



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Europass+²

Interim Evaluation Report

Luca Dordit
external evaluator

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Foreword

Intermediate external evaluation report aims at reflecting on achievements and critical aspects emerging after the first working year of Europass+ 2 Project, in order to allow the Steering Group – and all the participants – to better understand results and problems encountered on the road, adjusting their actions in a coherent way. This report has to be read in a complementary way with the *administrative* one, providing me with data concerning the State of the Art of the activities. As external evaluators I would like to focus on:

- reasons and constraints explaining actual advancements of the working packages, considering the evolution of the activities;
- “perceived” quality and limits of processes and products elaborated by the partnership;
- strong and weakness points of the first phase of the project, as well as opportunities and threats that should be faced by the partners to achieve the expected results at the end of the project;
- some final remarks and suggestions concerning further developments of the activities.

Intermediate evaluation has been realised exploiting different sources:

- available data concerning the state of the art of the WPs, compared with original and redefined operative plans;
- logs, discussions and documents concerning characteristics, contents and elaboration procedures of the Europass tool;
- results of some survey aiming at collecting direct information from the partners, concerning quality, coherence, pertinence of the actual outcomes of Europass+ 2 project, and remarks concerning effectiveness and efficiency of the partnership, involved in the production process.

Information and remarks has been better elaborated valuing feed-backs and discussions realised in Nuremberg and London, taking in account more recent and detailed monitoring data provided by the coordinator and the steps further made in designing and testing of the tool.

Intermediate evaluation report - after some general introductory remarks, also aiming at updating the state of the art of the project - focus more in deep on the results of the surveys. The presentation is divided in 2 descriptive sections and a chapter defining some conclusions.

Data will be obviously presented according to privacy “duties and rights”, but evaluations and feed-backs from individuals and participating organisations has been taken in account, on the basis of the discussion that took place during the transnational meetings.

1. The project development so far

1.1. State of the Art

According to available evidence the project is in line with scheduled goals and deliverables and results are coherent. The overall level of quality is good.

More specifically, in the following pages we will provide a detailed examination of main deliverables of the project, paying close attention to the progress that has been achieved so far, to their ability to match expected results as well as their overall quality.

WP1 Shared understandings, analysis and evaluation of the model

Activities for work package 1 have been carried out according to the original plan. The timetables for tasks and milestones have been fully respected by partners who proved able to work efficiently and to develop activities on time.

Work package 1 mainly consisted in the planning and the realization of the first transnational meeting, that took place in Nuremberg in February 2010. On that occasion partners had the opportunity to discuss and achieve a better understanding to the Europass+ model. This proved of an essential step that facilitated subsequent stages of the project. The organisation that was in charge with the coordination of the Europass+ project described basic features of the model, in terms of both substantial contents and its methodology. In addition partners deepen their knowledge of the website and of the Europass+ software. Time has been devoted to the discussion on options for the expansion and diversification of target groups, leading to the recognition for the need to introduce a number of modifications to the tools. On the basis of a preliminary test carried out in Italy, a list of changes in the website have been identified.

Finally partners validated guidelines for the development of the model. Such guidelines represents a critical analysis of the tool that pays specific attention to beneficiaries and the context for the implementation of the project.

Previously, on occasion of the national meeting that was held in Milan in January 2010, actors included in the institutional group of resonance met for a first time to present main goals, expected results and the structure of the project.

WP2 and WP3 revision and adaptation of the interface and contents

The main goal of WP2 was to achieve a revision and an updated version of the basic model and tool Europass+2 on the basis of recent developments in European VET regulation and CEDEFOP recommendations. In addition goals for WP2 included the analysis and the planning of the diversification of guided paths for filling CVs according to different target groups. A third goal was the realization of a new website design - including the layout, the interface and the tutorials – and the gradual development of subsequent versions of Europass+2 tool. In the late summer 2010 the planning team realised first revised versions to improve its user-friendly characteristics, with particular attention to versions targeting firms and adults. Such revised versions relied on pre-tests carried out in different Italian regions. The elaboration of revision adapted versions required first, the in-depth analysis of existing model in light of the process of European CV revision by the European Commission. Second, the realisation of WP2 required an analysis of the level of coherence between the

Europass+2 model and the on-going development of European policies in the fields of international mobility and recognition of competences and qualifications (European Qualification Framework – EQF). Third, the revised version required the development of new contents that allow for a diversification of target groups. This included the introduction of new examples drawn from different learning contexts and the introduction of new explanatory sections.

