

The European Framework for VET and the recognition of qualifications IN WISE

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 4



EPP PROJECT

Strengthening Emergent Professional Profiles in the third sector – a way to foster innovative bridges to work and social inclusion of disadvantage groups

EPP project

The EPP - Strengthen emerging professional profiles in the third sector - a way to promote innovative bridges to work and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups', it is a European project funded by the Erasmus +, Key Action 2, taking place between November 2014 and October 2016.

It is a strategic partnership coordinated by A3S Association (Portugal), in partnership with ARBEIT (Austria), ENSIE (Belgium) SCF (Italy) and ESS (UK). Partners have lengthy experiences in training, consultancy, research, networking and lobbying in the fields of social enterprises, and especially on WISE (Work Integration social Enterprises). We are members of ENSIE, sharing a common mission of social and professional integration of disadvantaged groups.

In the **background** of the new European priorities on social innovation in the Europe 2020 Strategy, EPP subject is the current challenges of WISE' human resources. Focusing on coaching roles and marketing functions developed by these organizations, the project debates and proposes training and advocacy instruments in the field of work integration of disadvantage groups.

The **objectives** are the following:

- To identify commune needs and challenges of training, qualification and certification of skills of professionals working in this sub-sector of social enterprises in U.E.
- Create instruments for intervention in the field of professional qualification of WISE.
- Lay the foundation for a structured and strategic intervention of medium and long term partnership for advocacy and lobbying on the qualifications of WISE professionals.

The ultimate **purposes**, or the expected impacts of the project, to contribute is to strengthen and qualify the training offer aimed at the increase of professional skills of human resources of WISE and to promote effectiveness and innovation in professional inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

There are four **products** that result from this project:

- One study: The coaching and marketing functions in WISE - exploratory study in five European countries
- Two training packages: coaching and marketing for WISE
- One document of Guidelines and recommendations for the qualifications of WISE Human Resources

At the moment we are in **multiplier events** phase (from April to September 2016) to validate and disseminate the products, with key stakeholders and at local, national and European levels.

EPP Partnership

[Associação A3S](#) (Portugal)

Coordinator of the EPP Project

Coordinator of the intellectual output 1 - The coaching and marketing functions in WISE:
Exploratory study in 5 European countries

[ARBEIT](#) (Austria)

Coordinator of the intellectual output 3 - Functions of marketing in WISE

[ENSIE](#) - European Network of Social Integration Enterprises – (Belgium)

Coordinator of the intellectual output 4 – Guidelines and recommendations for the
qualifications of WISE Human Resources

[Scuola Centrale Formazione](#) (Italy)

Coordinator of the intellectual output 2 - Functions of job coaching in WISE

[Social Enterprise Europe](#) (U.K.)

Project evaluator (and co-author, as well as all partners of the fourth intellectual outputs)

Table of contents

Content and structure of the report	5
1. Introduction to the European vet context	5
1.1. Relevant agencies in the European VET field	6
1.2. Relevant declarations for improving the recognition of knowledge, skills, and competences	7
2. Current tools for the recognition of competences across members states	9
3. Lessons learned and relevant results from the epp project	10
3.1. Education and training programmes for WISE coaches in the partners' countries (officially recognized programmes as well as not recognized ones)	10
3.2. Skills analysis of wise coaches	11
3.3. Training needs of WISE coaches in the scope of the case studies	12
3.4. Contribution of the EPP training programme to (further) develop and complement training services in WISEs	13
3.5. Results and recommendations from other relevant European projects	14
4. Next steps: dissemination activities and relevant European institutions	17
4.1. National VET Agencies	17
4.2. European institutions	18
4.3. Recommendations at European level	19

Content and structure of the report

The main objective of the following report is to sum up the most relevant findings and outcomes of the EPP project in terms of policy development. Hence, the report will, based on the analysis of the case studies conducted in the partner countries, provide guidelines and recommendations on how to enhance WISEs human resources and effectiveness in social inclusion in the future. Furthermore, central debates and issues concerning VET in WISEs and the development of human resources within WISEs will be discussed.

The first chapter outlines the **European vocational and educational context** in terms of policies and EU agencies as well as on existing tools for enhancing the recognition of competences among member countries.

The second chapter discusses the **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)** which is the most relevant tool for the recognition of competences across European Member States.

The third chapter is dedicated to the **lessons learned** from the EPP project, based on the case studies conducted in the five partner countries (Austria, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, UK), providing more detailed information on issues and key topics identified during the empirical research. The lessons so far learned are complemented by relevant recommendations and outputs of previous European projects, namely the *SYSCOM* and the *Breakable Workers* projects.

