Specialised masters-level degrees are offered by several countries (e.g. Finland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the United Kingdom), but across the whole range of expectations, it is often the case that employers of career guidance staff – and therefore most frequently the State – demand qualifications from what are considered to be fields related to guidance rather than in guidance itself. Often these include psychology, education, sociology, economics and social work. While disciplinary overlaps with career guidance may be evident, there is often no sustained attempt to analyse whether the competences offered during the study period coincide with those required in employment. In most cases, the expectation is that career guidance workers learn their skills on the job.

*Table 15: Training guidance staff in France*

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There are three main types of training in guidance counselling occupations in France:

- (a) a higher university-level course, which is full-time and specific to a professional body: guidance counsellor/psychologists of the public education service;
- (b) higher education by alternance specific to a professional body, namely ANPE (*Agence nationale pour l'emploi*) counsellors;
- (c) university courses opening up prospects of employment in the area of guidance, labour and human resources such as Inetop's (*Institut national d'étude du travail et d'orientation professionnelle*) specialist higher education diploma (DESS) in psychology and career guidance. Research is also included in the higher education diploma (DEA) course in industrial psychology and transitions offered by CNAM (*Conservatoire national des arts et métiers*)/Inetop as part of the multipartner doctoral school 'enterprise, labour, employment' (CNAM-University of Marne-la-Vallée). This DEA leads to a doctorate in psychology.

These three types of training are supplemented by continuing training schemes based on mentored practice offered by public organisations such as AFPA (*Association pour la formation professionnelle des adultes*) or CAFOC (*Centre académique de formation continue*) or private agencies.

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***Training required from career guidance staff in the education sector***

There is variation in entry requirements and in training both within the education and labour market sectors, and especially between them<sup>(30)</sup>. As a general rule, it appears that career guidance staff in education have more opportunities for specialist initial training than their PES counterparts. There are some examples across the European countries surveyed where applicants to school guidance posts are encouraged to have a relevant degree, with appropriate experience (e.g. French-speaking Belgium, Malta), a specialist diploma or certificate in guidance (e.g. Cyprus, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom), but this does not mean that all guidance staff in school will have followed that training, and many countries indicate that they have substantial numbers of staff without such qualifications – up to a third or a half in some cases – despite the courses available (e.g. Germany, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway). Many education systems are happy to employ guidance staff if they have some years of teaching experience. In most cases, a teaching qualification is a prerequisite, though in Iceland the Association of Guidance Counsellors is lobbying for the removal of such a requirement, and in the Netherlands some schools are employing trained staff who are not teachers. In other countries (e.g. Latvia), psychology degrees may have special modules in guidance.

Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom seem to be among the most advanced in the range and level of initial training they offer, providing a host of specialised short and long courses in career counselling, some of which lead to masters level qualifications. Little information was provided in the guidance survey about how much the in-service training available to teachers focused on the specific needs of guidance staff, or indeed about the training offered to class teachers and others involved in delivering aspects of the career education curriculum.

***The multiple and indeterminate roles of guidance workers in the education sector***

Most career guidance staff in schools are required to combine their duties with other activities. They often teach a regular curriculum area for at least half or more of their time (e.g. Flemish-speaking Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Malta, Spain). In Germany, staff employed in teaching full-time are given an extra allowance to provide career guidance over and above their regular duties. Many staff also find themselves bogged down by administrative duties, such as managing the choice of subject clusters, or helping students fill in further education application forms. Occupational roles are generally not well defined, with

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<sup>(30)</sup> This is a point also made by McCarthy (2001) in his review of training in 23 countries. In Denmark, training is so sector-based that the country report refers to as many as 15 different types of courses for guidance workers.

staff having to shoulder a broad range of responsibilities. Some countries are attempting to deal with this situation of indeterminacy in both job requirements and job role by establishing service manuals or competence frameworks, with good examples coming from Estonia, Greece, Malta, and particularly Poland.

Role indeterminacy also leads to difficulties in carving out clear progression paths in the profession from the less expert to the more expert worker, and from the paraprofessional to the full professional. Lithuania and Romania are exceptions, while Estonia, Ireland and the United Kingdom are among the few countries that report paraprofessional categories (e.g. information officers) to support the work of qualified guidance staff. As with most other linked professionals (e.g. social workers) and non-professionals (e.g. alumni, stakeholders, significant adults and peers who often work with the 'hard to reach') these attached staff require some training if they are to consolidate the mainstream work done by guidance staff. None of the countries involved in the survey – other than the United Kingdom in terms of the staff employed in the 'learndirect' initiative – made any reference to training provision of this sort.

***Training for  
career guidance  
staff in the  
higher education  
sector***

The tertiary education sector displays many of the same characteristics described for schools, except that it is more weakly professionalised, and more fragmented in provision. It is not unusual for guidance functions to be distributed among staff in different administrative units, with some being department or faculty-based, others operating from a counselling and student advice centre, others from an international office catering for foreign students, and yet others from a student union office. These different categories of staff may have little or no formal specialised training (e.g. Denmark, Germany); even where they do, there is usually no central regulation determining the qualifications required to practise, or indeed any monitoring.

***Career guidance  
staff in the  
labour market  
sector***

Generally speaking, guidance staff in PESs have still less initial specialised training to prepare them for their roles. Some have a psychology degree, but their backgrounds are even more disparate than guidance workers in the education sector, with some having qualifications in law, business management, economics, and even engineering (e.g. Romania, Spain). Much of their guidance-related training comes through in-service provision, with staff in ACCs in particular benefiting from professional development opportunities offered via such EU programmes as Phare and Leonardo. Some staff from Member States have also had access to training programmes through the European Social Fund (e.g. Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain).

### 8.3. Overall trends linked to staffing issues

*Despite disparity and diversity, some overall trends and issues can be highlighted*

Despite such disparity in the qualifications and competence background of guidance workers within and across sectors, some overall trends and issues can nevertheless be highlighted:

- (a) guidance workers do not seem to have a strong professional identity, are poorly organised and often poorly supported by a disparate network of professional associations and research and training organisations. Consequently, their ability to determine their work roles and impact on policy-making is weak. It is interesting, however, that many countries involved in this survey noted the founding or strengthening of professional associations. These included Austria, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia (founded in 2002), France, Greece, Iceland (in 1981), Italy (in 2001), Latvia (in 1996), Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, and Sweden. In the United Kingdom and in Denmark, sector-focused associations have been consolidated under one national umbrella (the Danish national council for educational and vocational guidance – RUE, and the United Kingdom Federation of Professional Associations in Guidance – FEDPAG). Some countries have also established registers to regulate the profession (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Latvia, Poland, Romania, the United Kingdom);
- (b) the private sector, in both the labour market and the education sector, is generally unregulated. Private schools may be required (as in Denmark) to provide guidance services, but the extent and nature of that provision remain the prerogative of the institution;
- (c) respondents involved in the survey feel that career guidance workers in their respective countries have developed several competences through initial and in-service training, as well as on-the-job. However, they also feel that, given the changing nature and context of their work – including a perceived greater incidence of mobility of students and workers across Europe – those involved in guidance require further training in several areas. These include skills in dealing with increasingly diverse groups of clients; managing ICT, telephone and e-mail based guidance services; catering for lifelong guidance; and planning and implementing research. They also require training in community involvement; management (including managing and evaluating information); integrating experiential methods in provision; and developing self-service approaches to guidance <sup>(31)</sup>;

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<sup>(31)</sup> Similar sets of competence needs have been identified by Watts (1992) and by Hiebert, McCarthy and Repetto (2001).

- (d) there is little common recognition of guidance qualifications between the education and labour market sectors, and much of the training remains strongly sector-based. Some developments have been flagged in the guidance survey suggesting that this trend may be slowly changing. A Danish Ministry of Education report has proposed establishment of a new cross-sectoral diploma programme. The most recent university course in career guidance in Malta accepted candidates from both the PES and schools; and both Estonia and Iceland report initiatives where the education and labour ministries have decided to jointly offer courses and training seminars to guidance workers from the two sectors. In the United Kingdom, however, the attempt to develop general training courses applicable to different categories of guidance workers has fuelled concerns about the loss of the specialised knowledge base and skills that had been developed by more targeted courses. Modular programmes that offer a common core with specialist options could go some way towards overcoming such problems;
- (e) it seems that increasingly, the trend is to offer more initial and in-service specialised training to career guidance workers in both the education and labour sectors (see Table 16). Several countries documented this tendency: Iceland, for instance, has extended its pre-service training requirements for school counsellors from 100 to 200 hours, and plans to upgrade the course to a master's degree. Austria's student advisers previously received only a few weeks of training; now a new standardised initial training course lasting two and a half years is to be trialled in three *Länder*. Malta has launched its first training course for employment advisers in the PES, and Ireland has declared its intention to increase the number of PES staff who hold diploma and higher diploma level qualifications. This trend is not across the board, however: France and Sweden report a growing group of career guidance staff without formal training in the field. Denmark's PES staff have seen their opportunities for training reduced, and their work roles reorganised to reflect organisational rather than professional inputs.

*Table 16: Increasing guidance training in Greece, Iceland and Romania*

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In Greece, until a few years ago, SEP – the guidance programme in secondary schools – was implemented by people who, for the most part, lacked any relevant training. However, since 1999 many special training programmes have been organised for SEP officials in universities under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Pedagogical institute with EU support funding. The Ministry also operates a model centre for vocational guidance, which it

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uses for professional development purposes. The University of Athens and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki both organise annual programmes attended by all vocational guidance managers. At the same time 10 of the country's universities have run in-service training programmes of about five months' duration, attended by 450 secondary school teachers. Similar programmes for the training of 78 teachers in information processing have been carried out at the Athens University of Economics and Business and the Athens Technological Education Institute.

In Iceland, the ministerial report on strengthening the guidance profession issued in 1998 proposed several measures, including extension of the one-year school counselling programme at the University of Iceland to two years. The course will now lead to a master's degree. The report also proposed that training should be more competence-based, that staff should become more familiar in the use of guidance tools, and that they should have improved access to computer facilities and databanks.

Romania has invested a great deal in training its guidance staff. It offered a master's degree in guidance and counselling at the University of Bucharest in 1996. Three years later, with World Bank cofunding, the same university offered a master's degree in public policy, with a specialised module in career guidance. Since then, about 900 graduates have followed that option. In 1999, Babeş-Bolyai University started offering a master's degree in counselling psychology. Romania also participates in the Academia project – a transnational exchange programme funded by the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme for the training of guidance staff.

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## 9. Funding career guidance

*This section identifies the sources that fund guidance services across Europe. Much of this funding comes from the State, though few details are available on the extent and volume of such provision. Different modalities can be used by the State to direct funds to clients, but increasingly the most common model sees governments devolving funding to regions, the local communities, or even specific institutions. Problems with this model are identified based on responses provided by the different countries involved in the guidance survey. Finally, private-sector investment in providing guidance services is examined in relation to developing markets and quasi-markets.*

### 9.1. Funding sources for guidance

***The cost of guidance services across Europe is largely borne by the State, but there is a deficit of clear information about the volume of this investment***

While the report has indicated several areas of deficit in guidance provision, it has also shown that the tendency has been to expand in extent, reach, and variety of provision, both in the education and the labour market sectors. Such developments require extensive funding, and it is important to see where such resourcing is coming from in the European States under review, and the different models that are most commonly used in providing such resources. Each of these will be examined in turn.

