

O1: Summary Research Report

O1-A1: State-of-the-art Research

Summary Research Report

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of the main results of the desk-based and field-based research completed in Ireland, Cyprus, Lithuania, Portugal, and Germany for the purpose of preparing the individual National Research Reports that were completed within the framework of O1-A1 (State-of-the-art Research). For the completion of the National Research Reports, the Research Framework that was prepared by CARDET and provided to all SELFIE partners was used, as well as the research tools provided in the Appendix of the Research Framework.

The scope of the National Research Reports was to provide an account of the state-of-the-art, meaning what currently exists, in each of the 5 partner countries with respect to the following thematic categories:

- Local context in terms of career planning and career guidance in the educational system
- Key skill areas that need to be addressed in the proposed career planning curriculum
- Key skill levels that are appropriate for each of the distinct student age groups
- Existing resources that could be used or re-designed for use in the new career planning scenario
- Appropriate media formats and environments for engaging students at the different age groups
- Assessment framework to facilitate the measurement of attainment at all levels
- Pedagogical supports for the induction of teachers and existing guidance experts into the new career planning subject arena
- Supports for the initial and continuous professional development of teachers addressing the integration of the tools currently available and the new tools to be developed

The desk-based research was based on the review of key policies, governmental documents, national reports, national statistics and publications in each of the partner countries. The field-based research was based on interviews and focus groups with the projects' target groups; specifically, interviews with policy-makers, school counsellors

and parents/guardians, and focus groups with students and teachers/school management.

This report provides a summary of the main findings of the research completed in the partner countries, while the complete compilation of the National Research Reports and the full presentation of the research completed and the results, along with references and the research tools, can be found in the comprehensive Compiled National Research Reports report. Both the Compiled National Research Reports report and this Summary Research Report will form the basis for the development of the Curriculum and Assessment Framework, as well as the Curriculum resources for each of the three levels (Introductory, Intermediate, Advanced). The Summary Research Report will also be translated in all partner languages.

Career planning and Career guidance

In **Ireland**, career planning in schools is mainly provided in second level schools through public resources funded by the Department of Education and Skills and provided by trained career guidance counsellors. Career planning and guidance in Ireland has been affected by cutbacks and career guidance provision currently varies greatly from one school to another. This means that the majority of resources are now being given to senior cycle students, aged 16-18, as they prepare for third level applications and the world of work.

Similarly, in **Germany**, career planning is mandatorily provided by secondary schools. They are obligated to include career planning and guidance in their curriculum and to implement it as a continuous and multidisciplinary process, which starts up from class 8. These involve advice and counselling on educational paths and on learning difficulties, psychological counselling and assessment by the school psychological services and classroom career education. In schools, guidance is provided by specially trained teachers, social workers, school psychologists and cooperating vocational guidance practitioners from the Employment Agencies.

In **Cyprus**, the Career Counselling and Educational Services (CCES) is responsible for the personal, social, educational, and vocational development of high school students. School counsellors offer the following services:

- Individual and group counselling (normally 2-4) on personal, social, educational, and career guidance issues.
- Seminars, visits, training programmes and conferences about counselling education.
- Teaching of the Career Education and Social Education course. This course is offered in the 3rd year of the Gymnasium - Lower Secondary School for 14 periods during the first semester.
- Organisation of a one-week work-experience programme in the 2nd grade of Lyceum and visits to post-school education institutions.
- Publication of instructional and informative books (i.e. Career and Social Education, Scholarships, etc.)
- Access to information on educational and vocational guidance via online libraries, educational videos, online guidance.
- Participation in various committees for students' benefits.
- Provision of personal and educational counselling to special needs students for their personal development through individual educational programmes

On the other hand, in **Lithuania**, there are three types of services, which are considered as part of career orientation (guidance): career information, career counselling, and career education. All of them are closely related and rarely supplied separately. Services are provided by various bodies - public and private. The Career guidance strategy aims to create an environment for career guidance system and service development in Lithuania taking in consideration the prospects of the country's economic and social development and the needs of every individual member of the society. However, the system in Lithuania also has some important weaknesses: Firstly, there is no integral system of career guidance or an institution, which is responsible for implementing, planning, and organizing the work of all institutions related to career guidance and counselling. Secondly, there is very little availability of career guidance

services in rural areas. There is not enough attention given to preparing and training career guidance specialists as well as improving qualifications of existing specialists. Last but not least, there is a lack of career counsellors, which means that career guidance services are accessible only for those who actively seek it.

