



euro | guidance  
European Network to Support  
Guidance and Counselling

# Euroguidance Insight

In this issue:

November 2015

## Theme Edition: *Mobility*



In the global education and labour market of today, international mobility experience and intercultural competences are highly valued qualities. Guidance practitioners can inspire and encourage young and adults to seize the opportunity and embark on such an international journey. Therefore, this current issue of Insight will be dedicated solely to the topic of mobility. Several countries from the Euroguidance Network have contributed with articles for the newsletter, and it is our hope that this issue of Insight will provide guidance counsellors interested in promoting the international dimension in guidance with useful information as well as inspiration for their work with guidance and mobility.

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## Study abroad and discover yourself

Before participating in foreign exchange programmes, students have high learning expectations. They expect to be practicing a foreign language and learning about another culture. On their return, the students acknowledge that, although these expectations were indeed met, more than anything, they have learnt more about themselves and grown as individuals.



This was one of the main findings in the Swedish doctoral thesis that examined the outcomes of short study visits abroad among upper secondary students.

‘They discovered themselves in their encounters with other people. They have dared to take the leap into new and unfamiliar environments, and they have discovered that they actually were able to cope. This boosts their self-esteem and makes the students more confident,’ says Åsa Karlsson Perez.

Before she started her doctoral thesis, Åsa worked for ten years as a teacher in Swedish schools where she also taught foreign students on exchange programmes. In undertaking her thesis, she wanted to delve deeper into the field of exchanges and study the outcomes of visits abroad.

### Losing the balance

‘Disjuncture’ is an important concept in her thesis and Åsa describes this as losing one’s balance. “The students encounter problems, find solutions and learn. They then reflect on their own actions before they experience transformation”. She was surprised to see that this

process of experience and meta-learning started so early after arrival as well as noticing the profoundness of the experience. “They have experienced a personal transformation. The learning is not limited to the few weeks spent abroad; it continues” says Åsa. Little international research exists on the effects or outcomes of studies abroad, and most of the available research relates to higher education. We know almost nothing about the effects of study visits in upper secondary education, however Åsa’s findings are consistent with previous research on higher education.

### The host family is the gateway

All 17 students stayed with host families. This meant that the students were immediately placed in a social setting.

“Host families are a key success factor. People who let you in and want to help you. But, at the same time, the students must reach out, keep open to contact with others, overcome the barriers, and speak the language”.

Despite the many levels of learning, everything is not just a walk in the park, or is it? Do they not encounter



any problems? “Yes they do, definitely,” says Åsa. “The students find most things hard, which is the very reason why they learn. Getting out of their comfort zone is what a study visit is all about. Even minor details of everyday life, such as catching a bus to school can seem like enormous challenges to somebody who is not familiar with the language, the codes and the customs. This example may seem banal. But we are dealing with young people who have little experience, other than of their own norms and routines. A deeper process takes place under the apparent banalities.”

*“What then are the implications of your study? Should all students go*

*abroad?”*

“Ideally speaking, yes! My study showed me how such visits transform young people. They learn to know themselves better, they get interested in other cultures, they care about other people’s lives and they develop a feeling of solidarity”.

Åsa Karlsson Perez feels that schools, on the other hand, generally speaking, undervalue the student’s international experience.

“The schools look at formal qualifications. And it is true that the students have also grown in terms of language and cultural competence. But no real educational value is put on all those

other, deep and transforming effects of a visit abroad, and this is a shame. This is a matter that ought to be discussed at a political level.”

### **Funding is needed**

External funding is essential in order to reach a wider group of students and thus enable many students to go abroad, stresses Åsa Karlsson Perez. “Ideally, all schools should receive budget allocations, funds which are earmarked for student exchange programmes” she says.

Runo Isaksen: Communication adviser at SIU/Euroguidance Norway

Åsa Karlsson Perez is a lecturer at The Department of Educational Science at Umeå University in Sweden. She is also a language teacher in upper secondary school.

‘Meeting the other and oneself. Experience and learning in international, upper secondary study visits abroad’ (2014) is the title of Åsa Karlsson Perez’s doctoral thesis. She conducted in-depth interviews with 17 former upper secondary school students from Sweden and Chile three to four years after they had been on a study visit abroad as part of an exchange programme (two to four weeks).



# ”Learning mobility easily becomes a privilege for those who are already privileged”

## - Interview with Søren Kristensen, PhD, Denmark



*Being a researcher on learning mobility, what do you see as the main challenges for guidance counsellors?*

The tasks of the guidance counsellor with regard to learning mobility are in principle the same as for any other guidance activity in a pedagogical context, namely to enable access (i.e. match clients with opportunities), survival (i.e. prevent premature drop-out) and enhance learning (i.e. help the client exploit the full learning potential of the experience).

