



**REVIEW OF CAREER GUIDANCE
POLICIES IN 11 ACCEDING AND
CANDIDATE COUNTRIES
SYNTHESIS REPORT
JULY 2003**



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External Communication Unit
European Training Foundation
Villa Gualino
Viale Settimio Severo 65
I – 10133 Torino
T +39 011 630 2222
F +39 011 630 2200
E info@etf.eu.int

REVIEW OF CAREER GUIDANCE POLICIES IN 11 ACCEDING AND CANDIDATE COUNTRIES

SYNTHESIS REPORT
July 2003

*Prepared by: Professor **Ronald G. Sultana** – Director, Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research, University of Malta*

*Guidance Review Coordinator: **Helmut Zelloth** – Country Manager for Poland, Estonia and Latvia, European Training Foundation (ETF)*

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Bulgaria: Nadezhda Kamburova, Svetlana Nickolova and Evgenia Petkova, Cyprus: George Christodoulides, Estonia: Margit Rammo, Mare Juske, Katrin Mälksoo and Mari Saari, Hungary: Laszlo Zachar, Istvan Kiszter and Andras Vladiszavljev, Latvia: Zinta Daija, Lithuania: Joné Sikorskienė, Malta: Ronald G. Sultana, Poland: Wojciech Kreft and Włodzimierz Trzeciak, Romania: Mihai Jigău, Slovakia: Stefan Grajcar, Irena Fondova and Jozef Detko, Slovenia: Saša Niklanovic

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

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FOREWORD

Helmut Zelloth, ETF Guidance Review Coordinator

Stimulated by the discussions on the emerging knowledge economy as well as the lifelong learning perspective and a number of related initiatives at European level¹, career information, guidance and counselling are moving up the policy agenda at national and international level.

In this context, in December 2002 the European Commission set up an Expert Group on "Lifelong Guidance" which has a mandate to develop a common understanding of basic concepts and underlying principles for guidance and to reflect on the European dimension of guidance for education, training and employment systems. This Group is composed of officials from education and labour ministries, experts, social partners, NGOs representing consumers, young people and parents from both Member States and Acceding and Candidate Countries (ACCs) as well as international bodies.

The work of this Expert Group is supported by an important body of information coming from reviews on career guidance policies that have been implemented by several international organisations, such as the OECD, the European Commission, the World Bank, CEDEFOP and the ETF. All activities are closely linked, and experts from each organisation are participating in reviews, site visits, analytical meetings and steering committees.

In 2002, at the request of the European Commission, the ETF collected information on guidance and counselling policies in 11

ACCs², focusing on the following key issues: key goals and policy instruments, roles of stakeholders, targeting and access, staffing and financing, quality assurance, delivery settings and methods, and evidence base. Country reports were prepared by 11 independent national experts with the support of the National Observatories, and the present draft synthesis report has been drawn up by an international expert, reflecting the key findings of the review.

Before publication both the country reports and the synthesis report have been the subject of an official consultation process with the relevant ministries in the ACCs, and will be followed by specific dissemination activities and events.

All these developments as well as their outputs are expected to give an additional drive to the strengthening of career guidance policies in different geographical regions, including ACCs. The latter have demonstrated a high commitment to learning from good practice and standards in the education and labour market field and in increasingly engaging in international co-operation.

We believe that this information will allow both policy-makers and practitioners to relate and benchmark their activities better within the international context, as well as stimulate initiatives to develop further national career guidance systems and structures based on a shared lifelong learning vision.

¹ European-wide consultation process on the Lifelong Learning Memorandum, the Communication on Lifelong Learning of the European Commission, the process of Enhanced European Cooperation in VET and the process on the Future Objectives of Education and Training Systems

² Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia. The Czech Republic was covered by the OECD Review and Turkey by the World Bank Review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The provision of career information and guidance throughout a citizen's life has become an issue of great importance worldwide, as societies prepare themselves to meet the challenges that the transition to knowledge-based economies represents. An unprecedented research effort has in fact been initiated by the OECD, which has distributed a dedicated questionnaire to 14 countries internationally in order to create a baseline of information on the current state of policy development in career guidance. That same survey instrument has been used by CEDEFOP to gather data on the remaining EU countries, and by the ETF in relation to 11 ACCs. The World Bank has initiated a parallel review in a number of middle-income countries, again using the OECD questionnaire. The thematic review by these key partners will lead to the development of the most extensive harmonised international database ever on guidance policy and practice.

This synthesis report summarises the state of play in the development of career information and guidance in both the education and labour market sectors in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Experts from each of these countries have written a report, structured around the OECD survey and on the basis of their own knowledge of the field, often following extensive consultation with key partners.

The broad purpose of this exercise is, first of all, to provide an account of the most recent and most significant developments, trends, challenges and major issues, as well as the strengths and weaknesses, of national career information and guidance systems and policies, in such a way as to

render the data susceptible to comparative analysis. Secondly, the synthesis report aims to facilitate the generation of benchmarks, enabling the countries that participated in the review to gauge how well they are doing in career information and guidance provision in relation to other comparable countries, and to facilitate the sharing of good practice. Thirdly, the report should prove to be a useful tool for the development of policy, particularly as ACCs have acknowledged the centrality of lifelong learning in their strategic response to the challenges of integration in the global economy generally, and in the EU more specifically, and the value of career information and guidance throughout life for citizens within that context.

The synthesis report consists of **six sections**, which closely follow the OECD outline in order to facilitate comparison between the different reports once these become available. In the Annex, experts responsible for writing up the detailed country reports have contributed a summary providing an overview of the key elements of the national arrangements for careers information and guidance, outlining the strengths, weaknesses, issues and challenges for their systems.

The **first section** provides a background to the Commission's involvement in the career information and guidance review. It also outlines briefly the geopolitical, economic and cultural contexts of the 11 countries surveyed, particularly in so far as these impact on career guidance provision.

The **second section** focuses on the **policy challenges for career information and guidance** in terms of national objectives. The latter include the upgrading of the knowledge and skills base of the

population, with a view to addressing unemployment, to meeting the demands of knowledge-based economies, and to ensuring that the labour supply and demand are in harmony. Another set of challenges arises from a social policy context that seeks to ensure equitable distribution of education and employment opportunities, with guidance services having a key role to play as active measures in combating early school leaving, facilitating the integration of at-risk groups in both education and the labour market, and reducing poverty. Governments in ACCs – and to a lesser extent, the private sector – have acknowledged the important contribution that career guidance can make in reaching these educational, employment and social objectives, and indeed have launched several initiatives to underscore their commitment to the cause. Nevertheless, while the discourse around career guidance has intensified, it appears that in some cases that discourse has outstripped practice, and plans tend to suffer from a lack of implementation.

The **third section** constitutes the heart of the report, as it considers several aspects that contribute to the **more effective delivery of career guidance**. An initial focus is the services provided in the **education sector**. Here attention is given to the extent to which guidance is a stand-alone activity offered infrequently and at key transition and decision-making points, which seems to be the key modality of provision when compared to other models where guidance issues permeate the curriculum. Attention is also given to the initiatives that help to connect the school with the world of work; to the instruments used in delivering guidance; to the groups that are targeted; and to the education sectors where services are non-existent (namely primary schooling), or where they are most present (secondary level), or where they are on the increase (tertiary level, including universities).

A second focus is on the **employment sector**, and the extent to which adults receive guidance as they negotiate occupational and further education and training trajectories in a lifelong learning

society. The synthesis report highlights the fact that most adult guidance is offered in the context of public employment services, and that it tends to be remedial in nature, narrowly targeted at unemployed people, with the immediate goal of finding them employment. Other key trends noted are the lack of cross-sectorial collaboration, and the minor involvement of the private sector in the provision of adult guidance, where at best they function as job-brokerage services. One aspect of guidance that has witnessed a great deal of development in most ACCs is the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to ensure more effective and widespread provision of education- and career-related information to the community. There is also a gradual trend to increased input and involvement by stakeholders, and to a shift in the modality of service whereby clients are provided with the resources to assess their needs and aspirations, and to match these with employment opportunities. A key issue cutting across the whole of this section is the lack of a sound evidence base that would permit the evaluation of the effectiveness of the guidance service in reaching its objectives.

Section four considers the **human and financial resources** dedicated to career guidance. In most ACCs, staff involved in offering guidance services have a higher level of education – often in psychology or the humanities – though not all have had specialised pre-service training in the field. Trends include increased opportunities for in-service training, and the gradual professionalisation of career guidance through the specification of entry and qualification routes, the articulation of clearly defined occupational roles, the drawing up of a formal code of ethics, and the formation of associations and networks that may have a research and training function. Most ACCs report that the profession tends to attract women in the main, and that the qualifications and training routes for staff employed in the education sector tend to be different from those for staff engaged in the employment sector. The information about the financial resources allocated to career guidance is extremely sketchy and inconclusive. Most

of the budget for careers information and guidance services comes from the state, with few ACCs reporting any substantial investment in the activity by the private sector.

Section five synthesises the observations made by experts from the ACCs in terms of the **strategic leadership** that is exercised in the field of career guidance, and of how this could be strengthened. Despite the fact that there have been several noteworthy developments, a general conclusion that can be drawn is that there is a need for stronger mechanisms to provide coordination and leadership in articulating strategies for lifelong access to guidance within a national policy framework that is both dynamic and adequately resourced. As things stand at the moment, career guidance still tends to be seen by governments as a marginal activity. There is also much scope for a more vigorous role for the private sector and stakeholders,

in a field where, curiously, trade union input seems to be particularly weak. Little evaluation is carried out to monitor quality in service provision, or to measure effectiveness, particularly in relation to specific performance targets and outputs. While examples of good practice exist in a number of the countries surveyed, a more robust evidence base is required if guidance is to be provided in a way that responds to the distinct needs of a differentiated clientele.

Section six provides a concluding note identifying the main challenges as well as the way forward for career guidance in the countries surveyed. While none of the ACCs on its own holds the key for addressing the most pressing issues that are identified, collectively they certainly provide a rich thesaurus of good practice from which policy-makers and practitioners can draw inspiration.

1. INTRODUCTION

1

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE COMMISSION'S FOCUS ON CAREER GUIDANCE

1.1.1 Career guidance has been identified as one of the main priorities for action in the European Commission's Communication on Lifelong Learning.³ As such, the Commission has decided to create a **baseline of information on the current state of policy development in career guidance** in Europe, through a survey using a dedicated questionnaire prepared by the OECD. This questionnaire has already been used in 14 countries⁴ as part of an OECD thematic review, in an attempt to develop benchmarks – enabling participating countries to gauge how well they are doing in career guidance provision in relation to other comparable countries – and to facilitate the sharing of good practice, providing countries with an

opportunity to promote their successes and to learn from practices elsewhere. On the basis of the proven usefulness of the OECD survey, the Commission, with the help of CEDEFOP, has extended the collection of information to the remaining EU Member States, with the ETF overseeing the same exercise in relation to 11 ACCs (namely Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia). The World Bank, for its part, has launched a parallel review in a number of middle-income countries (including Chile, Russia, the Philippines, Turkey and South Africa), again using the OECD questionnaire. The involvement of these key partners – all using the same survey tool – will lead to the development of the most extensive harmonised international database ever on guidance policy and practice.

³ Commission of the European Communities (2001), *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*, COM(2001) 678, pp.17-18.

⁴ The countries that took part in this review are Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, UK, Australia, Canada, and Korea. For an account of the process adopted for the purpose of this review, see R. Sweet (2001), *Career information, guidance and counselling services: policy perspectives*. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, Vol.10(2), pp.11-14. Material relating to the OECD review can be accessed at the following website: www.oecd.org

1.1.2 The main motive behind the Commission's interest in this area is the consideration of how the organisation and delivery of occupational information and career guidance services might **advance the public policy objectives of lifelong learning and active employment and welfare policies**. Other than the collection of baseline information, the Commission has decided to set up an expert group, the European Lifelong Guidance Group, in order to provide an opportunity to key policy-makers in each member state, as well as in ACCs, to share their experiences and to consider which initiatives might be appropriate at the European level.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE ACCEDING AND CANDIDATE COUNTRY REVIEW

1.2.1 The present synthesis report provides an **analytic account of the most recent and most significant developments, trends, challenges and major issues, as well as strengths and weaknesses of national guidance systems and policies**, as reported by experts from the 11 ACCs responsible for responding to the survey instrument designed by the OECD.⁵ These experts completed their task on the basis of their own in-depth knowledge of career guidance in their country, and in some instances after an extensive consultation exercise with key decision-makers and providers in the field. The present synthesis report strives to develop a strong **comparative dimension**: this is justified by virtue of the fact that all the countries involved in the study are one step away from accession to the EU, and their own policy-making has been greatly influenced by EU policies, including the EU Social Charter, EU Employment Action Plans, and structural indicators that focus on

employment, innovation, social inclusion and economic reforms. Comparison is particularly justified in the case of the nine ACCs that have only recently embarked on the transition from a centrally planned to a democratic market economy, which means that they have to deal with 'radical changes in the role of the state, the individual and the economy' that have 'an immense effect on the starting point, nature, and investment in, career development'.⁶ Indeed, most of these countries report an intensification of interest in career guidance. This is understandable, given that labour supply and demand were previously an outcome of state planning, and as a result insecurity about employment and economic futures is a relatively new experience for many citizens in central and eastern Europe.⁷

1.2.2 Despite the similarities, however, one must not lose sight of the **very real differences – geopolitical, economic and cultural** – both between and sometimes even within countries. The 11 ACCs reviewed in this context include some large nations, such as Poland, Romania and Hungary; small states, such as Estonia, Slovenia, Latvia and Lithuania; and micro states with populations less than a million, such as Malta and Cyprus. At the macro level, scale can matter when, for instance, it comes to managing a decentralisation process, and to developing strong municipal career service structures operating within the framework of a steering national policy. At the micro level scale can also matter in shaping occupational destinations, not least because small, close-knit societies are more likely to develop extensive personal networks in which 'who you know' can sometimes be more decisive than 'what you know' in clinching a job. Some of the ACCs have a relatively homogeneous ethnic composition (e.g. Malta, Poland, Slovenia), while others are quite

⁵ In drawing up this report, the work of the author was greatly facilitated by the draft outline structure of the final OECD report coordinated by Richard Sweet, and by feedback provided by Helmut Zelloth (coordinator of the ETF project on career guidance), Haralabos Fragoulis and Jean-Raymond Masson (ETF), Anthony G. Watts (OECD), John McCarthy (European Commission), as well as by the experts who wrote the respective candidate country reports.

⁶ See D. H. Fretwell & P. Plant (2001), *Career development policy models: synthesis paper*. Paper presented at the Second International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, Vancouver, Canada, p.1.

⁷ See European Training Foundation (2000), *Careers Guidance and Counselling: theory and practice for the 21st century*. Report of the conference held in Budapest, Hungary, 29-31 March 2000.

multiethnic (e.g. Estonia, Latvia). Some, such as Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia, have significant numbers of minority groups. There are also significant differences between the ACCs in the per capita income they can command (with Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia going beyond the 10 000 threshold and the rest ranging between 5 500 and 9 500 per capita). In some countries, the political context encourages stakeholders to make important contributions to the policy-making process as well as to provision of services. Other states from among the ACCs are more reluctant to adopt a social partnership model. Different histories, traditions, ideologies and policy regimes have an impact on shaping the education systems in the different ACCs, with some only recently beginning to question centralised systems that encourage early streaming and tracking, and that seriously limit the extent to which individuals and their families can 'choose'

educational and occupational trajectories. Career guidance is an old tradition in some of the countries involved in this review: Poland's service started in 1918, for instance, while guidance services were already being offered in Latvia and Lithuania in 1929 and 1931 respectively. In many other countries, however, career guidance is a recent service, with little tradition to build upon. Culturally too there are significant differences, with religion (mainly Christian – with its Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant varieties – but Muslim as well) and the family playing quite significant roles when it comes to shaping young people's futures, occupationally or otherwise. All these factors, together with the variable composition of the different countries' economies, have a significant impact on the way career guidance is perceived, on how it is organised, on the challenges that have to be overcome and on the issues that need to be addressed.

2. CAREER GUIDANCE AND PUBLIC POLICY

2

2.1 POLICY CHALLENGES FOR CAREER GUIDANCE

2.1.1 Despite the diversity of socio-economic, cultural and educational contexts that mark the 11 ACCs under review, **all face a broad set of similar challenges** for education, labour market and social policies that have implications for career guidance and information systems. Through a variety of national policy documents, as well as through reports and analyses produced during the process leading up to accession to the European Union, all ACCs have articulated goals that include the upgrading of the knowledge and skills base of the population with a view to addressing unemployment, to meeting the demands of forward-looking knowledge-based economies, and to ensuring that the labour supply and demand are in harmony. For those ACCs emerging from the experience

of decades of centrally planned economies, such challenges and goals are particularly pressing.

2.1.2 All ACCs have also firmly located such goals within a **social policy context** that seeks to ensure equitable distribution of education and employment opportunities. Guidance and counselling services are indeed seen to be active measures to reduce school drop-out rates, to facilitate the fuller integration of at-risk groups into both education and the labour market and to reduce poverty. Educational and career guidance are therefore increasingly promoted as an effective policy strategy not only to reduce gender segmentation, but also to assist persons with disability, immigrant groups, ethnic minorities and ex-convicts to re-engage pathways that lead to fuller social and economic integration.

2.2 THE SPECIAL CHALLENGE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

2.2.1 A key consideration here is the special challenge that is posed by lifelong learning, with **guidance being seen as a key tool facilitating personal development and employment** in relation to the need for a constant engagement with learning and training. Partly as a result of the desire to participate more effectively in the global economy, but also in response to the invitation made by the EU Commission to member and accession countries to consider its Lifelong Learning Memorandum, ACCs have started to formulate national lifelong learning policies that have implications for the way citizens flow through and between educational and work pathways. Most ACCs have in fact embarked on a set of reforms that strive to make compulsory schooling more responsive to the differentiated learning needs of students, encouraging learners to be more proactive in opting for trajectories that, while taking them closer to the world of work, nevertheless keep them engaged in learning. Through a range of initiatives, including more flexible but coherent pathways, the acknowledgement of learning achievement through alternative assessment strategies that openly and transparently recognise experience and competence, and the burgeoning of opportunities for adult learning both within and away from work contexts, young people and older citizens are being encouraged to develop those skill and attitudinal profiles that will be increasingly required in post-Fordist, high-ability societies. There is indeed a clear recognition of the fact that as pathways become more diversified but linked, and as the openings into further education and training multiply, groups and individuals should increasingly benefit from transparent and easily accessible information, supported where appropriate by guidance.

2.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR CAREER GUIDANCE

2.3.1 The ACC reports collectively signal an **increasing realisation** on the

part of governments – though, apparently, less so on the part of the private sector – that career information and guidance, both in and through education as well as the labour market, are central to any policy that seeks to increase access to learning, to bolster learning completion rates, to increase the national stock of skills, to ensure their flexible deployment both nationally and Europe-wide, to reduce unemployment, and to enhance the individual's employability through competent career management. At the present moment, in most of the ACCs, the realisation that occupational guidance is a market-economy facilitator and also a potentially effective instrument to combat social exclusion tends to be more readily sustained by **formal declarations** – and such policy-steering mechanisms as new legal provisions – than by actual practice. Thus, while the *discourse* around career guidance has intensified, in the case of many ACCs that discourse has outstripped actual practice. This will become clear as a synthesis of the main problems and challenges that career guidance has to face is presented throughout this report. However, it must also be kept in mind that the writing of this synthesis is akin to shooting a moving target: changes are taking place all the time, and it is difficult to keep up with all the developments in policy implementation.