In **Portugal**, the vocational and professional orientation services are provided by:

- Institutions linked to employment and professional training, involved with individuals who are, generally, outside of the school system (unemployed), awaiting their integration in the active life (Professional Insertion Offices, Employment Centres).
- Institutions linked to education, especially in primary and secondary school levels.
- Institutions related with youth and municipalities.
- Private offices.

All these services are provided by psychologists and go beyond vocational development, covering interpersonal and identity development. However, it is important to note that, in Portugal the professional guidance is not contemplated at curricular level, because of the absence of a national curriculum in this context.

Key skill areas that need to be addressed in the proposed career planning curriculum

In **Ireland**, key skill areas that need to be addressed in the proposed career planning curriculum at the beginner stage (12-14) include focus on the self, organisation skills, goal setting, and study skills. An introduction to hobbies/interests and how they link to certain careers would also be useful. At the intermediate stage (14-16) personal career skills such as CV writing, career sectors, work experience and employability would be vital. Later, at the advanced stage (16-18) qualification framework and options after second level including preparation for university or the world of work and interview skills would also be very important.

However, in **Cyprus**, the career planning curriculum that currently exists focuses on developing self-awareness and self-esteem to students. The main goal is to equip

students with values of life, promote active citizenship, and provide them with information about the educational system thus helping them make their own personal and educational choices. Therefore, the two key skill areas of career counselling and planning are: interpersonal relationships and career planning/counselling. Additionally, Cypriot counsellors have the responsibility to help the student choose the best possible career. As part of the curriculum, the students can also participate in interviews, get informed about the educational choices, academic studies and jobs, visit educational centres and come in touch with psychometric tests, activities and digital material. In public schools, there is also the opportunity for the students to have direct contact with a job of their choice for one week, the so called “week of labor” during the second grade of lyceum. The resources that should be addressed should be along these lines, but in a more hands-on, practical and student-centered approach, allowing students to be more active in the decision-making process and preparing them to face the challenges of the professional or academic world as best as possible.

In the same spirit, the key skills that should be addressed in **Lithuania** are general awareness and self-awareness; students should know how to evaluate their knowledge, skills, abilities, how to recognize their weaknesses and know how to improve them. In Lithuania, stakeholders think that students’ ability to objectively and realistically evaluate their environment, goals, and possibilities is also essential, as well as decision-making and skills-implementation. Correct attitudes towards one’s career planning are also considered to be important. Students also believe that key skills that should be addressed as part of a career planning curriculum should be self-awareness, ability to evaluate their interests, which would lead to understanding of what career paths they would like to pursue in the future. Likewise, the teachers believe that similar skills should be reinforced – self-awareness, most importantly, also critical goal setting, and ability to plan and coordinate one’s actions efficiently.

In **Portugal**, the secondary education level is defined as the starting period of differentiation of interests and skills of the students in terms of human development and professional preferences. Skills like: Development of attitudes; Exploration skills; Interaction with areas of interest, and Employability skills should be present in the curriculum of career planning. The study of the social and family life of the student

(experiences, beliefs, social and moral values, professions of the family members and other examples), are also some of the aspects that should be included in the development process and vocational guidance of the students, which allies to personal preferences, self-knowledge, self-esteem, resiliency, life goals, market study. All of these should assist the student in his vocational choice and "correct" integration into the labor market.

During the field-based research, portuguese stakeholders listed some key areas of competencies to implement in a future curricular project in the area of career planning. At the 7th grade level, they identified skills such as: Organize the study; Learn how to learn; Living in the school. At the 8th grade, key areas like: Pathways and training; Self-knowledge; Skills and expectations; Interests and satisfaction, were highlighted. At the end of the 9th grade students choose the study area that they intend to follow and which has a decisive impact on the access to the higher level course; therefore, at this stage some of the respondents highlighted as key areas of competence: Self-knowledge; Explore school and professional training opportunities.

On the contrary, in **Germany**, readiness for vocational training refers to the valuation if a prospective trainee is convenient to start and finish their training in an appropriate way. Basically, the concept is abstracted from specific tasks and sets a focus on occupations with comparatively less extensive requirements. Applicants need to have skills on an average level in terms of academic elementary qualifications, life-practical competencies, as well as to cope with an 8-hour working day. Based on the available catalogue, every basic attribute is defined and differentiated in the following way:

- Short description and definition
- Indicators for the assessment and operationalization of the particular criterion
- Approaches and diagnostic possibilities for the measurement

On the one hand career choice, including the ability to make a self-assessment and to gather information concerning the individual possibilities in occupational fields, is explicitly considered. On the other hand, the catalogue outlines which core areas and skills are valued as very important and elementary to start and finish an apprenticeship from a broad point of view.