Learning mobility, however, is a complex phenomenon that cannot be subsumed under a single category or headline. There are many types of learning mobility that address different target groups and learning objectives, and as a form of experiential learning that takes place in a geographically remote location, it contains many so called “imponderables” – factors which are difficult to access or evaluate the significance of from the guidance counsellor’s lair. Therefore, there is a certain reticence vis-à-vis learning mobility, and many counsellors prefer to deal with

it reactively – on request – rather than actively promoting it to clients for whom the thought of learning by leaving does not suggest itself naturally. Thereby learning easily becomes a privilege for those who are already privileged, and this is a pity. Research shows that also young people with fewer opportunities can benefit substantially from a transnational experience but they need encouragement and support to cross the threshold. Getting more people motivated for, and involved in, learning mobility is arguably the biggest challenge for guidance counselling with regard to this – but of course not the only one.

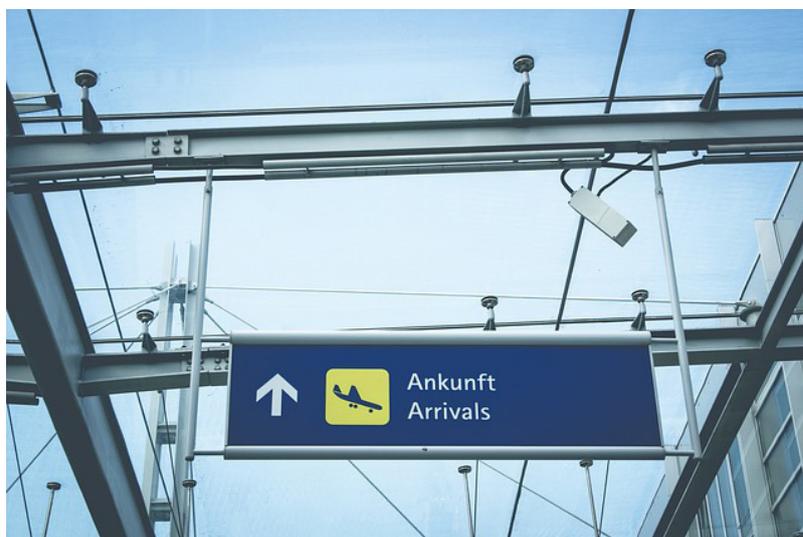
*What, then, is needed to overcome this challenge?*

There are several ways to make learning mobility more inclusive through guidance and counselling.

Firstly, all guidance counsellors – and not just those dealing with students in higher education – must have some basic knowledge on learning mobility, and especially about the

opportunities available to the target groups they deal with. They need to know something about common problems occurring in mobility projects and about the way learning happens in situations outside of an institutional setting and in a foreign context. This is however no rocket science and it can easily be integrated into basic training programmes for guidance counsellors or provided as a short in-service training course. Ideally, a proportion of guidance counsellors in a given context should also have had a transnational learning experience themselves. It is often those who have been abroad at some stage and know what it takes (as well as what it gives), who are the most effective proponents of learning mobility.

Secondly, there must be ready access to more specialised information in the shape of websites dedicated to learning opportunities abroad and experts who can be contacted for more in-depth knowledge. Thirdly, there must be contact and cooperation between guidance systems across national borders, so that counsellors can draw on each other



in connection with transnational projects.

All of this has for many years been addressed both at national and European level but not always in a systematic way. Moreover, the interventions tend to get concentrated around learning activities where there already is an established demand – the usual suspects – rather than involving new target groups.

*So you are saying that more effort needs to be put into extending guidance provision to involve new target groups for learning mobility?*

There has been some development over the last decades. For a long time, there was an emphasis on developing mobility for students in higher education. In the last 10-15 years or so – for a longer time in some countries – transnational mobility has also become integrated into the learning trajectories for students and apprentices in vocational education and training and guidance provision has been upgraded accordingly.

The new challenge is people with fewer opportunities: dropouts and early school leavers and those with learning handicaps or suffering from other problems of a psycho-social character. As the labour market

changes and job profiles are becoming more and more specialised, these groups are increasingly becoming marginalised. We know that learning mobility can be a very powerful tool for enhancing their employability and developing their competences and attitudes but at present it constitutes a real opportunity for only an infinitesimal number. We are currently harvesting experience

from a number of projects – e.g. financed through the ESF and INTERREG – on how to organise and implement learning mobility for this target group but there is still a way to go before we have worked out the implications for guidance practices in relation to this.

Søren Kristensen, Techne, and BIRTHA Theut, Euroguidance Denmark



Dr. Søren Kristensen has for many years been occupied with learning mobility, both at national and European level. In 1999-2002 he worked at the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training in Europe (Cedefop) as an expert in transnational mobility in a VET-context, and in 2004 he defended a PhD-thesis at the Danish University of Education with the title "Learning by leaving – placements abroad as a pedagogical tool in the context of vocational education and training in Europe". His thesis was later published Europeanwide by Cedefop under the same title. He was involved in setting up the first Euroguidance centre in Denmark in the early 90s and has over the years participated in several major national and European-level studies on mobility in the field of education, training, and youth. He has frequently worked as an evaluator of mobility programmes and projects and has published extensively on the subject.