2.3.2 At this stage, however, it should be noted that several developments have been reported by different ACCs indicating **the attractiveness of career guidance as an important tool** for helping to achieve the range of education, labour market and social objectives outlined earlier. Such developments will be highlighted throughout this report, and include:

- the promulgation of legal instruments promoting career guidance and stipulating it as a right of citizens (e.g. in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia);
- the extension of career guidance services to new client groups, such as higher education students (e.g. in Estonia, Poland and Romania), students or registered unemployed people with disabilities (e.g. in Bulgaria

2. CAREER GUIDANCE AND PUBLIC POLICY

and Slovakia), those already in employment (e.g. in Latvia) and parents (e.g. in Cyprus);

- the enhancement of access to services through regional provision (e.g. in Estonia, Latvia and Poland);
- the enhancement of access to services, in practically all the ACCs, through ICT and internet provision;
- the development of new tools, such as aptitude testing services (e.g. in Cyprus and Malta);
- the creative reconstitution of guidance services away from traditional paradigms, in such a way as to offer integrated services in modalities that encourage clients to be more proactive in their search for information and in their decision-making (e.g. the CIPS, or

Vocational Information and Counselling Centres, in Slovenia);

- the articulation of professional qualification standards for career counsellors (e.g. in Estonia, Malta and Poland);
- the establishment – or intensification of the activities of – career guidance associations (e.g. in Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Romania);
- attempts to enhance cross-sectorial collaboration (e.g. through the establishment of National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance – Euroguidance Networks in the ACCs; and through the development of strategic plans to build up an integrated career guidance system, as in Poland).

3. DELIVERING CAREER GUIDANCE MORE EFFECTIVELY

3

3.1 MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

3.1.1 In most ACCs, as is the case internationally, **much career guidance takes place in the context of the school**, in post compulsory education settings and increasingly in universities. By far the greatest provision is made at the secondary school level, to the extent that in Latvia, for instance, schools at this level can only be accredited if they have vocational guidance activities. Generally speaking, little if any career guidance or education is provided at the primary school level; Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia are exceptions among the ACCs in this regard. The timing of educational and vocational guidance provision tends to depend on the stage at which key decisions must be made by students as they flow through the pathways offered. Most often, therefore, service delivery is tied to immediate decisions that must be made, rather than being seen as a seamless process

accompanying students throughout their stay at school and beyond.

3.1.2 While some of the ACCs have **specialist staff** to provide career guidance services in schools (e.g. Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia), this is by no means the case for all. Slovakia does not have an occupational category to fulfil career guidance roles, which are entrusted to regular teachers. In some cases (e.g. Hungary, Latvia, and to a lesser extent, Bulgaria, Estonia and Romania), the class teacher is a key player in the provision of services at the secondary school level, even though he or she is not necessarily trained in school-to-work transition matters. This leads to recourse to specialised career guidance services outside the school (e.g. teachers in Latvia refer students to Professional Career Counselling Centres). In Lithuania, school psychologists are expected to provide vocational guidance, but in reality, the latter service is mainly delivered to students by labour market training and counselling

personnel. Across all ACCs, **staff tend to have multiple roles**, often finding themselves obliged to provide the whole range of guidance services, including personal counselling and educational guidance, rather than focusing solely on career issues. Given the fact that many of the staff employed in guidance roles have a psychology background, and that schools are increasingly the places in which young people act out their frustrations, there is a tendency for personal counselling concerns to crowd out career guidance.

3.1.3 At the secondary education level, a number of ACCs report that career education, information and guidance is also offered **through the curriculum** (i.e. by formally allocating space in the weekly or semestral time-table for the subject, as occurs in Romania, and to a lesser extent in Cyprus), or **across the curriculum** (i.e. by formally addressing work-related issues in different subjects, as occurs in Latvia, Malta and Poland). None of the ACC reports refer to cross-departmental curriculum development strategies facilitating coordinated efforts in career guidance by different subject teachers. While this might happen on an ad hoc basis, or as part of a curricular project within an innovative school, such activities are not prominent or common enough to be highlighted by any of the ACCs. In some cases, there is a desire to strengthen the bond between the world of work and the curriculum. This is the declared intention in Slovakia's National Employment Plan, for instance, and in Malta's new National Curriculum.

3.1.4 Taken one level further, career guidance as an activity does not yet seem to be considered to be part and parcel of the overall organisation of the educational institution – what might be referred to as a **'whole-school approach to guidance'**. Neither can we yet talk of the appearance of the **'guidance-oriented school'**, where the function of careers staff is not merely to help young people to make immediate choices in relation to further study, training or work, but also to promote the skills and attitudes that are required by lifelong learning and lifelong occupational development. Thus, not only is it rare to

find a clearly articulated role for the career education curriculum within the general school programme of studies, it is also rare to have a clearly articulated role for other members of staff or the community more generally to contribute to career guidance. In most ACCs, alumni, parents, employers and, to a lesser extent, trade union leaders occasionally visit schools and universities to share their knowledge and skills with young people. In particular, employers often provide job-related information, which is generally made available in career guidance rooms or at career fairs or seminars. Generally speaking, employers and trade union representatives contribute to career fairs or exhibitions, which are organised in practically all ACCs, often at a national level. However, while there are some excellent initiatives to facilitate stakeholder input (e.g. in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), such involvement tends to be sporadic and is dependent on the personal initiatives of institutions or individuals rather than being part of any institutionalised mechanism for coordination, delivery or policy-making.

3.1.5 Some of the ACCs provide **'work shadowing'** and **'work experience'** opportunities for secondary level students in order to help them gain first-hand knowledge of the world of work. While in most cases the organisation of such activities depends on the initiatives taken by individual guidance staff or schools, there are examples of central policy leads in this direction. Estonia, for instance, has a 'work shadowing day' organised annually at national level. There is some evidence that these kinds of activities are on the increase (e.g. in Latvia). Cyprus, for instance, has introduced a one-week placement in work contexts for Grade 11 students, and is also planning to introduce summer work placements. Lithuania has introduced 15 hours of work experience at Grade 11 and another 15 hours at Grade 12. Such initiatives, however, are more common in VET-type schools, such as those in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia. Other ACCs have developed in-school programmes that encourage students to set up businesses, helping them to learn entrepreneurial skills experientially, under the guidance or mentorship of established

3. DELIVERING CAREER GUIDANCE MORE EFFECTIVELY

members of the business community. Latvia and Estonia, for instance, participate in Junior Achievement, while Malta has the Young Enterprise scheme, as well as the SCOOPS (Co-Ops in Schools) project.

3.1.6 Career guidance is provided both to individuals and within the context of group settings. The **predominance of a psychological orientation** towards vocational guidance in most ACCs means, however, that the former mode of delivery is more common. Guidance seems to be generally interpreted as an intervention in the process of constructing one's occupational identity in view of and on the basis of individual characteristics and aspirations. The focus on individual self-fulfilment, while positive, tends to obscure the way that social and gender experiences structure desires and trajectories. Group career guidance, as well as facilitating the linkage between the personal and the social in the decision-making process, has the added advantage of ensuring wider access to services. As many of the country reports note, schools are generally failing to satisfy student demand for guidance, as the staff-to-pupil ratio is inadequate if the only or **primary modality of provision is based on the individual guidance interview** (e.g. the ratio is 1:800 in Cypriot Lyceums and TVE schools). There are, however, a number of examples of good practice that could provide a useful contrast to the sole reliance on individual provision: in addition to the curricular programmes already noted, Malta and Poland, for instance, organise occupational orientation workshops and seminars for groups of students during their final year of secondary schooling.

3.1.7 Much of the emphasis across all education sectors in the ACCs appears to be on *provision* of service. It is noticeable that the idea of making resources and contexts available in order to encourage and enable young people to engage in **self-directed career exploration** is slowly gaining ground. Pen-and-pencil (e.g. in Cyprus and Malta) and, less often, computer-based self-assessment tests (e.g. in Hungary, Slovenia) are used in some schools. Some ACCs – notably Slovenia and Romania –

have indeed articulated a policy commitment to a shift in the modality of provision, encouraging self-help, self-evaluation and computer-based strategies, with the client to feature more centrally in the decision-making process.

3.1.8 Across all ACCs there is an aspiration to offer guidance services to one and all. However, given the scarcity of both human and material resources, decisions often have to be made to **target priority groups**. Some target VET-track students; at Grade 10 level, for instance, Hungary provides career guidance services exclusively to VET students. However, other ACCs (e.g. Slovakia) do not give priority to students in the VET track, considering that they are not in as great a need of career guidance, since the assumption is that they have already made their occupational choices.

3.1.9 Career guidance is generally underdeveloped in many of the **universities** in the ACCs, though there is a clear trend towards setting up or increasing services. Where guidance is already offered – as in Poland through its university career bureaux – specialist staff have a very broad remit, often providing a whole range of guidance services, including personal counselling, study skills, stress management, and information about different courses on offer and the career pathways such courses open up. Some services, including assistance with applications for employment, training for interviews, job brokerage, and graduate placement, are offered by student associations, either to complement the work done by the established careers office, or to make up for a deficit. Romania has developed a particularly strong programme for its university sector, and is the only one of the ACCs to offer a specialised career-orientation curriculum to tertiary level students, focusing on counselling during the first year of studies, and on information during the subsequent year. Some university career services also organise tracer studies among graduates in order to be in a better position to guide students on likely employment trajectories after finishing a degree (e.g. in Estonia and Malta).

3.2 MEETING THE CAREER GUIDANCE NEEDS OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUNG PEOPLE

3.2.1 Most countries target **early school leavers and school drop-outs** in an attempt to ensure that these benefit from specialised guidance services, with a view to reintegrating them into education and/or training programmes as quickly as possible. As the OECD thematic review has noted, services for this group of clients tend to be most successful when they involve a highly individualised approach which interweaves personal, educational and occupational guidance. This is most effective when service providers implement outreach programmes which, while articulated within (and coordinated by) a highly developed central policy approach, make good use of local resources that are closest to the target group, and work hand in hand with other providers across different sectors, including schools and community associations.

3.2.2 ACCs generally do highlight the needs of this particular group of young people, but **have not developed a successful strategy** to respond to these needs. In some cases, as in Slovenia, the problem lies with the fact that guidance services tend to be seen by school drop-outs as part of the system that they have experienced in a negative way, and that they have abandoned. Schools too might not be too keen to welcome back young people who are perceived to be troublesome. This also partly explains why, in most cases, unemployed school-age young people tend to be catered for by the public employment service rather than by school-based guidance services. In Malta and Romania, for instance, young people are offered skills training and basic literacy courses, as well as programmes that attempt to help them rebuild their self-image in order to re-engage with learning and to plan a life path. Overall, however, **none of the ACCs report any sustained attempt** to ensure collaboration between the education and labour market sectors, and between these and the community, in an effort **to generate an**

effective response to the specific needs of out-of-school young people.

3.3 MEETING THE CAREER GUIDANCE NEEDS OF ADULTS

3.3.1 Most of the career guidance that is addressed towards adults takes place within the context of **public employment services** (PES), and in most cases, the service targets unemployed people. As such, while providers do attempt to meet a whole range of needs, and do try to fulfil a broad remit of responsibilities, the focus of the personnel in ACCs largely seems to be on training for employability, on information-giving and on job brokerage rather than on career guidance. An exception is in Latvia, where Professional Career Counselling Centres outside the PES provide a service for both unemployed and employed students and adults. PES personnel are typically overburdened with multiple roles (e.g. in Cyprus, Latvia, Malta and Slovakia), their main tasks appearing to be channelling unemployed people towards training and retraining tracks, informing them about employment opportunities and acting as mediators and brokers between them and potential employers. They may also be engaged (as in Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia, for instance) in group-based activities that encourage unemployed people to become more motivated and more skilled in looking for work (e.g. job clubs, writing CVs, self-presentation strategies during interviews and positive thinking). The main goal is often to combat long-term unemployment, and notable success has been achieved in some cases in this regard. For example, Slovenia's 14 Job Clubs, where guidance is part of a set of strategies, have an impressive success rate, with an average of 55% of long-term unemployed clients finding work within six months.

3.3.2 Some of the PES in ACCs offer **further services that are more directly connected to career guidance.** Poland's Poviats labour offices, for instance, together with the 51 Centres for Career

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Information and Planning in Voivodship Labour offices, are very well resourced, and provide a range of services both to those who are unemployed, and to those who are at risk of losing their jobs. Similarly, Lithuania, through its Labour Exchanges and its Labour Market Training Authorities, offers programmes that seem to give due importance to the vocational development of clients. Slovenia too offers employment counselling over and above the range of information-based services that are common to many PES, and has a team of trained career counsellors who help unemployed and long-term unemployed people to draw up employment plans.

3.3.3 All in all, however, as is the case in several other countries internationally,⁸ career guidance services for adults tend to be **remedial in nature**, and **narrowly targeted** at unemployed and long-term unemployed people, with the **immediate goal** of finding them employment. In contrast to this would be a proactive approach, addressing a much wider group, and utilising the whole range of guidance functions⁹ to help all adults to sustain employability and respond flexibly to change. While several of the ACCs report that the concept of lifelong guidance is increasingly referred to in national debate, particularly in response to the Lifelong Learning Memorandum of the European Commission, **this debate has, as yet, had little impact on actual policy and practice in the field of adult career guidance**. None of the ACC reports, for instance, referred to **leisure, third age, or retirement counselling**, which will inevitably become critically important given the implications of the demographic structure in Europe. It is only in a few of the **larger enterprises** in the ACCs that we find a guidance service, often within the human resource development department or unit, that is offered to personnel with a view to helping them to make progress in their career, or to switch tracks due to

either changing interests or changes in the skills profiles required by the company.

3.3.4 Career guidance for adults is sometimes offered by **trade unions**, though in most cases such provision is informal, offered by union staff who have no training in guidance, and targeted largely at union members who are at risk of unemployment due to restructuring (e.g. in Romania, and more modestly in Cyprus, Estonia and Malta). Most often, however, trade unions are only represented at a national level on bodies that cater for social partnership (e.g. in Bulgaria), and negotiate on behalf of members facing mass redundancies and the effects of privatisation. They sometimes support vocational guidance, entrepreneurial education and courses on job-search techniques, but their actual involvement in career guidance is on the whole minimal.

3.3.5 Other guidance services are very occasionally offered by **private employment services**. These are largely underdeveloped in most of the ACCs, though governments appear to be increasingly keen to outsource to the private sector (e.g. in Cyprus, Estonia and Hungary; Slovenia's employment services also outsource aspects of the mandate of Job Clubs to private providers). In most cases, private provision has only appeared in the past decade, and is only now becoming established (e.g. in Poland). Such services are most likely to be focused on finding, selecting and placing personnel in highly qualified and specialised labour niches (as in Romania, for instance). Typically – and as is the case in Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia – private employment services in ACCs act as job brokers and head-hunters rather than as fully-fledged providers of guidance and counselling. While their job-matching approach responds to the immediate needs of clients in search of work, none of the ACCs report that there is much enthusiasm

⁸ See A.G. Watts (2002), *Policy and practice in career guidance: an international perspective*. Keynote speech delivered to the Institute of Career Guidance Annual Conference, Ashford, Kent, 5-7 September 2002, p.6.

⁹ Drawing on a number of sources, Plant identifies a range of 15 activities that constitute career guidance. These are: informing, advising, assessing, teaching, enabling, advocating, networking, feeding back, managing, innovation/systems change, signposting, mentoring, sampling work experience or learning tasters, and following up. See P. Plant (2001), *Quality in careers guidance*. A paper commissioned jointly by the European Commission and the OECD, prepared for the OECD review of policies for information, guidance and counselling services.

from adults to make use of this fee-paying service as yet.

3.3.6 Adults can access career guidance services in at least two other ways. First, if they are students following courses in **tertiary level institutions**, they can benefit from advisory services that increasingly feature in universities and colleges. Second, in some countries, **community-based associations** provide services to specific groups, especially if these are the targets of national equity policies. Few of the latter initiatives are reported by the ACCs, where the main agent remains the state, with one example being provided by Bulgaria and its Open Society Fund.

3.4 WIDENING COMMUNITY ACCESS THROUGH MORE AND INNOVATIVE DIVERSE DELIVERY

3.4.1 In the context of compulsory level schooling, and as noted earlier, access to career counselling and guidance has been improved in some of the ACCs through the **introduction of a transition-to-work curricular area** (e.g. in Romania and Cyprus), or of **work-related themes across the curriculum** (e.g. in Estonia, Latvia, Malta and Poland). This has also encouraged the provision of group-based rather than merely individual-based guidance, ensuring wider access to greater numbers of students.

3.4.2 Practically all ACCs report the increasing **use of ICT** in order to disseminate information more widely about occupations, and in some cases to support guidance functions and to enable interactive career decision-making via CD-based software, career navigation systems, or the internet. In most cases, the use of ICT complements rather than replaces traditional forms of provision, such as face-to-face interviews, leaflets and brochures carrying occupational profiles. While many of the ACCs, as is perhaps to be expected, adopt software

that has been developed in more economically advanced countries that have a longer guidance tradition (e.g. Romania uses the Canadian software 'Interoptions', while Slovakia and Slovenia used an adapted version of the British software 'Adult Directions'), there are several instances in which material has been produced locally, to reflect the realities of the indigenous labour market, and to respond more effectively to the country's specific human resource development needs. One example of this is Poland's 'Counsellor 2000' software, which permits a multi-dimensional analysis of occupations, stimulates clients' efforts and assists them in choosing an appropriate job. Another is Slovakia's 'Guide to the World of Occupations'. This software was developed under the Leonardo da Vinci programme in cooperation with Czech Republic, Greece, Cyprus and the United Kingdom.

3.4.3 Several of the larger ACCs note that it has proved difficult for them to deliver career information and guidance in the remoter regions, and that ICT represents a very powerful tool for overcoming such barriers. This is particularly true if, rather than just providing information on the nature of occupations and on vacancies, the software allows self-exploration, self-assessment of vocational interests and abilities and interactive sessions with counsellors, with the internet providing a portal into a broad and flexible network of interlinked services.¹⁰ **'Distance career counselling'** is therefore increasingly on the agenda (e.g. in Poland and Romania, but also in several other ACCs such as Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, and Latvia, where the guidance function is being incorporated into websites). However, one needs to keep constantly in mind the equity dimension in web-based guidance services, given the differential state of penetration of IT and the internet across the population. ICT has, in some cases, also proved very powerful in enabling the integration of all relevant and related data in one internet-based system (e.g. in Estonia).

¹⁰ See A.G. Watts (2001), *The role of information and communication technologies in an integrated career information and guidance system*. A paper commissioned jointly by the European Commission and the OECD, prepared for the OECD review of policies for information, guidance and counselling services.