The fourth and last chapter names the European institutions most relevant for **disseminating** the project outcomes as well as a timeframe for all dissemination activities.

1. Introduction to the European VET context

The responsibility for policy in the fields of employment, social affairs and inclusion is shared between the EU and its member countries. The European Commission specifically coordinates and monitors national policies, promotes the sharing of good practices, can make legislation proposals and monitors their implementation in these areas as well as on workers' rights and (the coordination) of social security schemes. The European Commission also acts in partnership with national governments, employers' and workers' groups and countries outside the EU

- to improve the quality of training (initial education, continuing development),
- to improve the quality of **teachers, trainers and other professionals** in the sector and
- to make **courses more relevant** to the labour market.

These objectives are achieved through a variety of initiatives and programs (*this list only contains programs relevant for the EPP project*):

- Improving national systems through the [European quality assurance framework for vocational education and training \(EQAVET\)](#) which is relevant for the EPP project and discussed in more detail below.
- [Work-based learning \(WBL\): An initiative promoting the stronger integration of WBL in training, also in VET](#)

As for the EPP project, the most relevant initiative is the [European Quality Assurance for Vocational Education and Training \(EQAVET\)](#). It supports the EQAVET framework's implementation at national level and aims at strengthening synergies and European cooperation in VET quality assurance.

Though EQAVET – as an organization – is not in charge of recognition of curricula, referring to its framework will facilitate the recognition of our training package. Within the EPP, we can use the [10 indicators](#) for referring to the EQAVET framework in a more concrete, practical way:

- I. [Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers](#): Thinking of the training which has already been provided in our WISEs: What good practices could we cite (e.g. internal quality assurance system or being already certified by EQAVET as a VET provider)?
- II. [Investment in training of teachers and trainers](#): To what extent do trainers / coaches (working in the WISEs of our networks) participate in training programmes? What importance is giving to (continuous) training in our WISEs?
- III. [Participation rate in VET programmes](#): To what extent do WISEs' workers (staff) participate in VET?
- IV. [Completion rate in VET programmes](#): To what extent does the staff complete the training (this is linked to the previous indicator)?
- V. [Placement rate in VET programmes](#): This is particularly relevant for the "springboard" model of WISEs.
- VI. [Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace](#) (in other words: Does a worker really use the acquired skills in the workplace?)
- VII. [Unemployment rate](#) (Is rather an indicator on macro level but we could still say something about the positive impact of WISEs in terms of employing people that have been long-term unemployed before working in the WISE.)
- VIII. [Prevalence of vulnerable group](#): Vulnerable groups are defined as "*groups that experience a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population*" such as migrants, disabled people as well as "**long-term unemployed and those who are inactive but not registered as unemployed**". Briefly, it is about the integration of social groups WISEs mostly employ and work with, hence a very important indicator for our project.
- IX. [Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market](#): It is important for WISEs to stay up-to-date on these needs in order to provide appropriate training which will facilitate the workers' integration into the regular labour market.
- X. [Schemes used to promote better access to VET](#)

1.1.1. Relevant agencies in the European VET field

It is mainly through the following two agencies that the EU puts its VET policies in practice: The European [Centre for the Development of Vocational Training](#) (CEDEFOP) and the [European Training Foundation](#) (ETF) which is not relevant for the EPP project as it works in the Western Balkans,

neighbouring countries and Central Asia in promoting the development of education and training systems.

The **CEDEFOP** reports on how countries are progressing towards achieving commonly agreed VET policy goals (furthermore, it provides information and analysis of education and training systems; as well as information on related policies, research and practices in the EU). The country reports for Italy and Austria contain hints to topics relevant to the EPP project: The Italian country report mentions social cooperatives as providers of guidance services: "Social cooperatives act in the common interest to *promote social inclusion of citizens* through management of health and education services, carrying out various activities in agriculture, industry, commerce or *services to support employment of the disadvantaged*"¹ (italics by ENSIE). Training bodies which are supposed to complete public services in providing vocational training for jobseekers are also mentioned in the Belgian country report as organizations contributing to more social inclusion.

For the Austrian case, the report points out that reintegration into the labour market - *the* common aim of "springboard" WISEs - is one of the most frequent causes to motivate adults to participate in VET activities.

The Portuguese and UK country reports do not contain any hints to WISEs or other topics relevant for the EPP project.

All CEDEFOP country reports are available [here](#).

1.2. Relevant declarations for improving the recognition of knowledge, skills, and competences

Apart from the already presented programmes and frameworks, the European Union is engaged in a process of enhancing **transparency and recognition of knowledge, skills, and competences** among Member States in order to facilitate studying and working anywhere in Europe. In the following, the most important and relevant - in terms of the EPP project - initiatives will be outlined.

