PROCOMP

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM OF RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMALCOMPETENCES

In Italy, France, Portugal and Spain

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM OF RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMPETENCES

This Booklet was created in March 2020, as a result of the research and analysis of the partner organizations carried out in the frame of the project **"ProComp - Promoting Development, Assessment and Recognition of Adults' Non-formal and Informal Competences"** (2019-1-IT02-KA204-062660), co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union and coordinated by Travelogue Associazione di promozione sociale (Marsciano, Italy).

For further information, visit the website: https://www.procompetences.eu/.

Partner organisations:

- Travelogue Associazione di promozione sociale (Marsciano, Italy)
- Asociación Iniciativa Internacional Joven (Malaga, Spain)
- Associazione Vita Indipendente Umbria APS (Terni, Italy)
- Epralima – Escola Profissional Do Alto Lima (Arcos de Valdevez, Portugal)
- IMF - Institut Méditerranéen de Formation et Recherche en Travail Social (Marseille, France)

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PROCOMP

Co-funded by the
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1. Partnership

Travelogue Associazione di promozione sociale (IT)

Travelogue is a non-profit organization working in the promotion of Umbria and the territory of Central Italy and its beauties at local and international level.The association is developing activities to promote European partnerships, exchange of knowledge between people and institutions, career guidance for youth and adults. Its main issues are: sustainable tourism, environmental protection, social entrepreneurship, social inclusion, skills development for youth and adults.

Associazione Vita Indipendente Umbria APS (IT)

AVI Umbria Onlus working for guarantee to the person with disabilities a leading role in the choices that concern them, starting from those that affect the health and therefore the quality of their life.
The association is developing activities to promote at local and national level a new culture of disability for the effective recognition of the rights of people with disabilities.
Its main issues are: independent living, protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, community empowerment, empowerment of the persons with disabilities, social inclusion, skills development of persons with disabilities.

Asociacion Iniciativa Internacional Joven (ES)

Asociación Iniciativa Internacional Joven is an NGO from Málaga (Spain) created in 2003 from a group of youths who after participating in international programmes and activities, concluded that these experiences had been very important to change their life. Therefore, they decided to share them with
other young people, collectives and associations, to enhance the interest in participating in international programs and exchanges, learning languages, realizing voluntary work, raising awareness, tolerance and respect for other cultures, etc. thereby contributing to personal and professional development of young people and adults.

Epralima - Escola Profissional do Alto Lima (PT)

EPRALIMA_Escola Profissional do Alto Lima, C.I.P.R.L., is a Private and Cooperative School, situated in the north of Portugal, in the District of Viana do Castelo and in the Minho Lima Region, more specifically Arcos de Valdevez, Ponte da Barca and Ponte de Lima.
Epralima focuses on vocational education, while offering Youth Educatio and Training Courses, Adult Education and Training Courses, and Specialized Technology Level V Courses.
Epralima prepares young people and adults for the exercise of qualified professions, by developing mechanisms that create closer ties between schools and economic institutions.

Institut Méditerranéen de Formation et Recherche en Travail Social (FR)

IMF (Mediterranean Training Institute) is a major player in social work training and research. It contributes to the professionalization and professional development of people and to the personalization of their training course : reception and individualized information, training and guidance advice, pre-training, pedagogical support, validation of learning from experience (VAE).

We have a team of guidance counsellors welcomes, informs and guides people in their search for a trade or training in the social sector in order to help them build their professional or training project.

We contribute to the training of citizens as social workers, committed, open-minded, cultivated, reflexive, capable of understanding the impact of globalization in the field of Social Work and pay particular attention to people who have difficulties finding employment.

2. Introduction

Adult Education is a subject that raises many questions, not only for its definition, but also for its purpose. In other words, when we talk about Adult Education it is very common to come across issues such as What is it? Who is it for? Who are the professionals who can work in Adult Education?

The concept of education is mostly associated with learning within the School and is seen as the key to economic development, i.e. education is considered a requirement for reconstruction and economic development. This causal relationship has led to a large investment in education at school by states.

Until the 1960s, school education was considered to be a process of preparing children and young people for a future profession. From this point of view, from the moment the individual entered adulthood he had no need to learn, to emancipate himself and to transform his reality.

