Validation of skills and qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning – the practical input of organised civil society

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What are we going to discuss today?

Non-formal education/learning

Informal learning

+ validation of skills and qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning

- the practical input of organised civil society
A couple of definitions

Non-formal education/learning

• means learning which takes place through **planned activities** (in terms of learning objectives, learning time) **where some form of learning support is present** (e.g. student-teacher relationships);

• it may cover programmes to impart work skills, adult literacy and basic education for early school leavers;

• very common cases of non-formal learning **include in-company training**, **through which companies update and improve the skills of their workers** such as ICT skills, **structured on-line learning** (e.g. by making use of open educational resources), and **courses organised by civil society organisations** for their members, their target group or the general public;
A couple of definitions

Informal education/learning

• means learning resulting from **daily activities** related to work, family or leisure and **is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support**;

• it **may be unintentional from the learner's perspective**;

  examples of learning outcomes acquired through informal learning are skills acquired through life and work experiences, project management skills or ICT skills acquired at work, languages learned and intercultural skills acquired during a stay in another country, ICT skills acquired outside work, skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities, sports, youth work and through activities at home (e.g. taking care of a child);
A couple of definitions

Validation

means a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases:

1. IDENTIFICATION through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual;

1. DOCUMENTATION to make visible the individual's experiences;

2. a formal ASSESSMENT of these experiences; and

3. CERTIFICATION of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification
On Rethinking Education:

_procedures for the recognition of knowledge acquired outside school (non-formal education), currently too formalist, need to be improved.

It should also be emphasised that decisions need to be the result of consultation with the relevant social partners and other civil society organisations and that the State should be responsible for ensuring the quality of this recognition.

Recognition procedures can more effectively help to increase the visibility, especially among the social partners, of the benefits of non-formal education.

It is also important to provide information that is as broad and as easy to understand as possible about the modes of recognition and validation of skills to ensure that they benefit everyone.
On Rethinking Education II.:

The EESC regrets that the Commission has failed to seize the opportunity offered by this communication to recognise the role that non-formal education can play as a supplement to formal education and draws attention to the call made by participants at the Strasbourg Symposium for a common long- and medium-term process to be established to recognise non-formal education in Europe.

On EU Policies and Volunteering:

The EESC is closely observing the Commission’s work… on the European Skills Passport. In order to record the learning achieved through volunteering in an appropriate way, the passport should not be a series of new separate certificates but, rather, a comprehensive document listing all practical experience, training, soft and vocational skills acquired through life-long learning, including those gained through volunteering, if desired by the volunteer.
Areas for discussion

1. Guidance, expertise and information
2. Coordination of stakeholders
3. Validation, national qualifications frameworks and systems
4. Ensuring the quality of validation
5. Validation from educational institutions
6. Validation in connection with the labour market
7. Validation in the voluntary sector
8. Tools for recognition
Ways forward – personal view

1. Regarding the volunteers
   • formal validation is only the last step, self-awareness is the first
   • self-assessment tools and portfolios at national level
   • support within voluntary NGOs
   • career guidance to include NFIL
   • European tool – Europass Experience

2. On the level of Employers
   • better understanding by the end users (especially SMEs)
   • better promotion of European Skills Passport (especially Europass CV)
Ways forward – personal view

3. On the level of Educational institutions
   • opening-up to learning outcomes and their validation
   • opening-up to cooperation with voluntary organisations
   • career guidance starting already at primary school level

4. On the EU level
   • updated Validation Guidelines – to take more into account specificity of voluntary sector and suggest ways to approach and involve it
   • Europass Experience
   • Institutional support for volunteering in the EC and EP
ON-LINE DIALOGIE OPEN

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Thank you for your attention.

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