- In 2002, the [Copenhagen declaration](#) launched the process of cooperation in vocational education and training (VET), involving governments, social partners, and EU institutions in Member States (also including Norway and the candidate countries). Since 2004, Cedefop has been mandated to report on how countries are progressing towards achieving commonly agreed VET policy goals.
- In 2010, Member States agreed for the first time on a long-term vision until 2020 for the European VET policy in the [Bruges Communiqué](#), committing to a series of actions to be implemented by 2014. Before the Bruges Communiqué, several other communiqués (such as the [Maastricht](#), [Helsinki](#), and [Bordeaux](#) Communiqués) had formulated short-time objectives for the European VET policy.

¹ CEDEFOP Italy country report 2014, page 50. Available under <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4132>.

To what extent are WISEs mentioned in the Bruges Communiqué?

The "Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in VET" does not say anything in particular about VET in WISEs. It only points to the importance of enhancing cooperation between VET institutions, profit and non-profit enterprises which of course also comprise WISEs.² Furthermore, the Communiqué calls VET providers to collaborate with "innovative enterprises"- as many WISEs are - in order to further develop VET strategies and feed in "experience-based learning methods"³ as well as work-based learning. The importance of experience- and work-based tools has also been pointed out by the SYSCOM project as non-formal and informal learning, what experience- and work-based learning basically are, stand at the heart of learning processes taking place in WISEs (relevant outcomes of the SYSCOM project will be discussed further below in chapter 3).

Besides the Bruges Communiqué and the already discussed CEDEFOP country reports, ENSIE analysed three further relevant Commission documents on EU legislation and initiatives on VET with respect to WISEs (which are also available on the European Commission's [website](#)):

- ["Cooperation in vocational education and training \(VET\)", 2009](#)
- ["A new impetus for European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training to support the Europe 2020 strategy"](#), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2010
- ["Vocational education and training for better skills, growth and jobs"](#), Commission Staff Working Document, 2012

The role of WISEs in VET and VET policies or its relevance for VET enhancement is not explicitly mentioned in any of these documents. Still, the documents stress the importance of VET in order to fight social exclusion and mentions the need to make VET in particular accessible to the low-skilled or "groups at risk of exclusion": Regarding the future priorities for enhanced European cooperation in VET, the conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the Council stress the importance to give all citizens access to participation in VET "with due regard given to people or **groups at risk of exclusion**"- in other words to groups WISEs typically work with.⁴ The promotion of VET in order to enhance social inclusion is also pointed out by the Commission, in particular regarding the low-skilled (cf. "A new impetus for European cooperation in VET", p. 8).

² "Governments, social partners and VET providers should make the necessary arrangements to (...) create opportunities for enhanced cooperation between VET institutions and enterprises (profit and non-profit)." (Bruges Communiqué 2010, p. 9)

³ "Participating countries should actively encourage VET providers to collaborate with innovative enterprises, design centres, the cultural sector and higher education institutions in forming "knowledge partnerships". (Bruges Communiqué 2010, p. 13-14)

⁴ Source: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=URISERV:ef0011&from=EN>

2. Current tools for the recognition of competences across members states

[The European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#) should be cited as the most important tool for the recognition of competences across EU Member States. It helps comparing national qualifications systems, frameworks and their levels to make qualifications more readable and understandable in different countries and education systems across Europe. The following table summarizes the EQF descriptors and is meant to give an idea of its structure and categories (the full description is available [here](#)).

The EQF country reports are available [here](#) (except Belgium for which only the Flemish report is provided).

EQF Level	Knowledge <i>(theoretical and/or factual)</i>	Skills <i>(cognitive / practical)</i>	Competence <i>(degree of responsibility and autonomy)</i>
1	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills, simple tasks	Direct supervision, structured context
2	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	Ability to solve routine problems	Work under supervision with some autonomy
3	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts in a field	Ability to solve specific problems by selecting and applying basic methods and information	Take responsibility for completion of tasks
4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field	Ability to solve specific problems in a field	Self-management within (changing) guidelines; supervise the routine work of others
5	Comprehensive, specialised, factual, theoretical knowledge within a field	Ability to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in a context with unpredictable change
6	Advanced knowledge of a field; critical understanding of theories	Ability to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field (advanced skills level)	Manage complex activities, responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable contexts; responsibility for professional development of others
7	Highly specialized knowledge; forefront of knowledge in a field; critical awareness of issues in a field	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation to develop new knowledge	Ability to manage and transform complex / unpredictable contexts; contribute to professional knowledge; performance review
8	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field	most advanced and specialised skills, able to extent knowledge, evaluate and synthesize	substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, commitment to the development of a field, including research