Finally it is of note that in the context of WP2 partners developed the technical design for the online helpdesk system.

WP4: pre-tests of the new interface

In the Italian context two pre-tests of the new interface have been carried out, on the basis of WP1 and WP2 and WP3 results. During the meeting in London partners discussed pre-tests results, achieving a better understanding of required modifications to the tool to be implemented. Results from WP4 are of particular importance, since its objective was the experimentation of the new interface on two specific targets: adults who recently got out of job and unemployed. Results have been discussed by focus groups including partners in the second transnational seminar, in order to identify corrective actions. Main results were: the preparation of the tool to the realization of text for adults; the evaluation of new examples (checklist) and the development of contents for examples by organisations and SMEs involved in the project; the feedback on pre-tests to the software design team.

1.2. General comments on outcomes and results

The most important comment to be made about the project refers to the changing economic conditions that represent a challenge for partners and their efforts. The rapidly deteriorating economic situation made the adaptation of the pilot scheme particularly urgent and relevant. For the Europass+2 to be useful to large number of adults who got out of job and an increasing number of unemployed people important modifications had to be introduced. This seems a highly sensitive task that required a particular attention and discussion.

Pre-testing phase in Italy

The new target groups – adults out of job and unemployed – resulted more diversified and fragmented and required a totally new approach compared to the previous pilot project. In addition, the basic characteristics of new target groups appear particular sensitive and peculiar. The development of specific tools devoted to them require a wide and extensive process of consultation with social actors who traditionally have a strong role in promoting employability and to address problems related to requalification processes and unemployment.

In particular, the adaptation of the tool from youngsters (apprentices, etc.) to adults, required a deep revision of all checklists and examples to make them meaningful to the new target and its peculiar characteristics.

More specifically:

- modifications have been required in order to link examples to the real skills owned by adults who are already experienced and involved in the labour market. In other words, the main issue was to develop examples that could give an accurate measure of effective levels of real competence exercise. For this reason partners decided not to adopt the EQF scheme – divided in 8 levels – because it mainly fits the characterization of professional aspects of qualification. At the same time partners were aware of the need for maintaining a scheme organised around different levels. The final scheme has been thus organised into 3 levels in relation to the dimension of autonomy and responsibility.
- In order to improve the usefulness of examples, modifications to the original scheme have been introduced to provide concrete evidence of the its usability by adults. Examples of social skills have to make reference to concrete working conditions, despite their more general application to a wide range of social situations. More specifically the more problematic issue to be addressed refers to the fact that these evidence should be easily translated into narratives. This requires to locate competences into a working context. In so doing the usefulness of the tool can be enhanced. This will allow adults to positioning their competences in relation to a concrete workplace experiences.

Process of change in the UE Europass portfolio

In addition to the rapidly changing economic conditions in Europe, the overall framework is to be affected by the development of European policies in the field of mobility and recognition of competences. In particular the most notable change refers to the revised contents and format of the Europass portfolio that is under discussion in the European Commission. At present, a modification of the EU CV seems likely as well as a modification of Europass Mobility, with the aim of make them better suited to include both formal, non-formal informal and learning.

