



State of the art
of documentation initiatives
in Poland
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Index

1	The Europass Initiative in Poland	3
1.1	Introduction	3
1.2	Europass documents – analysis of implementation in Poland	4
1.3	Europass –CV (E-CV).....	4
1.4	Europass Language Portfolio	5
1.4.1	Europass – Mobility (E-M)	5
1.4.2	Europass – Diploma Supplement (E-DS)	6
1.4.3	Europass- Certificate Supplement (confirming vocational qualifications) (E-CS)	7
1.5	Dissemination of Europass Initiative in Poland	8
2	Other initiatives of documentation competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning in Poland	10
3	Summing up	12

1. The Europass Initiative in Poland

1.1. Introduction

Since the access of Poland to European Union in May 2004, Poles who go abroad to take part in vocational training and apprenticeship in frame of Leonardo da Vinci Program, were able to obtain Europass Training document. This document was functioning in EU and EFTA/EOG countries in accordance with Council *Decision of 21 December 1998 on the Promotion of European Pathways in Work-linked Training, Including Apprenticeship (1999/51/EC)*. It confirmed the period of apprenticeship realized in other country and presented acquired qualifications and professional experience. The promoters of Leonardo da Vinci projects who were interested in it, could apply for that document. In Poland, till the end of 2004, 768 beneficiaries of Leonardo Program gained the Europass-Training. It was the first document available for Poles – formally recognizing knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and informal education.

Since the beginning of 2005, the new Europass was established, on the basis of *Decision No. 2241/2004/EC of The European Parliament and of The Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass)*.

Current Europass initiative is indeed the portfolio of 5 documents, enabling European citizens better recognition and presentation their vocational qualifications and competences. Europass is open for EU citizens and EEA countries, and which is something new, for the citizens of EU candidate countries.

These 5 documents are: Europass - CV, Europass-Language Portfolio, Europass-Mobility, Europass-Diploma Supplement, Europass-Certificate Supplement (confirming vocational qualifications). Europass Initiative is one of the elements of *Copenhagen Declaration*. It was a Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen in November 29th –30th, 2002 on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training. This document emphasized the decisive role of European co-operation in vocational education and training and of the mobility as the key factors to promote employability. Declaration appealed to take actions to establish the European

document making qualifications and competences visible and transparent. Poland also accessed to the actions of *Copenhagen Declaration* and we started to realize Europass Initiative.

European Commission decided that a National Europass Center (NEC) will be established in every country in order to coordinate implementation of this Initiative. In Poland, on the *Decision of The Minister of National Education and Sport*, Biuro Koordynacji Kształcenia Kadr, Fundacji „Fundusz Współpracy” plays the role of NEC. Polish NEC’s main tasks are:

- coordination of all activities connected with rendering Europass documents accessible and with issuing Europass documents, in co-operation with other Polish institutions,
- distribution of Europass documents,
- promoting of Europass Initiative, including Internet services

1.2. Europass documents – analysis of implementation in Poland

1.2.1. Europass – CV (E-CV)

Europass CV is probably the most known element of Eurpass “packet”. It is curriculum vitae which describes individual’s professional career and education path, also enabling to describe the skills and competences acquired in non-formal and informal training. This document is prepared by someone’s own and the main task of NEC is taking the promotion actions. The main beneficiaries of Europass CV are especially young people, who actively look for a job. People interested in E-CV can gain the document from the website www.europass.europa.eu, where all patterns of documents are published in MS Word and Open Office formats, with guidelines and examples. However, the most popular is the web application on the same website, which enables to prepare E-CV on-line. There is also a wide range of guidelines and suggestions for adequate preparing this document. Since March 2nd, 2006 the Polish language portal made by NEC is available. According to the European Commission will, on the Polish website www.europass.org.pl the patterns of documents are not published, but there are information about document and tips how to use E-CV pattern and links to adequate sections on Commission website mentioned before.

In 2005, 22434 patterns of E-CV were downloaded from this website in Polish language, which was about 4,4% of all downloads. In 1st semester of 2006, it was more than 5% of downloads.

Between January and October 2006, 22892 E-CV were prepared in Polish language through the Internet application, which was 3,2% of all made E-CVs in 2006. We must remember that people from Poland use also E-CV in other languages, which is helpful in looking for a job abroad. It is also important that E-CV pattern, downloaded once from the website in MS Office or Open Office format can be useful to prepare own CV for many people.