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3.4.4 There is also a noticeable shift, in several of the ACCs, from an approach that emphasises provision, to one that encourages and enables clients to access services proactively, and to engage in a **self-service mode** (e.g. the Vocational Information Counselling Centres – CIPS – in Slovenia). Some of the best examples of the use of ICT facilitate such a shift, but self-help methods have also been promoted through the use of self-administered decision-making tools and self-scoring assessment instruments, and the organisation of career guidance facilities in such a way that clients can access information and engage in self-exploration on their own, asking for an individual interview with counsellors only if and when they need to. Some ACCs, such as Cyprus, have set up internet points in youth clubs and other centres where young people tend to gather, offering a self-service approach to analysis of aptitudes and interests, and to matching profiles with vacancies and further training opportunities.

3.4.5 Several of the ACCs report the use of newspapers, television, roadside hoardings and other **advertising strategies and outlets** in order to ensure that occupation-related information reaches a wider range of people in the community. In many ACCs, the press features supplements on careers, advertises job vacancies and further education and training opportunities, as well as information about overall labour market trends.

3.4.6 In some cases, **call-centre technology** is being used to good effect, enabling clients to telephone their queries (e.g. in Lithuania). In most cases, however, such call-in services tend to be used to provide psychological and personal support (i.e. help-line counselling, as in Malta) rather than career guidance.

3.4.7 The issue of widely dispersed populations in remote regions in some of the ACCs poses a serious challenge to the delivery of guidance services and work-related information to all citizens. Alongside the use of ICTs, some are attempting to overcome the problem by

providing **outreach services to remote areas** (Estonia). Some (e.g. Hungary) are finding that the demand for the service is not sufficiently high to justify the presence of an expert on a permanent basis, and are considering providing the service during times of the year when the demand is high. Others have developed peripatetic counselling team services to respond to unsatisfied demand. A case in point would be Latvia, which has mobile teams to make up for the fact that it has Professional Career Counselling Centres in only 19 of 26 of its regions.

3.4.8 Practically all ACCs report initiatives on the part of educational institutions that invite alumni and parents as well as business and community leaders into the school in order to share their experience and knowledge of the world of work with students. They are also sometimes involved in arranging student visits to their enterprises. While in most cases such activities depend on the personal initiative of a guidance officer or of the school itself, there are countries in which the **input of stakeholders** is more formalised. Hungary, for instance, has active Parent Organisations that provide students and parents with information about educational and occupational pathways. At higher education levels, student organisations and associations are increasingly active in providing career-related information, particularly where, as in Estonia, there is a lack of government-funded provision.

3.5 PROVIDING CAREER INFORMATION MORE EFFECTIVELY

3.5.1 Information is at the core of career guidance and education; indeed, it tends to prevail over other guidance functions. From the point of view of the client, information should lead to improved knowledge about the self, about the labour market, about education and training opportunities and pathways, and about the ways in which all these elements interact together. Most ACCs report that the **formal responsibility for the provision of such information lies largely with the state**: government agencies collect the

information, organise it and disseminate it. Information is often published at a national level, with data fed to a centre via a network of regional and local providers. Such information typically includes a classification of occupations, occupational descriptions, macroeconomic indicators and labour market trends. Much of this information is distributed free of charge through educational and training institutions, labour offices, career fairs and exhibitions, and community-based organisations and libraries. Some of the information is produced at a local or regional level, either by training centres or, occasionally, by employers themselves. On a different scale, guidance staff within educational institutions sometimes produces their own information brochures, leaflets and internet sites (e.g. in Slovenia and Malta).

3.5.2 Much of the information is **print-based**, but there is an increasing trend for it to be also – or exclusively – produced **in ICT format**, as CD-ROMs, on diskette, or on the internet. Production costs are thus substantially minimised, and the task of updating information is rendered more feasible. Films that would otherwise be expensive, and that provide qualitative information about the experience of working in particular occupations, can be downloaded via the internet by clients, at little or no cost (e.g. in Hungary and Lithuania). Several of the ACCs report that the potential of ICT-based career information is still being tapped, with the tendency being to attach more importance to the amount of information than to the adequacy of its design. Thus, sections giving information on educational and training pathways and the relevant occupations they lead to are not always linked, to each other, or to the personal profile of the client using the system. Such a system, integrating the most recent developments in artificial intelligence that link information management with decision-making strategies, is being developed in Poland. Slovakia, too, is engaged in a similar endeavour, in collaboration with eight other countries and under the auspices of a Leonardo da Vinci project. Often, however, websites become nothing more than

replicas of print-based materials. Furthermore, ICT-based information does not tend to be directed to a specific category of client. A rare exception reported by the ACCs is the modification of a multimedia application – ‘Counsellor 2000’ – that permits a multidimensional analysis of occupations while guiding a client to choose an appropriate job, and that has also been adapted for use by people with disabilities (Poland).

3.5.3 **Connectivity** between career and educational information on the one hand and labour market data – such as vulnerability to unemployment and earnings compared to minimum salary – seems to be quite rare in the ACCs, with Poland, Bulgaria and Romania being the exceptions.

3.5.4 Often, **different ministries** – notably those of education and of labour – **collect different information**, and it is not always the case that these different data sets are consolidated and linked in such a way as to help the client to make better sense of options and opportunities. Estonia has attempted to deal with this by organising joint seminars between appropriate individuals from the two ministries in order to ensure common standards. Bulgaria has passed a law specifying the nature of the coordination that must exist between different ministries in the delivery of career guidance services. For its part, Slovakia has a formal agreement on cooperation in career guidance, making it mandatory for the two ministries to set up a system of interconnected information on VET and the labour market, and encouraging cooperation within and between institutions at national, regional, district and local levels.

3.5.5 In most cases, **the state remains the standard-setter and guarantor of quality in information provision**. Some ACCs have formalised procedures in order to ensure that information is both correct and timely. Thus, some regulate the quality of the information provided through legal measures and instruments (e.g. Estonia’s Public Information Act); some have developed strategies to ensure

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accuracy through systematic comparison of data from different sectors (e.g. Lithuania); and others have developed quality standards (e.g. Bulgaria and Slovenia), with groups of experts monitoring the production of data following set criteria. In some cases (e.g. Poland) clients are asked to comment about the user-friendliness of the information package with which they have been provided, particularly when this is web-based. More rarely, as is the case in Bulgaria, material is trialled with target groups and evaluated by experts.

3.5.6 While most ACCs **produce** their own career-related information, others **buy, translate** and **adapt** software or even print-based material. As noted in section 3.4.2, Slovakia and Slovenia use an adapted version of the UK-produced 'Adult Directions' programme, with Slovenia investing a great deal of effort into building national databases (including job descriptions and details of its own education system) to ensure that the UK programme reflects national realities. Other ACCs have been able to develop sophisticated information systems with the help of agencies such as the World Bank (e.g. Poland and Romania). One of the challenges that ACCs have to face, particularly when systems have been set up with the help of donor agencies, is that of regularly updating the information after the external funding has dried up.

3.5.7 Several ACCs report that, while the state remains the key guarantor of the production and dissemination of career-related information, it is increasingly willing to **outsource** to specialised government agencies or foundations (e.g. the Foundation for Vocational Education and Training Reform, which runs Euroguidance and the National Observatory in Estonia, among other HRD projects), to not-for-profit organisations (e.g. the Open Society Fund in Bulgaria), or to private for-profit enterprises. The latter have not entered the information market in any major way, often restricting their activities to producing educational and occupational guides and manuals. An exception to the rule seems to be Romania, and to some extent, Slovakia, where the private sector operates several websites that are accessible to clients, for a fee.

3.5.8 Much of the energy that is expended in most ACCs seems to go into the production and dissemination of information, with relatively **little being known about the extent to which clients access it, understand it, connect it to their own frames of reference or actually use it to implement their life goals**. Neither is much known in ACCs, or in other countries, for that matter, about the cost-effectiveness of the different modes of information production and dissemination, in relation to use and impact.

4. RESOURCING CAREER GUIDANCE

4

4.1 STAFFING CAREER GUIDANCE

4.1.1 There is a **great deal of variety within and between ACCs** in terms of the level and nature of qualifications and training required of those who provide career guidance. This ranges from no specific requirements at all, other than a few hours' in-service training (e.g. PES staff in Malta), to the stipulation of high levels of training, including a Master's degree for practitioners in the area, as in the case of Poland and Romania. Most ACCs require career guidance staff to have a first degree, often in psychology, pedagogy, sociology or social work. **Entry into the career guidance field** in the education sector, where requirements tend to be more clearly stipulated, is often accomplished on the basis of what the authorities consider to be a relevant degree, together with experience in schools. Some in-service courses are generally offered. Most ACCs do not offer a specific university level degree or diploma in career guidance. At best, as in Latvia, those with a psychology degree may have

followed a module on the psychological bases of guidance – a module that is offered in only some universities. The main exceptions here are Poland, which offers a host of specialised short and long certificate-awarding courses – including postgraduate studies – in career counselling, and Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia and Malta, which offer short courses in the same area of specialisation. Poland has also developed a draft 'description and standards of professional qualifications for careers counsellors', specifying the requirements for personnel working within both education and labour sectors, and is currently working on a Leonardo da Vinci programme that will lead to an equivalence of certification for career guidance staff in Poland, Germany, Austria and Hungary.

4.1.2 There are often **differences in the backgrounds** of those providing career guidance in **education settings** and those working in **public employment services**. Generally speaking, as has been noted in a review of practice in 23 countries,¹¹ there is no mutual recognition of guidance qualifications between the

education and labour market sectors. Staff providing career guidance in labour offices often have a psychology degree, but some have degrees in law, economics and engineering (e.g. in Romania).

Furthermore, **in-service opportunities** that offer guidance-specific training seem to be more available in PES than in the education sector. This is partly because pre-service training for PES workers is generally lacking, and also because dealing with unemployed people is often at the top of a government's funding priorities. Furthermore, the process of accession to the EU has enabled PES guidance staff to participate in international visits and internships in the context of such programmes as ACADEMIA and the establishment of the Euroguidance network. Staff from the central and eastern European Acceding and Candidate Countries have also benefited from training modules in guidance, developed in the framework of Phare projects.

4.1.3 **The private sector of guidance services is generally unregulated**, and none of the ACCs report any specific requirements in terms of training and qualifications.

4.1.4 In most cases, career guidance in ACCs is **not yet professionalised** – i.e., it is not often offered by staff who have specialised and regulated career guidance qualifications, with clear entry and qualification routes into clearly defined occupational roles, and supported by an extensive network of professional associations and research and training organisations. Notable exceptions are Poland and Romania, where career counselling has been added to the Classification of Occupations and Trades. In Poland too, there have been important developments in the provision of a variety of study routes giving access to employment as a career guidance officer. It is rare to find a clearly articulated career development structure for guidance staff, with facilities for progression from the role of less experienced to the role of more

experienced worker. Lithuania and Romania are exceptions among the ACCs in this regard. Romania and Estonia are also among the few countries that report having para-professional categories – such as Youth Information Officers – to support the work of qualified guidance staff. Such para-professionals, together with non-professionals (e.g. significant adults and peers, who often work with the 'hard to reach'), and 'linked professionals' (e.g. social workers) can, if trained, consolidate the occupational identity of career guidance workers, and further ensure access for all to services.

4.1.5 **Occupational roles, and clear codes of practice and of ethics**, are often not formally defined or regulated by legally binding documents. As already noted, career guidance staff in schools, and to a lesser extent in labour offices, tend to have to respond to a broad range of responsibilities, with the counselling function often overwhelming the career guidance one. In some cases, as in Malta for instance, career guidance staff spends a proportion of their time teaching subjects unrelated to school-to-work transition.

4.1.6 Few ACCs have attempted to develop a **competence framework** outlining what is needed by career guidance staff, though examples of good practice in this area are provided by Estonia and Malta, and especially by Poland. There is a realisation that the competence base of guidance personnel has to reflect changing demands, including skills in ICT, in project management, in networking and international cooperation, and in responding to an increasingly differentiated clientele. New skills are also needed in order to reconceptualise and reorganise career guidance as an activity that is increasingly based on self-help techniques. A competency approach could counteract the tendency for guidance workers to attend to work tasks that are a result of the type of training they have had, rather than a response to client needs.

11 See J. McCarthy (2001), *The skills, training and qualifications of guidance workers*. A paper commissioned jointly by the European Commission and the OECD, prepared for the OECD review of policies for information, guidance and counselling services.

4.1.7 Most ACCs report that, while it is difficult to assemble reliable information about the **size and age composition of the career guidance force**, there is little doubt that by far the greater number of workers in this area are female. In some countries the proportion is as high as 90% or more (e.g. in Poland, in both the education sector and PES). As with all other professions that become **feminised**, this trend has implications for occupational identity, for the status accorded to the activity by society, and consequently for the salaries and resources it will be able to command.

4.1.8 ACCs report the increasing development of **professional associations** of career guidance staff. In some cases, as in Romania, a special section dedicated to vocational guidance has been established within an already existing Psychology Association. Lithuania has plans to move in the same direction, while Cyprus, Latvia and Poland already have their own Association of Educational and Career Guidance Counsellors.

4.1.9 Little information has been provided by the ACCs as to the qualifications and background of guidance-related personnel in **private employment services**. Most often, however, they tend to have a background in human resource development and management.

4.2 FUNDING CAREER GUIDANCE

4.2.1 As is the case for most countries internationally, it is difficult, if not impossible, to provide estimates of **national expenditure on career guidance** in the ACCs. One reason for this is that government budgets rarely provide information regarding expenditure. Another is that career guidance is only one of a whole range of activities that the relevant staff provides, and expenditure is not recorded separately for each of these activities. Thus, for instance, several ACCs note that there is no differentiation in central records between how much is spent on guidance-related activities in public

employment services and how much is spent on career guidance as a whole. Similarly, when central budgets are allocated to regions or to specific institutions such as schools, there is no readily available record of what proportions of these funds go to which activities. Information about the extent of expenditure by the private sector on career guidance is even more limited.

4.2.2 In most ACCs, career guidance activities and provision is **almost entirely funded by the state**, with guidance services being provided free of charge in both the education and labour sectors. In only a very few cases are minimal charges made to clients for certain aspects of guidance; this is the case for some forms of therapy in Romania, for instance. Funds are often made available centrally, directly from the government budget. Sometimes funds are devolved to regions or to institutions, which are then free to allocate resources as they see fit. In some cases the region outsources provision, subcontracting service delivery to community organisations, private companies or not-for-profit organisations (e.g. in Estonia).

4.2.3 Only rarely do we find cases where the **private sector** contributes to the funding of a service offered by the state. The Cypriot HRD Authority, for instance, finances its activities (including the collection of occupational information) by imposing a levy of 0.5% on the payroll of all private and semi-public companies and organisations. In Poland, the employers' contribution is made through a 2.45% levy of the payroll, thus financing a labour fund which includes guidance activities under active measures.

4.2.4 Another source for the funding of career guidance activities in ACCs is **external agencies**. Most often, funding is accessed through involvement in EU programmes, such as Leonardo da Vinci and Phare. Most ACCs, like EU member states, have set up National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance in the Euroguidance Network, with funds being made available by individual governments in collaboration with the EU Commission.

Hungary, Poland and Romania have benefited from World Bank funding to develop their career guidance systems and

resources. As noted in section 3.5.6, sustainability issues arise once such external funding comes to an end.

5. IMPROVING STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

5

5.1 STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

5.1.1 The review of the 11 ACCs shows that career guidance has increasingly featured on the agendas of governments. Overall, however, and despite real progress achieved, career guidance still tends to be seen by governments as a marginal activity. As a result it is rare to find **determined strategic leadership**, with provision sustained by a clearly articulated national policy framework that is both dynamic and adequately resourced. The picture that emerges from the ACC reports is that where governments have provided policy directions, they have done so through the enactment or revision of legislation and through the issuing of formal documents, and have been somewhat less ready to follow through with funding, or by ensuring improved services to clients. This is somewhat understandable given the severe budgetary restraints that many of the ACCs have to exercise. In some cases, especially in Central and Eastern European ACCs, the deficit in strategic leadership can also be at least partly

attributed to the lack of expertise within ministries (e.g. in Estonia), where bureaucratic inertia and a reluctance to abandon old practices leads to a policy torpor. It is therefore clear that there is a **need for stronger mechanisms to provide coordination and leadership in articulating strategies for lifelong access to guidance**. Such mechanisms would draw together the relevant ministries as well as professional bodies and stakeholders, enabling local, regional and national levels to interact for the benefit of clients. The National Forum for Vocational Guidance, described in the Polish report, seems to approximate closely to such a mechanism. Other steering institutions reported by ACCs include the National Career Orientation Council in Hungary.

5.1.2 The Polish case also highlights the fact that government strategic leadership is particularly necessary in **the context of decentralisation**. While it is true that the EU policy regime promotes decentralisation through its emphasis on the concept of subsidiarity, and that giving more power and responsibility to the local

authorities encourages ownership of challenges and initiatives intended to overcome them, it is also a fact that devolution of responsibilities within a policy vacuum can lead to costly overlaps, an excessive number of disparities that give rise to inequalities, and a lack of standards. In the case of Poland, the winding down of the national network of labour offices in favour of local government provision has led to a serious deterioration in the quality of provision. Decentralisation can also be a convenient mechanism for devolving responsibilities to local government without passing on the necessary funding, as is noted in the report for Latvia. Both the Polish and Latvian experiences support the view that the best way forward may very well be to have a judicious mix of centralised and decentralised models, in which municipalities develop their own policy in the context of central guidelines that have been formulated after wide consultation with stakeholders. Estonia seems to have adopted such a model, stipulating contracts between central and regional government to avoid problems of great variability between regions.

5.2 EVIDENCE AND DATA

5.2.1 Evidence and relevant data are necessary if governments and other stakeholders are to **assess the effectiveness of career guidance services in meeting public policy objectives**. While there are some examples of good practice in this regard among the ACCs reviewed, the majority do not appear to have the capacity to generate the data indicators relating to the impact of the services provided. It must be said that research on the impact of career guidance is difficult to do well: it is hard to observe directly, and in any case there are so many variables that have an impact on career decision-making that causality is difficult to establish, especially when issues of effectiveness are being considered. Furthermore, the outcomes that career guidance tries to achieve are not often easily measurable, particularly in national contexts where, as in most ACCs, there are no specialised institutions or centres to carry out systematic research in this area.

At best, theses or research projects on specific aspects of guidance have been produced within university departments (e.g. in Romania) or by professional associations, where these exist, but such reports tend to be one-off occurrences that give a snapshot in time and are not produced on a regular basis permitting cumulative research. Some countries generate annual reports that are submitted by the relevant departments to central and/or regional government, but their usefulness to policy-makers is often limited. The capacity to produce research data is particularly limited in the smaller of the ACCs, and even when such data is produced, it is often not exploited to the full. Thus, Malta expends a great deal of resources in carrying out a tracer study with all its school leavers, but the information gathered is hardly ever used to steer policy-making. Some of the ACCs report government intentions to invest more heavily in research on career guidance (e.g. Lithuania, Malta and Poland), particularly in the services offered through the public employment agencies.