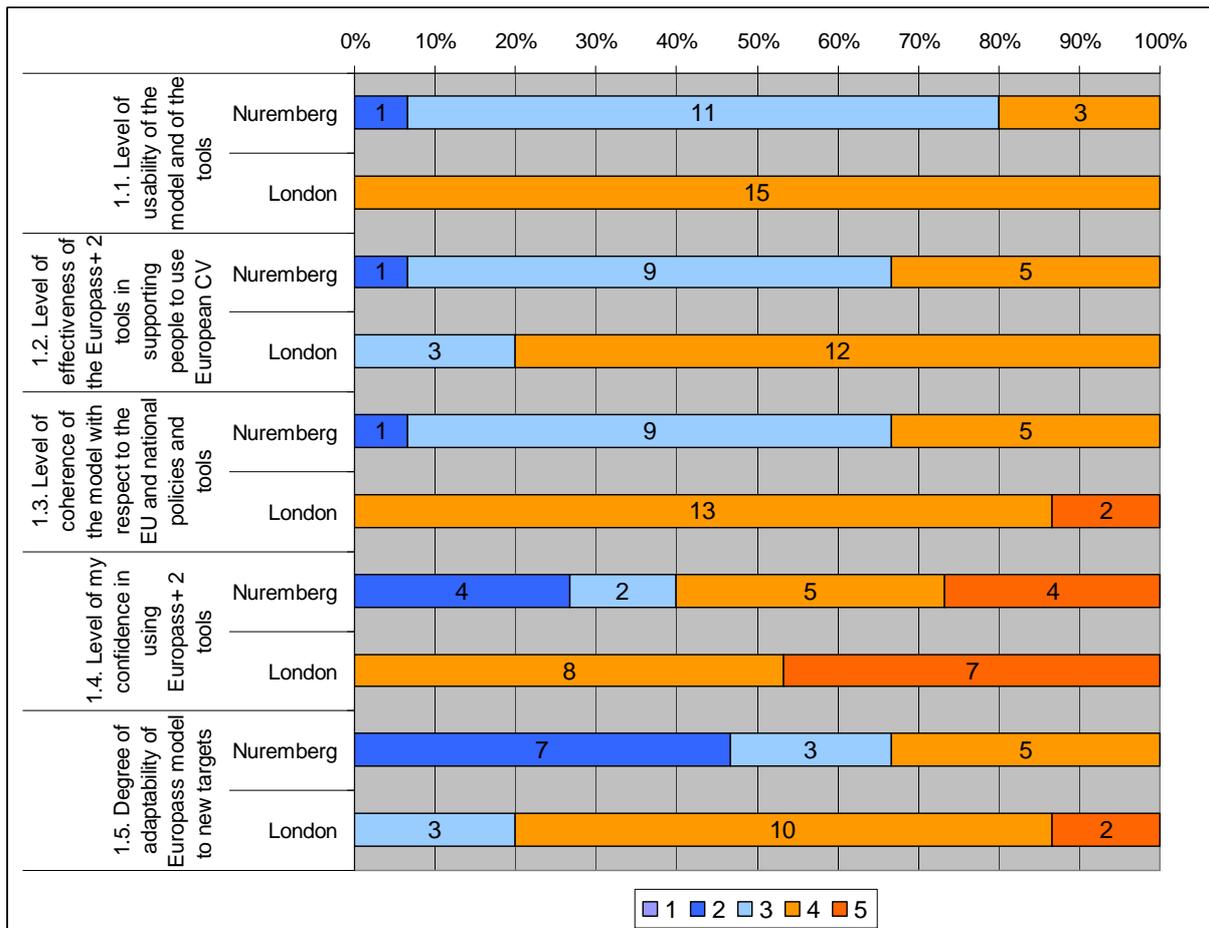
2. The project evaluated by partners: outcomes, deliverables, process

We will report in this second chapter the results of the direct inquiry realised involving the partners. The results are presented in a descriptive form, following the contents of the survey. Some comments will be made at the end of every paragraph, preparing final remarks. Tables below show the comparison between evaluations expressed by partners in June and February 2010, on occasion of meetings in Nuremberg and London.

Colours will be used to let relatively good results and critical opinions emerge in a clearer way: purple means a very critical opinion, blue something to be taken in account with care, when light blue, yellow and orange represent a result more and more coherent with the expectations.