A caveat must however be made from the outset. This is that, most respondents found it difficult, if not impossible, to provide even approximate estimates on national expenditure on guidance. If the focus is on outlay by the State, then most countries note the costs of delivering guidance services are included in broader budgets that cannot be readily broken down and are therefore difficult to compute. Often there is no differentiation in central records between how much is spent on guidance-related activities (e.g. personal counselling) and on career and educational guidance.

The picture becomes more complex where central funds are allocated to regions or institutions that have a degree of autonomy in allocating budgets. Where some statistics were provided in the country responses, they show an increase in government investment in guidance services, even if the general comment made by most was that overall aspirations, of providing more comprehensive guidance services, were hampered by lack of sufficient funding. France's *Centres d'information et d'orientation* (CIO), for instance, saw an increase in funding of 6.2 % between 1998 and 1999, and another 5 % in the following year. Similarly, the budget for the *Agence nationale pour l'emploi* (ANPE) was boosted by 9.2 %

between 1998 and 1999. Of the 29 countries, only Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Sweden signalled significant State cutbacks in funding support for aspects of the guidance services provided. Given the commitment of European governments to LLL, and consequently to lifelong guidance, guidance services need to expand to cover the lifelong and lifewide range of needs. Funding of such intensified investment represents a policy challenge for all European governments.

***Private investment in guidance services is minimal compared to the funds provided by the State***

Information about the extent of private investment in guidance is even harder to come by in the country reports. It is clear, from the material presented in the preceding sections (e.g. 5.2; 7.2) that private companies are offering services for which individuals pay, either directly or indirectly. Other individuals will be paying for guidance as part of a fee which purchases a package of services – as in the case of students attending non-State educational institutions. In very rare cases (e.g. Finland, Iceland, Romania) certain state guidance services (e.g. processing of occupational inventory tests) are provided at a cost to the client, but often such fees are largely symbolic. It is not possible, however, to calculate any of these private investments in guidance on the basis of data provided in the country responses.

While most often, national expenditure on guidance services draws directly on government budgets deriving from tax contributions, this is not the case with all the countries reviewed. In Germany, for instance, the Federal employment service is funded through social insurance contributions from individuals and their employers; the role of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is to ensure that the service complies with statutes and legal requirements. A somewhat similar model has been put into place in Greece, where employees and businesses indirectly finance guidance services through national insurance contributions, a percentage of which is earmarked for the Manpower Planning Organisation (OAED). Elsewhere, such contributions play a more limited role. In Cyprus and Poland, some of the state authorities or bodies involved in delivering aspects of the guidance services fund their activities by imposing a levy on the payroll of private and semi-public entities, and some sectors in the Netherlands have developed several services based on training levy funds from employers and employees. Austrian employers fund aspects of guidance services through membership fees to the Economic Chamber, to which they are obliged to belong.

***External funds for guidance services***

Other funding for aspects of guidance services comes through international programmes. EU Member States access such support through participation in the European Social Fund. In addition, and

together with the ACCs, they also benefit from a whole platform of Community funding programmes such as Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci. Over and above this, Hungary, Poland and Romania have been able to develop their guidance systems and resources thanks to targeted funding and technical expertise made available by the World Bank. Once again, however, when compared to the investment made by the State, these and other forms of external funding, while often having a substantial impact on service development, represent a tiny fraction of the overall outlay. Also there is a problem of sustainability when the project money dries up.

## **9.2. Modalities of State funding of guidance services**

### ***The ways in which State funding reaches the user***

An analysis of the 29 countries involved in this review suggests that government funds can be directed at a package of services, of which guidance represents only one facet, or alternatively, they can be targeted at guidance activities specifically. In addition, government funds can be channelled to the client via national, regional, or local governing bodies. Irrespective of the way funding is packaged, and the governing apparatus used to channel it, state funding reaches the guidance service user in one of four main ways. It can:

- (a) be managed directly by the national, regional, or local government itself;
- (b) be delegated to a government-controlled agency;
- (c) be devolved to a range of institutions;
- (d) be outsourced or subcontracted to, for instance, community and other not-for-profit organisations, or private companies.

Examples of all four modalities can be identified across Europe. Here, they are discussed in terms of the policy mechanisms which seem to have the most impact on the way funds flow through the system and become converted into services for the user, namely devolution (to regional or local governing apparatuses, and to institutions) and outsourcing.

### ***Devolution from national to regional and local levels: promises...***

The current policy climate across Europe encourages devolution to local levels, in the belief that this encourages ownership of challenges and of initiatives to meet them. In the CEE countries, decentralisation tends to be particularly attractive as an antidote to a heritage of tight central control, and as a mechanism to diffuse power that had previously been in the hands of a few. Moves towards devolution are evident in most of the 29 European countries surveyed – only Finland and Iceland reported a reverse trend.

*...and pitfalls*

Several countries that have decentralised their systems also noted, however, that the shift of responsibilities has generated new problems, and that devolution offers no guarantee for the efficient and effective use of resources (e.g. Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Finland, France, Latvia, Poland, Spain, Sweden). Indeed, devolution of responsibilities within a policy vacuum can lead to costly overlap, lack of coordination within and across sectors, a deficit in comparable standards between regions leading to inequitable access to services, and an overall degeneration in standards (Grubb, 2002b). The case of Poland is instructive. The winding down of the national network of labour offices in favour of local government provision has led to a serious deterioration in the quality of provision. In Latvia, decentralisation became a convenient mechanism to devolve responsibilities to local government without passing on the necessary funding; while in the Czech Republic, the transfer of authority for managing the consulting centres which offered career information and guidance to the regions has led to a dramatic reduction in services. In the absence of central policy leads, the career guidance services in Luxembourg have ended up manifesting several gaps. Such central steering is difficult to achieve when, as in France and the United Kingdom, decentralisation leads to too much diversity in service provision on the ground.

These and other experiences across Europe support the view that the best way forward may very well be a judicious mix of centralised and decentralised models, where municipalities develop their own policy in the context of central guidelines reached after wide consultation with stakeholders. Estonia (see Table 17), Finland, Portugal and Sweden, among others, seem to have adopted such a model, stipulating contracts between central and regional government, with the centre prescribing the minimum level of guidance services that should be available, thus avoiding undue variability between regions.

*Table 17: State funding of guidance in Estonia*

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In Estonia, the Ministry of Education and Research signs an annual cooperation contract with each of the country's 15 administrative regions. The county governor of a specific region, in turn, outsources guidance services to a provider, who can be either a non-profit association or a municipal institution. The regions can decide how to use about 95 % of the money addressed to youth career counselling by the Ministry of Education. The rest of the funds are earmarked for re-training, for information materials and for the maintenance of the electronic information system. The budget for in-service development of guidance staff is provided by the local government. While there are no mandatory service standards, there are specific guidelines that providers are asked to follow.

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In the case of the Ministry of Social Affairs, salaries for workers and for the equipment used in providing career guidance come from the State budget. Supplementary funds – which, according to the national employment action plan, are earmarked for the re-training of career counsellors and of job mediation consultants, for the publication of career information brochures, and for the purchase of career tests and training in their use – come from the proceeds of privatisation. Phare 2000, funds the project Support to the balanced development of labour market services, which involves staff training, and the development of the guidance system and of service standards in guidance. The latter are applicable across the board.

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***Devolution to institutions***

In some cases, funding flows to clients via transfers from the State to the institutions which provide the services. In some countries (e.g. Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway), there is a direct allocation of funds for ‘guidance time’ to students, on the basis of a preestablished formula decided by the ministry or after a collective agreement. Often, funds are provided as an overall package, with guidelines indicating, in a more or less detailed manner, how the money should be spent in relation to a range of services. Such guidelines can be mandatory, or can leave much to the discretion of the management of the institution. This funding model is often used in the education sector where, as in Denmark and the United Kingdom, budgets follow students, as it were, with schools benefiting from their ability to attract and retain clients. Student entitlement to career guidance can be difficult to guarantee in this model, because management might have other priorities, and might be tempted to consider guidance services a frill.

### **9.3. The market and quasi-market alternatives for funding guidance**

***Outsourcing to community or not-for-profit organisations, and to the private sector***

Several respondents to the survey noted that their governments were increasingly attracted by outsourcing, particularly in relation to the provision of guidance within public employment services (e.g. Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, the United Kingdom). Subcontracting can be an attractive policy measure for several reasons: it can be a way of recruiting staff at lower costs, without having to extend the usual benefits that have to be given to civil servants; the subcontracted services may not be as bureaucratically tied up by complex civil service regulations, and hence may be more nimble and flexible in their response to new challenges; and community and not-for-profit organisations in particular

may be closer to the target clients than government institutions, and hence more likely to be knowledgeable about – and responsive to – their needs.

### ***Quasi-market models***

For these and other reasons, several countries across Europe have adopted quasi-market models in their approach to funding career and information services, outsourcing functions that traditionally had been carried by the PES. Examples from the guidance reports abound, particularly for the older EU Member States. Thus, the Austrian PES (the AMS – i.e. the Federal employment office) contracts out some guidance services to a range of for-profit and not-for-profit organisations, which normally cater for six-week orientation courses to improve the employability of 14 to 20 year old youths. It also contracts out the production of career information material, as do its Czech, Finnish, German and Spanish counterparts. Germany, the Federal employment service has outsourced some of the profiling work with unemployed and disadvantaged individuals, plus their training in jobseeking skills. Iceland's Ministry of Social Affairs has subcontracted trade unions to manage projects for enhancing the services for unemployed people. Spain gives great importance to funding community-based organisations to cater for the guidance needs of disadvantaged groups.

In some cases, outsourcing is done indirectly, with the State giving a voucher to clients, who can then buy a service from a provider of their choice. Such schemes have been tried out in Flemish-speaking Belgium (see Table 18), France, Germany and Italy, for instance. A variation on the voucher model is the contract model that has been trialled in the United Kingdom, and more recently in Estonia and the Netherlands. This involves giving the choice of provider not to the client, but to the official authorities concerned, who are deemed to be more knowledgeable about what will offer best value for money. As in the case of devolution, outsourcing – in all its guises – poses important questions about the role of the State in monitoring the quality of the services it funds, and in ensuring equity in access. A good example of this is provided by the United Kingdom, where all guidance services in receipt of public funding have to meet the 'matrix' quality standards. Estonia too is planning to develop regulations governing service standards that external providers will have to follow.

*Table 18: Learning and guidance cheques (vouchers) in Flemish-speaking Belgium*

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While learning cheques or vouchers have been in circulation in Flemish-speaking Belgium for some time, the whole system has recently been reformed, following an agreement between the Flemish government and the social partners, signed in March 2003. Under the new system, all funding for training and learning facilities are brought together and will be used for (a) the development of career guidance and the recognition of prior learning, and (b) financing the learning cheques scheme. The scope of the existing system is being broadened, mainly by (a) adding the possibility of its use in the private sector, (b) targeting the at-risk groups by increasing the number of vouchers they receive, or the value of their cheques, and (c) by setting up a voucher system for employees as well. While previously cheques were delivered to employers, there is now a system that issues cheques to employees, who have complete autonomy in making use of them be it to fund training and learning, to pay for guidance services, or to gain certification for prior learning. Every employee is entitled to a cheque of EUR 250 annually, which individuals are required to supplement according to their financial standing.

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***Market models for funding career guidance services, while growing, tend to be limited in extent and scope***

Several countries also noted that there is a growing private market offering different aspects of guidance, though, as has already been noted above, and in other sections of this report, this sector is still small. It is also less likely to be found in the new Member States, and tends to be confined largely to the production of career information materials (such as handbooks, guidebooks, CD-ROMS, and websites), to employment agencies (with an overwhelming focus on job brokerage and head hunting), and to outplacement agencies (that offer career counselling). In some cases, a limited market for career guidance services paid for by individuals has also appeared (e.g. in French-speaking Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom – and to a lesser extent in Denmark, Ireland and Sweden). In many cases, these services have found it difficult to survive, largely because individuals do not seem to be willing to pay for guidance at full-cost rates.

