

THE EUROGUIDANCE NETWORK POSITION PAPER ON THE REVIEW OF THE KEY COMPETENCES RECOMMENDATION

Comments from the Euroguidance Network with reference to Key Competences Review 2017¹

EUROGUIDANCE NETWORK – LINKING LIFELONG GUIDANCE AND INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY ACROSS EUROPE

Since 1992, the Euroguidance Network provides knowhow and expertise in lifelong guidance and learning mobility within education, training and employment in Europe. Altogether 34 European countries belong to the Euroguidance Network. The national Euroguidance Centres contribute to the implementation of the Erasmus+ objectives as well as the EU policies and strategies in the context of lifelong learning and sustainable employment.

The Euroguidance Network's primary goal is to develop an international dimension in guidance, by educating guidance professionals, who work in the education and employment sectors. On top of this, the Euroguidance Network promotes the international exchange and cooperation of guidance practitioners and is involved in developing lifelong guidance provision at a European level.

WHY CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS SHOULD BE ADDED AS A TRANSVERSAL SKILL TO THE KEY COMPETENCES FRAMEWORK

The Euroguidance Network firmly believes that citizens can take well-informed choices and decisions on their learning on all education levels and career paths when professional information, advice and guidance support is easily available to them. At the same time a broader set of competences are needed to find fulfilling jobs and become independent citizens that contribute to society.

Career Management Skills (CMS) are competences that include self-knowledge of one's capacities and interests, capacity to analyse information about learning and work opportunities in relation to one's self-knowledge and the capacity to make career decisions and successful transitions². These are competences that have become increasingly important for the individual in the fast changing global world of today. It is also widely acknowledged that CMS are linked to life skills and competencies that are important for the individuals to manage their life effectively.

Therefore, the Euroguidance network recommends to add Career Management Skills (CMS) as a transversal skill to the existing framework of key competences.

By looking at guidance as a learning process in a broad perspective, CMS shift the focus from where the role of guidance is to help young people and adults to make choices to a role where guidance is to provide activities that equip individuals with the skills to manage recurring choices and cope with their life in a longer run. This enables individuals to update and upgrade their skills in a lifelong learning perspective.

¹ This paper does not necessarily reflect the opinion of all Euroguidance centres

² A Reference Framework for the EU and for the Commission. ELGPN Tools No. 6, 2015

HOW CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS ARE CONNECTED TO THE INDIVIDUAL KEY COMPETENCES

CMS contributes to the other key competencies, especially the horizontal skills, learning to learn and social and civic responsibility;

- *Learning to learn* is defined as an ability to effectively manage one's own learning. The self-knowledge included in CMS is a pre-requisite for this competence.
- *Social and civic responsibility* is an ability to participate effectively and constructively in one's social and working life. Also here CMS play an important role by contributing to the capacity to making successful career decisions and transitions.

Ronald G Sultana³ proposed the need for CMS to connect with the European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, as following:

Key Competences for LLL	Links to Career Management Skills
1. Communication in mother tongue	– Able to search, collect, process written information
2. Communication in a foreign language	– Able to work with diversity
3. Math (sic), science, techno- logical literacy	– Able to manage a budget – Cultivating a disposition towards critical thinking – Able to manipulate tools and data to reach a conclusion
4. Digital competence	– Able to use internet-based data and services – Able to use ICT to support critical thinking, creativity and innovation at leisure and work
5. Learning-to-learn	– Effective self-management of learning and careers
6. Interpersonal and civic competences	– Able to interact effectively with institutions – Able to distinguish between work and personal life
7. Entrepreneurship	– Skills in project development, implementation – Able to identify one's strengths and weaknesses – Able to assess and take risks when warranted
8. Cultural expression	– Able to realise economic opportunities in cultural activities

DEVELOPMENT OF KEY COMPETENCES THROUGH MOBILITY

The Euroguidance network promotes possibilities for young people to take part in periods of learning mobility and practical training abroad. This is important work in relation to the key competences, as young people gain so much more than just language skills, which is often the main highlight. These persons grow as individuals and gain experiences that affect their life choices in terms of educational and vocational choices as well as views on world-wide issues. In fact, several studies have shown that mobility can contribute to the development of many of the key competencies and help individuals to stand out in the global labour market.

For example, The European Commission's extensive Erasmus Impact Study⁴ showed that that international experience is highly valued by employers in gaining basic skills for working life, such as problem solving, tolerance and self-confidence.

³ Ronald G. Sultana, 2011, Learning career management skills in Europe: a critical review

⁴ European Commission, 2014, The Erasmus Impact Study

In a study⁵ conducted among Swedish employers, competences that they considered that students developed during international studies or internships abroad were also competences that were considered to become increasingly important in the labour market. Examples of competences mentioned were: adaptability, ability to take initiatives and good communication and social skills.

Furthermore, a report⁶ from the former CIMO, Center for International Mobility, in Finland, showed that those who have taken part in another country's education, culture and/or labour market often have the kind of skills that employers demand, but do not always associate with international mobility. These include skills such as productivity, curiosity and resilience.

Therefore, the Euroguidance network recommends adding mobility for learning purposes as one of the crucial activities to support the development of key competencies.

EUROGUIDANCE SUPPORT FOR THE KEY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

For more than 20 years Euroguidance has been supporting the upgrading of guidance practitioner competences and raising their awareness of European initiatives and trends in the fields of education and employment, thus developing the European dimension in guidance. Guidance practitioners are the key stakeholders in the development of citizens' key competences through counselling and provision of relevant information.

Several activities⁷ supported by Euroguidance have been implemented at national level, aiming to enhance the skills and competences of all target groups (e.g. self-assessment tools and e-portfolio tools based on the EU key competences framework, training seminars for the guidance practitioners, informational material and events for the end users etc.).

Through this work, Euroguidance is able to promote and support the future use of the key competencies, focusing on enhancing the visibility of the revised framework and up-grading the competencies among guidance practitioners, so that they are able to turn the key competency framework into a meaningful package for the individuals of all ages in the process of lifelong personal and career development.

Therefore, the Euroguidance network recommends recognising guidance practitioners as an important target group for the future use of the key competency framework and acknowledging the role of Euroguidance in raising their awareness.

⁵ Svenskt näringsliv, 2010, Arbetsgivarens syn på utlandserfarenhet (Employers views on experiences from abroad)

⁶ CIMO, 2014, Hidden competences

⁷ Further information on Euroguidance activities: Highlights of the work 2016, <http://www.euroguidance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Euroguidance-Network%E2%80%99s-Highlights-of-the-Year-2016-compressed.pdf>