Adult education is a comprehensive process involving formal, non-formal and informal education, which takes place and develops throughout life, that is, all forms of Teaching/Learning that integrate Man, in the totality of his existence and experiences. Education assumes a role of primary importance, not only for economic

development, but also and above all for the development and emancipation of the person, leading him/her to transform his/her personal and social reality, only in this way does it make sense.

In general, Adult Education, and referring to the Fourth UNESCO Conference, should contribute, among others, to:

- promote action for peace…;
- develop a critical understanding of major contemporary problems and social transformations, and the ability to participate actively in the progress of society from a perspective of social justice;
- to ensure the conscious and effective insertion of individuals into the World of Work, providing them with advanced technical and professional training, and developing the ability to create, individually or in groups, new material goods and new spiritual or aesthetic values;
- developing the ability to use leisure time in a creative way and to acquire all necessary or desired knowledge;
- developing the ability to learn how to learn.

Adult education should meet the needs of the participants, valuing and taking advantage of "their various experiences" for the benefit of the teaching/learning of the adult person, giving priority to the most disadvantaged groups. It should also "trust in the ability and willingness of every human being to progress throughout his or her life, not only in terms of personal development, but also in relation to his or her activity in social life" and awaken the interest of adults in formation, using their experience to strengthen their confidence and active participation. Adult education must adapt to the personal characteristics of the adult, as well as to the context in which he/she is inserted, that is, Adult Education must be designed to respond to the real needs of each adult, taking into account his/her family, social, professional and residential context. "Its fundamental task is to meet the needs and aspirations of adults in all dimensions of life."

It is in this sense that the Processes of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies assume an extremely important role.

3. Research and Analysis of the system of recognition of non-formal and Informal competences in the project countries

3.1. France
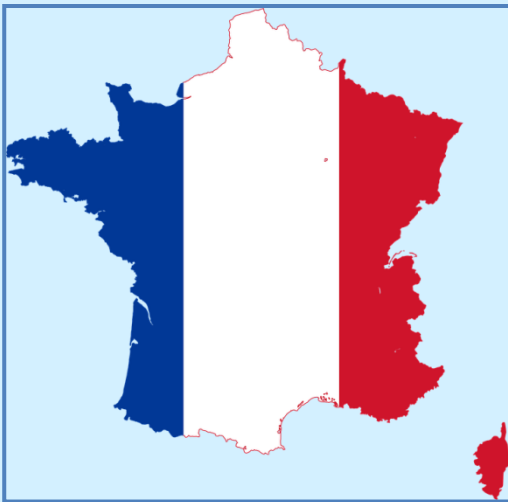
Laws and regulation at national/regional level about the VAE Process

The VAE (Validation of Acquired Experience, also called Recognition of Prior Learning) is:

"A procedure which allows the applicant to obtain all or part of a professional certification on the basis of experience, without necessarily going through a trainingphase"

"It's the possibility of having everything you have 'learned on the job' through work or volunteer activities officially recognised and turned into a 'diploma'".

"A real diploma, exactly the same as the one you get when you go to an educational institution, and it doesn't say VAE on it!"

The pathway of experience

In addition to initial and continuing training, **VAE has created a new route to certification**: that of experience**.** With this system, introduced <u>by the French Social Modernisation Act of</u> <u>17 January 2002 (Articles 133 to 146)</u>, it is possible to obtain all or part of a diploma, a professional qualification or a certificate of qualification at the end of a process aimed at recognising skills acquired during professional and extra-professional activity.

Obtaining this professional certification, which is similar to that awarded through training, offers, in addition to personal and social recognition, the opportunity to enhance one's skills in order to, for example, progress within the company, facilitate mobility or

retraining, be better equipped to find a job, take part in a competitive examination, obtaina pay rise in accordance with the pay scales of the collective agreement, etc.

Do not confuse VAE and VAP

Since 1985, the Validation of Professional Experience (VAP or VAP 85) has made it possible to apply for higher education training without having the required qualifications or diplomas (see Art. D163-38 to D163-50 of the French Education Code). This scheme therefore differs from the VAE, which makes it possible to obtain certification without returning to school. Anyone who has interrupted their initial education for at least two years (or for three years if you failed the educational course in question) may take advantage of the VAP scheme. Candidates who do not hold the baccalaureate, with the exception of high-level sportsmen and women, must be at least 20 years old. The application for VAP is made to the institution providing the educational instruction you wish to access.

