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Vocational Guidance Education in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe

European Commission

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN FULL-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

LUXEMBOURG

School year 2007/08

Education is compulsory for pupils between the ages of 4 and 16. The first two years are spent in pre-primary education, the following six years in primary education and the remaining three years in lower secondary education (*lycée général* or *technique*). The transition from primary education to secondary education is based on a recommendation. Pupils may choose different systems, sections and specialisations in general and technical secondary education.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Apart from the legal frameworks of the different services and their missions, Luxembourg does not have specific legislation defining the guidance strategy. In view of the conclusions of an analysis conducted by OECD experts in Luxembourg in June 2002, the current government introduced a synergy between educational guidance and vocational guidance as part of its reflection on the subject of lifelong guidance.

The law of 13 July 2006 concerning the reorganisation of the psychology centre thus defines two missions:

- to advise the minister on the initiatives to take in order to implement the provision of information and educational and vocational guidance to pupils, in particular as regards the activation of relations between the professional world and the educational world;
- to coordinate relations between the services and the external bodies whose duties include the provision of guidance and information to pupils.

Two structures have been established in this respect, namely the National Information and Guidance Commission for the first mission and the Information and Guidance Coordination Committee for the second.

Similarly, in the framework of recent European developments in the area of guidance (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network), a national forum was set up, whose mission is to propose a concept of modern guidance counselling based on individual development and not on selection, separation or matching. This forum will present a first report during the last quarter of 2008.

RESPONSIBILITIES

There are four active structures in the area of educational and vocational guidance, two of which depend on the Ministry of National Education and Professional Training, namely the Psychological and Educational Guidance Centre (CPOS) and Local Action for Young People (ALJ), and one on the Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research, namely the Centre

for Documentation and Information on Higher Education (CEDIES), with the fourth one being the Vocational Guidance Service (OP) of the Employment Office, under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

In order to provide adequate service, a close and ongoing collaboration exists between these institutions.

The field of activity of the CPOS with the Psychological and Educational Guidance Services (SPOS) in the schools and of the CEDIES is centred on guidance in a school or university environment. However, the interventions of the OP and the ALJ are not limited to vocational guidance or guidance provided to young people in a school environment, and include counselling and support provided to unqualified and unemployed people.

The agencies of the Employment Office and Vocational Guidance Service (ADEM-OP) are the main bodies within the framework of the vocational guidance measures established in the employment sector, aimed at adults and people with special needs.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

Vocational guidance education is not compulsory. However, certain *lycées* (from the 7th to the 9th year) have launched pilot projects in which up to two hours per week may be devoted to vocational guidance education. This programme is based on an educational approach to guidance providing young people with tools to allow them to discover the environment, to understand it better and to give meaning to their education. The objective or challenge is to help young people learn to find their way, individually and collectively, in an ambivalent, uncertain and increasingly complex world. Teachers are responsible for this programme with the support of school psychologists. The programme includes an initiation to work, observations of work situations, support from older pupils, and the realisation of personal projects.

OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITY/GUIDANCE SERVICES

In the framework of preparations for future career choices, a number of activities are organised for young people by the Psychological and Educational Guidance Services (SPOS) in collaboration with other stakeholders in the area of guidance, according to the population and the aim.

Traineeships within the framework of the curriculum

Apart from work placements which are part of the curriculum, traineeships as an introduction to the professional world may be organised for young people who must decide on a professional training project. After preparation in the classroom, the young people look for a company where they may become familiar with the professional world. These traineeships may last up to two weeks. During the traineeships, students remain in touch with the contact person at their school (teacher, instructor, etc). A report is made at the end of the traineeship.

These work placements may take various forms adapted to different populations.

Guidance services outside school

Following the same logic of preparation for a future career choice, a number of activities take place outside school and may or may not be included in teaching time.

The guidance services of the Employment Office and Vocational Guidance Service (ADEM-OP) assist young people in the formulation of their career plans and in their search for employment. The counsellors who work there organise information sessions or extracurricular courses about the professional world, for example. These activities may take the form of individual interviews, information activities in the Career Information Centre or in the offices of the OP, or information sessions in the classrooms.

For early school leavers, the Local Action for Young People service offers systematic individual support. This assistance is provided by qualified instructors and may take various forms, in particular individual guidance, the elaboration of a plan of action and training in job search techniques. As regards this last type of assistance, sessions are also organised with classes in technical secondary schools, with the collaboration of the OP.

The ALJ also collaborates with classes in technical secondary schools, where there is the highest concentration of the weakest pupils who are most at risk of unemployment, in order to carry out preventive actions.

QUALIFICATIONS OF GUIDANCE STAFF

In the schools

The staff of the Psychological and Educational Guidance Services (psychologists, social workers and qualified instructors) must have a university degree in psychology or education, without specific requirements for training in guidance or vocational counselling.

Teachers who collaborate in the area of guidance have introductory courses on the subject, in the framework of their ongoing training.

In other guidance services

The staff of the Employment Office and Vocational Guidance Service (ADEM-OP) are generally recruited according to conditions which apply to all state employees, and do not need special qualifications in vocational guidance. Some staff members nevertheless have higher education degrees in education or social science.

The ALJ staff are qualified instructors who have undergone specialised training as instructor/guidance counsellors during their initial training, or who have become specialised during ongoing training. Technical secondary school teachers are employed by the ALJ.

Generally speaking, guidance counsellors are not required to have special qualifications. Nevertheless, this aspect should be reviewed in the framework of the abovementioned policies.

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Certain cooperative efforts exist between schools, parents, former students, etc. but depend on individual initiatives. For example, employers and parents may get involved by presenting careers to pupils. These services take place in the framework of specific events or during the preparations for future career choices described above.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

The information published by public bodies on educational pathways and careers exists in the form of brochures, guides and websites. Publications are available, such as: '*What to do after the 9th school year*', *'What to do after the 6th school year'* and *'Upper secondary education'*, or for upper secondary students, *'Reports on careers'* and *'Higher education in…'.*

The Vocational Guidance Service has a wide range of documentation on studies and careers, including information from the German 'Berufsinformationzentrum'.

A database on careers (www.bif.lu), financed by the Ministry of National Education and supported by trade associations, is accessible in German and French. It contains a multicriteria search engine on training and existing careers.

Information is also provided by trade associations and the University of Luxembourg.

The majority of this information is accessible on the Internet.

Internet references

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www.cpos.lu

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3. Eurybase; Eurydice.
4. Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap. OECD 2004.