



# **Non-Vocational Adult Education in Europe**

**Executive Summary of National  
Information on Eurybase**

**Working Document**

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## FOREWORD

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The present general survey of national policies in the area of adult education was completed in response to a request made by the European Commission to the Eurydice network at the end of 2005. The aim was to provide information for the preparation of the Communication from the Commission, which was adopted in October 2006 under the title of *Adult learning: it is never too late to learn*. A comparative summary of national policies in force allowed a better understanding of the different national contexts, their common and characteristic points, and the challenges they face.

This summary is structured around approximately ten key topics, including funding, target groups, accessibility, organisation, content, qualifications, quality, guidance and teacher training. It focuses on the (non-vocational) education/training policies implemented within formal education systems.

This analysis was above all founded on basic information updated each year for all levels of education, including adult education. The information is presented as a database organised according to country (Eurybase), and is available on the Eurydice website. Other information, gathered and updated regularly by Eurydice (e.g. *Structures of education, vocational training and adult education systems in Europe*), was also used. A special data collection was organised at the beginning of 2006 to cover certain specific topics which were not considered in the abovementioned work, as well as to compensate for a lack of basic information on certain countries.

The national units in the Eurydice network gathered all the necessary information at national level, and then validated the comparative summary. Generally speaking, the work carried out by Eurydice focuses on formal education systems, from pre-primary to higher education. Prior to this summary, adult education had not yet been the focus of a specific analysis by the network. In order to benefit from in-depth knowledge of the subject, the European unit, which was responsible for drafting the comparative summary, collaborated with Helen Keogh, an external expert, who took on this task. Exchanges took place with the Commission throughout the development of the analysis, providing those responsible for the Communication adopted in October 2006 with solid grounds for reflection.

The European unit would like to thank the national units in the Eurydice network for meeting such tight deadlines and overcoming considerable obstacles at times in order to gather the required information. The EEU would also like to thank Helen Keogh for sharing her knowledge of the issues examined as a result of many years of experience, and for adapting to the limits imposed by the comparative methodology used by Eurydice.

Patricia Wastiau-Schlüter  
Head of the Eurydice European Unit



## INTRODUCTION

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### Context and scope

The subject of this executive summary is *non-vocational adult education* (henceforth NVAE) in the countries in the Eurydice Network, with the exception of Turkey. NVAE takes place in a broad range of settings within a lifelong learning framework.

Lifelong learning has been defined <sup>(1)</sup> as ‘all learning activity undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective’. Within this framework NVAE is adult education as both social policy and social movement and comprises adult learning – formal and non-formal – not *directly* linked to the labour market. Formal NVAE as an equity and redistribution measure is generally provided in or through formal education and training institutions for adults who left uninterrupted initial education *without* mainstream school or other qualifications and who now wish to gain these qualifications in later life. Formal NVAE, particularly at lower and upper secondary levels, is generally publicly funded as a form of ‘continuing’, ‘further’ or, to use a deficit model, ‘second-chance’, ‘palliative’, ‘recovery’ or ‘compensatory’ education. In the majority of countries *non-formal* NVAE is adult learning as social movement and socio-educational activity without a *direct link* to the labour market, generally not requiring specific qualifications to enter and engaged in by the learner for personal, social, civic and cultural purposes. It may take place in education and training institutions, but, by and large, takes place outside and alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. Non-formal NVAE does not typically lead to formalised certificates.

NVAE is characterised by its heterogeneity. It covers a wide range of continuing education provision for adults with a wide range of structures, priorities, aims, learning content, organisational forms, delivery methods, duration and learning outcomes. Nomenclature for NVAE as institutionalised and organised learning and teaching processes for adults without a *direct* link to the labour market varies enormously from country to country. Appendix 1 sets out examples of nomenclature used across the review countries.

It is recognised that making clear-cut distinctions between adult learning for vocational and non-vocational purposes is contrary to the general trend towards holism in Europe and that, in practice, the distinction between vocational and non-vocational is increasingly blurring as vocational and non-vocational learning experiences are increasingly overlapping. It is also acknowledged that adults do not observe these neat administrative distinctions when they take up a learning opportunity. Their goals do not necessarily coincide with the goals of the funding body or provider and they frequently achieve unplanned or unanticipated outcomes and applications from learning. Moreover, a significant feature of the knowledge society is the links between all aspects of learning – formal, non-formal and informal – done by individuals, enterprises, communities and regions. In addition, the use of a negative term defining a phenomenon by what it *is not* rather than by what *it is*, is not entirely satisfactory.

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<sup>(1)</sup> European Commission (2001) Communication from the Commission, COM (2001) 678 final, *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality*, p. 34. [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lll/life/communication/com\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lll/life/communication/com_en.pdf)



However, in late 2005 and early 2006 there was a number of reasons for drawing a distinction between vocational and non-vocational adult learning. Firstly, the review sought to emphasise NVAE in a context where, in practice, the majority of countries in the Eurydice Network appear to privilege work-related learning needs. Policy statements espouse an holistic approach to adult learning, stressing both economic and non-economic outcomes, but, in reality, policy implementation privileges the economic agenda, thus providing greater support for vocationally-oriented adult learning than for general adult learning. Secondly, in a context of many existing overviews of vocational adult learning throughout Europe, it was considered that an overview of NVAE would be a useful contribution to the European Commission's then proposed Communication on adult learning <sup>(2)</sup>.

### Sources and limitations

The main sources used for this executive summary on NVAE are the thirty-three national descriptions of education systems included on the Eurydice Eurybase database <sup>(3)</sup>. The summary also includes the responses to the supplementary general and bi-lateral questions posed to the Eurydice National Units and collected in December 2005. Thus the information is relevant for the year 2005-2006. Other sources are drawn upon to provide context and, where relevant, commentary on the information provided by the National Units.

The decision to focus on NVAE presented a number of challenges. Firstly, the author recognises that the concept of NVAE as used challenged a number of countries. The category of NVAE was not necessarily reflective of categorisations of adult learning provision on the ground in individual countries. The national information from many countries does not always draw a firm line between vocational and non-vocational provision and qualifications when describing 'second-chance' provision enabling adults to gain upper secondary qualifications in later life, as part of formal NVAE. Moreover, as has been pointed out, adults frequently employ their learning outcomes, including qualifications, for purposes not envisaged by funding bodies and providers.

Secondly, while formal NVAE for the acquisition of mainstream school qualifications is a familiar concept in all the countries under review, non-formal NVAE varies significantly from country to country. The majority of national descriptions on Eurybase present limited information on non-formal NVAE. In many cases the information is not systematically gathered at regional or national level. Moreover, NVAE in the tertiary sector gets limited coverage in Eurybase and is not covered in this summary <sup>(4)</sup>.

Thirdly, for historical, political-educational and resource reasons, in a number of countries public adult learning opportunities are at a low level of provision and the main focus is on 'second chance' formal opportunities for young early school leavers. In other countries the main and, indeed, at times only focus of publicly funded adult learning opportunities may be vocational training with the result that some national providers found themselves describing adult learning activities that may not have always fitted neatly into the category of NVAE. A working session with all Eurydice National Units sought to clarify the concept of NVAE prior to the issue of supplementary questions, but the author recognises that

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<sup>(2)</sup> European Commission (forthcoming 2006) Communication from the Commission, *Adult learning: It is never too late to learn*.

<sup>(3)</sup> Available at [www.eurydice.org](http://www.eurydice.org)

<sup>(4)</sup> An extensive report on university continuing education in twenty-nine European countries was produced in 2003 by the THENUCE (the European Thematic Network in University Continuing Education) project funded by the European Commission from 1996 onwards. See Osborne, M. and Thomas, E. (2003) (eds.) *Lifelong learning in a changing continent. Continuing education in the universities of Europe*. Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE). Information on university lifelong learning (ULLL) is available from EUCEN (European Universities Continuing Education Network) at [www.eucen.org](http://www.eucen.org).

information more related to vocational adult learning than NVAE may have 'got through' in the case of a small number of countries. However, in what is the first summary of the national descriptions on adult learning in Eurybase, it is believed that such instances are not numerous.

Fourthly, the term 'adult' is complex with various cut-off points for who is considered an adult with the right to participate in adult education. For example, in Portugal anyone aged 15+ is considered eligible to participate in adult education. The age at the end of compulsory schooling is considered a starting point for adult education in Ireland (16) and in the United Kingdom (16, but more generally thought of as 19). In Spain <sup>(5)</sup>, Lithuania <sup>(6)</sup>, Poland <sup>(7)</sup>, Slovenia and Slovakia, the minimum age for entry to adult education is 18. In Denmark the age for entry to formal adult basic general education is 18 but an individual aged 17½ may enter a folk high school. The minimum entry age is 20 in Austria and Sweden.

Finally, the national statistics on NVAE supplied in the national descriptions are not harmonised. Different parameters and different interpretations of what constitutes adult learning give rise to problems of comparison. Moreover, such statistics as are supplied do not give any real sense of the relative *volume* of NVAE in individual countries. Accordingly, to provide a general context for the executive summary, participation figures across European Union Member States and beyond are provided in Appendix 2 <sup>(8)</sup>. The figures indicate that the percentage of the working age population who participated in education and training in the 4 weeks prior to the survey in 2005 amounted to 10.8 %. There is considerable variation around this mean, from 1.1 % in Bulgaria, 1.6 % in Romania and 1.8 % in Greece to 34.7 % in Sweden. The Nordic countries <sup>(9)</sup>, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, show the highest lifelong learning participation rates in 2005.

In the interests of providing a sense of the breakdown in participation between the different types of adult learning, attention is drawn to the second footnote in Appendix 2 where it is pointed out (as per the original document) that data used for assessing the benchmark refer to a 4-week period of participation (Labour Force Survey 2004 <sup>(10)</sup>) and that if a longer period were used, rates would be higher. Eurostat data from the Labour Force Survey *ad hoc* module on lifelong learning carried out in 2003 (referring to a 12-month period) show a participation rate of 42 % (4.4 % in formal learning; 16.5 % in non-formal learning and nearly one European out of three declared having taken some form of informal learning).

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<sup>(5)</sup> Exceptionally, people over 16 who have a contract of employment that would prevent them from attending mainstream education institutions or are high performance sportspeople may attend formal NVAE.

<sup>(6)</sup> There is a minimum entry age of 16 for 'second chance' education.

<sup>(7)</sup> Compulsory schooling ends at 16 and compulsory education at 18.

<sup>(8)</sup> Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe – 2006 *Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission* on progress under the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme. Council document 2006/c79/01, pp. 17-18.

[http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c\\_079/c\\_07920060401en00010019.pdf](http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c_079/c_07920060401en00010019.pdf)

<sup>(9)</sup> Nordic countries include Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway.

<sup>(10)</sup> Eurostat (2005) Statistics in focus, Population and social conditions 9/2005 'Labour Force Survey, Principals results 2004'. Luxembourg: Eurostat. <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>



## MAIN FINDINGS

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### 1. POLICY, LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORKS

It is evident from the national information that in the review countries the concept of lifelong learning is operating as a vision, a conceptual framework for policy-making in relation to education and training and a guiding principle for provision and participation across all learning contexts. Within the framework of lifelong learning many countries are striving to increase the quantity and quality of adult learning and to ensure compatibility and complementarity between initiatives. Adoption of a lifelong learning approach has important implications for structures, the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, the entitlements of individuals, the provision of learning opportunities, the overall quality of provision and the recognition of learning.

#### Policy framework

The European Union provides direction for national orientations within a framework which fully respects the responsibility and autonomy of Member States to develop their own education and training systems. Within this context, all countries provide evidence of the impact of the Lisbon Agenda on their policy priorities and the agenda is specifically named as a policy compass by a number of countries (for example, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Latvia, Malta, Poland). It is clear that the *Education & Training 2010* work programme is driving developments in all countries. Many countries have now developed lifelong learning policy statements, strategy documents or national action plans. Others have put framework legislation in place (for example, Greece, Spain, France and Romania). But the emerging lifelong learning policies show differences in, for example, the emphasis placed on the social dimension of policy, a situation characterised by an emphasis on a knowledge economy rather than a knowledge society. The latter includes the former but encompasses broader social, cultural and political goals for individuals and societies. Some countries (for example, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway) appear to be striking a positive balance between the two approaches and are making strong advances on implementation.

NVAE policy-making is also being driven by national and/or international reports and national/regional needs analyses and resultant priorities. Specific drivers include democratic values and the liberal ideal; demographic trends; productivity levels linked to skill levels of the population; unemployment levels; identified gaps in adult learning provision; a recognised need to address standards in education and training; participation levels in education and training; priority target groups; priority learning areas; high differentials between social groups and, mainly in the new Member States, ESF funding priorities and criteria. Appendix 3 details the key policy drivers indicated by individual countries.

NVAE is the least regulated section of the overall education system. Multiple partners have a stake in NVAE policy-making and implementation, including ministries, regional governments, local governments, social partners, public providers, non-governmental organisations and private for-profit providers, all frequently operating from different values, objectives and approaches. Depending on the point-of-view, this diversity constitutes a 'rich mosaic' or a 'confusing mélange'. Clearly, maximisation of investment will depend on co-ordination and coherence in policy-making and implementation. While governments appear to be aware of the need for reform to achieve this end, the actual policy, legislative and administrative frameworks to deliver co-ordination and coherence are not widely established.

Public policy has to create the frameworks – legislative, administrative, financial, institutional, learning, informational, qualifications and quality – needed to motivate adults to engage in learning<sup>(11)</sup>. In addition, NVAE policy has to be made in the context of a wide range of other policies, for example, employment, health, training, welfare. The social partners and civil society are being increasingly recognised as partners in the process and their involvement ranges from consultation to participation in formal structures at national and/or regional levels. Social partners also exert influence on overall adult learning policy through the collective bargaining process.

Effective policy frameworks operate as levers to increase the quantity and quality of adult learning. However, key limitations in policy-making across Europe include: a lack of focus on adult learning overall; the fragmentation of policy-making across many government departments; limited resources to implement policy on any significant scale and limited monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation.

The Communication *Making a Europe Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* characterised partnership between adult learning stakeholders as the key building block of lifelong learning. The midterm review of the Lisbon Agenda<sup>(12)</sup> called for more connected thinking and for policies that address multiple economic and social issues – in particular, policies that promote knowledge and learning alongside social opportunity and labour market flexibility. In addition, the most recent review of progress on the *Education & Training 2010* work programme emphasises the key importance of co-ordination and coherence<sup>(13)</sup>. The review laments the fact that ‘such forms of governance are not widespread’.

Nevertheless, the national information for a number of countries reveals a general thrust towards co-ordination and coherence across adult learning structures; management; provision; qualifications. This involves inter-ministerial, inter-institutional and inter-organisational co-operation at national, regional and local levels for the development of enabling frameworks. Activities point to a thrust towards systemic cross-sectoral policy-making in the interests of creating an overall lifelong learning system. Such activities include: policy statements (for example, Latvia); national action plans (for example, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Netherlands, Austria); master plans (for example, Slovenia); national strategies (for example, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Sweden) and qualifications frameworks (for example, Ireland, United Kingdom).

## Legislative framework

In the majority of countries no single piece of legislation provides the legal framework for NVAE. Statutory measures promoting adult education are integrated into various laws, decrees and ministerial resolutions. Thus, countries have legislated for adult learning as part of legislation on education in general, on higher education, on qualification systems, on quality assurance, on employment, on welfare, on health. This legislative approach may be positive or negative, the former when it is the result of a systemic view of adult education as a key element of the overall education system, the latter when it arises from adult education being merely ‘tagged on’ to general education legislation. The absence of a comprehensive

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<sup>(11)</sup> Jones, H. C. (2005) Lifelong Learning in the European Union: whither the Lisbon Strategy? *European Journal of Education* Vol 40, No 3, 2005.

<sup>(12)</sup> European Commission (2005) Communication to the Spring European Council, COM (2005) 24, Mid-term Review of the Lisbon Agenda – Working together for growth and jobs: a new start for the Lisbon strategy. [http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005\\_024\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005_024_en.pdf)

<sup>(13)</sup> Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe – 2006 Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission on progress under the ‘Education & Training 2010 work programme’ Council document 2006/c79/01, p. 8. [http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c\\_079/c\\_07920060401en00010019.pdf](http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c_079/c_07920060401en00010019.pdf)

specific legislative framework for adult education may make it vulnerable, particularly at times of budgetary constraints. When adult learning provision and financial and other supports for adults to resume and/or continue their learning – and, indeed, *entitlements* to supported learning opportunities – are not protected by law, adult learning tends to be the first area of education to attract cutbacks by national and regional authorities.

Recent developments in the specific legislative framework for NVAE point to a number of trends across the review countries. The bulk of the legislation involves a thrust towards co-ordination, coherence and, indeed, integration of policies, structures, financing; provision and qualifications. It is not always entirely clear from the national information whether the adult learning legislation refers to vocational or non-vocational adult learning, or both. In addition, it is not always clear if what is clearly adult education legislation refers to formal or non-formal learning, though, in general it is more likely to be the former as non-formal NVAE is weakly regulated in the majority of the review countries.

A majority of countries have put in place specific legislation or other national frameworks for formal and/or non-formal NVAE (for example, Belgium [the three Communities], Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Norway). In many countries formal NVAE is included under general legislation on the education system and in specific legislation on tertiary education, open education, qualifications and quality. Legislation integrating all aspects of adult learning has been enacted in a number of countries (for example, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands (formal only), Romania, Finland, Sweden). A small number of countries (for example, Denmark, Lithuania, Sweden and Norway) have put in place specific legislation for non-formal NVAE or liberal education.

## **Administrative framework**

Administrative structures within a country are critical to achieving the co-ordination and coherence essential to deliver quality services, prevent duplication and overlap and avoid confusion among learners and providers.

Co-ordination at national and/or regional ministry level and decentralisation are the two main administrative approaches adopted to promote and enhance overall co-ordination and coherence in formal NVAE.

In general, in the majority of countries no single ministry has a monopoly of responsibility for adult learning. Responsibility for policy and provision in formal NVAE may be that of the education ministry or of combined education and employment ministries. Welfare ministries are frequently involved in income maintenance for individuals who take up learning. In non-formal NVAE the role of ministries other than education ministries is strongest where there is less common provision of general core funding grants for non-formal adult education (for example, in Ireland, Spain, Portugal). To address potential fragmentation and duplication and to move towards an overarching lifelong learning framework, many countries have established co-operative models of working through a range of concrete inter-ministerial structures and mechanisms to promote co-ordination so as to maximise investment in adult learning. 'The undeniable tendency for articulation between the education and vocational training systems' is how Portugal describes the phenomenon of a systemic approach to adult education and training within the broader education and training system.

In the review countries there is a growing emphasis on the principle of subsidiarity whereby authority for decision-making is located as close as possible to where education and training actions are taken. Administrative structures to support decentralisation of policy-making and implementation to sub-national levels of authority is generally considered a key strategy in enabling co-ordinated and coherent

provision for adult learning. Decentralisation is seen as increasing efficiency and effectiveness through devolution of decision-making to where the policies will be implemented and through affording funders, organisers and providers greater autonomy to co-operate in identifying and meeting local needs. Decentralisation may also be viewed as evidence of a growing commitment on the part of national governments to management of performance and outcomes as opposed to administration and control.

Two main forms of decentralisation are in evidence in the review countries, viz.,

- *sharing of responsibility* for policy making and implementation with regional and local authorities [for example, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Finland, Sweden) and
- a *federal or devolved decentralisation* where responsibility for policy making and implementation is devolved to the members of the federation while national governments may set some national objectives (Belgium, Germany, Austria).

Administrative structures in a number of countries fall outside or between these two main forms of decentralisation. For example, in Spain the central government establishes a framework for adult learning and each Autonomous Community has the authority to specify its development or to implement it within their field of autonomy. This constitutes a system which is not exactly a sharing of responsibility nor a federal decentralisation. The UK Government has devolved some of its powers, including responsibility for education, to the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland, and (when it is in operation) Northern Ireland whilst retaining legislative powers for education in England. Responsibility for policy making and implementation is shared between these administrations and local authorities.

Several countries have transferred responsibility for NVAE to municipalities or other local level authorities. The central authority retains responsibility for some or all of policy development, national goals, targets, and quality assurance and in many cases the municipalities or counties co-ordinate the provision of adult education. In Denmark, for example, the Adult Education Reform 2001 established a shared responsibility for adult education between state, regional and local government. In Portugal, Finland, Sweden and Norway, the municipalities implement adult education policy. In Hungary, there is an enhanced role for the regions in relation to adult education since the Act on Adult Education 2001. In France, the regions and communes are involved in adult education, either directly by promoting various forms of action, or indirectly by funding existing organisations and associations. In Greece, the activities of the Adult Education General Secretariat have been decentralised. In the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Scotland), local education authorities (part of local government) are charged with procuring adequate provision for the adult education that falls outside the remit of Further Education colleges, usually non-formal NVAE that does not lead to formal accreditation

Parallel developments are occurring in the federal systems. In Austria more responsibility is being devolved to regional level and the adult learning resources of the *Länder* are increasing. In Belgium the communities' responsibilities include cultural matters, education and language. In Germany, the activities of the State in the field of continuing education are restricted to laying down principles and to issuing regulations relating to the organisation and financing of adult learning. Such principles and regulations are enshrined in the legislation of the federal Government and the *Länder*. State regulations are aimed at establishing general conditions for the optimum development of the contribution of continuing education to lifelong learning.

