

Implementation of the Concepts of European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network in Austria, Croatia and Slovenia

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This article brings an overview of activities that are based on the work of European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN). It introduces the insights of the work that was accomplished in terms of policies, research and lifelong guidance programmes in the educational field in Austria, Croatia and Slovenia.

Keywords: ELGPN, lifelong career guidance, Austria, Croatia, Slovenia

This article briefly delineates the activities that were carried out in this field by Austria, Croatia and Slovenia, in the time period from 2007 onwards. This framework included the designing of a curriculum for teachers and other educational staff, which was developed as part of Erasmus+ by a team of developers from the three participant countries in the years 2015–2017. Throughout the process, the three countries differed considerably in their approaches to implementing the policies of lifelong guidance into their respective documents and practice, which is why the passages that highlight this field in each of the countries differ as well. For each of the three countries, the paragraphs below show what work has been done regarding policies and research in the field of lifelong career guidance, and how the content of lifelong guidance has been embedded into the education and training of experts, headteachers, teachers and other educational staff.

Austria

Austria, particularly the former Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (now the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs), started to work towards the achievement of those goals that the EU set for lifelong guidance in 2005. A group of re-

searchers began to develop a system for lifelong career guidance and counselling service (IBOBB). As a first step, it was evaluated how many projects that had already been running met the demands of the EU policy, in order to identify the gaps that needed to be bridged by the implementation of new programs.

In 2006, a task group developed a national strategy with the following goals:

- Implementing basic competences in all curricula
- Focus on process and guidance
- Professionalisation of counsellors and trainers
- Quality assurance and evaluation of processes and structures
- New offers for other groups

This national strategy focused on students and adult education. In 2011, the group of experts managed to integrate their lifelong guidance policy into a policy paper that dealt with lifelong learning. This paper, ratified in July 2011, considers lifelong guidance as one of the five main principles of the Austrian LLL strategy. All in all: ‘The co-operation and contributions of Austrian ELGPN delegates and their communication, dissemination and co-operation in their respective fields in Austria have had significant influence on developments in Austria. All ELGPN work has been discussed, reflected on and respected in relevant policy processes, as in developing Guidance Steering Groups and to make regional governmental policy programmes (2008–2013, 2013–2018), National Strategies (LLL 2020), ESF Programme Planning Documents (2013–2020), and others, in several policy areas and chapters,’ (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network 2015, 28).

Educational Staff Career Development

Headteachers in Austria, in accordance with the national Education Act, are tasked with several duties they have to fulfil. In addition to shouldering organisational and administrative responsibilities, headteachers are also accountable for staff management at their school. It is stipulated that teachers are to be counselled by the headteacher in their instructional and educational activities. The wording of the Act does not specify in what way this can or should be accomplished. It can involve yearly talks with teachers, but the implementation of the activities themselves very much depends on the individual headteacher. Suggestions encouraging

additional training that could help a teacher achieve a better position within the school or lead them to the career of a headteacher are likewise optional. What is fostered is the kind of training that might benefit the school in the future.

One activity that is mandatory is the monitoring of teachers at the start of their career. This involves a visit to classroom lessons and a subsequent interview. Headteachers have to evaluate young teachers in their first five years of teaching and file a report, which is submitted to the local educational government. This report can be decisive for the future employment of young teachers.

There is also an additional mechanism that requires all teachers of primary and lower secondary schools to attend a yearly set of further training provided by various educational institutions.

Croatia

At the beginning of 2011, the Croatian Employment Service was designated the national representative and activity co-ordinator in the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), which aims at establishing co-operation in the area of lifelong professional guidance and proposing suitable support structures and mechanisms for the implementation of priorities as defined within the EU Council resolutions on lifelong guidance (Council of the European Union 2004).¹ Furthermore, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport also acts as a partner of the Croatian Employment Service in Croatia's ELGPN membership.