1.2.2 Europass-Language Portfolio

Europass-Language Portfolio, in technical aspects is similar to E-CV. It is also prepared by someone's own, and the method of its preparation is the same. This document presents the level of foreign languages knowledge, according to common criteria accepted in Europe. It also enables to document the language skills acquired in school education, courses and trainings (non-formal as well). Important values of this document are: (a) self-assessment table, which helps in objective analysis of real knowledge of foreign language and (b) possibility to define the knowledge on precise multi-grade scale.

Europass Language Portfolio is definitely less popular than Europass CV. 1935 patterns in Polish language version were downloaded in 2005 from the portal Europass, which was about 3% of all downloads. In 1st semester of 2006 it was 2781 downloads (5,8%). When the Polish language portal started to work, 457 people prepared the document on-line in 1st semester of 2006. In whole 2006, 1179 people prepared the document, which was 4,3% of all documents Europass Language Portfolio.

On the Polish NEC website, in section dedicated to Europass - Language Portfolio, users can find: document description, pattern of the form with the self-assessment table, tips how to fulfill the document and relevant links to European websites.

1.2.3 Europass – Mobility (E-M)

Europass – Mobility (E-M) presents in the same way in all European countries, the scope of knowledge and experience acquired by its holder through the education, training and apprenticeship abroad after January 1st, 2005. The learning in other country should be realized in

frame of any European Union VET Program or in frame of a similar initiative (with additional conditions).

NEC issues Europass – Mobility free of charge after the application from the institution which provides the foreign training or apprenticeship. The EM document which confirms training or apprenticeship, must be fulfilled both by sending and receiving organizations. Document is issued in Polish language and for special wish, in any European language. If someone wants to obtain E-M, the institution must fulfill short application form (available on the NEC website) and send it by e-mail to NEC. The application form can be also delivered on paper and sent by fax or traditional mail. In response, institutions receive the electronic patterns of EM, which should be fulfilled, printed and signed by them and by the receiving institution abroad. Then, the completed document must be sent to NEC to final confirmation and registration. After that E-M document is sent to the institution which forwards it to the beneficiary. This procedure seems to be complicated, but in Poland electronic signature is not popular yet. In this case, it seems to be the only procedure which assures authenticity of the documents (original signatures and stamps). To make the procedure less complicated, NEC works on on-line application which will be available very soon.

1500 applications for E-M were received by NEC in 2005. In 2006 it was about 2700 applications. Till the end of 2006, NEC confirmed about 2300 documents. The rest documents are still been completed or their future holders are still abroad. About 94% of applications come from institutions which realize Leonardo da Vinci projects, 4% from organizations which work on Sokrates Erasmus and Comenius Program, 2% from other bilateral initiatives.

The interest in EM is increasing all the time and many young people use this document while seeking a job. The possibility of documentation the qualifications and competences acquired within non-formal and informal learning is indeed it's advantage.

1.2.4 Europass-Diploma Supplement (E-DS)

The next document issued institutionally is Europass-Diploma Supplement (E-DS). This document is a supplement to diploma of any college or university since January 1st, 2005. It helps others to understand the meaning of diploma, relating to knowledge and competences acquired by it's holder. E-SD describes the type, level, theme and status of studies graduated by the holder of

original diploma. The pattern of Polish EDS was elaborated on the basis of the model prepared by European Commission, European Council and UNESCO, and it is an appendix to The Ordinance of Minister of National Education and Sport from July 23rd, 2004 about diplomas and professional titles and diploma patterns issued by universities. In fact now, E-SD is an integral part of diploma (it's part B), and "traditional diploma" is in fact only part A. The universities had half a year from the publishing of the Ordinance to prepare themselves for issuing the new diplomas, but the works on that really started few years earlier. There were pilot programs which prepared most of universities well to fulfill this task in the beginning of 2005. Some universities have problems with issuing the Supplement in foreign languages. If the Ministry is notified of such cases, it must intervene. According to the regulations, the university's obligation is to issue the additional copy of diploma (part A and B) in one of following languages: English, French, Spanish, German or Russian if the graduate wishes so. University can take a payment for the additional copy of diploma in foreign language, not more than 40 PLN. Moreover in order to help universities, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education has prepared the translated patterns of diploma and supplement and has published them on Ministry's website.