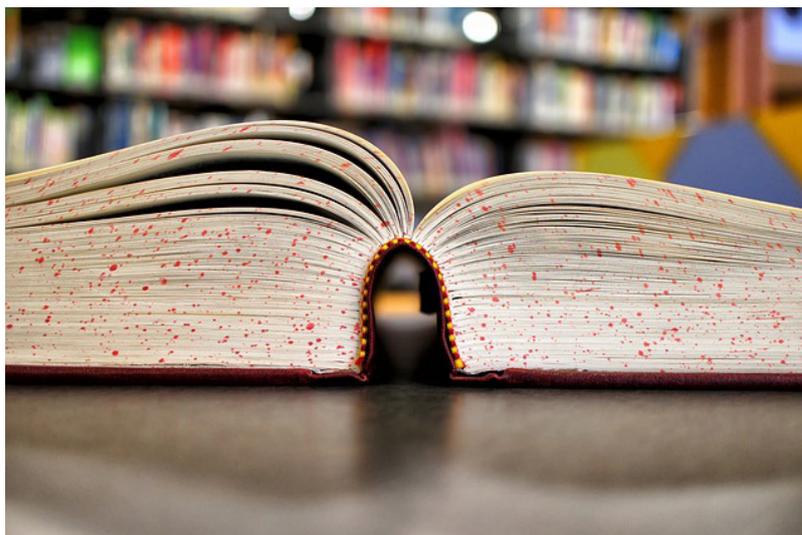
## Student mobility counselling – who is involved?

Within the framework of master's degree studies in career counselling, I had the opportunity to observe the Erasmus student mobility process at the University of Latvia. In my thesis, I compared the experience of students and mobility support providers at the University of Latvia with the student mobility support needs identified and best practice examples developed by researchers and practitioners in the Euroguidance Mobility work group, various EU countries, the USA and Australia. The thesis analysed what sort of support is offered to Erasmus student mobility participants, what kind of support is needed, and how closely a student's choice to participate in mobility is linked to his or her career planning.

Support for student mobility can be divided into three stages: before leaving the home university, during the period abroad, and after returning from the mobility experience.

**Before leaving**, the main body of support is related to information-giving and help with administrative issues. Students are informed about the Erasmus programme's requirements, shown where to find courses offered by partner universities, and told how to apply. It is assumed that the student will select those courses or placements that best match the student's interests and that the home faculty will assign credit points for the mobility period, as long as the courses or placement are completed to a satisfactory level. However, this phase can also be tricky to navigate.

- Students do not always have an adequate understanding of the host partner's offer and may not be able to select activities which meet the



academic requirements of the degree they are studying. If the curriculum of their degree programme is not sufficiently flexible, they may fail to achieve credit transfer and fall behind in their studies.

- It sometimes happens that those activities foreseen by the Erasmus student agreement do not take place at the host institution due to a lack of participants or human resources.

- Without guidance, it is very difficult to find a good placement.

It must be noted that if students do not have sufficient host country language skills, their choice of courses, as well as the scope and responsibility of tasks they can perform during a placement becomes limited. Students have to make decisions about participating in mobility early enough that they can manage to acquire language skills which enable them to fully take advantage of the opportunities offered by mobility.

During preparations for a mobility period, career counsellors can help students to write their motivation letter and CV, find placements and

refer them to useful information sources on finding accommodation. In the ideal case, if a student has access to career guidance counselling early enough in the learning pathway, student mobility can be foreseen in his or her career plan and preparations like learning languages, saving up for mobility-related expenses, or gaining basic intercultural skills can be made. Thereby mobility gains in added value – it becomes a better grounded and more purposeful activity.

**During the mobility period** Erasmus Student Network participants offer peer mentoring and cultural awareness-raising activities. If needed, the sending and hosting Erasmus Coordinators can provide support in handling administrative, academic or practical problems. Emotional difficulties can be overcome with the help of peers, as well as friends and family at home, or through psychological assistance. In the case of the University of Latvia, psychological support is available even via distance counselling.

**Following the mobility period**, the home faculty and foreign affairs department invite students to talk about their impressions and give reminders about settling credit transfer issues and completing mobility participant reports. If, upon return, the student has difficulties in reintegrating in the study environment, psychological support can be accessed. A career counselling session can help the student become aware of skills acquired, as well as to formulate these skills in terms comprehensible to potential employers, thus improving the quality of one's CV.

Students who participated in the Erasmus Impact Study, similarly to the students at the University of Latvia interviewed during my master's research, felt that they need more support for Erasmus placements. The labour market of the host country is unknown to students. In order to be more certain that the placement will meet academic requirements as well as to be confident that the foreign company will be willing to host them, students would like to receive specific recommendations. During a place-