5.2.2 Those countries that have generated data can provide governments with a variety of useful statistics and information that may be considered in the process of policy-making. **Such data include the following:**

- *The number of users of services, including their characteristics (such as age, gender, region, socio-economic status, educational level and ethnic origin).* Most of the ACCs that do collect this kind of data indicate that there has been a very significant increase in the use of services. Estonia, for instance, has seen a threefold increase in the use of guidance by students since 2000; Latvia has seen a 25% increase in the use of the services by students, higher education students and unemployed people. Most ACCs also note that guidance services tend to be most often accessed by school leavers and young adults; most of the clients are female, and from an urban background.
- *The different needs of different types of clients.* There are some examples of good practice in this area: Latvia, for instance, has regularly carried out

different kinds of surveys that provide information regarding the different career-guidance-related needs of school students, VET students and unemployed people. On the whole, however, there is a lack of such data from ACCs. This could be related to the fact that most career guidance services are undifferentiated, with the services following a 'one size fits all' approach. Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia stand out among the ACCs for their attempts to tailor aspects of their career guidance service to the specific needs of clients with disabilities.

■ *Client satisfaction rates, and variation in these rates by client characteristics.*

Where research on this aspect is carried out (e.g. in Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania), the tendency is to focus on quantitative indicators (e.g. how many of the unemployed clients who used the career guidance service found a job or commenced further training). The collection of qualitative indicators (i.e. client satisfaction with the service offered) tends to be rare (e.g. in Latvia).

5.2.3 It is significant to note that, as with several other countries involved in the parallel OECD survey, none of the ACCs were in a position to provide sufficient details about the overall **cost of services**, the ways in which costs are shared between different parties, nor the relative costs of different types of services.

5.3 LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

5.3.1 There is some variety in the extent to which legislation and regulation are used to **steer career guidance services** in the ACCs reviewed. Some of the countries, such as Cyprus and Malta, have no legislation addressing vocational guidance, which is managed within the context of the civil service rules and regulations of the respective education and labour departments. Others, such as Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Poland, have detailed goals set out for career guidance within the context of national strategies concerning employment and human resource

development, or of national development plans. Typically, where legislation does exist, reference to career guidance is made within education acts, or laws concerning VET or those regulating the provision of services within the Ministry of Labour, where the right of citizens to vocational counselling is formally declared (e.g. in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia). Such references tend to be formulated in terms of general goals (such as 'enabling students to choose occupations', or 'facilitating successful professional development of individuals', 'reducing unemployment and poverty', 'improving adaptability', and 'promoting entrepreneurship').

5.3.2 More rarely, one finds **legislative measures specifically addressing vocational guidance** (e.g. in Lithuania), or a relatively detailed section focusing on guidance (e.g. in Poland) in a law embracing a variety of aspects of public service. In such cases, one is more likely to find details regarding the type of services that are to be provided, how they are to be provided, the code of ethics to be followed in making provision, and the quality standards that must be met. Some laws outline the new delivery structures that need to be set up in order to implement the provisions of the law. This is the case in Bulgaria and Slovakia. Occasionally, job descriptions for career guidance personnel have the force of formal regulations and orders, thus serving to establish standards (e.g. in Romania).

5.3.3 Several of these laws and regulations have been promulgated in recent years, and most ACCs' reports note that while legal provisions have been made, these have often **not been implemented** (e.g. in Latvia and Poland; Bulgaria has partially implemented its plans, but has yet to establish the Career Information and Guidance Centres to which the VET law refers). Legislation obviously does not guarantee access, but the fact that it is there usually provides a fillip to provision. It also justifies claims on the part of both providers and clients for adequate resources, and facilitates the development of programmes, as well as structures for the delivery of such programmes.

5.4 QUALITY STANDARDS

5.4.1 Most ACCs report an increased interest on the part of governments in introducing **quality assurance measures** for career guidance. In the case of Malta, for instance, this is part of an overall effort by the state to establish quality charters across all its departments, specifying not only standards but also strategies for achieving those standards. In Romania, performance evaluation has been adopted as a mechanism for quality control, and is directly tied to career progression.

5.4.2 Practically all ACCs have attempted to establish quality standards by **regulating entry into the profession** through the stipulation of the minimum qualifications required by candidates. Most have also attempted to address quality issues by providing further training opportunities for staff, in some cases making this a condition for continued tenure of their post (e.g. Romania). Some countries have developed occupational descriptions for career guidance staff and for those involved in the production of career-related information, detailing the competencies that staff are expected to demonstrate (e.g. Malta, Poland and Slovakia). In most cases, these have the weight of guidelines rather than being mandatory in nature, and are therefore less directive than standards, which often have checking procedures or sanctions attached to them. Some governments have also issued guidelines with a view to improving administrative procedures in guidance centres, or minimum criteria that have to be satisfied before public or private entities are awarded a licence to offer career guidance services (e.g. Bulgaria). The issue of central management of standards becomes critical in the context of a trend towards devolution of responsibilities to local government. As has already been noted, such a trend, if it is not sustained by determined policy steering, can have a potentially negative effect on ensuring quality standards across a country. In Poland, for instance, the standards developed by the National Labour Office in 1999 were never adopted after the PES was dismantled in favour of giving autonomy to the regional offices.

5.4.3 Overall, there are very few cases in which **performance targets** have been articulated with a view to guaranteeing quality service, particularly from the point of view of the client. Only Slovenia notes a developing interest in outcomes-based evaluation of career guidance services.

5.4.4 Apart from governments, **professional associations** can also spearhead initiatives that set out to ensure quality provision. Thus, the Latvian Association of Educational and Career Guidance Counsellors has made important steps forwards in drawing up standards applicable to career guidance. The National Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance in Romania has, for its part, developed a code of ethics as well as quality indicators for its members.

5.5 IMPROVING STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

5.5.1 Strategic leadership can be improved through mechanisms that increase the involvement of stakeholders, particularly if these are represented on formal consultative and advisory bodies. Overall, it can be stated that for the ACCs under review, **stakeholder involvement is underdeveloped**, partly because the public is not necessarily fully aware of the benefits of a well-functioning career guidance service, and partly because some policy-makers have not yet embraced styles of leadership that involve social partnership.

5.5.2 It has already been noted that **trade unions** are not particularly active in the field of career guidance in the ACCs reviewed. **Employers**, however, tend to have a more direct involvement, at both national and local levels. Employers are, of course, involved in many career-guidance-related activities, ranging from addressing students in schools to hosting students for work shadowing or work experience and apprenticeship placements, and participating in careers exhibitions and fairs. Both trade unions and employers are involved more formally in national and local bodies through representation on constituted tripartite

bodies that deal with different aspects of education, training and employment. In some cases, such as in Bulgaria and Slovakia, such representation is required by law.

5.2.3 Other stakeholders include **students and parents**. Their views are usually heard more often in the context of broad public consultations on needs and the extent to which current services on offer

meet those needs. In some of the ACCs such feedback is collected regularly and systematically through client satisfaction surveys. In most cases, however, the views of these stakeholders are gathered on only an ad hoc and irregular basis, as a result of a specific project or initiative. It is rare to find national bodies that involve parents and students as key partners in policy-making.

6. CONCLUSIONS – THE KEY ISSUES

6

6.1 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

This review has attempted to provide a **cross-country analysis** reflecting the most recent developments, trends, challenges and major issues for ACCs regarding counselling and guidance, and the strengths and weaknesses of national guidance systems and policies. It is intended to give a sense of the variety in service provision, the repertoire of initiatives, the multiple strategies developed to overcome challenges, and the extensive efforts being made to bolster the impact of career guidance in facilitating personal fulfilment, in improving access to lifelong learning, and in providing the appropriate human resources to build stronger, more dynamic economies. It is clear that, as is the case with the OECD overview report to which this report should be considered a companion piece, **none of the ACCs on its own holds the key for addressing the most pressing issues that have been identified**. Indeed, no such blueprint can possibly exist given that, despite an increasingly integrated and globalised world, each context has its own

ecological specificity. Nevertheless, collectively, the 11 ACCs reports provide us with case studies of national career and information guidance systems, as well as with a rich thesaurus of good practice.

6.2 KEY CHALLENGES

It is useful to outline the **key challenges** that lie ahead of the ACCs in this area. Based on the reports of the countries' experts, the key issues as they appear in this synthesis document can be summarised under three related headings, i.e. in terms of (a) the extent, (b) the modality and (c) the resourcing of provision.

6.2.1 Key issues in terms of the extent of provision

- The **right to career guidance** has only recently been entrenched in legal instruments in some of the ACCs. Several of these countries do so only with reference to the vocational education and training sector.

- There does not yet seem to be much **differentiated delivery** of service that would permit a more effective response **to the particular needs of specific groups**, such as people with disabilities, migrants and refugees. It is significant that few of the reports mention career guidance programmes specifically aimed at women.
- There are **significant gaps in guidance provision** for adults. In particular, there have been few developments in making guidance services available for those already in employment, to support career changes, or to prepare them for increased leisure or retirement. Such services tend to be offered, if at all, only in large enterprises that have a strong HRD department.
- In most cases, but especially so in the labour market sector, there is a **tendency to emphasise the giving of information** rather than the provision of guidance.

6.2.2 Key issues in terms of the modality of provision

- A major weakness in the area of career guidance is the **lack of cross-sectorial collaboration**, with the education and labour market providers often working in parallel rather than in convergent and mutually beneficial ways. This is often to the detriment not only of clients, but of the staff themselves, who have much to learn from the experiences, knowledge and skills of their counterparts in other services.
- Guidance in education contexts needs to move on from a **mode of delivery** that is almost solely focused on key decision-making points to one that is **integrated into the curriculum** through different subject areas. There is also **plenty of scope for the further development of linkages between the world of education and that of employment**, particularly when such activities encourage young people to engage in a critically informed manner with issues that will soon be central to their lives.
- While there is a trend towards encouraging clients **to engage in a self-service mode** in relation to

educational and career guidance, the overwhelming approach is still traditional, inspired by input models of provision.

- Despite **inadequate staff-to-client ratios**, much of the guidance activities are still aimed at the individual, when group approaches would ensure greater access to the service.
 - Few initiatives are reported by candidate country experts in terms of the development of **community-based provision** of career guidance services, in such a way as to attend to the needs of the 'hard to reach'.
 - **Quality assurance mechanisms are underdeveloped** in most ACCs, as is the evidence base. There is little research that can guide providers in terms of the effectiveness of the service they offer in reaching different types of clients and in responding to their needs. This is especially important as the reports on which this synthesis is based indicate an increasing tendency for the state to outsource and contract out provision.
 - **Social partnership** in the provision of career guidance services is **underdeveloped** in the ACCs. Parents, alumni, employers and occasionally trade unions do contribute information, experiences and advice, but only on a sporadic basis.
 - There is an **increasingly widespread use of ICTs** in the dissemination of educational and occupational information. However many of the media used do not support a guidance function, and may often be a computer-based version of what is already available in print. More must be done to exploit the connectivity functions that information and communication technology permits, enabling clients to clarify aspirations, evaluate skills and identify further education, training and employment opportunities.
- #### 6.2.3 Key issues in terms of resourcing provision
- More effort must be made to provide guidance staff with **preservice specialised training**, possibly as a certificate or diploma level course after

a first degree in such related areas as psychology, economics and/or the humanities.

- In both the education and labour market sectors, it is clear that **career guidance staff** often suffer from a role overload that severely limits their effectiveness.
- Career guidance staff **tend to be underprofessionalised**, in the sense that in ACCs they are generally not benefiting from the kinds of activities that associations undertake in order to advance their own profession, including training, research and the development of codes of practice. The competencies expected of career guidance personnel are often not clearly stipulated.
- Much of the funding for guidance activities comes from the state, with **little input from the private sector**. There is little research that can guide the public and/or private sector in channelling resources to particular sectors or groups.

6.3 THE WAY FORWARD

Needless to say, each country will gauge the extent to which it has already taken on the challenges identified above. The list merely serves as a useful overview of what the candidate country experts have collectively singled out as needing the attention. Policy-makers and practitioners can, in this way, better situate their own activities within the general picture, appraising and benchmarking their own achievements in relation to those of others, and drawing inspiration from the range of alternatives that have been piloted elsewhere.

ANNEX

INFORMATION, GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

BULGARIA

Nadezhda Kamburova, Svetlana Nickolova & Evgenia Petkova

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population (in millions)	7.8 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	3.7% (2001)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	66% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	44.2% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro)	5 710 (2001)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	55.8% (2000/01)
● as a % of EU-15 average	25% (2001)	● early school leavers rate* (%)	21% (2002)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS		● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	71% (2001)
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	49.6% (2001)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	1.3% (2002)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	23.9% (2001)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	7.5 (2001)
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	18.1% (2002)		
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	39.3% (2001)		

* % of 18–24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); *Employment in Europe 2002*; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); Europa Website: *Structural Indicators (May 2003)*; *Statistics in Focus Theme 3 19 and 20/2002 LFS Principal Results 2001*; SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General Background

Before 1990, career guidance and counselling in Bulgaria was largely confined to the education sector, where it was an inherent part of the system rather than an explicit service with its own distinct identity. After 1990, however, the Ministry of Education and Science set out to develop the field, and a Centre for Vocational Guidance was established within the Ministry in Sofia. The Centre's main activities included the development and adaptation of tests as well as the creation of an information system covering the vocational schools and vocational colleges in the country. A network of 28 Pedagogical Consulting Offices relating to the regional administrative governing bodies and covering the whole country was created. The initiatives undertaken by these Offices were closely linked to activities of the Vocational Guidance Centre. These offices were, however, closed down in 2000.

In 1994 the former National Employment Service, now functioning under the name of the Employment Agency (executive Agency to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy), set up a specialised system for vocational guidance services. This followed a German model, and catered mainly for unemployed people.

Nowadays, the services for information, guidance and counselling of young people and adults in Bulgaria are mainly provided within the framework of the Employment Agency. The legislative basis for carrying out activities in this field is the Law on Employment Incentives (2001), which revises the previous Law on Employment Protection and Employment Promotion (1998). According to this law, all job seekers above the age of 16 – whether unemployed or employed – have a right to vocational information and counselling.

The legislative basis for vocational guidance activities also includes the Law for Vocational Education and Training (1999). Important steps were undertaken for its implementation with the establishment of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, a specialised public body that has, as a goal, the accreditation of activities in the VET sector as well as the coordination of institutions and organisations related to VET, including guidance. According to this law, vocational guidance services should be delivered by Centres for Information and Career Guidance, whether these are run by the government, the community, or the private sector (Bulgarian, foreign, or joint ownership between Bulgarian and foreign investors). For a number of reasons, these Centres have not yet been established.

Activities connected with providing services in the field of career guidance in the public sector are funded by the state budget and are offered to clients free of charge. The private guidance and information sector remains underdeveloped.

Guidance in the Education Sector

Much remains to be done in the provision of vocational information and guidance services in the Bulgarian education system. There are, for instance, no separate career education lessons as a normal part of the secondary school curriculum. Neither are there systematically organised activities to integrate career education in other subjects. General secondary schools do not organise periods of work experience, though these are included in the curriculum of VET schools.

Lower and upper secondary schools do allocate one hour per week for students to meet their class teacher. This provides an opportunity for issues related to occupational choice and career development to be discussed. Secondary schools also have pedagogical advisers who provide information and counselling about educational opportunities after the seventh and eight grades and after the termination of compulsory schooling.

There is no formal career guidance set-up in the higher education sector. Both post compulsory institutions and universities organise orientation seminars with the aim of presenting first-year students with detailed information about the relevant course programmes, the main subjects of study and opportunities for specialisation and for postgraduate studies. At Sofia University, the oldest higher education institution in Bulgaria, a Consultant Centre for career development has been established as a unit of the Labour Office. Its aim is to provide information, guidance and counselling services to assist high school and university students to manage their careers. In other parts of the country, specialised information, guidance and counselling services for school and university students are provided by the Centres for Vocational Information, which are units within Labour Offices.

Guidance in the Labour Market Sector

The Employment Agency provides information, guidance and counselling services to young people and adults through its territorial branches, the Labour Offices. In the context of the mediatory services for employment, unemployed people and job seekers of all ages are offered information on job vacancies in the local labour market, the requirements of employers and the characteristics of specific occupations, together with guidance and counselling on the opportunities for broadening their chances in the labour market through qualification and re-qualification courses.

Labour Offices have a number of units attached to them. Job Clubs, for instance, provide information on actual and prospective occupations. Similarly, Centres for Vocational Information function as specialised units delivering information, guidance and counselling services. These Centres target school students in the main, but many other clients have free access to the services provided, including parents, university students, unemployed people, those in employment but seeking to change their jobs, employers, teachers and career guidance specialists. Client needs are addressed individually or in groups. Currently in Bulgaria there are 111 Labour Offices, 40 Job Clubs and 15 Centres for Vocational Information. Three of the Labour Offices in Bulgaria's large towns have units attached to them providing specialist information, guidance and counselling services to people with physical disabilities.

The Employment Agency has an Information and Publishing Centre that is responsible for the development, updating and dissemination of occupational information materials and products. The information materials and products are developed and updated according to approved requirements and procedures and on the basis of regular evaluation of the needs of clients. Every effort is made to ensure that the information produced is reliable and user-friendly. The material produced covers (a) various aspects of a wide range of occupations (e.g. characteristic work activities and tasks; work environment; psychological and personal requirements; opportunities for career development); (b) opportunities for education, training, specialisation, and retraining for the different occupations in the country and abroad (e.g. application forms, institutions and organisations; course programmes; entry requirements; diplomas and certificates awarded); and (c) labour market information (for instance, opportunities for practising different occupations at a national and regional level, self-employment options, and the social status of the different occupations). Information is provided in different ways, including print, video and multimedia formats. There are currently printed materials covering 450 occupations, while 110 video films and 90 multimedia products have been developed. Clients have access to these materials at the Labour Offices, as well as through Job Clubs and the Centres for Vocational Information.

The following is an overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision of career information and guidance services in Bulgaria, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- The promulgation of a legislative basis for the functioning and development of the system;
- The development of a reliable information base, which is constantly updated, broadened and enriched in response to clients' needs;
- The practical experience that has been amassed in the provision of career information and guidance services to young people and adults;
- The implementation of innovative projects, many of which have benefited from the financial support of external agencies.

Weaknesses:

- Underdeveloped information, guidance and counselling services in the education system;
- An insufficient number of specialised units providing information, guidance and counselling, with some parts of the Bulgarian territory not covered;
- The lack of specialised training for career counsellors in the higher education system;
- The lack of officially approved quality standards to regulate service provision.

The Way Forward:

- The development of a national strategy for the future of information, guidance and counselling in both the education and labour market sectors in the context of lifelong learning, on the basis of evaluation of practical achievements and weaknesses that have become evident during recent years;
- The establishment of more effective links and mechanisms for coordination of activities between all institutions and organisations related to career guidance at both national and regional levels;
- The continued investment in building up the network of specialised units providing information, guidance and counselling services;
- The broadening of the scope of information, guidance and counselling services and implementation of lifelong services.

Svetlana Nickolova is a psychology graduate and has a Master's degree from the Technical Institute in Dresden, Germany. She has held positions at the Research Institute for Education and at the Centre for Vocational Guidance in the Ministry of Education and Science in Bulgaria. She is currently the head of the section producing information in the Information and Publishing Centre of the Employment Agency. Her main areas of interest are in secondary VET schools; vocational competencies and interests; innovative methods in vocational training; psychological assessment of the effectiveness of training methods; and the design and implementation of guidance-related printed materials, video films and multimedia. She also has a strong interest in researching and adapting successful practices from EU countries in the field of career counselling and active employment policies. She has published articles, research reports and other documents relating to VET and guidance.