Key skill levels that are appropriate for each of the distinct student age groups

While in **Ireland** there is a proposed draft national curriculum that deals with each distinct student age group – to which, however, there is no access-, in **Cyprus** there is no planned career guidance for the student age groups 12-14 and 16-18 compared to that of 14-16. In addition, the CCES is considered as part of the Secondary General Education. The students of the last grade of the Gymnasium in Cyprus, attend the courses “Career Education” and “Social Education”, which aim to equip the 14- year olds with the skills of self-knowledge, confidence, and self-realization so that they will be able to take rational decisions, especially about their future professional career, based on self-awareness. Later, the students of the first grade in Lyceum that fall into the age group 14-16, in mid-school year, are called to choose their school program for the next grade. Their options are: three direction subjects of four periods a week, and a subject of their interest of two periods or merely four direction subjects. In the second grade of lyceum, the students become aware of their capabilities and they are usually able to decide whether to change or keep the subjects they selected. Regarding Higher and Tertiary Education, the counselling service is not adequate. It is restricted in the Universities and includes career education and guidance activities such as visits to companies.

On the other hand, in **Lithuania**, the current career education system is not consistent and systemic and whether or not it helps students to develop these skills depends largely on a specific school or a career counselor. That is why it is difficult to unambiguously evaluate if the present system complies with the student’s needs and a more consistent and systemic career education system should be created. The most important skills are self-awareness, ability to assess one’s self and abilities, ability to make plans and keep up with them, also critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills, information search skills. Generally, the Lithuanian stakeholders believe that in each age group the same key skill areas should be given attention to, only in different levels.

In **Portugal**, however, there are no fully defined skill levels, due to the lack of a specific program for career planning, which leads to an ignorance of the subject by some.

However, throughout the field-based research conducted, a certain type of action was mentioned that integrates a set of activities in the field of vocational guidance, which may be performed in the age groups of 12 -14; 14 -16; 16-18, among which:

- Introductory level (12-14) – awareness-raising phase for the variables, present in vocational guidance (a deep knowledge of professions, personal dynamics, communication).
- Intermediate level (14-16) – training and professional market study, vocational guidance, personal marketing.
- Advanced level (16-18) - life goals and career planning, pursuing studies or entering into the labor market, building a lobbying plan. The referred typology reflects the current need to initiate actions in the area of vocational counselling in early schooling levels (7th grade).

In **Germany**, it is hardly possible to give a general statement about appropriate skill levels for the distinct age groups, because of the various types of schools and their specific justification. It is a major difference when talking about key skills from students in:

- Secondary General Schools, which have the main focus on the dual system and where a lot of students will enter the transition system.
- Grammar Schools, where the main focus lays on academic careers and perspectives.
- Vocational Schools, as partner in the dual system are in a conflict of general education vs. vocational education, and have a huge variety of educational background (developing readiness for occupation vs. training in the dual system vs. general qualification for university entrance).
- Schools for learners with special needs, where only a minority of the students gets the Certificate of Secondary Education and the majority enters the transition system.

Existing resources that could be used or re-designed for use in the new career planning scenario

As far as existing resources that could be used (or re-designed for use) in the new career planning scenario are concerned, in **Ireland**, there are limited resources currently available for students. The main resource available is an online REACH program, available through www.careersportal.ie. This is a resource for both students and guidance counsellors to use that guides students through interest inventories, writing a CV, researching third level options, and has videos about various careers also. There is also a book available for this program and many schools in Ireland currently use either the book or the online program.

In **Cyprus**, the existing resources for career planning include guides for students, school counsellors, and parents as well. Apart from the toolkit for the 3rd graders of Gymnasium, there is a significant amount of career guides for students aging 14 to 18 that are also available online. The content of these books covers the subject areas below:

- Information on the two educational options after the 3rd grade of Gymnasium, the high school and the technical school.
- Detailed description of the high school with particular reference to the courses offered. An essential tool for the students of the 1st grade in high school.
- Detailed description of the technical school with particular reference to the courses offered. An essential tool for the students of the 1st grade in technical schools and for the public interested to learn about the choices offered.
- Exercises designed to bring students into contact with different aspects of themselves and get to know better the interests, abilities and skills and generally their individual characteristics.
- Information on the public universities and tertiary institutions in Cyprus and Greece giving emphasis on the required subjects corresponding to each faculty/department.
- Information on available scholarships for post-secondary school and graduate studies offered by our government.