A scheme that is open to all
The VAE is a right open to everyone, regardless of age, nationality, diploma or employment status (salaried employee, permanent, fixed-term or temporary contract; jobseeker, receiving benefits or not; public official, whether or not a permanent employee; volunteer; trade union leader; local elected representative), provided that they can prove at least one year of professional activity related to the content of the certification in question. This activity may be current or past, continuous or discontinuous, be or have been carried outon a full-time or part-time basis.

Diplomas, titles and certificates for professional purposes

The VAE makes it possible to obtain any certification for professional purposes, which is identical in every way to the certifications that can be obtained through continuing education. The term "professional qualification" is general and refers to diplomas, vocational certificate or CPQs (certificates of professional qualification). National diplomas, vocational certificate created and issued under the aegis of professional branches, or vocational certificate and diplomas created by private, public or consular bodies can be obtained through the VAE.

The only requirement is that this qualification must be registered in the RNCP (French National Directory of Vocational Qualifications).

The VAE is used to officially recognise your skills and knowledge

The VAE can be used other professional situations:
- The VAE can help you hold on to your job
- The VAE can help you advance in your company
- The VAE can help you train for new occupations
- The VAE is useful if you expect to be made redundant
- The VAE can make it easier to find a job
- The VAE can make you feel more legitimate in the workplace
- The VAE can help you feel more self-confident

This is not necessarily what we are going to look for when undergoing Validation of Acquired Experience, and yet, those who do undergo VAE all say the same thing:

"…… I have more confidence in myself and my skills, ……"
"…… I feel more competent, more legitimate ……"
"…… I want to move forward, to make further progress……"

There are still other reasons to explore the VAE pathway: to sit for a competitiveexamination, to create a company, to comply with regulatory obligations...

Organizations in charge for the VAE process

The RNCP, a must

Qualifications eligible for the VAE can be found in the National Directory of Vocational Qualifications, RNCP for short, the "Bible" of diplomas.
The diplomas listed in the RNCP are all accessible under VAE with some exceptions. It should be understood that there are few exceptions. For example, the State Diploma of Nursing is not currently accessible under VAE. Whether or not the qualification is eligible for VAE is noted in the description of diploma that you can find in the RNCP.
There are about 15,000 qualifications in the RNCP, which is a good thing, because thereis a wide choice!

During the VAE process, three players are involved with applicants:

- The **certifier**, a body or institution authorised to issue certification (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of National Education, professional branches, chambers of commerce and industry, private bodies, etc.) ;
- The **counsellor**, a public or private body (ministry, training institution) who advises and
- guides the applicant requesting support during the preparation of the VAE process; (optional)
- The **financial backer**, which differs according to the status of the VAE applicant (State,
- Region, Pôle Emploi (French employment service), Competency Fund, employer).

Other actors may also be involved, in particular the VAE advisor (who helps the applicant to identify possible qualification(s) and to formalise his or her eligibility file).

Steps/phases before the VAE Process

The VAE, a pathway...

The VAE (Validation of Acquired Experience) is also a pathway, the average length of which is between 9 and 12 months, at the end of which the applicant obtains the desired qualification.

The different stages along the VAE pathway are:

Information and advice on VAE

This first step, which is not compulsory but recommended, allows the applicant to get information and advice on his or her VAE project. To do so, he or she can visit a VAE counselling centre. The counselling interview allows the applicant to find his or her way more easily along the VAE pathway, to identify the qualification that best corresponds tohis or

her experience, and to find out about the different possibilities of financing the VAE.

Eligibility

This compulsory phase, often also known as "File 1", makes registration with the certifier possible. It also provides access to funding for guidance and support. Eligibility is established on the basis of a detailed CV and documents proving that you have the experience required for the qualification in question. An "evidence" file of prior experience is prepared. If the application is accepted, the applicant receives a notification of eligibility which authorises him or her to apply for an interview with the VAE selection panel.

Preparing the experience file for presentation

Validation is done on the basis of a file called "File 2". This is a crucial phase. Here the applicant must describe his or her career path in detail and show that his or her skills are relevant to the qualification sought. For this stage, it is strongly recommended that the applicant be provided with VAE guidance and support, a methodological aid lasting a maximum of 24 hours, to help him or her prepare the file to be presented to the certifier and to appear before the selection panel.