Nadezhda Kamburova is a psychology graduate and holds a Master's degree from Sofia University. She has occupied positions at the Research Institute for Education and at the Centre for Vocational Guidance in the Ministry of Education and Science. She is currently the senior expert in the section producing information in the Information and Publishing Centre of the Employment Agency. Her main areas of competence include VET in secondary vocational schools; the development of career information; and comparative research focusing on successful European Union practices in such fields as career guidance and active employment policies. She has published research reports and other documents relating to career guidance. E-mail for correspondence: ciidnsz@datacom.bg

Evgenia Petkova is a psychology graduate from Sofia University and has followed traineeships in the European Commission (Brussels) and the Institut International d'Administration Publique (Paris). She has occupied various positions in Bulgarian institutions dealing with the European integration of the country, and she is currently the Deputy Director of the Human Resource Development Centre in Sofia. She has published articles and research papers on Bulgarian vocational education and training and lifelong learning as seen from a European perspective. E-mail for correspondence: evgenia.petkova@sanebg.org

CYPRUS

George Christodoulides

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population (in millions)	0.7 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	6.1% (2002)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	66% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	37.5% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro) as a % of EU-15 average	17 180 (2001) 74% (2001)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	14.3% (2000/01)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS		● early school leavers rate* (%)	14% (2002)
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	65.9% (2000)	● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	65% (2001)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	49.2% (2000)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	3.7% (2002)
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	3.8% (2002)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	22.1 (2001)
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	8.4% (2001)		

* % of 18-24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); Employment in Europe 2002; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); Europa Website: Structural Indicators (May 2003); Statistics in Focus Theme 3 19 and 20/2002 LFS Principal Results 2001; SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General Background

Career information, guidance and counselling services in Cyprus are mainly delivered by staff from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The former provides such services via schools, the latter via Public Employment Offices. Other providers include the Student University Services (state and private), the Private Employment Services and, recently, the National Youth Organisation. Employers have an indirect input through the occasional dissemination of career information, while trade unions offer help and guidance to members who lose their jobs and are seeking to re-enter the labour market. As social partners, both employers and trade unions participate in advisory and other councils that deal with education and training.

There are no legal instruments regulating or steering guidance or information services in either the education or the labour sector, though the Schemes of Service of government employees do provide a framework that is also applicable to career guidance personnel. Schemes of Service detail duties and hierarchical accountability, and specify the academic and professional qualifications required of incumbents of positions in the public sector. They are legal instruments in that they are formally endorsed by parliamentary decisions. Policy Objectives are detailed through the Operational Regulations, which are also ratified by Parliament.

The Joint Assessment Paper (JAP), setting out as it does the policies and priorities for employment, is likely to have a strong influence on the shaping of new mission statements for the information, guidance and counselling services, which are striving to respond more effectively to the needs of the economy and of society, and also to the establishment of a culture of learning.

Guidance in the Education Sector

The relevant services in the education sector focus on counselling students and helping them to identify their qualities, strengths and inclinations so that they are able to make considered choices in relation to educational and career paths. Occupational/career information and guidance are not as much emphasised. Consequently, the influences shaping the national policies of the Ministry of Education and Culture are primarily educational and social; labour market needs tend to be secondary considerations.

The main target groups are ninth- and eleventh-grade students. The former are offered information and counselling to guide them in the choice of subject options they will follow in the tenth and eleventh grades. The latter students receive guidance in the choice of study pathways linked to further education, and are also sensitised to the way industry functions in preparation for their participation in the 'World of Work Familiarisation Week'.

Services are provided centrally from Nicosia, where the Ministry runs a one-stop-shop facility for use by students and parents as well as for the in-service training of school counsellors. The centre has a library with leaflets and catalogues detailing various study providers, as well as information about scholarships and other occupational and education-related topics. Access to the various services is, generally speaking, optional and is encouraged by word of mouth, by class teachers and by education psychologists. All ninth-grade students are expected to attend sessions on guidance-related issues throughout one semester.

Counselling staff is required to possess appropriate qualifications to be employed as teachers, together with a postgraduate qualification in counselling. More and more new recruits are now appointed on the strength of their first degree in psychology or sociology. The usual ratio of counsellors to students is about 1:650 for Grades 7, 8 and 9, and about 1:800 for Grades 10, 11 and 12, though in some cases the ratio could be as high as 1:300 students to cater more effectively for at-risk groups. Pre-service and in-service training is offered to new recruits by the Pedagogical Institute.

Guidance in the Employment Sector

The key objectives and goals for the information, guidance and counselling services of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security are related to the employment opportunities and training courses available to unemployed people, to those who receive social welfare benefits, to those seeking better employment and to at-risk target groups, such as school drop-outs. The major influences shaping the national policies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security relate to the target of reducing unemployment. Access to the services is, in general, optional. Services to at-risk groups – including young people living in remote areas, women who are outside the labour market, elderly workers and people with disabilities – are still underdeveloped.

Most guidance-related activities are offered through individual face-to-face interviews. Job seekers are registered through the nationwide Computerised Candidate System (CPS), which stores such information as the educational and occupational history of clients, their qualifications and their interests. Such profiles are then matched with vacancies. There are further plans to improve the services through the introduction of internet-based facilities.

The Ministry and the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) regularly publish information on vacancies and on the numbers of unemployed people by sector of economic activity.

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses in the provision of career information and guidance services in Cyprus, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- There is considerable investment in the upgrading of services, through the introduction of psychological and aptitude testing and the implementation of computer-aided guidance systems, such as the CPS;
- Staff qualifications, particularly in relation to the education sector, are being improved, so that guidance personnel now hold degrees in psychology or sociology, together with specialised postgraduate training in counselling;
- Employers show a willingness to liaise with school counsellors in implementing career guidance schemes and in contributing information about the world of work;
- The National Youth Organisation is becoming more and more interested and involved in providing user-friendly career counselling services to young people;
- Private employment services are on the increase, and are becoming more involved in career guidance and aptitude testing. Their involvement is subject to moderation and quality assessment by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security;
- There is a variety of providers who, between them, cover the production and dissemination of a wide range of career and education-related information and data.

Weaknesses:

- The system is too centrally controlled, with field providers at the level of the school and of the Public Employment Offices allowed little room for taking initiatives;
- There are no effective mechanisms for involving the various stakeholders in policy formulation and in the delivery processes;
- Lifelong learning policies are as yet unshaped, and the potential contribution of guidance services in promoting a knowledge-based economy is not sufficiently understood;
- There is little interaction, cooperation and integration of services between the major information, guidance and counselling services providers, and the mechanisms to activate and facilitate such cooperation are lacking;
- There are no explicit mechanisms in place to ensure quality standards;
- No research has been carried out to gauge the community's needs and clients' expectations in the area of occupational guidance and information.

The Way Forward:

- The development of national strategies relating to lifelong learning, together with a clearly articulated understanding of the contribution that information, guidance and counselling services can make to such strategies;
- The establishment of mechanisms for cooperation between different providers, and the integration of services so that objectives and targets are more effectively reached;
- The involvement of stakeholders in policy formulation and in the implementation of services;
- The undertaking of research to identify needs, to assess quality and to formulate standards.

George Christodoulides is a Senior Adviser with the Consultancy Unit of Intercollege, Cyprus. He is an accredited consultant in quality systems management and in human resources. He teaches Strategic Management at undergraduate and MBA level. He has been Headmaster of a Technical School, Director of the Higher Technological Institute, Director of Technical & Vocational Education, Chairman of the Cyprus Standards Organisation, and Consultant for the World Bank and UNESCO in Technical Educational and Training. E-mail for correspondence: christodoulides.g@intercollege.ac.cy

ESTONIA

Mare Juske, Katrin Mälksoo, Margit Rammo & Mari Saari

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population (in millions)	1.4 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	7.3% (2002)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	71% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	62.1% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro)	9 240 (2001)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	31.8% (2000/01)
● as a % of EU-15 average	40% (2001)	● early school leavers rate* (%)	13% (2002)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS		● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	86% (2001)
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	61.3% (2001)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	5.2% (2002)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	48.4% (2001)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	30.1 (2001)
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	9.1% (2002)		
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	24.5% (2001)		

* % of 18–24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); *Employment in Europe 2002*; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); Europa Website: Structural Indicators (May 2003); *Statistics in Focus Theme 3 19 and 20/2002 LFS Principal Results 2001*; SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General Background

Career guidance has been practised in Estonia for over 70 years. As is the case in other countries, the development and nature of this field has been dependent on the interaction of several factors. The coordination of career guidance and counselling is a task currently shared between two ministries: the Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the provision of services to young people, whereas the main target group of the Ministry of Social Affairs are unemployed people. The number and range of services provided by the private sector is growing rapidly, and includes career counselling, coaching and competency assessment, as well as career development services for managerial staff and specialists, together with the more common job brokerage/recruitment role.

In Estonia, career guidance has close affinities with psychology, and developments in the latter field have an important impact on the former. Research in the psychological sciences, as well as the teaching of psychology at institutions of higher education, ensures the availability of appropriately qualified staff and establishes the paradigm on the basis of which those engaged in career counselling organise their work. Indeed, a critical shift can be observed in the way counselling is being defined, with a new focus on cooperation and communication between the client and the counsellor replacing the previous emphasis on testing and the provision of information.

Other shifts have been signalled by new legislative and regulatory measures in both the education and labour market sectors. In the latter sector, there has also been a drive towards quality provision through the official adoption of standards in public services, the setting out of a clearly articulated protocol for the provision of vocational guidance services, and the drawing up of a job description for service providers, including activities

by target groups. Political mechanisms for the steering of guidance services – such as mandatory standards – have not yet been implemented in the education sector.

Despite important developments in the right direction, Estonia still does not have a unified and sufficiently regulated vocational guidance and counselling system. The need for this has nevertheless been officially recognised, and steps are being taken to find optimum solutions.

Guidance in the Education Sector

Information relating to career guidance and counselling activities and aimed at young people is collected and put together at the Ministry level, which is also where decisions about policy, initiatives and resources are made. The Ministry works in close cooperation with two organisations, namely the Estonian Youth Work Centre and the Foundation VET Reform in Estonia. Relevant annual agreements are signed with the county governors – of whom there are 15 – who are responsible for services in the area. Each county has one or more Youth Information and Counselling Centres (YICC), whose responsibility it is to provide a range of guidance and counselling-related services. The extent to which these Centres focus on career guidance, and the range of guidance services offered, differs from region to region and largely depends on capacity. There are currently 21 centres in operation across Estonia, some of them managed in cooperation with local governments in the country's largest cities.

Young people also have access to career-related information in schools, with a cross-curricular theme – 'Professional Career Development' – featuring in the National Curriculum for Basic Schools and Gymnasias. Although this cross-curricular theme will not be implemented until September 2004, schools have already embarked on the process of identifying staff members who will take responsibility in this area.

Service provision in educational settings is further supported by school psychologists who, in many cases, also provide career-counselling services. Using mainly client-centred, humanistic counselling approaches, these psychologists help young people learn about their aptitudes, personal characteristics and vocational orientations. Students are also provided with support to enable them to identify their potential and inner resources. Counsellors are usually attached to the central unit, but have no formal teaching duties.

Up until a few years ago, vocational education establishments did not offer career guidance services to their students. Recently, however, the VET school sector has seen some major reforms, with several schools in a number of towns merging into regional training centres that also provide training courses for adults. Some of these new centres have introduced career guidance services, either in the form of specific lessons in such employment-related matters as job seeking skills, or through testing and test processing, offered by career counsellors visiting the school. In general, however, it can be said that career- and guidance-related matters have not featured highly in vocational education establishments.

At the tertiary level, career guidance services operate in five Estonian universities. In addition to providing career consultation and counselling, such services often also act as a bridge between employers and students. Companies are invited to introduce their enterprises to students, lectures and seminars are organised, with students being invited to join a job seekers' database. The university career centres also collect feedback from the labour market, particularly through the first destination survey, and through employer questionnaires. There is no central regulation of career guidance services in higher education, and centres are established on the initiative of each university.

Guidance in the Labour Market Sector

Vocational guidance as a labour market service is regulated by the Labour Market Services Act which came into force on 1 October 2000. There are currently 18 vocational counsellors working in 16 regional employment offices. The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for the central formulation of the political guidelines and strategic goals that constitute national labour market policy, and for ensuring that these guidelines are followed. The implementation of the labour market policy is monitored by the administrative Labour Market Board, which supervises and monitors the regional employment offices.

Vocational guidance in employment offices is currently offered exclusively to unemployed job seekers (i.e. those registered as unemployed) and to job seekers who have received notice of the termination of their employment due to the restructuring of the enterprise for which they work. At the same time, information on the situation in the labour market and on the possibilities of labour market training is provided to every information seeker.

In 2002 counselling was provided to more than 8,100 job seekers, i.e. around 7.5% of the total number of unemployed people. The main target groups are the long-term unemployed; women (or men) returning to the labour market after an extended period of absence (often due to taking time out to raise a family, but also for other reasons); job seekers who have no qualifications or previous work experience, or who cannot work in their usual occupation for health reasons; people belonging to minority groups; and employers looking for appropriate labour. The aim of vocational counselling is to help job seekers to acquire a better understanding of their work situation, of the education and labour market situation, and of the opportunities available in employment and training in relation to their choices and preferences. The service is voluntary and free of charge for the client. The recommendations of the counsellor are taken into consideration when suggesting applicable labour market services to the client.

As well as giving information, counsellors also carry out interviews with clients, administer career guidance tests and provide training in job seeking and decision-making skills. Individual action planning will be launched during 2003 as a strategy to help at-risk job seekers (e.g. young people aged 16–24, long-term unemployed people, mothers with small children) to re-enter the labour market. It will also be used with unemployment benefit applicants in order to activate their job seeking process.

Guidance personnel work not only with individuals, but also with groups, particularly when these are formed on the basis of sharing similar difficulties or needs. Most regional employment offices provide internet access to job seekers, and a web-based self-information system was launched in 2003 in order to improve accessibility to labour market services. The self-information system facilitates the mediation between the client and work and training opportunities, providing career information as well as professional suitability testing and e-learning possibilities.

All counsellors working in the employment offices are graduates, with 80% of them having degrees in psychology, pedagogy or social work. Further training opportunities are regularly offered on the basis of the training programme approved by the Estonian Labour Market Board to ensure that vocational counsellors have the necessary skills required by their profession.

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses in the provision of career information and guidance services in Estonia, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- The general acknowledgement within the relevant ministries of the importance and necessity of guidance services;

- The availability of a newly issued set of documents and laws regulating service provision in the labour market system, including aims, tasks and clients of the service, as well as quality service criteria and service delivery standards;
- The higher education requirement and coordinated further training of counsellors, which have resulted in a harmonised level of professional skills for counsellors working in the labour market system;
- The existence of some methodological materials and tools, including handbooks for counsellors, workbooks for job seekers and pupils, and professional suitability tests;
- Growing cooperation at the regional level between the education and labour market guidance sectors, including the exchange of information, the dissemination of information materials, and the organisation of joint information days.

Weaknesses:

- The lack of unified political steering in this area between the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Social Affairs;
- The existence of two separate counselling systems, with separate management and financing, targeting different client groups; this impedes purposeful cooperation, limits opportunities for joint development activities and uses more resources;
- Insufficient regulation of guidance in the relevant policy documents within the education sector, with service delivery standards and quality assurance criteria not yet being developed;
- Lack of postgraduate specialised training of vocational and career counsellors;
- Low wages in the sector, resulting in difficulties recruiting and retaining specialists with high levels of qualifications;
- Variable levels of accessibility and quality of vocational counselling services across regions;
- The fact that guidance of working adults is addressed only by the private sector.

The Way Forward:

- The joint development of a guidance service provision model that will form the basis of a national implementation strategy that addresses young people and adults (both working and unemployed);
- The provision of support in the teaching of careers issues as a cross-curricular theme within the National Curriculum for Basic Schools and Gymnasias;
- The development of high-quality internet-based information systems and other electronic tools for different target groups;
- The acknowledgement of the guidance practitioner as a key contributor towards the implementation of lifelong learning;
- Increased cooperation with EU member states and countries in the European Economic Area;
- The development of new methods to address the needs of different target groups (such as adults, pupils and at-risk groups).

Mare Juske works as a chief specialist at the Estonian Labour Market Board. Her tasks involve the provision of information on the labour market situation and labour market training, the coordination and development of job mediation and vocational counselling services, and the harmonisation of their provision in the employment offices. She has worked in the guidance field since 1988. E-mail for correspondence: mare.juske@tta.ee

Katrin Mälksoo works at the Foundation VET Reform in Estonia as a project manager in the Phare programme. She coordinates the implementation of the project component dealing with the development of career guidance services in Estonia. Having previously been employed by Euroguidance Estonia, she has been involved in the development of the field since 2000. E-mail for correspondence: katrin.malksoo@sekr.ee

Mari Saari works as a psychologist at the Tartu Counselling and Crisis Help Centre, her main target group being unemployed people. Since 1993 she has led several groups of adults and young people in career planning, and has been a lecturer in solution-focused brief therapy and career counselling. She has worked in the guidance field since 1975. E-mail for correspondence: mari.saari@email.isp.ee

Margit Rammo works at the Foundation VET Reform in Estonia as a coordinator for the Estonian Euroguidance Centre. The Centre contributes towards the development of Estonia's career guidance system and, as a member of the European network, sets out to support guidance counsellors in promoting European mobility and the European dimension within education and training. Rammo has coordinated the production of several publications – such as 'Texts in Career Counselling' and 'Education, Labour Market and Careers Guidance in Estonia' – as well as web-based guidance tools. She has been involved in the guidance field since 1998. E-mail for correspondence: margit.rammo@sekr.ee

HUNGARY

Laszlo Zachar, Istvan Kiszter, Andras Vladiszavljev

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population (in millions)	10.2 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	4.5% (2002)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	66% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	51.6% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro)	12 250 (2001)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	11.5% ** (2000/01)
● as a % of EU-15 average	53% (2001)	● early school leavers rate* (%)	12% (2002)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS		● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	70% (2001)
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	56.5% (2001)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	3.3% (2002)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	24.1% (2001)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	14.8 (2001)
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	5.6% (2002)		
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	10.5% (2001)		

* % of 18–24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

** in addition more than 50% of upper secondary students are in prevocational programmes

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); *Employment in Europe 2002*; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); *Europa Website: Structural Indicators (May 2003)*; *OECD Education at a Glance 2002*; SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General Background

The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Employment Policy and Labour share the task of providing career information, guidance and counselling in Hungary. The participation of the private sector is not widespread, and private employment services are more concerned with making job placements. Some guidance is also offered through community-based civil organisations, but this provision is mainly informal and offered mostly by non-specialised personnel.

The legal instruments steering guidance and information services in both the education and labour market sectors are included in the laws governing public education, vocational education, adult training and the promotion of employment. An important policy instrument is the Framework Curricula for secondary schools, which provides clear directives regarding career orientation in the ninth and tenth grades, encouraging gender-equal guidance and equity in opportunities and outcomes.