Within the scope of European skills and qualification certification, the validation of **non-formally and informally acquired competences** represents another crucial topic. The validation of non-formal and informal learning is a way to recognize the full range of an individual's knowledge, skills, and competences, regardless if acquired within or outside the formal education system. If validated (identified, documented, assessed, and/or certified) these learning experiences can be made more visible and usable for further studies or work. Member countries are invited to put the necessary arrangements for validation in place by 2018. [A European Inventory](#), reflecting the "[European guidelines](#) on validation", includes 36 reports for 33 countries which are updated on a regular basis as well as a cross-country summary report from 2014.

The importance of informally or non-formally acquired skills is also a central outcome of the SYSCOM project, an already completed project dealing with similar questions as EPP, which will be dealt with in the following chapter.

3. Lessons learned and relevant results from the EPP project

The central results of the EPP case studies, mainly based on the case studies conducted in all five partner countries, will be presented along four thematic lines: Existing education and training programmes for coaches working in WISEs, existing skills and skill profiles of WISE coaches, training needs of WISE coaches identified within the case studies and last but not least contributions of the EPP training package to the further development and improvement of training in WISEs.

3.1. Education and training programmes for WISE coaches in the partners' countries (officially recognized programmes as well as not recognized ones)

With the exception of Austria, there is no specific extensive education or training on job coaching in the partner countries and consequently neither for job coaching in the WISE context. In Belgium (more precisely in Wallonia) however, job coaching is part of different social sciences studies such as social work / assistance, psychology or human resource management etc.

Drawing on the cases studies conducted in the partner countries, it shows that most coaches working in WISEs have (university level) education in fields such as social work, psychology, human resource management and then get additional specific training once they joined a WISE. In some countries such as Austria and Belgium, WISEs have already developed standardized training programmes for their coaching staff, whereas other countries follow a work-based learning model (e.g. Italy). In the UK and in Belgium, two short-term trainings are available for coaches: In the UK, the "Training in Systematic Instruction" (TSI) since 1991, a four-day training for one-on-one coaching for people with disabilities both in terms of professional and "independent living" skills. In Belgium, the Walloon NGO "Flora" offers an eight-days training on job coaching since 2008. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that a national quality framework for supported employment and (job) coaching has recently been developed in the UK. However, at present it is not known to what extent these quality standards are actually adopted (as they are not mandatory). In Portugal, the job profile "coach" or "job coach" is not yet recognized or defined as such though it exists as a matter of fact.

3.2. Skills analysis of WISE coaches

Based on the case studies conducted in the partner countries, two types of coaches can be distinguished. On the one hand, there are "hands on" coaches who support and accompany workers in their daily work. They usually joined the WISE many years before and therefore have, additionally to their technical skills in a specific working area, extensive work experience.

On the other hand, there are (job) coaches who provide workers / clients with more "holistic" coaching. This means that, apart from providing coaching on career trajectories and training needs, they also support clients in terms of their personal problems, financial or housing problems etc. (for the Belgian case, this type of coaching is also called "life coaching"). Most of these coaches, in the Belgian as well as in the Austrian case, have a social work, psychology or human resources background and bring along extensive work experience. Moreover, they also have highly developed social, interpersonal, and communication skills and bring along a pragmatic attitude (this applies to all staff members who directly work with clients, not only to coaches).

The Italian and Portuguese case studies show that coaches accompanying workers on their work trajectories usually have a social work / social services, psychology or pedagogy background (in Portugal also sociology graduates) or are persons with a technical education. In Portugal, coaches usually get trained on educational skills within the general education system for social intervention. However, it is mainly through work experience in WISEs or through other forms of intervention with target groups that coaches acquire the skills needed for their work, including the organization and distribution of work (as needed for management positions), management and control of the trainees' / clients' processes and of the cooperation between trainees, tutors and trainers as well as external communication. In the Portuguese case, follow-up coaching is provided by trainers and tutors who learn to provide follow-up coaching through learning-by-doing (and have specific technical backgrounds such as gardening, agriculture, kitchen etc.).