The creation of a national/regional co-ordinating body for NVAE is in evidence in a number of countries. Appendix 4 presents examples of such bodies in a number of countries. Such bodies bring together adult learning stakeholders, including government ministries, social partners, representative of statutory providers, learners and non-governmental interests in adult learning, especially non-formal NVAE, with a view to increasing participation in and raising the quality of, adult learning through ensuring collaboration between a wide range of partners. Generally these bodies represent vocational education and training or NVAE or a combination of both. Such bodies have policy-making and implementation, policy co-ordination and/or policy advisory roles. Depending on their status and level of autonomy, they may establish targets, mobilise resources, motivate adults to learn, co-ordinate qualifications or promote quality.

In Germany, for example, the Concerted Action Campaign for Continuing Education was established by the federal Ministry of Education in 1987 as a platform for communication and co-operation between all the stakeholders – statutory and non-statutory – active in the area of continuing education. In July 2004 the Federation and the *Länder* adopted a joint strategy for lifelong learning in Germany. The strategy aimed at demonstrating how learning can be encouraged and supported for all citizens of all ages and at all stages in their lives; this takes place at different locations and teaching is offered in various forms. The strategy is oriented around the various phases in person's life, ranging from early childhood to old age, as well as around key elements for lifelong learning that represent main development focuses. Within this framework, realistic prospects are to be developed for the long-term that build on the existing educational structures, activities and experiences and define a structured framework for lifelong learning that is flexible and open for the necessary continuous development. Development focuses in this strategy are: inclusion of informal learning; self-guidance; development of competences; networking; modularisation; learning counselling; new learning culture/popularisation of learning and fairness of access.

With its programme 'Learning Regions – providing support for networks', the Federal Ministry of Education and Research promotes regional co-operation and networking. The objective is to bring together important players from different educational sectors in order to jointly develop new offers for lifelong learning within the scope of a national strategy. This includes:

- general and vocational schools; institutions of higher education; funding agencies; institutions offering out-of-school education and off-the-job or inter-firm training; trade unions and industry training organisations; adult education centres; education funding agencies of the churches; commercial providers and other educational institutions
- companies, chambers and business development organisations
- education counselling institutions, youth authorities; employment offices and other bodies
- cultural and socio-cultural institutions
- teachers and learners.



## **Co-ordination and associations in non-formal NVAE**

The growing co-ordination and coherence agenda visible in formal NVAE does not necessarily extend to non-formal NVAE. In many countries support for non-formal NVAE comes from a range of government ministries including health, welfare, community development, agriculture etc. and, in general there is little evidence of co-ordination or coherence. However, some examples of co-ordination of non-formal NVAE do emerge. For example, in Belgium (the three Communities) responsibility for non-formal NVAE policy is located within the Department of Culture. The role of non-formal education providers in promoting democratic participation and strengthening social cohesion is considered of crucial importance. The Flemish Decree of 4 April 2003 aimed to restructure the sector and improve coordination and transparency among the wide range of providers. At the operational level, in the Flemish Community the non-governmental providers are coordinated by SOCIUS, a publicly supported information centre for socio-cultural work.

In Finland, the capacity of civil society to meet the demands of current life was recently reviewed through a policy programme for citizen participation. As a result, the role of lifelong learning which supports active and democratic citizenship will be strengthened in schools, adult education and civic and political activities.

In many countries, non-formal NVAE providers have formed national representative associations and networks which are frequently funded by national, regional and/or local authorities. Such associations and networks contribute to policy-making at national and regional levels; organise national and regional events; provide training for providers and tutors; promote quality provision; develop materials; carry out research and participate in European co-operation projects, principally under the Grundtvig Action. In Estonia, for example, the public funding allocated annually to non-formal adult education is distributed through the Estonian Non-formal Adult Education Association, an umbrella organisation of over seventy providers in Estonia.

Many of associations and networks are members of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) and some are members of the European Prison Education Association and the European Adult Education Research Association (ESREA). Examples of national/regional representative associations are set out in Appendix 5.

## 2. FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Since 2000 a series of publications from the European Commission has focused on the subject of financing education and training in the Member States. The *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* <sup>(14)</sup> (2000) calls for a significant increase in investment in lifelong learning. A Commission Communication in 2003 <sup>(15)</sup> calls for higher and more efficient investment in education and training. The mid-term review of progress towards the Lisbon goals <sup>(16)</sup> calls for the urgent deployment by Member States of more effective and efficient investment in human resource development.

Within a context of public financing of adult learning a number of key balances – and potential imbalances – needs to be addressed by public authorities. Firstly, the balance between funding human resource development (for economic reasons) and funding what has been termed human potential development (for non-economic reasons) is critical in the case of NVAE which is not *directly* linked to the labour market. Theoretically, the majority of countries support both endeavours, but in practice the bulk of funding goes to adult learning directly geared to the labour market. The balance between supply side and demand side funding is also an important balance to be addressed. A lifelong learning approach involves a shift from a focus on the supply side of adult learning to a focus on the demand side. In other words the adult is placed at the centre of the adult learning endeavour and this shift of focus may be reflected in supply side financing measures which aim to stimulate investment by enterprises and individuals.

There is a need to achieve a balance between supporting a relatively small number of higher skilled individuals and supporting a greater number of low-skilled individuals. Participation in adult learning can be a double-edged sword that exacerbates educational inequalities due to the so-called ‘Matthew effect’ <sup>(17)</sup> whereby individuals with the highest levels of initial education and training are the most likely to take up education and training after the completion of initial education. Low-skilled individuals tend to fare worst in a scenario of under-investment by public authorities in adult learning.

Another balance to be addressed is that between investment in adult learning as a productivity enhancement mechanism and adult learning as a redistribution and equity mechanism. This is the balance between economic and non-economic goals. Finally, a key balance is that involved in the levels of investment in adult learning by the different stakeholders. Many countries are exploring ways and means of promoting stakeholder co-financing of adult learning with a view to spreading the cost and risk of investment (for example, Denmark, Germany).

Financing for NVAE comes from a wide range of sources, viz., public authorities, enterprises, non-governmental organisations (NGOs <sup>(18)</sup>) including civil society organisations (CSOs) and individuals. There is a recognised need for the state to adopt more than a general steering, managerial, co-ordinating role

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<sup>(14)</sup> European Commission (2000) Commission Staff Working Paper *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*. SEC (2000) 1832, p. 12. <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lll/life/memoen.pdf>

<sup>(15)</sup> European Commission (2003) Communication from the Commission *Investing efficiently in education and training: an imperative for Europe*. COM (2002) 779/final. [http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002\\_0779en01.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_0779en01.pdf)

<sup>(16)</sup> European Commission (2005) Communication to the Spring European Council, COM (2005) 24, Mid-term Review of the Lisbon Agenda – Working together for growth and jobs: a new start for the Lisbon strategy. [http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005\\_024\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005_024_en.pdf)

<sup>(17)</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2003). *Beyond rhetoric: Adult learning policies and practices*, Paris: Author, p. 116.

<sup>(18)</sup> An NGO is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation, recognised as such legally and fiscally by the public authorities.

and to make public interventions in cases of market failure to guarantee learning opportunities for adults most at risk of unemployment and social exclusion. Such interventions serve as educational redistribution and social equity measures within a framework of NVAE as social policy. They are generally focused on compensatory measures to provide a 'second chance' to adults to achieve compulsory and upper secondary qualifications and on measures to reach the most vulnerable through literacy and basic education provision.

It is clear from the national information that public commitment to and investment in, NVAE differs between countries. In some countries (for example, Germany) the bulk of adult learning of all kinds is privately provided while in others (for example, Denmark, Finland, Sweden) public authorities are significant investors in adult learning, especially for individuals experiencing disadvantage. In Norway, public authorities are investors in NVAE together with private providers.

### **Financing formal NVAE**

Public funding of formal NVAE takes three forms in the review countries:

- transfers from central government to lower levels of government
- transfers directly from central government to providers
- transfers to stimulate the demand side by means of direct or indirect financial support to individuals through a wide range of mechanisms.

The majority of the review countries finance formal NVAE through funding or subsidising regional/local authorities which, in turn, provide direct supply-side funding to providers. Central government funds providers directly in a minority of countries (Ireland, Cyprus, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Iceland, Liechtenstein). In situations of financial constraints, public funding is normally used to support priority target groups to participate in formal NVAE on a full-time or part-time basis. Most formal NVAE does not require large scale investment as many of the participants can be accommodated in mainstream schooling provision at the same time as young people or in shift, evening or weekend classes. Given the role of formal NVAE as 'compensatory' and redistributive, the majority of individuals do not pay fees to participate in learning opportunities to raise their education levels. For example, in Denmark, public finance for adult learning is focused on those with low levels of educational attainment. Those with higher educational qualifications are more likely to have to finance their studies themselves and to study on their own time. In Lithuania, for example, provision is free of charge to all participants who seek primary, lower and upper secondary education qualifications. Throughout the review countries demand-side financing of individuals is also employed to stimulate demand (see Appendix 6).

In the context of national goals and targets for adult education, devolved financing systems raise questions for central governments about accountability and the quality of regionally and locally funded provision

### **Financing non-formal NVAE**

The field of non-formal NVAE has been characterised as 'very dispersed and weakly institutionalised' with no precise documentation of public investment in non-formal NVAE delivered by NGOs <sup>(19)</sup>. Non-formal NVAE which takes place within formal public educational institutions and, more frequently, outside such institutions in a wide range of non-governmental organisations, tends, on the whole, to be self-financing. With the exception of socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who are generally supported

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<sup>(19)</sup> Bélanger, P. and Bochynek, B in collaboration with Farr, K-O. (2000) *The Financing of Adult Learning in Civil Society: A European Exploratory Study*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, pp. 142-143.

by public funding or private funding from bodies such as foundations and charities, most individuals pay in full or in part to participate in non-formal NVAE for social, cultural, political and personal development reasons.

The public financing of non-formal NVAE provided outside of formal institutions in a range of non-governmental organisations including civil society organisations (CSOs) is 'a complex reality' <sup>(20)</sup> which varies considerably across Europe. NGOs are being increasingly recognised as having a key role to play in non-formal NVAE for individual and collective development and for democratic citizenship and social inclusion. The range of providers is vast, from non-government organisations which are exclusively education providers to those which include education activities for the general public and/or for their own membership within a framework of wider social involvement. The former include large long-established publicly-funded providers in the Nordic countries, Germany and Austria (folk high schools, study associations, study circles) with provision of education opportunities as their main function. The latter include campaigning civil society organisations that include adult education in their wider social remit (for example, disability, environment, health, immigration, justice and peace issues). Within this range there are those that rely exclusively on public funds, those with mixed funding schemes and those that are entirely self-supporting.

The long tradition of public support in the Nordic countries is being maintained and diversified in 2006, while governments in the south and east of Europe are giving project-based funding to NGOs. Multi-source funding from a wide range of statutory, non-statutory, private, philanthropic and demand side sources is the norm in non-formal NVAE in the majority of the review countries.

Not surprisingly, this reality results in strengths and weaknesses, on all sides. On the plus side, NGOs may be in a better position to maintain ideological independence of their funders in a broad context of accountability for public and other funding. On the down side, there may be pressure to 'follow the funding' with consequent potential for mission drift and distortion. There may be a lack of security about continuity of funding, especially in situations where the provider is not in receipt of committed annual core funding for education activities. There may be a reduction in efficiency due to the time spent on making funding applications and reporting to funders. In addition, multi-source financing is not transparent and different funders have different accountability procedures. Examples of how non-formal NVAE is financed are set out in Appendix 7.

The reasons governments finance participation in non-formal NVAE vary. The Nordic countries are explicit in their intention to promote and support democracy, social inclusion and social cohesion through funding or heavily subsidising liberal adult education provided by folk high schools (day and residential), study associations and study circles. It is widely recognised that CSOs with campaigning and/or representative roles are by definition better placed than formal educational institutions to reach individuals and groups at a distance from formal or non-formal learning. Accordingly, in many countries they attract public funding to provide non-formal learning for particular, frequently 'at risk' target groups including individuals with literacy difficulties; parents with low education levels; individuals with a disability; individuals experiencing domestic violence; older adults; members of ethnic minorities; immigrants and the most marginalized in the society such as homeless people and individuals involved in substance abuse.

In Finland, an education ministry Working Group on the financing of non-formal adult education reported in Spring 2005 and legislation based on their findings was passed later in the year. The act strengthened folk high schools and prioritised citizenship education in the activities of the education associations.

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<sup>(20)</sup> Bélanger, P. and Bochynek, B in collaboration with Farr, K-O. (2000) *The Financing of Adult Learning in Civil Society: A European Exploratory Study*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, p. 133.

Depending on the kind of institution, providers of non-formal NVAE in Finland get 57 % to 65 % of their costs from public authorities.

In Denmark, in order to receive public funding, non-governmental educational institutions must meet criteria regarding non-formal 'popular enlightenment' or liberal education viz., free choice of topics by learners; universal access to learning and free choice of teachers.

It is interesting to note that there appears to be growing downward pressure on the level of public finances available for non-formal NVAE in a number of countries <sup>(21)</sup>. In addition, in many of the new EU Member States where the development of market economies and the rapid development of civil society demands new knowledge and new skills on the part of citizens, non-formal NVAE provision by NGOs is limited by lack of funding. For example, in the national information for Slovenia it is recognized that 'this type of education is systematically still not supported enough.' Interestingly, since 2003, a resident citizen of Lithuania has the right to apply to taxation authorities at the end of the tax year to have up to 2 % of his/her personal income tax transferred to non-formal and/or, indeed, formal NVAE institutions, thus giving these institutions the possibility of additional funding.

### **Demand-side financing – funding individuals**

Financial constraints are strong deterrents to participation for many individuals considering adult learning. This is particularly true in the case of low-income and low-skilled individuals. Moreover, it appears that, apart from specific priority target groups, the costs of learning are being increasingly transferred to individuals. In this context, financial mechanisms to motivate individuals (the demand side) to commit to learning on a full-time or part-time basis are a critical policy lever for governments.

Investment in adult learning is a risky business for all stakeholders in the endeavour. In the interests of offsetting and reducing the risk for any one stakeholder, the principle of stakeholder co-financing where as many as possible stakeholders share the burden of investment, is being increasingly promoted at all levels, supra-national, national, regional and local. The development of demand-focused financial policies, sometimes as part of collective bargaining agreements (for example, in Germany and France), has led to many models and formulae for financial incentives to stimulate the demand side in adult learning. In the case of 'at risk' adults such incentives need to go hand in hand with other supports including, for example, guidance; childcare; learning support to address structural, cultural, informational, dispositional and situational barriers to participation and to obviate the ubiquitous 'Mathew effect'.

Demand-led schemes may be funded by public authorities (central, regional, local); by social partners (including individual enterprises); or through mixed funding and there may be general or restricted availability. As a result of funding being channelled directly to the learner rather than to the provider beneficiaries are empowered to make individual learning choices within certain limitations, including the fact that almost all financial incentive measures apply only to formal NVAE (and mainly to vocational training). Demand side financing is predicated on the belief that the individual is well placed to choose his/her learning experiences.

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<sup>(21)</sup>- In the United Kingdom (England) a larger contribution in the form of fees from adult learners is expected to result in a decrease in the number of learners by some 300 000 individuals in 2005.

Source: From Country Updates, Minutes of Meeting of Grundtvig Working Group, November 2005.

## Incentives: active measures

Some of the demand-side incentives are passive measures, in that they recognise investment already made, others are active in that they aim to stimulate demand. The former include tax incentives while the latter range from general welfare measures including income maintenance, child/family allowances, childcare support, housing benefit, transport costs to specific financial aid to cover opportunity costs in the form of loans, grants, training bonuses, scholarships/bursaries, training vouchers, individual learning accounts. Active measures aim to stimulate adult participation in learning and take many forms summarized below.

**Income maintenance** through conversion of social welfare income to a training allowance based on the amount of unemployment benefits as part of the Adult Education Initiative 1997-2002 was successful in Sweden and in Ireland as part of the ongoing Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (a 'second chance' education programme). Training allowances are often topped up with family, childcare, travel, accommodation and other allowances.

**Individual training grants** and subsidies are employed in a number of countries (for example, Denmark, Germany, Ireland [post-secondary], Spain, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Poland [mostly for unemployed people], Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom [England, Wales and Scotland]).

**Training vouchers** which are in use in a number of countries (for example, Belgium [Flemish and French Communities], Germany, Italy, Austria) may be 'cashed in' to pay for a course of learning. The voucher is frequently usable over the lifetime of the individual and the provider redeems the specific value of the voucher from the voucher fund which may be financed by public authorities and/or the social partners.

Multi-source financing is also a feature of the **individual learning account** (ILA) approach, with the addition that the beneficiary also makes a financial contribution to the bank account which may only be used to fund learning. ILAs have been introduced in a number of countries (for example, Belgium [Flemish Community], Netherlands, United Kingdom [Wales – relaunched after having been withdrawn in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2001], United Kingdom [Scotland]).

In the United Kingdom (Scotland), the Individual Learning Account (ILA) Scotland scheme was launched in 2004 with an initial offer targeted at low income individuals. The ILA provides up to €300 per year for learners to fund a wide range of courses. An additional 'universal' offer was launched in 2005 to provide €150 per year for all adult learners, for accredited ICT learning up to SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) Level 5 or equivalent. ILA Scotland is administered through a personal virtual account. To encourage personal ownership of the process learners are required to contribute a minimum of €15 for each course they undertake.

**Paid educational leave** (PEL) as an indirect financial learning incentive to individuals has a long history in many of the review countries. In many countries the entitlement to PEL is laid down by law, by collective agreement or by both, while in others PEL is at the discretion of the employer. Universal entitlement to PEL is limited to only a few countries while in the majority of countries PEL is applicable to specific groups or categories of employees.

PEL arrangements vary greatly in terms of the basis of the entitlement; the beneficiaries; qualifying employment conditions; income maintenance conditions; employer discretion to give/withhold/defer consent; maximum duration of the leave; eligible participation and learning achievement; reinstatement rights and employer reimbursement mechanisms. In many countries PEL covers formal NVAE as well as vocational training and higher education. A critical issue is the extent to which the learning must be employment-related.

In Greece PEL applies to civil servants and teachers only and in Belgium (the three Communities) it applies only to the private sector. In the Nordic countries PEL applies to work-related learning and formal NVAE and to personal learning objectives and over the years uptake has been relatively strong in Denmark, Sweden and Norway compared to other European countries. In most countries uptake has been relatively low for a range of reasons to do with regulation, the reluctance of employers to grant leave and employees' concerns about career interruption.

Appendix 6 presents more complete information on ways in which direct and indirect supports to individuals are financed to participate in NVAE.



### 3. TARGET GROUPS – WHO IS LEARNING IN NVAE?

The need to increase participation rates in adult learning remains a major challenge for Europe, particularly in the southern European countries and the new EU Member States<sup>(22)</sup>. In 2004, at least 150 million adults in the then EU15 lacked a basic level of secondary education<sup>(23)</sup>, a situation that places them firmly within the target groups for formal NVAE which provides another chance to adults who left initial education with limited or no qualifications to gain lower secondary, upper secondary (general and vocational) and/or post-secondary qualifications in later life.

An average of 10.8 % of adults aged 24-64 in the EU25 participated in lifelong learning in 2005. These figures may be off-set to some extent by high upper secondary completion rates in many of the new members states. In 2005, Slovakia at 91.5 % had the highest share of young people aged 20- 24 with at least upper secondary qualifications and other countries (for example, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia) already had shares over 90 %. These completion rates mean that inflows to the number of adults without upper secondary qualifications are low in those countries. In addition, striving to reach the benchmark of at least 80 % of young people aged 22 with completed upper secondary education by 2010 will help to reduce to some extent the overall inflow.

While there are substantial cross-national differences in the incidence and volume of continuing education and training among adults<sup>(24)</sup>, there are also remarkable similarities across countries in the distribution of education and training within sub-populations<sup>(25)</sup>. In other words, the adults most and least likely to participate in adult learning are the same groups of people in all the review countries. There is wide ranging evidence that education is an important predictor of engagement and participation rates increase with levels of initial education, so the above figure of 150 million adults without a basic level of secondary education gives a measure of the depth of the challenge faced by countries in promoting take-up of adult learning opportunities among this group. Against this, there is evidence that raising the basic skills level of all individuals in a country to achieve a more equitable distribution of skills across the population can have a larger impact on overall economic growth than investing in improving the skills of selected groups of high skilled individuals<sup>(26)</sup>.

The majority of the review countries are targeting the adults least likely to participate in structured learning. Across the review countries this group consistently includes the following sub-groups: unemployed adults; older adults; adults in rural areas; adults with physical and sensory disabilities; adults with learning difficulties and disabilities; members of ethnic minorities; prisoners and ex-offenders; recent immigrants; adults generally experiencing economic and/or social disadvantage. Within these priority target groups, any one individual may, and frequently does, cross over a number of these categories and, thus, experiences multiple disadvantage.

<sup>(22)</sup> Allen, J. (2004) Adult Education through European Eyes. Paper delivered at Conference on *Adult Education: a future in Europe?* 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004, Brussels, Welsh Assembly Government, ELWa and European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning.

