

NATIONAL POLICY COHERENCE REPORT

Lithuania

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Introduction

The TRANSVAL-EU project

Transversal skills are often only an implicit part of the existing validation and guidance process. The aim of the TRANSVAL-EU project is to experiment on how to make those skills more explicit and to embed the lessons learned in validation and guidance provisions. TRANSVAL-EU proposes innovative approaches for the validation of transversal skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL), which were tested in five pilot countries – Austria, Belgium, Italy, Lithuania and Poland.

TRANSVAL-EU aims to increase the knowledge and awareness of validation assessors, counsellors and career guidance practitioners on transversal competences through capacity building. The project strengthens cross-sector cooperation between practitioners, policy-makers and other stakeholders in order to build coherent VNFIL systems. The project life span encompasses 30 months, starting on March 1st, 2021 and ending in August 2023. It is co-funded by Erasmus+ (Call KA3 Policy Reform – Policy Experimentations).

TRANSVAL-EU National Reports

In the last phase of the project, partners were looking into the potential for translating the successful experimentation that took place within the project frame into sustainable policy change.

Successful policies often rely on policy coherence and coordination. Policy coherence refers to how policies are connected between them and across silos, avoiding overlap and inefficiencies. It does not just happen by default. It implies a set of collaborative and knowledge-sharing practices between the responsible authorities in charge of the policy, their institutions and the staff in the institutions (the policy-makers). It is dependent on this cooperation to materialise in the policy texts.

A partner in the TRANSVAL-EU project, the Lifelong Learning Platform investigated coherence at the European level with the support of the other partners (see TRANSVAL-EU, European Policy Coherence Report, August 2023 and its short version). At national level (or in the case of Italy and Belgium, taking the regional dimension into consideration), partners from the five EU countries or regions where the experimentation took place (Austria, Belgium, Italy, Lithuania and Poland) plus a partner representing Nordic countries (for the case of Sweden and Iceland) also looked into the issue of policy coherence at national and regional levels. The National Policy Coherence Reports are the results of these reflections. They mostly relied on desk research and dialogue with the respective public authorities involved in the project. The National Policy Coherence Reports address the issues of main policies relevant for validation, guidance, skills and competences, coherence between these policies (e.g. terminological coherence), coordination between the institutions in charge of these policies, among others. All Reports include recommendations for policy-makers at national and regional levels.

The results of this work complete the early research made in the first phase of the project which led to the publication of the TRANSVAL-EU, European State-of-Play Report on the Validation of Transversal skills and Country sheets for the five countries ([download links here](#)).

Lithuania - Policy Coherence Report

National policy coherence challenges

Lithuania, being a partner in TRANSVAL-EU, has chosen the target group of the schools of Vocational Education and Training (VET), and VET teachers, who, beside their daily duties of teaching, work in the career guidance area with their students. National studies in Lithuania reveal large differences in student achievement between different municipalities, urban and rural schools, and even schools in the same city. Lithuania lags behind in the indicators of inclusion in pre-school, pre-school education, lifelong learning of adults. Groups at risk of social exclusion, especially young people, are not guaranteed equal opportunities to participate in society, and they have difficulty integrating into the labour market. There is also a lack of attention to the gifted. One of the big challenges is the teaching staff: difficulties of renewing the ageing community of teachers, extremely high expectations of the society for the teacher, and the changing role of the teacher in the school. All this forces us to rethink the systems of teacher training and qualification improvement, to increase the prestige of the teaching profession by various means.

The Ministry of Education Science and Sports in Lithuania is planning to implement the **Life skills program** from 2023 - introducing and intensifying teaching of life (transversal) skills in Lithuanian schools. The life skills program will be aimed at students in grades 1-10. The purpose of the program is to provide students with the opportunity to consistently develop social and emotional skills important for life, healthy lifestyle attitudes, learn to protect their own and others' health and life, and prepare to build personal and professional relationships. It will integrate several previous programs - health education and family preparation, human safety, prevention of bullying, violence, drugs, alcohol, social-emotional education. According to the ministry, while learning life skills, students will explore their own and others' emotions, learn to recognize the impulses that cause them and manage them, develop inclusive behaviour skills that help build relationships, work and collaborate.