- Reference to the factors that influence the students' educational and vocational choices and the ways in which parents can help their child.
- Useful information needed by the school counsellors to provide the appropriate guidance. The teacher's guide provides guidelines and instructions about the development of the courses Career and Social Education

In another spirit, in **Lithuania**, the prevailing opinion seems to be that more modern assessment tests and equipment are needed in order to better fulfill their needs. According to a career coordinator, even if the currently available resources used for career education meet the needs of the students, there is lack of self-counselling system as well as e-tools. Such resources as e-tests, games, information webpages, a better managed and user-friendly AIKOS webpage, more allocated hours for career activities would help career specialists to meet the students' needs in this area. Furthermore, an implementation of an e-portfolio system in Lithuania, where students could upload their information, certificates, CVs, career plans would improve the situation. Lithuanian teachers usually rely on assessment tests and practical activities for career education in their subjects; however, they feel that they lack in skills and knowledge of other types of resources and they wish they could engage their students more with different types of career activities.

In **Portugal**, the current resources used in vocational and professional intervention should steer individuals not only in an individual process but also in a social process. The intervention in the process of orientation will have, thus, to contemplate these two strands. It was found that many of the resources used in Portugal are appropriate to the population and to the student's needs, but many tests resources are already outdated, but also it would be appropriate to extend the existing resources and turn them into something more formal and regulated in the education system. It is demonstrated also as being advantageous that these resources could be made available in greater numbers and more diversified to meet the needs of students. Despite the existence of outdated material, the education professionals try to upgrade their tools and adapt them to the target audience. It is noteworthy that the resources used are applied only to the age group of 14-16, corresponding to the 9th grade.

On the other hand, in **Germany**, the developed 'Förderatlas zur Berufsorientierung in der Bildungsregion Paderborn' addresses school managers and career orientation coordinators in schools as well. It gives an overview of already existing and applied local best practice approaches in the field of career orientation. Moreover, the overall and guiding program 'KAoA' intends to introduce a statewide and obligatory transition system from school to occupation. It highlights four main spheres of activities to realize this goal:

- Career orientation and academic orientation
- Systematization of the transition from school to occupation and/or university
- Attractiveness of the dual system
- Need for local coordination and collaboration

The consideration of the above fields should help to have a sight on all learners and to support a successful start in occupation or the academic sector and, simultaneously, contribute to secure the competitiveness of enterprises. To achieve this aim, MAIS recommended that stakeholders, who are involved in this process, have to cooperate on a local level and undertake continuous efforts to improve the associated elements. MAIS declared five standard elements, which schools have to consider in order to fulfill their responsibilities regarding career and academic orientation:

1. Career and academic orientation as an integral part of individualized learning, and development as an obligation of all general secondary educational schools.
2. All subjects in secondary education stage have to support career orientation processes. This cross-curricular task has to be fixed in a school intern curriculum for career and academic orientation.
3. Schools have to facilitate possibilities that can be used by all students to gather experiences in the process of career and academic orientation according to their needs and skills.
4. Students with special needs will receive additional and specific standard elements which help them to detect and support their individual career path.
5. Schools have to establish continuous offers for career counselling and advice under consultation of parents, Employment Agency and further stakeholders.

Appropriate media formats and environments for engaging students at the different age groups

In **Ireland**, the main media formats and environments currently used to engage students include the written word (book, newspaper, etc.) or online such as www.careersportal.ie, a website that also has videos about careers and online career interest inventories. The strengths of the online format is that students engage very well with it and see it as appropriate for their age. Without this technology or access to it, often students may disengage from book-based work.

In **Cyprus**, though, there is a considerable amount of local youth organizations and associations aimed at providing information and counselling facilities targeting young people, such as the Youth Board of Cyprus. Additionally, the public and private universities and tertiary institutions in Cyprus offer career guidance on a regular basis to students above the age of 16. Moreover, all major towns in Cyprus provide private counselling and guidance services to the public. In general, the guidance is provided face to face via conferences, seminars, meetings, or over telephone conferencing with the expert, or online through articles, news about educational options, labor market's needs and tips for job interviews etc. Online counselling (e-counselling) is provided as well for students, who are familiar with the internet. For example, the prevention section of the Youth Board of Cyprus requires only to log in to the website and start chatting confidentially with a counsellor even for issues concerning career guidance and planning.