<sup>(23)</sup> Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe – 2006 *Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission* on progress under the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme. Council document 2006/c79/01, p. 4.  
[http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c\\_079/c\\_07920060401en00010019.pdf](http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c_079/c_07920060401en00010019.pdf)

<sup>(24)</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>(25)</sup> O'Connell, P. (1999) *Adults in Training: An International Comparison of Continuing Education and Training*, Paris: OECD/CERI.

<sup>(26)</sup> Coulombe, S., Tremblay J-F and Marchand, S. (2004), *International Adult literacy Survey, Literacy Scores, Human Capital and Growth across fourteen OECD Countries*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.



Within a context of growing consistency of European Union policy for asylum and immigration since the Treaty of Amsterdam <sup>(27)</sup> came into force in May 1999, immigrants <sup>(28)</sup> form a special target group for the majority of the review countries. The integration of immigrants into society is a major concern for European policy-makers, including education and training authorities, with a view to ensuring equality and preventing racial and ethnic discrimination. The national contexts are very diverse. Some countries having a long history of immigration, others have more recent experience of immigration and some countries have just begun to debate how their systems, including adult education, should respond to immigration <sup>(29)</sup>.

### Target groups in formal NVAE

In all countries there is a perceived need to provide 'second chance' learning opportunities as part of the ABC philosophy of adult education, viz., **a**nother chance, a **b**etter chance, a **c**ontinuing chance. Priority target groups for formal NVAE emerge explicitly or implicitly from: the rationale for policy-making; national and/or regional development strategies; explicit statements identifying priority target groups and/or the key learning activities publicly funded.

In relation to the target groups identified above, formal NVAE serves a number of purposes. It acts as a redistribution measure through the provision of learning opportunities for individuals through 'second chance' measures that equip them with good foundation education. It promotes inter-generational equity by giving older adults an opportunity to achieve the education levels open to young people. It gives adults a platform from which to participate in further education and training after they have achieved initial education qualifications. It functions as an up-skilling measure for economic, social and personal development purposes. It promotes social inclusion and reduces marginalisation. By its very nature, participation in formal NVAE to gain secondary education qualifications serves to preclude the impact of the 'Matthew effect'.

Experience from the review countries highlights the importance of setting participation targets. A number of countries have/had participation targets for formal NVAE, (for example, in Ireland [National Adult Literacy Programme], Spain [National Reform Plan], Finland [Noste Programme], Sweden [Adult Education Initiative 1997-2002], United Kingdom [strong targets to raise the skills levels of the general population]). In Belgium (French Community) participation in secondary level courses has grown by 25 % since 1994, up from 102, 371 in 1993-1994 to 126, 400 in 2002-2003. In Romania, the number of places in lower secondary education for adults financed through public funds is set by the government at 1.5 % of the total number of places in overall provision financed at that level.

Appendix 8 sets out the formal NVAE target groups specifically identified in the national information.

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<sup>(27)</sup> Articles 61 and 63 of the Treaty of Amsterdam. Denmark does not take part in the adoption of measures under these articles. Ireland and the United Kingdom may do so at their discretion in accordance with Article 3.

<sup>(28)</sup> By immigrants are meant adults who may or may not have been born in the country and both of whose parents were born abroad. They include citizens of third countries who emigrate for a variety of reasons, including economic and family reasons or because they are refugees or asylum seekers (From: Eurydice European Unit (2004) *Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe*. Brussels: Eurydice, p. 11). In general, the national information does not distinguish between immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers or migrants.

<sup>(29)</sup> Eurydice European Unit (2004) *Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe*. Brussels: Eurydice, p. 3.

## **Target groups in non-formal NVAE**

In many countries public authorities – education, training and other ministries – promote non-formal NVAE in the interests of the promotion and maintenance of democratic values; for community development; for the maintenance and development of social capital; for cultural expression; to promote social inclusion; to promote and support active citizenship; to attract ‘hard-to-reach’ adults to learning. Thus, theoretically, target groups for non-formal NVAE include the entire population in any country. Participation by particular ‘at risk’ adults is frequently financed by public authorities through public or non-governmental organisations. Participation by adults outside these groups is generally self-financed, fully in most countries and partially in the case of the Nordic countries.

The national information makes limited reference to target groups in non-formal NVAE, but some examples can be mentioned. In Denmark non-formal NVAE is open to everybody in the country in order to meet their needs of acquiring, updating, completing and widening their capacities, knowledge, skills, aptitudes and competences for their personal and professional development through the various types of both formal and non-formal education educational institutions. In Sweden a commission of inquiry to investigate participation in liberal adult education was appointed in 2002 to identify who does not participate and the reasons why.

Depending on its outcomes and its physical location, education provision for immigrants comes within formal and non-formal NVAE, more commonly the latter.

The Thessaloniki European Council in June 2003 stated that EU policy for integration of third-country citizens should include provision for education and language training. The integration of legal immigrants was a priority for the Brussels European Council in October 2003. Integration measures with an education component include introduction programmes, language training and civic, social and cultural education. It should be noted that many projects on the integration of immigrants have been funded through the Grundtvig Action of the Socrates Programme 2000-2006.

Publicly financed provision for immigrants is named in the majority of the review countries. A trend towards compulsory participation in language and cultural awareness provision is emerging (for example, in Belgium [Flemish Community], Netherlands, Norway).

## **4. ACCESS FRAMEWORK**

Formal NVAE is typically subject to various admission requirements, notably in terms of age and prior education attainment. Generally there are few admission requirements in non-formal NVAE.

### **Admission requirements for formal NVAE**

Actual admission requirements for formal NVAE vary considerably from country to country and from programme to programme within countries, regions, local areas and, indeed, within providers and institutions. As the Czech Republic national information states ‘unambiguous admission requirements can generally only be stipulated for courses of study leading to a specific qualification.’ However, given the goal of the majority of countries to remove or reduce barriers to participation for adults with the lowest skills and education levels, even seemingly fixed requirements are enforced as flexibly as possible.

### **Age requirements**

Minimum age requirements for entry to formal NVAE vary across countries from, for example, 15 years of age (for example Belgium [the three Communities – part time provision], Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Portugal [basic education]), to 16 years of age (for example, Ireland, Latvia, Norway) to 18 years of age (for example, Denmark, Greece, Spain [compulsory schooling ends at 16 and compulsory education at 18], Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Portugal [secondary education], Finland, Iceland). Within these age requirements many countries have additional requirements in relation to specific programmes within the general provision.

### **Prior education attainment**

In the majority of countries formal NVAE for a ‘second chance’ is open in theory to all adults without secondary education qualifications, including individuals active in the labour force. However, in situations of restricted resources, public financing of participation tends to be restricted to specific target groups including unemployed individuals, individuals with low basic skills; prisoners and ex-offenders.

In formal NVAE at secondary education levels the stated requirement of prior education attainment (in for example, Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Finland, Liechtenstein) has more to do with ensuring that the individual has the capacity to succeed in the course than to restrict entry. Where such educational requirements are not formally met, formal procedures to recognise and accredit non-formal learning are used in a growing number of countries to secure admission to the learning opportunity for the individual. In other countries informal recognition of prior learning through interview and guidance processes will ensure admission of the individual. In addition, where prior learning attainment is low, learning support in the form of parallel literacy, language and study skills provision will frequently be provided during the course of study.

### **Enrolment fees**

Full opportunities for free participation may not be open to all adults but a wide range of priority target groups are publicly supported to participate on a full-time or part-time basis. In keeping with the principle of encouraging participation, enrolment fees are not charged or are struck at a low rate. For example, no fees are charged in the following countries in the following situations: Bulgaria (in public schools providing primary and secondary qualifications), Czech Republic (in public schools providing primary and secondary qualifications), Estonia (basic and upper secondary general education at adult upper secondary schools as evening courses or distance learning), Ireland (achievement of qualifications

to post-secondary level in full-time courses), Spain (adult education in publicly-funded institutions), Italy (in territorial centres), Latvia (basic and upper secondary general education at evening (shifts) schools), Hungary (first vocational qualification; people under 22 years of age), Austria (in Schools for Employed People – mostly evening classes within upper secondary schools and colleges), Portugal (in public schools & in non-public schools with the legal status of a public school), Slovenia (for adults with incomplete elementary education), Sweden (adult education in municipalities), Norway (in primary and secondary education for adults). Nominal fees only are charged in Malta.

Limited information is provided on enrolment fees in non-formal NVAE. In general, non-formal NVAE organised by schools and colleges for social, cultural and personal development tends to be self-financing in a number of countries. In the Nordic countries non-formal NVAE outside of the formal education system in folk high schools (day and residential), study associations and study circles is generally subsidised by public funding to the providers while participants pay reduced fees. In many countries non-formal NVAE provided by NGOs is frequently free of charge to participants who come within priority target groups supported by public financing.

## 5. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The location of learning opportunities is a vital element in motivating and supporting adults to participate in learning. In this context, the institutional framework for the provision of NVAE, particularly formal NVAE, is critical.

### Formal NVAE learning sites

The majority of formal NVAE learning places are a physical presence, although the use of distance web-based provision is increasing. Formal NVAE is provided in a wide range of institutions in the review countries, including public schooling institutions for young people; public institutions specific to adults; non-governmental organisations; community-based settings and commercial providers. Face-to-face provision is offered on a full-time or part-time basis during the day, in the evening and/or at weekends. Web-based provision is available on an anytime, anywhere basis. It is recognised that institutional barriers can operate as strong deterrents to participation in structured learning for adults, particularly for adults with low skills levels who may have poor memories of initial education in schools. Thus, the debate about the most enabling locations for formal NVAE provision – mainstream schooling institutions for young people, public institutions specific to adults or less formal community-based organisations – continues, but not necessarily among public authorities in the review countries who, for the most part, appear to have taken pragmatic decisions informed mainly by resourcing issues about where to locate formal NVAE. Appendix 9 details a range of the learning sites for formal NVAE indicated in the national information.

### Non-formal NVAE learning sites

Non-formal NVAE takes place in a multiplicity of settings, in formal education institutions and in a wide range of non-governmental not-for-profit organisations including civil society organisations. The actual learning spaces are: education institutions such as public schools, colleges and universities; folk high schools, education associations, popular universities; centres attached to churches, trade unions, political parties; institutions attached to chambers, professional associations, enterprises, employer associations, commercial education and training enterprises; sites of civil society organisations; public and private museums and libraries; community, cultural and leisure centres; virtual spaces in the media and distance learning – the list could go on. It is clear that the spread of providers has not been mapped to any extent in the majority of the countries. For example, in Slovenia ‘the information on courses provided by civil society is not organised in a way that would allow generalisation’. This is significant in light of the findings of the 2003 Eurobarometer survey module on lifelong learning that respondents considered they learned more often in non-formal and informal settings than in formal education and training settings <sup>(30)</sup>.

The contribution of non-governmental organisations to adult learning in Europe is not a recent development. There is a long tradition in the Nordic countries and in Slovenia of democratic learning or popular enlightenment through large residential and day folk high schools, study associations (Poland) and/or study circles. Folk high schools are also active learning sites in Belgium (Flemish and German-speaking Communities), Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands and Austria. Non-formal NVAE has been taking place in church organisations, political parties, trade unions, and worker’ co-operatives since mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in northern Europe. In southern Europe the popular universities perform a similar function. In central Europe, in order to facilitate the present transition phase and involve the social actors in civil society countries are now adopting new policies in adult and continuing education.

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<sup>(30)</sup> Cedefop. (2003) *Lifelong learning: citizens’ views*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, pp.13-14. [http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/4038\\_en.pdf](http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/4038_en.pdf)

In recent years new types of NGOs are providing adult learning opportunities including women's groups; environmental associations; health associations; local cultural centres; solidarity groups; migrant associations; older citizens' associations. There is also an emerging trend in relation to vocational training being provided in learning sites run by non-governmental organisations that up to now have been used almost exclusively for non-formal learning for social, cultural and political development. For example, in Finland a number of non-formal adult education institutions and organisations will, in the future, have the right to provide vocational adult education.

The volume of adult learning provision provided by NGOs is not always indicated in the review countries but elsewhere there are estimates that anything from 10 % to 70 % of provision in some countries is thus provided <sup>(31)</sup>. Appendix 10 lists examples of non-formal NVAE learning sites.

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<sup>(31)</sup> Bélanger, P. and Bochynek, B in collaboration with Farr, K-O. (2000) *The Financing of Adult Learning in Civil Society: A European Exploratory Study*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.

## 6. ORGANISATION AND APPROACHES

In the CEDEFOP study of participation in lifelong learning <sup>(32)</sup> adults identified time as the main obstacle to taking up education and training. Individuals are concerned about the demands that structured learning would make on their time for work, family life and leisure activities. In this context, the positive incentives to participation identified by the respondents included: flexible working hours (21 % of respondents); individualised programmes of study (20 %); personal choice of study methods (20 %); access to good information and advice (14 %). Clearly learning must be increasingly organised in ways that enable individuals to combine it with their life commitments as adults. The concept of *organised* implies a decision being made on different aspects related to learning (content, structuring knowledge, methods, timing, purpose, environment, etc) which are pre-determined before starting the activity <sup>(33)</sup>. Some learning activities may have a high degree of organisation (for example, attending a school or centre), others may have a low level of organisation (for example, self-learning through software, with or without a manual).

### Organising learning in formal NVAE

Formal NVAE generally happens in formal educational institutions. Traditional educational institutions have been primarily concerned with transmitting knowledge, whereas modern learning opportunities and the lifelong learning approach put the emphasis on the development of individual capabilities and the capacity of the person to learn. Lifelong learning implies a paradigm shift from the dominance of traditional education institutions to a diverse field of traditional and modern learning opportunities that are more process and outcome oriented <sup>(34)</sup>.

How courses and learning opportunities in general are organised is critical in terms of encouraging, enabling and supporting access by adults, especially adults who are distant from learning due to informational, situational, dispositional or institutional barriers. In addition to addressing elements such as outreach, guidance, admission, cost, assessment and quality assurance arrangements, the decisions that are taken by the institution about learning content, structuring of knowledge, scheduling, teaching/learning methods and learning supports are crucial in supporting the individual to overcome the personal situational (life circumstances) and attitudinal barriers experienced by busy, reluctant or sceptical adults.

### Structuring learning provision

Flexibility is a key enabling principle for structuring learning provision that seeks to attract adults. It has a bearing on how learning opportunities are 'packaged' by the provider.

### Sequencing learning

Traditionally, provision has been structured in a linear, sequential mode based on the concept of same time and same place delivery with the obligation on the learner to attend and learn in a linear, sequential manner. But the principle of flexibility is dictating a move to modularisation and unitisation with positive outcomes for learning options, manageability of learning effort and individualisation of learning pace.

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<sup>(32)</sup> Cedefop. (2003) *Lifelong learning: citizens' views*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, pp. 66-70. [http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/4038\\_en.pdf](http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/4038_en.pdf)

<sup>(33)</sup> Eurostat, European Commission (2005) *Classification for Learning Activities, Draft manual*, May 2005, p. 10.

<sup>(34)</sup> Eurostat, European Commission (2005) *Classification for Learning Activities, Draft manual*, May 2005, p. 4.

Many countries in transition from linear delivery to modular delivery of formal NVAE report a mixed linear and modular delivery (for example, Belgium [the three Communities], Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Austria, Poland [in particular in vocational education], Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Finland [since 1994], Sweden, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway).

Spain has a long tradition of modularisation in NVAE provision corresponding to the compulsory stages of education while a linear structure is maintained in upper secondary education for adults. In the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) where the structure of provision depends on the requirements of the awarding body, some qualifications available for adult learners have been modularised, for example, all A levels were unitised in September 2000, and candidates are now able to take units as they proceed through the course rather than being examined in a single session at the end of the course.

### **Personalising learning**

Personalised 'tailor-made' courses provide the ultimate in flexibility. The learning may be self-directed or may be facilitated by a tutor on a one-to-one basis and/or within a group setting. In all modes the learner may receive face-to-face, correspondence and/or online support. Estonia and Slovenia operate individual education plans for adults with special learning needs. In France the network of Personalised Training Workshops (APP) provides personalised tailor-made learning programmes for adults, frequently within a group setting. Individual learning plans are also reported in Italy, Hungary, Portugal and Sweden.

### **Independent learning**

Knowledge is no longer confined to traditional education and training institutions. Independent learning whereby the place, time, duration, content and intensity of the learning can all be adapted to the individual's requirements is considered a good response to the flexibility needs of adults. It may be organised by an institution or at a distance by correspondence or on-line. The appropriateness of this approach needs to be monitored, particularly for adults with low educational and skills levels as the absence of the support provided by a class group and regular teacher contact may reduce commitment and the benefits of learning. However, adequately supported by regular face-to-face, telephone or email contact with a tutor or mentor, it is a useful option for time-pressed individuals. In the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium guided individual study provides the opportunity to prepare for secondary education and civil service examinations. In Estonia, upper secondary schools for adults offer various flexible study opportunities including learning as an external student. In Spain, CIDEAD is a public body which provides secondary education through distance/independent learning for those who, for whatever reason cannot participate in mainstream education. In Finland it is possible to study the entire general upper secondary education syllabus by distance learning but, in general, students prefer to combine face-to-face and distance modes.

### **Scheduling learning**

Delivery that meets the needs of adult learners will schedule provision to address the time constraints of individuals. A range of scheduling arrangements is identified in all countries, including part-time day, evening and weekend taught provision; workplace-based learning during or outside the working day; anytime anyplace learning in the form of distance learning by correspondence or, increasingly, online. There is no indication in the national information of how widespread any of the above scheduling arrangements is.



For example, in Belgium (French Community) where the underpinning legislation supports 'considerable timetable flexibility', 'social advancement education' is offered during the day and/or evening and on Saturday.

## Teaching and learning methodologies in formal NVAE

Teaching and learning methodologies constitute the organisational frame used to learn or to teach. Changes in society entail a commensurate shift in teaching and learning approaches. There is a move from a teaching supply paradigm to a learning demand paradigm with the learner at the centre of the learning endeavour. Teaching methods that recognise the adulthood of adults are required. This implies a more symmetrical pedagogy where the adult is the key actor in learning. Adults learn best when they have a choice of how and when they learn, when they are able to build on past experience, when the issues and topics are 'real' for them and when they can apply the learning to their own personal and professional contexts. In addition, they want to be able to draw on learning supports such as guidance, literacy support, assistive technology and study skills as required.

Two main trends emerge in relation to overall teaching methodologies in formal NVAE. At least one-third of the countries indicate that formal NVAE providers use the same teaching methodologies as mainstream schools which would seem to indicate, in the words of Belgium (German-speaking Community) 'in many cases fairly traditional teaching methods'. Lithuania states that 'the formal education is not sufficiently flexible and does not always understand the needs of adults'. Given that formal NVAE is frequently located in mainstream educational institutions and generally follows the mainstream curriculum, teachers can very easily get locked into an adult schooling as opposed to an adult education approach and can consciously or unconsciously work out of a subject-centred rather than learner-centred methodology. This is particularly the case when the teachers have had neither initial nor continuing professional development in adult education methodologies. On the other hand, at least two-thirds of the countries indicate that the teaching methodologies employed in formal NVAE are dictated by the needs of the adult learners.

The formal NVAE 'adult-friendly' teaching and learning methodologies indicated in the national information include: participative approaches such as case study, role play and study clubs; personalised teaching and learning; multi-media supported teaching and learning; blended learning (a number of approaches).

## eLearning in formal NVAE

ICTs can broaden access to learning opportunities for adults. The Commission's *eLearning* programme aims at the effective integration of ICT in education and training systems in Europe (2004-2006). The programme is a further step towards realising the vision of technology serving lifelong learning <sup>(35)</sup>. In 2005 the Commission proposed a new strategic framework: *i2010: the European information society* to promote an open and competitive digital economy and emphasise ICT as a driver of inclusion and quality of life.

ICTs are mentioned as a subject and as a methodology in many countries but the volume of penetration and usage is not discernible. From experience it would probably be fair to say that usage varies widely in terms of quantity and quality and, indeed, access to the technology. eLearning as ICT-supported teaching and learning exists in the majority of the review countries, to a greater or lesser extent. For example, in Portugal the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence through the Navy Centre

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<sup>(35)</sup> Page, K. (2006) *A preliminary study on the current state of e-learning in lifelong learning*, Cedefop Panorama series; 123. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, p. 9.

on Distance Learning provides elearning opportunities for adults who are enrolled in recurrent education courses. In this context, the Ministry of Education supports an elearning project for a range of courses, including adult education in some schools in the Azores. In Finland, general upper secondary schools for adults have been to the forefront in developing distance learning with the result that upper secondary teaching can be organised either partly or fully as contact teaching or ICT-supported distance teaching.

## **Organising learning in non-formal NVAE**

The national information provides a limited description of teaching and learning methodologies in non-formal NVAE. In Denmark, for example, there is no clear distinction between the teaching methods used in formal and non-formal provision. A central element in the teaching in both is a high degree of participation by the students/adults, but this approach may be even more prevalent in non-formal NVAE. To be eligible for public funding independent educational institutions must meet criteria regarding 'popular enlightenment' which is based on the principles of universal access; free choice of topics and free choice of teachers. Educational broadcasting is used in Ireland (for literacy) and in Malta. In Slovenia it is believed that more adult appropriate teaching and learning approaches have been made available through the study circles (which use mentors and leaders) and through blended learning approaches. In general, the learning issues for study circles arise from the immediate environment in which the study circle is located, thereby meeting the condition that to be most effective, the adult's learning should have applicability in his/her own life.