The Republic of Croatia actively participated in the work carried out by two working groups: 'Career Management Skills' (WP1) and 'Mechanisms of Co-Operation and Coordination in the Policy of Professional Guidance and System Development' (WP2). The results of both working groups have been used to improve the system of lifelong career guidance in the fields of employment, education and social integration.

There have been several important outcomes of Croatian membership in the ELGPN, for example: the establishment of a national strategy for career guidance, the development of the Croatian model of quality assurance in career guidance and the establishment of a national guidance forum.

¹ 'Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, Meeting within the Council of 21 November 2008 on Better Integrating Lifelong Guidance into Lifelong Learning Strategies.' *Official Journal of the European Union*, 13 December 2008, c 319.

Terminology

According to available study findings, career guidance in the Republic of Croatia has often been viewed as a lifelong process involving the personal and career development of groups of teachers, students and professors based on two documents: the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology² and the Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia 2016–2020 (Ministarstvo rada i mirovinskoga sustava 2015).

The terms which have been closely used in the area of career guidance are that of ‘lifelong guidance’ and ‘professional guidance,’ which are also integral part of the Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia 2016–2020 (Ministarstvo rada i mirovinskoga sustava 2015, 5). These terms are the closest to the definition of career guidance related to career in the Lead-Career project.

The term *lifelong guidance* signifies a range of activities through which the citizens of all ages at any given point in their life have an opportunity to: identify their own capacities, abilities and interests; make decisions regarding their education, career development and life management through learning, work and other circumstance in which these opportunities and competences are learnt or/and used. *Professional guidance* (career development), on the other hand, is defined as different activities by which citizens of all ages in any given period of life can determine their own capacities, competences and interest; make rational decisions regarding their own education, career development/training and vocation; life management, professional management in which these capacities and competences are gained/used (Ministarstvo rada i mirovinskoga sustava 2015, 5).

Within the Croatian business sector, the most widely used term for dealing with career guidance issues is that of ‘life coaching,’ which covers all types of profiles working in career development and pertains more specifically to managers who are confronted with ever-growing organisational changes and their own career developments, small company owners and managers who are looking for new approaches to personal development and coping strategies to deal with everyday pressures. In the public sector, we can therefore witness a systematic strengthening of career guiding competences in terms of increasing flexibility in new career directions. Some of the agencies involved in providing ca-

² ‘Strategija obrazovanja, znanosti i tehnologije,’ *Narodne novine*, no. 124/2014.

reer guidance and counselling in Croatia are as follows: National Employment Service, CISOК – Lifelong Career Guidance Centers (part of Croatian Employment Services), Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, Euroguidance Croatia, Leadership Academy by Velimir Srića etc.

In terms of the strategy of the Republic of Croatia in general, it can be concluded that there are various strategic documents that approach career guidance, but so far there has been no evident systematic work regarding this particular issue from the point of view of directors who are in control of the career management of their employees. Although the system provides opportunities for education sector employees to complete their internship for license approval or to advance to the title of mentor or counsellor within their own vocation, the head also has a certain role defined in this process. Still, it cannot be maintained that this support is systematically provided for education sector employees, even though, from a director's perspective, organised career guidance activities do exist: trainings, programmes. Some of the main institutions involved in providing career guidance within the educational system of the Republic of Croatia are: Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA); Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education; Agency for Science and Higher Education.

Educational Staff Career Development

When 'career' is discussed as a term in education, researchers and experts (Rijavec 1999; Marušić 2001) often cite Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), who define career as:

- knowledge and skills gained by education, training and career development;
- person with her/his own values, beliefs, ideas and experience;
- the context (institution or sector) in which the person works.

Under the term of 'career development,' Staničić (2006) refers to a continuous process that is an integral part of school programs and contributes to the development of the competences of individuals and working school teams for a more successful accomplishment of their tasks.

Among the activities related to the topic of career guidance, various conference meetings co-organised by the Agency for Edu-

cation and the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes can be highlighted. For instance, conference meetings on the topic of professional guidance were held on several occasions for primary and secondary school psychologists in Zagreb. The purpose of career development in this field of professional guidance was to improve the knowledge that psychologists in primary schools need for student guidance and counselling. Psychologists in schools play an important role in providing support to teachers and parents for developing those skills and work habits in elementary school children that promote work values, skills, career planning and overall lifelong employability.