Appearing before the selection panel

At the final stage of the pathway, the interview with the selection panel can take three forms, depending on the qualification sought: a simple presentation of the file, a presentation of the file with an interview, or performance in a professional setting. At the end of this stage, the applicant may be awarded all or part of his or her qualification, or may be refused. In the case of partial validation, the applicant receives recommendations for continuing his or her studies if he or she so wishes (by following additional training, acquiring additional professional experience or by carrying out work requested by the selection panel, such as producing an additional dossier).

For the applicant, the 5 essential steps of the VAE process are as follows

- Choosing the right degree, also called qualification
- Meeting with the certifier (the body that issues the diploma) and completing the application for eligibility
- Seeking funding for guidance and support in writing the second application (this is optional in theory, but highly recommended)
- Preparing the experience file for analysis and submitting it
- Meeting the selection panel and presenting the file
- And then, waiting for the results!

Figures and roles of the professionals in charge of the VAE Process

- The **certifier**, a body or institution authorised to issue certification (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of National Education, professional branches, chambers of commerce and industry, private bodies, etc.) ;
- The **counsellor**, a public or private body (ministry, training institution) who advises and
- guides the applicant requesting support during the preparation of the VAE process; (optional)
- The **financial backer**, which differs according to the status of the VAE applicant

(State, Region, Pôle Emploi (French employment service), Competency Fund, employer).
Other actors may also be involved, in particular the VAE advisor (who helps the applicantto identify possible qualification(s) and to formalise his or her eligibility file).

The VAE Process

Access Conditions/requirements

There are 4 basic requirements for eligibility under the VAE:

1. a requirement concerning length of experience: at least one year.
2. **Watch point:** The activities may have been carried out continuously or discontinuously, on a full-time or part-time basis. The experience, of a minimum duration of one year, is calculated by combining these activities with periods of initial or continuing education in a professional environment.
3. a requirement concerning the nature of the experience: the experience corresponds to a field or trade.
4. a requirement concerning the diploma: you have to find the diploma that correspondsto this experience.
5. a requirement concerning supporting documents: it must be possible to prove the duration and nature of the experience with official documents, for example with pay slips or certificates.
6. The activities may have been carried out in France or abroad under different statuses: salaried, self-employed (as a retailer, an employee of a retailer, a sole trader, a farmer or a craftsman, etc.), or voluntary (with an elective or trade union mandate, via a community organisation).

Tools and proceduresFinancing a VAE initiative

The VAE process generates a certain number of costs, in particular costs linked to the implementation of the procedure by the certifier, which vary according to the certification concerned and the body concerned (registration fees, fees for presentation before the selection panel, participation in a compulsory module for certain diplomas, etc.), and costs relating to VAE support issued by a provider body. Additional costs incurred by the process (photocopying, transport, etc.) must also be taken into account. In addition, in the case of partial validation, the costs of additional training modules may have to be added.

There are several possibilities for partially or fully financing a VAE scheme, depending on the status of the applicant. It is also possible to finance a VAE process on an individual basis.
Employees can obtain coverage:
- as part of their company's skills development plan: the request should be made to the employer;
- by using their acquired rights under the Personal Training Account (CPF). In this case, the employer's agreement is limited to the authorisation of absence if the VAE supportis carried out during working time, the VAE being an enforceable right (Law No. 2014- 288 of 5 March 2014).
- Jobseekers can benefit from various funding schemes which, under certain conditions, make it possible to ensure that the entire VAE pathway is free of charge:
- By using regional aid: most regional councils offer financial aid (in Ile-de-France, the single

- VAE voucher book in partnership with Pôle emploi);
- By using assistance from Pôle Emploi (in addition to regional aid);
- By using their acquired rights under the Personal Training Account (CPF) to finance the VAE guidance and support process;
- Under VAE leave, for former holders of fixed-term contracts.

The law of 5 September 2018 for the freedom to choose one's professional future is changing VAE leave. As of January 1, 2019, obtaining VAE leave becomes a right for employees who wishes to have his or her experience validated during working hours. The maximum duration of this leave, set at 24 hours, is counted in a series of evaluation sessions and no longer during one single validation session as before. For low levels of qualification, the duration may be increased by individual or collective agreement.

VAE jargon

How can you make sense of VAE's strange vocabulary?Guidance and support

Methodological assistance provided to the VAE applicant to prepare his or her file with the certifier and prepare for the interview with the selection panel. The guidance and support is provided after the eligibility stage of the application. It is an optional measure that improves the applicant's chances to complete the process.