In Spain, the system of *Aulas Mentor* managed by the National Centre for Educational Information and Communication provides open and free distance on-line training. It has been designed as an open training system consisting of different courses addressed to individuals interested in improving their cultural level, preparing for the labour market or updating their skills, regardless of previous qualifications or educational levels. Students are free to choose the course, the timetable, the learning pace and the learning location (at home or at the *Mentor* classes).

In the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) *learnirect* operates a network of more than 2 000 online learning centres providing access to a range of e-learning opportunities through more than 550 different courses covering a range of subjects, including management, IT, skills for life and languages, at all levels. More than 75 % of the courses are available online, thus enabling people to learn wherever they have access to the Internet – at home, at work or at a *learnirect* centre.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, language training is the main focus of online courses for adults. More than 3 000 fully online, multimedia and interactive courses have been developed by the language centres of the Flemish universities, and packaged into courses which can be easily accessed through different learning management systems. The Flemish government has also initiated a project supporting blended learning in the Centres for Adult Education.

## 7. LEARNING CONTENT

The curriculum framework for NVAE is, in effect, life-wide and life-related within a lifelong learning framework. It ranges from provision for mainstream secondary qualifications through literacy learning, foreign language learning, target country language learning for immigrants, ICT skills and learning for social, cultural, political and/or personal development through a vast array of subject areas and activities.

### Learning in formal NVAE

Formal NVAE, so-called 'second chance' provision, covers mainstream courses in primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary provision. Formal NVAE in the form of 'second chance' provision serves multiple purposes in all countries, viz., compensatory (makes up for the learning that did not happen in initial education); educational (prepares individuals for further education and training); economic (raises the skill levels of the labour force); redistributive (gives increased access to learning opportunities and qualifications); promotion of equality (the money not expended on the individual in initial education is now being spend on remedial action); intergenerational impact (educating parents and grandparents has positive influence on the education outcomes for the children and young people). Formal NVAE addresses a wide range of gaps, divides and disparities in the review countries, viz., the knowledge divide; the skills divide; the digital divide; the gender divide; the age divide and disparities between sectors of the general population in the economic, social, cultural and personal domains.

From national information, it appears that publicly supported measures (programmes, courses, assessment processes, learning and other supports) to enable adults to gain compulsory and upper secondary education and training qualifications exist in virtually all countries. Lower secondary to end of compulsory education is generally not occupation-specific. It supports the development of knowledge, skills and competences usually not contextualised in work situations. Completion of basic vocational training qualification leading to the acquisition of basic skills suitable for many job functions<sup>(36)</sup> is considered part of upper secondary education in many countries.

As has been indicated, the national information does not always draw a distinction between general and vocational education in describing participation in formal NVAE at upper secondary level. However, a number do (for example, Belgium [Flemish and French Communities], Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia, Finland, Iceland). Indeed, in some countries the majority of adults in upper secondary and post-secondary levels participate in the vocational strand (for example, Czech Republic, France, Austria). However, up to 70 % of the 800 000 individuals who participated in the Adult Education Initiative (1997-2002) in Sweden participated in general upper secondary education as an access route to higher education. In Finland, almost 10 % of the 123 000 adults currently in upper secondary education are in the general education provision.

In a number of countries adults have a statutory right to achieve secondary education qualifications (for example, Italy, Portugal, Norway). In Finland, a Working Group was established to implement a programme from 2003 to 2007 for 30-54-year olds aimed at raising attainment levels among the whole population, improving study skills and increasing the number of people with upper secondary education. In addition, a Working Group established in 2005 to develop adult general upper secondary education and draw up a development programme for adults for the period 2006-2012 is due to report in October 2006.

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<sup>(36)</sup> Eurostat, European Commission (2005) *Classification for Learning Activities, Draft manual*, May 2005, p. 17.

In Portugal, the Government established an educational programme, for the period 2006-2010, named 'New Opportunities', which intends to qualify a million youngsters and adults. Its specific goals are, among others, to increase the offer of education and training courses, involving over 350 000 adults, so that they achieve compulsory education and/or upper secondary education; to expand to 500 the net of RVCC centres till the end of the programme; to guarantee the certification of competencies to over 650 000 adults'.

In Sweden the Adult Education Initiative (1997-2002) enabled over 800 000 adults (almost 20 % of the work-force) to return to structured formal adult learning to raise their education levels. Fifty per-cent (50 %) of the participants were unemployed and over 60 % had less than three years of upper secondary education on entry. Approximately 50 % of participants emerged with a higher ISCED level.

In Norway the aim of the Competence Reform is to maintain and raise competence levels in the workplace, in society and at individual level. The reform is directed at adults, regardless of labour market attachment, and it has a broad and long-term perspective. The active involvement of the government and the social partners is a critical aspect of the reform. Under the reform, adults have a statutory right to free primary and secondary education, to education leave of absence and to loans and grants from the State Educational Loan Fund on the same conditions as young people. It appears that there will be more emphasis on basic skills in coming years in Norway as a recent survey (The OECD-survey Adult Literacy and Life Skills – ALL) indicated that up till 400 000 of the population have difficulties with reading, writing and numbers.

In Ireland since 1989 the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) has provided 'second chance' lower, upper and post-secondary learning opportunities for over 5 000 unemployed adults aged 21+ each year. Adults participate on a full-time basis for up to two years in a range of learning activities that are education-led, vocationally-oriented and progression-focused and lead to mainstream qualifications within the national framework of qualifications.

In Iceland the Education and Training Service Centre which has a service agreement with the Ministry of Education enables adults who have not completed upper secondary education – some forty per-cent of people in the labour market, depending on the year and the region – to obtain upper secondary qualifications. The Centre which was established in December 2002 by the Icelandic Federation of Labour (ASÍ) and the Confederation of Icelandic Employers (SA) facilitates collaboration on adult education and vocational training by the founding partners, in cooperation with other education bodies operating under the auspices of the member associations of ASÍ and SA. In 2006 and again in 2007 the Ministry of Education is/will be providing additional funding for the provision of educational and career guidance to support adults participating in the learning opportunities provided under the auspices of the Education and Training Service Centre.

## **Learning in non-formal NVAE**

The range of topics covered within non-formal NVAE is vast – all the social issues form its subject matter, including ageing, crime, environment, health, heritage, parenting and poverty as well as cultural matters (for example, arts, crafts, cuisine, dance, languages, literature, media, music, theatre) and political matters (for example, community development, current affairs, democratic participation, history, international relations, law).

In 2001, the emphasis on adult learning for active citizenship within a lifelong learning framework in the Communication *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* was considered significant in the context of a perceived increasing Europe-wide focus, in practice, on adult learning for economic goals. March 2004 saw the launch of the *Citizenship in Action*, programme which enables civil society, faith-

based, youth and cultural organisations, trade unions and family associations to draw down funding for activities that promote active citizenship. This programme which supports learning for interculturalism and civic participation has particular significance for community-based non-governmental and civil society groups and organisations throughout Europe.

The sixth of the eight key competences for lifelong learning recently identified by the European Reference Framework <sup>(37)</sup> is 'interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, civic competence'. This competence is defined as covering 'all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary.' Civic competence 'equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation'. The eighth key competence for lifelong learning is 'cultural expression' which is defined as covering 'appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts'. Clearly the development of these competences lies in the non-formal NVAE domain.

In the majority of countries NGOs provide a range of non-formal NVAE depending on their mission and composition. Some are exclusively education providers while others include educational activities within a framework of wider social involvement. A campaigning NGO will provide learning that promotes its ideological aims in relation to particular social concerns, for example, environmental protection; multiculturalism; social justice; women's empowerment. Other NGOs will draw on non-formal NVAE as part of their self-support activities and services to members, for example for individuals with a disability. An NGO with a education service delivery role will provide adult education as a service to individuals outside the organisation, for example, literacy provision for individuals with low literacy levels; cultural development and community development education for the general public.

While a number of countries indicate that information on non-formal NVAE is highly fragmented (France, Romania, Slovakia), some countries set out the aims and content of non-formal NVAE. The Nordic countries and Germany explicitly recognise the role of non-formal NVAE in developing active and participatory citizenship and social capital and strengthening social inclusion and social cohesion. As a rule the contents of study circles originate from the challenges of the local communities in which the study circles are located. In Finland, where the term *liberal education* is used in this context, the main mission of non-formal NVAE is to promote democratic values, active citizenship and social cohesion. The overall objective of participation is the achievement of personal growth, maturity and independence and an understanding of social and human relations. In France non-formal NVAE is the product of a movement inspired by Christian, working-class and/or social principles. The popular education movement sprang from a long activist tradition inseparable from the principle of making education available to all, promoting citizenship and emancipating people through access to knowledge and culture. In Greece non-formal NVAE develops parenting skills and volunteer responses to emergencies.

In United Kingdom (Scotland) the term *Community Learning and Development* (CLD) refers to the wide range of community-based adult learning, community capacity building and youth work outside of formal institutions. Community education is defined as *a way of working which encompasses a variety of formal and informal learning opportunities* and is involved in the development of core skills including adult literacy, numeracy and use of information and communication technology.

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<sup>(37)</sup> European Commission (2005) Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning. COM (2005) 548 final/2005/0221 (COD). p. 13.  
[http://eu2006.bmbwk.gv.at/en/downloads/education\\_keycomp.pdf](http://eu2006.bmbwk.gv.at/en/downloads/education_keycomp.pdf)

## Literacy learning: policy framework and provision

While acknowledging that the concept of literacy is a contested one, for practical reasons literacy in the context of this executive summary is taken to mean *the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work and in the community – to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential* <sup>(38)</sup>. Literacy learning is provided in a range of formal and non-formal learning locations, viz., education and training institutions; at work; in the home; in community settings. Literacy learning is frequently considered non-formal NVAE but it may happen as a support within formal NVAE. In addition, as national frameworks of qualifications are being developed, the lowest levels are being designed to accredit the outcomes of literacy learning thereby placing literacy learning within learning leading to qualifications and, thus, within formal NVAE.

A key platform of the lifelong learning agenda is ensuring new basic skills for all and communication in the mother tongue is the first of the key competences for lifelong learning identified in the European Reference Framework <sup>(39)</sup>. Literacy skills lay the foundation for continuing learning for all purposes and are considered both old and new basic skills as their practice is time and place bound and is under permanent construction over a lifetime. A recent report <sup>(40)</sup> raises the issue of the barrier posed by low literacy levels in terms of access to ICTs, as a subject to develop digital literacy or as a learning method. This is a key issue for adult education and underscores the crucial role of literacy as a foundation for learning.

The findings of the first OECD research on literacy levels <sup>(41)</sup> mobilised governments in a number of the review countries to take action to address the low literacy levels of significant numbers in their population. However, in other countries it is considered that the literacy levels of the adult population do not require such an intervention (for example, Czech Republic ['illiteracy is a sporadic phenomenon'], Latvia, Poland, Slovakia).

In recent years a number of countries (for example, Belgium [Flemish Community], Germany, Ireland, France, Italy [Southern Regions], Netherlands, Slovenia, United Kingdom [England], Norway) have focused on developing a policy framework for the development of literacy provision. Initiatives have included research, legislation, infrastructure; white papers and action plans. Appendix 11 details examples of such policy initiatives.

A number of the review countries have taken a national programmatic approach to the development of literacy provision generally under the education ministry (for example, Ireland, United Kingdom [England, Wales and Northern Ireland]); others are developing national provision through a range of ministries and providers (for example, France); a third group is supporting individual initiatives through individual providers, especially NGOs in the non-formal NVAE domain (for example, Belgium [French and German-speaking Communities], Italy, Luxembourg). Within these three broad policy approaches the actual

<sup>(38)</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1995) *Literacy, Economy and Society: Results of the First International Adult Literacy Survey*. Paris: OECD Publishing.  
<http://www.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/display.asp?tag=XUBD78XX4X3869595WDUXW&sf1=identifiers&st1=811995111P1>

<sup>(39)</sup> European Commission (2005) *Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning*, COM (2005) 548 final, p.13.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/keyrec\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/keyrec_en.pdf)

<sup>(40)</sup> Page, K. (2006) *A preliminary study on the current state of e-learning in lifelong learning*, Cedefop Panorama series; 123. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, p. 37.

<sup>(41)</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1995) *Literacy, Economy and Society: Results of the First International Adult Literacy Survey*. Paris: OECD Publishing.  
<http://www.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/display.asp?tag=XUBD78XX4X3869595WDUXW&sf1=identifiers&st1=811995111P1>



literacy provision may be a stand-alone or integrated. In the former, individuals concentrate on literacy and/or numeracy learning on a stand-alone basis, more or less apart from other learning activities. In the latter, literacy forms a constituent part of provision for basic education and/or basic skills, may be an additional support in formal NVAE secondary education provision or may be integrated into learning of practical skills such as cookery, parenting, carpentry, ICTs, workplace activities etc. In many countries a mix of approaches is used depending on the learner's needs and preferences, the learning location, the provider's philosophy and capacity and the funding criteria.

A number of challenges present themselves in respect of the take-up of literacy learning opportunities, not least the fact that adults with literacy difficulties do not necessarily recognise and/or acknowledge them and, even when they do, are frequently reluctant to expose themselves by seeking assistance. Thus, multiple approaches drawing on a variety of locations, methodologies, and methods are required to motivate individuals to engage in literacy learning. The approaches revealed in the national information include stand-alone literacy and numeracy learning; literacy integrated into education and training provision at basic and primary levels; literacy as a support to participation in lower and upper secondary education and in training courses; literacy through the public broadcast media; family literacy; workplace literacy; literacy for ethnic minorities. Appendix 12 presents examples of literacy provision in the review countries.

In 1998 in France the campaign against illiteracy was declared a national priority within the overall campaign against all forms of exclusion. The National Agency to Combat Illiteracy was established to maximise resources from central government, local authorities and business and industry. The programme *Integration, Reintegration and Beating Illiteracy* (IRILL) which is based on regional partnerships, supports a variety of actions, including: training of trainer; funding of resource centres; financial support for structuring partnerships; development of training paths; development of teaching methods; provision adapted to adult needs (including guidance, mentoring and supervision, additional resources and personalised tuition). The Workshops for Personalised Training (APP) provide literacy training within personalised training for young people aged 16-25, job-seekers and employees.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium an important objective in the field of formal adult education is the improvement of adult literacy. The adult literacy plan contains actions for the implementation of structural policy measures as well as for research to improve basic skills, including ICT.

## Language learning

Depending on its purpose and outcomes, language learning comes under both formal and non-formal NVAE. Following a wide-ranging public consultation process in 2002, the Commission published the Action Plan *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity* in 2003 <sup>(42)</sup>. On the topic of language learning by adults the Action Plan states:

Language learning is for all citizens, throughout their lives. Being aware of other languages, hearing other languages, teaching and learning other language; these things need to happen in every home and every street, every library and cultural centres, as well as in every education or training institution and every business.

The Commission believes that the key areas for action at European level are: fostering an inclusive approach to languages, building more language friendly communities, and improving the supply and

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<sup>(42)</sup> European Commission (2003) Communication from the Commission to the Council, The European Parliament, The Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions. *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004 – 2006*. COM (2003) 449/final.

take-up of language learning. 'Communication in foreign languages' is the second key competence for lifelong learning within the European Reference Framework.

## General foreign language learning

In the context of these developments, it is significant that accounts of language learning by adults, apart from immigrants, are noticeably limited in the national information. In general, apart from the German-speaking Community of Belgium and Luxembourg, only passing reference is made to general foreign language learning by individuals or groups of people, mainly in the context of non-formal NVAE, commercial provision or the availability of international language qualifications.

In Luxembourg learning languages is considered critical given the multi-lingual nature of the country and its large cohort of trans-border workers. In the Czech Republic a special ISCED 4C sub-category of one-year language study is available at language schools. Slovenia makes reference to foreign language examinations for adults at basic and advanced levels organised by the National Examination Centre. In Lithuania, the *Foreign Language Education Strategy (2001)* is based on the principle that by learning new languages adults get a better understanding of issues such as political developments, cultural changes and environmental protection. In Spain, the Official Language Schools provide an important structure for teaching the official languages of the EU Member States as well as the co-official languages of the Spanish State and Spanish as a foreign language. Other languages which for cultural, social or economic reasons present a special interest (Chinese, Japanese, Russian) are also offered.

## Language learning for immigrants

The Introductory Act which took effect on 1 September 2005 has made participation in courses in Norwegian language and social science a right and an obligation for all new non-EU immigrants who get a residential permit. The course consists of 250 lessons of Norwegian language and 50 lessons of social science taught in a language that the immigrant understands. Completing the course is part of the requirements for getting a permanent settlement permit. The course is the central part of the so-called 'Introductory scheme', which is combined with an 'introduction benefit' for those who have refugee status. In the Netherlands, in 2003, funding for *inburgering*<sup>(43)</sup> of new and 'old'<sup>(44)</sup> immigrants was transferred from the education ministry to the new Minister for Immigration and Integration. There has also been a transfer of €70.5 million from the education ministry budget to the new programme where it is added to the budget aimed at compulsory *inburgering* to cover the two basic levels within the framework for Dutch as a second language (NT2). The education ministry will retain responsibility for NT2 courses for adults who are not obliged to take such courses and who will pay fees.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium the 'Dutch Language Houses' and the 'civic integration' courses (Dutch language; assistance for employment; and social orientation) deliver provision specifically targeting immigrants and newcomers. For some categories of immigrants these civic integration courses are compulsory. In Greece the programme 'Greek as a second language for working immigrants' lasts 400 hours and includes an introduction to Greek culture. In addition, the programme 'Education and counselling for families of Roma, Muslims, Repatriates and Immigrants' targets parents whose children are in primary and secondary education and aims to create a family environment supportive of the young people's needs. In Ireland, refugees and specified asylum seekers have the right to participate in adult

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<sup>(43)</sup> *Inburgering* refers to actions to acquire a sufficient knowledge of the Dutch language in combination with an orientation on Dutch society and the labour market.

<sup>(44)</sup> 'Old' immigrants (*oudkomers*) refers to the first generation of immigrants, who – in this case – have not been integrated sufficiently in society.



learning opportunities on the same basis as Irish citizens. An Action Plan on language support for immigrant workers has been published early 2006.

In Sweden, the municipalities manage Swedish tuition for immigrants 'Sfi' with four courses at three levels depending on earlier education. The 'Interactive Programme for Refugees' includes intensive interaction with the labour market and the employment office and a personal relationship with a native Swede. A small number of countries (for example, Estonia) indicate that due to the very low levels of immigration, provision for immigrants is not necessary. In Lithuania, provision is focused on immigrant children rather than adults, but there is 'an exceptionally low number of such children'. In Spain, Spanish as a foreign language for immigrants is provided by public and private organisations as well as by numerous NGOs.

Appendix 13 sets out the range of provision for immigrants as indicated in the national information.

### **Information and communication technology (ICTs): national strategy for digital literacy**

Training in ICTs comes within formal and non-formal NVAE provision, but tends to be more widespread in the latter. The role of ICT skills in enabling participation in the knowledge society is well documented. ICT skills are now considered key basic skills for all citizens and 'digital competence' is the fourth of the eight key competences for lifelong learning within the Europe Reference Framework. In the context of adult learning ICT skills comprise digital competence for the demands of learning and life and ICTs as a subject (administration, programming etc). Adults throughout Europe fall on both sides of the so-called 'digital divide' in terms of their access to ICTs and to ICT skills. Predictably, the digital divide runs along the same fault lines as and reinforces, the education and training participation divide with socially and economically disadvantaged adults, older adults and rural adults on the deficit side of the divide with the least access all round.

Although the most recent report on progress on the *Education and Training 2010* work programme<sup>(45)</sup> states that ensuring access to ICT is a major priority for the majority of countries, there is limited reference in the national information to policies and practices to address the digital divide. Many of the references to ICT training are in the context of commercial provision and/or non-formal NVAE. However, there are some examples of actions by public authorities in the review countries.

In 2004 in Lithuania, the government approved the General Computer Literacy Programme with the aim of accelerating the development of the information society through enabling the population at large to achieve computer literacy in line with their education and professional activity. As part of the programme the Lithuanian Adult Education and Information Centre organised a promotion campaign on the application of ICT in everyday life and published a series of methodological aids for providers and learners. In 2006, the Centre began work with the Ministry of Education and Science and Vytautas Magnus University to implement a European Social Fund-supported project on the advancement of adult education institutions in the regions. One of the aims of the project is the development of digital literacy among the adult population.

A number of countries have put in place a national strategy for digital literacy. In Norway the Digital Literacy for ALL strategy sets the goal that by 2008 digital literacy will be integrated at all levels in education and training and the Norwegian educational system will be among the foremost countries in

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<sup>(45)</sup> Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe – 2006 Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission on progress under the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme. Council document 2006/c79/01, p. 3.  
[http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c\\_079/c\\_07920060401en00010019.pdf](http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c_079/c_07920060401en00010019.pdf)

the world to use ICT in teaching and learning. In United Kingdom (England), there is the post-16 e-learning strategy. In Portugal, all students enrolled in formal NVAE as well as in mainstream education study ICT and all adults in non-formal education study ICT modules.