The English case studies confirm the importance of interpersonal skills but also show that required skills vary greatly due to the target group(s) of a WISE. The English case studies, dealing with WISEs working with persons with learning disabilities, show that it is actually preferable to hire coaches who, additionally to good interpersonal skills, bring along complementary experience and skills in relevant business areas (e.g. food based, hygiene compliance) instead of 'social care' skills in order to create a work environment as inclusive as possible. Some WISE staff has been trained in TSI (Training in Systematic Instruction), an approach that breaks job roles down into clear repetitive steps and was especially designed for people with learning disabilities. Furthermore, one workers' group whose members have Aspergers share their skills and knowledge through peer-to-peer training (on IT and website development).

Eventually, all case studies point out to the great importance of work experience as a crucial skill for coaches, no matter how much formalized trainings for coaches are in the partner countries. Work experience is not only a central "skill" but also an important source for skill building, be it in terms of rather practical coaching at the work place or in terms of a broader coaching approach.

3.3. Training needs of WISE coaches in the scope of the case studies

In Belgium, as for the work place supervisors who accompany workers on a daily basis, training is mostly needed in terms of communication skills: How to communicate well with their subordinated workers and encourage their active participation in the WISE's decision making structures on the one hand, how to represent the WISE towards the outside world on the other hand. This also applies to the RES coaches (who do more specific job coaching) as WISE's workers are a quite heterogeneous group, thus communication skills need to be "updated" continuously. Furthermore, the Belgian case studies point out that many coaches, particularly at the beginning of their engagement within the WISE, need to improve and develop their job coaching skills as those are not dealt with enough during their studies, something also stated in the Italian case studies (in particular follow-up coaching once workers have found a job). Furthermore, to change from the perspective of a social worker / social assistant to the perspective of a coach is another important lesson to be learned by coaches new to WISEs. This mainly means to (re-) establish the worker's autonomy (instead of getting active in his / her place) and to empower the client to do things himself / herself, to regain personal autonomy. In contrast, the English case studies point out training needs for very specific "technical" skills (such as advanced food hygiene training).

In the Austrian as well as in the Belgium case studies, internal training and tutoring is widely practiced to build up and improve skills and knowledge. In the Austrian case, training is widely organized by regional networks, Austrian WISEs usually have a budget for training and get additional support by their regional network. For training needs that cannot be covered inside the WISE, specific courses are bought from external training institutions. However, the interviewees of the Austrian case studies did not point to any specific training needs for their coaching staff (which can also indicate that the mentioned internal training structures satisfy the coaches' training needs).

The need for more training on general business and management skills is pointed out in the English, Portuguese, and Italian cases studies, including skills on product and service development, production, and marketing / promotion skills, furthermore interpersonal / social and communication skills of managers as well as cooperation and negotiation competences. The Italian case further stresses the need for project design skills (how to develop a project while keeping the perspective of a "social" expert).

Taking the question of training needs to the **national level**, a need for formalization of training on job coaching and its integration into the existing education offers becomes evident (e.g. by integrating training on job coaching into social work education as suggested in the Belgium case study).

To sum it up, job coaches require very heterogeneous skills ranging from specific social skills (as working with continuously changing target groups such as stated in the Austrian case study) to practical job coaching skills (i.e. where to find job offers and write applications etc.). According to the enterprises' sector of activity, coaches need to train workers in specific skills (e.g. technical skills) as stated in the English case study. With regard to representing the WISE coaches also need at least some basic knowledge and skills on marketing / external communication.

3.4. Contribution of the EPP training programme to (further) develop and complement training services in WISEs

Through the case studies, the partners identified the following subjects that should be integrated into training for job coaches in the future:

➤ In terms of the coaching / training function

- Qualifying and basic training for professionals in the social sector who work with disadvantaged groups, particularly in technical skills needed in production, gardening, cooking, etc.; in-depth training on specific technical skills for experienced coaches.
- Evaluating the person's situation with regard to his/her personal and employment situation in an ongoing and participative way
- Communication tools and methods particularly related to job coaching
- Training (content as well as tools / methods) on diverse social and interpersonal skills (such as teamwork, communication skills, particularly nonviolent communication skills) as well as conflict management skills and participatory practices, in particular for experienced coaches (but also for those with less experience).
- Support supervisors/managers on how to develop an empathetic approach towards disadvantaged workers (how to make workers understand what it means to be low skilled, to have a difficult biography, a discontinuous career path etc.).
- Training on human resources management in the WISEs' context (from recruitment to end of process, also considering participatory management practices), enhance job motivation skills (How to make work meaningful?).
- Training on business sector specific skills, business development, business structures and legal requirements, marketing, etc.).
- Develop a participative methodology and tools for encouraging the workers' democratic participation with the WISEs; furthermore develop their democratic and social values.
- Keep an open perspective so that we can (continuously) add lessons learned from the case studies analysis; develop an "innovations training resource" to spread innovative practices and facilitate ongoing knowledge sharing across the community.

