

## Overview of results of testing of EuroCV

Key points from results:

- EuroCV is useful as part of a package of tools but not sufficient on its own
- Almost all candidates and many teachers who worked on the testing had great difficulty in moving from their normal practice based on completing such forms using the idea of courses and activities to the idea of learning outcomes and competences. A lot of dissemination and valorisation work needs to be done on this.
- All candidates needed support to complete the form adequately and even more support to complete it well with the idea of recognition in mind.
- Some amendments or additional tools are necessary if the EuroCV is used for recognition purposes. A number of detailed suggestions were received– these are available in the full country reports and have been reflected in the proposed tool - VALIDPASS

A copy of the full report from each country is on the website: [www.eucen.org/Refine](http://www.eucen.org/Refine)

### **Estonia:**

The EuroCV was tested in the youth sector, the vocational training sector and with employers, and in the university sector.

In the youth sector, the participants found the tool easy to follow and fill. The form together with explanatory notes provided good structure for CV. Positively was noted the possibility to include information about social competences and interests. Some technical remarks were about the electronic version and the fact that it was not explained how thorough and detailed the answers should be. The part concerning education needs more concrete structure – in the present form it is too unclear what sort of information is needed. There was thought to be a need to clarify formulations and terms in order to get adequate information and a need for guidance - the process of filling up the form should be planned and explained.

In the vocational training sector and with employers the participants were generally very positive about the EuroCV but they thought that people need more support to fill it in effectively. They also thought the supplementary material (in this case the addition of a portfolio) was extremely helpful. The candidates were positive; they had no problems with filling in CV. Comments- easy to fill; very understandable/clear; more accurate and profound than "ordinary" CV; employer/expert gets all information he/she needs. The main difficulties occurred where people had to describe their social skills and personal/other competences.

In the university sector, the EuroCV was thought to be a good basis for the initial evaluation of the candidates: do they have enough experience for more detailed evaluation – for compiling the portfolio and getting possible accreditation of learning from experience. Positively was noted the possibility to include information about social competencies and interests.

Some recommendations:

- Make a language of the EuroCV more understandable
- The part concerning education needs more concrete structure – what sort of information is needed
- Add some explanations to the instructions of CV
- A need for guidance to help with completing the CV
- Some technical changes are needed in the electronic version.
- Need for explanation about how thorough and detailed the answers should be.

### **Finland:**

The European CV was used in two educational contexts, in a vocational adult education for rural developers (6 candidates) and in a non formal adult education centre for workers interested in community competences (4 candidates). Both cases showed that a well supported preceding portfolio process with a strong emphasis on self-evaluation is needed. The CV should be filled up for each specific occasion by using the documentation and evaluative material collected into the portfolio. The European CV alone is not good for recognising learning.

However, the European CV helped the participants to:

- recognise their own social, organisational and artistic skills and activities: participation in projects, activities with children as a tutor or a guide; being a member of communities, cooperation and interaction with people in variable contexts (social activities, educational, cooperational, technical, artistic activities, painting, writing, lyrics, and sports, dancing courses)
- recognise their knowledge and skills as an active citizen and the importance of their own activity: working with minority groups, meeting with people with different back ground and values has helped the candidates to appreciate the diversity, increasing their tolerance, equality and respect towards diversity.
- recognise the importance of own activity: group work as a tool for developing social skills, cooperation with different target groups; own activity in gaining skills, knowledge, interaction with people; an active member in a trade union; as a member of the community supporting health care by donating blood.
- recognise the artistic activities and skills of expressing oneself: workshops in theatre, music, movement and picture, improvisation, painting; hand work as an creative activity and way of expressing herself; empowered by the artistic activities.

There were some problems and difficulties in recognising and expressing the skills gained in non-formal learning:

- The CV itself does not identify and evaluate the experiences and learning results of those skills mentioned. For example, one candidate listed his many demanding projects as activities, not as his skills. Another candidate mentioned only her formal education and activity in trade union. Discussion with the candidates is needed in order to help them to evaluate their learning process and development of new skills, and how they are able to use them in life.
- Some candidates, though, did use the Euro-CV as a tool to recognise their skills and competences as well as activities. They see their activities as a learning process and the concrete achievement to be an active citizen. They have used EuroCV as a tool to effectively evaluate their activities.

Suggested improvements for the use of Euro-CV:

- The CV would need more instructions and face to face discussion in order to evaluate the non-formal learning. A discussion and mutual evaluation of the competences with the candidate is necessary. A feedback is necessary in self-evaluation in order to find out the learning outcomes in everyday life.
- Euro-CV with the use of portfolio is a good tool to recognise own competence and to document it. The portfolio helps the candidate to evaluate his/her skills gained in non-

formal learning, which will then be transmitted to the Euro-CV as a documentation of own skills and competences.