In a similar way, in **Lithuania**, the most common formats used for engaging students are seminars by guest trainers, career activities, career lessons, career days at schools, group and individual consultations. These formats meet the needs of the students as they are dynamic, innovative as they involve students in participatory activities and allows them to experience the methods and activities themselves. Lithuanian students that participated in the field-based research pointed out that they received most of their information about career guidance from their school's psychologist; from publications, such as "Kur stoti?" ("Where to apply?"), which provides comprehensive information about higher education institutions, current professions, requirements for applying for study programs; personality and interest assessment tests; and higher education fairs,

which provide the latest information about study programs, etc. Currently, the most used methods of informing, engaging, and educating students are individual consultations, excursions to companies, hands-on practice activities, short-term internships, board games, e-mail system, and the web page of the school.

In **Portugal**, currently, the means of dissemination that are being used are also new technologies (websites, social networks), group sessions using dynamic and playful resources and methodologies, study visits to companies, training centers, and professional job fairs and conferences. All these means of dissemination are exclusively offered to the age group between 14-16 years, corresponding to the 9th grade. The means of dissemination cited above, are existing media in Portugal that intend to steer in the best possible way the individual, but they are not enough. It can be said that these environments and dissemination formats are exhausted and very restricted, needing to expand horizons and involve each individual in the orientation process, in order for more information to exist, more time to digest the information and take effective decisions about school and the future. On the other hand, contact with the reality is always a factor of increased motivation, but the practical education's costs are high and may not be supported by the schools clusters.

In **Germany**, however, there is a wide variety of printed and online media on careers, training opportunities, study programs and labor market information accessible, as well as different kinds of self-assessment tools. Most of them are provided by the Federal Employment Agencies and are available for free in the BIZ in schools and online. The offered resources of the Federal Employment Agency contain brochures, publications by the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), annual reports, and online publications. In the field of online publications there are different resources which: a) have a considerable use in a national context and b) seem to be relevant and useful in the context of SELFIE.

- KURSNET: The portal for vocational training and further vocational training
- BERUFENET: Information on more than 6,300 occupations in Germany
- JOBBÖRSE: Job and applicant exchange of the Federal Employment Agency

- Abi: The Internet portal for secondary education; everything on the subject of career choice, study, vocational training and career
- Planet-berufe.de: Everything on the subject of vocational training
- BERUFE-Universum: The programme for self-study
- BERUFE TV: The film portal of the Federal Employment Agency

By choosing one of these sources, the user gets more detailed information. For example when using the website <http://berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de/berufe/> (BERUFENET) learners receive a lot of information about occupational possibilities.

Assessment framework to facilitate the measurement of attainment at all levels

In **Portugal**, evaluation is an integrated part of the teaching-learning process and there is a very wide space currently in the teaching process. However, there is no evaluation framework to facilitate the measurement of accomplishment of the activities of vocational and professional counselling and guidance.

On the other hand, in **Ireland**, the resources used for career planning/guidance are not currently evaluated on a formal basis. Career planning/guidance services provided on a public level are evaluated through the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills. This means that although this evaluation is effective, only some schools are evaluated and whilst there is a move towards school self-evaluation, it is a slow process.

Similarly, in **Germany**, there is no clear assessment framework to facilitate the measurement of attainment at the different levels. Schools are forced to write down a concept for career orientation under consideration of their given framework but, due to this specific development, it is very complicated to judge a measure in general. For example, the school inspection (in North Rhine Westphalia the Qualitätsanalyse) is an instrument / approach where external evaluators can assess the school in consideration of the given characteristics and quality backed up by data. The principal of the school has the (formal) responsibility to realize measures concerning career orientation and build up an appropriate network. In this context, the principal can nominate one or more

person(s) who will support this process and is/are responsible for the intern coordination. In addition, stakeholders like parents, learners, teachers, the Employment Agency, enterprises, and people from the public sector have the opportunity to evaluate the existing measures. From a formal point of view, schools can use statistics and rates/quotas of successful transitions from the school into the world of work or the higher education sector to evaluate their offers regarding career orientation.

