

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CONTINUING EDUCATION NETWORK

OBSERVAL

Leonardo da Vinci Networks

EUROPEAN OBSERVATORY OF VALIDATION OF NON FORMAL & INFORMAL LEARNING

OBSERVAL is a European project granted by the Leonardo da Vinci programme. EUCEN, the European University Continuing Education Network, is the leader of this project. Partners are teams in 24 countries of the European Union representing the different educational sectors (higher education, vocational education and training, adult education).

The main objective of this project is to create a database on validation of non formal and informal learning in European countries, which will be regularly updated, available in a European Observatory and accessible by Internet. The perspective is to provide documents useful for a large range of actors (decision makers at national and institutional level, social partners, human resources managers, people in charge of validation,...) which are usually confidential or limited in use and dissemination outside the country or the Region or this institution where they have been produced and to present them on common formats in a way that facilitates understanding and allows comparison.

Four categories of data will be available in the Validation Observatory:

1 Formal information: official texts organising validation of non-formal learning in each partner country, tools used by institutions practicing validation (standards, dossiers, portfolios, grids of interviews,...), statistics, reports on results,... These documents will be presented in national language with a brief comment in English explaining content and key points.

2 An annual state of play of the implementation of validation of non-formal and informal learning in the country, of debates and discussions, of the articulation of validation with European initiatives (European Qualification Framework, introduction of credit systems, of learning outcomes as basis of presentation of programmes and recognition of individual pathways, the 2008-2010 Action Plan on adult education, the futures guidelines for the development of validation process in Member States,...). This short note will be written in English.

3 Case studies presenting interesting or innovating initiatives and experimentations, good or even « bad » practices, difficulties met in implementing. These cased studies will not be necessarily written documents, but also videos, reports of interviews with members of juries, of human resources managers, portraits of candidates.

4 An annotated bibliographical review of reports, books, articles, surveys published each year in a country on validation of non formal and informal learning issues. The objective is to

identify each year five to ten documents contributing to significant progresses in reflection and practices and to present a short resume (1 to 2 pages) of main results in English.

To gather and prepare these documents, we have identified in each country a project leader. His or her mission is to set up a national team made of representatives from different educational sectors: higher education, vocational education and training and adult education (third sector). The role of this team will be to help the project leader in identifying existing useful documents, good or bad practices which could be a basis for case studies and in contributing to the elaboration of the annual national state of play. The composition and the management of this team is under the responsibility of the project leader who reports to the Observal Management Group.

These data will be reviewed and validated by the experts of the Observal Management Group.

Two major events are scheduled:

- A meeting in Sweden in 2009 during the second semester, during the Swedish presidency of EU where a first version of the Observatory will be presented and discussed with representatives of potential users;
- A Conference in Belgium in 2010, during the Belgian presidency of EU to present the final version of the Observatory and to envisage with European deciders and main European networks working in the field of education and training the possible follow up and the solutions to ensure sustainability.