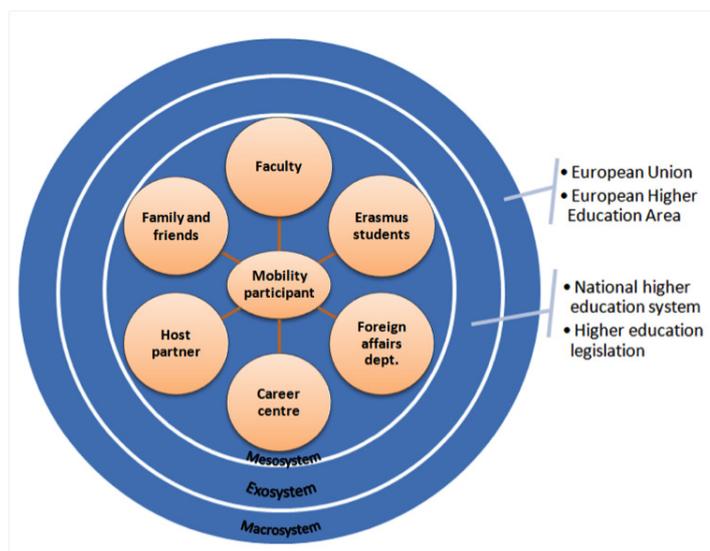
ment, students usually do not have access to university housing options in the host country, which means less help in finding a place to live and reduced access to peer support for cultural adaptation. The International Research University Network IRUN ([www.irun.eu](http://www.irun.eu)) provides a good practice example in the cooperation that takes place among career centres of the networked universities. Career centres provide the same kind of support for visiting students in finding placements as they would to their own university students.

Several providers are involved the mobility support process: the home faculty, the host partner (university or employer), the foreign relations departments of the sending and receiving universities, career services staff (career counsellors, psychologists, and administrative staff), peers and significant others. They can be viewed as a sort of ecosystem, where each is influenced by the meso-level (relationships among the different support providers), the exo-level (the national higher education system and related legislation), as well as

the macro level (the European Union and the European Higher Education Area).

Information exchange is crucial at the microsystem level – between the student and each of the different support providers, as well as at the mesosystem level – among the support providers themselves. If the career counsellor is left out of the communication taking place among the other members of the mobility microsystem, students have greater difficulty in choosing mobility activities relevant to their career plans, and they lack information and support on placement options and on identifying and integrating acquired skills into CV and motivation letters following the mobility experience. There is a risk that students may not be able to fully take advantage of the results of the mobility experience and to convince potential employers of the value that mobility brings.

Ilze Jansone, Euroguidance Latvia



Pictured: Mobility counselling ecosystem

## Summary: The extended understanding of international experience

Curiosity, productivity, and resilience are attributes that employers are looking for when recruiting skilled employees. However, in a Finnish study on international mobility it was discovered that many employers are not able to link these competences and people's international experiences at recruitment.

### Hidden competences

Many of the key competences required from new staff members are the same that employers who operate internationally link with international experience, such as creativity, networking ability, and general interest in new things. These competences clearly differ from the ones traditionally associated with international experience, such as language skills and cultural understanding, tolerance and broad-mindedness. International mobility produces the kind of competences that the employers seek for, but they are not able to link these competences and people's international experiences at recruitment.

In 2012–13, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) and the think tank Demos Helsinki examined how employers rated the skills and knowledge acquired through international experiences within their recruitment procedures. How do employers value

international skills and competences? What skills and competences are associated with international experiences? And what are the qualities driving working life now and in the future?

The main findings of the study are that employers do not necessarily value all learning mobility experiences when recruiting new employees.

### Towards a deeper understanding of international competences

The Finnish study added three new attributes to the hidden aspects of international competences: productivity, resilience, and curiosity. Productivity can be understood as efficiency, analytical ability, problem-solving ability, and credibility. Resilient employees are able to adapt, they know their limits and strengths and are confident and persistent. Curiosity forms the basis for many attributes linked with international experiences: the urge to learn,

search, and experience; interest towards new issues; intercultural knowledge; and networking ability. These factors help us understand the value of international experience. Productivity, resilience, and curiosity can help to gain competitive advantage in the working life in general, not only in international organisations.

The research calls for employers to develop a better understanding of the new skills and competences needed in workplaces. They must also come to understand the key role international experiences play in developing these skills and competences.

### New tools for understanding international skills and competences

The study showed that tools were lacking for a better understanding of the international key competences that young people and students might have. The task of creating