***Factors explaining the growth of a private market in guidance***

Three factors can help explain the growth of the private market in career guidance:

First is government outsourcing and subcontracting has tended to stimulate the market, providing a reliable source of funding which makes investment on the part of private entrepreneurs a feasible option. Governments have also stimulated competition in the provision of employment services by doing away with the monopoly that their PES often used to enjoy – until the legality of such a monopoly was challenged in at the European Court of Justice on the grounds that it was impeding

real competition. Private employment services have been legalised in Denmark (in 1990), Sweden (1993), Germany (in 1998), and Norway (in 2000). Greece has gone one step further and has actually recently privatised its PES, with Cyprus soon to follow suit.

Second, has contributed to the growth of a private market in the guidance and information is the increasing readiness of employers to pay private, external providers to meet the careers guidance and development needs of their employees (e.g. French-speaking Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands). Employers may do this for several reasons: guidance may be part of a service they offer to their management, to ensure continued development of their skills and motivation. It may also be offered to employees who are about to be laid off due to recession or restructuring. In this case, the obligation of paying for such career guidance may have been agreed by employers as part of a collective agreement with unions, and sometimes the State may partially subsidise the costs of the guidance service offered.

Third, stimulus for private provision of guidance is the increasing demand for services, and the inability of the State to satisfy such demand.

A key factor is that, despite the increase in private provision, most European countries seem to know little about its extent, and have made few attempts to regulate it. This has serious implications, especially if the premise is that guidance is a public as well as a private good. If so, the State has a responsibility to ensure that services offered through the market are sound, and also to compensate for any market failure as a result of which client entitlement to guidance services may be jeopardised.



## 10. Improving strategic leadership

*This section considers the State's responsibility in developing an overall vision for guidance and in strategically managing it. Such leadership is necessary to ensure that public policy goals are met, and that quality services are available for all citizens. To fulfil such a strategic role, the State needs to ensure the necessary legislative and quality auditing mechanisms are in place, and there is an adequate evidence platform on which effective policies can be developed. The relationship between the State and its partners and stakeholders in meeting such responsibilities is also considered.*

### 10.1. The State's role in providing strategic leadership

#### ***The strategic coordination of guidance services in the learning society***

In the previous section, the point was made that despite the policy attractions of different forms of devolution as well as of stimulating provision through the market, the State still has a crucial role to play in the strategic overall management of such public goods as guidance. The more guidance is delivered through a variety of providers in a decentralised system, the more critical the coordinating role of the State becomes. Such coordination is necessary to ensure that all citizens have equitable access to services that are delivered in a timely and professional manner across their lifespan, in a way that supports and furthers their life goals. The responsibility of the State to ensure adequate provision and standards and to address market failures in delivery is intensified in societies which, like European ones, have committed themselves to developing individuals and economies through LLL. Lifelong, and indeed lifewide guidance cannot be strategically delivered unless it is conceived as a networked service, one that is linked to other personal, social and educational services (European Commission, 2001a), and that makes good use of stakeholder input to ensure more effective provision (European Commission, 2002b).

#### ***The challenge of cross-sectoral cooperation***

Respondents to the guidance survey made it clear that, despite some important recent initiatives, this determined strategic leadership by the State is still largely missing when it comes to guidance. The main obstacle is the lack of adequate cooperation between: (a) the different government departments and agencies, and (b) the government on the one hand and stakeholders on the other. Underpinning this deficit is the lack of a clearly articulated national policy framework that is both dynamic and adequately resourced. In the case of the ACCs, governments have tended to try to steer policy through legislative measures – cross-sectoral cooperation in Slovenia, for instance, is mandated by law – but have found it difficult to sustain a vision without the follow through of

adequate funding. Some CEE countries in particular are also hampered by the lack of expertise within ministries, given the relatively recent introduction of comprehensive guidance services (e.g. Estonia). In the case of other European countries, both members and non-members of the EU, cross-sectoral cooperation is increasingly touted as necessary, but the sheer diversity of services offered at national, regional and local levels, in a policy context which favours decentralisation and local autonomy, has made any form of central steering daunting (e.g. France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain). Several countries claim that it has proved somewhat easier to coordinate the field at local rather than regional or national level (e.g. France, Italy, Sweden), though even here, few examples of effective mechanisms which bring together different government as well as non-government stakeholders to debate and resolve policy issues were reported in the survey.

In contrast, several examples were given of how institutional interests, turf-guarding, and sectoral concerns about role and identity have jeopardised the development of concerted policy planning and development to ensure the availability of comprehensive, connected, quality services. In the ACCs in particular, some policy-makers have not yet embraced styles of leadership that involve social partnership <sup>(32)</sup>. Across the rest of Europe, employers' associations seem to have a more direct involvement in guidance-related issues and services than trade union organisations, whether at local, regional or national levels.

***The benefits of cross-sectoral cooperation and partnership approaches***

Cooperation between government departments and agencies – normally those with responsibility for education and the employment portfolios – is important because career guidance relates directly to both, and requires the reciprocal input of both. This is true for technical matters – such as in the provision of information in a form that can be consolidated so as to maximise awareness of opportunities for clients – and in relation to the capacity to follow and support the pathways clients take through learning and working. Cooperation between government and non-government stakeholders is also very important. Much can be gained, from the point of view of the client, if the respective knowledge, insights and accumulated experience of the different providers and interested parties, as well as of the clients themselves, are brought together. Such dynamic synergy can serve to provide a multidimensional and multiperspective picture, and a sounder basis for developing a policy vision and for implementing it strategically. Key outputs could include the elaboration

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<sup>(32)</sup> Some EU programmes and initiatives, however, now commonly require social partner involvement in projects, and some reports for ACCs noted that this had stimulated a new trend in fostering such involvement.

of quality standards for career information and guidance provision, common approaches to customer/user involvement and protection, and common marketing and branding of services.

***Different levels of cooperation***

Country reports provided a range of examples illustrating how mechanisms are slowly being developed to ensure improved cross-sectoral dialogue, and to link key players at the local, regional, national and even European levels. These are presented in four levels:

- (a) at the first, interministerial level, cooperation has, in some cases, been consolidated through the setting up of an interdepartmental structure bringing different government portfolios together. Their role is usually to ensure that governmental policies are clearly articulated, mutually agreed and supported, and effectively presented at national forum level. Examples of this strategy are the interdepartmental working groups on guidance in the Netherlands and in Norway, the working committee for job placement and career guidance in Hungary, as well as the United Kingdom's national information, advice and guidance board within the Department for Education and Skills;
- (b) at the second, national level, cross-sectoral cooperation has been reinforced through the creation of forums which include both government and stakeholder representatives, as well as key partners in service provision (see Table 19). Examples include: Finland's National advisory group; Germany's Alliance for jobs, training and competitiveness; Hungary's National career orientation council; Iceland's Educate group; Poland's National forum for vocational guidance; and the United Kingdom's Guidance council. Denmark used to have a National council for educational and vocational guidance (RUE), but this was recently dissolved, although it is to be replaced by a new structure within the Ministry of Education. Italy's National guidance committee has also been dissolved, but there are now plans to revive it, as its absence generated coordination problems in service provision. Other countries reported plans to establish a national guidance forum, as the lack of cooperation among the different providers is leading to various problems. A case in point is Latvia, where the document setting out a vision statement for vocational guidance, issued in 1994, envisages the setting up of a Guidance coordination council;
- (c) similar structures, or chapters/subcommittees of national forums, are probably also needed at the regional and/or local level, though this

depends on the scale of each country, as well as on its policy regimes and the extent of decentralisation;

- (d) at another level, strategic management of guidance and information services across the EU Member States has much to commend it. The European Commission in its communication *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality* (2001a) proposed the setting up a European guidance forum of policy-makers and social partners to develop common policy approaches. As noted in Section 1, an expert group on lifelong guidance has been established by the European Commission.

*Table 19: National guidance forums in Finland, Bulgaria...and a regional guidance forum in Austria*

In Finland, key stakeholders engage in wide-ranging and many-sided cooperative ventures, and several organisations are interested in issues connected with counselling and guidance. A national advisory group was set up on the initiative of the Finnish Euroguidance centre (CIMO) in 1999. It brings together the national authorities and other key players in guidance and counselling, ensures coordination, and seeks to create and exploit synergies among the different actors operating. In addition, CIMO has its own advisory council representing different ministries, universities and polytechnics, business and industry, as well as student and youth organisations.

Bulgaria established a National agency for vocational education and training – NAVET – as a specialised government body for the accreditation and licensing of activities in VET as well as for coordinating institutions related to VET and guidance. The managing council of NAVET includes 24 representatives: 8 each for the respective Ministries, for employers’ organisations, and for employee organisations.

In the province of Styria, Austria, a strong regional network has been established to facilitate the transition of young people to work. The network includes representatives from the Styrian provincial government, educational institutions, employer organisations, individual companies, trade unions, and the PES. The *Berufsfindungsbegleiter* project aims to improve young people’s access to firms, advice, and information.

## 10.2. Legislation and regulations

***Variety in the way legislation is used to manage guidance strategically***

One of the key ways the State exercises its role as strategic manager of public services is through legislative mechanisms. These can stipulate the nature, extent, frequency and quality of a service that must be offered, setting it out as an entitlement for all, or for specific groups of citizens. The guidance survey suggests that there is some variety in the manner in

which legislation is used as a policy steering mechanism in guidance in European countries, when it is used at all. There is also variety within the same country, since there are cases where legislation for the education sector refers to guidance, while that for the labour market does not, or vice versa. The range of ways in which guidance is regulated in the countries surveyed include the following:

- (a) a number of countries do not have formal legislation regarding vocational guidance, but prefer to manage it within the context of civil service rules and regulations of the respective education and labour departments. Cyprus and Malta are examples of this. Occasionally, job descriptions for career guidance personnel have the force of formal regulations, thus serving to establish standards (e.g. Romania);
- (b) other countries have detailed goals set out for career guidance within the context of national strategies concerning employment and human resource development, or of national development plans (e.g. Estonia, Latvia, Poland);
- (c) another way of regulating guidance is through sections within Education Acts, or laws concerning VET or regulating the provision of services within the Ministry of Labour, or a law embracing a variety of aspects of public service, where the right of citizens to vocational counselling is formally declared (e.g. French-speaking Belgium, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania). Given the context in which such regulations are articulated, entitlement is set out in very general terms (e.g. ‘pupils have the right to necessary guidance on education, careers, and social matters’, or ‘students should have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices’). Similarly general are the goals for the service that is to be offered (e.g. enabling students to choose occupations, facilitating successful professional development of individuals, reducing unemployment and poverty, improving adaptability and promoting entrepreneurship);
- (d) more rarely, legislative measures address vocational guidance specifically (e.g. Denmark, Lithuania). In these cases, the laws are likely to be more detailed, outlining the types of services to be provided, the code of ethics to be followed in making provision, and the quality standards to be met. Some even outline the new delivery structures that need to be established to implement the provision mandated in the law (e.g. Bulgaria, Slovakia).

All but the most recent laws tend to fail to articulate guidance within the broader picture of lifelong learning, and consequently tend to emphasise services aimed at young people in education, and at unemployed youth and adults. Those countries that have passed laws more recently tend to also refer to guidance services for adults in employment, and to older workers (e.g. Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia, Poland).