Excellent
 Good
 Average
 Poor
 Bad

A. Transfer of innovation

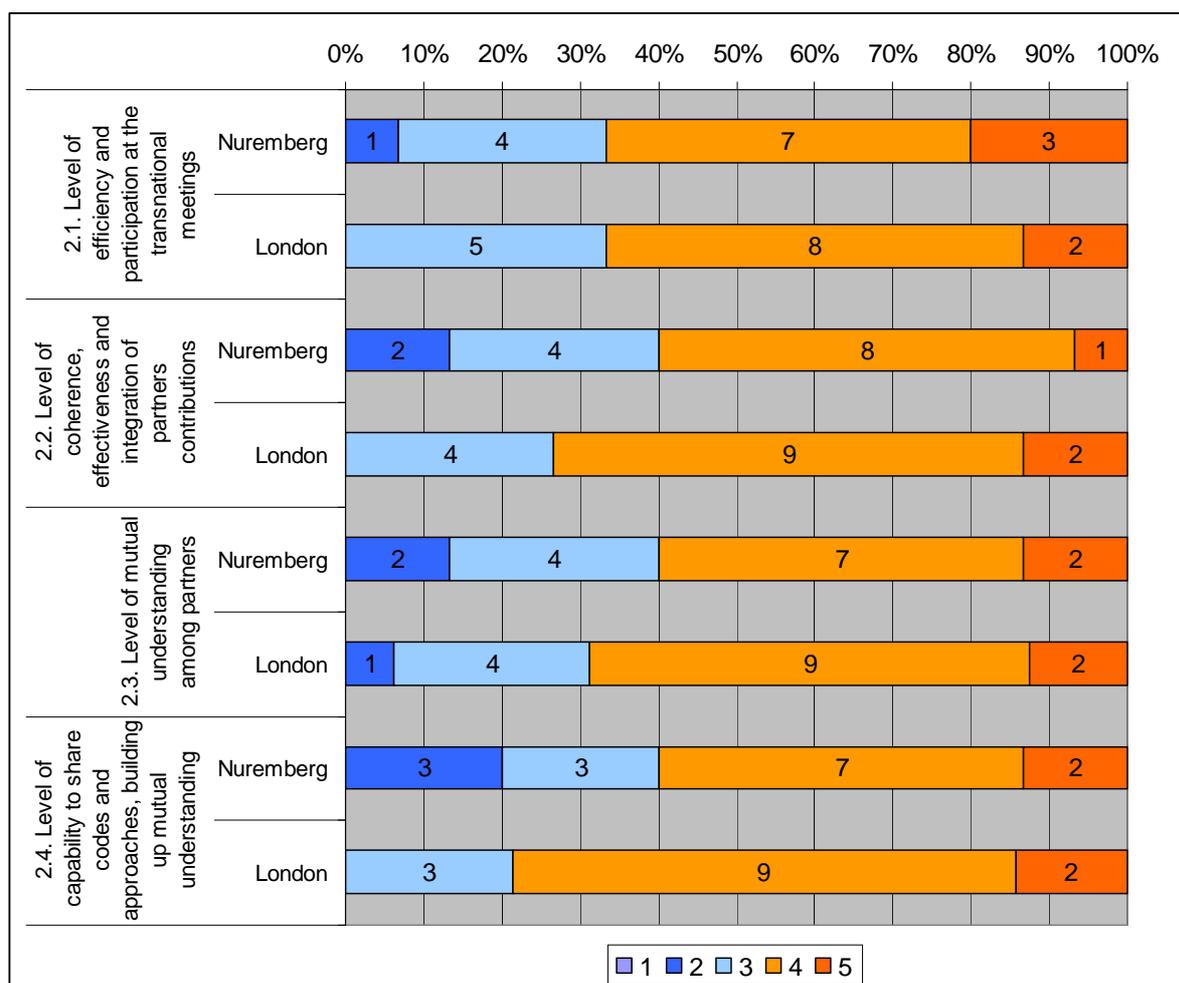


Main results

Concerning transfer of innovation, it emerges **a good evaluation**.

Present general results are increasingly positive, concerning the **level of usability** of the model and tools (London: Excellent+Good: 12 out of 15; Nuremberg 3 out of 15), **level of effectiveness** in supporting the use of European CV (London: Excellent+Good: 12 out of 15; Nuremberg 5 out of 15), **level of coherence** with EU policy and tools in the field of VET (London: Excellent+Good: 15 out of 15; Nuremberg 5 out of 15), **level of confidence** in using the tools (London: Excellent+Good: 15 out of 15; Nuremberg 9 out of 15), as well as **degree of adaptability** of Europass+ 2 to new targets (London: Excellent+Good: 12 out of 15; Nuremberg 5 out of 15).