#### **France:**

The EuroCV was tested by 8 candidates in the university sector, 3 in the youth sector and 6 in the voluntary sector

The EuroCV was tested on a wide range of people thanks to the diversity of the partners' approach: job seekers, future volunteers within the framework of the European Voluntary Service, volunteers in the associative sector and VAE candidates. In spite of the diverse expectations of each individual as regards the usefulness of this system, the experiment inspired a number of general remarks:

- The EuroCV is an original document which, thanks to the introduction of the "skills" section in its layout, offers the candidate the possibility to highlight skills other than professional and formal ones and to focus on the acquisition of knowledge, know-how and behaviour rather than a chronology of experiences.
- This document is rather inflexible and cannot be adapted to all types of people without support and to all situations (for example, it seems to be incompatible with the employment market in France at present)
- Within the framework of the validation of experience, the EuroCV could be used as a basic document for the establishment of an accompanying file to guide the candidate in his project presentation.

The initial experiment results raise questions as to the legitimacy of the EuroCV. Is it a sophisticated system allowing for the auto-evaluation of skills and knowledge or an effective decrypting tool for the recognition and validation of an individual's skills and competences for a VAE jury or an employer?

#### **Greece:**

a) University sector: 37 students tested EuroCV (see also University sector report)

The EuroCV was tested with two groups of students:

- 10 undergraduates with no previous information or knowledge of the EuroCV
- 20 undergraduate and postgraduate students (2 months later). They all had some information about the EuroCV and the 15 postgraduates all had some work experience.

Key points in results:

- The section on artistic skills and competences was completed as if the question asked for hobbies and interests; the answers were mostly: 'dancing', 'theatre', playing the 'piano', 'reading'....
- A key problem was that the candidates did not understand the difference between 'education and training' and 'personal skills and competences'. They could not understand the difference between a training course and the skills and competences that they acquired in that course (or other activity). So they did not know where to put for example their diploma in English or French, in computing or typewriting.
- The main problem was with languages – they did not know how to relate their diplomas in languages (lower, certificate etc) with the levels ('excellent, good, basic').

- They did not understand in the 'additional information' section what was expected under 'contact persons' – did it mean professors, priests ....?
- One group said that a lot of information would be lost in a EuroCV

#### b) Vocational training sector

Two groups of students were involved: 10 in the tourism sector and 10 in management. They completed a EuroCV as part of their application for the course and at the end of the unit entitled 'Job search techniques' they completed the EuroCV again. An analysis of the differences was undertaken in order to evaluate the course unit as a tool for helping students to complete the CV. The 'Job search techniques' course includes:

- a discussion about skills – what is a skill? how are skills acquired in a range of different settings, transferable skills
- self awareness exercises – to encourage them to think about what skills they have
- self assessment tools – help them identify job values, individual skills and strengths, social, communication and numeracy skills

The majority of trainees were unable to complete the CV before the training programme and there were no differences between the two groups even though the educational level of one group was considerably higher than the other. At the end all were in a position to complete the CV effectively.

#### Italy:

Suggestions and problems that were raised during the interviews with the 29 candidates who had tested the EuroCV, in vocational training, university and third sector organisations:

#### a) Work experience section

This part was seen as easy to use because it is clear and well structured.

- Some candidates from Lumsa University, third sector ASVI and third sector Sol.Co. made a selection of their work experiences, so not all of them were included in the cv as they thought that providing prospective employers with a long list of previous experiences could be ineffective – it could be too long, too detailed, and maybe not very clear.
- So one suggestion for the interviewee is: before filling the CV, think of your profile. Second suggestion for the interviewer: do not take for granted that the CV is exhaustive of the person who is in front of you. Go into deeper detail during the interviewee, for something important that might be missing.
- A third sector candidate Sol.Co. proposes to regroup the work experiences for thematic activities (i.e. research, coordinating projects, and sector head, etc.) instead of listing them in chronological order.

#### b) Education and Training section

- Third sector ASVI candidates pointed out the difference between education (high school diploma or university degree) and training. They believed that training is extremely relevant for professional goals; therefore while they describe in detail the subjects they covered in training, they omit this kind of information when referring to education.
- According to the same candidates, it was not clear if and how one should insert training experience (i.e. Erasmus, LLL courses, language courses) not perfectly fitting into the format requirements (i.e. there is not a title, attendance, or a point of reference institution).
- Most candidates emphasized the difficulty in understanding the expression "level in national classification". Italian education does not have a formal national education framework which is spelled out as a point of reference for qualifications, although there is obviously an implicit framework.

#### c) Other Languages section

Third sector ASVI candidates suggested that candidates should specify the kind of training or experiences certifying their linguistic competences (i.e. classroom course, language certification exams, living abroad, etc.). This would be an appropriate description of the level attained.