***Most legal instruments are provision-driven, rather than specifying client entitlements to quality service***

Much of the legislation reported in the country surveys tends to emphasise input, and is provision-driven. In other words, the legal framework obliges entities to provide a service, but does not empower citizens by specifying their entitlements to the service. There is a qualitative difference here, for as they stand, many guidance providers are not subject to the kind of accountability measures which, from the point of view of the client, ensure minimum standards. In addition, whereas client rights are not specified in such a way that entities failing to provide the service, or to provide it adequately, are susceptible to legal action, there is a risk that provision guarantees may flounder. Such is the case with many of the CEE countries, which report a serious lag in the implementation of recently promulgated laws concerning guidance (e.g. Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland). Greece reports a similar situation.

### **10.3. Quality standards**

***The need to ensure quality guidance provision***

Legislation, especially when it is articulated in broad, general terms, needs to be complemented by other mechanisms to ensure adequate service provision. One such mechanism that was frequently referred to in the countries involved in the guidance survey concerns the setting of quality standards. These can serve several goals related to quality assurance and quality improvement:

- (a) they can be used to set minimum thresholds for service providers, which must be met if an entity is to be awarded a licence to offer career guidance services (e.g. Bulgaria), or if funding is to be transferred. All adult guidance services offered in England, for instance, have to demonstrate that they have met the ‘matrix’ standards if they are to secure public funds;
- (b) they can serve as criteria for establishing performance targets and for organising service evaluation and inspection. Several countries, for instance, have developed occupational descriptions for career guidance staff and for those involved in the production of career-related information in either the education or the labour market sectors, detailing the competences that providers are expected to

demonstrate in fulfilling their roles (e.g. Estonia, Denmark, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain). Performance evaluation on agreed-to standards, as a mechanism for quality control, is sometimes tied to career progression, as in Romania; while in Finland, salaries are tied to outcomes of services through a management-by-results system. In Slovenia, there is a move to tie performance targets to outcomes-based evaluation of career guidance services;

- (c) particularly in decentralised systems, but also in centralised ones, quality standards can establish some sort of common ground and add coherence to a diversified system. Spain, for instance, has developed a ‘European excellence model’ – an adaptation of the European foundation for quality management model – to be used by schools to evaluate themselves on several criteria, with guidance services being involved in this self-assessment as part of the overall exercise. Denmark uses a similar approach in its vocational education and training sector, where self-assessment is complemented by external audit processes.

***Gaps and weaknesses in quality guidance provision***

Several general points can be made following this review of approaches to quality assurance of guidance services across Europe. First is, generally speaking, there is little regular and systematic analysis of the quality of guidance across the 29 European countries reviewed. When investigative analysis is carried out, it tends to be quantitative in nature, throwing little light on processes. Second, when there is such evaluation, it tends not to be targeted specifically at guidance, but at guidance as part of an overall range of services, as in Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands, and Spain. As such, much depends on whether the evaluating team has an interest or expertise in guidance. Third, where a quality framework is articulated, it tends to be voluntary rather than mandatory, and operates as a set of guidelines (e.g. Ireland’s guidelines for schools on guidance programme planning, issued by the National centre for guidance in education; or the guidelines issued by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research). Quality standards sometimes have checking procedures or sanctions attached to them, but little goes on across Europe in terms of inspection of guidance services, although there are some exceptions to this provided by the United Kingdom, where there is a well established system of school and college inspections. At best, quality is assured through regulating access into the profession, and through improved initial and in-service training. On both these counts, however, the guidance field in Europe still manifests several fundamental weaknesses, as Section 8 made clear.

*Table 20: Quality assurance in the United Kingdom, Romania and Estonia*

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Since April 2002, the United Kingdom has put into place the ‘matrix’ quality standard for information, advice and guidance services, which is administered by the Employment national training organisation. Accreditation of organisations against the standard is awarded by the Guidance accreditation board.

Romania has developed a set of quality criteria, both quantitative and qualitative, to evaluate the results of the information, guidance and counselling services:

**Quantitative indicators include:** number of people counselled, tested, guided etc. individually or in groups (school and university students, adults); number of counselled persons who found employment; number of information materials produced (information about professions, brochures, posters, websites); number of surveys, studies, investigations, scientific papers etc.; additional financial resources attracted; drafting of promotion materials on the image, objectives and services of the different centres providing vocational guidance; teaching credentials and scientific degrees obtained by counsellors.

**Qualitative indicators include:** client satisfaction; efficient use of available resources (working equipment, psychological equipment, ICT, tests, questionnaires); involvement of other potential sources of counselling and guidance (the community, representatives of administrative authorities, employers, trade unions); networking; vocational self-education; engagement in professional associations.

These criteria are set by the counsellors’ community and reflect aspects they regard as relevant for the evaluated activity. Within the boundaries of formally imposed general norms, the expert has a certain degree of autonomy in measuring and evaluating his or her own work. The tools used have a guiding role and provide the expert with feedback.

The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research has issued guidance providers with the following guidelines: they are to specifically design their services to respond to the needs of young people; they are to be open to all young people, without the need for an appointment; they are to provide information on a wide range of subjects, in a variety of forms, prepared both for young people in general and for groups with special needs; the information provided has to be practical, pluralistic, accurate and regularly updated; they have to operate in a way which considers the personal needs of each user, which respects confidentiality, and which provides a maximum of choice, promoting the client’s autonomy; they are to refer the user to a specialised service when necessary.

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## 10.4. Evidence and data

### *The importance of evidence and data to ensure comprehensive provision adequately assessed*

The strategic auditing of guidance services cannot be done effectively unless the State is supported by an adequate and reliable platform of information. Such data provides policy-makers and stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of the overall picture of provision, as well as of the effectiveness of that same provision in meeting public policy objectives. Mention has already been made in previous sections of the lack of relevant data, particularly with reference to the financial flows into national guidance systems (Section 9.1). The observation made in that regard is also applicable to other aspects of the guidance field, namely that a good understanding and evaluation of the inputs, processes and outputs of the service is seriously hampered by a weak evidence and database. This is generally true across all European countries, even in those where guidance has been established for a long time. It is even more true of those countries where guidance services have been set up in the last decade or so, and which have not yet developed the capacity to generate the data indicators required to assess the impact of such provision.

### *Obstacles to developing quality assurance in guidance*

Part of the reason for the lack of sound research on the effectiveness of career guidance is that such evaluations are difficult to do well. As many have noted (e.g. Plant, 2001; Maguire and Killeen, 2003; Sweet, 2003), guidance is hard to observe directly, and in any case, there are so many variables that have an impact on career decision-making that causality is difficult to establish, especially when issues of effectiveness are being considered. The outcomes that career guidance tries to achieve are also not often easily subject to measurement<sup>(33)</sup>. Further, with some notable exceptions (see Table 21), there are few countries that have set up specialised institutes or centres to carry out systematic research in this area. It is also surprising that few European universities yet have a chair in guidance, which could provide intellectual leadership not just on substantive issues, but as importantly, given the research complexity of the field, on methodological ones.

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<sup>(33)</sup> The extent to which guidance is effective in achieving the goals set is debatable, and evidence is hard to come by given the difficulties of isolating cause from effect. Nevertheless, a review of the relevant literature by the OECD (2003) (see also Maguire and Killeen, 2003) suggests that guidance contributes to improving learning outcomes of knowledge, skills and attitudes. There is also increasing evidence that participating in guidance activities leads to positive behavioural outcomes in relation to participation in learning and work (Savickas, 2000). Firm evidence of long-term benefits is still inadequate. In the general contribution to public as well as private goods, the overall evidence on the benefits of career guidance is described as limited, but positive.

Table 21: *Guidance research centres in the Czech Republic, Greece, Ireland, Romania and the United Kingdom*

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The Czech Republic set up an Institute of pedagogical and psychological counselling (IPPP) which was founded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT) in the year 1994 ([www.ippp.cz](http://www.ippp.cz)). IPPP carries out a lot of research and training activities, and publishes the periodical *Výchovné Poradenství* (Educational counselling).

In Greece, the EKEP, the National centre for vocational orientation, was established by Law 2525/97. This body is based in Athens and is answerable to both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. One main objective is to cooperate with corresponding European and international centres, universities and research institutes or individual experts to promote better theories, methods, information provision, and counselling and vocational guidance services. Greece has also set up a transition observatory to monitor the extent to which secondary education graduates are able to join the labour market.

Ireland has a national centre for guidance in education, an agency of the Department of Education and Science within the education portfolio. Its roles include managing national initiatives, developing guidance support materials for practitioners, providing advice on good practice, supporting innovation and pilot projects, disseminating information to practitioners, organising in-service training, carrying out surveys and research on guidance, and advising the Department of Education and Science on policy development. It also acts as a European national resource centre for guidance under the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

Romania has an educational and vocational department at the Institute for educational sciences, which has been designated as the methodological authority for the Ministry of Education's guidance and counselling network. It is run by a team of highly qualified scholars with advanced degrees in a variety of areas linked to guidance and counselling, and has led several evaluative research projects focusing on human and ICT resources, staff qualifications, tests, career guidance for adults, computerised career guidance programmes, and beneficiaries of guidance services.

The United Kingdom has specialised centres for research and policy analysis in career guidance, including the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC) and the centre for guidance studies at the University of Derby. Several other centres, both within tertiary education and outside it, employ research staff with a specific expertise in career guidance. A proposal for the establishment of a national research forum for career guidance in the United Kingdom, developed at a conference jointly organised by the Guidance Council and NICEC in May 2002, has been supported by government.

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***Research on career guidance has increased in recent years ...***

While recognising such limitations, it is also important to highlight the promising nature of the present conjuncture, where several factors have converged to place guidance more centrally on the policy and research agendas in Europe. As already noted, the European Commission's communication on lifelong learning has helped to draw attention to the guidance field, and triggered a healthy debate in national and European forums on the ways lifelong guidance can support LLL. Some of that debate is raising questions to which only systematic research can provide answers. In addition, the OECD's review of policies for career guidance, and its extension to practically all European countries via ETF and Cedefop support, will have – and in some cases is already having – a catalytic and mobilising effect. Several of the survey reports for the ACCs noted, for instance, that the consultation exercise required to respond to the questionnaire stimulated deeply engaged discussions across the various stakeholders, and led to a resolve to carry out further research. A number of governments have initiated major reviews of guidance services in recent years. Italy's Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, for instance, commissioned an extensive analysis of its guidance systems in a study carried out between 1997 and 1999 (Malizia, 2000). In 1998, Iceland's Ministry of Education, Science and Culture commissioned a report on guidance from the perspective of lifelong learning. In the United Kingdom, the National foundation for educational research, on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills, investigated the delivery of career guidance in schools (Morris, Rickinson and Davies, 2001), while the Department of Education and Employment published a review of career guidance services in higher education (Harris, 2001). The French guidance survey report highlights the boom in research and development in the guidance field, largely thanks to university-based scholars. Other reports noted that different university departments have produced theses or lead research projects on different aspects of guidance, and have showcased recent achievements in research on guidance in their country, confirming that there might indeed be a swing towards a recognition of the need for more evidence-based policy-making.