Acquired Knowledge and Experience

All the knowledge and skills of which an individual demonstrates full understanding in a professional, corporate or training activity.

Certifier or Validator

Official body that issues the qualification. It is also called the validator.

Qualification

Document attesting to an individual's competencies and know-how. A qualification covers both diplomas, vocational qualifications and certificates of qualification.

Certificate of professional qualification (CPQ)

A written document created and issued under the responsibility of a joint national employment commission (CPNE) for branches, sometimes recognised in the collective agreements for the branch.
The CPQ attests to an individual's mastery of the abilities and competencies required bya job or trade in the branch. It is only of value in the branch that created it.

Diploma

A written document establishing a privilege or right. Emanating from a relevant authority, the diploma has a legal dimension. It conditions access to certain professions and to certain training courses or competitive examinations. (AFNOR X 50-750)

Experience file

Document drafted by the applicant in which the activities carried out are described in relation to the

competencies required by the reference framework of the qualification, professional qualification or diploma in question.

This document is the basis of the interview with the selection panel in the validation procedure.

Selection panel

Body designated by the official texts in force for the validation of prior professional learning and experience. It is the only body authorised to grant dispensation from the units or tests making up a given diploma, following the analysis of the learning acquired from a person's experience.

PRC: Point Régional Conseil VAE

A VAE information and counselling service where you can meet a professional VAE counsellor. It is a service financed by the Regional Councils, free of charge for the public, neutral and confidential.

Diploma (or qualification) referential

A document that contains a detailed list of the behaviours, competencies and learning required to obtain the diploma in question. It indicates the situations in which these can be assessed, the levels to be attained, the criteria for success, which make it possible to determine the level attained or to situate the performance of the trainee. This referential is not a programme but a measuring instrument. It indicates what needs to be assessed, how it should be assessed, and what the measures of assessment should be.

RNCP (French National Directory of Vocational Qualifications)

Directory created by the French Social Modernisation Act. Diplomas and professional qualifications are classified by field of activity and level.

Its purpose is to provide individuals and companies with constantly updated information on vocational diplomas and qualifications and on the certificates of qualification appearing on the lists drawn up by the joint national employment commissions of the professional branches.

Professional qualification

The professional qualification is awarded on completion of vocational training under the supervision of the French Ministry of Labour. It is officially recognised by the State by an order approving technological educational qualifications and diplomas (entry in the national register of professional qualifications).

VAE support and guidance, some methodological guidelines

For preparing the experience file

This is a document prepared by the applicant in which the activities carried out are described in relation to the competencies required by the referential of the qualification, professional qualification or diploma in question.

The document forms the basis for the interview with the selection panel in the validation procedure.

1- The applicant/ counsellor relationship

A few watch points to ensure that this relationship is effective the role of the counsellor is to help the applicant to:

- describe his or her activity
- analyse the specificities of the work situations encountered

- examine the actual work, not the prescribed work
- distance themselves from his or her various experiences
- structure and organise his or her thoughts with a view to formalising his or her qualifications and professional experience

Several types of advisor are available to the applicant to help prepare his or her validation file:

The VAE advisor: he or she listens, helps to formulate, knows the possible pathways, provides guidance and points of reference, indicates possible obstacles, does not judge.

A diploma expert: can be contacted by the applicant; he or she explains what the diploma entails, the objectives, the contents, etc; he or she can also put the applicant in touch with teachers, former students, professionals, etc.

A professional expert: he or she can be contacted by the applicant depending on the need (human resources manager, line manager, work colleague, etc.); he or she helps the applicant to reconstruct and recognise the experience acquired within the company or organisation, helps the applicant to prepare and gather the evidence to be presented to the selection panel.

Managing the difficulties that emerge during guidance and support.

The counsellor must avoid slipping into the role of an assistant.
He or she must make sure that the applicant's motivation is maintained whateverobstacles, events or difficulties might interfere with the work and discourage the applicant.

2- Guiding and supporting the applicant.

