

Key competence “Career management skills”:

Taking up ongoing national policy developments at EU level

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Taking into consideration both, ongoing developments in the Member States and the relevance of Career Management Skills for personal development, career management skills can be considered as an explicit key competence: **Many countries have taken action as they see the need to strengthen students’ career competences**, i.e. collect information in a structured way, take informed decisions and implement these with a view to educational and occupational choice. They want to equip citizens with the right skills to better cope with a world of faster changing job profiles, education, training pathways, to look for a new job in labour markets with increasing temporary employment and continuous restructuring. The development of career management skills contributes to workforce development, to enterprise performance and to continuing employability of citizens either employed or self-employed.

According to evidence from the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, in 2015, **careers education has been introduced in most EU countries** with the objective to enhance career management skills:

- **12 countries integrated Career Management Skills as a learning outcome into their curricula** as a separate subject with specific time allocation: AT, CH, CY, EL, FI, HU, HR, LT, MT, NL, NO, RO, SK;
- **7 countries integrated the acquisition of CMS in other school subjects or give the schools autonomy to allocate specific hours** for this: DE, DK, EE, FR, IR, PT, SE. Four of these countries has already frameworks for learning outcomes for the training of CMS in place: Estonia, Ireland, Malta and Portugal.¹

This development **reflects international trends**: for example, South Korea, Japan, Canada, New Zealand and Saudi Arabia have introduced careers education in curricula. Further, the reform of career services in education and employment with focus on career competencies and successful transitions is one of the key themes of the activities of the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy, ICCDPP.²

At European level, the **Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies** (2008) has inspired new policy developments. It calls upon Member States to encourage lifelong acquisition of career management skills as one of four fields for action. To this purpose, relevant teaching and learning activities have to be included into in general, vocational and higher education programmes. There is a need to prepare teachers and trainers and to involve relevant stakeholders, such as parents, civil society organisations and social partners. Guidance should become one of the objectives of schools, VET providers and higher education establishments.

The European Commission supported implementation through funding structured cooperation at European level within the **European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network** (ELGPN, 2007 - 2015). An **ELGPN working group on Career Management Skills** bringing together representatives from education and labour ministries has produced a unique knowledge base: a section on Career Management Skills in the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Resource Kit (2012), concept notes on designing policies and on factors for implementation³ as well as European guidelines for policy and

¹ see also Eurydice report 2014 “Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe. Strategies, Policies and Measures” at:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/175en.pdf

² <http://iccdpp.org/>

³ http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/ELGPN_resource_kit_2011-12_web.pdf/

system development in this field. Starting with schools, the concept has been applied to other sectors, VET, higher education, employment etc. to cover the whole life path⁴.

Continued cooperation at EU level would be needed to keep the momentum going. Although encouraging, provision of careers education is still at the beginning in most countries.

The **revision of the European Framework of Key Competences could offer an opportunity** to discuss and acknowledge the relevance of Career management skills and the need for action at European level. One option could be to add **Career Management Skills as an own key competence**. A second option could be to **define it as sub-category** of the competence “sense of entrepreneurship”, even if this would be a second-best option only. Currently, the Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning includes eight competences: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (i.e. ability to turn ideas into action, e.g. to plan and manage projects); cultural awareness and expression.

The need to further develop these competences has been confirmed by policymakers, researchers and experts: At the **European Education Training and Youth Stakeholder Forum**, 20-21 October 2016, participants highlighted topics with a strong link to career management skills, guidance and careers education:

- resilience as an ability to get the skills you need in the future, the ability to move to different occupations, facilitate transition between the jobs, the skill to demonstrate one’s own skills (Michel Servoz, Director General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion);
- need to prepare oneself for jobs which do not exist yet or for jobs which might disappear, requiring technical skills, but also skills to manage the transitions;
- need for skills to get a job and changing a job throughout their lives (Detlef Eckert, Director for Skills in DG Employment). It was also said at the conference that these skills should be part of education the earlier the better and be taught in schools and beyond.

In its **resolution of 19 January 2016 on Skills policies for fighting youth unemployment**, the **European Parliament** underlined “*that good quality educational tailor-made guidance and support at all stages of education and training is necessary and can lower the risk of early school-leaving as well as help to overcome difficulties in accessing the labour market*”. It stressed that “**guidance should be anchored in the curriculum** and must be provided in cooperation with economic actors and employment agencies”. The Parliament identified need for action given a lack of high quality career guidance in the Member States.⁵

Pointing in the same direction, a comprehensive **evidence-based study on the effectiveness of labour market interventions for young people** concludes that “*Even more important may be earlier education system interventions to improve the school-to-work transitions.*”⁶ Already earlier, the **Commission Lifelong Guidance Expert Group** recommended in 2006 to include specific reference to the skills of managing one’s own career and learning into a Framework of key competences, stressing that these are different from learning to learn. Now the time has come to act at European level to react to current developments as well as to future needs.

<http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/elgpn-concept-note-cms>; <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/elgpn-tools-no-4-cms>.

⁴ <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/elgpn-tools-no-6-guidelines-for-policies-and-systems-development-for-lifelong-guidance/>.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/536318/IPOL_BRI%282015%29536318_EN.pdf

⁵ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2016-0008+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>, see also briefing note: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/536318/IPOL_BRI%282015%29536318_EN.pdf

⁶ <http://wol.iza.org/articles/youth-labor-market-interventions-in-oecd-countries.pdf>.