B. Transnational cooperation

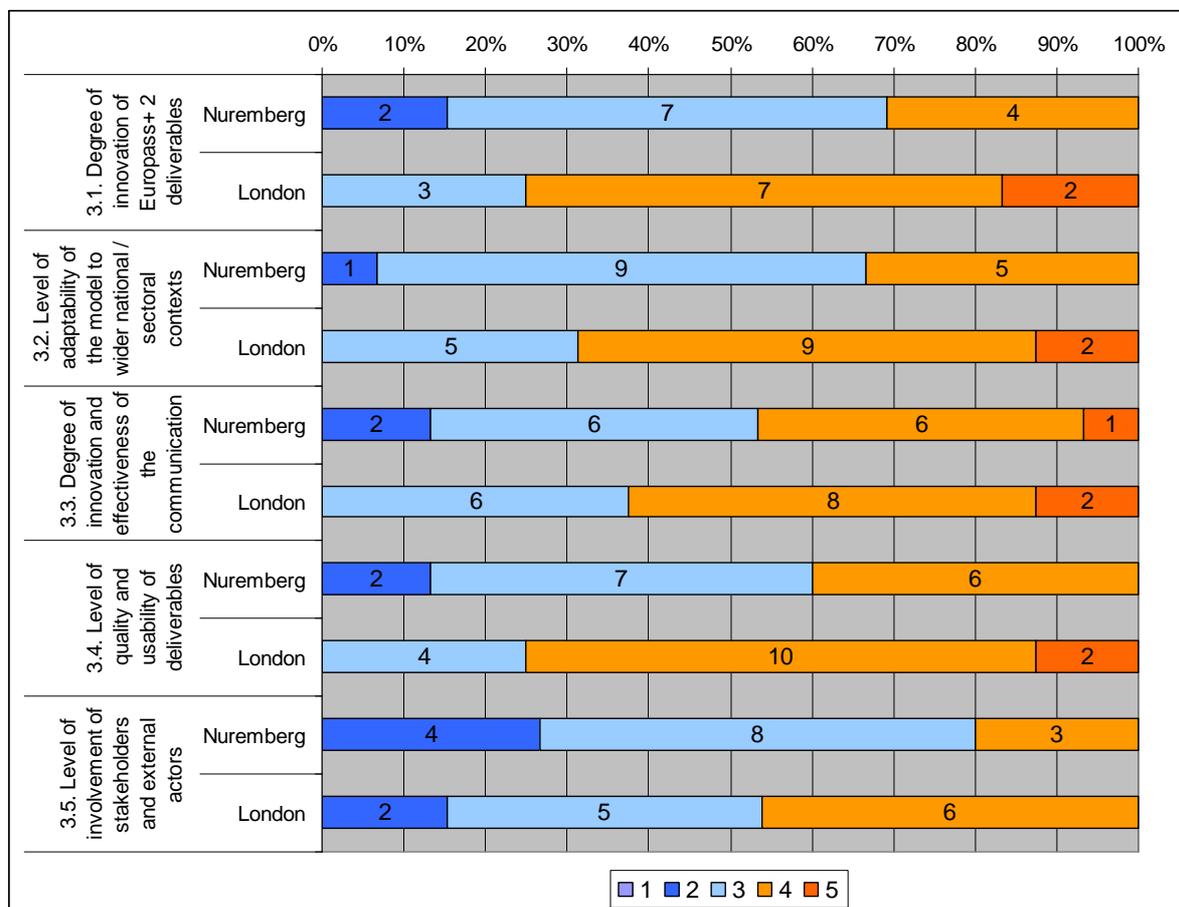


Main results

Concerning transnational cooperation, it emerges ***a good evaluation referred to the involvement of the partners in the development of the tool.***

General results are increasingly positive concerning the ***level of efficiency and participation to the transnational meetings*** (London: Excellent+Good: 10 out of 15; Nuremberg 10 out of 15), ***level of coherence, effectiveness and integrations of partner contributions*** (London: Excellent+Good: 11 out of 15; Nuremberg 9 out of 15), ***level of mutual understanding among partners*** (London: Excellent+Good: 11 out of 15; Nuremberg 9 out of 15), as well as ***level of capability to share codes and approaches, building up mutual understanding*** (London: Excellent+Good: 11 out of 14; Nuremberg 9 out of 15).

