



**Workshop 5 –
The Validation of Non-formal and Informal
Learning
Conclusions and Recommendations**

Workshop discussions and conclusions

- **Observation of the diversity and analysis of the rationale behind**
- **Sharing practices amongst the 16 participants with quite different level of expertise in the field**
 - ◆ ***5 persons from UK and Ireland, 5 from France, 3 from Slovenia, 1 from Latvia, 1 from Finland, 1 from Switzerland, 2 from Belgium***
- **Agreement on the conclusion: Bologna process does enable validation process on different ways**
- **Recommendations for EUCEN and Bologna Follow-up Group at two levels**
 - ◆ ***5 recommendations concern 'Methods' : in order to improve the Validation of Non-formal and Informal learning process, its dissemination and its consistency***
 - ◆ ***2 recommendations concern 'Actions' : they are requirement for the Validation of Non-formal and Informal learning development***



Diversity in Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning

Factors influencing the observed diversity

- **Existence of regulatory frameworks**
 - ◆ *from intentions, projects or recommendations to laws*
 - ◆ *(f.i. emerging arrangement in Latvia, Slovenia and Switzerland)*
- **Top down or bottom up initiatives**
 - ◆ *General framework*
 - ◆ *Or long tradition, General principles but dispersed initiatives and practices (f.i. the Netherlands, Ireland and UK)*
- **Level of implementation:**
 - ◆ *from limited experimentations*
 - ◆ *to global system (f.i. France (since many years), Finland, Belgium (quite recently))*
- **Level of impact and development: from sectoral approaches to implication of all stakeholders, from few institutions involved to all institutions concerned**



Conclusion on influence of the Bologna Process

- **Despite the diversity, Bologna process could and should enable validation process by different ways, by the use of:**
 - ◆ ***Credits and Credits Transfer System***
 - ◆ ***Learning outcomes***
 - Importance of Learning outcomes in validation “what is expected”
 - ◆ ***Diploma supplement***
 - ◆ ***Collaboration with professional/regional/social partners***
 - ◆ ***Quality standards***
- **The group has made recommendations on these aspects**



Recommendations for EUCEN (methods)

1. Offer training and communication opportunities at different levels, for

- Policy makers
 - Managers of Universities
 - Practitioners: academics, assessment boards (juries) and other people in charge of guidance, counselling, tutoring,...
 - Applicants
 - Other stakeholders : social partners, employers, ...
- **Communicate the validation objectives at all levels (Increasing and Widening the learner participation, Increasing the stakeholders involvement, ...)**
- **Explanation on how to use the existing tools and how to improve or adapt them**
- **Training for a methodology to write learning outcomes: assistance to universities in order to have a common comprehensive approach and to improve the consistency**
- Common methodology (top down approach and common part concerning the Bachelor or Master level)
 - but specific content (bottom up approach and disciplines dependent)



Recommendations for EUCEN (methods)

2. Consolidate the networks of experts and activists in Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning: Share practices and elaborate new strategies

- **Creating new groups or using existing disciplinary groups**
 - *Share practices and compare situations in evaluation of learning outcomes in the same disciplines*
- **Agreeing on common terminology**
- **Formalising guidance, preparation or assistance to candidates, in order that :**
 - *assistance is recognised as mainstream activity for the University*
 - *assessment is recognized as a formative process for the candidate*
 - **For instance, the ‘preparation phase’ could be organised as a module, following institutional decision (including collective teaching/mentoring combined with individual tutoring, carrying credits, ...)**



Recommendations for EUCEN (methods)

3. Propose Quality indicators

- For practitioners : for starting or exchanging best practices
- For candidates: for ensuring consistency and equity
- For institutions or national Authority: for improving the global system

➤ Collaboration with national Quality Agencies

➤ Using already existing Validation Quality codes in different countries

4. Provide an observatory

➤ Define the objectives of this observatory and design the indicators: quantitative and qualitative

5. Seek funding to support this work



Recommendations for EUCEN : Actions

1. Diploma Supplement

◆ *to be changed*

- In terms of learning outcome and not the way by which the learning outcomes have been acquired
- Same academic judgement → same diploma

Main advantages: no discrimination – employer recognition

2. Funding the Validation process is a major question

“The university should not do the validation for free”

Example of France:

Candidate for validation = registered students → corresponding funding



Recommendation for Bologna Follow-up Group

- **Make APEL a more significant part of the workplan for the next period of the Bologna process**
 - ◆ *See proposed actions concerning use of credits, writing of learning outcomes, quality assurance, diploma supplement*

