



An EU-funded project managed by the Croatian Employment Service

T R I B A L

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Improving Lifelong Career Guidance and ICT Support project:
Legislation on Career Guidance in EU member states

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In January 2012, Tribal Education Ltd., on behalf of the Croatian Employment Service (CES), invited Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE, Director of DMH Associates and Associate Fellow, Warwick Institute for Employment Research (IER) in England, to produce two complementary papers on a synopsis of current legislative provision in EU member states in respect of (i) the provision of lifelong career guidance; and (ii) the establishment and operation of National Fora for Career Guidance.

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DISCLAIMER

The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of Tribal Education Ltd and its consortium partners, and can in no way be taken to reflect the view of the European Union.

INTRODUCTION

This Executive Summary paper provides an overview of 27 EU Member States¹ legislative arrangements on career guidance' designed to inform the development and implementation of a leading-edge national lifelong guidance system in Croatia. The contents complement a separate, but inter-related, discussion paper which analysed and assesses statutory provisions providing the base for establishing the operation of National Fora for Career Guidance in EU member states².

Overall, the work is situated within the context of a high profile national development project led by Tribal Education Ltd., undertaken on behalf of the Croatian Employment Service (CES). The project's overall objective is to support capacity building and developments within and outside of the CES.

The national development project aims to:

- create an improved CES ICT system based on the model of data integration and exchange with labour market stakeholders in order to facilitate better provision of service to CES clients; and
- support the development of a Lifelong Career Guidance (LLCG) system, which services will be available to inform Croatian citizens in all phases of their lives, based on their needs in education and occupation selection, in accordance with EU employment policy and EU best practices.

Key outcomes of the overall project include the establishment of a National Forum for Lifelong Career Guidance and the successful launch by CES of 7 pilot Lifelong Career Guidance Units in selected Counties and to start the provision of high-quality Lifelong Learning Career Guidance to Croatian citizens according to EU standards.

The intended audience for this report is primarily, though not exclusively, members of the Working Group examining the formation of a National Lifelong Guidance Forum in Croatia. The contents are designed as a 'stimuli' discussion paper for members of the new and evolving National Lifelong Guidance Forum in Croatia. An overview of the current 'state of play' in EU member states is offered based on a short-term intensive data gathering exercise which involved a review and analysis of:

legislation on career guidance in EU member states.

Career guidance is provided through a wide diversity of structures, delivery systems and practices across education, training, employment, unemployment, private and community/voluntary sectors. This diversity provides a rich basis for co-operation and mutual learning. There is a clear need to strengthen structures for policy and systems development at national and regional levels by involving the appropriate key players such as ministries, social partners, employment

¹ It is recognised that Iceland and Norway are not EU member states but participate in the ELGPN and therefore it has been deemed appropriate to include evidence from these countries as part of this report.

² Ditto above

services, education and training institutions, service providers, guidance practitioners and consumers. From the outset, it is important to acknowledge that the Working Group in Croatia is at an early stage in coming together to inform the development of a new National Lifelong Guidance Forum. This provides a real opportunity for sharing information, ideas and expertise in order to help create a strong foundation for improved career guidance services for the citizens of Croatia.

The main report is structured into six main sections. *Appendices* are also available in a separate document in respect of legislation on career guidance in the Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Scotland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

The contents do not offer a prescriptive solution on 'what must be done': instead, examples of legislative arrangements on career guidance are offered to help benchmark policies and practices in Croatia and to illustrate 'what might be done' based on good and interesting policies and practices in other EU member states.

FINDINGS

The findings draw upon available desk research literature from within the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)³, Cedefop⁴, Euroguidance⁵ and other key EU sources of information such as EU resolutions and relevant reports. A total of at least 55 website searches were also undertaken between January – February 2012, followed by email correspondence and data exchange with national experts in EU member states.