C. Quality of deliverables and valorisation

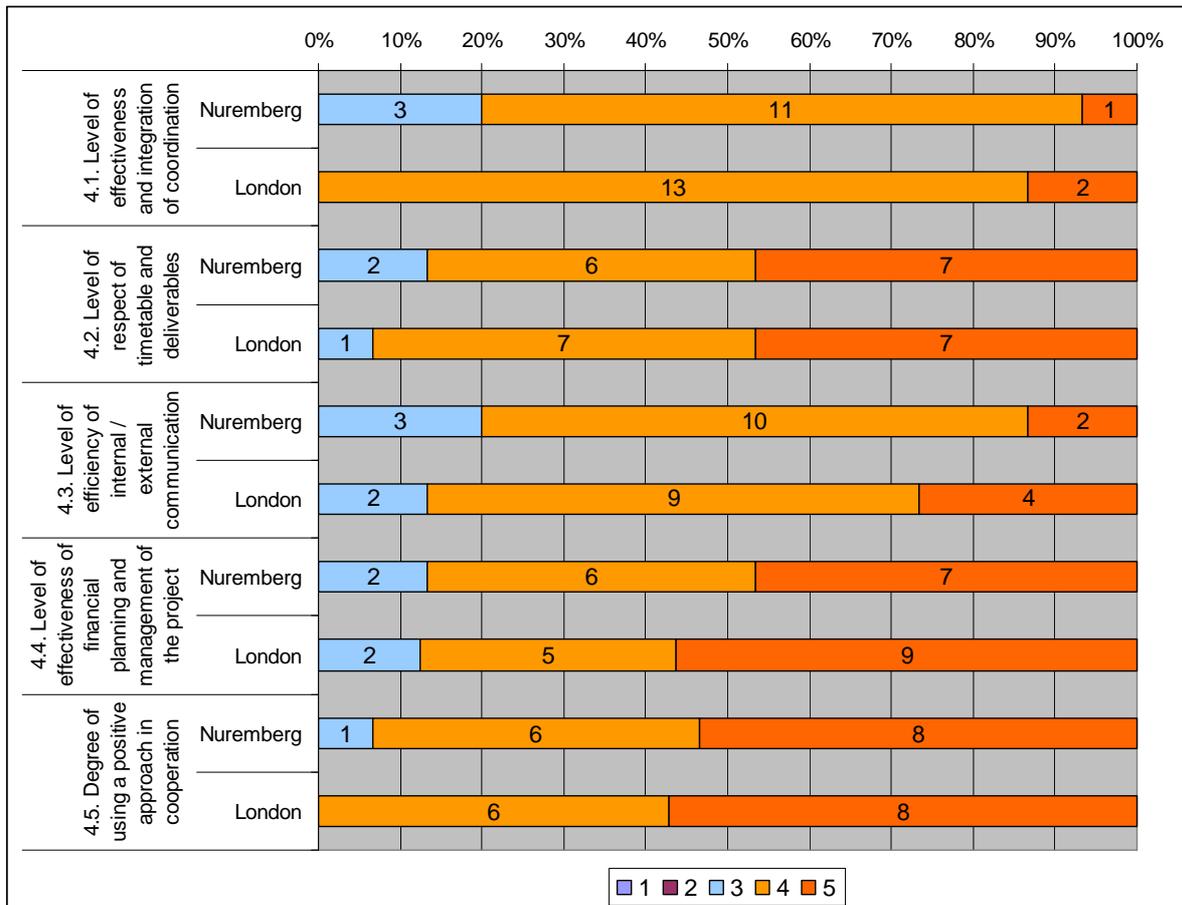


Main results

Concerning valorisation of the project, it emerges ***a quite good evaluation referred to the innovation, effectiveness and quality of deliverables and involvement of external actors.***