Some colleges, especially private ones with no studies on Masters degree, acquired the law to issue new diploma on the basis of new Act of higher educational system in March 27, 2005.

Now E-SD is a document issued automatically with the diploma free of charge (in Polish) and as the only document from the Europass "packet" has no logo of Europass Initiative, like in other countries.

1.2.5 Europass-Certificate Supplement (confirming vocational qualifications) (E-CS)

Europass Certificate Supplements is a document which defines the scope of competences of the person having professional certificate. Every person who finished vocational school and passed external vocational exam confirming his qualifications, can apply for this document. It is issued free of charge by the Regional Examination Commissions which issues the professional certificates as well. E-CS is a document in Polish language but if the holder wishes so, E-CS can be also issued in English language. The regulations and the pattern of this document were defined in The Ordinance of the Minister of Education and Science from February 15th, 2006.

E-CS has similar structure in all EU countries and is strictly connected with the occupation of it's holder. In one country, the holders of certain certificate get the same Supplement for their occupation. It does not substitute the original certificate and it does not allow to formal recognition of certificate by institutions in other countries, but it helps it's holders to move on European labor market.

Polish E-CS is a little different from documents issued in other European countries. It contains the name of the holder, which is something unique. According to the opinion of Ministry of National Education, the personalization of this document increases it's significance. The name of this document is also different from generally accepted name in EU countries. It is called simply "Suplement Swiadectwa" (Certificate Supplement).

E-CS is the latest implemented document in Poland from Europass "packet". The reason of some delay seems to be the necessity of elaboration the patterns of Supplement in two language versions for 185 occupations, additionally different for different types of vocational schools. The Ministry of National Education commissioned the Krajowy Ośrodek Wspierania Edukacji Zawodowej i Ustawicznej (National Center for Supporting Vocational and Life-long Education) elaboration these Supplements.

In February 2006, E-CS formally was implemented and started to be issued by Regional Examination Commissions. To the end of 2006, more than 49 000 documents were issued.

1.3 Dissemination of Europass Initiative in Poland

Poland formally started to disseminate the Europass Initiative in May 1st, 2005, when the Agreement between Polish NEC and European Commission was signed. In June 10th, 2005 the Conference in Warsaw was organized with 200 participants representing Administration, education institutions and vocational organizations.

People working in NEC participated in 2005 in more than 30 seminars, conferences, meetings, fairs and similar invents and directly presented and promoted the Europass Initiative. The target groups of dissemination were: beneficiaries of Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates Programs, local

self-government representatives, employers, EURES advisers, Europe Direct and Eurodesk networks representatives, people working in career offices, students of colleges and high schools and other people interested in it..

Since the beginning of March 2005, the Polish website, administrated by NEC www.europass.org.pl started to work. There are all the necessary information about the Europass Initiative available on this website. In 2005, 2 000 posters and several thousands leaflets about Europass were printed and disseminated. Some of them were specially dedicated to students, apprentices or employers. There was also an social-information campaign on TVP3 channel, including the spot made in Germany, which was adapted to Polish realities. This spot was also shown on MTV and VIVA channels in 2005. Furthermore the NEC representatives participated in TVP3 and Polish Radio BIS programs, dedicated to Europass Initiative. The information about Europass was also published in national and local press.

Year 2006 was the second year of Europass promotion in Poland. Distribution channels used before were still using, but NEC also started to have the benefit of new possibilities. Printing and distributing of posters and brochures were still continuing, furthermore 2 types of special leaflets for vocational advisers and teachers were prepared. Also CD with information materials about Eropass with patterns of documents were produced.

In 2006, NEC organized 3 big regional conferences (in Warsaw, Bydgoszcz and Wroclaw) for vocational advisers and labor offices workers. There was also a conference for employers and labor agencies in Warsaw and a conference in Krakow for training institutions. NEC representatives accepted the invitations for more than 30 information meetings, seminars, conferences, fairs etc. The target groups in 2006 were the same like previous. Nevertheless, NEC co-operated closer with EURES network and National Agency of Socrates Program. In 2006, the promotion through mass media was definitely increased. The professional Public Relations agency was preparing the dissemination materials. The spot was broadcast on TVP3 channel, and on Discovery Channel and Animal Planet. Two radio programs were produced and broadcast in 14 regional public radio stations. The promotion campaign was also prepared for electronic media. There were banners, buttons and newsletters in 10 Internet portals for young people and job seekers.