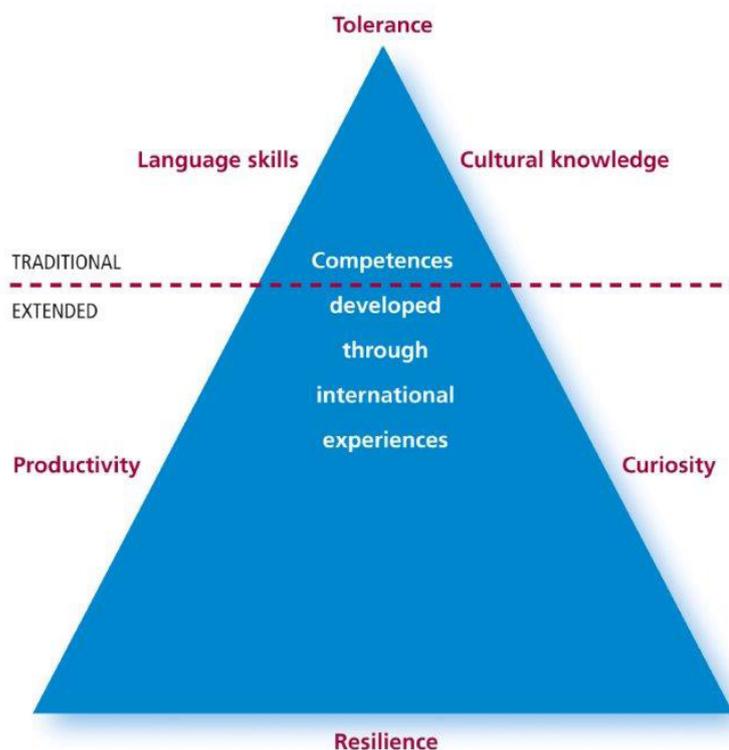


such tools was given to the summer trainees of CIMO. They designed a web-based test that helps young people understand their international competences and they also collected some good ideas for expressing international competences when searching for a job. It is not enough just to mention the period abroad in one's CV; one has to be able to show clearly the learning outcomes acquired. The new tools for guidance practitioners include exercises that are designed for individual and group guidance sessions.

Full research study "Hidden Competences": [http://www.cimo.fi/services/publications/faktaa\\_-\\_facts\\_and\\_figures\\_1\\_2014](http://www.cimo.fi/services/publications/faktaa_-_facts_and_figures_1_2014)

Full article by Maija Airas and Linda Tuominen, CIMO in "Open the Door to the World" p 8-11: [http://euroguidance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Open\\_the\\_door\\_to\\_the\\_world.pdf](http://euroguidance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Open_the_door_to_the_world.pdf)

Summary by Alexandra Ejby Bidstrup, Euroguidance Denmark



# Finnish guidance professionals touring the world with critical eyes and open minds

In spring 2015, nearly twenty Finnish guidance professionals working in vocational education institutions and in employment and economic development administration participated in the Academia study visits organised in several European countries. The experiences gained were discussed with the Finnish guidance practitioners at the return seminar organised in September by the Teacher Education College of JAMK University of Applied Sciences.

Although the visit put language skills to the test, the days were long and full of activities and the absorption of the information about the destination country took its toll, the exchange visits were generally considered extremely valuable. The main impressions of the visits were the abundance of professional experiences yielded by them, international contacts and the chance to see guidance work from a new perspective.

## You can always learn something new

There are always great expectations related to participating in expert exchange abroad. Participants want to make the most of the week spent in another country, both professionally and socially. The goals are in particular related to developing guidance competence, establishing new expert contacts as well as learning more about the destination country and its culture.

When it comes to an exchange, people seek inspiration, good practices and new methods for their daily work. Indeed, many of the exchange participants say that it is important to take some distance from one's own everyday guidance work and get the chance to see how things are done elsewhere. This enables critical reflection of one's own guidance work and gives an opportunity to contemplate how skills could be further developed. It is important to look for influences elsewhere and gain insights: "Hey, you could do it that way, too!"

## Guidance is increasingly significant

The current economically difficult

times have brought guidance and its significance to centre stage in many countries. The Finnish participants emphasised that there seems to be, to an unprecedented extent, social demand and a function in society for guidance in Europe. It is important to see guidance in a wider context as this brings deeper significance to the work of guidance professionals.

The sharing of information and experiences with participating guidance professionals from other countries helps you to understand the nature of guidance work and its challenges in different parts of Europe. The aim of supporting clients in their education and career choices is shared by everyone, but there are great differences between countries in how guidance services are organised and how guidance professionals are trained.

## Continuing training at its best

The concept of the Academia guidance professional exchange has been developed in many ways throughout

the years. On JAMK's initiative, a so-called professional article was introduced as a new feature this year. Each Finnish guidance professional participating in the exchange writes such an article on a topic s/he chooses, inspired by the Academia visit. The articles are a good medium for distributing the results of the exchange in the guidance professional's work community and networks. At the moment, the intensive Academia exchange is categorised as continuing vocational training at JAMK University of Applied Sciences, and all Finnish guidance professionals who have completed it, receive five credit points for the exchange.

Text: Mika Launikari. The article is based on the interview of Jaana Ahlqvist. Jaana is in charge of the Academia exchange coordination at JAMK University of Applied Sciences.

Photograph: Jaana Ahlqvist, JAMK.

Academia study visits are funded through the Erasmus+ programme.



## Info4Migrants website launched

**With the refugee crisis making headlines and demand for migrant services increasing, a new website aims to improve access to information for migrants and career guidance professionals.**

Over the last two years Aspire-international (based in the United Kingdom) have been leading a project to develop a new online resource called Info4Migrants. This work has been funded by the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme and has involved partners in Austria, Bulgaria, Sweden, Finland and Spain. The purpose of the website is to provide up to date information for migrants in one online platform.

The project's partners could never have imagined that the website's launch would coincide with the largest migration of people seen since the Second World War. When the project started, the aim was to develop a resource for careers advisers that would make their work with migrants more effective. The UK had slipped 10 places to 13th on the [MIPEX ranking system](#) that compares how well countries integrate migrants. Since 2013, the UK has fallen further and the situation for careers advisers remains difficult.

### **Easy to use, a timely resource**

The diverse needs of migrants create various challenges for careers advisors. How do you begin to offer guidance to a person who doesn't speak your language? Whose skills are very different to those required by the local labour market? Who comes from a country where careers guidance doesn't exist?

