

REFINE: RECOGNISING FORMAL, INFORMAL, AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

NATIONAL REPORT: LITHUANIA

1. Project Team and Represented Sectors

Lithuanian Refine project team consists of 3 partners representing 3 different educational sectors: higher education or universities sector, vocational training, and adult education sector.

Partner status	Sector	Organization	Department	Representative(s)
Leading national partner	University/ high education	Kaunas University of Technology (KTU)	Innovation and Information Department	Dr. V. Kaunelienė
Associate partner	Vocational Training	Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts (CCIC)	Professional Training Centre (VET)	D. Šidlauskienė, A. Giedrienė
Associate partner	Adult Education	Kaunas Region Educational Centre (KREC)	-	L. Ruzgienė

The above introduced team is operating under ideological support of Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science as well as promoting its activities through Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

2. Partners' Profiles

2.1. Universities Sector - Kaunas University of Technology

KTU is the largest technical University in the Baltic States and the second largest institution of higher education in Lithuania. More than 17 thousand undergraduate and 450 graduate students are enrolled in KTU's eleven faculties. The training system for all specialists with qualification degrees is based on:

- profound and comprehensive study of both hard and natural sciences, in addition to the main engineering subject;
- thorough study of the humanities and social sciences;
- liberalized and individualized study of special education subjects divided into modules and evaluated by credits;
- open and competitive selection of module educators;
- coordination of academic/engineering studies with professional/engineering studies.

The applied system of modules and credits enables the exchange of students with other foreign universities, as well as integration into the European system of studies. The reformed studies provide students with the space to develop both their individuality and responsibility.

The University has signed an agreement with the other higher schools in Kaunas to expand educational possibilities at the University. There is an extensive cooperation among high schools, secondary, and professional schools. Students may now attend lectures in other higher schools and their examinations and credits taken elsewhere are recognized and counted. This is a very important step toward the concept of an open university.

2.2. Vocational Training Sector - Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts

In 2001 Kaunas CCIC established Vocational Education and Training (VET) Department. Its main activities are:

- Organizing final qualification exams in Kaunas regional vocational schools;
- Administrating functions delegated by Lithuanian labour market regarding professional training services;
- Organizing short term seminars;
- Initiating and managing national and international projects, focusing on professional development issues;
- Liaising with other social partners and educational institutions region and nation wide.

In 1997 the new law of Vocational Education and Training was ratified. As a result of this Law VET department undertook the following responsibilities:

- Registering three-sided contracts among enterprises, vocational schools and students;
- Arranging Assessment Commissions;
- Preparing qualification exams materials;
- Supervising exams;
- Preparing analytical reports regarding final qualification exams;
- Organizing the evaluation process of training programs, etc.

VET department collaborates with Kaunas Regional Labour market training centres, enterprises and companies that are engaged in continued training and this collaboration enables to provide the quality professional training as well as anticipate the labour market up to date needs.

2.3. Adult Education Sector - Kaunas region education centre

Kaunas Region Education Centre (KREC) is a part of Kaunas Region Administration, Department of Culture, Education and Sports. It operates since 1994. Centre's Mission is to provide quality training and qualification raising services as well as implement the education and culture reform that leads to improvement of the education quality. The above mentioned reform embodies the life-long learning concept to comply with the demands of science, culture and information technology.

Kaunas Region Educational Centre is the member of LA AE (Lithuanian Association of Adult Education).

The main Centre's functions cover the following: spreading good experiences, creating methodical informational programmes, researching, coordinating continuing adult education, consulting, and organising teachers' attestation.

One of the most significant aims of the centre is to enable teachers, culture and sports executives raise their qualification. Centre develops programmes together with Universities professors, specialists of the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as Education Centre's senior specialists and teachers. Due to the interest of teachers, the number and topics of the programmes is increasing every year. Qualification programmes are created every 6 months considering educational demands and priorities of the country and region as well as the demands of region's teachers', education, culture and sports specialists. The number of participants in qualification events has increased noticeably: in 2000 KREC had only 4212 participants, while in 2001 – 4727, 2002 – 6523, 2003 – 7435. During the year KREC implements about 240 programmes on different topics such as management, economics, new methodical trends in teaching subjects, etc.

3. Euro CV – A Tool for Recognizing Formal, Informal, and Non-Formal Education

The **European CV** is the backbone of **Europass portfolio**. Europass is a new way of helping people to:

- make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe (European Union, EFTA/EEA and candidate countries);
- move anywhere in Europe.
- Europass consists of five documents:
- two documents (Europass curriculum vitae (CV) and Europass Language Passport) you can fill in yourself; and
- three other documents (Europass Certificate Supplement, Europass Diploma Supplement and [Europass Mobility](#)) filled in and issued by competent organisations.