A number of countries have established a national/regional body to organise and manage the development of e-learning, especially online distance learning (for example, Ireland, Spain, France, Sweden, United Kingdom [England, Wales and Northern Ireland]). These bodies manage an online distance learning system (Bisonline in Belgium [Flemish Community], Oscail & FÁS Net College in Ireland, Aulas Mentor in Spain, *Learndirect* in the United Kingdom). In Greece, the General Secretariat of Adult Education has established the Adult Distance Learning Centre which will use new ICTs to promote e-learning in adult education and will be operational from September 2006. In Sweden the Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning develops new methods for distance learning for adults, mainly at upper secondary level.

In the United Kingdom the remit of the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTa) covers the 'learning and skills' sector which includes all forms of adult learning. BECTa is the UK-wide agency which supports the education departments across the United Kingdom in their strategic ICT developments. It works directly with the learning and skills sector through the provision of advice, digital resources, partnerships, standards and organisational development strategies. BECTa works in partnership to implement the post-16 e-learning strategy.

## 8. QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Qualifications recognise and reward learning, ideally wherever and however achieved and give a visibility, market value and 'currency' to the knowledge, skills and competence achieved – both in the workplace and in terms of access to further education and training. However, qualification-bearing learning is a double-edged sword. For some adults the official recognition of the learning is what makes it attractive. For others the inevitable assessment of learning involved proves to be a barrier to taking up learning.

To maximise their impact, qualifications need to be part of a transparent qualification system which is taken to mean all aspects of a country's activity that result in the delivery or recognition of learning for qualification<sup>(46)</sup>. Such a system thus includes institutional arrangements, quality assurance processes, assessment processes, validation procedures, awarding processes, skill recognition and other mechanisms. Qualification systems are important in giving access to further learning as at their best they signpost pathways between sectors and between award levels. An explicit framework of qualifications may form part of the qualifications system.

Throughout Europe supra-national and national objectives of building a lifelong learning society are creating a strong demand for more coherent and flexible qualifications systems. In many countries qualification systems have, to date, been diffuse and incoherent resulting in confusion for stakeholders, lack of recognition for learning, difficulties in access, transfer and progression for individuals and overall loss of value to individuals and society. Up to recently, the majority of the review countries have had qualifications based on inputs or on the completion of a learning programme as opposed to qualifications based on specified competence outcomes from that learning.

The development of national frameworks of qualifications (NFQs) is taking place within a European context of developments in relation to qualifications. Responding to the call in the Copenhagen declaration, the European Parliament and Council in December 2004 adopted a decision on a single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences. The decision established a new transparency tool, Europass, which integrates qualifications and competences across all lifelong learning in an ICT-based portfolio. In July 2005 the Commission consultation on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was launched. The objective of the proposed EQF is to create a European framework which will enable qualification systems at the national and sectoral levels to relate to each other. The consultation with stakeholders in the 32 countries participating in the *Education & Training 2010* work programme ended in December 2005. The feedback will be taken into account in establishing the final content and structures of the EQF.

Qualification systems are being refined and transformed in many of the review countries and many countries are putting in place a range of measures to tackle the technical, cultural and political challenges inherent in systematising qualifications. Reform measures include legislation (for example, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Malta), the establishment of a national /regional awarding body with overall responsibility for the qualifications system (for example, Belgium [Flemish Community], Ireland, Spain, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal) and the development of a national and/or regional qualifications framework (for example, Czech Republic, Ireland, Spain, United Kingdom). The initial development of and recent transnational consultation on the proposed European Qualifications Framework (EQF) are steering and stimulating further developments in this regard. Appendix 14 details these measures.

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<sup>(46)</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2005) *Moving Mountains. How Can Qualifications Systems Promote Lifelong Learning? Preliminary Edition*. Paris, p. 16.

## National/regional awarding body

A national/regional awarding body would typically include public bodies with the authority to define and/or recognise the value of a qualification positioning it in a national framework of qualifications. For example, the Malta Qualifications Council was established in 2005 with the remit of developing and managing a national qualifications framework, accreditation of institutions and programmes. In Ireland, a similar body with a parallel remit, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, was established in 2000.

## Qualifications framework

Within the overall qualifications system(s) a key development in recent years in a number of countries has been the emergence of qualification frameworks – regional and/or national. The framework of qualifications covers both education and training and is independent of the pathway leading to the award of the qualifications included in it. A national framework of qualification (NFQ) has been defined as:

the single, nationally and internationally accepted entity<sup>(47)</sup>, through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which define the relationship between all education and training awards<sup>(48)</sup>.

The regional and/or national framework may take the form of a regulatory document which stipulates the qualifications and their relative positions in a hierarchy of learning achievements as well as the bodies that provide or deliver these qualifications (awarding bodies). It includes a grid of qualifications, usually linked to programmes designed to lead to them, to institutions providing these programmes and to organisations awarding or recognising these qualifications. The majority of frameworks promote and facilitate the recognition of prior learning with a view to the achievement of credit or a qualification, thereby reducing the time and financial cost to the learner.

Within a country/region, the framework of qualifications enables achievements to be communicated to a wider audience, including employers and education and training institutions. The contribution of a framework of qualifications to and its importance for the development of, an overarching framework for lifelong learning is critical. By mapping the learning landscape in terms of awards a framework of qualifications has the potential to act as a powerful tool to overcome compartmentalisation of qualification development and to promote transparency, co-ordination, coherence and cohesion across the entire lifelong learning spectrum. The creation of the so-called 'zone of mutual trust'<sup>(49)</sup> between stakeholders at regional, national – and, indeed international – levels is a critical element in generating the environment essential for this work to succeed.

Recent years have seen the relatively rapid development of national frameworks of qualifications (NFQs) (for example, in Ireland, Spain, United Kingdom). The approach to their development has tended to be practical and eclectic, more a case of *It works in practice, now does it work in theory?* rather than the product of a coherent theoretical approach. All have required consensus building among stakeholders to deliver the crucial zone of mutual trust. As a result, NFQs are taking many different forms in the review countries.

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<sup>(47)</sup> The entity can take the form of an organisation/body, or regulatory document. It stipulates the qualifications and the bodies that provide or deliver the qualification (awarding bodies) that are part of the National Framework of Qualifications.

<sup>(48)</sup> Eurostat, European Commission (2005) *Classification for Learning Activities, Draft manual*, May 2005, p. 17.

<sup>(49)</sup> Coles, M. and Oates, T. (2005) European reference levels for education and training, promoting credit transfer and mutual trust. Study commissioned to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, England. Cedefop Panorama series 109. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Preface.

The development of an NFQ is a key priority in some new EU Members States and the candidate countries (for example, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia). In Lithuania, the Labour Market Training Authority (Ministry of Social Security and Labour) with support from the European Social Fund is implementing a project for the design of a national framework of qualifications comprising a uniform, consistent and transparent qualification system embracing all the levels of qualifications. Currently, the qualifications landscape is being mapped and analysed to provide a foundation for the development of the proposed national framework by 2008.

Some countries (for example, Denmark, Germany, Portugal) make reference to the benefits of a sequence of qualification achievement throughout the life of an individual and a move away from a once and for all qualification in one's early years.

### **Assessment procedures and qualifications in formal NVAE**

In virtually all the review countries, the assessment of learning achieved through participation in formal NVAE for achievement of compulsory and upper secondary education qualifications is the same as or very close to, assessment procedures employed in mainstream initial education. Consequently, the qualifications achieved by adults in formal NVAE at secondary education level are the same as those in mainstream education in virtually all the review countries. Issues arise in relation to the appropriateness for adults of typical mainstream secondary level assessment which is frequently terminal assessment with an emphasis on a narrow set of skills.

### **Specific certification for literacy learning**

In the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) there are national standards for adult literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and national qualifications in adult literacy, numeracy and ICT skills have been introduced to support these standards. The qualifications are available at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2. 'Entry Level' qualifications constitute the first level of the national qualifications framework and aim to encourage progression to higher-level awards. In Ireland certification at Levels 1 and 2 of the 10-level NFQ is being developed to recognise learning achievement at basic levels. A partner from Slovenia participated in the European Certificate of Basic Skills (EDCEBS) project to develop certification for basic skills including literacy. Efforts are now being made to have the certificate officially recognised in Slovenia.

### **Certification of language learning**

In many of the review countries achievement in foreign language learning is assessed and accredited through international awards bodies, frequently originating, attached to and/or located in, the 'home' country of the target language. Bulgaria and the Czech Republic make specific reference to these qualifications. In the Netherlands the existing five-level reference framework for Dutch as a second language (NT2) will be replaced with a new structure fitting in with the Common European Framework for Languages for persons not obliged to take part in *inburgering* <sup>(50)</sup> courses. Certification of language competency for immigrants is being developed in a number of countries (for example, Spain, Austria, Norway).

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<sup>(50)</sup> *Inburgering* refers to actions to acquire a sufficient knowledge of the Dutch language in combination with an orientation on Dutch society and the labour market.

## Specific ICT qualifications

In France an ICT qualification for adults, the B2i FC-GRETA <sup>(51)</sup> a continuing education computer skills and Internet certificate, was instituted by the Ministry of Education in 2001. Each GRETA may formally certify the courses in office automation, computer technology and the Internet. In Belgium (German-speaking Community), Ireland (where digital literacy is a core element in the majority of full-time formal NVAE) and Malta, there is strong uptake of the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) certification offered by public and private providers.

## Recognition of non-formal and informal learning

A lifelong learning paradigm values learning from a multiplicity of learning sites – formal, non-formal and informal. This principle stems from the belief that none of the stakeholders in education and training system can afford to overlook the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning or to undervalue their contribution to the development of economies, communities and individuals. Although non-formal NVAE does not generally lead directly to a qualification, there is a growing movement throughout Europe for the recognition of the knowledge, skills and competence achieved through non-formal and, indeed, informal learning, that is the identification, recognition, accreditation and certification of learning outcomes independent of when, where or how they have been achieved.

Emphasis on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is not new. In 1995 the European White Paper, *Teaching and Learning – Towards the Learning Society* identified recognition of skills as a key component of the acquisition of new knowledge on the grounds that it would contribute significantly to the employability of young people and workers. Recognition of non-formal and informal learning is the focus of studies by CEDEFOP, OECD, UNESCO, and ILO. To a large extent the CEDEFOP work provided the background for the determination of the common European principles to inform the development of systems and approaches to the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, adopted in May 2004 by the first Education Council meeting in an enlarged Europe. The principles while not prescribing any particular approach or system, provide an overarching basis for the introduction of the recognition of prior learning and make reference to: individual entitlements; obligations of stakeholders; confidence and trust; credibility and legitimacy. In 2005 a number of the review countries formed a peer learning group with a priority focus on the recognition of prior learning and Norway hosted a meeting of the group in September 2005.

To date, nomenclature in relation to recognition of non-formal and informal learning is far from fixed throughout Europe but the development of the EQF may go some distance towards the creation of agreed terminology. Many terms are used in English for the concept and practice <sup>(52)</sup> but they will be referred to in this executive summary as *recognition of prior learning* (RPL).

RPL performs a number of functions within education and training systems. It enables access, transfer and progression. It can be instrumental in motivating non-engaged adults to resume or continue learning as it identifies and makes visible knowledge, skills and competence of which the adult may not have been aware and, if a national framework of qualifications exists, it places the individual at the appropriate level on the framework. It enables existing knowledge, skills and competence to be formally recognised, rewarded and signalled to different stakeholders, including employers, thus increasing economic returns.

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<sup>(51)</sup> Brevet informatique et Internet Formation continue – GRETA (Groups of local public-sector educational institutions that pool their human and material resources to organise continuing education for adults).

<sup>(52)</sup> APEL (accreditation of prior experiential learning); APL (accreditation of prior learning); PLA (prior learning assessment); PLAR (prior learning and assessment recognition); RPL (recognitions of prior learning); VPL (validation of prior learning).

It reduces opportunity costs through eliminating or reducing the need to spend time and money relearning what has already been learned.

The introduction of a system of RPL has technical, cultural and political dimensions. Technical requirements refer to standards and learning outcomes against which such learning can be assessed; recognition methods; assessment techniques and portability of credits. The cultural and political challenges should not be underestimated. Addressing them requires the active involvement of the education and training stakeholders, the social partners and civil society to ensure that recognition systems are credible and transparent to stakeholders within a 'zone of mutual trust', local, regional, national and, ultimately, transnational.

There are many different ways to recognise learning from settings outside of formal learning, from the relatively straightforward and less costly to the more complex and costly. Competence-based examinations to measure skills and competence that are being developed in a growing number of countries are towards the less complicated end of the spectrum. At the more complex end is the typical portfolio of evidence produced by the applicant testifying to the areas and levels of expertise.

In general, the RPL agenda is being driven by the vocational education and training sector as a means of raising skills levels for individuals, enterprises and society and of facilitating access and mobility for the individual. It is clear that many of the review countries have taken up the baton in relation to RPL. Some countries (for example, France, Netherlands, Portugal, Finland, Norway) have well-established systems of RPL while several have recently introduced measures or are in the process of doing so (for example, Belgium [Flemish and French Communities], Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Slovenia, Sweden). The RPL measures in evidence in the review countries include the establishment of legislative frameworks (Belgium [French and Flemish Communities], Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, France, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Norway); national curriculum guidelines covering the responsibility of individual schools in relation to RPL (Iceland) and a national action plan (Denmark). RPL has not yet been addressed in Slovakia.

In Denmark in 2004 the *Better Education* action plan in which four government ministries were involved, sought to strengthen RPL within the education system, with particular reference to adult education and vocational training. A system of RPL within the education system was launched in April 2005. In France individuals with at least three years in the active labour market may secure official recognition of their professional expertise, through a vocationally relevant title or qualification or a qualifying certificate. The examiners may make a full award. In 2002 a national directory of professional and vocational certification (RNCP) was established and all the qualifications are achievable through RPL. In Italy, RPL appears in many national and regional provisions as well as in agreements with the social partners. RPL may be used by individuals aged over 18 for access to education and training courses; to gain exemptions from the programme of learning, to transfer between the various education and training systems and geographical regions and/or for achievement of full awards.

In Lithuania, the 2004 *Action plan for the implementation of the strategy ensuring lifelong learning* envisages that mechanisms for the recognition of competencies acquired through non-formal and self-directed learning will be in place by 2008. The proposed mechanisms will build on a number of current projects for the development of RPL in a range of areas such as life skills and tourism.

In Norway, RPL has been on the political agenda since 1999, as an integral part of the Competence Reform that is aimed at all adults, regardless of their labour market attachment. The Competence Reform gives adults statutory rights to have their non-formal competences validated for access to upper secondary or higher education, as well as for exemption from study modules, examinations and tests. The Validation Project (1999-2002) was given the mandate to establish the foundations for a national system



of validation and the process of validation has been established in most sectors. The reform is implemented with the active participation of the social partners and the government – a key success factor. Responsibility for validation in relation to upper secondary education lies with the nineteen counties and candidates are assessed against national curricula. The majority of validations have happened in the vocational sector. The NGO sector has been involved in seven validation projects, involving adult and distance learning organisations, folk high schools, and youth organisations. In 2003, a *Personal Competence Document* was created by three NGOs. 2006 sees a move to scale up the pilot validation projects to a national programme.

In Portugal the National System for Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies (RVCC) is currently targeted at adults, aged 18+, without basic education. RVCC is being implemented through a network of centres, with a total of 84 RVCC centres expected by 2006. In Sweden, the Adult Education Initiative 1997-2002 extended the use of validation of real competences. A number of initiatives on various aspects of validation are organised but no national policies have been set yet.

Validation of non-formal learning is an emerging phenomenon in Iceland. The existence of centres for lifelong learning, the discussion on lifelong learning within the EU and pressure from individuals and labour unions have led to steps to establish a system of validation of non-formal and informal learning. The issue has been taken forward in a decisive manner by the Education and Training Service Centre, a body founded by the Icelandic Federation of Labour and the Confederation of Icelandic Employers. The Centre receives public funding and is expected to assist the Ministry of Education in developing RPL for individuals without upper secondary qualifications. Issues such as broadening the initiative, gaining acceptance and legitimacy for RPL in the labour market and within the formal education system and the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders are still under debate.

While there is some evidence in the national information that RPL is being used formally for access to higher education in a number of countries (Belgium [French and Flemish Communities], Slovenia, Norway), in general, RPL appears to be strongly directed towards the achievement of vocational rather than general education qualifications (for example, Malta [exists only in the Institute for Tourism Studies], Slovenia and Norway). It appears that this will also be the situation in the Czech Republic where RPL for job-oriented education only is planned for 2007. This situation is arising from the fact that while entry requirements to formal NVAE for the acquisition of lower and upper secondary qualifications include reference to prior levels of education in many countries, in general, as has been pointed out, given the goal of the majority of countries to remove or reduce barriers to participation for adults with the lowest skills and education levels, even seemingly fixed requirements are enforced as flexibly as possible, thus reducing the need to introduce an RPL system to any great extent. In addition, informal recognition of prior learning is embedded in the planning of learning programmes in NVAE and, where prior learning attainment is low, learning support in the form of parallel literacy, language and study skills provision will frequently be provided during the course of study. In this context, the issue of the application of RPL to formal NVAE is under debate in Slovenia and in Ireland it is being monitored in the RPL pilot phase.

Another concern, especially for the non-formal NVAE sector, is the fear that RPL could change the nature of non-formal learning through making it more formal and through opening the way to having accreditation systems applied directly to it as it is happening or at its conclusion.



## 9. GUIDANCE SERVICES

In an NVAE setting – formal or non-formal – the term *guidance* refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices. The activities may take place on an individual or group basis, and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including help lines and web-based services) <sup>(53)</sup>.

Given the relevance of career guidance for education, training and employment policies, the European Commission established an Expert Group on lifelong guidance in December 2002 and in May 2004 the Education Council adopted a resolution recognising the importance of guidance activities in the context of lifelong learning.

The role of guidance services in promoting participation in adult learning and in accessing qualifications is well documented <sup>(54)</sup>. Experience on the ground shows that guidance services have a key role to play in overcoming the barriers to participation experienced by the most at risk adults. Guidance services can provide accessible, useful, relevant and timely information; address issues of self-esteem and self-confidence in potential learners; help adults make decisions about learning options; point individuals to services and entitlements to address situational barriers; provide feedback to institutions where procedures may be proving a barrier to participation; support the adult in transfer and progression.

Currently guidance services for adults, such as they are, present multiple challenges on all fronts. First, policy-making in relation to guidance is weak and fragmented in most of the review countries. Second, guidance services for adults are patchy and rarely well planned or co-ordinated at national, regional or local levels. There are striking inconsistencies within countries in objectives, resourcing, staff qualifications and delivery methods of guidance services. Third, in the majority of countries, the supply of guidance falls well short of demand. However, low income and low skilled adults are among those who would benefit most from guidance but are the least likely to seek out a guidance service. The same groups that, as has been seen, are the least likely to participate in intentional learning, formal or non-formal. Fourth, in most countries guidance services need to broaden their focus beyond labour market issues. Fifth, there are significant differences in the quality of guidance services in different countries. Sixth, there is a big gap in data on provision, cost and effectiveness <sup>(55)</sup>.

Within the context of the above challenges, there is, nevertheless, evidence in the national information that the issue of guidance is being addressed by a number of countries (for example, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, France, Lithuania, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway). A range of responses and resources is being put in place with a specific focus on low skilled adults to promote re-engagement with learning and course completion and to secure successful transition to sustainable employment.

### Measures to develop adult guidance

Measures to develop adult guidance include: putting in place policies to underpin a guidance service (for example, Finland); a specific budget for guidance and information (for example, Slovenia); establishing a national body with responsibility for the co-ordination and coherence of adult guidance services (for

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<sup>(53)</sup> Adapted from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004) *Career Guidance. A Handbook For Policy Makers*. Paris: author, p. 10.

<sup>(54)</sup> Ibid, pp. 37-39.

<sup>(55)</sup> Adapted from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004) *Career Guidance. A Handbook For Policy Makers*. Paris: author, passim.

example, Ireland, Lithuania, Finland, United Kingdom [Wales]); providing information on adult learning opportunities (for example, Adult Learner's Week; on-line information; information/resource centres; information booklets/magazines); putting a guidance service in place (for example, Czech Republic [in Labour Offices, including for general education], Ireland, Greece [in second-chance schools], Spain, Latvia, Austria [Burgenland], Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Norway); working within a Europe framework (all countries through Ploteus and EUROGUIDANCE).

## **National co-ordinating body**

A small number of countries have developed structures in the form of a regional or national co-ordinating body to ensure that the different sub-systems that provide guidance are connected to each other. A co-ordinating body may be a inter-ministerial or inter-departmental committee, a national guidance forum, or a departmental policy unit responsible for overall guidance policy and provision.

In Finland the National Advisory Group comprises a broad range of stakeholders, statutory and non-statutory. In 2005 the education and labour ministries established a taskforce to draw up an action programmes for the development of information and guidance services for adult education and training. The aim is that by 2008 adults will have access to a varied, nationwide guidance service geared to their needs. The service will draw on multi-professional expertise in systematic and goal-oriented collaboration. In Ireland the National Guidance Forum established in 2004 brings together guidance stakeholders from all sectors with a view to developing a coherent guidance service for all age groups and in all contexts.