Some people do not have sufficient basic knowledge to be able to prepare their VAE file. They may be offered refresher courses on this knowledge (maths, reading, writing, etc.). Various tools and training courses exist for such people in difficulty.

a - An interview to explore the pathway:

The aim is to gather the applicant's biographical information and list of experiences.Sample questions:
- What are the main stages of your career? What would you call them?
- What are the common and different points between these different stages?
- What do you remember in particular about each of these stages? About others? About yourself?
- What events in your pathway represent failures for you? Successes? In what way?

b - An interview to explain the activities:

The aim is to help the applicant verbalise and put into words a particular activity. It therefore provides particularly detailed information on how an individual has carried out a task.

Sample questions for each of the steps used during this interview:

Dividing activities into tasks

The activity consists of...

Providing context

Why did you choose to describe this activity? How is it significant in relation to thequalification sought?
What percentage of your time do you spend on this activity?
How long have you been carrying out this activity? And in other environments?

Identifying repetitive, occasional, exceptional tasks

Description of the work sequences
Describe the typical flow of this activity. Can the tasks be separated from each other?Describe the product, good or service resulting from this activity.
Do the actions necessary for the successful completion of this activity follow a predefinedmodus operando? Describe it in detail.

The conditions for carrying out the tasks

In what environment does this activity take place?
Who are you in contact with to carry out this activity? Internally and externally?What are the tasks under your full responsibility?

Considering and designing the activity

What information do you need?
What are the different methods used to carry out this activity? Can you identify severalmodus operandi?
What tests and experiments do you carry out? How is this done?

Preparation

During this phase, what are your margins for autonomy and initiative? What do you expect? What are you looking for? What do you examine?How do you plan your time? Your actions? Your team's?

The resources used to conduct the activity

What questions do you ask or are you asking yourself? What theoretical and practical knowledge do you need? Generally, how much time do you have at your disposal?

Carrying out the activity

When should you work and where? Who decides?
Where do you start? What are your observations, your words, your gestures?What procedures, methods, protocols do you apply?
What do you avoid doing? What precautions do you take?

Analysis of the result obtained

Who ultimately inspects and validates this activity? How is this done?What do you do in case of non-compliance? How do you explain it? Do you make a report, an end-of-activity report? How is this done?

What to infer from this

What do you need to know to manage this activity successfully? What is something new that you

have learnt by doing this activity?
If you have carried out the same activity in other companies or in a non-work environment, compare your different experiences

How are the non-formal and informal competences evaluated

An interview to explain the activities:

The aim is to bring together prior experience, the qualification reference system, and competencies, i.e. make it possible to select with the applicant the elements of his or her career path (professional and extra-professional activities) which are directly related to the diploma for which he or she is applying, in order to present them in his or her file in a way that is legible and comprehensible to the selection panel.

- Highlight the knowledge that the training courses followed (inter or intra-company, continuing vocational training, at the request of the employer, on his or her own initiative, with or without a diploma, etc.) have enabled him or her to acquire.
- Highlight how the activities carried out in the workplace (salaried or non-salaried) demonstrate the use of knowledge and skills. Show how they express competencies.
- Show that the activities carried out as part of a personal activity (social, individual, travel, reading, writing, artistic or other achievements) have provided an opportunity for self-directed learning.
- Remember to include a glossary of terms used

Collecting and selecting evidence:

- Administrative evidence: photocopies of diplomas, programmes and contents of the courses taken, etc.
- Evidence in support of the presentation and analysis of experience: it is not a matter of gathering all the documents that justify the experience described by the applicant, but of attaching only those that reveal the competencies most representative of the qualification sought (activity reports, projects, articles, press reviews, organisation charts, meeting minutes, mission letters, diagrams of a manufacturing process, artworks, sculptures, films, etc.).

A trap to avoid: too much evidence confuses the whole validation file.

Careful and critical rereading to improve the applicant's successive attempts:

- In-depth recommendations based on the selection panel's reading grid
- A diagnosis of any shortcomings and advice on how to remedy them
- Assistance in the written expression of competencies: method of structuring the writing, verification of the logic between facts and ideas, etc.
- Suggestions for syntactic corrections, style, vocabulary, etc.
- Suggestions for documenting, illustrating, making the file more attractive, etc.

A piece of advice to give the applicant: have the file proofread by a third party!