***...but many studies are fragmented rather than strategic and cumulative in scope, and many gaps in the knowledge base remain***

Despite these promising signs, it would be fair to say that many of the studies referred to tend to be ad hoc, not cumulative in scope, and detached from policy-making. In some cases, too, data is produced but not adequately exploited in policy terms. The unsystematic approach to creating a solid evidence base leads to important gaps in most countries. Specifically, the following input, process and output data were generally weak, or completely missing from the country responses to the guidance survey:

- (a) the number of users of services, including their characteristics (such as age, gender, region, socioeconomic status, educational level and ethnic origin). Such information is both basic and crucial to identify

patterns in access to the service. Where such data is kept (e.g. Estonia, France, Latvia), the information management system can supply providers and policy-makers alike with important feedback as to whether the services are reaching more or fewer clients over the years. From the point of view of the policy-makers who wish to promote skills upgrading and labour flexibility nation-wide, for instance, it is important to know whether most services are being accessed only by urban school-leavers and young adults (as they are in several of the accession countries);

- (b) the diverse needs of different types of clients. There are some examples of good practice in this area – Latvia, for instance, has regularly carried out surveys that provide information regarding the different career guidance-related needs of school students, VET students, and the unemployed. On the whole, however, there is a lack of such data from all European countries. This could be related to the fact that most career guidance services are undifferentiated, with services following a ‘one size fits all’ approach. Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia stand out among the ACCs for trying to tailor aspects of their careers guidance service to the specific needs of clients with disabilities;
- (c) client satisfaction rates, and variation in these rates by client characteristics. Where research on this is carried out (e.g. Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Poland, Romania), the tendency is to focus on quantitative indicators (e.g. how many of the unemployed clients who used the career guidance service found a job or commenced further training). The collection of qualitative indicators (i.e. client satisfaction with the service offered) tends to be rare, though some reports do indicate a trend in this direction (e.g. Belgium).

## 11. Conclusions

*Future directions for guidance in Europe* This report has attempted to present the way education and career information and guidance services are being conceptualised, organised and delivered in 29 European countries. In doing so, the review has tried to remain sensitive to the specificity of each national context, giving the reader a sense of the variety in service provision, the repertoire of initiatives, the multiple strategies developed to overcome challenges, and the extensive efforts made to bolster the impact of guidance in facilitating personal fulfilment, in improving access to lifelong learning, and in providing the appropriate human resources to build stronger, more dynamic economies. At the same time, however, the review has drawn connections between countries, and groups of countries, in such a way that common themes, issues and challenges – as well as policy responses – can be identified.

The report's main goal is to simplify transversal and thematic analysis of guidance policy across Europe. One way of contributing to that goal is to distil the main conclusions of the foregoing comparative exercise, and present them as flows in policy-making. Such flows at one and the same time signal characteristics of alternative models in guidance provision, as well as the attempts, on the part of system managers and practitioners in the different European contexts, to develop guidance service provision that is in tune with the paradigm shift required by the learning society. This approach has several advantages. First of all, it synthesises key findings in a way that faithfully portrays the overall 'state-of-the-art' of guidance across Europe, without losing the sense of dynamic change and shifts that mark the field. Second, it captures the complex differences between and within the individual countries, which can be placed along a continuum marking origins (or what guidance practice has tended to be like) and destinations (or where guidance practice is trying to get to in its attempts to respond to the challenges of the Knowledge society). Additionally, by highlighting the direction of flows in policy-making across Europe, it effectively proposes a checklist of benchmarks, indicating what best – or at least interesting – policy and practice may be like. Policy-makers and practitioners can, in this way, better situate their own efforts within the general picture, appraising their own achievements in relation to those of others, and drawing inspiration from the range of alternatives being piloted elsewhere.

*A continuum of flows in guidance policy and practice across Europe*

**The nature of guidance:**

- From a service that is considered peripheral ...  
*...to one that is central, a key responsibility for government in partnership with others*
- From a service that draws its rationale and tools from psychology...  
*...to a service that is more multidisciplinary*
- From a service that considers opportunities in the context of a nation state or region...  
*...to a service that facilitates student and worker mobility across Europe*

**Who guidance is to be provided to:**

- From a service aimed largely at secondary level students...  
*... to a service that caters for the needs of all learners*
- From a service that is available to unemployed youth and adults...  
*...to a service that caters for within/between career moves*
- From a marginal service targeting at risk groups ...  
*... to a mainstream service available more broadly*

**When guidance is to be provided:**

- From a service that is provided mainly at key decision points...  
*...to a service that is provided lifelong*
- From a service that is curative and provided at crisis points...  
*... to a service that is educative, empowering citizens with learning and career management skills, preparing for wise decision-making throughout life*

**Where guidance is to be provided:**

- From a service that is offered only in institutional sites...  
*...to a service that is also available in leisure sites, in the community, and in the home*

- From a service that is formally bounded in time and space...  
*...To a service that is ubiquitous*

**Who provides guidance:**

- From a service that is exclusively provided by the State...  
*...to a service that is also provided by community organisations, Trade Unions, employers and other private entities*
- From a service that is delivered only by guidance staff...  
*...to a service that includes inputs by stakeholders and others*
- From a service that is staffed by non-specialised personnel...  
*...to a service that requires pre- and in-service training*
- From a service that tends to focus on personal and educational guidance issues...  
*... to a service that gives due importance to career guidance*
- From a service that is poorly professionalised...  
*...to a service that has clear entry and career progression routes*
- From a service that is staffed by same-level personnel...  
*...to a service that includes different staff categories, including paraprofessional workers*

**How guidance is to be provided:**

- From a service that focuses on provision...  
*...to a service that focuses on self-access and self-service with appropriate levels of assistance or none*
- From a service that is centrally managed...  
*...to a service that is decentralised but monitored centrally*
- From a service that is largely homogenous, irrespective of client diversity...  
*...to a service that is differentiated, responding to specific needs*

- From a service that is segmented according to sector...  
*... to a service that values cross-sector collaboration*
- From a service that works with individuals...  
*...to a service that maximises its impact by also working with groups*
- From a service that is available to students outside the curriculum...  
*...to a service that permeates guidance issues through the curriculum in a planned, coordinated manner*
- From a service that demands guidance staff to fulfil multiple roles...  
*...to a service that encourages specialisation in service delivery*
- From a service that is unregulated...  
*...to a service that has codes of conduct and standards of practice*
- From a service that fails to connect education and labour market data...  
*...to a service that uses ICT to consolidate different data*
- From a service that is under-researched...  
*...to a service that is regularly evaluated and is systematically reflexive*

### ***The way forward***

#### ***Progress is being made ...***

There is, of course, some tension in presenting these characteristics at one and the same time descriptively and prescriptively. The flows described are not necessarily linear – examples of flows in the reverse direction than that indicated, for instance, can be found in some of the countries surveyed, and while, in some cases, new forms of practice supersede others, in other cases both can, and do, coexist. Additionally, the specificity of each national – and at times, even subnational – context must not be lost sight of, whereby specific traditions, structures and policy regimes condition the way the flows described above are given expression in actual practice. Despite these important caveats, however, it can be claimed with a degree of confidence that the different country reports do indicate an overall shift, in Europe, towards an alternative model of guidance provision.

#### ***... but key gaps remain***

Despite such progress, the data presented in this synthesis report also suggests that there are several key weaknesses and gaps which need to be addressed if the different European countries are indeed to move further



along the continuum towards the provision of quality lifelong guidance services. For the EU Member and acceding States in particular, these areas of concern are of especial importance given the objectives for education, training and employment as these have been articulated in the Lisbon Conclusions, the Concrete objectives and the Copenhagen processes, and in key policy documents referred to in the first section of this report. Specifically, the following six areas seem to require the most urgent attention of policy-makers and service providers:

***Integrated  
guidance systems***

First, it is important for all providers and stakeholders to **jointly** take stock of the strengths and weakness of their overall provision, to **jointly** plan, implement and sustain the reforms that are required by the new guidance paradigm. Such a stocktaking exercise should be greatly facilitated by the national guidance reviews, and by the comparative picture that emerges from the different syntheses that are now available, including this one. What is critical here is the **joint** endeavour to consider guidance provision as a **whole system**, rather than as a motley collection of services offered in an unconnected manner at different times to different client groups at different points in the life course. As this report has pointed out, lifelong guidance requires a shift in the way services are provided, not merely in technical terms, but in the very way such services are conceptualised. From the point of view of the citizen, guidance needs to appear as a seamless flow of services that are linked, coherent, meaningful, accessible, and useful, to be drawn upon and made use of, in different ways, as he or she negotiates pathways through life. In most cases in the guidance field across Europe, it is still the logic of institutionally segmented provision that tends to prevail, and not the logic of holistic, integrated access. The shift that is required by the lifelong guidance paradigm, however, entails determined, coordinated, and strategic leadership, facilitated by structures and mechanisms such as national guidance forums, where stakeholders – including those representing the client perspective – are actively involved in policy development.

***Lifelong  
guidance***

Second, the discourse around lifelong guidance cannot but appear rhetorical if, as has been observed in this report with reference to services in several European countries, provision for adults in employment – not to mention senior citizens – remains limited, if not non-existent. This lacuna is compounded by the fact that social partners, and particularly trade unions, have not, generally speaking, identified the systematic and professional provision of guidance to workers as part of their overall mission and responsibility. The focus, on the part of both employers and trade unions, still tends to be largely on helping workers cope with redundancy and finding new employment, rather than with managing their

careers, working lives and leisure in a way that promotes and enhances personal fulfilment, in the context of a life plan.

***Appropriately  
trained and  
qualified staff***

Third, it is clear that the paradigm shift to lifelong guidance requires sets of new and advanced skills from the different providers, and that the pre-service and in-service training of guidance workers – professional and paraprofessional – has to be both broader, and deeper. In a runaway world marked by supercomplexity and by heightened unpredictability and vulnerability (Giddens, 1999; Beck, 1992), the citizen is bound to require more informed support and guidance to exploit opportunities, to decode and make sense of his or her milieu, and to remain empowered in determining his or her life course. Needless to say, guidance providers cannot face such complexity with mediocrity, and must increasingly pool and upgrade their knowledge, skills and resources to be of more effective service. Not to do so risks rendering guidance ineffective, or worse, irrelevant.

***Tiered services***

Fourth, the challenge of providing lifelong guidance services has far-reaching resource implications which few countries, if any, can afford to provide in a sustainable manner without rethinking their models of provision. Lifelong guidance requires much improved initial and continuing staff training; consolidated databases that do justice to the national and Europe-wide opportunities for education, training and working; information management systems that are easily accessible and user-friendly; innovative strategies to reach out to client groups across time and space. The traditional guidance paradigm is simply inadequate to deal with such a quantitative and qualitative exponential leap in demands, and to have recourse to it is tantamount to charting a new course with an old map. Human and financial resource challenges can be more reasonably met, however, if one conceptualises lifelong guidance as a multifaceted service that is delivered in a differentiated manner, where career, training, and education information is more easily available in a self-access mode, and where clients have a range of options that includes, but does not necessarily involve, intensive personal guidance, according to the personal needs and circumstances at a given point in time. Similarly, guidance workers need not all be working at the same level of competence, with a more variegated staffing structure permitting some to focus on relatively straightforward, information-related tasks – whether at the front-desk or via the use of ICT – and freeing up others with more advanced helping skills to cater for face-to face individual or group interviews.

***Diversification of  
guidance  
providers***

Linked to the third and fourth point is a fifth one, concerning the necessity for European countries to explore ways of diversifying not only the range

of guidance services, but of guidance providers as well. While this report has underscored the fact that citizens are entitled to lifelong support and guidance, as part of the social contract that binds them to society, helping them to lead dignified and fulfilling lives and guarding them against exclusion, it is also evident that the State cannot, on its own, carry out such a task, and that such a responsibility has to be shared by the social partners. Increasingly, too, governments need to find ways of stimulating non-state provision, whereby a variety of incentives and strategies – some of which, such as outsourcing, have been described in this synthesis – encourage voluntary and community-based organisations as well as private guidance firms, to enter into partnership with the State, to ensure quality lifelong guidance services and products.