Euro CV was established through the European Commission Recommendation in March 2002 and has been slightly improved recently. Like all CVs, it is a personal document completed by the concerned person. The European CV shall provide citizens with the opportunity to present in clear and comprehensive way information on all their qualifications and competences.

The European CV provides information on:

- language competences;
- work experience;
- education and training background;
- additional skills and competences acquired outside formal training schemes

European Communities web site <http://europass.cedefop.eu.int/> presents the nature and advantages of Euro CV: “whether you are planning to enrol in an education or training programme, looking for a job, or getting experience abroad, it is important to be able to make your skills and competences clearly understood. The Euro CV (recently named as Europass CV) enables you to make your skills and qualifications visible, and other Europass documents can be attached to the CV”.

Euro CV was chosen as a methodological tool by Lithuanian Refine Team as the most comprehensible tool that could be widely used in various sectors by people applying for new job or study program. Lithuanian Refine Team aimed to explore what are possibilities and limitations of using Euro CV for recognition of formal, non-formal, and in-formal education.

4. Target Respondents

4.1. University sector

Kaunas University of Technology team representing Lithuanian Universities sector chose to interview the former students of Public Administration master program in order to explore how Euro CV could have served them to prove their competence acquired via formal, informal, and non-formal education and therefore to pass equivalency examination of particular subjects without actual studies.

The presumption of this targeting was that as all the candidates were long-time employees in various public institutions (3 municipality servants, 1 governmental auditor, and 1 labour market executive) and they had acquired significant competence during their professional life before entering master program in public administration.

Main facts on the target group:

- average age – 41 years;
- gender: 2 males and 3 females;
- purpose of participating in the research: as all the candidates were awarded master diploma, the purpose was - personal use of the tool or the development of self-evaluation skills, rarer – plans to use Euro CV applying for job promotion.

While researching KTU Innovation and Information Department's team was closely cooperating with Prof. V. Domarkas, the Head of Public Administration Department at Social Sciences Faculty. Professor provided significant information concerning public administration master program as well as University regulations regarding recognising competence acquired

It is important to note that neither Lithuanian Law nor Lithuanian universities foresee a legal way to recognise informal education or any sort of competences without accomplishing a certain higher education curriculum. Therefore Refine Project concept was implemented for pilot purposes only and shall serve as a feasibility study.

4.2. Vocational Training sector

Vocational Education and Training (VET) Department at Chamber of commerce, industry and crafts was testing EURO CV with VET students – teachers at vocational schools who had to have higher education background and they needed to re-qualify depending on the subject they taught at vocational schools.

The newest law (Education Law, 17/06/2003) in Lithuanian induces the above mentioned specialists to attend specialized VET schools to graduate precise subject at a vocational education level.

Teachers who participated in Refine research had examination organized by CCIC and received certificates, which proved they were re-qualified and able to teach students at vocational schools by at the highest level of national requirements and anticipate up-to-date labour market needs.

Main facts on the target group:

- average age – 48.4 years;
- gender: 5 females;
- purpose of participating in the research: all the candidates participated in this research with the goal of development of self-evaluation skills.

Refine research in vocational training sector aimed to explore the chances of awarding vocational teacher's certificate without going through the whole training program in case they prove to be competent vocational teachers by presenting their precise Euro CV.

4.3. Adult education sector

The amended Law on Education as well as new "Educational Directions 2003-2012" emphasize the importance of health education importance and issues. In 2002 Kaunas Region Education Centre (KREC) founded Health Education Institutions Network that covered 32 pre-school and secondary education institutions.

Despite of the new requirements concerning health promotion there is a significant lack of specialist to undertake this new course. Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education introduced a higher education program for public health specialists. Nevertheless it is not sufficient for Lithuanian educational infrastructure needs.

Therefore KREC launched a number of special programs correlating to the subject of health promotion. These courses became extremely popular among nurseries and primary schools teachers, as well as biology and physical training teachers in the secondary schools.

Despite of numerous vocational and non-formal courses and hours spent on them, teachers are having hard times struggling to be formally recognized and awarded Health Educators Certificate.

Therefore Refine project and the challenges it presents are very timely and important striving to improve the situation in adult education sector.

Responding to the changing legislation in the field of education, KREC chose to interview teachers of physical training, biology and chemistry who were about to undertake the brand new course of health education at the secondary schools and explored how Euro CV could serve solving recognition of their informal training while claiming Health Educator Certificate.

Main facts on the target group:

- average age – 40.8 years;
- gender: 5 females;
- purpose of participating in the research: all respondents participated in the research with a goal of testing EURO CV as a tool to claim a part of health educator diploma.

