

NATIONAL THEMATIC EVENT REPORT

As a Gruntvig partner of the “**Building Learning Societies – Promoting Validation of non-formal and informal learning**” programme, the Small Enterprises’ Institute (IME) of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (GSEVEE) held a National Workshop called “**Promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning in Greece**”. The workshop took place in the IME GSEVEE premises, in Athens (46, Aristotelous St.) on Tuesday 27/05/2014 (14:00 – 17:00).

The main aim of the workshop was to create national partnerships in order to promote awareness about validating non formal and informal learning, exchange existing experience and methodologies to form new propositions, which are to be put forward to the relevant decision maker bodies at national level.

After IME GSEVEE’s open call, there were 28 delegates participating in the workshop, representing all interested parties, such as employers, labour unions, national bodies involved in vocational qualifications recognition processes, employment services, education providers as well as organizations of citizens’ society. Below is the list of the delegates.

Name	Institution
Paraskevas Lintzeris	Small Enterprises’ Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (IME - GSEVEE)
Vassileios Siomadis	Small Enterprises’ Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (IME - GSEVEE)
Stathis Karatzogiannis	Small Enterprises’ Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (IME - GSEVEE)
Panagiota Andreopoulou	General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning – Ministry of Education & Religious Affairs (GGDM)
Piera Leftheriotou	General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning – Ministry of Education & Religious Affairs (GGDM)
Maria Pavli-Korre	General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning – Ministry of Education & Religious Affairs (GGDM)
Dimitris Panopoulos	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Ioanna Dede	National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP)
Konstantinos Papaefstathiou	National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP)
Christos Goulas	Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of Workers (INE – GSEE)



Makis Karatrasoglou	Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of Workers (INE – GSEE)
Nikos Fotopoulos	Educational Policy Development Centre of the Greek General Confederation of Workers (KANEP – GSEE)
Nikos Gavalakis	Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV)
Dimitris Priftis	National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce (ESEE)
Konstantinos Samourelis	Hellenic Commerce Development Centre (KAELE)
Nikolaos Zoitos	Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SETE)
Athanasia Theodoridou	Man power Employment Organisation (OAED)
Maria Bartsoka	Man power Employment Organisation (OAED)
Agapi Tsikli	State Scholarships Foundation (IKY)
Konstantinos Tranoudis	State Scholarships Foundation (IKY)
Eleni Lamprintzi	National Institute of Labour and Human Resources (EIEAD)
Sophia Benea	Special Management Service E.P Human Resc Development – EYD EPANAD
Aggeliki Staikou	Special Management Service E.P Human Resc Development – EYD EPANAD
Georgios Kalergis	Hellenic Accreditation System – ESYD
Pantelis Varlamos	Hellenic Accreditation System – ESYD
Matina Alifraggi	Therapy Centre for Dependent Individuals - KETHEA
Ifigeneia Orfanou	AELIA AMKE
Athanasios Olympios	Vocational Training Centre “AKMON A.E” - KEK

The Workshop proceedings started with a welcoming speech that the Executive Manager of Small Enterprises’ Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (IME GSEVEE) addressed to all the attendants. **Mr. Paraskevas Lintzeris** outlined IME GSEVEE’s contribution to the «**Building Learning Societies – Promoting Validation of non- formal and informal learning**” project, the goal and the content of the particular Thematic Workshop and the significance which GSEVEE attributes to the certification of non-formal and informal learning.

Next, **Mr. Vassileios Siomadis**, in charge of the project management and implementation on behalf of IME GSEVEE, described the significance of the project, pointing out that opportunities to validate competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning are limited and are not sufficiently exploited in most E.U member states. These limited opportunities make competences remain “invisible” and unexploited to the detriment of individuals, the economy and society as a whole.

The project aims, as Mr. Siomadis mentioned, at contributing to the pan European attempt to certify these competences, through an awareness campaign for the certification of learning outcomes in non-formal and informal learning which can function as a tool both to further improve adult career prospects and boost interest for further education and training.