This field has not yet been given adequate attention to in terms of professional specialisation, the preparation of working materials for students (workshops for elementary and secondary schools) and a questionnaire that would serve as a guide in the choice of career. The researchers and experts who have studied this area include: Vlasta Vizek Vidović (Institute for Social Research), Darja Maslić Seršić, Maja Parmač Kovačić (Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb), Iva Šverko and Toni Babarović (Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar).

In addition, ETTA provides courses on professional career based on the work of foreign authors (Hargreaves and Fullan 1992; Day 1999; Northouse 2008). Professional training shows a lasting positive impact on teachers at all stages of career development. Research carried out by Marušić, Ivanec and Doolan (2011) suggests that school mentors constitute an important element of support in career development. The authors also highlight priority areas: the application of social learning principles (modelling) in a demonstration of good teaching practice, the grasp of observation techniques and methods, organisational skills, the assessment of teacher competence level, the critical analysis of trainee practices and the evaluation of their achievements and communication skills. As the preferred modes of training, the authors point out professional training programmes in the field of mentoring and the insurance of favourable self-education conditions (literature, meetings and lectures).

In terms of career development and its indirect impact on expanding opportunities for individuals in general, it can be pointed out that the education system in the Republic of Croatia is one of the few in Europe that takes into account the scientific knowledge regarding the quality of early education as a prerequisite

for academic success. Since 1997, the early nursery and preschool programs in the Republic of Croatia are not part of its social welfare framework, but instead fall under its education system. From 2014 onwards, a mandatory free preschool program has been implemented for preschoolers, i.e. the children in the year of their school-entry. The preschool system is co-financed by the government, requiring only a partial financial participation of parents in kindergarten-related expenses. All competences defined by European strategic documents, such as language competences and others, have been taken into account. Professional training is compulsory and free. Since 2005, a higher education is required for preschool teachers. Kindergartens and schools can become centres of excellence, which in itself can be called career guidance, because only a director with excellent human resources can achieve this level of performance. Expert opinion on their programmes of work is provided by the Agency for Education and verified by the Ministry.

Headteachers in Croatia are exclusively covered by professional training within the Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA). Based on unsystematic observations and interviews carried out with headteachers, it can be said that they take care of their career on their own in terms of formal (required qualifications), non-formal and informal learning. As for career guidance, there are large differences in awareness, the interpretation of the term and the need for it.

In terms of providing career guidance for other educational staff, this is more related to the possibility of the staff being promoted to the status of mentor or counsellor, and less to the strengthening of headteachers' capacity for managing their own careers and the careers of other educational staff members at the institution they work in.

In Croatia, the career development of educational staff is regulated by the Preschool Education Act,³ Primary and Secondary Education Act⁴ and other regulations. For example, in the case of preschool staff, there are the pedagogical state standards of preschool education⁵ and the regulations on the methods and conditions of taking a professional exam for preschool educat-

³ 'Zakon o predškolskom odgoju i obrazovanju,' *Narodne novine*, no. 152/1997

⁴ 'Zakon o odgoju in obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi,' *Narodne novine*, no. 87/2008.

⁵ 'Državni pedagoški standard predškolskog odgoja in naobrazbe,' *Narodne novine*, no. 63/2008.

ors and other preschool professional staff⁶ as well as the rules on the methods and conditions of promotion within the profession and title promotion for preschool educators and other preschool professional staff.⁷ Headteachers have great influence on the advancement process of their educational staff, as this advancement depends on the headteacher's decision, assessment. Headteachers are the ones who decide what education and training courses are to be attended by teachers (as part of the process of learning and improving their personal skills so they can do their job better) or evaluate educational staff when these want to become mentors or counsellors (in the book of regulations).