#### d) Personal Skills and Competences

- This was certainly the part of the CV that generated more doubts and discussion. Almost all candidates had difficulty completing this section of the CV.
- First of all we have to highlight how candidates are not used to consciously describing, evaluating and judging themselves.
- Secondly, they show a strong reticence and a remarkable embarrassment to admit and declare to another person their personal qualities, because they mistake self-evaluation with self-celebration.
- The requirement to indicate the context where skills and competences were developed is very helpful because it allows candidates to frame their own statements, which they believe “arbitrary”, in real and concrete situations.
- Candidates said it was difficult to understand if and how personal experiences developed into competences, and social and organizational skills.
- In particular, the interviewer from Scuolalad University noted some initial embarrassment from candidates when facing this section, and later observed an important change: candidates recognized the importance of this kind of information, and considered the social and organizational skills they use in their daily life (i.e. family life, sports, volunteer work), highlighting the need of having these skills and competences in the workplace. For example, one candidate thought that the management of a family of five to be a fundamental element to add to her profile, because in the family context she developed a skill for facing anything and everything with method and organization, which is very useful in the workplace.
- Analyzing and defining one’s own social and organizational skills was difficult. It could be useful to identify some basic and advanced skills, and give examples. It could also be useful to distinguish between formal, informal and non formal learning, and to explicitly ask candidates to link developed skills to actual experiences.
- During the interview, many candidates talked about important experiences outside the working or educational world and in the volunteer organizations, which they did not include in their CV because they did not come to mind as they completed it. The interviewer’s role in identifying these informal and non formal experiences, and letting them come to the surface, was crucial. The CV was a tool that could be use to register them, but not a tool that help the candidate understand what the relevant things were.
- For this reason the interviewers from Lumsa University, Scuolalad University, Third sector Sol.Co. and VT Cnos-Fap suggested that staff should meet with the candidate before he/she completes the CV: helping them to see themselves as having skills and personal and organizational competences, distinguishing the different fields in which the working and non-working experiences are divided, and spotting skills and competences they have to use and develop in different contexts.

#### e) Items to add

- Third sector ASVI candidates highlighted the lack of a specific section dedicated to expectations and future goals, they emphasize the need for expressing their professional and life goals and future intentions for work and education. Future projects could help structuring more adequately the candidate’s present profile.

- Some Third Sector Sol.CO. and CNOS-FAP V T candidates stressed the same need.
- GA Youth Organization candidates, who were under 28 and had little work experience, thought that they missed the possibility to explain why their CV is being sent to a specific potential employer. There is not a section dedicated to the motivation leading the candidate to apply to a certain organization for a certain position. They regard the impossibility to present oneself in a direct way as a negative feature. The CV format was seen as a dry repetition of facts, which were not very telling.
- Many candidates felt the need to present themselves in a more personal way, highlighting their values, which can emerge not only from their past experiences but more importantly from their future plans.
- Finally, a specific section for publications is missing.

Comments from the interviewers:

- The interviewer from CNOS-FAP VT pointed out the difficulty some young candidates may have to understand some concepts (i.e. *multicultural environment*, or the difference between *occupation* and *position*) and thought that this format is suitable for people with a high cultural and educational level. Therefore, he thought it would be advisable for a tutor or a trainer to meet the candidates before they write their CV, to help them use this tool and to recognize their own personal skills and competences, and then a second time after they have written their CV.
- The interviewer from Third Sector ASVI highlighted the lack of a section dedicated to describe candidates' values, dreams, and professional and life objectives. Providing information about personal objectives is fundamental, especially for people such Third Sector ASVI course participants, who feel the need of move from the "For Profit" to the "Not-for-Profit" professional field. Actually, this kind of information is useful for any kind of employer, who wants people to share the values of the organization.
- Third Sector Sol.Co., LUMSA University and Scuola IAD University interviewers indicated that the section on "personal skills and competences" was very difficult to complete.
- GA Youth Organization interviewer said that, in order to write the CV, candidates must already have a high level of self-reflection. Young candidates were forced to a self-analysis, which they all judged in a positive way, but were not prepared for.

### **Lithuania:**

The EuroCV was tested with 5 candidates in the university sector (Kaunas University of Technology), 5 in the vocational training sector (Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, KCCIC) and 5 in the adult education sector (Kaunas region education centre).

Results:

The availability of a standardized CV form used in all EU countries and adequately rated was evaluated as a clear advantage of the tool. It was seen as comprehensive and sufficient to get the main idea about one's background, competences and life-work experiences and sufficiently detailed and general to be easily adapted to one's needs and precise situations by expanding or constricting some sections. It is advanced in terms of describing one's competences, not just achievements in formal education. It presents a clear structure of competence fields.

However, in using it for the recognition of formal, informal and non-formal learning it was found to be 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 a particular goal or institution.

## Portugal:

In Portugal the EuroCV was tested with 20 candidates in a university, 2 vocational training organisations and a third sector organisation for children. All the candidates interviewed thought that EuroCV is well structured and has a lot of information relevant to employer's needs. However, they detected the following difficulties:

- different information groups should be more circumscribed between them;
- CV should be divided into fields that are compulsory and essential to the purpose and fields that are optional that could add value to the basic information.

The importance of social, organisational, artistic, technical and other skills and competences is different from candidate to candidate according to their education and training, so some candidates could omit some of these fields.

For language knowledge, almost all candidates suggested a frame that summarises the learning of all languages, which would allow a better employer's analysis. Example of this frame:

<b>Language</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Writing</b>
Portuguese			
English			
Others			

Evaluation Scale: Excellent, Good and Regular.

Additional information like exhibitions, awards, workshops, seminars and publications is relevant to be included in EuroCV structure in a field like "complementary activities" and not in one like "other skills and competences" or "additional information".