5. Methodology and Process

Once the target groups were defined in each sector, the research of using Euro CV as a tool for recognition of formal, informal, and non-formal education was conducted using unstructured interview method.

This research was performed focusing on the three major goals:

- to inform the candidates about initiatives across Europe regarding recognition of the competence acquired in informal way;
- to stimulate reflections on relevance of Euro CV as a tool for recognizing competences;
- to enable candidates to use Euro CV for their own personal and professional development purposes.

Entire research process could be conditionally divided into 2 phases:

- 1st phase: introducing each candidate to the concept of Refine project as well as Euro CV format and asking him/ her to fill in the first part of Euro CV, covering formal education and job experience;
- 2nd phase: accommodating personal meetings and moderating deep discussion on competences of each candidate and relevance of using Euro CV as a tool for recognition of informal education.

The expected outcome of the research was to receive 15 comprehensive Euro CVs and Candidates Report Forms representing reflections on Euro CV as well as its advantages and limitation as a tool for recognising formal, informal and non-formal education.

All the 15 candidates were interviewed and the expected outcome reached within a period of 1 month – October 2004.

6. Research Results

Research of using Euro CV as a tool for recognition of formal, informal, and non-formal education revealed the following **good points of the tool**:

- Standardized Euro CV form used in all EU countries and adequately rated was evaluated as a clear advantage of the tool.
- Euro CV form is comprehensive and sufficient to get the main idea about one's background, competences and life-work experiences.
- Euro CV is sufficiently detailed and the same time universal to be easily adapted to one's needs and precise situations by expanding or constricting some sections.
- Euro CV is advanced in terms of describing one's competences, not just achievements in formal education. It presents a clear structure of competence fields, while the other wide-spread CV examples are too generic.

Research revealed the following **difficulties in writing Euro CV** and **limitations** in using it as a tool recognition of formal, informal and non-formal education:

- It is quite difficult to make the precise and sufficient description of competences, acquired in a non-formal way without mentoring and also recalling numerous qualification courses, that impact on one's competence.
- As any CV form, EURO CV is presented having in mind particular goal or institution. Therefore it has to be filled in exactly according to what has to be achieved. It means that every time it may be needed to develop a different version of Euro CV.
- There is a certain psychological effect that may cause some concerns regarding objectivity and adequate self-evaluation while presenting one's competences.
- Lack of conceptual knowledge about competences leads to confusion in definitions as well as precise description of one's competences.
- As the result of the above mentioned problem,. most respondents confused social and organizational competences even adding some aspects of professional competence. Others confuse "competence" and "abilities" definitions and present their competences in the level of personal aptitudes

7. Suggestions to Amend Euro CV

Respondents made the following **suggestions** regarding amendments towards Euro CV:

- All respondents agreed that there is nothing to exclude and every part of Euro CV is very important; except of some competences (e.g. artistic) that may not be relevant in a certain situation.
- It was collectively agreed that it is extremely important adding section of "Professional competences" as these competences play significant role in the labour market.
- In come cases section of professional, social, and organizational competences should be elaborated to present topics/ subjects, studied at the qualification courses (especially if it is not represented in attached certificates).

- Section of “Awards” as evaluation of professional and organizational skills was among suggestions concerning improving Euro CV.
- Finally, Great attention should be paid to the annexes of Euro CV, such as recommendations, copies of diplomas and certificates as most often they reveal very important aspects of informal education.

8. General Conclusions

- Anyone, following memorandum of life long learning, should build a strategic plan of self-education and start attending courses to accumulate credits under certain program. After accomplishing certain curriculum, one is allowed to apply for part of diploma. This tendency is foreseen to increase in the future as budgets for qualification raising purposes are annually increased by public private institutions. This is the current situation in Lithuanian Education system. There is no chance of using Euro CV in order to claim diploma in the time being. Nevertheless the situation and requirements regarding recognition of formal, informal and non-formal education may change any time therefore ideas raised by Refine as well as research conducted under this project may become of a significant value.
- While discussing matters of awarding diploma basing on Euro CV information, opinions of respondents separated. Ones were keen to use such chance as soon as possible as they claimed to have all the needed knowledge required by certain program. Others were more modest and believed that there is always more to learn in the formal or informal courses before claiming diploma. Professorship was confident Euro CV would never be acknowledged as a sole document to award diploma (or part of it) without additional examinations or even studies.
- Based on the above presented opinions, Euro CV was acknowledged to be more useful to apply for job rather than formal education course or claiming certificate.
- Finally, there was certain hope concerning Euro CV to be ratified and wide spread on the national level as it would definitely increase cultural and economical coherence with other EU countries.