Legislation on career guidance in education, training and employment sectors generally tends to focus on improving access to, and quality of, service provision, as well as smoothing pathways between different levels of education and key transition points for young people and adults. The main findings highlight:

- Ministries in EU countries are structured differently though the Ministries of 'Education' and 'Employment' are usually the two main guarantors of public career guidance services.
- Legislation for 'career guidance' (where this term is used) tends to be rather general in nature⁶ and can often be embedded (or hidden) in major Education, Vocational Education and Training and/or Employment Acts or in some form of regulation where the right of citizens to vocational counselling is formally declared.
- A number of countries do not have formal legislation regarding career guidance, but prefer to manage it within the context of civil service rules and regulations of the respective education and employment departments.
- Widespread variation exists (even within nations) regarding the degree of legal specificity in relation to career education, career guidance, career information, career management skills, practitioner competences and vocational education and training.

³ European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network - <http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/elgpn>

⁴ Cedefop: European Centre for Vocational Training - <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/>

⁵ Euroguidance Network - <http://www.euroguidance.net/>

⁶ Op.cit p.12

- Some countries do have detailed strategic goals or frameworks for lifelong guidance set out but, in many cases, these are not directly linked to legislative measures specifically related to career guidance.
- In a few cases, legislative measures address vocational guidance but this is currently by exception rather than normative practice.
- In many cases, client entitlements are not specified in such a way that entities failing to provide the service, or to provide it adequately, are susceptible to legal action.
- Many EU countries are currently reviewing existing legislative measures that include career guidance strategies and services in response to immediate political, economic and social policy imperatives.

A Summary Table 1 is presented in the full report to provide an overview of current legislation on career guidance in each of the 27 EU member states⁷.

SUMMARY

The policy landscape is moving fast, as illustrated in the responses received from national experts, whereby government departments are, in many cases, downsizing and/or merging: this has resulted in the size, shape and nomenclature of government departments changing. New management and delivery arrangements, legislation, decrees and regulation are unfolding at a rapid pace, for example, in **Hungary, Ireland and Greece**. The necessity for clarity on existing legislation on career guidance becomes even more crucial as new players become involved in career guidance policy formation. In the absence of this, there is a real danger that careers provision and entitlements may not be fully understood, misinterpreted, or indeed, lost in the quagmire of renewal and policy proliferation.

Some EU countries do not have formal legislation regarding career guidance, for example, **Cyprus** and **Malta**. Instead, systems are in place to bring key stakeholders together to formulate plans and priorities. In many cases, member states have put in place National Strategic Plans designed to strengthen communication, co-operation and co-ordination between agencies, for example, **Austria, Northern Ireland and Germany**.

Differing EU member states have designed and implemented alternative forms of legislation some which are best described as being broadly generic rather than specific to career guidance, for example, **Czech Republic** and **Netherlands**. In contrast, countries such as **Finland, Denmark, Italy, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Slovak Republic** and **Germany** have detailed and specific legislation that has been recently updated or is in the process of being reviewed. In countries such as **Sweden** and **Spain** legislation on career guidance exists but this is left mainly to communities and regions to self-regulate. Across the EU, a move from centralised to decentralised governance structures provides more fragmented provision across the relevant countries.

The division of Ministries with separate responsibilities for Education, Vocational Education and Training, Higher Education and Employment Acts and regulations can often impede the ongoing development of all-age career guidance provision. The formation of a National Lifelong Guidance Forum, underpinned by legislation and direct inter-ministerial support can help to address this ongoing challenge, as reported in **Denmark, Luxembourg** and

⁷ Ditto above re: inclusion of Iceland and Norway

Estonia. In **France** an Information and Guidance Delegate reports to the Prime Minister, and is appointed by the Council of Ministers. In **Portugal** the Directorate-General of Vocational Training, under the scope of the Ministry of Education, is responsible for a National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences providing strategic leadership on adult guidance. These examples indicate the critical importance of having a clear sense of vision and leadership in career guidance provision, where key roles and responsibilities are made explicit. It is in this context that a National Lifelong Guidance Forum can perform a significant role in influencing Ministers and other interested parties on priorities that will enhance current and future lifelong guidance policy developments. This involves having a shared sense of purpose and focus among key stakeholders in areas where separate and/or joint action can be achieved, ideally linked to cost benefit savings.