Information about Europass was published in national, regional and specialist press (including magazines for managers) and in education reference books. Generally, the information about the

Europass were sent regularly to 79 papers and magazines. NEC also paid for the advertisements about Europass in specialist press.

Dissemination activities result in increasing of interest in Euroapss in Poland. More and more people phone and send e-mails to NEC with questions about the Initiative. Direct contact with people is also an important element of dissemination provided by NEC, however less spectacular than other activities. NEC receives more and more invitations from many institutions to make presentations, lectures or workshops during the educational and information events. It means, there is a growing need for documents confirming and presenting individuals' competences to employers, acquired both in formal education and in workplace or even at leisure. Nowadays in Poland, Europass is the only common initiative which can document non-formal and informal learning.

2 Other initiatives of documentation competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning in Poland

In Poland there is no common system validating non-formal and informal learning. This is the source of many various problems on the labor market like no adequate supply of certain qualifications with the demand for really needed qualifications, and like the weak mobility of the workforce. This is a visible problem for many years and there are some initiatives to build the basis for recognition of competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning. These are: National Standards of Professional Qualifications (Krajowe Standardy Kwalifikacji Zawodowych) and National Qualification Framework (Krajowe Ramy Kwalifikacji).

The discussion on professional qualification standards in Poland started in the first part of ninetieth years (for instance seminar in Miedzeszyn in 1993), but the first description of 8 qualification standards were elaborated only between 1998 and 2000 in frame of PHARE 98 project "The training needs analysis". In frame of the next PHARE 2000 project "National system of vocational training", qualification standards for more 40 occupations were elaborated. There were also prepared vocational training modules with learning materials based on the concept of International Labor Organization (I.L.O.).

There were also designed electronic databases for all the qualification standards and module training programs developed within different projects. These databases resources are available in Internet on the website www.standardyiskolenia.praca.gov.pl. The next project PHARE 2002 “The skills improvement of public labor services for implementation the European Employment Strategy and participation in EURES system” resulted the elaboration of further qualifications standards and verifying the standards developed before.

The activities on development and dissemination of professional qualification standards will be continued next years. It was mentioned in the “*Act of employment promotion and labor market institutions*”. It was also planned in Government document “*Sector Operation Program Human Resources Development*” (SPO RZL). These activities will be realized in frame of projects co-financed from *European Social Fund*. One of such projects “Development and dissemination of national professional qualification standards” started to be realized in 2006 by Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. It’s result should be the new qualification standards for 200 occupations, which will be added to the existing database. These standards will be elaborated with need analysis of prospective users. The next output of the project will be popularization of qualification standards in Poland.

Regardless of the actions undertaken by Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of National Education has recently started the social consultation on the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training ECVET, developed by European Commission. ECVET system will help to gather, transfer and recognition qualifications, defined as confirmed in any country result of individual’s education (regardless of circumstances of educating process). The main aim of ECVET is supporting life-long learning, increasing the transparency and compatibility of competences (also acquired in non-formal and informal learning), supporting geographical, educational and occupational mobility and increasing trust and co-operation between EU countries.

ECVET system is going to be absolutely voluntary. Countries which decide to implement it, will define by themselves the methods and the scope of this implementation, according to their internal regulations. The consultation last to the end of February 2007 and more information

about it and about the ECVET Initiative can be found on the website http://www.men.gov.pl/ksztzaw/strategia/konsultacje_ecvet.php

Concerning other initiatives in Poland, the project realized in frame of Community Initiative EQUAL “Model system of knowledge management in company” is worth mentioning. The author of the project and it’s main Partner is TNOiK Gdansk. The result of project’s works will be the system of knowledge management, including internal validation, recognition and certification competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning, but only within the company. However the results of this project could be used in building the national system of recognition and certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning.

3. Summing up

Despite hitherto initiatives in Poland, our country has to start building the common national framework of recognition qualifications. Current actions in frame of Lisbon Strategy, “Education and learning 2010” Program and other European and national strategies are beneficial, but they are still not complex. They are undertaken ad hoc, without the clear vision of final result. Further works should continue development of vocational qualification standards, but they must be also focused on identifying all kinds of qualifications that could be acquired in formal and non-formal education and on tools of certification non-formal and informal learning.

Thanks to European initiatives, there is a real chance that these works in Poland will have the concrete results and finally the system of recognition qualifications and competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning will be elaborated and implemented.