In the private sector of **Lithuania**, sales numbers are used as an assessment method, while in the public sector measures such as surveys for parents, students, and various reports are used. There is no scientific committee for assessment of career education services in Lithuania. There are also no measures to assess currently used resources/methods, so the only possible way to improve the situation in this area would be to at least introduce such measures. Moreover, at schools, teachers use informal discussions with students to get an idea of how efficient and useful certain career activities are. Parents also provide feedback during teacher-parent meetings.

Last but not least, in **Cyprus**, the evaluation of the Counselling and Career Education Service of the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture conducted by a Scientific Evaluation Committee, revealed a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the counselling services and proposed some recommendations. The SWOT analysis indicated that the Counselling and Career Education Service in Cyprus is widely recognized for its significant role in the educational setting. Regardless of the limitations, there is a widely positive attitude towards the counselling services in the middle and upper schools. The staff is considered as highly qualified and professional regarding the international standards. Nevertheless, there are some limitations overshadowing these strengths. The weaknesses of the CCES concern the counsellors' work overload due to the blurred boundaries of their duties in schools and the insufficient use of the available resources. As a result, the quality of the counsellors' work is restricted.

Pedagogical supports for the induction of teachers and existing guidance experts into the new career planning subject arena

Career guidance counsellors in **Ireland** are required to hold a teaching qualification (which consists of a degree and a post-graduate or Master's degree in education) as well as further training in the field of career guidance. For some, this may mean a Master's qualification in Guidance, whilst others can hold a post-graduate diploma. The training can take one to two years, depending on the educational institution providing the training and covers areas, such as personal counseling skills and training, psychology, personality theory, career planning, and career guidance. As guidance counsellors in Ireland are required to perform a dual role of personal student counseling as well as teaching guidance classes and giving specialist career advice to senior students, the role has become more challenging and complex. There are large time constraints on their work. Their competence and expertise could be further improved and enhanced, if there were more support from within the educational system through increased resourcing and continuous professional development programs.

Likewise, in **Cyprus**, the counsellors, before being appointed, are expected to hold a first degree in a subject taught in secondary education and a post-graduate diploma or Master's degree in guidance and/or counselling from an American or British university, plus a one-year initial teacher training program at the University of Cyprus. In their evaluation, the Scientific Evaluation Committee proposed the following recommendations that would enhance the competence and expertise of the counsellors:

- Appropriate training in counselling and career education to graduates with a first degree in any subject is vital.
- A postgraduate training program in counselling and career education should be developed at a university in Cyprus.
- A research unit should be established alongside the proposed training program. There is the need for in-depth research in the counselling and career education field.
- A professional team consisting of psychologists, social workers, educational counsellors, and doctors should be formed to coordinate and collaborate with

counsellors, providing important information and developing special care for vulnerable groups in society.

- The content of the teacher training program should be reviewed to make it more appropriate to the future school counsellors' distinctive needs.

In **Portugal**, the guidance professionals (psychologists) have a degree, a Master's or post-graduation in the desired area and attend further training courses. The DGE (General Direction for Education) organizes seminars on sharing and suggestions of good practices at the level of vocational and professional guidance in the school context. This entity's mission is to ensure the implementation of policies concerning the educational component and didactics for pre-school education, of basic and secondary teaching levels and extra-school education, providing technical support for its formulation and monitoring and evaluating its implementation.

Schools, in **Germany**, are obligated to nominate a coordinator in the field of career orientation and guidance (StuBO). In a curricular decree the Ministry of Education and Training passes regulations concerning career orientation related to the following points:

- Aims, tasks, and organization
- Coordination on a regional level
- Cooperation between schools, career counsellors and universities
- Cooperation with youth welfare
- Particular hints regarding career orientation in the context of special needs education
- Industrial placements and practical phases in universities
- Qualification of teachers

The program 'Qualifizierung der Koordinatorinnen und Koordinatoren für Berufs- und Studienorientierung', is a central element to qualify career advisors and career orientation coordinators (StuBO) to strengthen career orientation at general-education secondary schools in NRW. The qualification courses should take into account:

- The experiences and previous knowledge of the StuBO
- The local context, activities, and foci

- The support of cooperation and networking
- The provision of an online platform, which contains material about all offered qualifications and possibilities for self-learning.

