



## **Building Learning Societies: Promoting Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning**

### **Austrian Recommendations on Validation of non-formal and informal learning**

Based on reports of the project “**Validation of informal and non-formal learning for disadvantaged people**” (2013-2014) the Federal Ministry of Education established in the framework of

- a) European Council Recommendations of December 2012 – national regulations for validation until 2018
- b) Austrian Lifelong Learning Strategy LLL 2020 action line 10 – national validation strategy until 2018

Aims of the projects are

- Identify different demands
- Definition of implementation criteria and areas
- Recommendations to educational policy processes

Design

- Open discussion processes
- Inclusion of relevant stakeholders and experts in regional focus groups, through calls of papers and in conferences (BFI OOE involved in various stages)

### **Focus groups:**

86 experts all over Austria coming from Chamber of Labour (6), Chamber of Economy (7), Austrian Trade Unions (5), Association of Industries (2), Chamber of Agriculture (2), Labour Market Service (8), Regional Governments (5), Universities (7), NGOs (9), Adult Education (24), Learners (11)

Experts estimate that disadvantaged groups including unemployed people will benefit most from validation processes as validation can raise their participation in lifelong learning and improve their access to the labour market.

Focus groups see clear benefits in validating non-formal and informal learning for (disadvantaged) learners in two main fields – a) raising self-esteem and empowering people / b) in facilitating easier transition processes

Focus groups also see benefits in validation processes for companies, the economy, adult and vocational education and the society as a whole.

Recommendations on Priorities regarding the Recommendations of the European Council:

- 1) E) Validation of non-formal and informal Learning is supported by **appropriate guidance and counselling** and is readily **accessible**
- 2) H) qualifications or, where applicable, parts of qualifications obtained by means of the validation of non-formal and informal learning experiences comply **with agreed standards** that are either the same as, or equivalent to, the standards for qualifications obtained through formal education programs
- 3) F) **transparent quality assurance** measures in line with existing quality assurance frameworks are in place that support reliable, valid and credible assessment methodologies and tools

It's important to create **win-win situations** for all stakeholders involved: learners, companies, economy, adult education, vocational education etc.

It's important is **to implement the validation strategies** in a way that builds trust with learners and stakeholders. Key factors for this are:

- validation of non-formal and informal learning is a right for everybody
- it's voluntary
- financing is secured
- all processes are clear and transparent
- no double procedures
- good communication

These discussions and recommendations were further elaborated in the Conference "Opening Chances. On the way to validate informal and non-formal learning" in Linz, April 10 2014 with 150 participants coming from public institutions, NGOs, social partners and adult education



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