The general results are increasingly positive concerning the ***degree of innovation of Europass+ 2 deliverables*** (London: Excellent+Good: 9 out of 12; Nuremberg 4 out of 13), ***level of adaptability of the model to wider national / sectoral contexts*** (London: Excellent+Good: 11 out of 16; Nuremberg 5 out of 15), ***degree of innovation and effectiveness of the communication*** (London: Excellent+Good: 10 out of 16; Nuremberg 6 out of 15) ***level of involvement of stakeholders and external actors*** (London: Excellent+Good: 6 out of 13; Nuremberg 3 out of 15). This last aspect should be taken into account in the next months.

D. Project management



Main results

Concerning project management, it emerges ***a stable and very good evaluation.*** The general results are steadily positive concerning the ***level of effectiveness and integration of coordination*** (London: Excellent+Good: 15 out of 15; Nuremberg 12 out of 15), ***level of respect of timetable and deliverables*** (London: Excellent+Good: 14 out of 15; Nuremberg 13 out of 15), ***Level of efficiency of internal / external communication*** (London: Excellent+Good: 13 out of 15; Nuremberg 12 out of 15) ***level of effectiveness of financial planning and management of the project*** (London: Excellent+Good: 14 out of 16; Nuremberg 13 out of 15), as well as ***degree of using a positive approach in cooperation*** (London: Excellent+Good: 14 out of 14; Nuremberg 14 out of 15).

3. Final remarks and suggestions

We would like to conclude our draft report getting back to some key issues in the light of intermediate results of the project.

- We can advance some suggestions for further development of the project. A first remark refers to the need for maintaining a high level of attention to on-going developments of the economic crisis. This seems of particular importance to assure a full usability of the revised Europass+2 by new targets. The drafting of checklist that make reference to workplace and concrete working experience is to be made a priority in order to enhance the usefulness of the tool. It is our opinion that the development of these examples, despite it results extremely time-consuming, represents an important achievement and added value of the project.
- A second remark refers to the need for assuring a close link of the project with on-going discussion at EU level and in particular with changes in the Europass CV and Europass Mobility. The growing importance of non-formal and informal learning should be reflected in the examples for the Europass+ 2 project in order to keep it in touch with on-going developments. The direction for change in the Europass portfolio and in particular in Europass CV and Europass Mobility is that of a recognition of skills and competence acquired during working experiences. In this light the expansion of the Europass+2 project to adults appears to be an important added value of the project.
- Once completed the definition of examples and the general adaptation of the website, subsequent stages of test at national and international levels appears of crucial importance. At the same time, valorisation and dissemination of achieved results at both national and European levels will prove essential. Here, it seems of particular importance to involve European and national experts on Europass portfolio, in order to acquire reliable and up-to-date information on on-going discussion at the EU level as well as on national efforts and debates in the context of National Europass Centres (NEC).
- We would like to stress the importance of a challenge: designing and implementing a tool which could be at the same time flexible / versatile and fit to be integrated and considered by European and national / local interpretation of what documentation should actually mean, in terms of aims, stakeholders, legal frameworks, target needs. We can say that in designing the tool significant efforts have been made to assure the euro-compatibility of the tool.
- The project should carefully avoid the risk of considering "personal skills and competences" as an asset to be recognised, assessed, validated and therefore documented in themselves, without pursuing their integration in activities actually performed by the people, at the workplace as in their lives. In tools design this preoccupation has been positively taken in account, using the "examples" strategy, to

contextualise in actual tasks the analysis of knowledge, skills and wider competences mobilised by the people.

- Documenting competence is in itself a task requiring the possession of significant competences. An on-line tool – without integrating it in a wider accompanying system - could help only in a limited way the people. Debates and discussions highlighted different positions concerning the extent to which a blended approach has to be pursued, in order to overcome the gaps hampering the people in analyse their experiences, recognise resources and competences mobilised in action. This aspect has therefore to be still monitored and discussed during the next months, in order to develop a balanced and effective tool, useful for the individuals but also in the framework of a guidance / coaching path.