***Systematic  
monitoring and  
evaluation***

Sixth, neither the claim for lifelong guidance provision, nor the increased and improved resources that this entails, can be justified unless services are strongly monitored to ensure quality. The synthesis has shown that few countries have set up structures to ascertain that guidance-related information, for instance, is usable, reliable, and up-to-date. Few gather, analyse, and/or follow-up on data concerning client use of, and satisfaction with, guidance services. Relatively little is known about the impact of guidance provision, its cost effectiveness, its outcomes, and whether the needs of vulnerable groups, or groups of clients with specific needs, are being met. A weak evidence base not only undermines claims for increased funding, but also short-circuits the feedback loop that is so crucial if changing and evolving client needs are to be met. It also jeopardises the attainment of overarching social goals, like equity in provision and access.

***Common  
learning and  
exchange***

Most guidance services across the different countries and sectors have registered some progress in addressing these key challenges. Many have advanced along the continuum of some of the flows described above, but, for diverse reasons, are lagging behind in others. None of the countries reviewed can claim, on its own, to hold the key for addressing the most pressing issues that have been identified throughout the report. Collectively, however, these 29 European countries provide a rich tapestry, signposting pathways for policy-makers and practitioners alike in their bid to be of service to citizens in the emerging knowledge society.



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# **Annex 1: Career guidance policies in 37 countries: contrasts and common themes**

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A paper commissioned by Cedefop for a conference on ‘Career guidance and public policy: bridging the gap’ organised by OECD and the Canadian Government in cooperation with the European Commission, the World Bank and the International association for educational and vocational guidance, held in Toronto, Canada, on 6-8 October 2003.

## **1. Executive summary**

Three coordinated reviews of national career guidance policies have recently been carried out by OECD, the European Commission and the World Bank, covering 37 countries in total. Some important differences are evident, with services in middle-income countries being less well developed than in high-income countries. But the dynamics of globalisation, together with ‘policy borrowing’, have led to a great deal of convergence.

In all countries, career guidance is viewed as a public good, linked to policy goals related to learning, the labour market and social equity. These goals are being reframed in the light of lifelong learning policies, linked to active labour market policies and the concept of sustained employability. Career guidance accordingly needs to be accessible not just to school-leavers and the unemployed, but to everyone throughout their lives.

To meet this challenge but avoid substantial increases in costs, efforts are needed to diversify the methods and sources of provision. These include innovative and more streamlined interventions, helping individuals to develop career-management skills and supporting self-help approaches. To enhance access, increasing use is being made of helplines and web-based services. In addition, stronger involvement is being sought from the private and voluntary sectors alongside the public sector.

With career guidance taking increasingly varied and disparate forms, there is a need within countries for stronger mechanisms to articulate a vision and develop a strategy for delivering lifelong access to career guidance. Such mechanisms are required both within government and involving other stakeholders. Their role could include the development of quality standards and other strategic instruments to coordinate the range of career guidance provision.

## 2. Introduction

Internationally, career guidance is higher on the public policy agenda than ever before. This paper summarises the key findings from three overlapping reviews of career guidance policies, which together have covered 37 countries. The first was a review of 14 countries conducted by the Organisation for economic cooperation and development (2003) <sup>(34)</sup>. At the request of the European Commission, the questionnaire developed for the OECD review was then completed by all member-states and acceding countries that had not taken part in the review, and a synthesis report was produced covering 29 European countries in total (Sultana, 2003) <sup>(35)</sup>. Finally, an adapted version of the same questionnaire was also used for a World Bank review of career guidance policies in seven middle-income countries (Watts and Fretwell, 2003) <sup>(36)</sup>. A significant stimulus for the coordination of the three reviews was provided by two international symposia on career development and public policy, held in Canada in 1999 and 2001 (Hiebert and Bezanson, 2000; Bezanson and O'Reilly, 2002).

The definitions of career guidance adopted for the three reviews are virtually identical. The term refers to services intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. These may include services in schools, in universities and colleges, in training institutions, in public employment services, in companies, in the voluntary/ community sector and in the private sector. The services may be on an individual or group basis, and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including helplines and web-based services). They include career information (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education and career management programmes, taster programmes, work search programmes, and transition services.

The present paper aims to identify the key common issues which have emerged from the three reviews, and the conclusions which can be drawn from them. First, though, some contrasts across the countries will be examined. Finally, a few closing reflections will be added to frame the discussions at this conference.

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<sup>(34)</sup> The 14 countries were: Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The review also included the joint commissioning by OECD and the European Commission of expert papers on key topics.

<sup>(35)</sup> The 29 countries were: Austria\*, Belgium (with separate reports for the French-speaking and Flemish-speaking Communities), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic\*, Denmark\*, Estonia, Finland\*, France, Germany\*, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland\*, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg\*, Malta, Netherlands\*, Norway\*, Poland+, Portugal, Romania+, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain\*, Sweden, and the United Kingdom\* (Belgium is to be added later). \* indicates countries which also took part in the OECD review; + indicates countries which also took part in the World Bank review. The other countries completed questionnaires but did not have review visits by external experts.

<sup>(36)</sup> The seven countries were: Chile, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Africa, and Turkey.

### 3. Some contrasts

There are difficulties and dangers in carrying out and synthesising a comparative analysis on this scale. The main danger is downplaying the extent to which each country has its own traditions and history of provision, with the same terms and concepts sometimes concealing quite different shades of meaning. The dynamics of globalisation have led to a great deal of intercountry convergence in the practice of career guidance: all countries face a similar set of broad challenges for education, labour market and social policies related to career guidance systems. Nevertheless, it needs to be constantly kept in mind that all guidance services reflect the economic, political, social, cultural, educational and labour market contexts – as well as the professional and organisational structures – in which they operate.

Some of these contrasts emerge less strongly in these reviews than one might have anticipated. Thus the OECD report on Korea, one of the few non-Western countries covered, notes the influence of Korean values (stemming largely from Confucian tradition) of respect for elders, deference, and obedience to authority; and also of endurance (learning to bear one's problems), maintaining social 'face' and avoiding embarrassment; these mores are not reflected explicitly, however, in the subsequent analysis of services. Similarly, the EC and World Bank reports note the importance in middle-income countries of the informal economy, much of it unregulated, in which individuals gain a living in semi-legitimate, entrepreneurial ways; but the reports find few guidance practices that attend to this economy and its importance in the work-lives of many individuals.

In part the lack of such contrasts may be a commentary on guidance systems themselves, which are inclined to be formal in nature and to be heavily influenced by European and North American models. The downplaying of differences may also be exacerbated by the OECD questionnaire used for all of the reviews, which tended – for understandable reasons – to emphasise formal structures at the expense of informal ones, and systems and structures at the expense of contents and processes.

Despite this, there are some **specific differences** between countries which emerge clearly from the reviews. These include, for example, differences between educational systems with strong early-streaming and tracking mechanisms and those with more flexible pathways: guidance services tend to play a more important role in the latter than in the former. They also include differences between countries in which most public services – including career guidance services – are delivered by the State or state agencies, and countries in which there has been a strong policy to deliver services through the private and voluntary sectors wherever possible: the latter tends to lead to greater diversity of service provision.

Two contrasts seem particularly worthy of note. One is the importance of level of **economic development**. While no low-income countries were included in the reviews, it would seem unlikely that formal career guidance services would have a significant role to play in such economies (though informal community-based services might). It is only as economic activity becomes more formalised and diversified, and resources are available to attend to the

problems this poses, that formal guidance services start to grow. The World Bank review shows that middle-income countries tend in general to have less well-developed career guidance systems than high-income countries, and in particular more limited career information to support such systems. This may be partly because of low levels of public resources, partly because the range of choices for many individuals is more restricted, and partly because more people are preoccupied with economic survival rather than with development and growth.

The second is the relationship of career guidance services to the development of **market economies and democratic political institutions**. This is particularly relevant to the countries of central and eastern Europe which have been moving from command to market economies; and to South Africa which has been in transition from the apartheid regime to a more integrated and open society. In centrally planned economies under the Communist regime, for example, there was little perceived need for career guidance services: unemployment did not officially exist, and people were largely allocated to their roles by selective processes; ‘career’ was linked with individualism, and regarded as a social vice. Career guidance services distinctively affirm the value attached in market-based democratic societies to the rights of individuals to make free decisions about their own working lives, linking personal goals to the socioeconomic needs of the society in which they live.

Particularly in middle-income and transition countries, but also elsewhere, there is much evidence of ‘**policy borrowing**’, in strategies, tools, resources and training. In some respects, the United States is the ‘absent centre’ from the reviews, since it is not directly included and yet its influence on career guidance practice is evident in most if not all of the participating countries. In recent years, Canada has been particularly successful in exporting its practices, ‘The Real Game’ – a career development programme involving role-play and simulation – being a prominent but not unique example. There are also examples of other links, often influenced by historic, linguistic, economic or cultural ties. Thus German models have been influential in several central and east European countries; French models tend to be visible in Francophone countries. In some countries, collaborative and support programmes financed by the European Commission and World Bank have had considerable impact. To some extent such programmes tend to promote a process of convergence, but they seem to be most successful when they include a process through which they are customised to the distinctive needs of countries and respond to country conditions.

#### **4. Key common issues**

With these caveats, we will now identify the key common issues which emerged from the three reviews. We will do so under five broad headings: rationale; evidence; delivery; resourcing; and leadership.

#### 4.1. Rationale

The reviews indicate that in all countries policy-makers clearly regard career guidance as a public good as well as a private good. The **public-policy goals** which they expect career guidance services to address fall into three main categories. The first are learning goals, including improving the efficiency of the education and training system and managing its interface with the labour market. The second are labour market goals, including improving the match between supply and demand and managing adjustments to change. The third are *social equity* goals, including supporting equal opportunities and promoting social inclusion. The balance between and within these categories varies across countries. A challenge for all countries is to maintain an appropriate balance between them in the provision of services.

These goals are currently being reframed in the light of policies relating to lifelong learning, linked to active labour market policies and the concept of sustained employability. The result is that countries increasingly recognise the need to expand access to career guidance so that it is available not just to selected groups like school-leavers and the unemployed, but to everyone throughout their lives.

This is arguably the key point in the reports, with huge implications. It requires not just expansion but **transformation**. If the expanded access that is required were to be achieved solely through public services and such traditional methods as face-to-face interviews linked to psychometric testing, there would inevitably be a massive increase in costs. For these and other reasons, efforts are being made to diversify the methods and sources of provision and to seek innovative and more streamlined forms of service delivery. As part of this, there is a move towards self-help approaches, including approaches designed to help individuals to develop the skills of managing their own careers. These trends are supported by recent trends in career development theory, which emphasise that career guidance should be available throughout life, should be viewed as a learning experience, and should foster the individual's autonomy.

Recent OECD work on **human capital** (OECD, 2002) suggests that the career management skills which are now a growing focus of career guidance policies and practices may play an important role in economic growth. It points out that less than half of earnings variation in OECD countries can be accounted for by educational qualifications and readily measurable skills. It argues that a significant part of the remainder may be explained by people's ability to build and to manage their skills. Included in this are career-planning, job-search and other career-management skills. There is a close harmony between this wider view of human capital and concepts of employability. Seen in this perspective, it seems that career guidance has the potential to contribute significantly to national policies for the development of human capital.