It soon became clear that the only way to address these problems was to share specialist knowledge and create a network of support. Therefore, the final website has been designed for two main groups - migrants and the professionals/volunteers who support them. Migrants are signposted to the most up-to-date and reliable resources, whilst information on cultural backgrounds is provided for advisors. To make it even easier for use, the website is also available in 6 different languages (English, Arabic, French, Romania, Polish and Urdu). These languages were chosen as they are some of the

most common spoken by migrants to the UK and so even non-English speakers can benefit from the information on the website.

The website was launched in September at an event for professionals and volunteers from across West Yorkshire. Attendees described the website as 'a much needed resource' that provides 'easy access to all the right information'. One particular community volunteer commented, 'I've managed to make many contacts to help me do my work better' – a perfect summary of what the Info4Migrants project set out to achieve.

The website is free to use.

Visit [www.info4migrants.com](http://www.info4migrants.com) to find out more.

Lauren Hendrie, Project Leader at Aspire-Igen

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[WWW.INFO4MIGRANTS.COM](http://WWW.INFO4MIGRANTS.COM)



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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

# “Guidance Crossing Borders” - Review of the European cross-border seminar of educational and vocational guidance centres

As Europe grows closer together, the field of guidance is also extending its reach beyond borders. The tenth Euroguidance Cross Border Seminar was held from June 9th -10th in Retz/Lower Austria in keeping with the motto “Guidance Crossing Borders” and dedicated itself to the manifold ways in which educational and vocational guidance counselling in Europe is crossing various traditional boundaries.

Presentations by two keynote speakers from Sweden and Hungary started off the seminar on June 9 in Retz, providing insights into the opportunities and challenges for educational guidance counselling as a consequence of crossing borders.

## Hidden competences

Employers usually only perceive a small fraction of competences that people acquire while working and studying abroad. The presentation by Nina Ahlroos (Euroguidance Sweden) was based on the Nordic/Baltic publication “Open the Door to the World - views on mobility guidance from up north”. On the basis of a Finnish article in the publication, she directed the audience’s attention to further, so-called “hidden competences”.

According to a study of the Finnish Centre for International Mobility, CIMO, employers usually only perceive improved language skills, increased intercultural experiences and an enhanced ability to work with different people and in different settings among applicants with international experience.

It is often overlooked that applicants, during their stays abroad, also strengthen other competences that are especially important for the future professional environment. The most prominent of these is curiosity: In times of rapid economic change, curiosity is proving to be an essential characteristic for searching out prospective developments and potentially achieving significant competitive advantages for companies.



Productivity, in terms of significantly increased problem-solving abilities, is another skill that applicants with international experience bring to the table. People returning from stays abroad have shown to be very resilient in professional situations since they are able to better evaluate their own abilities and limitations and pursue their goals with perseverance.

Nina Ahlroos pointed out that educational guidance counsellors with an expanded understanding of the benefits of stays abroad can support their clients even better in presenting their abilities in the application process.

## “Career” concepts

The second keynote speech at the seminar established a historic correlation between mobility activities and career paths. The Hungarian

guidance expert Tibor Bors Borbely-Pecze, senior consultant at ELGPN (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network), illuminated the various contexts in which professional careers progressed on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Socialist systems predominantly assigned career paths and professional activities to individuals. Occupational choices were limited in the extreme; the space for making independent career decisions was very narrow.

Eastern European states, just as the entire Central European region, underwent a developmental change within the Post-Fordism of recent decades: Employers increasingly developed into entrepreneurs with strongly individualised qualification profiles and internalised control mechanisms, reaching a state of self-exploitation while concurrently being confronted with unreliable social security systems.



Tibor Bors Borbely-Pecze introduced further career concepts: such as the protean career model (according to Douglas Hall), which describes a career as a process that is managed by the person, not by the company. The search for self-fulfilment is the driving force for the individual; criteria for success are rooted within the individual, not in external circumstances.

The career adaptability model (according to Mark Savickas<sup>1</sup>), on the other hand, focusses on the resources of individuals in coping with current and expected professional changes, transitions and challenges. The ability to proactively advance one's own development and make suitable life choices has proven essential. High professional adaptability also necessitates continuous engagement with one's own future and the ability to perceive opportunities that present themselves.

In light of increasing challenges for the individual within the work process and concurrently growing flexi-

bility, challenges are also increasing for educational and occupational guidance counsellors who prepare their clients and help them make suitable careers choices.

#### **Interactive workshops**

Following these two keynote speeches, participants at the Euroguidance Cross Border Seminar attended workshops held by 10 European countries. Two workshops from Austria emphasised the cooperation among educational guidance centres. "Do it like the spider: How network building can improve the access to Lifelong Guidance" (Kathrin Weinelt and Ingeborg Wilfinger from Bildungsinformation Burgenland [Educational Information Burgenland] and Katrin Reiter from Netzwerk Bildungsberatung Salzburg [Network Education Guidance Salzburg]) initiated a discourse on the practice of networking at four interactive work stations. The workshop "Online Guidance – Chances and Limits of a Nationwide Collaboration and the Method Itself", led by Barbara Oberwasserlechner and Barbara Glattauer

(both from Bildungsberatung in Wien [Educational Guidance in Vienna]) introduced specific methods for this form of counselling and explained the advantages of cross-institutional cooperation. The workshop "Image in career coaching and vocational guidance" guided the participants through the counselling process toward self-reflection and the identification of objectives with visually oriented coaching methods (led by: Dorota Raniszewska, business trainer and coach, Poland).