On the other hand, in **Lithuania**, a recommended job description for professional advisors working in CIPs (Career Information Point) includes requirements such as higher education diploma, preferably specializing as a career advisor; the ability to collect, manage, and provide every student with information about professions, qualifications, and their acquirement in higher education and vocational institutions, opportunities provided by the education system of Lithuania, institutions that provide career counseling, information systems and sources of career information; ability to initiate and organize various events in the area of career information, aiming to make students' career-choosing skills more rational and efficient; ability to cooperate with the school's administration, teachers, social pedagogue, school's psychologist, students' parents and work with them as a team; ability to communicate and collaborate with various social partners in a constructive manner.

Supports for the initial and continuous professional development of teachers addressing the integration of the tools currently available and the new tools to be developed

In **Ireland**, the professional development opportunities for career guidance counsellors are mainly provided through the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, the representative body to which each guidance counsellor pays a membership fee. They hold an annual conference with various speakers and workshops and also have regular local branch meetings. They also provide counselling supervision for all members through local groups. In addition to this, the National Centre for Guidance in Education provides some continuous professional development courses. The third level institutions and CAO hold annual open days and conferences also. Whilst these are all very positive and beneficial, some guidance counsellors cannot attend these events as they are not released to attend by school management due to time constraints and timetabling. This means that like guidance provision, the level of continuous professional development available to guidance counsellors can differ, depending on the school or the area.

In **Lithuania**, such professional development opportunities for career specialists are currently mostly provided by individual trainers, public institutions, or certain projects. Their success usually depends on every individual person's motivation and will to participate and engage in the activities. There are specialists who actively seek such opportunities and take advantage of them, but there are also specialists who do not put any effort to develop their skills, so the professional development highly depends on each individual specialist. The most valuable professional development opportunities would be those that aim to develop awareness, motivation and positive attitudes. There could be more improvement opportunities provided, for example by collaborating with the Lithuania's high education association for organizing general admissions or career coordinators, counsellors from other organizations. Also, a general, constantly updated web page for career specialists would help the improvement. Moreover, teachers almost unanimously expressed the opinion that there is a lack of professional development opportunities in the area of career education. According to them, the lack of time to actively pursue such development opportunities impact their lack of confidence in delivering career education activities, and therefore, the overall quality of such services.

In a different approach, the **Cyprus** Ministry of Education and Culture organizes on a regular basis educational seminars, trainings, and conferences for the professional development of the school counsellors. The subjects relate to education and gender, integrating immigrant students in secondary schools and in the labor market, and promoting respect for diversity in schools. There is, however, the need to provide further training in topics related to domestic violence and integrating new technologies in counselling since internet connection is considered essential, as the use of computers is as well considered to be necessary to complete the daily operations. Furthermore, in-service training, which includes seminars, training programmes and meetings in order to develop their knowledge on priority needs and labor-market trends should be continuously provided.

In **Germany**, according to the enacted curricular decree the Ministry of Education and Training schools have the opportunity to receive time compensation for the additional work regarding counseling and coordination in the context of career orientation. All teachers in secondary education do have the obligation to participate in the planning

and realization of a school and site-specific concept concerning career orientation. Schools have to consider career orientation and guidance explicit in the planning of further teacher training. Furthermore, the nominated advisors and career orientation coordinators receive appropriate qualification to fulfill their tasks. This further education is financially supported and funded by the MAIS (Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs), the ESF (European Social Fund of the EU) and the Federal Employment Agency. The realization lies in the responsibility of the foundation 'Partner für Schule NRW'.

On the other hand, in **Portugal**, in the current context, opportunities for professional development for these professionals are exhausted. Since the vocational and professional guiding process takes place at school level under the guidance of a professional psychologist, psychologists have in their basic training, knowledge and practices of vocational and professional guidance and counselling. However, the General Direction of Education promotes initiatives such as seminars on sharing suggestions of good practice, conferences, and workshops, intended as a punctual offer, little diversified. In addition, regularly, professionals tend to invest in their training at private level, looking for a bigger and better training offer In the Training Centres (Centres for Qualification and Professional Education).

Conclusion

Based on the information provided in the National Research Reports, even though the specifics in each partner country vary with respect to current practices of career guidance and counselling in schools, what prevails is the fact that more student-centered, updated, and hands-on resources need to be designed so as to fulfill the needs of the current market place and academic world. For this reason, the SELFIE partners will aim to create such resources as the Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced level, so as to bridge the gap that currently exists in the partner countries with respect to existing material and the needs of students, who should be trained to respond appropriately to the demanding needs of the professional world.