Slovenia

Through European initiatives, Slovenia has been participating in the field of career guidance since the formal beginnings, the establishment of the European Group for Lifelong Guidance (ELGLG) network in 2002. It has heeded the majority of recommendations by the ELGPN. It has adopted the guidelines and documents developed at the level of 30 European countries and reshaped them to fit the Slovenian context.

The chronology of events from the perspective of policies and research can be seen in the review below.

- 2003: A project within the Institute for Vocational Education and Training led to the development of a concept for the integration of LLG in vocational school programmes, which was titled the 'Concept of Integrating the Key Qualification of Career Planning and Guidance into Secondary Vocational Education Programmes.'⁸
- 2006: Within the framework of Slovenian participation in the European Commission's Joint Actions project, Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Youth, the Slovene national forum for career guidance was established.

⁶ 'Pravilnik o načinu i uvjetima polaganja stručnog ispita odgojitelja i stručnih suradnika u dječjem vrtiću,' *Narodne novine*, no. 133/1997.

⁷ 'Pravilnik o načinu i uvjetima napredovanja u struci i promicanju u položajna zvanja odgojitelja i stručnih suradnika u dječjim vrtićima, *Narodne novine*, no. 133/1997.'

⁸ 'Koncept vključevanja ključne kvalifikacije načrtovanje in vodenje kariere v izobraževalne programe srednjega poklicnega izobraževanja,' see <http://www.cpi.si/strokovna-podrocja.aspx>.

- 2007: Slovenia entered the ELGPN. The country participated actively in the Network till its resolution in 2015. It followed the Network's directions in setting up its own national policies and strategies.
- 2008: The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport established a cross-sectoral (transversal) expert group for lifelong career guidance.⁹ The group convenes on a regular basis from the start. So far, its members have discussed various documents concerning LLG (White Paper, Labour Market Regulation Act, abolishment of the mandatory statistics regarding labour market needs), engaged in the organisation and implementation of conferences and participated in the ELGPN events, which have taken place in Slovenia.
- 2010: Within the ESS 2007–2013 project, the Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia set up its National Coordination Point for Lifelong Career Guidance (NCP LLG). The NCP LLG has collaborated with all national institutions that are active in this field with the aim of a co-ordinated implementation of programmes and quality assurance, which must be given a greater prominence.
- 2011–2012: Tools No. 1 – A European Resource Kit was translated into Slovene. It is available under its Slovene title of *Razvoj politike za vseživljenjsko karierno orientacijo: evropski nabor orodij*.¹⁰ In regard to career management skills, the European Resource kit highlights the following (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network 2014, 17–18):
 - Citizens are provided with opportunities to learn how to make meaningful educational and occupational decisions and how to manage their progression in learning and work.
 - Programmes to develop such career management skills are provided to all young people as part of compulsory schooling.
 - The continued development of these career management skills is the focus for all subsequent guidance provision.
- 2011: Tools No. 2 – Lifelong Guidance Glossary. Slovenia produced its own glossary of career guidance terminology (Ko-

⁹ See http://www.ess.gov.si/o_zrsz/projekti_zavoda/nkt.

¹⁰ See <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/slovene/razvoj-politike-za-vsezivljenjsko-karierno-orientacijo-evropski-nabor-orodij/>.

hont idr. 2011), which contains updated common terms related to LLG.