➤ The coaching / training function at a meta-level

- Training on the (main) macro-economic determinants of the situation of the low skilled

Theories particularly related to job coaching Eventually, we would like to point out the need for a stronger integration of WISE expertise in lifelong learning initiatives and programmes: WISEs respectively the WISE context should be included in lifelong learning initiatives and their further development, making use of the WISEs' substantial knowledge on training and coaching of many different target groups with often very specific needs.

➤ **Identified functions in terms of social marketing**

- Advertising WISEs' goods and services at public services and other place where WISEs publicize their offer
- Advertising for the target groups WISEs work with
- Basic and low resources advertising
- Structured contact maintenance and / or networking with selected contact persons from public or private social welfare services, employment and health services (marketing activities at institutional level)
- Public advocacy for causes as part of social marketing activities: Advocacy of the idea of WISEs and the concept of social economy (such as benefits for the target groups but also for the society as a whole), including the development of advocacy strategies
- Advocacy for causes to actual and potential employers

The limitations and thus **challenges** in (social) marketing activities of WISEs mainly seem to be due to the enterprise's size: WISEs with few resources allocated to marketing activities are often small companies. They tend to have a person responsible for the communication and advocacy of social causes whereas bigger WISEs tend to have professional structures, such as a (social) marketing responsible / or even department.

The difficulty all WISEs face in terms of their (social) marketing activities lies between the disclosure of their mission, appealing for social responsibility and responsible consumption, and competing in equal terms with other companies, convincing the consumer by the mere quality of their services and goods.

In the following, relevant results from the SYSCOM project, another EU project with a similar thematic focus, will be briefly discussed to broaden the perspective on the relevance of training and coaching in WISEs.

3.5. Results and recommendations from other relevant European projects

➤ The SYSCOM project

The SYSCOM project (**Systematic Competency Documentation in Social Integration Enterprises**) shares a similar thematic focus with the EPP project (*Life Long Learning Programme*, 2009 – 2010, <http://www.ensie.org/syscom>). The overall aim of the SYSCOM project was to **enhance the systematic documentation of skills and competences of WISEs' staff** in several EU Member States. Moreover, the project had been set up to ensure that WISEs will not be left out of the EU's efforts to encourage (work) mobility.

- The project partners particularly pointed at the project's **positive impact on the awareness rising for competence assessment and competence documentation**, specifically of informally and non-formally gained competences. For instance, the Austrian partner (which was BDV as in the current EPP project) decided to integrate the comparison of the clients' competences before and after his/her training period in the WISE into its standard counselling process. BDV also succeeded in getting its training program for permanent staff certified by the Austrian Academy of Continuing Education.
- The SYSCOM project also claimed that **WISEs should be entitled to certify skills** of its transit (impermanent) staff (e.g. licence for any kind of specific technical skill, accounting, taxi licence, first aid) ([source](#)).
- Another important aspect which could be identified during the project was the necessity to **adapt methods of competence analysis and assessment** to the needs of WISEs and WISEs' clients. The methods applied should differ as much as possible from test and/or school settings ([source](#)).

Eventually, the SYSCOM project emphasizes that **national education systems** and their structures strongly determine the possibilities for the certification of competences. To cite again the Austrian case: The strong formalization of educational trajectories makes it more difficult to get informally or non-formally acquired competences certified here (i.e. the apprenticeship system as a strictly regulated education scheme for many manual and service professions). On the contrary in Ireland, for instance, where such a highly formalized apprenticeship system does not exist, the recognition of informally or non-formally acquired competences became common some time ago (in general, Ireland is the member country which is further ahead as it had already developed its NQF by 2003- long before the debate of an EQF was introduced).⁵

⁵ SYSCOM Guidelines and Recommendations, p. 9. Available under http://static1.squarespace.com/static/53da557be4b0202cfb098951/t/54e6ef07e4b0ed744407afbe/1424420615670/1_FR_GUIDELINES_EN.pdf.

Furthermore, the following recommendations of the SYSCOM project are relevant in the context of the EPP project too:

- WISEs are experts in providing supportive learning environments for the low-skilled. Hence, their umbrella organizations should try to influence national and European programmes on quality enhancement in VET as much as possible, ensuring sufficient attention is paid to the specific WISE context.
- Also, as experts on how to organize learning for the low-skilled, WISEs and in particular their umbrella organizations should disseminate their expertise and “lessons learned” to relevant institutions (concrete suggestions for the EPP project results are discussed in the following chapter “Next steps”).
- Ministries and other relevant public institutions should consider the needs of transitory employees of WISEs in terms of policy development and policy design.
- National WISE umbrella organizations, also with ENSIE’s support, should disseminate European quality standards for VET in order to improve VET offers by WISEs (as well as disseminating good practices from other countries). These activities can also encompass awareness rising on quality assurance in VET in the specific WISE context.

