Validation of non-formal and informal learning. A European overview

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In **2000** Cedefop published the seminal work: Making learning visible

**2019** publishing the last inventory

[www.cedefop.europa.eu/validation](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/validation)
**Validation** means a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard.

**Terminology differs:**
- Prior learning assessment (PLA)
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of non-formal and informal learning (RVA)
- Credit exemptions
- Skills assessment
The fundamental values

1. All learning, irrespective of where and when it takes place, is valuable for the individual and for society.

2. Formal education needs to be complemented by validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Identification → Documentation → Assessment → Certification
Council recommendation 2012: Member States and the Commission

Arrangements in place by 2018

European Qualifications Framework advisory group given the overall control

The Commission should provide support for the implementation by using the expertise of Union agencies, in particular Cedefop, and by reporting on the situation with regard to the validation of non-formal and informal learning in the annual report on the development of National Qualification Frameworks.

Update Guidelines and Inventory

SWD – Evaluation of the Recommendation 2020
EU inventory - A rich source of information

- 39 country reports (covering 36 countries)
- Providing detailed information by area
  - Sub-sector of education
    - General Education
    - IVET
    - CVET
    - Higher education
    - Adult education
  - Labour market
  - Third sector
- Thematic studies
- International country cases
- A synthesis of main findings

www.cedefop.europa.eu/validation/inventory
Validation in Europe

Number of countries with validation arrangements

Source: European Inventory 2018
Validation outcomes – Connection to formal

Cases in which outcomes are possible as a % of the total number of instances in which validation exist

Source: European Inventory 2018
Validation roles

Involvement of the Government in the three broad areas

- Education and training
- Labour Market
- Third Sector

Involvement of the youth organizations in the three broad areas

- Education and training
- Labour Market
- Third Sector

Source: European Inventory 2018
Validation state of play

Increasing arrangements and strategies

Limited coordination across sectors

Increasing use of NQFs, linked to validation

Other modes of certification not included

Equivalent standards to formal qualifications

Limited used and awareness
Evaluation

• All Member States have taken action;
• On the whole more people have validation opportunities and can find better information and guidance on validation;
• Wide agreement that in general validation benefits justify its costs;
• Wide consensus that the Recommendation is consistent with other actions and tools;
• Overall, the Recommendation has had a certain impact on national action on validation.

Challenges
• Many people still have no access to validation – no information, not eligible, no means
• Validation arrangements are not comprehensive and not coordinated
• Guidance may not be effective (outreach)
• Need to involve more stakeholders
• Poor information on costs and benefits of validation
Skills Agenda – new policy cycle

Aiming to: Train more People, train more often, acquire the right skills

• Collective action
• Defines a clear strategy to ensure that skills are fit for jobs
• Help build their skills throughout life
• Identify the financial means to foster investment
• Set ambitious objectives for up- and reskilling to be achieved within the next 5 years
The future: Updating European Guidelines for validation

The ambition and purpose of the guidelines is to **clarify the conditions for implementing validation, highlighting critical choices** to be made by stakeholders at different stages of the process.

They were first published in **2009**...  
...and updated in **2015**...  
...working in an update by **2022**
THANK YOU!

@Cedefop_EU
#ValidationEurope

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/validation

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