There are some notable examples whereby Governments have decided to legislate and / or regulate career guidance policies. For example, in **Denmark**, a National Dialogue Forum is firmly embedded within a clear legislative directive which outlines specific responsibilities and priorities and in **Greece** a National System for Quality Assurance of Life Long Learning (P3)” incorporates principles and quality indicators for Career Guidance underpinned by legislation. However, this is an exception rather than common practice across the EU. Some other alternative examples of good and interesting policies and practices can be found in EU member states such as **Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia** and **Poland**.

Legislative arrangements in place that guarantee a right of access to vocational / career guidance provision are prevalent in **French-speaking Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania, Norway** and **Slovenia**.

In some countries, there is a growing trend towards a new duty upon teachers in schools to deliver career education linked to policy goals for greater freedoms and autonomy, as illustrated in the examples provided by **Greece, Ireland, England** and **Scotland**. Also, the extent to which curriculum content and contact time with students is supported by formal legislation and /or statutory and non-statutory regulation varies considerably across EU member states. For example, **Austria, Hungary, Latvia** and **Poland** provide some interesting examples. In **Wales**, regulatory frameworks for careers and the world of work exist but are often weakened by failure of schools to adhere to the recommended requirements.

The professional competence and qualifications of careers counsellors have been given specific attention within legislation in countries such as **Poland, Iceland** and **Finland**. In some cases, regulation by professional bodies is a preferred approach often linked to quality standards and licence or professional register developments such as in the **UK** and **Germany**. Furthermore, the critical importance of multi-professional and inter-disciplinary approaches for professional development has become a major imperative across EU member states.

Government requirements for more individuals to take opportunities and responsibility for their own learning and work by using financial incentives or vouchers for participation have attracted interest in some countries, for example, **Flemish-speaking Belgium**. New policies rather than state legislation that support the active engagement of employers and greater

utilisation of career information centres, labour market intelligence and ICT systems are also prevalent in many EU member states.

Legislation on career guidance targeted on marginalised or particular groups appears to be embedded within a wide variety of Acts. In the case of **Poland**, specific attention is given to vocational guidance for professional soldiers or former professional soldiers. A common theme across much of the legislation is that those most vulnerable or 'at risk' are highlighted as a priority. For example, in **Lithuania** the law on handicapped social integration (2008) addresses vocational guidance, counselling and assessment of skills as a part of professional rehabilitation services.

In many cases, higher education legislation does not have an explicit statement on guidance but student entitlement for individual study plans is included, for example, in **Finland** and **France**. **Germany** provides an interesting example of close co-operation between higher education institutions and the **Public Employment Service**. As an alternative, regulation through quality assurance arrangements led by Government-funded agencies and professional bodies appear quite common, for example in the **UK**.

LOOKING AHEAD

Some suggested ideas are presented to inform the Working Group on potential ways of moving forward in their discussion on legislation on career guidance and statutory provisions for establishing the operation of a National Lifelong Guidance Forum in Croatia. There is significant potential to:

- Learn lessons from other National Fora, in particular take steps to avoid a 'silo approach', nurture and develop cross-departmental dialogue, co-operation and joint action from the outset.
- Map out where career guidance activities currently take place and identify, where necessary, who is responsible for this and why.
- Create a vision for a National Forum which could be based on examples of good and interesting practice from EU member states and innovation from within Croatia itself.
- Identify legislation and regulations that already exist in Croatia to inform and support career guidance provision across the education and employment sectors. This exercise is currently being undertaken by a legal expert in Croatia but Working Group members also need to feed in their knowledge and expertise in this regard.
- Identify gaps in existing legislation and regulations and consider what needs to be done to make an impact on the design and improvement of career guidance services. Are current legislative and regulatory arrangements sufficient or not?
- Consider whether or not the new National Lifelong Career Guidance Forum would best function within or outside of a legislative arrangement drawing upon examples of practice from other EU member states.

- What would be the main rationale for introducing new legislation to help steer the work of the National Lifelong Guidance Forum? Could this be linked in some way to creating a new ethos of collective responsibility and/or breaking down silos? Might this help support longer-term sustainability and provide direct access to senior political leaders and policymakers?

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the Public Employment Service, Croatia

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