➤ **The Breakable Workers project**

The main **aim** of the Breakable Workers project (Grundtvig programme, 2009 – 2011, <http://www.ensie.org/breakable-workers>) was the **exchange of the different strategies and practices of work integration social enterprises** in the participating countries, the conditions of unemployment and job search for the unemployed, in particular newly arrived immigrants and those recently made unemployed, as well as each country’s employment policies.

For the EPP project, the outcomes on trainers’ and coaches’ skills needed in WISEs are particularly interesting and relevant. For the Belgian situation, it was pointed out that the combination of technical skills and the competence to accompany / coach the worker in a professional way is crucial in order to succeed as a trainer / coach in a WISE. This was confirmed by the Austrian and German partners. In these two countries, WISEs networks organize particular pedagogical training for coaches / trainers themselves.

Social-pedagogic staff, though already training in social work, equally receives further training in order to work as WISE coaches. Much training is done on leadership, communication and conflict management, motivation issues and stress management, anti-discrimination and diversity management, dealing with addiction or mental health problems.

Furthermore, the *Breakable Workers* project partners agreed on the following content that should be addressed by any training programmes for trainers / coaches in WISEs: Staff should be trained to “consciously” recognize the workers’ experiences and competences and adapt training (in terms of content and structure) to them; workers should be given the opportunities of promotion and training in WISEs needs to be linked to (potential) employment sectors.

4. Next steps: Dissemination activities and relevant European institutions

In this final chapter, we will present European institutions which should be contacted to disseminate and present the EPP project's outcomes as well as the main recommendations build from the findings of the project.

The following table is a suggestion for how to precede on our dissemination activities:

When <i>(Adapted to the new deadlines agreed on by all partners in Ludlow.)</i>	Activity	To Whom
Starting from March 2016	Dissemination of IO ₂ content <i>(IO₂ will be ready end February)</i>	National VET agencies / national training institutions
Starting from April 2016	Dissemination of IO ₁ and IO ₃ content <i>(IO₁ and IO₃ summary will be ready by mid-March)</i>	EU institutions (listed below)
Starting from May 2016	Dissemination and recognition of EPP training package <i>(As 2 May is the deadline for submission of the results of the multiplier events which means that validation will be finished by beginning of May.)</i>	National VET agencies- <i>needs involvement of all partners</i>
Mid-July 2016 <i>Final version of IOs (in English) ready</i>	Dissemination of recommendations and conclusions	EU institutions (listed below), national VET agencies

4.1. National VET Agencies

As briefly outlined and discussed at the transnational meeting in Vienna, the national agencies are potential partners for helping us disseminating our project outcomes.

As we know from the documentation provided by the partners, Austria, Belgium, UK and Italy have so far established contact with their national agencies. SEE has been in touch with the Erasmus+ administrators and plan to get in touch with other relevant bodies once the project provides more concrete outputs. SCF has established contact to the Italian national VET agency as well as to the national reference point in charge of quality assurance in education and training.

-Austria: [OeAD \(Österreichische Austauschdienst\) / erasmusplus@oead.at](mailto:erasmusplus@oead.at)



Erasmus+



-Belgium: [AEF-EUROPE /aef@aef-europe.be](mailto:aef@aef-europe.be), [EPOS vzw / info@epos-vlaanderen.be](mailto:info@epos-vlaanderen.be), [Jugendbüro der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft V.o.G./ info@jugendbuero.be](mailto:info@jugendbuero.be)

-Italy: [Agenzia Nazionale Erasmus+ ISFOL](mailto:erasmusplus@isfol.it) (National Research Institute for Vocational and Educational Training, Employment, and Social Policies) / erasmusplus@isfol.it / agenziaerasmusplusisfol@pec.it, [Agenzia Nazionale Erasmus+ INDIRE](mailto:erasmusplus@indire.it) / erasmusplus@indire.it, [Agenzia nazionale per i Giovani](mailto:direzione@agenziagiovani.it) / direzione@agenziagiovani.it

-Portugal: [Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional](mailto:agencianacional@erasmusmais.pt) / agencianacional@erasmusmais.pt, [IEFP - Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional](mailto:contactform@iefp.gov.pt) / [contact form](mailto:contactform@iefp.gov.pt)

-UK: [British Council, in partnership with Ecorys UK – British Council](mailto:erasmusplus@uk.ecorys.com) / erasmusplus@uk.ecorys.com/ general.enquiries@britishcouncil.org: Besides the Erasmus+ administrators, there is a range of bodies that together have responsibility for VET in UK. SEE will consider which to include once we have some project results.