#### 4.2. Evidence

In this context, the available empirical evidence on outcomes from career guidance is of great interest to policy-makers. Of course, policy-making is not a wholly rational process: power

processes matter too, and anecdotal evidence can often be persuasive. It is important to acknowledge that many social activities are supported by public funds without such evidence: the teaching of history or literature, for example. But sound empirical evidence is helpful if sceptics are to be convinced.

The OECD report reviews the existing evidence at three stages: immediate learning outcomes from career guidance, including attitudinal changes and increased knowledge; intermediate behavioural changes, including entry into a particular career path, course or job; and longer-term outcomes, such as success and satisfaction with these paths or placements.

In these terms, there is substantial evidence of the **learning outcomes** which individuals derive from career guidance interventions. This is important, because in general career guidance interventions are concerned not with telling people what to do but with helping them acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them make better career choices and transitions. It is also congruent with the growing attention to the development of career management skills.

In the aggregate, there is also growing evidence of positive **behavioural outcomes** on the impact upon participation in learning and in work: more such studies are needed. On **long-term benefits** in terms of success or satisfaction – to which some policy outcomes on economic and social benefits are linked – adequate studies have not yet been conducted. There is a case for a major international initiative, possibly linked to continuing OECD work on human capital, to determine what is feasible in this respect: the methodological difficulties and cost implications of long-term longitudinal studies are formidable. Meanwhile, it can be concluded that the available evidence on the benefits of career guidance is not comprehensive, but that what exists is largely positive.

### 4.3. Delivery

The reports go on to examine the current delivery of career guidance services in relation to the changing rationale outlined above. Much of the value of these analyses lies in their detail and in the examples of practice they include. Twelve general points relating to delivery are particularly worth noting here.

The first is the growing recognition of the importance of **career education and guidance in schools**, not only in helping young people to make the immediate choices that confront them but also in laying the foundations for lifelong learning and lifelong career development. This is evident, for example, in the inclusion in many countries of career education in the curriculum, incorporating career awareness, career exploration, and the development of career management skills. This can be a separate subject, or subsumed into a broader subject, or infused across the curriculum (though the latter approach is difficult to implement successfully); alternatively, it may be provided in the form of seminars and workshops. Such programmes are greatly enriched where they include active involvement of employers, parents and other stakeholders, and opportunities for pupils to engage in experiential learning: course



tasters; and active experiences of the world of work through visits, simulation, shadowing or actual work experience. The longer-term perspective is also evident in the introduction of profiling and portfolio systems designed to encourage students to engage in regular review and planning and to manage their own learning. As with career education, such approaches can start in primary school. They have implications for the whole school, evident for example in the concept of *l'école orientante* in Quebec.

Second, there is a risk of career education and guidance in schools being **marginalised within a broad concept of guidance**. Many countries have guidance counsellors with a holistic role covering personal and social as well as educational and vocational guidance. In such schools, there is consistent evidence that career guidance tends to be marginalised, in two respects: the pressing nature of the personal and behavioural problems of a minority of pupils mean that guidance counsellors spend much of their time on these problems, at the expense of the help needed by all pupils in relation to their educational and vocational choices; and guidance on such choices tends to focus mainly on educational decisions viewed as ends in themselves, rather than on their vocational implications and on longer-term career planning. In Norway, accordingly, the career guidance role is being split off, partly to protect its resourcing, and partly to address its distinctive competence requirements, including knowledge of the labour market. In Poland, too, separate career counsellors are now being introduced into schools.

Third, it is clear that alongside career education and guidance within the school itself, there is merit in making career guidance available in a specialist form from the employment service or some other **agency based outside the school** – as is the case, for example, in Germany and the UK. Such an agency can offer closer links with the labour market, and stronger assurance of impartiality in the guidance they provide. In several countries there has been some erosion of such agencies in recent years, with damaging consequences. On the other hand, other countries are exploring the possibility of setting up new agencies of this kind. In such cases there is a need for clear partnership models with schools, to avoid confusion and unnecessary overlap.

Fourth, there has in many countries been a growing policy concern for **at-risk young people** who have dropped out of formal education and training with few or no qualifications, and who are drifting in and out of unemployment, labour-market inactivity and marginal unskilled work. In Denmark, for example, municipalities are obliged to make contact with, and offer guidance to, such young people. Successful strategies for this work involve a highly individualised approach which attends to their personal and social as well as their educational and vocational guidance needs: in contrast with our earlier comments on schools, this is a case where holistic approaches are highly desirable. Such strategies can be managed through close partnership working between career guidance workers and youth workers, using outreach approaches. An alternative model is to have a single generic 'first-in-line' role, supported by a range of specialists (including career guidance specialists) who can be brought in when their distinctive help is needed.

Fifth, it is evident that in several countries career guidance services in **tertiary education** are inadequate or non-existent. Ironically, guidance roles within education tend to be least strongly professionalised in higher education, which is the sector responsible for much of the professional training in the field as a whole. In some countries such guidance as is available is confined largely to choice of studies: the assumption seems to be that students can manage their own transitions into the labour market without any support. This may have been sustainable when their student body covered a small academic elite, who normally entered a narrow field of work related to their studies. It is much more questionable when the number of students is much larger and more diverse, and when the links between their studies and the fields open to them are much more complex. There is accordingly increasing recognition of the need to strengthen career guidance services in tertiary education. These include not only central careers services, but also developments in the curriculum including career management courses, opportunities for work experience, and profiling and portfolio systems, extending and enhancing earlier such provision in schools.

Sixth, there is a widespread need to integrate **public employment services** more closely into lifelong learning strategies in general and strategies for lifelong access to guidance in particular. Huge public resources are concentrated in these services. They tend at present to be targeted narrowly at particular groups (notably the unemployed) and short-term goals (immediate employment and removal from the benefit system). But they could be transformed into well-publicised career development services for all, helping people to sustain their employability and respond flexibly to change. This could also enable their work with the targeted groups to be preventive rather than purely remedial and to avoid the stigma which can undermine the effectiveness of such work. A strong model could, for example, be developed by bringing together the respective strengths of the career information centres (BIZ) in Germany with the innovative capacity of the public employment service (Aetat) in Norway, including the design quality of the latter's walk-in services, the user-friendliness of its website, its inventive range of web-based tools, and its plans to set up a callcentre for information on learning and work.

Seventh, there is a need for enhanced career guidance services to be provided in the **workplace** by employers for their employees. These can include career planning workshops and regular review and planning processes, paralleling those within education. They tend to be stronger in large organisations than in small and medium-sized enterprises. While employer interests may impose constraints on the impartiality of such services, they are an important part of lifelong guidance provision. They can be supported by public policy through voluntary quality-mark schemes, and by including career guidance provision within expenditure allowable against training levies. There is also interest in several countries, including Austria, the Netherlands and the UK, in the role of trade unions in providing career guidance services for their members.

Eighth, career guidance can have a particularly dynamic role to play in **adult education**. Some access provision for people returning to learning or to work includes strong guidance elements. Again, procedures for the accreditation and recognition of prior learning can

develop into a guidance dialogue, in which individuals are helped not only to identify the knowledge and competences they have acquired informally, but also to explore new opportunities to which they might be transferable. Career guidance services can also be used to improve the responsiveness of educational institutions to consumer needs through advocacy on their behalf and through feedback to providers on their unmet needs. In an experiment in Sweden, learners were not permitted to start an education or training programme without first seeing a guidance counsellor and drawing up a learning plan.

Ninth, a life-stage where current provision is particularly inadequate is the **third age**. Many countries are expressing growing concerns about their ageing populations and difficulties in funding adequate pension provision, and the consequent need to encourage people to stay longer in the labour force. There is also growing interest in encouraging those who have left the labour market to continue their involvement in learning and in voluntary work in the community, so reducing health bills and harnessing their social contribution. But no country has yet systematically addressed the potential role of guidance services in these various respects, and more generally in helping individuals to manage more gradual and more flexible approaches to 'retirement'.

Tenth, there is much scope for using **helplines and web-based services** to extend access to guidance, and for integrating such services more creatively with face-to-face services. In the UK, the Learndirect helpline was launched in February 1998; since then it has responded to over five million calls. In principle, flexible but integrated use of helplines, websites and e-mail, linked closely with face-to-face facilities, opens up new strategic opportunities for the delivery of career information and guidance. It means that individuals can initially access help in the form which is convenient and comfortable for them, and then where appropriate be moved on to other media to maintain the dialogue.

Eleventh, good-quality **career information** is essential for good-quality career guidance and good-quality career decision-making. Governments have an important role to play in funding the collection, publication and distribution of career information. Even where information is produced by others, they should also seek to assure its quality. Too often career information is driven by producer needs rather than consumer needs. There is a need for strong 'cross-pathing' between educational and occupational information – showing, for example, the occupational implications of educational decisions, and the educational pathways that lead to particular occupational destinations. This requires close cooperation between education and labour authorities. ICT-based systems make integration of this kind easier to deliver, and also make it possible to add a diagnostic front-end to enable individuals to input their characteristics and preferences and be guided to appropriate opportunities. The National Career Information System in Australia is a good example of what can be produced.

Finally, there is scope to redesign the physical facilities of all career guidance services on a **self-help** basis. Some services, particularly in some middle-income countries, are designed solely for one-to-one consultations, with information resources kept in counsellors' offices rather than on open display. Elsewhere, though, it is increasingly common for a variety of

ICT-based and other resources to be on open access, with clear signposting, and with specialist career counsellors being available for brief support as well as for longer counselling interviews. Diagnostic help can then be provided on reception to help clients decide whether they can operate on a self-help basis, need brief staff assistance, or require intensive professional help.

#### 4.4. Resourcing

Under the heading of resourcing, there are two key issues which have implications for the nature and quality of career guidance services. The first is how such services are staffed. The second is how they are funded.

On staffing, there is a need for **stronger occupational structures** in the career guidance field. In many countries, the current structures are weak in comparison with those in related professions. Many services are provided by people who do it for only part of their time (the rest being devoted to teaching, job placement, or guidance on personal or study problems) and little appropriate training. Often, qualifications from apparently related fields – such as teaching and psychology – seem to be regarded as proxies for guidance qualifications, without any verification of whether they assure the requisite competences or not. Guidance strategies can include delivery through others – teachers and mentors of various kinds, for example; there is also a need for wider use of trained support staff. But clarity is needed about the role of guidance professionals within such diversified delivery systems. Their training should include consultancy and management roles, and embrace the types of cost-effective and flexible delivery methods that can widen access to guidance.

Supporting such diversified training provision, there is also a need for **competence frameworks** which can embrace but also differentiate a variety of guidance roles – and provide a career development structure for guidance staff themselves. The Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners, developed in Canada through a long process of consultation between all the professional groups involved, is of particular interest in this respect. The international standards recently developed by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance provide a useful reference point for such processes.

On funding, policy options include **devolving funding** either to regions and localities as part of decentralisation, or to individual educational institutions. This can result in stronger local ownership and customisation of services, but can also produce wide variation in their level and quality. Steps that can be taken by central governments to avoid this include staffing formulas, performance contracts and legislative-based entitlements.

Some governments have **contracted out** a range of employment services, including career guidance services. This can result in cheaper services and, particularly in the case of the voluntary, community-based sector, in services that are more closely attuned to the needs of particular groups. It can also, however, result in services that are fragmented. In Canada, it is estimated that there are over 10,000 community-based organisations delivering career

development services. Alternatively, a few countries have trialled **voucher** schemes in which funding is channelled through the clients, who can use their voucher to ‘buy’ the service from a provider of their choice.