- 2011–2012: Tools No. 3 – The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance: A Guide to Key Findings for Effective Policy and Practice. At the time, two studies were carried out in Slovenia on the topic of the lifelong guidance of adults:
 - 2011: Mojca Polak Williams (2011) published a review of the current education for career guidance.
 - 2009: Saša Niklanovič (2009) published a review of theoretical bases for building a systemic approach to LLG within the operational program for the development of human resources. In 2012, a document on the analysis of quality assurance systems in the field of lifelong career guidance (Niklanovič 2012) followed. The analysis of educational programmes for teaching staff in education showed that, on the one hand, as a norm there were no courses in their undergraduate studies (i.e. also in the undergraduate education of headteachers) that provided training in terms of career guidance competences, while on the other hand both the additional training and support for career guidance remained rare and/or with poor attendance.
- 2014: The cross-sectoral expert group for lifelong guidance compiled a brochure titled *Moja kariera* (My Career) which provides an overview of the availability of lifelong career guidance services for users of all ages (Ažman and Lovšin 2014). The overview of the services is intended for different users, from children to the elderly. It considers various public institutions, including the Institute for Vocational Education and Training, National School of Leadership in Education, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, etc. as the key providers of LLG.
- 2015: Tools No. 4 – Designing and Implementing Policies Related to Career Management Skills (CMS). The cross-sectoral expert group for lifelong guidance published a publication on career guidance policies with recommendations for a cross-sectoral, interministerial approach to lifelong guidance (Ažman et al. 2015). This publication seeks to provide policy- and decision-makers with recommendations for a cross-sectoral approach to regulating the area of career guidance in Slovenia, as based on European guidelines and the overview of the current situation in Slovenia.

- That same year saw the development of Cross-Sectoral Guidelines for Quality in Lifelong Career Guidance (or simply lifelong guidance, LLG), which places the National School for Leadership in Education within the structure of LLG organization in Slovenia (Bandelj et al. 2015). The central part of the document discusses 15 guidelines that enable different sectors to effectively monitor the quality of LLG implementation:
 1. Ensure a proper inclusion of LLG in legislation and relevant policies;
 2. Recognise LLG as a process within a given organisation;
 3. Ensure a partnership approach in securing LLG quality;
 4. Define the modes of implementation of Cross-Sectoral Guidelines in practice;
 5. Integrate LLG Quality Guidelines into the existing quality assurance systems;
 6. Provide professional training to counsellors and other staff implementing the LLG Guidelines;
 7. Pursue compliance with LLG ethical standards;
 8. Ensure suitable resources and conditions for the quality provision of LLG services;
 9. Provide relevant LLG services for individual target groups;
 10. Provide LLG services fitting the needs of individuals;
 11. Make LLG services accessible;
 12. Increase LLG competence in individuals;
 13. Determine the effects of LLG;
 14. Seek flexibility of quality assurance systems;
 15. Aim for a minimal administrative burden to the LLG provider.

The above-mentioned documents constitute a suitable basis for the implementation of LLG-related content in the training of teachers, counsellors, headteachers and other professionals in this field. Let us take a look at what has already been achieved up until now.

Professional Education and Training for LLG

In Slovenia, there are but a few university programmes at the master's level that offer courses related to career guidance. Career guidance topics are incorporated into other subjects and the curriculum does not specify the exact number of hours dedicated to

career guidance specifically. Most of these courses could be found at the Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, and at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

In 2010–2014, attempts were made to implement a career guidance management programme called ‘Izvajanje karijerne orientacije’ on the master’s level at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana. The programme offered 30 ECTS (900 hours – contact and self study hours). The programme was neither accredited nor put into the practice. As a result of this programme, in 2014–2015, an international project funded by the European Social Fund and called ‘Modular Training for Career Counsellors’ (MUKS) was implemented. It was a one year programme with 160 hours, but it was not accredited and it was also never incorporated into the system (Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje 2015).

The same goes for the European Social Fund funded project of education and training of adult education professionals (Izobraževanje in usposabljanje strokovnih delavcev v izobraževanju odraslih) 2009–2011, carried out by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. Deriving from this programme, there were several learning packages that were put into practice in various training programmes in a number of institutions. In 2012, a questionnaire for the assessment of career management competences for adults was designed (Ažman, Jenko, and Sulič 2012).

For Slovenia, it can be therefore concluded that there are no programmes fully dedicated to the career guidance of teachers (or other educational staff members). There are only fragments of this scattered around Slovenian universities and international programmes (ESF). So unless Slovenian teachers are intent on studying psychology, they receive no training for career guidance.