## **Information services**

A key aspect of guidance is the availability of relevant and timely information. There is a recognised need to tailor different ways of providing information and a key challenge is the extent to which information can be turned into learning rather than remaining at the level of information.

In Slovenia adult learners are supported by a high-quality information system on learning possibilities and by the on-line publication entitled *Overview of Adult Education in Slovenia*. Information websites exist in a many countries (for example, Ireland, Spain, Latvia, Austria, Finland, Slovenia, United Kingdom [England, Wales and Northern Ireland]). In Finland the electronic advisory and information service *Opintoluotsi* is being expanded and 'web-based information systems on adult learning opportunities aim to lower the threshold for individuals wishing to get information on education options and to make comparisons leading to choices.' In Austria an existing website was expanded with funding from ESF Target 3 funding. In Ireland a national database on adult learning opportunities is nearing completion. In United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) the *LearnDirect* initiative provides information on a wide range of learning opportunities.

There is an established guidance service with regional service points for counselling and guidance for adult learners in formal NVAE in Austria (Burgenland). Advice is available face-to-face, via email and telephone and in smaller municipalities visiting counsellors ensure a flexible response to regional and individual situations. Data are collected systematically to facilitate quality assurance. In Finland the adult guidance service operates in adult basic and general upper secondary education to support the individual in the different stages of study through development of an individual study plan. Guidance reduces the risk of drop-out and exclusion and addresses issues of gender equality and equality for adults of different ethnic backgrounds. In Ireland 35 local adult educational guidance projects have been established to meet the educational guidance needs of specific target groups participating in formal NVAE and non-formal NVAE. There is also a separate guidance and counselling service for early school leavers and members of the Traveller community. Information centres for adults operate in the

Autonomous Communities in Spain, in Lithuania (established in 2005-2006) and in Slovenia. In Portugal a resource centre under the Directorate-General of Vocational Education which is responsible for all publicly-funded adult learning offers adult guidance and counselling.

### **European dimension**

PLOTEUS is the EU's Internet portal of learning opportunities and EUROGUIDANCE is a network of guidance centres in the EU and EEA countries which is a source of information for guidance workers regarding education systems in other countries.

## 10. QUALITY FRAMEWORK

In March 2001 the Stockholm European Council approved the *Report on the concrete future objectives of education systems* which set out a coherent overall approach to national education policies in the context of the Lisbon Agenda on the basis of three major objectives, the first of which was to *improve the quality of education and training systems* in the Member States. In 2002, the European Council at Barcelona set the objective of making European education and training systems a world quality reference by 2010 <sup>(56)</sup>.

To date the majority of the initiatives on quality assurance at European and national levels have focused on vocational training and education (VET). The Copenhagen Declaration (2002) <sup>(57)</sup> aimed to promote (voluntary) co-operation in quality assurance with particular focus on exchange of models and methods as well as common criteria and principles for quality in VET. This agenda was implemented through a two-year work programme (2003-2004) by a Technical Working Group (TWG) in which Member States, EFTA-EEA countries, European Social Partners and the European Commission were represented <sup>(58)</sup>. A major output of the TWG was a Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF), a common reference framework designed to support the development and reform of the quality of VET at systems and provider level, while fully respecting the responsibility and autonomy of Member States to develop their own quality assurance (QA) systems.

The May 2004 Education Council endorsed the CQAF approach and invited Member States' relevant stakeholders and the Commission to promote it on a voluntary basis. The European Network on quality assurance and development in VET was established in mid-2005 to continue and build on the work of the TWG <sup>(59)</sup>.

Enhancing the effectiveness of education and training through achieving higher quality and improving standards is a major theme of reform for most countries according to the recent joint report on progress in the *Education and Training 2010* work programme. However, many countries have not developed adequate national performance indicators or put in place arrangements to collect necessary data, with the result that it is difficult to measure the impact of education and training actions. Of these countries, many (for example, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Romania) and in particular those where levels of spending on education and training are comparatively low, emphasise how constraints limit their capacity to implement all necessary policies <sup>(60)</sup>. The 2005 OECD report on adult learning makes the point that there is much room for improvement in the evaluation of adult learning activities outside of labour programmes <sup>(61)</sup>.

<sup>(56)</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Barcelona European 15 and 16 March 2002. SN 100/1/02 REV 1. points 43 and 44, p. 19. [http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/71025.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/71025.pdf)

<sup>(57)</sup> Council Resolution of 19 December 2002 (Jo 2003/C 13/02) and Declaration, adopted in Copenhagen in November 2002.

<sup>(58)</sup> European Commission (2005) *Fundamentals of a 'Common Quality Assurance Framework' (CQAF) for VET in Europe*, updated version of 29/09/05, pp. 3-5.

<sup>(59)</sup> European Commission (2006) *European Network on Quality Assurance in VET. Work Programme 2006 – 2007*. pp. 3-5.

<sup>(60)</sup> *Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe. Draft 2006 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of 'Education & Training 2010 work programme'*. Brussels: COM (2005) 549 final/2, p. 5.

<sup>(61)</sup> OECD (2005) *Promoting Adult Learning*. Paris: OECD. Executive Summary, p. 4.

## Measures to ensure quality in formal NVAE

Within these broader European and national contexts, the national information describes a range of measures, comprising planned and systematic actions put in place to provide *adequate confidence* that NVAE will meet/is meeting the requirements of stakeholders, especially the adult learners. In this regard, legislation, structures, policies and specific actions are being introduced to address quality issues in adult learning provision with the notable exception of adult guidance services where there is little evidence in the majority of countries of systematic attention to quality of service. Service standards are limited in guidance provision and quality frameworks where they exist tend to operate as guidelines rather than as mandatory requirements. Outside of the adult guidance area, however, institutions are being increasingly required to evaluate their work on a regular basis and to disclose to the relevant funders and the public in general their learning goals and outcomes <sup>(64)</sup>.

A legislative framework to underpin measures to improve quality in formal NVAE has been put in place by a number of countries (for example, Denmark, Ireland, France, Netherlands, Romania, Finland, United Kingdom [England, Wales and Northern Ireland]).

National or regional bodies with the specific remit of monitoring and/or evaluating education, including NVAE and assuring the quality of provision have been established in a number of countries (for example, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden). In other countries (for example, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Poland, Slovenia, United Kingdom [England], Liechtenstein), responsibility for steering and managing overall quality issues is the part of the remit of bodies with other education and training responsibilities.

Where formal NVAE is delivered in mainstream schools the quality assurance measures in place in those institutions will apply equally to the adult provision. For example, in Portugal there is a Mission Team with responsibility to evaluate, monitor and implement recent reforms in upper secondary education, including recurrent education. The majority of the review countries have put in place a number of specific measures to ensure the quality of formal NVAE.

## Quality frameworks

Criteria related to quality assurance of education and their domains of application include: institutional capacity; educational effectiveness; strategies and procedures for quality assurance; accessibility and adequacy of learning resources; Performance indicators and targets within a quality approach have been set in a number of countries. For example, in United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) students, prospective students and the wider community have a statutory right to information on the performance of educational institutions against a range of indicators. In Germany the model procedure *Learner orientated quality certification in further education* (LQW2) has been developed as a quality development and certification process which places learning at the centre of the quality effort. LQW2 applies to more than 400 institutions and has proved an important measure alongside the ISO and EQFM (European Foundation for Quality-Management) approaches. For the learners and participants, the certificate offers guidance in the search for high quality further education provision in a competitive learning market.

## Inspection

In a number of countries inspection is a key aspect of the approaches to quality monitoring and development of formal NVAE. In United Kingdom (England) the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) has responsibility for the inspection of further education for people aged 19+ in further education colleges and also of non-formal adult and community learning. Parallel developments in the inspection of adult

learning have taken place in United Kingdom (Wales and Northern Ireland). From April 2007, the inspection work of the ALI will merge with Ofsted, the inspectorate for children and learners in England.

## Internal evaluation

A number of countries have produced *self-evaluation guidelines* using performance or quality indicators for institutions. In Austria the *Fachhochschule* institutions have established a well-developed and compulsory system of permanent evaluation mechanisms partly using external research expertise. In Denmark the Act on Transparency and Openness obliges adult education institutions to make their performance reports accessible to members of the public on the Internet. In Finland self-evaluation is required by law in all institutions providing basic and general upper secondary education, including provision for adults. In the United Kingdom (Scotland) the *Standards and Quality in Scottish Further Education Colleges in Academic Years 2004-05 to 2007-08: National Briefing Document (August 2003)* was drawn up to support self-evaluation procedures in further education colleges. Since 2005 in the United Kingdom (England), the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and the Learning Skills Council expect colleges to regularly evaluate all aspects of their provision and to produce an annual self-assessment report. In Iceland, formal NVAE in mainstream schools is subject to internal evaluation like the other activities of the school. In Lithuania, one of the main approaches to ensuring quality in adult education schools is the internal audit which is a process of reflection on the work of the institution by the institution under seven key headings, viz., ethos; curriculum content; learning attainment; teaching and learning approaches; student support; resources; administration and quality assurance.

Appendix 15 provides additional examples of measures to ensure quality in formal NVAE.

## Quality in non-formal NVAE

Depending on the historical, legal, fiscal and other status of the providers, procedures for recognition, accreditation and accountability in non-formal NVAE vary enormously from country to country and the national information provided on the subject is limited. The wide range of providers – independent institutions, community-based organisations, trade unions, church organisations etc – makes it difficult to generalise about what is happening in the various review countries. However, there is evidence from another source that in the majority of countries, accountability and quality assurance issues are coming to the fore for bodies in receipt of public financing. This gives rise to a certain ambivalence on the part of providers. The majority are independent bodies but to receive public funding they need to meet external accountability criteria <sup>(62)</sup>.

Examples of measures to address quality issues in non-formal NVAE include: legislation; the establishment of a national body with a specific remit for quality in non-formal NVAE; policy developments for quality improvements; the development of guidelines; accreditation of providers; licensing of programmes; quality frameworks; inspection; self-evaluation; staff skill requirements; general requirements for annual reports.

The national information provides a limited number of examples of practice in the review countries.

The General Secretariat of Adult Education (Greece) has constituted, since January 2006, the so-called 'Body of Evaluators and Controllers for the Quality of Adult Education Services'. The Body's mandate concerns the evaluation and control, at the level of prefectures, of the quality of all programmes that collectively make up the adult education provided through regional structures. Moreover, in each

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<sup>(62)</sup> Bélanger, P. and Bochynek, B in collaboration with Farr, K-O. (2000) *The Financing of Adult Learning in Civil Society: A European Exploratory Study*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, p. 159.

Prefecture and Region a 'Committee of Coordination of Adult Education' has been operating since its establishment in October 2006. The later Committee aim to secure the best possible coordination and synergy of executives and those in charge of structures and programmes at the level of prefectures and regions respectively. The main purpose in this case is the enhancement of quality in regard to the G.S.A.E's offered educational services.

In Finland, the Finnish Evaluation Council which was established as an expert network in 2003 is responsible for evaluating liberal adult education and has an ongoing focus on the evaluation of independent civic education. In Liechtenstein the Adult Education Liechtenstein Foundation is responsible for assuring the quality of the instruction in non-formal adult education through the use of recognised quality standards and the formulation of minimum quality requirements for training providers supported by state funds. In Sweden a Commission of Inquiry with the task of making a nation-wide evaluation of liberal adult education (study associations and folk high schools) was appointed by government in 2002 and reported in 2004.

### **Accreditation**

In Estonia under the Private Schools Act, the government issues an education licence to providers of professional and non-formal education with a duration of longer than 120 hours or six months in a year. As the current licensing system 'satisfies none of the stakeholders' including the government, and the licence does not guarantee quality, it is planned to review the system in the near future. In Latvia in 2003, the LAEA (Latvian Adult Education Association) in cooperation with the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments and the Ministry of Education and Science developed '*Recommendations on procedure for licensing non-formal adult education programmes*'. In Hungary provider accreditation procedures in non-formal NVAE introduced quality assurance based on self-evaluation.

In Poland, accreditation for non-formal NVAE may be obtained by both public and private institutions and may cover all the educational activity of the institution or particular courses only. Accreditation is granted by the regional educational superintendent. Educational institutions may also be registered at the regional employment bureau. In Bulgaria, OPTIMA, a national branch of the international organisation for quality language services, licenses private language schools after an inspection.

### **Quality assurance system**

In Estonia it is planned to develop a quality assurance system for non-formal education under the leadership of the Estonian Non-formal Adult Education Association. In Ireland, the National Association of Adult Education is piloting a quality framework with women's education groups while in the United Kingdom (Scotland) a quality framework has been developed for Community Learning and Development (CLD).

## Inspection

A small number of countries carry out inspection of non-formal NVAE (for example, Austria, United Kingdom). In the United Kingdom (Scotland) the scope of inspections of Community Learning and Development (CLD) is set out in *Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities*. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) evaluates the quality of local authority CLD services and may also evaluate the contribution of other publicly-funded CLD partners. HMIE is currently introducing a revised inspection process and quality framework for CLD Partnerships. This new version of *How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development* will provide the basis of inspection of provision in this area and for self-evaluation by providers of CLD. In addition, HMIE is working with key stakeholders to develop a self-evaluation toolkit to support the use of the quality framework.

## Self-evaluation

In Slovakia, for example, evaluation is the responsibility of the providers themselves. In Finland, under the Act on Liberal Adult Education, providers are obliged to carry out regular self-evaluation (as well as participate in external evaluation).

## European dimension

In Austria an EQUAL partnership is developing quality assured models for basic literacy and setting up the different elements of guidance measures for this special target group. In Latvia the work on developing the quality evaluation system of adult education providers is ongoing. The Latvian Adult Education Association coordinates the 2-years project (2004-2006) *Managing the Quality of Adult Education in Europe*. In Ireland a quality framework for the adult literacy services has been developed and published by the National Adult Literacy Agency (an NGO) as part of a Grundtvig co-operation project.

Appendix 16 provides additional examples of measures to ensure quality in non-formal NVAE.



## 11. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

The professional development of staff is a critical component of quality assurance in NVAE. The recent joint report on progress on the *Education and Training 2010* work programme regretted the fact that 'the professional development of vocational teachers and trainers remains a real challenge for most countries' <sup>(63)</sup>. The report might have justifiably extended the disappointment to the professional development of teachers in NVAE – formal to some extent and non-formal to a much larger extent. In general, the majority of countries have paid little attention to defining the content and processes for initial training for formal NVAE personnel and even less so for personnel in non-formal NVAE. Generally, the occupation of teacher or trainer of adults is not a regulated profession in the review countries. There are many educational and professional routes to becoming a teacher, programme developer or manager in the adult education sector, mirrored by the wide range of approaches to professional development of such staff, with the bulk of actions concentrating on continuing rather than initial professional development stage.

### Initial and continuing professional development in formal NVAE

Adult educators need two sets of skills: a) to be experts in their subject and b) to be able to teach it to adults. While the former is more or less taken for granted, there are usually few formal requirements in relation to the latter, even within the state sector. Teachers of adults in formal NVAE may also be teachers of young people and/or may have other non-related occupations, especially when they work in evening and weekend adult-specific provision.

Staff in formal NVAE which comes under mainstream schooling regulations are usually required to hold the same qualifications as mainstream school staff, viz., generally a degree from a field of higher education studies. This degree may constitute a professional teaching qualification or may require the addition of a further post-graduate professional qualification. It is likely that in the majority of cases the teaching qualification will pertain to teaching young people rather than adults. However, it appears to be possible to study adult education as a main degree subject through undergraduate studies or to study modules on adult education in a number of countries (for example, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, Norway).

In a small number of countries (for example, United Kingdom [England, Wales and Scotland]) a specific professional qualification is required to work with adults. In the majority of such cases, it is possible to work towards this qualification following an in-service employment-based route.

In the United Kingdom compulsory teaching qualifications for further education teachers were introduced in England in September 2001 and in Wales in 2002, although many teachers of academic subjects in further education colleges already have the teaching qualification required to become a school teacher, viz., Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). In Northern Ireland, further education lecturers are not statutorily required to have an initial teacher training qualification on appointment, but they must hold an approved qualification and work towards a postgraduate certificate (Further and Higher Education) within three years of their appointment.

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<sup>(63)</sup> Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe – 2006 *Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission* on progress under the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme. Council document 2006/c79/01, p. 8.  
[http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c\\_079/c\\_07920060401en00010019.pdf](http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c_079/c_07920060401en00010019.pdf)

In November 2002, the discussion document *Success for All: Reforming Further Education and Training* <sup>(64)</sup> presented a strategy to develop the post-compulsory sector in England. There have been developments in a number of areas in England since the publication of the strategy. Targets have been set for the numbers of teachers in colleges obtaining qualifications (90 % of full-time and 60 % of part-time teachers to be qualified by 2006). Following consultation, the education ministry set out its programme of reform in *Equipping our Teachers for the Future: Reforming Initial Teacher Training for the Learning and Skills Sector* <sup>(65)</sup>. The reforms which refer to England only, include: initial teacher training leading to the award of 'Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills'; the development of Centres of Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs) new standards and quality assurance arrangements for initial teacher training.

Ongoing *continuing professional development* (CPD) for those working with adults is more prevalent than specific initial professional development but it nevertheless remains patchy and *ad hoc* in the majority of countries. The extent of specific CPD to develop or improve skills to teach adults is generally dependent on the employer. All the larger providers of adult education in the majority of countries make courses on teaching methods or related subjects available to their teaching staff. These courses are frequently provided by higher education institutions. Management personnel also need CPD to improve the governance of institutions. In this respect, it is significant that since 2000 very few Grundtvig projects have addressed the issue of management of adult education despite the fact that the topic is an eligible theme of the action. Moreover, the Grundtvig 3 training courses have faced a number of challenges in running CPD courses for adult educators.

In Austria, in 2003, the financial subsidies for train-the-trainers-projects in relation to trainers and educational managers within the non-profit adult education sector made available by the federal ministry for Education, Science and Culture have been raised using national and ESF funding. It is anticipated that the upgrading of post-secondary colleges of teacher training to higher education institutions will produce a considerable improvement in quality. A nation-wide project for qualifying managerial groups, the 'Leadership Academy' has been established.

In Greece the Centre for the Training of Educators and Trainers of Adults seeks to raise the competence levels of teachers and trainers of adults. Greece is among a number of countries (including Romania, Slovenia) that make specific reference to the challenges involved in upskilling teachers of adults.

## Initial and continuing professional development in non-formal NVAE

With a few notable exceptions, very little information is provided on professional development of personnel in non-formal NVAE. To a greater extent than in formal NVAE, teachers in non-formal NVAE are from a wide range of backgrounds and there are few requirements for teaching or training qualifications. However, the large non-governmental providers with a specific remit for education and training where many of the teachers will be higher education graduates and which are in receipt of public funding will provide regular CPD in teaching adults and other issues for their staff. In smaller NGOs, staff are likely to work on a part-time basis and to have another occupation outside of education. The issue of teacher qualifications is, however, increasingly likely to arise in the context of quality assurance if the organisation is in receipt of public funding, hence, as has been seen, measures in some countries, to introduce quality measures, including staff development, in NGOs receiving public support.

<sup>(64)</sup> *Equipping our Teachers for the Future: Reforming Initial Teacher Training for the Learning and Skills Sector* // Standards Unit. Department for Education and Skills. London: DfES, 2004.

<sup>(65)</sup> *Success for All: Reforming Further Education and Training: Our Vision for the Future* // Department for Education and Skills. London, 2002. <http://www.successforall.gov.uk/linkAttachments/ACF4CD5.pdf> [20 January 2004].

In the United Kingdom (Scotland) initial qualifying training for community learning and development practice is at degree level (ISCED 5A). Currently the CLD initial qualifying training is being provided by five higher education institutions (one of which offers a distance learning route) and a number of FE institutions. Recent years have witnessed the development of flexible and work-based modes for professional training in United Kingdom (Scotland), with a particular emphasis on widening access to community activists. In order to take these developments forward a consortium for providers of work-based and part-time professional training in CLD has been formed to support development of these modes of training and evaluate the varied approaches. In Finland, the Act on Liberal Adult Education lays down specific requirements in relation to the skill sets of teachers in the area of non-formal learning. Adult education in Norway has traditionally been the responsibility of NGOs and as a result of this non-formal approach, there has been no formal demand for teachers and trainers with formal qualifications in teaching adults in the area of non-formal adult learning in Norway. The NGOs themselves have traditionally organized courses in adult education for teachers and trainers and this tradition continues today.

## CONCLUSION

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This review of formal and non-formal non-vocational adult education (NVAE), based on the thirty-three national descriptions of education systems in the countries in the Eurydice Network (with the exception of Turkey) and undertaken for a specific purpose, is a snapshot in time (2005-2006) of a section of the larger landscape of adult learning. Limitations to the exercise arose from definitional and categorisation challenges and from the level of information on NVAE, especially non-formal NVAE, available in the review countries.