4.2. European institutions

- **Education and Training 2020 Working Groups: expert group on [Vocational education and training trainers](#)**

As part of the [Education and Training 2020 \(ET2020\)](#) Open Method of Coordination, the Commission and Member States cooperate in the form of Working Groups. Working Groups are designed to help Member States address the key challenges of their education and training systems, as well as common priorities agreed at European Level. The primary focus of the Working Groups is to benefit the Member States in the work of furthering policy development through mutual learning and the identification of good practices. Following their mandate, Working Groups must deliver outputs directly linked to the objectives of ET2020 and contribute to [Europe 2020](#).

- **DG Education and Culture**

The Directorate General for Education and Culture, or DG EAC, is the branch of the European Commission charged with Education, Training, [Youth](#), [Sport](#), [Languages](#), and [Culture](#). Its activities, as concerns education and training, are framed by the [Education and Training 2020 strategy](#) (ET2020), designed to promote growth and jobs in Europe, as well as contributing to the development of skills for the labour market. The main responsibility of DG EAC in the field of education and training policy is to support Member States in developing coherent policies for [schools](#), the for us relevant [vocational education and training](#), [higher education](#), [adult education](#).

As for our project, the person to present our results to, whom we can also invite to the final project conference, is Mr. Robert, policy officer in charge of the above mentioned "Education and Training 2020 Working Groups" (phone +32 229-55342, address: Rue Joseph II 70, Brussels). His unit is part of the [Directorate A — Modernisation of Education I: Europe 2020, country analysis, Erasmus+ coordination, department 1. Europe 2020, Investment Plan, Education and Training 2020](#).



4.3. Recommendations at European level

The state of play of the work integration social enterprises (WISEs) and the training offers for their professionals are very different from a country to another in Europe. These differences are usually linked with the existence or not of a national framework supporting the social enterprises and the social and professional integration of disadvantaged people.

Considering the case studies and analyses held in the framework of the project, **the main challenges and results concerning the WISEs sub sector are the following:**

1. Models of work integration are continually evolving fostering effectiveness in their results and innovation in their methods and mission. Finding ways to share knowledge, experiences and tools is a base for better results and enhance their social innovation ecosystem. Thus the strategies to develop long-life learning initiatives must include as often as possible the debate on WISE achievements, diversity and the collective distance travelled in the creation of innovative solutions the field of work integration of disadvantage groups.
2. There are countries where the challenges are the awareness and the promotion of WISE in civil society as well as, at in VET systems, in social enterprises and social economy networks and at the public policy making level (PT).
There are countries where the WISE subsector is more established and the targets stakeholders for life-long learning activities are more the structure, development and acknowledge HR qualification and certification needs in the WISE subsector.
There are countries (UK) where the subsector faces urgent challenges other than qualification and training, such as deregulation.
3. As a DNA function, coaching in WISE reveals a wide range of competencies, skills and knowledge, taking into consideration the European diversity. There are several levels of qualification:
 - Level of academic degree: Universities (initial qualification)
 - Level of VET providers (initial and continuous professional training)
 - Level of network (continuous professional training)
 - Level of WISE (continuous professional training)
4. The marketing function reveals a tighter profile of needs and challenges for WISE HR in relation to the range of specific (from 'general' marketing) of competencies, skills and knowledge.

The results of the different case studies and analyses held in the framework of the project demonstrates the diversity of the sector in the studied countries and thus lead to general recommendations starting from situations where the WISEs sub sector is not or no more developed at all to others more relevant to countries where it is historically well established.

Taking into considerations the debates and studies held during the EPP project, the partners highly recommend the following:

- To recognise work integration social enterprises through adapted national legislative frameworks in some European countries where it does not yet exist, such as Portugal and Hungary;
- To increase the support and the development of work integration social enterprises through adapted financing measures in European countries;
- To promote and support the training of WISE's professionals to improve their competencies in responding to the target group's needs;
- To recognise the trainings for WISEs professionals already existing in some countries and the ones on job coaching and marketing developed under the EPP project, in the different National Qualification Frameworks;
- To adapt the training offers for WISEs professionals taking into account the specificities linked to WISEs and their target groups, in the countries where the offer is already existing;
- To promote the dissemination of the training packages developed within the EPP project on job coaching and marketing, in the countries where the offer is not existing.