Mr. Siomadis presented the company structure, the subjects and the anticipated outcomes of the project and concluded his presentation by citing the European Directives for the certifications of non-formal and informal learning, which can be outlined in the following fundamental principles:

- Validation must be voluntary.
- The protection of individual privacy must be secured.
- There should be equal access and fair treatment for everyone.
- Interested parties must participate in creating validation systems.
- Qualification validation systems must be backed up by quality assurance systems.
- Procedures and validation criteria must be fair, transparent and supported by quality assurance systems.
- Systems must respect interested parties' legal interests and seek everyone's balanced participation.
- Validation process must be impartial and interest conflicts avoided.
- Vocational proficiency of individuals who conduct evaluations must be secured.

Next, **Ms. Ioanna Dede**, Director of National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), presented the Core Principles of the Non-formal and Informal Learning Outflows Validation System, the development of which EOPPEP is implementing with the co-funding of the European Social Fund and of National Resources.

Ms. Dede pointed out that, if we wanted to give shape to an ideal qualifications validation system in the field of non-formal and informal learning, based on social co-operation, deliberation and consent and understanding, we should start with the creation and operation of suitable needs diagnostic mechanisms in vocations and skills, and then move on to the registration of professions, specialties and expertise.

As a third stage, Ms. Dede mentioned the necessity to document the qualifications that are about to be certified since in international bibliography and in everything that has so far been presented and discussed, not all qualifications are to be certified. The last stage is the application of the Qualifications Certification System.

At this point, Ms. Dede highlighted the significance of developing and implementing specific actions for adult counselling support so that they are able to choose the right qualifications to certify, those acquired in non-formal and informal learning.

Finally, Ms. Dede presented the possibility of applying the fundamental principles that should be present in certifying non-formal and informal learning, based on European



directives and on a specific and existing qualifications certification process. The latter referred to professionals who do not have a recognized vocational title in the specialty: ‘Private Security Staff’.

Next spoke **Mr. Stathis Karatzogiannis**, Scientific Associate of IME GSEVEE, to coordinate the discussion, commenting that he would choose to discuss two sets of the fundamental principles that were mentioned earlier.

One set of principles would be the so-called individual-centred ones. It is the individual who is the focal element of the validation process, attribute a voluntary feature to it respect and take measures to protect privacy. Individual-centred principles are – however- accompanied by strong control mechanisms and individual counselling support as prerequisites for the principles to function.

Mr. Stathis Karatzogiannis stressed out the necessity to develop new ways and methods of high level vocational counselling that will advise individuals on what they can certify, how and what the benefits will be and the costs from getting involved in the procedure.

Next, a number of participants in the Thematic Workshop took the stand and focused on the following main topics:

- Actions implemented in Greece, during the formation of the Counsel for the “study on citizens’ society” and proposals on the way the validation process must be implemented so that it meets citizens’ needs.
- Stances / reactions to proposals -2014 concerning the directives on validating non-formal and informal learning, especially the core principles of validation.

After much productive discussion and views exchange and under Mr. Karatzogiannis coordination, the Thematic Workshop was brought to completion with the synopsis of the following basic conclusions by Mr. Lintzeris:

- It is an extreme over-simplification to put the citizen in the centre of the validation process because the certification process entails social, collective and other aspects. So, this social dimension should be highlighted and added to the European directives for non-formal and informal learning validation.
- Learning that stems from organised educational process produces different, not identical, learning outcomes from the ones produced from non-educational paths, namely from social and professional experience. Learning deriving from education is cognitive and mental in nature whereas learning deriving from educational paths is more experiential, and –therefore, produces different learning outcomes.



- It is not possible for vocational experience to completely cover for the lack of vocational education and training, nor is the reverse possible. These two learning forms, the one stemming from organized educational learning process and the other deriving from social and vocational experience, must be complementary to each other so that neither can dominate.
- We should keep emphasizing not only on learning outcomes exclusively but also on learning inflows and educational processes. There is need, therefore, for certification systems that will take into account not only the learning outcome (as this results from the vocational profile, but other parameters as well, like the quality and goal-setting of educational services.

With these conclusions, the Thematic Workshop was completed followed by a light meal for the participants.