Guidance in the Education Sector

The curriculum in Hungary does not feature any one subject that is directly linked to career counselling and guidance, though the theme of the world of work is addressed in a variety of subjects. At primary school level, the subject known as 'technique' is designed to provide careers information, to which two to three hours are dedicated weekly, making a total of around 72 hours annually. Twenty of these 72 hours are dedicated to occupational choice and career guidance. In addition, the class teacher meets students for one hour a week, and a portion of the time is devoted to providing labour market information. The

latter focus is intensified during the final year of primary schooling, when students have to make decisions about their future.

At the secondary school level, students receive career counselling and guidance from their form teacher during the so-called 'form teacher hour', as in primary school. Two hours each week are timetabled for this activity. Each secondary school also provides personal counselling, which is mainly psychological and remedial in orientation.

Guidance services are rather underdeveloped at the tertiary education level, though some universities – such as the University of Economics and the University of Technology – organise career fairs on an annual basis, attracting private sector companies in search of graduates. Over and above fulfilling recruitment needs, such career fairs give students the opportunity to engage in self-assessment in terms of the qualities required for specific occupations, collect relevant career information, engage in decision-making, learn and practice self-presentation skills, manage stress, look for jobs, learn how to write their curriculum vitae, and in some cases submit handwriting samples to graphology experts, on the basis of which personality profiles are drawn up.

The National Pedagogical Institute coordinates and supervises schools across Hungary, while the actual provision of career information, guidance and counselling services is the responsibility of the pedagogical institutes of the counties.

Guidance in the Labour Market Sector

The State Employment Service operates 20 County Labour Centres and 173 local branches nationwide. The Employment Law defines the responsibilities of the Centres, stipulating that career guidance and counselling are their primary tasks, with the rapid insertion of young unemployed into the labour market being a key goal. The main target groups are young people and adults in need of community and social support, particularly those who are unemployed or disadvantaged.

The County Labour Centres organise a career information forum in each county in order to assist the occupational selection process. County educational institutions, the chambers and representatives of civic organisations have all participated in these forums. Every year the County Labour Centres also organise career information exhibitions and similar events, which are intended to assist young people and adults as they move in and out of the labour market.

Since 1992 nine Regional Training Centres have been set up with World Bank support. These Centres provide training and retraining programmes for adults, with career guidance, information and counselling services featuring as an element therein. From 1994 onwards Employment Counselling Departments have been established with German assistance. The services of these Departments – as an institution network – include the provision of career information, training, and career guidance and counselling. Such services are provided free of charge to groups and individuals, and target unemployed workers and students. Currently each province (19 counties and Budapest) offers Employment Counselling services.

In 1998 the Ministry of Labour entrusted the Csongrad Province Labour Centre with the task of establishing the National Career Information Centre (NPK) with the help and support of the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme. The Centre's main objectives include the mapping of available training programmes and opportunities for training and employment that exist outside Hungary's borders. The Centre is also responsible for providing information about Hungary's education, labour, and social security systems to young people from other countries in order to assist mobility between states. The Centre has developed national databases about higher education, secondary education, adult education, vocational training and career information, all of which are available to any school or individual via the internet.

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses in the provision of career information and guidance services in Hungary, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- Hungary has a regulated guidance service in the education sector, with clear roles, objectives and learning materials, and with many institutions having a special room dedicated to guidance and counselling activities;
- Guidance issues are built into the school curriculum, and work-related issues are addressed in a number of curricular areas;
- Information about educational and occupational futures is freely available through the National Career Information Centre and the Employment Information Centres, and generally speaking, clients have open and easy access to services;
- Increasing attention is being given to the specific information and guidance needs of at-risk groups.

Weaknesses:

- The information content of the manuals and descriptions needs to be updated with special attention being given to regional differences;
- There are few well-trained counsellors;
- There are no quality-assurance mechanisms in place;
- There is a lack of cross-sectorial collaboration;
- Career guidance personnel in schools do not always have a good grasp of labour market realities;
- ICT-based information that contains a guidance function has yet to be developed;
- Some at-risk groups, including students with disabilities, are not yet receiving special attention in terms of career guidance;
- Adult guidance is underdeveloped, often focusing on unemployed people.

The Way Forward:

- There is a need to develop a national and integrated career guidance strategy;
- The articulation of formal standards would help to achieve quality in the provision of services;
- Guidance needs to be seen within a lifelong perspective, and structures and services should be developed with that in mind;
- The potential of ICTs in addressing individual and community needs should be exploited more effectively;
- Closer links should be established with the social partners in the provision of services.

István Kiszter graduated in Mechanical Engineering and qualified as an Engineering Teacher at Budapest University of Technology and Economy. He achieved the DACUM Facilitator Certificate at Holland College, Charlottetown (P.E.I. Canada) in 1995. He works in the Ministry of Employment Policy and Labour as the head of the Adult Education Development Department. His main areas of interest are the methodological aspects of adult education and job orientation. He currently directs three regional career guidance development programmes which are financed by Phare. E-mail for correspondence: istvan.kiszter@om.hu

Andras Vladiszavlyev graduated from Szeged University of Science as a teacher and career counsellor. Between 1993 and 1995 he worked as the General Director of the National Labour Centre in Hungary. He is currently the General Director of the Csongrad County Labour Centre and the Coordinator of the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance in Hungary. The Centre contributes to the development of Hungary's career guidance system and, in the fields of education and training, it supports guidance counsellors in promoting European mobility and European harmonisation. He has also led various European projects. He is the author of *The Modernisation of the Vocational Training* (2000), as well as of a number of other books and articles. E-mail for correspondence: va@nph.hu

Laszlo Zachar graduated in Mechanical Engineering and qualified as an Engineering Teacher at Budapest University of Technology and Economy. He has been the director of National Institute for Adult Education from 2002. He is also an associate professor at Budapest University of Technology and Economy and Pecs University of Science. In recent years he has had a number of university and secondary school textbooks published. His main areas of interest are the theoretical and practical aspects of adult education, particularly the knowledge of the world of work and job orientation. E-mail for correspondence: zachar.laszlo@nfi.gov.hu

LATVIA

Zinta Daija

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population (in millions)	2.3 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	5.9% (2001)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	67% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	64.5% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro) as a % of EU-15 average	7 750 (2001) 33% (2001)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	32.3% (2000/01)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS		● early school leavers rate* (%)	19% (2002)
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	58.7% (2001)	● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	79% (2001)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	36.9% (2001)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	8.4% (2002)
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	12.8% (2002)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	7.2 (2001)
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	22.9% (2001)		

* % of 18–24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); Employment in Europe 2002; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); Europa Website: Structural Indicators (May 2003); Statistics in Focus Theme 3 19 and 20/2002 LFS Principal Results 2001; SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General Background

The Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Science share the responsibility for the organisation of career information, guidance and counselling services in Latvia. The lead organisation is the Professional Career Counselling Centre (established under the supervision of the Ministry of Welfare in 1987) which offers its services centrally through 20 regional offices and through a peripatetic counselling group. The Centre's tasks include delivering guidance and counselling services to citizens (mainly compulsory education, VET and higher education students, unemployed people, and the employed people wishing to change jobs); compiling and disseminating educational and occupational information; developing guidance methods and strategies; investigating client needs; and providing training in career guidance. The Professional Guidance Information Centre (established under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science in 2000) compiles and disseminates educational and labour market information and is functioning as the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance in the Euroguidance network. There is one public organisation that charges a fee for providing guidance and counselling services to young people. Some guidance information is also offered through the Children and Youth Interest Centres and the Adult and Further Education Centres, but much of this provision is informal, and offered by non-specialist personnel.

Vocational guidance in the Republic of Latvia is regulated through a number of legal acts (the Social Security Law, the Education Act, the Vocational Education Act, the Law regarding Job Seekers and the Unemployed), which act as steering mechanisms for policy-making in both the education and the labour market sectors. Aspects of career guidance have, over the past few years, also been included in a number of national programmes and strategies concerning employment and human resource development. It

must be noted, however, that these activities and initiatives have not been adequately financed.

The career guidance profession is included in the Classification of Occupations, and the Association of Educational and Career Guidance Counsellors was established in 1996. Despite the increasing professionalisation of the occupation, there has been little evidence of cross-sector collaboration.

Guidance in the Education Sector

Guidance-related themes are integrated throughout compulsory schooling within the social sciences curriculum (Grades 1 to 9), which devotes one to two lessons to the area annually. Local governments are expected to provide guidance to students, but existing regulations do not articulate roles, objectives, duties and service standards. Schools have a deputy director for out-of-class activities, and this includes responsibility for career guidance. Guidance is mainly provided during special lessons led by the class teacher and during project weeks, but such provision is generally in the hands of non-specialist staff. Students explore different career pathways and visit educational institutions and educational exhibitions. In addition, students participate in individual or group guidance and counselling sessions in the Professional Career Counselling Centre. The Centre has 37 counsellors, all of whom have a first degree (generally in psychology) followed by specialised in-service training. Counsellors visit schools and lead group counselling sessions or organise information days. It is calculated that around 26% of the school-leaving-age students have been involved in such guidance-related activities.

Some secondary schools provide a work shadowing experience in order to help students gain first-hand knowledge of the world of work, and organise student enterprises in collaboration with Junior Achievement. Other schools have introduced career development programmes or provide career counselling following specialised courses offered to teachers by the Professional Career Counselling Centre.

The VET and tertiary education sectors have not yet developed special career guidance and counselling services. Higher education establishments have Study Centres, but the role of the counsellors is here confined to introducing students to the available programmes of study.

The Professional Career Counselling Centre, the Professional Guidance Information Centre and some private providers publish information on an annual basis about vocational and higher education establishments. This material is distributed in print format among schools and libraries and is also available in bookshops. Web-based versions of this information are now provided through Ministry of Education and Science channels, and through some private providers. A number of CD-ROMs have also been produced. In addition, education- and career-related information is disseminated through the monthly journal *Target* (in Latvian), the newspaper *Education and Career* (in Russian), and *Career Day*, a supplement of the national newspaper. Career-related issues feature regularly in other newspapers, as well as in the broadcasting media more generally. Employers' organisations contribute towards the organising of annual educational exhibitions and fairs at both state and regional levels, while the State Youth Initiative Centre organises regional youth information days. These include a career day, on which lectures and seminars on guidance-related themes are scheduled.

Guidance in the Labour Market Sector

Information, guidance and counselling services for adults – whether employed or unemployed – are offered by the Professional Career Counselling Centre. This has seen a 25% increase in the use of its services, by a broad range of clients in recent years. The

State Employment Service offers information about vacancies and implements active labour market measures. The latter include job seekers' clubs, training and retraining courses, and work practice for young unemployed people. It also supports employment units for individuals with special needs.

Over and above state provision, there are 40 private employment services, but these are mainly concerned with job placement.

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses in the provision of career information and guidance services in Latvia, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- Legal acts stipulate that all citizens have a right to career guidance and that providers should offer a responsible service;
- An organisation that is external to the school and to the State Employment Service – namely the Professional Career Counselling Centre – has been established in order to provide guidance and counselling services to a wide range of clients, including school students, vocational and higher education students, unemployed people, those already in employment and people with disabilities;
- Regional provision has enhanced the access to services;
- A National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance has been established;
- Guidance-related themes are being integrated across the curriculum in the compulsory school sector;
- A number of career guidance initiatives have been launched in schools, with work shadowing, career development courses and career counselling serving as models of good practice;
- Surveys are being carried out to identify the different career guidance needs of school students, VET students and unemployed people;
- A broad range of educational information is available in both print and ICT formats as well as through newspapers, journals, TV, the broadcasting media, and at career and further education fairs.

Weaknesses:

- Collaboration in the provision of guidance and counselling services between the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Education and Sciences and local governments is underdeveloped;
- Career education and guidance services in schools need to be improved, as clear objectives, service manuals, and specialist staff are still lacking;
- Career guidance is also underdeveloped in VET schools and higher education establishments;
- Occupational and labour market information needs to be linked more effectively to educational information;
- Career guidance is still often offered by non-specialist staff;
- No clear strategy or structures have been developed to respond effectively to the specific needs of out-of-school young people.

The Way Forward:

- The development of the career guidance and counselling system by integrating the service and creating closer collaboration between social partners;
- The provision of specialised training for career guidance staff, and ensuring effective service by adopting standards and a quality charter;
- The optimisation of the use of ICTs in addressing individual and community needs;

- The improvement of career guidance in educational institutions in order to develop 'guidance-oriented schools';
- The strengthening of the capacity of the Professional Career Counselling Centre to respond to the needs of a wide range of clients.

Zinta Daija is a Doctor of Biology (Psychophysiology), and is deputy director at the Professional Career Counselling Centre, where she directs research and runs training programmes. She was trained in career counselling and psychology by Russian specialists, has delivered lectures in this area in three higher educational establishments, and is a co-author of a book, *Make Your Career by Yourself* (Professional Career Counselling Centre, Riga, 2000), and of 28 articles. E-mail for correspondence: zinta@karjerascentrs.lv

LITHUANIA

Jonė Sikorskienė

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population (in millions)	3.5 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	6.0% (2001)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	71% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	59.3% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro) as a % of EU-15 average	8 960 (2001) 39% (2001)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	38.3% (2000/01)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS		● early school leavers rate* (%)	14% (2002)
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	60.1% (2000)	● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	84% (2001)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	41.6% (2000)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	3.3% (2002)
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	13.1% (2002)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	6.8 (2001)
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	30.9% (2001)		

* % of 18–24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); Employment in Europe 2002; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); Europa Website: Structural Indicators (May 2003); Statistics in Focus Theme 3 19 and 20/2002 LFS Principal Results 2001; SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General Background

The main providers of career guidance and counselling fall within the remits of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. These Ministries are responsible for career guidance and counselling development at a national level. The tasks of these Ministries differ by target groups.

- The competence of the Ministry of Education and Science includes the provision of career guidance at general education and vocational schools.
- The competence of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour includes organising extra-curricular guidance for young people, their parents and teachers, and also for other labour market participants such as unemployed people, those facing unemployment, employers, employees and vulnerable groups.

There are some other institutions that provide career counselling:

- Career centres at the biggest universities, which offer such services as counselling for students who are making vocational choices and planning their careers; organising further education and internship programs within the country and abroad; providing information on the situation in the labour market; and helping to organise job searches;
- Regional labour market training and counselling services and labour exchanges;
- Private consulting organisations, of which there are currently around 20, offering such services as searching and selecting qualified specialists, conducting personnel and management training, and providing counselling on management issues;
- The National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (or Lithuanian Euroguidance Centre), which was established in 1998 with the National Agency for Leonardo da Vinci

and which has as its main purpose the production and dissemination of guidance material as well as supporting mobility across Europe.

Despite the fact that activities of separate institutions are regulated by the laws of the Republic of Lithuania, by government resolutions and by ministerial orders, there is as yet no national system for providing career information, guidance and counselling. Institutions operating in this field lack coordination and cooperation.

Guidance in the Education Sector

Each general education school has a person responsible for career guidance, usually a director or deputy director. Their activity is not regulated by legal documents. Compulsory level schools can employ an educational psychologist (of which there are 236 in all), though not all of them are able to find or afford such specialists, especially in rural areas. School psychologists have a broad remit, which is outlined in their job description. This includes addressing learning difficulties and conduct and relationship problems, and providing educational and career guidance. The latter tends to get very little attention, as other responsibilities take precedence.

Career guidance began to be given more importance in 1998, when schools introduced specialised curricular pathways. Students became more motivated to seek guidance support as their choices had an impact on their future educational and occupational trajectories. Such guidance could be from obtained outside the school, in such places as:

- The Territorial Labour Market Training and Counselling Services (TMLTCS, under the remit of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour);
- The Vocational Guidance Centre at the Lithuanian technological park (under the remit of the Ministry of Education and Science);
- The psycho pedagogical services (under the remit of the municipalities).

Specialists in these institutions are professional psychologists, who help clients to identify personal interests, abilities and vocational aptitudes, and to choose the suitable study pathway in view of their career plans. Services can be offered to clients either individually or in groups.

Guidance in the Labour Market Sector

Two public institutions deal with employment, vocational training and career issues.

- The Lithuanian Labour Exchange, which consists of one National and 46 Territorial Labour Exchanges. These offer generic vocational information; clients who require more detailed career guidance and counselling are directed to Territorial Labour Market Training and Counselling Services.
- The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority and its regional subdivisions, including six Territorial Labour Market Training and Counselling Services (TLMTCSs) and 14 Labour Market Training Centres. Territorial Services employ 180 persons, of whom 35 are counsellors who are psychology graduates. They provide career information and counselling to adults, and extra-curricular counselling to schoolchildren in towns and districts. In addition, they visit Territorial Labour Exchanges and schools in rural areas. TLMTCS counsellors provide individual and group career information, guidance and counselling; they also develop and implement programmes for labour market integration and help clients in planning careers, while facilitating their social and personal development.

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses in the provision of career information and guidance services in Lithuania, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- Territorial Labour Exchanges provide career information through a variety of outlets, including job centres, youth job centres, information and counselling centres, vocational information centres and self-information services terminals;
- There is a network of 6 Territorial Labour Market Training and Counselling Services that covers the biggest towns and their districts;
- TLMTCS counsellors and central staff in Vilnius prepare and conduct effective programmes helping clients develop their occupational abilities for labour market participation;
- There is a growing number of websites that provide career information.

Weaknesses:

- Coordination between institutions providing career counselling is weak;
- There is a general lack of information about counselling services;
- There is no training institution for career counsellors, no formal agreement regarding the qualification requirements for entry into the profession, and no quality standards to regulate the exercise of the profession;
- Career guidance providers/counsellors are not available in sufficient numbers to satisfy need or demand, and as a result, services tend to be directed those who ask for them, rather than to the target groups that are most at risk, including young people and adults who have lost the motivation to learn or to work;
- The subject of career education is not yet integrated throughout the general school curriculum, and currently benefits only senior students;
- There are insufficient up-to-date psycho diagnostic methods available for use by career guidance staff.

The Way Forward:

- The development of a national career guidance strategy, which would recognise the extent to which a successful occupational life is marked by lifelong learning;
- The involvement of social partners in planning and providing career guidance services;
- The preparation of quality standards to guide service providers;
- The coordination and targeting of a career guidance services network oriented towards consumer and community needs;
- The further development of an integrated, open, non-commercial, computerised career information and counselling system.

Jonė Sikorskienė is director of the Vilnius Labour Market Training and Counselling Service, a not-for-profit state body responsible for the organisation of labour market career guidance, counselling and vocational training in the city of Vilnius and surrounding districts. E-mail for correspondence: sjone@vilnius.ldmt.lt

MALTA

Ronald G. Sultana

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population (in millions)	0.4 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	5.0% (2001)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	68% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	37.1% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro) as a % of EU-15 average	12 600 (2000) 56% (2000)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	26.3% (2000/01)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS			
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	54.2% (2001)	● early school leavers rate* (%)	53% (2002)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	31.0% (2001)	● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	n/a
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	7.4% (2002)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	4.4% (2002)
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	11.2% (2001)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	25.4 (2001)

* % of 18–24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); Statistical Yearbook on Candidate and SE European Countries 2001; Employment in Europe 2002; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); Europa Website: Structural Indicators (May 2003); SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General Background

The task of providing career information, guidance and counselling in Malta is shared by two different Ministries, namely Education and Social Policy. There are few private providers of career information and guidance, with private employment services being more concerned with job placements than with actual guidance and counselling. Some vocational and educational guidance is also offered through trade unions, and through the many youth and community-based organisations on the island. Much of this provision is informal, and offered in an ad hoc manner by non-specialist personnel.