Further workshop topics: "Guidance for a Happy Life" (Ionana Panc, Titu Maiorescu University, Romania), "Applying psychological counselling in student career guidance" (Ivana Mrgan, guidance counsellor, Croatia), "Guide my W@y!" (Florian Kreutzer, University of Applied Labour Studies of the Federal Employment Agency, Germany), "Braveness vs performance? Overcoming the learned helplessness" (Krisztina Molnar, TANDEM, Slovakia).

The tenth European seminar was held in Retz/AT this year. As this year's event marked an anniversary, it was held under the auspices of the Austrian Euroguidance Centre and in close cooperation with the other two founding countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Keynotes and workshops from 11 countries (AT, CZ, DE, HR, HU, PL, RO, SE, SL, SK) provided insights into current approaches and methods of participating countries. 81 counsellors from 14 European countries took part. The participants learned about Czech cooperation between companies and university career centres within the context of a field trip to Brno on June 8.

1)

Mark Savickas Ph.D. is professor of Behavioral Sciences at the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, Adjunct Professor of Counselor Education at Kent State University, and Professor Extraordinaire at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. He has served as a Visiting Professor in the Department of Organisational Behaviour in the School of Business at Loughborough University (United Kingdom), the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Lisbon (Portugal), and the Department of Psychology at Vrije University (Belgium).

The detailed programme is available here:

[http://www.bildung.erasmusplus.at/euroguidance\\_cross\\_border\\_2015](http://www.bildung.erasmusplus.at/euroguidance_cross_border_2015)

Extensive seminar documentation will be published in autumn, the online version will be published at [www.bildung.erasmusplus.at/euroguidance\\_cross\\_border\\_2015\\_en](http://www.bildung.erasmusplus.at/euroguidance_cross_border_2015_en)

For a printed copy send mail to: [info@euroguidance.at](mailto:info@euroguidance.at)

Documentation for seminars from previous years:

2014, Zagreb, HR: Counselling methods for fighting youth unemployment [http://www.mobilnost.hr/prilozi/05\\_1426582367\\_Euroguidance\\_zbornik\\_final.pdf](http://www.mobilnost.hr/prilozi/05_1426582367_Euroguidance_zbornik_final.pdf)

2013, Warsaw, PL: Methods, Techniques and Tools to Diagnose Competences

[http://euroguidance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Cross\\_Border\\_Seminars\\_methods\\_techniques\\_and\\_tools.pdf](http://euroguidance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Cross_Border_Seminars_methods_techniques_and_tools.pdf)

Open the Door to the World – views on mobility guidance from up north: [http://euroguidance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Open\\_the\\_door\\_to\\_the\\_world.pdf](http://euroguidance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Open_the_door_to_the_world.pdf)

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Text: Karin Hirschmüller, Euroguidance Austria

Photo Credit: APA, Ludwig Schedl.



## Working for EU agencies: Systematic career management or pure happenstance?

Working for the European Union has been a dream for many people since their young age and they have taken systematic steps to make this a reality in their lives. For others, having a career as an EU expert was never something carefully planned but rather happened by coincidence. These two main approaches to having a career abroad come through in an ongoing doctoral research on EU labour mobility.

Twenty interviews with staff members of 12 different nationalities, working for three European Union agencies (Cedefop, European Training Foundation and Eurofound), were conducted by Mr. Mika Launikari (Finland) for his PhD research in early 2015. Four themes were touched upon: the motivation to pursue an international career, professional development, the life outside of work and the multicultural aspects of working in the EU environment.

### Guidance support for self-directed experts

A common general feature to most respondents was a high degree of self-directedness when taking decisions on one's career development and management. For many, it was

self-evident that they wanted to have an international career whereas for the rest it was a natural development after many years of working in their own countries to embark on a professional path abroad. Guidance support, for example from teachers, trainers, psychologists and significant others was often part of the preparatory stage when the interviewees were orienting themselves towards working abroad.

### Emphasis on soft skills

Working in the EU context means a constant development of professional competences, the respondents reported. Hard skills are vital but less tangible soft skills are absolutely necessary in the everyday office life with colleagues with diverse cultural back

grounds. These include personality-driven skills like getting along well with people and who have different worldviews (i.e. concerning cultural sensitivity), listening and engaging easily in small talk (i.e. being chatty and open) and showing curiosity for new situations and phenomena.

### Making friends abroad

Living abroad can be very challenging in terms of establishing contacts with the locals in the new country. Many interviewees shared their frustration about how difficult it can be to become integrated in their new society and how time-consuming it can be to break into the circles of the locals. Not knowing the language of the country well enough was seen as an obstacle in the case of Greece and Italy at least. Having children, though, often facilitates the bridge building with local parents and opens access to the local community through day-care or school-related activities.