The general objectives and overall direction of adult education and training policies in all the countries show broad similarities, while substantial differences may be observed in immediate priorities and in approaches, methods and instruments by which objectives are being pursued. Some countries are striving to consolidate infrastructure so as to respond flexibly to individual and collective learning needs while others are dealing with rapid supply and demand-led expansion of adult learning and other provision. Nevertheless, certain common trends emerge. The European Union provides direction for national orientations within a framework which fully respects the responsibility and autonomy of Member States to develop their own education and training systems and, thus, in all countries the direction provided by the Lisbon Agenda and the flagship *Education and Training 2010* programme is evidenced by the general promotion of lifelong learning as an overarching unifying vision and an organising framework. As Europe struggles to adjust to growing economic and social pressures, adult education has evolved as a central policy issue in many countries. The broad politico-educational drive is towards the rationalisation of education and training systems with a thrust towards co-ordination, coherence and, in a small number of countries, integration of policies, structures, financing, provision and qualifications.

Countries are legislating for adult learning as part of a wide range of educational and other legislation. Adult learning is very diverse with a wide range of stakeholders at all levels. To address fragmentation at vertical and horizontal levels, decentralisation and co-ordination at national and/or regional ministry level are two main administrative approaches being adopted. In addition, national and local partnerships of the multiple stakeholders exist, are emerging or are being aspired to. However, apart from the national representative associations formed by countries non-formal NVAE providers in many countries, the growing co-ordination and coherence agenda does not necessarily extend to non-formal NVAE.

A balancing act in terms of who pays, why, for what and for whom is essential in the effective financing of NVAE. By and large, there is recognition in many countries of the need for the state to go beyond a general steering, managerial and co-ordinating role to ensure learning opportunities for adults with low education levels and most at risk of unemployment and social exclusion. However, it is clear from the national information that public commitment to and investment in, NVAE varies between countries. The majority finance formal NVAE through funding or subsidising regional/local authorities which, in turn, provide direct funding to providers, frequently schools. Multi-source funding from a wide range of statutory, non-statutory, private, philanthropic and demand-side sources is the norm in non-formal NVAE in the majority of countries. Levels of financial support vary considerably across Europe and participation in non-formal NVAE tends, on the whole, to be self-financing except in the case of socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. In most countries no precise documentation of public investment in non-formal NVAE is available.

The need to increase participation rates in adult learning remains a major challenge in the majority of countries. While there are substantial cross-national differences in the incidence and volume of continuing education and training among adults, those adults most and least likely to participate are the same groups of people in all countries. The majority of countries are targeting under-represented adults and in many countries public authorities support non-formal NVAE due to its capacity to reach particular 'at risk' individuals.

Stimulating and supporting participation is a concern in all countries with, as we have seen, varying degrees of success, ranging from high levels of participation in learning for adults aged 25-64 in the Nordic countries, Netherlands and Slovenia to much lower levels of participation in many of the new Member States and the acceding countries. Financial mechanisms to motivate individuals to commit to learning are a critical policy lever for governments. The trend is away from supply-side to demand-side measures, including tax incentives, general welfare measures to support participation and specific financial aid to cover opportunity costs.

In an effort to respond to time and other pressures that hinder participation, the organisation of learning is receiving attention at institutional level in a number of countries. Flexibility is a key organisational principle with countries reporting a mixed linear and modular delivery of formal NVAE; personalised 'tailor-made' courses; independent learning opportunities, a more symmetrical pedagogy; flexible location and scheduling of learning opportunities, and the provision of appropriate learning supports. However, there is no indication of the extent of any of these arrangements and information from at least one-third of the countries points to a reliance on traditional teaching methods in formal NVAE. There is limited national information on the organisation of teaching and learning or methodologies in non-formal NVAE.

Publicly supported measures to enable adults to gain compulsory and upper secondary education and training qualifications exist in virtually all countries. A distinction between general and vocational education is not always drawn in the national information on participation in formal NVAE at upper secondary level. Adults have a statutory right to achieve secondary education qualifications in a limited number of countries. Literacy learning is frequently considered non-formal NVAE but it may occur as a support within formal NVAE. In recent years a number of countries have focused on developing a framework for the development of literacy provision, including legislation, infrastructure, white papers and action plans. Interestingly, a number of the new Member States indicate that their adult literacy levels do not warrant any specific interventions. Training in ICT, as digital competence and as a subject in its own right, comes within formal and non-formal NVAE provision, but tends to be more widespread in the latter. It is significant that accounts of language learning by adults, apart from immigrants, are noticeably limited in the national information.

All the social, cultural and political issues form the subject matter of non-formal NVAE and a number of countries explicitly support the role of non-formal NVAE in developing active and participatory citizenship and social capital and strengthening social inclusion and social cohesion.

Guidance in NVAE, where it exists, faces many challenges in the majority of countries. Service standards are limited and quality frameworks where established tend to operate as guidelines rather than as mandatory requirements. However, there is evidence that a number of countries are putting in place responses and resources to promote re-engagement with learning, course completion and a successful transition to sustainable employment for adults with low education levels.

Supra-national and national objectives of building a lifelong learning society are creating a strong demand for more coherent and flexible qualifications systems and governments in many countries are responding with legislation, the establishment of national /regional awarding bodies with overall

responsibility for the qualifications system and the development of national and/or regional qualifications frameworks. The recent transnational consultation on the proposed European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is steering and stimulating further developments in this regard.

Allied to the development of national qualification systems, there is a growing movement throughout Europe for recognition, accreditation and certification of learning outcomes independent of when, where or how they have been achieved. In general, the recognition of prior learning (RPL) agenda is being driven by the vocational education and training sector as a means of raising skills levels for individuals, enterprises and society. So far the impact of RPL on NVAE has been limited as entry, especially to non-formal NVAE, is relatively flexible and informal recognition of prior learning tends to be embedded in the planning of learning programmes. Nonetheless, there is a concern in the non-formal NVAE sector that RPL could lead, eventually, to the application of accreditation systems directly to non-formal learning as it is happening.

Enhancing the effectiveness of education and training through improving quality standards is a major theme of reform for most countries. When formal NVAE is delivered in mainstream schools the quality assurance measures in place in those institutions apply equally to the adult provision. However, many countries have not developed adequate national performance indicators or put in place arrangements to collect necessary data, with the result that it is difficult for them to measure the overall impact of education and training actions. Procedures for accreditation and accountability in non-formal NVAE vary enormously and the national information provided on the subject is limited, but there is some evidence that accountability and quality assurance issues are coming to the fore for non-governmental bodies in receipt of public financing.

The professional development of staff is a critical component of quality assurance in NVAE. In general, the majority of countries have paid little attention to defining the content and processes of initial training for formal NVAE personnel and even less so for personnel in non-formal NVAE. In the majority of countries the main emphasis on adult education as a discipline in higher education is at post-graduate level as an academic discipline and/or as continuing professional development.

It is tempting to seek to identify models of NVAE across the review countries, but the task of going beyond naming trends to the identification of models of NVAE is complicated by variations in the volume of national information in the Eurydice database, by an inevitable decontextualisation through concentration on a limited area of adult learning and by the absence of harmonised statistical information. Given the available information base, perhaps the most confident statement that can be made is that it is possible to loosely plot the location of clusters of countries along a spectrum of development in relation to the politico-educational (policies, legislation, structures, administration, target groups, indicators and benchmarks, etc) and pedagogical (learning processes, outcomes, etc) realities described above. Because adult education policies are essentially national policies, a wide range of factors contribute to the position of any country on any spectrum, including: the prevailing socio-political culture comprising beliefs and values about the role of the state in general and in relation to education and training in particular; the dominant views on the optimal balance of power, roles and activity between the three major social institutions, state, market, and civil society; the systems of governance in operation; the role of the social partners; the prevailing views on the function of education systems – in this, case adult education – in relation to the social, cultural, political and economic goals and priorities of a country; the level of economic development and the level of investment in education and training.

Formal NVAE leading to the acquisition of secondary school qualifications addresses a wide range of gaps, divides and disparities in a country, viz., the knowledge divide; the skills divide; the digital divide; the gender divide; the age divide and disparities between sectors of the general population in the

economic, social, cultural and personal domains. Formal NVAE occurs along a spectrum of policy, provision and practice in the review countries.

At one end of a spectrum of formal NVAE, a number of countries adopt a systemic approach to formal adult education whereby it is an integral autonomous sector within the overall education and training system. Thus, enabling legislation, policies, structures, financing, flexible learning provision and support, initial and continuing professional development of personnel and overall monitoring and evaluation are established as for the primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors of the system within an overall lifelong learning framework. Tripartite arrangements underpin the policy development culture and formal NVAE is part of redistributive and equality measures within a public service rationale. Literacy levels are generally high and adults with low levels of education have a statutory right to achieve upper and post secondary qualifications in a public network of dedicated institutions. They may also have a statutory right to the recognition of their prior learning for access, exemption or gaining part of or a full qualification. Concerns with quality and with monitoring and evaluation are translated into policies, structures and measures. Significantly, these countries tend to score highly on all the benchmarking criteria of the *Education and Training 2010* work programme.

At the other end of this spectrum are countries where formal NVAE provision is limited. The legislative basis, policies and financial support are disjointed and weak; structures are fragmented; partnership is minimal at most levels; provision lacks coherence and varies from region to region within the country. The systematic involvement of the social partners is either emergent or has yet to evolve. Provision may depend to a large degree on the private for-profit sector. Such provision as there is, may be limited by programmatic eligibility criteria focused, perhaps, on young early school leavers and based on a schooling paradigm; school-based teaching methodologies are the norm. Monitoring and evaluation are sporadic and, where they exist, may not necessarily inform evidence-based policy-making. Between these two extremes it is, of course, possible to identify formal NVAE provision comprising varying combinations of the best and least favourable characteristics of the two ends of the spectrum.

Many countries positioned at what – by a range of criteria – might be characterised as the more effective end of the formal NVAE spectrum, began implementing the *Education and Training 2010* work programme, including the adult learning elements, from a position of comparative strength where they were already ahead of the benchmarks set for 2010. In these countries adult learning is embedded in the wider social, economic, cultural and political domains. Many of the countries at the less developed end of the spectrum stress how historical legacies and financial constraints are limiting their capacity to enhance formal NVAE among other education and training provision.

Non-formal NVAE provision also occurs along a spectrum of legislation, policies, structures, financing and, ultimately, effectiveness on a wide range of fronts. Compared to formal NVAE, non-formal NVAE lends itself even less to neat categorisation and, as has been pointed out, the information on the subject provided by the majority of national authorities is limited.

Non-formal NVAE as social movement and socio-educational activity is engaged in by adults for personal, social, civic and cultural purposes. The range of providers is vast, from non-government organisations which are exclusively education providers to those that include education activities for the general public and/or for their own membership within a framework of wider social involvement. Within this range there are those that rely exclusively on public funds, those with mixed funding schemes and those that are entirely self-supporting.

At one end of the spectrum the intrinsic value of non-formal adult education is explicitly recognised by the state as a collective as well as an individual project contributing to consensus building and social cohesion and as having a major role in the promotion of active citizenship and the maintenance of



democratic institutions. Adult education is considered a 'public good' and a public responsibility and there is recognition of the role of non-formal NVAE in building bridges between culturally diverse people and leading to enhanced social capital. To these ends, non-formal NVAE tends to be supply-based within a well-developed infrastructure of public and non-public institutions. Popular associations and organisations receive public funding while retaining their independence regarding learning content and organisation, subject to being accountable for public funding. Non-formal NVAE is thus the result of an explicit partnership between the state and civil society, valued by both sides.

The other end of the spectrum is characterised by a lack of or limited explicit public commitment to, the role of non-formal NVAE in the maintenance and/or creation of democratic institutions and social cohesion; multi-source funding from a wide range of non-statutory, private, philanthropic and demand-side sources with limited or, indeed, no public funding; a restricted capacity on the part of a fragmented civil society to deliver adult learning services; what might be termed an 'heroic' against-the-odds approach in place of a more structured and professional approach. Between the two ends of the spectrum, the status, resourcing and participation in non-formal NVAE falls somewhere between these two extremes.

### **Elements of effective NVAE provision**

A number of countries are located at the 'more effective' end of the policy, provision and practice spectrum in relation to both formal and non-formal NVAE and in these countries the two merge to produce an holistic, integrated, relatively seamless provision of NVAE which functions effectively in relation to societal goals and objectives – social, cultural and economic. Without any wish to propose simple or, indeed, simplistic solutions to complex challenges or to advocate a harmonisation of NVAE across the review countries, it appears that this convergence of spectra suggests the essential elements of effective NVAE provision at national level. Such elements include:

- a systemic approach to NVAE, formal and non-formal, within an adult learning framework within an overarching lifelong learning framework
- decentralised structures for a better analysis of local needs and greater opportunity for partnership and co-ordination
- maintenance of a balance between civic and social values and needs and those of the economy, that is, a balance between human capital and social capital goals
- effective resourcing of adult learning with a focus on demand-side measures which include strategic targeting of under-represented groups
- maintenance of a public network of flexible adult learning settings
- a focus on addressing the learning and other needs of adults with low education levels in the interests of democratic institutions, social cohesion and economic development
- the provision of effective learning supports, including information and guidance
- an integrated qualifications system with provision for the validation of informal and non-formal learning
- the development of policies, structures and measures to address quality issues and ensure quality outcomes
- a systematic approach to the initial and continuing professional development of NVAE personnel.





## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX 1.

### Examples of nomenclature for NVAE

Nomenclature	Country
Adult education (AE)	Belgium (German-speaking Community), Ireland, Greece, Spain (also called <i>permanent education</i> ), Italy (main term used), Latvia, Lithuania ('voluntary selection of areas of education and by specific methods of training', <i>continuing education</i> is also used), Luxembourg ('concept is highly ambiguous'), Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Poland (as an element of continuing education), Slovenia (programmes for raising general education and cultural levels), Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Iceland, Norway
Adult and Community Learning (ACL)	United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) – a wide range of learning by adults mainly outside formal further education
Continuing Education; Continuous Education (CE)	Germany, Spain (adult education to Baccalaureate and HE access), Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Iceland, Norway
Community Learning and Development (CLD)	United Kingdom (Scotland) – a variety of formal and informal learning opportunities and the development of core skills including adult literacy; numeracy and ICTs
Community Education	Ireland
Further Education (FE)	Belgium (German-speaking Community), Ireland, Latvia, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland – FE is the term most often used to describe continuing education and training for young people leaving compulsory education and for adults – includes vocational, academic, leisure and personal development courses), United Kingdom (Scotland)
General Education	Denmark, Latvia
Interest Education	Czech Republic
Liberal Education	Denmark, Finland, Sweden (called <i>popular education</i> )
Non-formal Education	Latvia, Slovenia, Norway
Permanent Education	Belgium (French Community), Spain (also called <i>adult education</i> ), Italy, Romania
Popular Education	France (non-formal adult education, also called <i>socio-cultural education</i> ), Norway
Popular Enlightenment	Denmark, Slovenia, Norway
Post-16 Education	United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) – includes school education of 16-19 year olds)
Recurrent Education (second-chance education)	Portugal
Second-chance Education	Austria, Romania
Social Advancement Education	Belgium (the three Communities)
Socio-cultural adult work	Belgium (Flemish Community)
Supplementary Education	Sweden

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

## APPENDIX 2.

### Participation in lifelong learning <sup>(66)</sup>

Percentage of population aged 24-64 participating in education and training in the four weeks prior to the survey, 2000-2005

	EU25		BE	CZ	DK	DE	EE	EL	ES	FR	IE	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
2000	7.9		6.8	:	20.8	5.2	6.0	1.1	5.0	2.8	:	5.5	3.1	:	2.8	4.8	3.1
2004	10.3		9.5	6.3	27.6	7.4	6.7	2.0	5.1	7.8	7.2	6.8	9.3	9.1	6.5	9.4	4.6
2005	10.8		10.0	5.9	27.6	:	5.9	1.8	12.1	7.6	8.0	6.2	5.6	7.6	6.3	9.4	4.2
Breakdown of 2005 data by gender																	
Males	10.0		10.3	5.5	24.2	:	4.2	1.9	11.2	7.4	6.6	5.7	5.1	4.9	4.9	9.3	3.5
Females	11.7		9.7	6.4	31.0	:	7.5	1.7	13.1	7.9	9.4	6.6	6.1	10.0	7.6	9.5	4.8

	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	LI	NO	BG	RO	HR	TR
2000	4.5	15.6	8.3	:	3.4	:	:	19.6	21.6	21.0	23.5	:	13.3	:	0.9	:	1.1
2004	4.8	17.3	12.0	5.5	4.8	17.9	4.6	24.6	33.3	29.1	23.9	:	18.9	1.3	1.6	2.0	:
2005	5.8	16.6	13.9	5.0	4.6	17.8	5.0	24.8	34.7	29.1	26.6		19.4	1.1	1.6	2.3	2.0
Breakdown of 2005 data by gender																	
Males	6.7	16.6	13.2	4.3	4.5	16.0	4.7	20.9	29.2	24.2	23.5	:	17.8	1.1	1.5	2.3	1.4
Females	4.8	16.7	14.6	5.6	4.7	19.6	5.2	21.1	29.9	33.9	29.7	:	21.0	1.1	1.7	2.3	2.6

Source: DG Education and Culture. Data source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey, EU 25 figure for 2000: estimate.

#### Additional notes

- Due to the implementation of harmonised concepts and definitions in the survey, breaks in time series: BE, CZ, DK, DE, EL, ES (2005), FR, IE, IT, CY, LT, LU, HU, MT, AT, PL, PT, SI, SK, FI, SE, IS, NO (2003) and RO (2004).
- 2005: provisional data for LU, MT, UK, HR

The percentage of the working age population who participated in education and training in the 4 weeks prior to the survey amounted to 10.8 % in 2005. Since the data overstate progress as a result of breaks in time series, this represents only a slight real progress compared to 2000 despite the nominal three percentage points increase. Additional efforts are needed to reach the benchmark of 12.5 % participation rate in 2010 <sup>(67)</sup>. The Nordic countries, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the United Kingdom currently show the highest lifelong learning participation rates.

<sup>(66)</sup> Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe – 2006 Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission on progress under the 'Education & Training 2010 work programme', p. 17-18. [http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c\\_079/c\\_07920060401en00010019.pdf](http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c_079/c_07920060401en00010019.pdf)

<sup>(67)</sup> Data used for assessing the benchmark refer to a 4-week period of participation (LFS 2004). If a longer period were used, rates would be higher. Eurostat data from the LFS ad hoc module on lifelong learning carried out in 2003 (referring to a 12-month period) show a participation rate of 42 % (4.4 % in formal learning; 16.5 % in non-formal learning and nearly one European out of three declared having taken some form of informal learning).

### APPENDIX 3.

#### Rationale for policy-making in NVAE

Key international policy drivers	Country (specifically named by...)
Lisbon Agenda	Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Bulgaria
<i>Education &amp; Training 2010</i> work programme	Czech Republic, Austria
Stimulus of participating in OECD review of adult learning	Austria
European Union reports & national/regional research including European Qualifications Framework	Belgium (Flemish Community)
EU Funding Criteria	Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania

General national priorities and development strategies	Country (specifically named by...)
Establishment of a knowledge society	Czech Republic, Greece, Poland
Promotion of democratic values and the liberal ideal – for individual and collective development	Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark, Greece, Lithuania, Finland, Sweden
Application of underlying principles of the education system	Spain, Austria
Development of a culture of learning thorough recognition of non-formal & informal learning	Belgium (French Community), Portugal
Utilizing adult education as a means of achieving general social and economic goals	Belgium (French and German-speaking Communities), Czech Republic, Spain, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
Utilizing adult education as a means of achieving specifically named social and economic goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ addressing demographic trends</li> <li>▪ driving socio-economic change</li> <li>▪ supporting community regeneration</li> <li>▪ promoting social cohesion</li> <li>▪ promoting social and economic redistribution</li> <li>▪ reducing unemployment levels</li> <li>▪ improving productivity</li> </ul>	Czech Republic, Ireland, Poland, Finland Romania Lithuania, United Kingdom (Scotland) Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Latvia, Finland, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) Latvia, Sweden Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia Bulgaria, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

<b>Specific national priorities and development strategies in relation to adult education</b>	<b>Country (specifically named by...)</b>
Overall adult education systems development	Czech Republic, Estonia, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Norway
Co-ordination of adult education	Belgium (Flemish Community), Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Italy
Improvement of co-ordination of LLL	Lithuania
Equal educational opportunities for all adults and learning as a lifelong task	Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Poland, Norway
Promoting access to adult learning/Addressing low levels of participation	Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Iceland
Developing the qualifications system/Qualifications framework	Czech Republic, Ireland, Spain, Poland
Raising the quality of adult education provision	Lithuania (through a focus on the quality of teaching and teachers), Poland, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
Facilitating access to reliable information, guidance and counselling	Poland

<b>Priority target groups</b>	<b>Country (specifically named by...)</b>
Adults without post-compulsory education	Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Finland, Iceland
Adults with low literacy levels	Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Iceland
Adult population in general	Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, Latvia, Poland, Norway
Adults with a disability Ex-offenders	Lithuania

<b>Priority learning areas</b>	<b>Country (specifically named by...)</b>
Basic skills/basic education	Belgium (Flemish Community), Czech Republic, Ireland, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Iceland
Languages and ICTs	Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

**APPENDIX 4.****Examples of national and/or regional coordinating bodies for NVAE**

<b>Bodies</b>	<b>Country</b>
The Training and Alignment Information Service	Belgium (Flemish Community)
Government Council and Regional Council of Human Resource Development	Czech Republic
Council for Adult Education Council for General Adult Education at Basic Level	Denmark
Concerted Action Campaign for Continuing Education Expert Council on Adult Education	Germany Germany (Rhineland-Palatinate)
National Adult Learning Council	Ireland
National Committee for Lifelong Learning	Greece
Council of Non-formal Adult Education	Lithuania
Service for the Education of Adults	Luxembourg
National Institute for Adult Education	Hungary
National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEŻiU)	Poland
Romanian Institute of Adult Education	Romania
Council of Experts on Adult Education	Slovenia
Adult Education Council	Finland (2000)
Swedish National Agency for Education Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning Swedish National Council of Adult Education	Sweden
Learning and Skills Council	United Kingdom (England)
Community Learning Wales	United Kingdom (Wales)
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education	United Kingdom (England and Wales)
Committee on Lifelong Learning	Iceland
Adult Education Liechtenstein Foundation	Liechtenstein (responsible for non-formal adult education)
National Institute for Adult Learning	Norway

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

## APPENDIX 5.

### Examples of national/regional representative associations for non-formal NVAE

Bodies	Country
AONTAS National Adult Education Association NALA National Adult Literacy Agency	Ireland
Association of Austrian Education Centres (formal NVAE); Austrian Committee of Adult Education (KEBO) – common platform of major adult education associations	Austria
Association of Adult Education Institutions	Czech Republic
Association of Adult Education Institutions in SR	Slovakia
Association of Estonian Adult Educators (AEAE) (NF/NVAE)	Estonia
Baltic Region Association for Research in Adult Education	Lithuania
Committee for the National and International Relations of Associations for Youth and Education for the People (CNAJEP); French League for Instruction and Continuing Education	France
Federation of Adult Education Associations	Spain
Federation of Scientific-Technical Associations (NOT); Polish Economic Society (PTE); Foundation for the Development of Local Democracy	Poland
Finnish Adult Education Association	Finland
German Adult Education Association	Germany
Institute for Continuing Adult Education	Greece
Latvian Adult Education Association	Latvia
Lithuanian Adult Education Association	Lithuania
National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)	United Kingdom (England and Wales)
Norwegian Association for Adult Education	Norway
SOCIUS	Belgium (Flemish Community)
Spanish Federation of People's Universities	Spain

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.