There are no legal instruments steering guidance or information services in either the education or the labour market sector. An important policy instrument is the National Minimum Curriculum, which provides clear directives regarding the school-to-work curriculum, encouraging gender-equal guidance and equity in opportunities and outcomes. A Guidance Services Manual published by the Education Division in 2000, while not having the formal status of a binding policy document, does provide guidance teachers with a framework regarding role, competencies and quality standards. Overall, however, guidance has not featured highly on the government's policy-making agenda, and there is little interministerial cooperation or cross-sectorial collaboration.

In the education sector, information, guidance and counselling services have been offered since 1968, when a fledgling Guidance Unit was set up. Guidance and counselling services currently fall under the aegis of the Department of Student Services and International Relations, one of 6 Departments in the Education Division, each of which is headed by a Director. This Department has three main responsibilities, catering for (a) student services, (b) special education, and (c) international relations. The Guidance and

Counselling Unit is located within the Student Services Section, which is headed by an Assistant Director. The Unit is led by an Education Officer, and is responsible for personal, curricular/educational and career guidance of students, and for the further training of counsellors and guidance teachers.

The roles of the 30 counsellors and 125 guidance teachers differ in that the former focus on personal and developmental issues rather than vocational and career issues, a focus legitimated by a separation of roles formalised by a Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) agreement. Counsellors are attached to the central unit and have no formal teaching duties, though they have to spend a minimum of three days a week in one or more schools. They offer counselling to individuals and groups of students and parents, facilitate referrals of students to other agencies or other specialists, and monitor the work of guidance teachers. The latter are assigned duties in one secondary school, along a pre-established ratio that is currently 1:300 students. Some challenging schools are allocated an additional member of staff. Guidance teachers spend half of the normal teaching time in classes teaching the curricular subjects in which they specialise. They spend the rest of the time leading individual and group sessions with students and parents, running a careers and further education information room, and fulfilling other duties associated with their role as guidance personnel, including organising orientation visits to work places. There are no guidance teachers assigned to primary schools, and while in theory there ought to be five counsellors dedicated to the primary sector, there is currently only one servicing the 80 state primary schools on the island. The impact of educational and occupational guidance in the education sector is constrained by a highly streamed system of schooling in which students sit for high-stake examinations at the end of their primary years (age 11+), the result of which largely determines their subsequent educational and occupational trajectories.

Postsecondary establishments and the University of Malta also have counsellors and Student Advisory Offices attached to them, catering for the whole range of personal, educational and vocational guidance needs of students. Most counsellors have a Master's degree, while guidance teachers usually have a first degree in teaching and a diploma in counselling.

The non-state education sector, which includes 30% of all students and which is made up of church, independent and parent foundation schools, also provides guidance teachers and counsellors, and these generally have the same profile and range of responsibilities as their counterparts in the state school system. They often join their colleagues from the public schools for further and in-service training sessions. The guidance teacher/counsellor-to-student ratio in non-state schools is not regulated. Some of these private schools have guidance teachers and counsellors, while some have the former but not the latter.

Over and above the information and guidance provided through the Guidance and Counselling Unit, the orientation towards the world of work and further studies is given in both primary and secondary schools through a number of subjects, especially social studies, personal and social education, home economics, business studies and religious studies. At the secondary level, form teachers meet their classes on a regular basis and discuss matters of concern to students, very occasionally including aspects of vocational and educational guidance. Form teachers also fill in Cumulative Record Cards for students under their care, in consultation with the guidance teacher, who has custody of these profiles. In theory, such profiles can be made available to employers for recruitment purposes. Schools also have the option to participate in experiential extra-curricular projects that attempt to help students develop skills in setting up cooperatives (SCOOPS – Co-Ops in Schools) or small businesses (Young Enterprise scheme). Other activities include career conventions and fairs, and the organisation of seminars to which employers and alumni are invited.

Information about postsecondary educational pathways as well as opportunities for further studies and adult education is also provided by another department of the Ministry of Education, the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (DFSAE). The DFSAE publishes a detailed annual prospectus of postsecondary courses, and this is distributed free of charge to all households with a young person reaching the end of compulsory schooling. The DFSAE also publishes a catalogue of adult and evening courses that is distributed to local councils, district libraries and various industrial enterprises. In addition, it disseminates information through its website and through advertising on community television (Channel 22). Partly in response to the nationwide debate on the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Memorandum, the DFSAE has decided to establish guidance and counselling services for adults.

A limited vocational guidance service is also available at the Public Employment Service of the Ministry for Social Policy, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC). The ETC targets a clientele that includes unemployed people, women returning to the labour market and individuals with special needs requiring advice on accessing supported employment units. It provides one employment adviser for every 550 clients, and offers its services both centrally and through its four regional offices. The 13 ETC employment advisers are principally concerned with job matching, maintaining contacts with employers and referring job seekers to the relevant training programmes in order to increase their employability options. They have no specific training in vocational guidance, although a two-year part-time diploma level course is now being offered to them by the University of Malta. The employment advisers interview clients and draw up a profile and an action plan for each interviewee on the basis of their work experience, qualifications, aptitudes and work preferences. Employment advisers tend to suffer from both a role and a case overload, and the administrative functions take precedence over the vocational guidance function. There is very little structured collaboration between the guidance services of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Social Policy – each has its own budget, and establishes its own operational and training targets independently.

There is very little scope for employers in Malta to offer vocational guidance within their businesses, since most enterprises employ fewer than ten workers and do not have the capacity to provide formal information or guidance services: of the 23,660 enterprises in Malta, 94.7% are micro enterprises, 4.3% are small companies and 0.9% medium-sized firms. At best, some larger enterprises offer occupational guidance informally through the HRD department, in response to specific situations, such as the introduction of an early retirement scheme. While trade unions do offer careers information and guidance to their members, much of this activity is informal, and is usually a response to ad hoc enquiries, for example from members who are facing redundancy or changing jobs. The idea of social partnership in guidance is not yet fully established.

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses of the career information and guidance system in Malta, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- Malta has a well-established guidance service in the education sector, with clear roles, objectives, and service manual, and with many institutions having a dedicated room for guidance and counselling activities. The role of the guidance teacher in schools is perceived to be attractive, though the personal counselling role tends to take precedence over the vocational guidance role;
- Guidance issues permeate the school curriculum, with several subjects addressing the world of work. Experiential extra-curricular activities ensure that at least some students develop real skills in setting up and being part of cooperatives and small businesses;
- A broad range of information about educational and occupational futures is made available in both print and ICT formats;

- Because of the country's size, clients have ready access to services;
- There is an increasing awareness of the differentiated needs of clients, with specific strategies being developed to target at-risk groups, including women returners, ex-substance abusers, ex-convicts and clients from economically depressed areas.

Weaknesses:

- Maltese guidance services suffer from a lack of clear policy steering;
- There is as yet no formalised quality auditing procedure for ensuring that guidance services in the education and labour market sectors are achieving objectives;
- As a result, there is a lack of cross-sectorial collaboration, with the labour market and education sectors working in parallel;
- School guidance staff tends to have little understanding of labour market issues;
- ICT-based information that contains a guidance function has yet to be developed;
- Despite the policy of mainstreaming in schools, there has been virtually no development in the provision of guidance services to students with disabilities;
- Adult guidance is underdeveloped, and where it is offered, is focused mainly on those who are unemployed. There is little if any guidance offered to adults already in employment.

The Way Forward:

- The formulation of a national strategy that integrates services and creates new synergies, with a well-stocked national guidance resource centre;
- The development of standards and quality charters;
- A shift towards a view of guidance as a lifelong process, and the creation of structures and strategies to support the implementation of a lifelong service;
- Optimising the use of ICTs in addressing individual and community needs;
- The establishment of closer and more open links between the social partners.

Ronald G. Sultana is Professor of Sociology and Comparative Education at the University of Malta, where he directs the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research. He trained as a counsellor in the UK, and his main research interests include VET, teacher training and transition-to-work issues. He is the author or editor of 13 volumes, including *Careers Education and Guidance in Malta: Issues and Challenges* (co-editor, 1997 – PEG, Malta), has published over 80 articles and chapters in refereed journals and books internationally and has recently authored the Cedefop synthesis review of career guidance in 28 European countries. Professor Sultana is a member of the editorial board of the *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, and of the European Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance. E-mail for correspondence: ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt

POLAND

Włodzimierz Trzeciak, Wojciech Kreft

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population (in millions)	38.6 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	5.2% (1999)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	67% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	63.4% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro) as a % of EU-15 average	9 410 (2001) 41% (2001)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	62.1% (2000/01)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS		● early school leavers rate* (%)	8% (2002)
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	55.0% (2000)	● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	80% (2001)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	28.4% (2000)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	4.3% (2002)
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	19.9% (2002)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	9.8 (2001)
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	41.5% (2001)		

* % of 18–24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); Employment in Europe 2002; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); Europa Website: Structural Indicators (May 2003); OECD Education at a Glance 2002; SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General Background

Vocational guidance in Poland is based on the theoretical perspective that the process of a human being's career planning and development starts in early childhood and lasts for the whole life period. Vocational life is a series of personal decisions that should take into account several factors. Some of these factors are of an internal nature, comprising the individual characteristics of a human being; other factors relate to independent, objective external conditions – social, cultural and economic. The history of career guidance services in Poland has almost 100 years of tradition. It should be emphasised that people in Poland tend to use the term 'vocational guidance' to describe the whole area of career information, guidance and counselling.

Career guidance and information services are mainly provided by two Departments of State, the Ministry of National Education and Sport, and the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy. Each of these ministries manages and finances its services independently. Within the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, there is a special Department of Vocational Counselling with a monitoring and coordinating function; in the Ministry of National Education and Sport there is no separate organisational unit of this kind.

The key goals of Polish national policies concerning information, guidance and career counselling services are defined in the National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources Development.

The main goal set out in the strategy is the wider involvement of citizens in the labour process. It is assumed that this will be achieved by:

- increased employability owing to development of quality human resources;
- promotion of entrepreneurship;
- improved ability of enterprises and their employees to adapt to the changing market conditions;
- enforcing a policy of equal opportunities within the labour market.

Improvement of employability will be of crucial importance with respect to career counselling because in most cases it is directly connected with individual career planning and career management; the need to acquire additional vocational skills; continued vocational training; and equipping the individual with the ability to operate in the labour market.

It is therefore crucial to create a system of widely available career information and to improve the quality and availability of counselling services. It is also vital that all relevant institutions and stakeholders are integrated more fully. This will increase the effectiveness and complementarity of such services.

Guidance in the Education Sector

Within the Ministry of National Education and Sport, information and career guidance services are provided mainly by a network of 587 Psychological and Pedagogical Centres.¹² All centres are supervised by local governments (at the *poviat* level, i.e. the middle tier of the local government structure, roughly corresponding to a district). In line with their statutory tasks, the centres offer assistance to children and young people aged 0–19 years. Around one in eight individuals from this age group receive direct specialist support from these institutions, in such areas as:

- early diagnosis and rehabilitation;
- counselling for teenagers (including preventing addictions);
- family counselling;
- help for disabled children and teenagers;
- career counselling.

Thus in the 2000/01 school year the number of children and young people aged 0–19 years was 10,629,745. The Psychological and Pedagogical Centres gave specialist support to 1,264,828 of these (11.9%) to 1,004,782 (9.45%) with a diagnosis, and to 260,046 (2.45%) without one.¹³

Until January 2003 schools did not have teachers or other staff with a specific responsibility for career education and guidance. According to the legal regulations, career information and guidance services for all school students were to be provided by the Psychological and Pedagogical Centres. However, their staffing and equipment were not sufficient to provide adequate services for all who needed them.

The Ministry of National Education and Sport regulation of 7 January 2003 on the organisation and provision of psychological and pedagogical support in public kindergartens, schools and other educational institutions (*Journal of Laws*, 11/2003 item 114) has now introduced a new role into Polish schools. At every level of education, each school may now employ a school career counsellor. This position is not obligatory, so it may take some time for this new role to appear in schools all over the country. Priority is initially being given to schools closest to the time of entry into the labour market. In smaller schools, the role may cover more than one school, or be combined with, for example, the teaching of entrepreneurship.

¹² Grażyna Soltysińska, *Career Guidance in the Polish Educational System*. National Centre for Vocational Training Support, Warsaw, 2002.

¹³ <http://www.cmppp.edu.pl>

Guidance in the Labour Market Sector

Since 2000 the employment services provided by the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy have been largely devolved to provincial (*voivodship*) and district (*poviat*) levels. Information and career counselling services are now offered at both of these levels.

- At the first, basic level, all activities are carried out by approximately 460 career counsellors working in the 373 *poviat* labour offices, which are supervised by higher local authorities called *starostwa*.
- The second level comprises career counsellors from the 51 Centres for Career Information and Planning of the voivodship labour offices, supervised by *voivodship* Marshals (i.e. heads of provincial government; there are 16 *voivodships*). These centres offer comprehensive professional career information and vocational counselling services. Their staff provide individual counselling services as well as information relating to career planning.

Career counsellors employed in Public Employment Services (approximately 700 counsellors across the country) offer assistance to unemployed people and other job seekers in solving their career problems.

In 2000 the National Forum for Vocational Guidance was established by the Task Force for Training and Human Resources (BKKK), a non-governmental organisation responsible for Poland's links with relevant European Union training programmes. Its main goal is to formulate consistent solutions in the field of vocational guidance in Poland. It was intended by its founders to facilitate the exchange of experiences and ideas between experts in this area. This is expected not only to result in improved knowledge and skills, but also to facilitate the development of the country's vocational guidance system. The forum brings together representatives of central and local government, vocational and continuing education institutions, the Ministry of National Education and Sport, the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, employer organisations, trade unions and vocational counsellors. Hitherto it has convened a series of ad hoc meetings; it is currently seeking to establish a more formal structure, with a Programme Council and a Permanent Experts Group.

The following is an **overview of strengths and weaknesses** of the career information and guidance system in Poland, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- A strong core group of professional career counsellors, especially in the labour offices and the Psychological and Pedagogical Centres;
- Improved career information resources, including web-based resources;
- Active leadership from the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, building upon the pioneering work of the former National Labour Office;
- The existence of a National Forum for Vocational Guidance.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of career education and guidance expertise within schools;
- Weak links between schools and the world of work;
- A traditional view that career information must be mediated by professional staff rather than being directly available on an open-access basis;
- Lack of services for employed adults to encourage them to review and develop their career on a regular basis;
- Limited involvement of employers and trade unions in the development of career guidance provision.

The main threat is that the lack of effective coordination, both horizontally between the Ministry of National Education and Sports and the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy, and vertically between the different levels of administration and self-government at national, voivodship, poviot and gmina levels, together with a failure to use the potential of the National Forum for Vocational Guidance, could result in:

- fragmented development;
- ineffective use of public resources;
- inefficient duplication of effort;
- failure to address gaps in provision.

The Way Forward:

- The provision by the National Strategy for Employment and Human Resource Development of an overarching strategy within which the development of stronger and more coordinated career guidance provision can be set;
- The provision by the National Forum for Vocational Guidance to provide a catalyst for coordinated strategic development across the career guidance field, on a lifelong basis;
- Recent initiatives to establish career education provision within the school curriculum;
- The new initiative to appoint school career counsellors in all lower and upper secondary schools;
- The career bureaux being set up in many higher education institutions.

Włodzimierz Trzeciak is former Director of the Methodological Centre for Career Information and Counselling of the National Labour Office, and is coordinator of the National Forum for Vocational Guidance. E-mail for correspondence: w_trzeciak@poczta.onet.pl

Wojciech Kreft is a career counsellor and independent expert. He was the chairman of the organising committee of the International Congress of Education and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), held in Warsaw from 29 to 31 May 2002. He works for The Polish Association of School and Vocational Counsellors and is a member of The European Commission's Expert Group On Lifelong Guidance. E-mail for correspondence: w.kreft@perspektywy.pl

ROMANIA

Mihai Jigău

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population* (in millions)	22.4 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	3.0% (2002)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	68% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	41.9% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro) as a % of EU-15 average	5 560 (2001) 24% (2001)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	63.9% (2000/01)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS		● early school leavers rate** (%)	23% (2002)
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	62.4% (2001)	● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	71% (2001)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	48.2% (2001)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	1.1% (2002)
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	7.0% (2002)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	4.5 (2001)
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	17.6% (2001)		

* although the 2002 census shows that the actual population figure is only 21.6 millions inhabitants, we have used Eurostat's population estimates for 2002 for reasons of comparability with other countries in this report

** % of 18–24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); *Employment in Europe 2002*; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); Europa Website: Structural Indicators (May 2003); *Statistics in Focus Theme 3 19 and 20/2002 LFS Principal Results 2001*; SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General background

The task of providing career information, guidance and counselling in Romania is shared by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Youth. There are some private information, guidance and counselling services, but these focus mainly on selecting and placing personnel in what is generally a highly qualified and specialised labour force sector. Recent initiatives include online vocational guidance services for adults.

Data provided by the Institute of Educational Sciences and by the Ministries of Education and Labour indicate that there are approximately 650 counsellors in educational settings and 450 counsellors in labour market settings. A further 100 counsellors work in the institutional structures of other ministries, or are employed by associations and private companies. Of a total of 1,200 counsellors, around 60% are aged between 25 and 40, with more than 80% being female.

There are some important legal instruments steering guidance and information services. Education Act No. 84/1995 regulates the information, guidance and counselling activities organised by institutions that come under the Ministry of Education. Other legal instruments regulate aspects relating to the Statute of the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centres, define the job description for guidance teachers and counsellors, and set out the regulations regarding the Organisation and Functioning of the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centres and of the Inter-School Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Offices.

Some recent initiatives have reinforced career guidance in schools. These include the introduction of counselling and guidance as a curricular area in the National Curriculum at

the pre-university level (with effect from the academic year starting 1998); the introduction, at the postsecondary level, of a new curricular area, vocational guidance and counselling (in the first year of the two-year course of study) and information and vocational guidance (in the second year) as an aspect of the VET Reform, funded by the EU under the Phare programme (VET RO 9405); the establishment in 1999 of a National Resources Centre for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG) in the Euroguidance Network; the setting up of Information and Vocational Counselling Centres within the framework of the National Employment Agency; the offer of a Master's degree in counselling and guidance at Romanian Universities (Bucharest and Cluj); and the establishment – thanks to co-funding by the Romanian Government and the World Bank – of a Master's degree in public policy at the University of Bucharest, with around 900 graduates taking their major in career information and counselling. In addition to this, further training opportunities became available when Romania joined the ACADEMIA Project, a European exchange programme for counsellors administered by the NRCVG.

