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**PROVYP - Professional
Orientation of Vulnerable
Young People**

Professional Orientation of Vulnerable Young People Project

**Policy recommendations for better regulation of
the career guidance provided in adult education**

Comparative Report

Abstract

September 2016



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Introduction

Reducing youth unemployment is a big challenge for all Member States in Europe. The improvement of career guidance (of which professional orientation is one part) is considered as a very important tool to acquire knowledge, skills and competences, in particular for adult learners in vulnerable situations.

In line with the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Agenda for Adult Learning, the '**Professional Orientation of Vulnerable Young People (PROVYP)**' project seeks to promote re-skilling and up-skilling across 8 Member States, providing vulnerable young people with e-career guidance and improving the orientation measures offered by the adult education providers in the field.

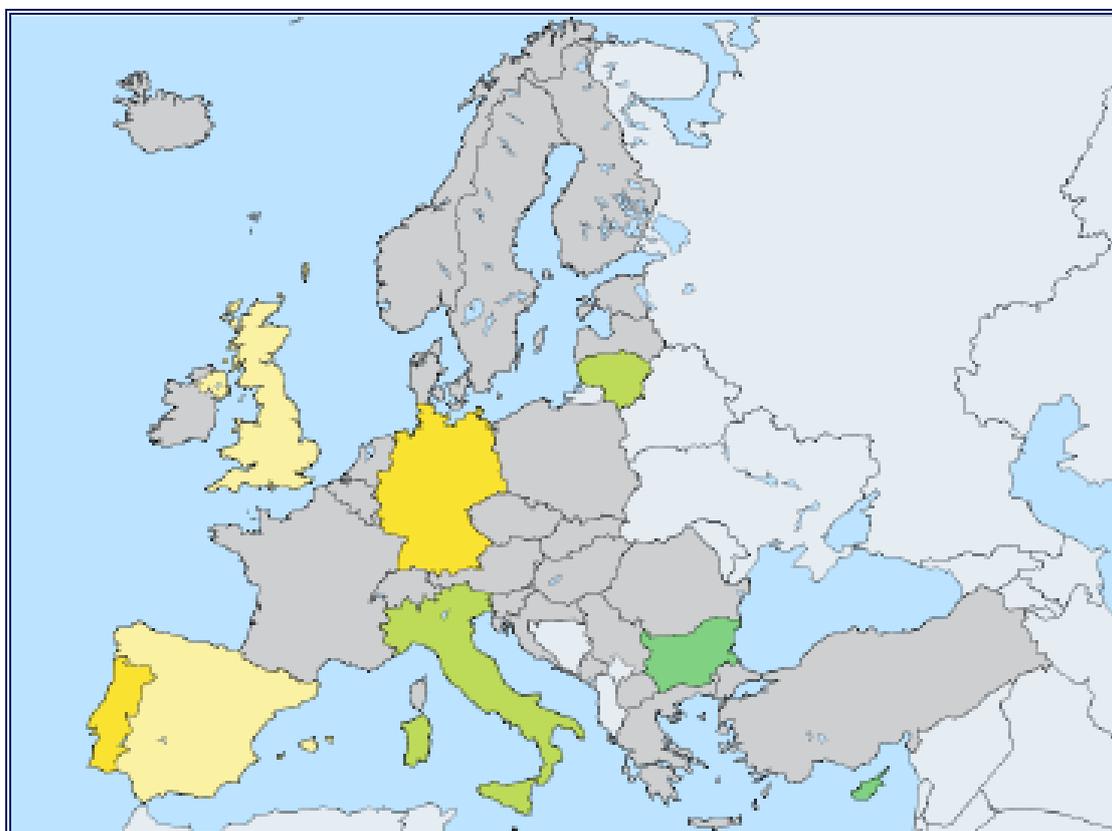
The PROVYP consortium brings together 10 organisations from 8 European countries, each of them with special expertise in the Adult Education field. The project reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches in professional orientation applied in the partner countries producing a consolidated European report and policy recommendations for improvement of the career guidance regulations. The involvement of experts from 8 European Member States consists an added value towards achieving the expected results and responds effectively to the initiatives and strategies undertaken by the European institutions in the field.

On the base of the developed in the frame of the project comparative report on education and training policies in the eight partner countries (Output 1), the experts from the PROVYP scientific board elaborated policy recommendations for better regulation of the career guidance provided in adult education at local/regional or national level and consolidated them at European level. The suggested measures seek to inform the decision makers in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain and UK about policy options in the Adult Education field that are evidence based, robust and could achieve the desired result in various scenarios.



Scope of the research

Country policy reviews were carried out in 8 European Member States (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain and UK) between June and August 2016. The comparative report covers approximately 29% of the European Union's countries. The results and the measures offered, if properly disseminated and further taken in mind in the development of national/regional strategic plans in the Adult Education field, could easily reach or affect 48 million of young adults (18 – 34 years old) living in the EU as final beneficiaries (Eurostat, August 2016).



Map 1: The PROVYP project partner countries

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|-------------------|
|  | Germany & Portugal |  | Italy & Lithuania |
|  | Bulgaria & Cyprus |  | Spain & UK |



Target group

In all partner countries, the experts pointed to the local or regional/national governments, in particular policy makers in the fields of education and training, employment and job search, social services and care as target group of the policy recommendations. The efforts were concentrated to setup professional orientation mechanisms at national, regional and local levels. In particular, they focused on the improvement of the career guidance provided in Adult Education.