## APPENDIX 6.

### Financing individuals

<b>Measures indirectly related to adult education – collateral measures to support participation in adult education</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Country (specifically named by...)</b>
Housing benefit		Finland
Transport costs	Transport costs funded or subsidised	Bulgaria, Ireland, Latvia, Hungary, Slovenia
Childcare	Support for care of dependent children	Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway
Extra tax-free child allowance	Based on the number of children & introduced as of January 1, 2006	Sweden
Tax exemptions or tax credits	Passive measure – Cost of education deducted from taxable income or converted to tax credits  Computer & internet cost (refund of one-third of the cost) to promote IT literacy and distance learning	Majority of countries provide one or more tax incentives  Lithuania

<b>Active financial measures directly related to adult education</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Country (specifically named by...)</b>
Grants – Training grant/Special grant/Recruitment grant/Student grant/Adult Learners grant/Learning grant		Denmark, Germany, Ireland (post-secondary), Spain, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Poland (applied to unemployed and employees sent by employers), Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom (England and Wales)
Training vouchers	To be used for all kinds of adult learning programmes & usually over the lifetime of the individual. Providers redeem the voucher from voucher fund	Belgium (Flemish and French Communities – all adult learning), Germany, Italy, Austria (most courses are job-related or transversal)
Individual loans	Terms usually include deferred repayment	Austria, Poland (from Labour Office only for unemployed), Finland, Sweden, Norway
Individual learning accounts (ILA)	Individual savings matched by contributions from public sources or employer – a special bank account to help pay for learning	Belgium (Flemish Community on an experimental basis only), Netherlands (experimental), United Kingdom (Wales – relaunched), United Kingdom (Scotland)
Scholarships/Studentships/Bursaries		Denmark, Lithuania, Netherlands (ILA), Slovenia, Finland, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Norway
Welfare income maintenance	Welfare income converts to training allowance during learning period	Bulgaria, Ireland, Sweden

<b>Active financial measures directly related to adult education</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Country (specifically named by...)</b>
Training bonus / benefits	Additional payment to individuals on welfare income maintenance schemes	Ireland, Poland (unemployed only)
Adult training formula fund	For disabled adults learning a foreign language or general purpose learning	Hungary
Paid educational leave	Wide spectrum of statutory and/or collective bargaining arrangements across countries and, depending on the country, may or may not apply to NVAE	Majority of countries
Full or partial subsidisation of fees by trade unions, professional bodies, etc.		Iceland

<b>Passive financial measures directly related to adult education</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Country (specifically named by...)</b>
Free or reduced cost courses		Belgium (the three Communities), Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovenia
Course materials free of charge		Ireland, Greece, Latvia, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

**APPENDIX 7.****Financing non-formal NVAE**

<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Country</b>
Basic public grant on annual or other basis from national, regional and/or local government	Belgium (the three Communities), Czech Republic (relatively recently), Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway
Multi-ministerial funding – education and other ministries involved	Belgium (French and Flemish communities), Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom (Scotland)
Project grants for specific educational work	For example, important in Czech Republic, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary
Participant fees – major element of funding of non-formal NVAE, except in the case of target groups considered most at risk who may be more effectively reached by non-governmental bodies	Participant fees are low in countries where there is relatively good public funding of providers
Part of the Student 's basket funds	Lithuania
Private sponsorship – churches; companies; foundations; national lottery; professional associations; trade unions	In many countries and mainly where public support is limited

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

## APPENDIX 8.

### Formal NVAE target groups specifically named in national information

	Country
Adults with low levels of literacy	Belgium (Flemish and German-speaking Communities), Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, France, Austria, Slovenia
Adults without primary education	Denmark, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Norway
Adults without lower secondary education	Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania (18+), Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, Iceland, Norway
Persons without three year upper secondary education	Sweden
Older adults	Belgium (French Community), Denmark, Spain, Slovenia, Finland
Adults with a disability	Belgium (French Community), Bulgaria, Denmark, Lithuania, Austria
Unemployed young people	Belgium (German-speaking Community), Denmark, France, Slovenia
Women	Belgium (French Community), Ireland, Spain
Prisoners	Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom (Scotland), Norway
Ex-offenders	Bulgaria, Greece, Lithuania
Individuals in obligatory military service	Lithuania
Recent immigrants	Ireland, Greece, Austria, United Kingdom (Scotland), Norway
Ethnic minorities	Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary (Roma), Romania (Roma, gypsies), Slovenia, United Kingdom (Scotland)
Generally disadvantaged adults	Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Ireland, Greece, Portugal, United Kingdom (Scotland), Norway
Residents of rural areas, regions of structural unemployment and persons threatened with social exclusion	Poland

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

## APPENDIX 9.

### Learning sites for formal NVAE

Institution	Country
Primary School	Spain, Italy, Portugal, Norway
Basic School	Czech Republic
Basic Education Centre	Belgium (Flemish Community)
Lower Secondary School	Norway
Secondary School	Belgium (French and German-speaking Communities), Spain, Portugal, Slovakia, Finland
Upper Secondary School (general and vocational)	Belgium (French Community), Czech Republic, Italy <sup>(68)</sup> , Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Iceland, Norway
Post-Secondary School	Finland
Vocational Secondary School	Liechtenstein
Interstate Diploma School for Adults	Liechtenstein (located in Switzerland)
Boarding School	Finland
Second Chance School	Greece (for young early school leavers), Slovakia
Second Chance Education Centre	Belgium (Flemish and German-speaking Communities)
Evening Primary School	Spain, Hungary
Evening School	Bulgaria, Germany, Latvia, Portugal
Evening School for Adults	Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Cyprus, Austria, Finland
Evening Classes	Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Romania, Iceland
Extra-mural Classes	Romania
Adult Primary School	Poland (6 <sup>th</sup> grade only)
Gymnasium for Adults	Poland
Social Advancement Education School	Belgium (French Community)
Upper Secondary School for Adults	Denmark, Estonia (evening courses), Spain, Luxembourg, Poland, Finland
Adult Secondary School; Adult classes in general secondary schools	Lithuania
Adult High School	Hungary
Adult Education Centre	Belgium (the three Communities), Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Lithuania, Poland (continuing education centre), Finland, United Kingdom (England, Wales), Norway (municipal, county and state)
Multi-Centre for Adults	Greece (formal and non-formal NVAE)
Municipal Adult Education	Sweden
Lifelong Learning Centre	Iceland

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

<sup>(68)</sup> Also in agreement with the Permanent Territorial Centres.

Institution	Country
State Institute for Further Education	Cyprus
Further Education College	Ireland, United Kingdom
Public College ( <i>Volkshochschulen</i> )	Germany
College	Germany, Malta <sup>(69)</sup>
RVCC Centre (for RPL <sup>(70)</sup> )	Portugal
GRETA <sup>(71)</sup>	France
Permanent Territorial Centre	Italy (set up in the schools in all provinces)
Study Association Private adult education association <sup>(72)</sup>	Norway
Regional education Centres (ROCs); <i>volksuniversiteiten</i>	Netherlands
People's universities	Slovenia
Distance provision	Belgium (Flemish and French Communities), Estonia, Greece (Adult Learning Centres), Spain ( <i>Aulas Mentor</i> on Internet), France, Latvia, Poland, Finland (OU), Sweden (Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning), United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland – <i>Learndirect</i> , National Extension College)

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

<sup>(69)</sup> In Malta, the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (Education Division) is currently restructuring mainstream education provision with the creation 'colleges' made up of a cluster of primary and secondary schools to provide regional 'community learning'.

<sup>(70)</sup> RPL = Recognition of prior learning.

<sup>(71)</sup> GRETA – groups of local public-sector educational institutions that pool their human and material resources to organise continuing education initiatives for adults. There are over 290 GRETA in France, with at least one in each *département*. The institutions concerned may be *collèges* (lower secondary schools), *lycées* for general and technological education, and vocational *lycées*.

<sup>(72)</sup> In Norway adult education is implemented in co-operation between public authorities and private adult education associations such as *Folkeuniversitetet* and the Workers' Educational Association.

**APPENDIX 10.****Learning sites for non-formal NVAE**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Country</b>
Basic Art School	Czech Republic
Folk High School	Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway
Residential Folk High School	Denmark, Finland, Sweden
Adult Education Centre	Belgium (Flemish Community), Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland
Popular Adult School	Spain
Adult Education Association	Finland, Sweden
Study circle	Denmark, Poland, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Norway
Educational Association	Finland
Civitas Club	Lithuania
Knowing+ Club	Portugal
Summer University	Finland
People's University	Slovenia, Finland
Popular University	Spain, Italy, Romania
University of the Third Age	Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, United Kingdom
Continuing University	France
Adult University	Spain
Folk University	Poland
Chamber	Germany, Greece
Commercial provider	All countries – generally no data available
Community Centre	Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom
Cultural Centre/Institution	Majority of countries
Community-based NGOs including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)	Named in Belgium (French and German-speaking Communities), Ireland, Spain, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Poland, Portugal (for literacy), United Kingdom
Language Centre/Language schools	Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Poland
Life long learning Centre	Iceland
Municipal Education Boards	Latvia
Municipal Social Centre	France
Municipality schools	Iceland
Neighbourhood Association	Spain
Popular Adult School	Spain
Prison	Named in Czech Republic, Ireland, Lithuania (for convicted people), Nordic countries, Poland, Portugal (recurrent education)
Tuition Centre; College	Malta
Continuing education centre	Poland
Practical education centre	Poland
Parent Counselling Schools	Greece
Prefectural Committees of Further Education	Greece

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

## APPENDIX 11.

### Examples of policy initiatives for the development of literacy

Law on social inclusion	Names adult literacy requirements	France
National Agency to Combat Illiteracy 1998	To maximise resources from all public & social partner stakeholders	
<i>Integration, Reintegration &amp; Beating Illiteracy</i>	Programme of strategies to raise literacy levels	
White Paper on Adult Education 2000	National Literacy Service	Ireland
Adult Literacy Plan		Belgium (Flemish Community)
<i>Skills for Life 2001</i>	National strategy to improve adult literacy, numeracy & language	United Kingdom (England)
Basic Skills Targets 2005	Strong targets to raise levels of basic skills set	
APOLL (Alpha-Portal Literacy Learning) Network 2002-2005	Providing infrastructure for information, support & advice for learners and teachers	Germany
<i>Reading and Writing Together</i>	Family literacy	Slovenia
<i>Bridge to Education</i>	Literacy for adults	
<i>Strategy for raising literacy levels 2003</i>	Prepared 2003 but not yet adopted	
White Paper <i>Culture for Learning 2004</i>	Six basic skills for all identified	Norway
<i>Basic Skills in the Workplace 2006</i>	Public programme for basic competences for adults	
SAPA	Project to monitor adult literacy skills	Italy (Southern regions)
<i>Plan to Attack Low Literacy 2006-2010: Involved from A to Z.</i>		Netherlands
Research studies	Comparative study on literacy	Liechtenstein (2006)
	Study of adult basic skills	Malta (2006)
<b>European Dimension</b>		
<i>European Basic Skills Network</i>		Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, France, United Kingdom

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.



## APPENDIX 12.

### Typical examples of literacy provision

Activity	Description	Country
Literacy and numeracy provision	Reading, writing & arithmetic; also integrated with practical skills	Belgium (French and German-speaking Communities), Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom, Norway
Adult basic education	As part of the education system As part of 'social advancement' provision As basic education	Belgium (Flemish Community) Belgium (French and Flemish Communities) Czech Republic, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, Hungary (as part of primary education for adults – very limited provision), Malta, Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom
As part of continuing education	Provided through community associations	Belgium (French Community)
As part of single compulsory education structure		Latvia
Specific basic skills integrated in education at all levels, including adult education <i>Basic Skills in the Workplace</i>	Comprising the ability to: express oneself orally; read; write; do arithmetic; use ICTs; participate, cooperate and act in the society Basic competences for adults	Norway
As part of employment & training programmes	One of 3 modules in such programmes in Bulgaria	Bulgaria, Ireland
As a support for adult lower secondary education		Ireland, Austria, Slovenia, Finland
As a support in training courses		Estonia, Hungary
Media – radio & TV	Public broadcast of programmes on literacy TV recruitment campaign	Ireland, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
Family Literacy	Inter-generational provision Initiatives to support improvements in the literacy skills of both children and parents	Ireland, Greece, Latvia, Malta, Slovenia, United Kingdom
Workplace literacy	Literacy integrated or stand alone in the workplace	Ireland, France, Netherlands, Slovenia, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
Literacy in public spaces		Netherlands
Literacy for SEN Literacy for rural inhabitants		Slovenia
Literacy for ethnic minorities	Provision for Roma; provision for gypsies	Romania

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

## APPENDIX 13.

### Examples of education provision for immigrants

Description	Country
Destination country language	Czech Republic, Estonia <sup>(73)</sup> , Ireland <sup>(74)</sup> , Cyprus, Latvia <sup>(75)</sup> , Malta <sup>(76)</sup> , Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia <sup>(77)</sup> , Sweden, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), United Kingdom (Scotland) <sup>(78)</sup> , Iceland
Language + culture	Belgium (German-speaking Community), Greece, Spain <sup>(79)</sup> , France, Italy, Latvia <sup>(80)</sup> , Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Finland <sup>(81)</sup> , Liechtenstein (in non-formal NVAE), Norway
'Boost competence – qualification for target groups with special educational needs' – includes immigrants	Germany
Basic & upper secondary education + language supports	Latvia
Education for social advancement	Belgium (French Community)
Language + culture + labour market orientation	Belgium (Flemish Community) <sup>(82)</sup> , Denmark, Netherlands, Finland
Research on educational needs of specific immigrants	Ireland (asylum seekers, Roma), Spain (immigrant women)

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

<sup>(73)</sup> State supported language courses for Russian-speaking people

<sup>(74)</sup> Refugees and specified asylum seekers have the right to participate in adult learning opportunities on the same basis as Irish citizens. An Action Plan on language support for immigrant workers has been published early 2006.

<sup>(75)</sup> State supported language courses for non Latvian-speaking people

<sup>(76)</sup> 'Maltese for foreigners'

<sup>(77)</sup> Communication level

<sup>(78)</sup> Identified as ESOL for ethnic minorities.

<sup>(79)</sup> Includes Spanish and the other co-official languages.

<sup>(80)</sup> Sunday schools where migrants can learn their own native languages.

<sup>(81)</sup> Literacy studies for illiterate adults; second mother tongue and literature studies for immigrants; immigrants' own mother tongue; culture and society orientation courses; labour market orientation.

<sup>(82)</sup> All adult learning provision is accessible to every adult, native or immigrant.

**APPENDIX 14.****Examples of measures to develop the national qualifications systems**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>Legislation</b>		
National Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999	Established the qualifications infrastructure comprising the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and two awarding Councils (2001).	Ireland
Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Act 2002 & subsidiary legislation	Established Malta Qualifications Council.	Malta
Organic Act on Qualifications and Vocational Training (2002)	Enabled transfer between education and training through recognition of qualifications.	Spain
Legislative Decrees 2003 and 2005	Enabled transfer between education & training through recognition of qualifications. Recognised professional qualifications through apprenticeship as training credits for continuing in upper secondary education & in vocational training.	Italy
<b>National Body</b>		
Government Taskforce		Belgium (French Community)
National Qualifications Authority of Ireland		Ireland
Malta Qualifications Council		Malta
Co-ordinating Body		Netherlands
National Qualifications Institute		Spain
<b>National/Regional Framework of Qualifications</b>	Co-ordinating entity for measuring & relating learning achievements to each other.	Czech Republic, Ireland, Spain, United Kingdom
<b>Development of a National Framework of Qualifications</b> – a key priority		Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

## APPENDIX 15.

### Examples of measures to ensure quality in formal NVAE

- **Accreditation of providers**, (for example, Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia)
- **Certification of the heads of institutions** (for example, Latvia)
- **Quality assurance approaches** including the use of quality assurance frameworks (for example, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Hungary, Malta, Austria, Romania, United Kingdom and quality labels such as INSI-QUEB (Austria); EQFM (Germany, Austria); ISO (Germany, Austria); LQW2 (Germany); GretaPlus (France); EduQUa (Liechtenstein); Integral Quality Assurance (Belgium [Flemish Community])).
- **Quality in guidance services** including voluntary guidelines (Denmark, Greece); quality standards (United Kingdom [England, Wales and Northern Ireland]) and a Guidance Accreditation Board (United Kingdom [England, Wales and Northern Ireland]). In general quality assurance procedures in guidance are not well developed in the review countries.
- **External evaluation of mainstream schools** providing formal NVAE. Formal NVAE comes under school external evaluation procedures in many countries through inspectorate (for example, Germany, Estonia, Ireland [further education colleges], Greece, Spain, Malta, Hungary, Lithuania [external audit], Poland [adult schools], Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Iceland)
- **External evaluation in non-school environments** (for example, Belgium [French and German-speaking Communities – planned], Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland)
- **Inspection by general inspectorate** of the education system (for example, Belgium [German-speaking Community], Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland [FE colleges], Spain, Latvia, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia [from 2006], Sweden, United Kingdom)
- **Inspection by a specific adult education or other inspectorate** (for example, Belgium [French and Flemish Communities], Slovakia [from 2006], United Kingdom [England and Scotland])
- **Monitoring of inputs and outputs** by research institutes and other bodies which carry out regular or periodic surveys of adult education inputs and outputs (various countries)
- **External assessment of student learning** through examinations (for example, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia)
- **External development** of quality teaching resources (for example, Spain, France)
- **Learning contract** with learners (for example, Italy, Hungary)
- **Internal evaluation** (for example, Belgium [French and Flemish Communities, planned in the German-speaking Community], Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland [FE colleges as part of School Development Planning], Greece, Spain, Italy, Austria [*Fachhochschule*], Poland, Portugal [RVCC], Romania, Slovenia, Finland, United Kingdom, Iceland)

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

## APPENDIX 16.

### Examples of measures to ensure quality in non-formal NVAE

Examples of measures to address quality issues in non-formal NVAE include:

- **Legislation** (for example, Denmark, Finland)
- **Establishment of a national body** with a specific remit for quality in non-formal NVAE (for example, Finland, Liechtenstein)
- **Policy developments** in relation to quality improvements (for example, strategy statements [Poland], the development of guidelines (for example, Latvia, United Kingdom [Scotland]))
- **Accreditation of providers** (for example, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Poland [on a voluntary basis])
- **Licensing of programmes** (for example, Latvia)
- **Quality frameworks** (for example, Estonia [from 2006], Ireland [for women's community education], United Kingdom [Scotland])
- **Inspection** (for example, Austria, United Kingdom)
- **Self-evaluation** (Greece [since January 2006], Hungary, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom)
- **Involvement in European co-operation projects** on the topic of quality (for example, Ireland, Latvia, Spain, United Kingdom)
- **Staff skills requirements** – limited attention paid to this area
- General requirements for **annual reports** (in many countries)

Source: Eurybase - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

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