Contracts and vouchers can also be linked to pump-priming **private markets** for career guidance service delivery. There are strong markets in several countries in career publishing, in placement agencies, and in outplacement services. But in general markets for career guidance *per se* are supported largely by contracted-out public employment services and by employers. Only in a few countries, notably Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, is there much evidence of a market in career guidance supported by fees paid by individuals themselves, and even here this market is still limited. It is as yet unclear whether this is a transitional problem, linked to users being accustomed to such services being free of charge, or a systemic problem, based on difficulties in treating career guidance as a commodity in the ways a market would require.

In all countries, more information is needed on the extent and potential of these markets. Since guidance is widely viewed as a public as well as a private good, the roles of government in relation to a mixed-economy model of provision would seem to be threefold: to stimulate the market (through contracts and incentives) to build its capacity; to ensure that it is quality-assured, both to protect the public interest and to build consumer confidence; and to compensate for market failure by addressing needs which the market cannot meet, where this is viewed as being in the public interest.

#### **4.5. Leadership**

Governments have an important role in providing strategic leadership. But they need to do so in association with other stakeholders: education and training providers, employers, trade unions, community agencies, students, parents, other consumers, and career guidance practitioners.

Evidence and data are important tools for policy-making. Stronger infrastructures are required to build up the **evidence base** for both policy and practice, and to do this cumulatively so that experience is not wasted and mistakes repeated. This should include evidence on users, on client needs, on which services are delivered to whom, on the costs of services (on which remarkably little information is available at present), and on the immediate and longer-term outcomes of guidance interventions. The limited extent of such data at present is due to the absence of an accountability culture among professional guidance staff and to the lack of pressure from policy-makers to collect the data. Some of the information should be collected on a routine basis; some requires sophisticated studies. To date, few countries have established specialist career guidance research centres or research programmes to develop the knowledge base in a systemic way. There is also a need for university chairs to provide status and intellectual leadership for the field: few countries have such chairs at present.

**Legislation** can be another instrument for steering career guidance services. It plays an important role in this respect in some countries, but none at all in others. Where legislation exists, it tends to be general in nature. Much of it is sector-specific: Denmark is a rare example of a country which has a specific career guidance Act covering all sectors. The value of legislation as a policy steering tool would be increased if it was used to define client entitlements.

A need is evident in many countries for stronger **coordination and leadership mechanisms** to articulate a vision and develop a strategy for delivering lifelong access to guidance. Such mechanisms are required within government, where responsibility for guidance services is often fragmented across several ministries and branches. Strong cooperation between education and employment portfolios is particularly important: for example, to ensure that educational and occupational information are integrated; and that a strong labour market perspective is included in schools' career guidance programmes.

Coordinating mechanisms are also needed more broadly at national level, to bring together the relevant stakeholder groups and the various guidance professional bodies (which in some countries are very fragmented). Parallel mechanisms are then required at regional and/or local levels, closer to the point of delivery.

The UK has a strong model in these various respects, with its National IAG Board to bring the relevant government departments together, its Guidance Council to bring the stakeholders together, its Federation of Professional Associations in Guidance to bring the professional groups together, and its Information, advice and guidance (IAG) partnerships of local adult guidance providers. Another promising exemplar is the National Forum for Vocational Guidance in Poland. In some other countries, by contrast, seminars set up for the OECD and World Bank reviews seemed to provide an unusual opportunity for the relevant groups to come together, and led to proposals to develop a more sustainable infrastructure for joint action.

An important focus for such collaborative action is identifying gaps in services and developing action plans for filling them. Another is the development of **strategic instruments** which can be operationally useful across the whole range of the career guidance field and hold it together. Competence frameworks for career guidance practitioners of the kind developed in Canada are one. Another is organisational quality standards of the kind developed in the UK, covering how individuals are helped and how services are managed: these can be voluntary in nature, but can also be made mandatory for organisations in receipt of public funding. A third type of instrument, developed in Canada drawing from earlier work in the USA, is the Blueprint for life/work designs: a list of the competences which career education and guidance programmes aim to develop among clients at different stages of their lives, with accompanying performance indicators. The systematic publication of data linked to such indicators could provide a way of introducing more coherent accountability across a coordinated career guidance system. Together, these three instruments could coordinate the system, particularly if they could be linked to common branding and marketing of services.

## 5. Conclusions

The conclusions in the three synthesis reports are framed in rather different ways. In the European report, they are framed by trends in the nature of guidance, and to whom, when, where, by whom and how it is offered. In the World Bank report, they comprise four general conclusions, one of which identifies five priorities for middle-income countries. The OECD report defines 10 features of lifelong guidance systems and six issues for policy-makers to address. Since the features and issues identified by OECD embrace most of the European trends and the World Bank conclusions, they can – with a few small additions and modifications – serve as conclusions for the three studies.

The **10 features of lifelong guidance systems** can be framed as criteria which policy-makers can use to examine the adequacy of their current guidance systems in lifelong terms, and to determine priorities for action. The 10 features are:

- (a) transparency and ease of access over the lifespan, including a capacity to meet the needs of a diverse range of clients;
- (b) attention to key transition points over the lifespan;
- (c) flexibility and innovation in service delivery to reflect the differing needs and circumstances of diverse client groups;
- (d) processes to stimulate individuals to engage in regular review and planning;
- (e) access to individual guidance by appropriately qualified practitioners for those who need such help, at times when they need it;
- (f) programmes for all young people to develop their career-management skills;
- (g) opportunities to investigate and experience learning and work options before choosing them;
- (h) access to service delivery that is independent of the interests of particular institutions or enterprises;
- (i) access to comprehensive and integrated educational, occupational and labour market information;
- (j) active involvement of relevant stakeholders.

The (now) **seven issues** which the creation and management of such lifelong guidance systems require policy-makers to address are:

- (a) ensuring that resource allocation decisions give the first priority to systems that develop career self-management skills and career information, and that delivery systems match levels of personal help, from brief to extensive, to personal needs and circumstances, rather than assuming that everybody needs intensive personal career guidance;
- (b) ensuring greater diversity in the types of services that are available and in the ways that they are delivered, including greater diversity in staffing structures, wider use of self-help

techniques, and a more integrated approach to the use of ICT (including helplines as well as the Internet);

- (c) exploring the scope for facilitating measures, including appropriate incentives, designed to encourage the development of career guidance services within the private and voluntary sectors;
- (d) working more closely with professional associations and training bodies to improve education and training for career guidance practitioners, preferably on a cross-sectoral basis, producing professionals who can manage guidance resources as well as be engaged in direct service delivery;
- (e) improving the information base for public policy making, including gathering improved data on the financial and human resources devoted to career guidance, on client need and demand, on the characteristics of clients, on client satisfaction, and on the outcomes and cost-effectiveness of career guidance;
- (f) developing better quality assurance mechanisms and linking these to the funding of services;
- (g) developing stronger structures for strategic leadership.

#### Postscript

Finally, there are three general points which may be helpful in relation to subsequent discussions at this conference. In part these emerged from the two international symposia mentioned earlier, but merit repeating here.

The first point is the importance of viewing career guidance services within each country as a coherent **system**. In reality, of course, they are not a single system. Rather, they are a collection of disparate sub-systems, including services in schools, in tertiary education, in public employment services, and in the private and voluntary sectors. Each of these is a minor part of some wider system, with its own rationale and driving forces. But in the reviews these different parts have been brought together, and viewed as parts of a whole. From the lifelong perspective of the individual, it is important that they should be as seamless as possible. If career guidance systems are to play their role in national strategies for lifelong learning linked to sustained employability, it is essential that the holistic vision adopted in the reviews be sustained and collectively owned by a council or other structure with the breadth and strength of membership to implement the vision. This is why stronger strategic leadership structures are so necessary.

Second, within lifelong learning strategies there is a strong case for viewing career guidance in more **proactive** terms than has been the case hitherto. Until recently, such services have been viewed largely as a reactive device, designed to help young people to manage the necessary transition from education to the labour market, and unemployed people to return to work as quickly as possible. This means that services need to be made available only when they have a problem which services can help them to solve. Within the context of lifelong



learning, however, it can be argued that such services need to be available at times and in forms which will encourage all individuals to continue to develop their skills and competences throughout their lives, linked to changing needs in the labour market. Such services accordingly need to be viewed as an active tool, and individuals positively encouraged to use them. This requires rationing mind-sets to be replaced by active marketing strategies linked to cost-effective models of service delivery.

Third, career guidance is essentially a ‘soft’ rather than a ‘hard’ policy intervention. At its heart is the notion of the ‘active individual’: that individuals should be encouraged to determine their role in, and their contribution to, the society of which they are part. The **primacy of the individual’s interests** is commonly a core principle in codes of practice for career guidance services. There are practical as well as ethical reasons for this, not least that such services can only serve the public good if they retain the confidence and trust of the individuals they serve. For policy-makers, this raises the issue of whether they expect practitioners to pursue the outcomes defined by policy objectives in their dealings with an individual client; or whether they are willing to support practitioners in addressing the individual’s interests, in the confidence that, when aggregated, this will meet the public objectives too. Several countries in the reviews made a point of centring their definitions of career guidance around the needs of the individual. In principle, career guidance could be viewed (not only by economic liberals) as a classic case of Adam Smith’s famous dictum that individuals encouraged to pursue their own interests are led by an ‘invisible hand’ to promote an end that is no part of their intention – the public interest – and to do so more effectually than when they intend to promote it. In this sense, career guidance services could represent Smith’s ‘invisible hand’ made flesh. Their role is to not to determine what individuals should do, but to ensure that their decisions are well informed (on, among other things, the needs of the labour market) and well thought through. If there could be a clear understanding between policy-makers and practitioners on this issue, it would greatly enhance cooperation between the two.

Career guidance services have often in the past been viewed as marginal services in terms of public policy. Reviews by three influential international bodies have affirmed that this view is no longer adequate. Such services need now to be brought into the mainstream of policy formation. A key challenge for this conference is to determine how this can be accomplished.



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Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)

**Guidance policies in the knowledge society.  
Trends, challenges and responses across Europe. A Cedefop synthesis report**

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The key contribution which career guidance can make to the achievement of four public policy goals – lifelong learning, social inclusion, labour market efficiency and economic development – is increasingly widely acknowledged both within Europe and internationally. Such public policy goals are fundamental to the attainment of the Lisbon Council (2000) aim of making Europe the most competitive economy and knowledge based society in the world by 2010.

The draft Interim Report on the Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, *Education and Training 2010: the Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms* (2004), identifies career guidance as one of four key actions to create open, attractive and accessible learning environments. It calls for the strengthening of the role, quality and co-ordination of career guidance services to support learning at all ages and in a range of settings, empowering citizens to manage their learning and work. In order to achieve this, the report calls for the development of common European references and principles to support national policies for career guidance as a matter of priority.

In 2001 the OECD launched a review of policies for career information, guidance and counselling services in which fourteen OECD countries took part. On the request of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, in 2002 CEDEFOP and the ETF extended the review to cover the remaining Member States and future Member States. In 2002, the World Bank also undertook a related review of career guidance policies in seven middle-income countries.

Drawing on this extensive body of research, this Cedefop synthesis report outlines significant developments, trends, challenges and issues, as well as strengths and weaknesses of information and guidance systems and policies across 29 European countries. The report identifies interesting practice illustrated with examples taken from the range of countries involved in the review. Policy-makers and practitioners will thus be able to benchmark their own systems in relation to those of others, and to review their practices in the light of the efforts and experiences of colleagues across Europe. Annexed to the main report is a short paper comparing and contrasting the career guidance policy situation in Europe with that of some middle-income countries and some non-European developed countries.



## Guidance policies in the knowledge society

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