Current situation

Adult learning includes anything from on-the-job training to continuing VET or a return to formal education to obtain a desired degree. The increasingly rapid changes in social, economic and labour market circumstances require individual citizens to be able to adapt to national/regional/local working conditions and labour market. All partners' reports stressed the importance of young people acquiring new knowledge by learning new skills, and by further developing competences, whether cognitive or non-cognitive.

Many adults, after having failed to acquire a sufficient level of knowledge, skills and competences during initial education, are stuck in low-quality jobs that offer little opportunity either for career growth, or motivation for undertaking further learning (Education and Training Monitor 2015, November 2015).

As a result of the regional/national reviews, the PROVYP experts concluded that all partner countries need some urgent measures to improve the regulation of the career guidance provided in their Adult Education Systems. The detailed country case files could be checked in the appendix of this report. The PROVYP experts made an effort to identify and analyze the shortfalls of their regional/national career guidance policies and suggest policy recommendations for improvement of the status quo.



Policy Recommendations

There is an unlimited range of options that policy makers can choose from to facilitate the provision of career guidance and access to training for adults. In some cases, the responsibility for action is that of government, in other cases technical and vocational education and training institutions and associations of counsellors could initiate action.

Having in mind the country reports of the PROVYP partners, their Policy Recommendation case files, the Education and Training Monitor 2015, different researches and reports listed in references, the PROVYP project experts recommend to the local/regional/national policy makers in the field of education, training and employment to implement the following steps in order to improve the regulation of the career guidance provided in Adult Education in their countries:

R1: Ensure consistent evaluation of all career guidance initiatives

- Annual renewal of programmes that are assessed as successful
- Introduction of new activities, following young people's opinion
- Introduction of new subjects required by the labour market trend
- Establishment of effective resourcing, identifying how best to employ those resources
- Establishment of quality control framework for monitoring and evaluation of career guidance programmes

R2: Ensure equity of access to quality career guidance services for all

- Allocate Funding for the disadvantaged and difficult to engage groups, including vulnerable young people, disabled, low-skilled and NEETs
- Provide targeted guidance and support services to learners and promote programmes to learners in under-represented groups
- Provide scheme to recognise prior learning (informal and non-formal)



- Use intermediary organisations in outreach to difficult-to-engage groups
- Invest in new technologies to enhance access to career guidance services and the quality of services

R3: Stimulate proactive behaviour in employers

- Raise employers' involvement in training design
- Motivate employers to invest in training and employment opportunities for young people at risk of exclusion and young people with disabilities
- Engage employers in independent careers advice and guidance
- Work in a network linking the third sector with the local public authorities
- Provide funding to assist employers to up-skill and retrain their workforce
- Co-finance employers' investment on the amount of work-related training

R4: Deliver well-informed career advice for all

- Provide good sources of information about careers and courses
- Formalize the requirements for career counsellor's/teacher's competence and job description
- Develop a coherent career guidance profession, independent from psychological counselling and well-informed by labour market information
- Develop and sustain youth work/career centers, providing qualitative career guidance services and ensuring the implementation of social economy principles in the State
- Regularly update information sources to identify emerging occupations and areas of skills shortage, as well as current and potential areas of skills oversupply and redundancy
- Establish a multi-disciplinary team: Having a team of skilled and motivated programme staff with complementary knowledge and experiences, including



career coaching, educational development, psychosocial support, guidance counselling and programme management, is crucial to providing an integrated package of services

- Ensure sustainability of career guidance and broader usability of the information system for adult learner's career education

R5: Coordinate an effective adult learning policy

- Establish mechanisms for policy alignment at local and regional levels
- Reduce the administrative bureaucracy and avoid duplication in the provision of services by different administrations
- Coordinate adult learning (or lifelong learning) policy with other national policies for improving knowledge, skills and competencies of adults
- Design campaigns to develop a career development culture that encourages all people to participate in lifelong learning
- Conduct researches to create new, more comprehensive and better ways of developing educational and vocational guidance
- Provide adequate resources for guidance services and protect them against the risk of being restricted
- Make financial support (funding), providing career guidance, more effective and purposeful
- Adopt standardised national assessment frameworks to underpin quality and consistency in training provision

R6: Deliver learning that meets the needs of the young adults

- Make school-based vocational education more practice-oriented
- Develop vocational branches and professional specializations, following a coherent social research



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- Involve vulnerable groups in designing, implementing and monitoring career guidance policies and services, thus greatly improving the development of services relevant to their needs
- Provide targeted guidance to learners about learning options
- Embed basic skills development in adult learning programmes
- Foster and support the partnership networks among all parties involved in both career education and labour market

Benefit

The provision of a good quality career advice can help to tackle the skills misalignment by making young people aware of the opportunities available in the job market and helping them to match these opportunities to their skills and interests. Failing to invest in career guidance will only exacerbate the skills mismatch, which in turn will have a negative impact on the country's productivity.

The recommendations stated above are feasible and viable as they will be disseminated to National/Regional authorities responsible for the education and training fields in the 8 partner countries. The PROVYP local coordinators have already planned the further steps to inform key policy makers about the current output and effectuate a follow-up of the recommendations' use.



References

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- ✓ Education and Training Monitor 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/monitor15_en.pdf
- ✓ OECD's policy review of vocational education and training (VET), Learning for Jobs, www.oecd.org/edu/learningforjobs
- ✓ Eurostat Database, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Appendix

-  **Policy Recommendations Bulgaria**
-  **Policy Recommendations Cyprus**
-  **Policy Recommendations Germany**
-  **Policy Recommendations Italy**
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