Guidance in the Education Sector

Information, guidance and counselling services have been offered in the education sector since 1991, when the first counselling centre for education staff, students and parents was established. Today the education ministry network includes the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centres (PPAC), of which there is one per county, and which are responsible for coordinating the activities of the Inter-School Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Offices (ISPPAC). The latter are organised in schools that have more than 800 students, or in clusters of schools with smaller populations, and are funded from the state budget. Staff involved in guidance activities have their rights and duties set out in a special statute; they are expected to work 40 hours per week, of which two to four hours are dedicated to teaching, and 18 hours to activities in the counselling office. Staff can also be involved in leading aspects of the counselling and guidance area of the curriculum. All staff involved in the delivery of information, guidance and counselling services are required to have studied psychology, pedagogy, sociology and social work at university. In most cases, graduate studies are followed by specialised training at the Master's level, or other courses organised by universities within various programmes. However, such postgraduate training is not a prerequisite for obtaining a counselling position in the pre-university education sector.

Another branch of the education ministry network consists of counselling services offered to higher education students and graduates through information and guidance centres, which are to be found in larger universities. Personnel employed in these centres include graduates from the social sciences. A 2002 initiative launched the so-called Complex Expertise Commissions, whose task it is to provide guidance services for students with disabilities.

Guidance in the Labour Market Sector

The information, guidance and counselling activities operated by institutions under the labour ministry are regulated by Law No.145 of 1998 regarding the establishment, organisation and functioning of the National Employment and Vocational Training Agency (now the National Employment Agency). The Agency administers the network of Information and Vocational Counselling Centres that are located in all counties and major cities. The target clientele of the centres are young graduates, unemployed people, and adults searching for employment, among others. The centres provide information regarding the labour market and education and training routes, help clients draw up a personality profile, offer guidance to unemployed people and act as go-betweens with potential employers. They strive to establish supply–demand equilibrium in the labour market and to institutionalise social dialogue in the area of vocational placement and training. They also implement vocational placement and training strategies. Guidance specialists employed

within the labour ministry have a higher education background; many are sociologists, legal experts, economists or engineers, but one also finds psychologists, pedagogues and social workers. A number of them have followed the public policy Master's courses within the career information and guidance project, specialising in career counselling.

Guidance for Young People

The Information and Consultancy Centres for Youth, within the framework of the National Agency for Supporting Youth Initiatives, offer information and counselling in a variety of areas in response to the interests and needs of young people between 16 and 26 years of age. Themes include access to public information, mobility, distance education, the use of ICT, leisure time, the social rights of young people, vocational training and self-improvement, as well as educational and career guidance. These centres are to be found in each county, and have been operational since 1994. Specialists working in the Ministry of Health's counselling network also have a higher education background, with some having followed further training courses such as a Master's degree in counselling.

Aspects of personal counselling are offered within services that fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health, but these are more broadly linked to personal guidance and only tackle career guidance incidentally.

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses in the provision of career information and guidance services in Romania, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- Romania has a well-established information, guidance and counselling system in the education and labour market sectors, and there is a generally positive perception of the career counsellors' role;
- There are several print- and ICT-based materials and resources linked to career guidance;
- A special research department in educational and vocational guidance in the Institute of Educational Sciences exists;
- In the National Curriculum (at pre-university level) there is a special Counselling and Guidance Curricular Area;
- The field has benefited greatly from funding and expertise provided by the World Bank, as well as from projects that have been implemented within the framework of such EU programmes as Leonardo da Vinci, Phare and Socrates.

Weaknesses:

- Despite co-funding from external agencies and the Romanian government, the field of career guidance still suffers a deficit of human and material resources in relation to the demand for such services;
- The lack of pre-service training in counselling and guidance in Romanian universities;
- There is insufficient communication and collaboration between the various services involved in the information, guidance and counselling field;
- Private career guidance services are still underdeveloped;
- The links between educational and vocational guidance, and between these services with placement services, needs to be strengthened;
- While ICT is increasingly being utilised, its potential is not being sufficiently harnessed, and tends to focus on providing information;
- Career guidance for adults focuses mainly on placement;
- Counselling professionals lack networking at national, European and international level;
- The legislative framework is still insufficiently centred on priorities of guidance and counselling, on clients' demand and on the outcomes of the process.

The way forward:

- The elaboration of ethical standards and quality criteria for career counselling activities;
- The strengthening of collaboration between career counselling specialists from different sectors;
- Continued involvement in international projects;
- The improvement of access through exploiting the potential of ICT in providing guidance, lifelong learning and professional training from a distance.

Mihai Jigău holds a doctoral degree in psychology, and is the Head of the Educational and Vocational Guidance Department at the Institute of Educational Sciences in Bucharest and the Coordinator of National Resources Centre for Vocational Guidance. He is the author of *Career Counselling* (2001), one of the reference materials in the field of career counselling in Romania, as well as of a number of other books and articles. He is coordinator of various European projects and a national trainer in career counselling. E-mail for correspondence: jigau@ise.ro

SLOVAKIA

Stefan Grajcar

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population (in millions)	5.4 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	4.1% (2002)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	69% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	46.0% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro) as a % of EU-15 average	11 200 (2001) 48% (2001)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	77.6% (2000/01)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS		● early school leavers rate* (%)	6% (2002)
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	56.8% (2001)	● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	85% (2001)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	22.4% (2001)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	9.0% (2002)
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	18.6% (2002)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	16.7 (2001)
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	38.9% (2001)		

* % of 18–24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); Employment in Europe 2002; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); Europa Website: Structural Indicators (May 2003); OECD Education at a Glance 2002; SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General Background

The responsibility for career information, guidance and counselling services is shared by educational institutions and authorities and Public Employment Services and is clearly defined in several pieces of legislation. The key roles are played by the Ministry of Education and the National Labour Office. Within the private sector and other sectors outside state and public provision, career information, guidance and counselling services are offered only occasionally and do not play a significant role.

Guidance in the Education Sector

Within the education sector the career information, guidance and counselling services have quite a long tradition, since the institutional framework on which the present network of stakeholders is based had its beginnings in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In fact its history is even longer this: in 1928 the Central Counselling Bureau for Occupations and the Psychotechnical Institute were established in Bratislava. Guidance services are now integrated in the system of educational counselling, which consists of educational counsellors in primary and secondary schools, school psychologists and school special pedagogists. These are specialists dealing with various special tasks in schools and school facilities. Contexts in which guidance and counselling activities are carried out include educational and psychological counselling centres, special education counselling centres and child integration centres. None of these centres deals solely with career guidance or counselling. Career information, guidance and counselling provision is the main activity of educational counsellors in primary and secondary schools, while in the case of educational and psychological counselling centres and school psychologists it is more or less in a balance with other activities.

Educational counsellors are to be found in all primary schools and in the majority of secondary schools (general, vocational and apprentice schools). Only 5–6% of all schools have school psychologists. Each of the country's 79 districts has an educational and psychological counselling centre offering services to children aged 3–5 years. The country's eight administrative regions cater for the guidance and counselling needs of young people aged 15–19 years.

Guidance in the Labour Market Sector

Career information, guidance and counselling services within the employment sector are provided by the National Labour Office, the public employment service responsible for active and passive labour market policy measures. Together with job mediation, career information and guidance services are the most important tasks of the Labour Office, and these two functions are clearly defined in the Employment Act.

The National Labour Office delivers its services through 79 District Labour Offices, eight Regional Labour Offices and one Directorate General, with career information and guidance being the responsibility of the mediating and counselling departments of District Labour Offices and Information and Counselling Centres of the Regional Labour Offices. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family is responsible for the development and implementation of legislation and policies in the field of employment policy.

Cooperation between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and the National Labour Office as the main stakeholders in labour market, employment policy, vocational education and training and all other related issues (including career information, guidance and counselling services) is guaranteed through the government and consultation procedures applied in the process of development of policy papers, pieces of legislation and other documents. No formal cooperation agreement between these three institutions is currently in force and coordination between labour offices, schools and counselling centres is only informal and takes place mostly at local level.

In relation to the future, several new and important initiatives have begun in both the education and employment sectors. They are also to some extent indirectly connected with career guidance and counselling and are expected to bring substantial positive changes in this field. Among the most important of these initiatives are the National Action Plan on Employment, the Sectorial Operational Plan on Human Resources Development, the National Plan on Education and Training and the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning.

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses in the provision of career information and guidance services in Slovakia, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- An established career counselling system in the education sector;
- A hierarchically structured system of guidance and counselling in employment services, in which different counselling approaches are practised, and in which there is an effective in-house system of training for guidance and counselling staff;
- The existence of a Career Information Resource Centre as a central support for the creation, development and dissemination of career information;
- Intense interest on the part of guidance and counselling practitioners in using new information and communication technologies in delivering services;
- Legislative support for career guidance and counselling;
- An information database on training opportunities and employment for graduates;
- The establishment of information sources in the National Labour Office network;

- The establishment of multinational cooperation within the development of schemes for the training of guidance and counselling practitioners, for the development of guidance methods, and for sharing good practice, thanks to Phare, Leonardo da Vinci, the Euroguidance network and EURES programmes;
- Collaboration with the public media in the dissemination of information relating to careers and further education.

Weaknesses:

- The lack of strategic development in the system of career information, guidance and counselling, especially in terms of the articulation of long-term vision, and planning and management at central, regional and local levels;
- The lack of finance and adequate instruments and equipment in information centres;
- The limited access to the career information and guidance services offered by the PES;
- The absence of specialised pre-graduate training of career counsellors in both the education and employment sectors, limiting the opportunities for on-the-job training for practitioners from schools;
- The absence of a specialised information network for guidance and counselling practitioners;
- The absence of research in the career guidance field, and the lack of labour market prospects for practitioners;
- The weak links between institutions participating in career guidance, as well as inadequate links between existing subsystems (schools and employment);
- A lack of sufficient awareness of the issues that need to be addressed in the career guidance services in the education sector;
- The lack of recognition that career guidance and counselling is an active measure of labour market policy;
- The absence of an integrated system of information on VET opportunities.

The Way Forward:

- The development of a national strategy and action plans for the future provision of integrated career information, guidance and counselling services in all sectors and at all levels;
- The establishment of favourable legislative support for the effective functioning of different forms of guidance and counselling services, particularly to encourage private sector providers;
- The financing of guidance and counselling services from sources other than the state budget or public sources, including funds that could be tapped from the European Social Fund and from EU programmes;
- Increasing accessibility of services through the building of career information and counselling centres that are closer to clients;
- The development of a consolidated database providing information on occupations and relevant qualification requirements;
- The achievement of closer cooperation between guidance and counselling practitioners and companies;
- The use of ICT and the internet, and the development of appropriate software, in order to help clients learn more about the world of work.

Stefan Grajcar is the head of the Career Information Resource Centre of the National Labour Office, a public employment service. He began as a career counsellor, and then spent several years in research institutes dealing with the organisation and management of counselling services in the education sector, and with the development of a career information system for the employment services. Since the early 1990s he has been involved in various projects and studies organised by ETF, ILO, and Phare. During the last few years he has played a leading role in the National Labour Office, having responsibility for three Leonardo da Vinci projects targeting different aspects of career guidance and counselling. He is also the co-editor of a handbook, *The World of Work*, for primary and secondary schools pupils (LOGOS, Bratislava 2000). E-mail for correspondence: stefan.grajcar@nup.sk

SLOVENIA

Saša Niklanović

BACKGROUND		EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS	
● total population (in millions)	2.0 (2002)	● total public expenditure on education (as a % of GDP)	5.6% (2000)
● population of working age (15–64) as a % of total population	70% (2001)	● participation rates in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) of young people aged 15–24	62.7% (2000/01)
● GDP per capita (PPS Euro)	16 210 (2001)	● percentage of upper secondary students (ISCED 3) in vocational education	72.3% (2000/01)
● as a % of EU-15 average	70% (2001)	● early school leavers rate* (%)	5% (2002)
LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS		● percentage of the population aged 25–64 having attained at least upper secondary education	75% (2001)
● employment rate (% of population aged 15–64)	63.8% (2001)	● participation rates of adults aged 25–64 in education and training (%)	5.1% (2002)
● employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55–64)	25.5% (2001)	● number of internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	30.0 (2001)
● unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15+)	6.0% (2002)		
● youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15–24)	15.7% (2001)		

* % of 18–24 year olds with less than upper secondary education who are not participating in any education or training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 25/2002 (First demographic estimates for 2002); Employment in Europe 2002; SiF Theme 2 8/2003, (Quarterly Accounts – the GDP of the ACCs); Europa Website: Structural Indicators (May 2003); National source; Statistics in Focus Theme 3 19 and 20/2002 LFS Principal Results 2001; SiF Theme 3 13/2003; SiF Theme 4 8 and 17/2002 (Info Soc)

General Background

Vocational guidance in Slovenia has a long tradition, which began in the 1950s with the establishment of Vocational Guidance Services in the Regional Employment Services. The momentum was maintained throughout the 1960s and 1970s, when counselling services were introduced in primary and secondary schools. Nowadays the Schools and Employment Services are two of the major providers of counselling services. The responsibility for the financing of guidance lies with the Ministry for Education, Science and Sport, which caters for guidance in education, and the Ministry for Labour, Family and Social Affairs, which caters for guidance in the employment sector. In some cases the two ministries share the responsibility. There is no explicit coordinated policy for career guidance in Slovenia, and no cross-sectorial coordination body exists.

Guidance in the Education Sector

Counsellors in schools provide a broad range of counselling services, including personal, social and vocational guidance for students. However, they also work with others, including teachers, parents and school management.

National Guidelines for School Counselling Services define the guidance programmes in primary and secondary schools in Slovenia. These programmes – called 'Minimal Standards for Guidance in Primary Schools' and 'Minimal Standards for Guidance in Secondary Schools' – include various information activities, lessons on career-related issues (such as career development, further education and employment possibilities), work with self-help guidance tools, psychological testing, individual career counselling and visits to employers. The national programme is largely implemented by school counsellors with

the assistance of the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS). The latter strives to increase the information resources available for guidance, as well as providing guidance services through Centres for Information and Career Counselling, which offer the usual range of services and, increasingly, computerised self-directed guidance tools. Career counsellors from the ESS have developed close and effective cooperative relationships with schools.

The weakest element of career guidance in Slovene schools is career education, which still has a marginal position in the curriculum. It is possible that the situation will improve in the vocational education and training sector, where reforms are taking place. Universities and other institutions of higher education do not have specialised career counselling services or career counsellors. Some of these institutions carry out different guidance activities (including visits to potential employers) with the aim of establishing links between education institutions and organisations in the labour market. Because of the lack of professional counselling services, student fairs play an important role.

Over the past three years, centres for adult educational guidance have been established within a number of adult education and training centres.

Guidance in Labour Market Sector

Vocational guidance has a long tradition in Slovenia's employment services. Prior to 1996, the main target groups were students in primary and secondary schools. By the mid-1990s, when unemployment had reached a peak of 15.3% (1993), the ESS had shifted its focus to an older clientele, and a reform was launched in 1996 with the goal of developing new guidance services and methods suitable for adults, particularly those who were unemployed. The number of counselling sessions with unemployed people is currently higher than with student client groups, and more resources are allocated to the former than to the latter. Nevertheless, the ESS still retains responsibility for implementing aspects of the guidance programme in schools, and has contributed towards its development over the years.

The relatively new experience of offering guidance services to the unemployed has highlighted the importance of two factors that determine the quality of service offered by the ESS. These are the level of professional skills of career counsellors and their ability to develop positive and collaborative relationships with client advisers. In attaining the latter goal, teamwork has proved to be a very effective mechanism.

Employers generally do not tend to offer career guidance to their employees, though it must be said that in some cases, large and multinational enterprises do have well-developed services.

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses in the provision of career information and guidance services in Slovenia, with some pointers for the way forward.

Strengths:

- The extent of counselling services offered in schools;
- The career counselling services available through the employment services;
- The level of existing professional development of guidance personnel;
- The trend for more partners to show an interest in guidance, accompanied by an increased willingness to participate in guidance-related activities and projects;
- The development of provision of educational guidance for adults;
- An emerging interest in career guidance among policy-makers.

Weaknesses:

- The lack of quality, specialised training and education in the field of career guidance;
- The fact that career education still has a marginal position in the present school curriculum;
- The absence of a clear and coordinated guidance policy at national, regional and local levels;
- The lack of career counselling services at the higher education level.

The Way Forward:

The number of organisations involved in guidance provision, development and policy-making has increased over recent years. This represents an important shift away from the traditional view that guidance was the sole responsibility of the school and the employment services. This new trend is grounded in a realisation on the part of many Slovenian citizens that lifelong learning has become very much a priority. The number of projects in the field of career guidance has increased substantially. Some of these projects are funded by European programmes (Leonardo da Vinci, Phare), while other benefit from national funding. The consequence of this trend is that the need for coordinated policy is even more visible than before. Coordinated strategic policy in the field of guidance would bring better dissemination of the results of the projects and a higher level of sustainability.

In the past few years European policy has had a positive impact on the situation of career guidance in Slovenia. The country has, for instance, placed career guidance among its key priorities in national strategic documents (such as the National Employment Strategy and European Social Fund-related documents). Policy-makers are consequently showing an increasing interest in guidance, considering it to be an important active employment policy measure and a mechanism for improving the effectiveness of vocational training. This renewed interest represents both a challenge and an opportunity for guidance practitioners in Slovenia. A number of issues need to be addressed, however, if guidance services are to develop more successfully. These include the following:

- Clear career guidance policies should be developed;
- Career guidance should be afforded a more central position in Slovene schools;
- Career guidance as a profession should be more proactive in defining its role in the present and future situation in the labour market, and in developing its profession to meet present and future needs;
- Quality education and training programmes for career counsellors should be developed to help counsellors to acquire the competences they need in order to cope with demanding tasks.

Saša Niklanovič is head of the Department for Vocational Guidance in Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS). He began as a career counsellor in the ESS, at the Regional Office in Ljubljana. He then led various projects in the field of vocational guidance, including the introduction of job clubs in the ESS (1995), the reform of the guidance services of the ESS (1996–99), the establishment of the Vocational Information and Guidance Centre in Ljubljana (1997–99) and the establishment of the NRCVG in Slovenia (1999). He also participated in a number of other projects that had as a goal the development of guidance methods. He is a member of the European Commissions' Expert Group for Lifelong Guidance and of the Board of Directors of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG). E-mail for correspondence: sasa.niklanovic@ess.gov.si

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Jean De Lannoy
 Avenue du Roi 202/Koningslaan 202
 B-1190 Bruxelles/Brussel
 Tél. (32-2) 538 43 08
 Fax (32-2) 538 08 41
 E-mail: jean.de.lannoy@infoboard.be
 URL: <http://www.jean-de-lannoy.be>

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 Rue de Louvain 40-42/Leuvenseweg 40-42
 B-1000 Bruxelles/Brussel
 Tél. (32-2) 552 22 11
 Fax (32-2) 511 01 84
 E-mail: eusales@just.fgov.be

DANMARK

J. H. Schultz Information A/S
 Herstedvang 12
 DK-2620 Albertslund
 Tlf. (45) 43 63 23 00
 Fax (45) 43 63 19 69
 E-mail: schultz@schultz.dk
 URL: <http://www.schultz.dk>

DEUTSCHLAND

Bundesanzeiger Verlag GmbH
 Vertriebsabteilung
 Amsterdamer Straße 192
 D-50735 Köln
 Tel. (49-221) 97 66 80
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