

Analysis of Learning Opportunities Survey

Europass Information Provision

Third Meeting of the Europass Advisory Group

14 March 2018



1 Purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to provide an analysis of the responses received from 30 participating countries to the survey on Learning Opportunities in the new Europass.

The survey was carried out between 28 January and 15 February 2019. The survey was sent to members of the Europass Advisory Group and representatives of National Euroguidance Centres.

A summary of the results are presented in the attached PPT slides.

The Europass Advisory Group is invited to give feedback on the document at the AG meeting on 14 March 2019.

This Note includes:

- **State of play** on
 - definition of 'Learning Opportunity' and legal bases
 - existing databases with Learning Opportunities
- **Suggestions** for organising information on Learning Opportunities in the new Europass such as
 - Types of Learning Opportunities
 - Structure of Learning Opportunities
 - Additional information related to Learning Opportunities
 - Additional features to make the section more user-friendly
- **Next steps**

2 State of play

2.1 Definition of Learning Opportunities and Legal Basis

The survey shows **great variety in terms of definition and legal reality** across participating countries. There is no correlation between having a single working definition of the term 'Learning Opportunity' and having a legal framework in place. As shown in the table below, the majority of countries do not have a single working definition, while the majority of countries do regulate (at least partly) content, collection and presentation of learning opportunities.

Definition and Legal Base:

Definition in place: 8 responses (SE, IE, FI, EL, PT, AT, ES, FR)

No definition in place: 22 responses (LU, EE, SI, LV, UK, BA, CY, RS, NO, BG, IS, BE(vl, fr), HR, TR, MT, MK, IT, PL, DE, HU, CZ, SK)

Legal base: 21 responses LU, SE, EE, SI, IE, PT, LV, UK, NO, ES, BE(vl), HR, MT, MK, IT, PL, DE, HU, CZ, FR, SK

No legal base: 10 responses FI, EL, AT, BA, RS, CY, BG, IS, BE(fr), TR

Of those countries that upload learning opportunities to the *Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe (LOQ) portal*:

- 7 of 10 countries have a definition in place
- 7 of 10 have a legal framework in place

In countries with a legal base (but not necessarily a single definition), learning opportunities are generally regulated at sectoral level including opportunities in non-formal settings.

There are also instances with no single working definition but instead learning opportunities are defined at by level of education or at sectoral/regional level.

2.2 National databases: an overview

The landscape of databases of learning opportunities in Europe concerning the linking of various national/regional/sectoral databases, data collection, quality assurance, maintenance and updates is rather fragmented.

Existence and content of national databases

Among the 30 countries (31 replies) that responded to the survey only 3 did not have national databases in place and all countries that uploaded to the LOQ had databases in place, however not always in the form of an integrated database mapping all learning opportunities in their respective country. In most countries, various databases exist for certain sectors (e.g. Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education), levels of education (primary, secondary and higher education) or at regional level. Often they do not only include training offers but also include information related to the Learning Opportunity such as the educational institutions themselves, admission to courses, financial issues (e.g. grants, scholarships), and recognition of foreign education, labour market forecasts and advice, practical information about the countries and in some cases also allow for a comparison between different training offers.

Purpose of national databases

The purpose of these databases is generally information provision to the general public as a whole or more specific target groups (prospective foreign students, pupils, parents, teachers, guidance counsellors, educational providers, employers, jobseekers, workers, policy-makers, researchers). Some databases are also serving the purpose of gathering statistical information about e.g. the number of enrolments in various educational institutions, study progression of enrolled students and the effectiveness of educational and labour market strategies. Most databases only include learning opportunities offered in the respective country and are only available in the national language. Databases with offers in the field of higher education present an exception with 'Study in country X' websites being available in English and some national databases also including offers from abroad.

Data collection, Maintenance, Quality Assurance and Update

There are a variety of means of data collection, maintenance and update at national level. Many organisations running databases are using technical solutions to collect data from various data sources (i.a. official registers, registers of Higher Education Institutions, Public Employment Services, and Adult Learning Institutions). Countries with integrated databases in place tend, in particular, to link the

integrated database with various other databases to facilitate data exchange and updates. Nevertheless, data is still in many cases being collected and updated manually either by the responsible organisations' staff or by the provider of the educational offer itself.

Regarding quality assurance, there are number of approaches in place including (1) learning opportunities that lead to qualifications are quality assured as part of national systems for qualifications; (2) quality assurance processes for providers of learning opportunities; (3) quality assurance of education and training offers, including checks by guidance practitioners, and cases where there is no specific quality assurance identified but opportunities are checked for completeness and accuracy.

[Upload to LOQ portal](#)

All countries except one do not make a selection but rather uploaded all data from their national database(s). In most cases the update took place **manually** and the data was **regularly updated**. In all except two cases, **National Euroguidance centres** were involved in the coordination, data collection, data structuring, technical and scientific support and the upload itself.