However, career development (as part of career development) is both a right and a duty for headteachers in Slovenia. The amount of time dedicated to career development of headteachers is specified in the employment or special contract. The only obligatory training for headteachers is Headship Licence; it must be obtained by all headteachers within one year of their nomination at the latest. In order to support headteacher professional training, in 1995 the Government established the National School for Leadership in Education. In order to be appointed headteacher in Slovenia, the person is required to have obtained the professional title of ‘mentor’ and can be later promoted to ‘advisor’ and ‘counsellor.’ Upon the person’s renomination, professional training is not considered a criterion; the same is true for the assessment of headteachers by the school council.

Career development is a right and a duty for other members of educational staff as well. The Collective Agreement for the Education Sector provides that every member of educational staff has the right to up to 5 days of training a year or 15 days every three years. Based on regulations, educational staff members can be promoted and receive the professional titles of 'mentor,' 'advisor' or 'counsellor.' By law (Organisation and Financing of Education Act, Article 49),¹¹ headteachers are also obliged to promote the professional education and training of their educational staff, attend to their educational work, monitor their work and offer advice, recommend the promotion of staff to titles and decide on the promotion of staff to higher pay grades.

Curriculum for the career development of educational staff was designed within the framework of Erasmus+ funds. It builds on various findings that reveal that the educational staff require means of empowerment regarding their career management competences. The curriculum covers 40 hours and is available for implementation to all interested educators with adequate LLG training. This fills the gap that emerged between the already developed programmes for primary and secondary school students, unemployed adults and, in the case of modular educations, also the counsellors. This way, the authors of the curriculum add another stone to the mosaic of opportunities for enhancing the career building competences of educational staff. This way, the educational staff foster the awareness of the importance of being competent in this field and empower themselves for managing their own career. The programme enables them to reflect on themselves and to try out various method and forms of learning, which they can incorporate in their everyday work with pupils or students as content concerning lifelong career guidance. Let us recall a well-known fact that it is only through their personal experience that teachers can change their way of teaching and learning, in our case in order to advance student learning in regard to their own career planning and management.

Conclusion

The operation of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network followed the initiative of the European Commission, which therefore contributed significantly to the development of policies

¹¹ 'Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja (uradno prečiščeno besedilo) (ZOFVI-UPB5),' *Uradni list republike slovenije*, no. 16/2007.

and practice in the field of career orientation within the member states. It is precisely because of their participation in this network that all the three countries discussed here set up their national forums for lifelong career guidance, which has represented an important turning point for the development of national policies and practices. Career guidance is a distinctly cross-sectoral affair, and as such necessitates the co-operation of all stakeholders, and with it the planning and implementation of activities in the field of policies as well as practices.

While Austria and Croatia issued their own national strategies on career guidance, Slovenia compiled recommendations in the area of lifelong guidance policies. These are hence the key documents that represent the beginning of planned development in this field.

The key document of Lifelong Guidance Policy Development: A European Resource Kit was also translated by all three countries into their languages. This enables policy makers and other stakeholders to monitor and update the services of lifelong career guidance as well as to identify any potential improvement opportunities. Despite the fact that the work of ELGPN came to its end in 2015, it is in the form of national forums for lifelong career guidance that the legacy of the network lives on. Likewise, there are numerous challenges for career guidance that remain for the future, such as extending transfer between education and work, improving career transfers, minimizing dropout rates and improving social and migrant integration, to only mention a few.

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Izvajanje konceptov Evropske mreže za politike v vseživljenjski karierni orientaciji v Avstriji, na Hrvaškem in v Sloveniji

V sestavku prinašamo pregled dela, ki temelji na delovanju Evropske mreže za politike v vseživljenjski karierni orientaciji (ELGPN).

Predstavljamo spoznanja iz dela, ki je bilo opravljeno v zvezi s politikami, raziskovanjem in programi vseživljenjske karierne orientacije na področju izobraževanja v Avstriji, na Hrvaškem in v Sloveniji.

Ključne besede: ELGPN, vseživljenjska karierna orientacija, Avstrija, Hrvaška, Slovenija

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