Also, the [OECD Skills Strategy Lithuania : Assessment and Recommendations](#) (2021) Report stresses that beyond participating in and completing education programmes, it is essential that young people of all backgrounds develop a range of skills to a high level and build high expectations for their future. However, students in Lithuania are not developing high levels of skills. Successfully equipping young people with skills for work and life should positively affect their employment outcomes and reduce skills mismatches. While there is strong and growing demand for high levels of skills in Lithuania, the success of the education system in meeting

these needs is mixed, with many graduates mismatched to their jobs. As well as one of the OECD high level recommendations where to "Recognise and reward the skills young people acquire through non-formal education and training, including in formal examinations and tertiary entrance."

Inter-institutional coordination

Mainly the two ministries are involved in developing and recognition of skills. Those are the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and Ministry of Economy and Innovations. The question of coordination between national and regional levels is irrelevant for Lithuania.

National commissions of VET teachers operate under KPMPC. The Commissions' task is to ensure methodical and subject-specific cooperation of VET teachers and educational support specialists in order to improve the quality of VET in its field of activity.

Coherence with EU policies

One of the European tools, followed in Lithuania, in the policy of inventorying and developing basic / transferable skills is ESCO (the multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations). ESCO is part of the Europe 2020 strategy. The ESCO classification identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training. The use of ESCO in job offers, research, big data analyses, etc., helps education and training providers to understand what skills the labour markets need. ESCO needs to be continuously improved to remain an added value for the labour market and the education and training systems, as new emerging occupations and skills are regularly requested by employers and changes in curricula and in terminology are also regularly introduced in education and training programmes.

KPMPC is the National Reference Point in Lithuania. EQAVET NRP is part of the European network for QA in VET – EQAVET network, which involves the national reference points of all European Member States. The network goal is to develop a common European framework for quality assurance of VET, the so-called EQAVET framework.

Policy recommendations for Lithuania

- EARLY VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE.

Vocational guidance starts already in primary school, grade 1 (for school kids at around 7 years old) to use transversal competences to promote students' choice of suitable professions and to regularly evaluate them in order to assess progress.

- QUALIFICATION OF TEACHERS.

Although general / transferable competences are integrated into vocational education, teachers do not have enough knowledge and experience on how to develop them, to include competence assessment as an auxiliary tool for vocational school students' further career planning. Piloting phase has revealed the need for the teachers to get more involved, for the career consultants to have more tools for evaluating transversal skills in such stages as choosing study programme, planning the career path in general and getting to know personal strengths and weaknesses of the students. Systematic recognition of transversal skills in the sector of VET institutions is still a niche in Lithuania.

- LEGAL ACTS NEEDED.

The assessment and recognition of transversal competences should be formalised in legal acts.

- RAISING OF AWARENESS AT NATIONAL LEVEL.

The sample of VET learners, whose transversal skills have been assessed, represented quite a wide age group from young adults of 18 years old with no work experience, up to adults in their fifties, who are requalifying or upgrading their qualifications there in VET schools. Before starting the assessment of their transversal skills, the discussion typically had to start from explaining the term and concept of transversal skills. It was also noticed that younger learners tended to demonstrate more self-confidence than the experienced ones: under self-evaluation and over self-evaluation appeared to be related with age. After assessment, learners have provided the feedback that the recognition of transversal skills is needed more for personal career guidance, than for formal certification. Absolute majority of learners have expressed their interest to get the updates and further consultations / assessments of their transversal skill, that helps to reflect better and more objective to one's professional capacities as well. The further action plan on raising the public awareness of transferable skills in Lithuania includes presentations in regional meetings with policy makers; presentations and discussions with other VET institutions in various regions of Lithuania. The peculiarities of demand might differ, but the topic of recognition of prior learning, including transversal skills is an issue, discussed as one of the strategic objectives in various regions.

References

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