Mika Launikari, Finland

More information about the doctoral research available at [www.launikari.eu/phd/](http://www.launikari.eu/phd/) and [www.launikari.eu/blog/first-impressions-based-on-interviews-of-eu-experts/](http://www.launikari.eu/blog/first-impressions-based-on-interviews-of-eu-experts/)

Proposed image for this news item is the one euro coin taken from flickr available at <http://bit.ly/1HFMeFd>



## “Getting an inspiration from foreign colleagues” Interview with Croatian counsellor Danijel Mišura who undertook job shadowing on a study visit to England

**“I highly recommend using mobility as a way of learning! Mobility is an opportunity for getting new ideas, using foreign languages in real life situations and boosting self-confidence. As a matter of fact, I’m about to implement new workshops at CISOK inspired by what I’ve learned during my mobility period: More specifically, I would like to organise workshops about adult learning methods to engage adult clients in the learning process after longer breaks.”**

Danijel Mišura is a guidance counsellor working at the Croatian Lifelong Career Guidance Centre (CISOK) in Osijek. He took part in the job shadowing visit to Leeds, UK, organised by Euroguidance Croatia in June 2015, to give Croatian practitioners an opportunity to learn from their fellow counsellors in other countries. Upon his return from Leeds Danijel was interviewed about his mobility experience:

“I wanted to get an insight into everyday work of career counsellors in another European country – how they work with clients, which methods and techniques they apply. As our Centre mostly works with pupils and the unemployed, the job shadowing was tailored to fit our needs – we got an opportunity to job shadow experts counselling pupils and job-seekers.”

*How was the visit organised? What did you learn in Leeds?*

“On my first day I observed the work of Christine Humberstone, an experienced guidance counsellor currently working in three schools in Leeds. She mostly counsels students at the age of 16, in the final year of secondary school, using a variety of tools and methods to support and encourage them to explore further education possibilities and the world of work on their own. One of the useful tools Christine is using is the portal of the National Careers Service<sup>1</sup>, often used by guidance practitioners in

the UK, offering an abundance of information for all target groups. What the students find most interesting are the descriptions of job profiles but the portal also offers self-assessment questionnaires, search tools for job offers and tips and tricks on how to write a good résumé.

After gaining an insight into counselling of pupils in Leeds, I got a chance to learn about counselling service offered to adults in different organisations: Opportunity (part of the Aspire-igen group) offering job-preparatory services to adults over the age of 19; Job Centre Plus – an



1) <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

organisation supporting the unemployed through (financial) benefits and trainings for increasing their career prospects; and Ingeus – a company aimed at discovering career potential of different groups – job-seekers, persons with disabilities, immigrants and others.”

*Have you identified any similarities and differences between the British and Croatian guidance systems?*

“At the Croatian Lifelong Career Guidance Centre (CISOK) I work with diverse clients, ranging from primary and secondary school pupils to the unemployed, but also with students, employers, parents and other groups. We organise both individual counselling and group activities: workshops (how to write a better résumé / job application; holding job interview simulations), lectures, presentations about lifelong guid-

ance, active job-search, career and personal development, labour market trends, and vocational / occupational fairs, to name but a few.

There are similarities between the Centre I work at and the Opportunity Centre in Leeds in terms of accessibility to clients – everyone can come to our facilities without an appointment and get information about work and education opportunities or help with personal career development. However, our guidance systems differ significantly; in Croatia guidance services of pupils are the responsibility of school counsellors (psychologists, pedagogues and education-rehabilitation experts) and the Croatian Employment Service, whereas in the UK schools outsource organisations to offer counselling services to pupils. Another point worth mentioning is the fact that counsellors working in

schools not only use a wide variety of graphic and engaging material (including games), but also adopt a custom-made approach to each student, trying to find the most appropriate method of informing and counselling them.

*Did the job shadowing meet your expectations?*

“It certainly did! Although I read about the British career guidance system before leaving Croatia, I would have never imagined it being so different from other European systems. I had the opportunity to see various aspects of career guidance support for people of different age and educational background. And I learned a lot about the history and future trends in the British career guidance policy.”

Doris Monjac, Euroguidance Croatia



# New Eurydice report: National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education 2015/2016

How much do students have to pay to study in Europe? Do all students have to pay fees? What are the requirements and criteria for accessing public financial support?

The yearly report from the Eurydice network provides information on student fees and support systems (grants and loans) across the European countries.

The report ascertains that in a significant number of education systems,

students are not charged any fee, while the highest fees are found in the UK, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland.

Furthermore, the report provides information sheets with country specific descriptions and diagrams. The report covers 37 European countries from the Eurydice network.

The full report: [National Student Fee and Support Systems in European](#)

[Higher Education 2015/2016](#)

More information: The European Commission's [Eurydice network](#) delivers analyses of the European higher education systems and education policy.



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Scripts are always welcome and should be sent to the following email address: [Dora.Stefansdottir@Rannis.is](mailto:Dora.Stefansdottir@Rannis.is)