Number of Learning Opportunities per country as at 1 March 2019:

Country	Number of Learning Opportunities uploaded
AT	10498
BE	772
CY	3
CZ	9
DE	37
DK	904
EE	1936
FI	7599
FR	60922
EL	12963
IE	947
LI	1674
LU	299
LV	1478
PT	13793
RS	2037
SE	6751
SI	3083
IS	700
NO	175

3 How to improve Learning Opportunities in the new Europass: suggestions received

Participating countries were invited to suggest how to ensure the added-value of learning opportunities information on the new Europass. Responses included the following feedback:

Suggestions for the new Europass in the survey responses can be grouped into five main questions, summarised below without further analysis by the Commission:

1. *Which types of Learning Opportunities should be included in the new Europass?*
2. *How to structure the Learning Opportunities?*
3. *Which information related to Learning Opportunities could be relevant for users?*
4. *How to make the functionality as user friendly as possible?*
5. *Operational issues*

Types of Learning Opportunities to be included:

- A **selection** should be made of learning opportunities to be uploaded on the new Europass portal but the question remains on what basis this selection should be made.
 - The selection could be made on the basis of levels of education (Primary, Secondary, Higher Education), types of education (General Education, Vocational Education and Training, Higher Education, Adult Education), types of provider (formal, non-formal) or its relevance to learning or job mobility.
- A discussion is needed on whether it is more useful to upload the learning opportunities to Europass or to provide links to national sources.
- A **definition** of the term 'Learning Opportunity' and clear guidance on selection criteria needs to be developed.

Structure of the Learning Opportunities:

- Learning Opportunities should be **connected to fields and/or skills** so that they can be personalised and linked to skills development and career goals of individual users. For such a suggestion functionality ESCO could be used.
- Information about Learning Opportunities should be **available in English** and/or other widely understood languages and should include information on entry requirements.
- Learning Opportunities should receive a **NQF/EQF level** to help the user understand the complexity and level of the course.
- **Information about the provider** such as number of enrolments, employer reputation, place in international rankings and statistics on employability of graduates should be included.
- The information should be **reliable and regularly updated** and a standardised expiration date for each Learning Opportunity (e.g. one year) could be included.

Additional information related to Learning Opportunities:

- **Links to national websites and databases** on Learning Opportunities should be included on the Europass portal and vice versa.
- Information about a **country's educational system and qualifications landscape** could be helpful for a user. This could be complemented with EQF referencing reports as they often provide a more detailed overview of a country's system.
- **Information** about validation, guidance services, exchange programmes, recognition of foreign diplomas and qualifications, voluntary work and financing (i.a. tuition fees, scholarships, loans) could be helpful for users to make an informed decision.

- Information about [labour market trends](#) and advice on student and adult mobility could support individuals in their career planning and skills development.
- [Europass mobility documents](#) should be made available on the new portal.

Additional features to make the section on Learning Opportunities as user friendly as possible:

- The [search function](#) should be improved and this could be done by e.g. adding a translator engine and the possibility to expand information on the search results.
- A tool to [compare educational offers](#) based on i.a. reputation among employers, student satisfaction, employability of graduates and international rankings could support users in their decision.
- [User testing](#) should be carried out regularly to ensure that the portal meets actual user needs.

Operational Issues

- When developing the IT infrastructure of the new portal the technical specifications of linking national databases to Europass should be the same as to the LOQ. A pop up message informing about the new section could be included to raise awareness of Learning Opportunities in the new Europass.
- A [small working group](#) could be set up to collect good examples of databases and suggest ways forward.
- The [role of the Euroguidance network](#) in the context of the new Europass has to be clarified and emphasised.
- [National databases](#) should be improved and/or integrated databases at national level should be created to facilitate interoperability with and data transfer to the European portal.
- Possibilities to provide [funding](#) for translation activities and linking national databases on Learning Opportunities should be explored.

4 Next steps

The Commission, with the Europass Advisory Group and stakeholders, will develop an approach to information on learning opportunities by:

- Establishing a temporary working group of the Europass Advisory Group to develop a proposal for learning opportunities content in the new Europass to ensure the effective implementation of the Decision.
 - This work will include consideration of the potential transfer of existing learning opportunities content on the *Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe* portal.
 - This group is expected to meet in April ([first meeting will be on 12 April 2019 in Brussels](#)) and May 2019 in order to develop an approach to learning opportunities to present during the June meeting of the Europass Advisory Group.
 - Members of the Europass Advisory Group are invited to nominate representatives to join the group [by 25 March 2019](#) to EMPL-EUROPASS@ec.europa.eu with the subject line Europass Learning Opportunities Group. For effective discussion, a group of around 10 representatives would be welcome.

- Separately, the Commission will consult with participating countries on [technical solutions](#) for uploading information on learning opportunities. This may include a one-off expert workshop. Initially the Commission will follow-up with participating countries who highlighted new developments and projects in their feedback.

ANNEX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE ON NATIONAL PRACTICES REGARDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

National practices

1. Does your country have a working definition of 'learning opportunities'? YES/NO
 - a. If YES, can you share the definition or a link to the definition?
 - b. If NO, how does your country identify and select learning opportunities to upload to the LOQ?
2. Does your country have legislation for or otherwise regulate information on learning opportunities at national level? Can you provide/share links to any relevant information on this regulation?
3. Does your country have a national database(s) or other online source(s) of information on learning opportunities? YES/NO
 - a. If YES:
 - i. Can you share the link to the database(s)/source(s)?
 - ii. Can you describe the target audience and purposes of this database/source?
 - iii. What is the technical process for collecting information on learning opportunities? Does your country have technical solutions/tools/software etc for collecting and compiling information from different sources?
 - iv. Can you share information on the maintenance, quality assurance and updating of the information on learning opportunities?
4. Are you aware of other information sources for learning opportunities (international, regional, city, private providers etc.) that offer good or promising practices for this review?
5. In your view, how can we ensure the added-value of learning opportunities information in the new Europass?

Other comments: please provide any other suggestions, comments or experiences on the topic of learning opportunities and the approach to learning opportunities in the new Europass