



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
24 JUNE 2008

Learning outside school is becoming an accepted route to qualifications

Cedefop reports on validation systems

Learning acquired outside schools - whether at the workplace, at leisure or even at home - is increasingly becoming an accepted route toward acquiring formal qualifications. The expansion of systems validating such learning is partly due to the rapid development of National Qualifications Frameworks across Europe.

This is the main conclusion of the report recently published by Cedefop, ***Validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe: A snapshot 2007*** [ISBN 978-92-896-540-3]

The report found that standards underlying a successful validation system need to be defined as **learning outcomes - what people know, understand and are able to do**, rather than where and how they learned it. Learning outcomes are the **key concept** on which the European and national qualifications frameworks are based.

Since the early 90s, interest in validating non-formal and informal learning has grown to the point where **several countries now have fully-fledged validation systems**.

Based on the European inventory on validation 2007, countries are divided into three groups:

- **Countries which have set up working validation systems** (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and the UK)
- **Countries where validation is emerging as a practical possibility** (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Sweden).
- **Countries with little or no activity** (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, the Slovak Republic, Turkey). In some of these countries, validation is still a controversial subject.

A critical issue in setting up successful systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning is **establishing standards that can be trusted by all**.

Moreover, any such system should be as **reliable in its assessment** of non-formal and informal learning as formal systems are.

Validating non-formal and informal learning gives individuals greater autonomy and improved job prospects, and allows society to make better use of all forms of learning and skills. Ideally, validation should not just lead to knowledge certification, but generally promote learning.

This publication is free of charge. To download, please go to:

http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publication_details.asp?pub_id=493

About Cedefop

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), an agency of the European Union based in Thessaloniki, Greece, supports European policy-making in the field of vocational education and training.

www.cedefop.europa.eu

###

Please contact:

Project Manager:

Jens Bjornavold, tel. +32 2 29 91093, e-mail: jens.bjornavold@cedefop.europa.eu

Press Office:

Ioáanna Nezi, tel +30 2310 490186, E-mail: ioanna.nezi@cedefop.europa.eu

Head of Area Communication, Information and Dissemination:

Gerd Oskar Bausewein, tel.+30 2310 490288,E-mail:gerd-oskar.bausewein@cedefop.europa.eu