Preparing for observation of performance in a professional situation

Some key points to explain to the applicant:

- Performance in a professional situation should not be perceived as a classic examination situation. It is a work situation (real or reconstructed) in which the applicant should feel free to ask additional questions, move around, etc.
- It is not a mere formality: even if the applicant is at ease in his or her work, even if he or she is a recognised professional in his or her company, he or she must prepare this test seriously.
- As an assessment method, it is accessible, feasible and realistic. Reassure applicants by reminding them that they meet the requirements for VAE and that they have the necessary competencies to obtain all or part of the qualification.
- Simulations of professional situations make it possible to assess different registers of competencies at the same time. Autonomy and initiative can be more easily perceived in this context.

Preparing for the interview with the selection panel

Methodological advice to be given to the applicant

Before the interview:

- Carefully reread and immerse yourself in the qualification reference system and the validation file
- Note the points of the file which seem the weakest and prepare their development, with details and additional evidence
- Widen the reflection on the profession, its conditions of practice, the professional sector
- Practise the oral presentation and argumentation of the elements of the file, if possible, in front of an audience (family, friends, professionals)

During the interview

- Do not hesitate to ask for questions to be clarified or reworded if necessary
- Be rigorous and attentive to the selection panel's questions to make sure that your answer is not beside the point
- Remain honest in the answers given
- Use a precise professional vocabulary to be more confident and to give relevance to what you are saying
- Be concise and efficient: avoid unnecessary detail
- Respect the time limit indicated: an interview lasts on average 45 minutes (this varies according to the qualification)

At the end of the interview

the applicant may be granted all of the qualification, part of it, or receive a refusal.

In the case of partial validation, the applicant receives recommendations for continuing his or her studies if he or she so wishes (by following additional training, acquiring additional professional experience or by carrying out work requested by the selection panel, such as producing an additional dossier)

Specificities of the post-selection-panel guidance and support

In the case of partial validation, the applicant may request additional guidance and support.

3.2. Italy

The validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning in Italian legislation is basically defined primarily through the Law no. 92/2012 on the reform of the labor market, which provides an official definition of lifelong learning: "the term lifelong learning refers to all learning activities formally, non-formally and informally undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences in a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective".

Furthermore, the same law foresees the establishment of a national public system for the certification of competences based on minimum service standards and uniform throughout the country.

'Certifiable competences' are a structured combination of knowledge and skills recognisable also as formative credits through a special procedure for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The certification of competences is defined as a public deed that ensures learning transparency and acknowledgment, consistently with the objectives set by the European Union. A certification, diploma or qualification formally attests that assessment and validation have been carried out by a public institution or an authorised subject.

The decree no. 13/2013 – issued in application of law no. 92 - provides the general rules of the national system for competences certification. The decree makes the new National system for competences certification operational; it aims at increasing the professional competences acquired at work, as well as those acquired in leisure time in order to promote mobility, to foster the meeting together of demand and supply in the labour market, to increase learning transparency and the relevance of certifications at national and European level.

Subsequent decrees (in 2015 and 2018) have defined the National framework of the regional qualifications and the National framework of qualifications (Quadro nazionaledelle qualificazioni – QNQ).

An innovative aspect of the new adult education system, that contributes to promote the national lifelong learning policies, is the promotion of the cultural heritage and the professional experience of the individual. The introduction of the Individual formative agreement allows for the acknowledgement of the adult's knowledge, formal, informal and non-formal competences.

The agreement is signed by the adult, the specific relevant board and the head of CPIA and – for learners of the second level pathways – also by the school head of the upper secondary school. The Individual formative agreement formalizes the personalized study pathway related to the

teaching term of the path chosen by the adult at the time of enrolment. The Certificate for the recognition of credits is annexed to the Agreement for the personalization of the pathway.

All information for citizen on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is available on the website of CEFEDOP - European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, a European Union agency.

Laws and regulation at national/regional level about the RVCC Process

Laws and regulation in Italy

At national level, a framework is defined within which the Regions operate respecting the logic of LEP (essential levels of performance) even if each one adopts different procedures and practices.

The Interministerial-Decree, 30-June-2015 establishes an operational framework for the recognition at national level of regional qualifications and related competences, through the National Directory of education and training qualifications and professional qualifications (referred to in Article 8 of Legislative Decree 16 January 2013, n. 13). This decree is an intermediate level between the state and the regions that use certification systems (such as IVC).

The Decree establishes the national framework of the Regional qualifications which are valid throughout the national territory (obviously for the equivalent professions between the Regions and therefore recognized at national level). Also the Regions have set themselves a standard of certification process that they are all committed to respecting and have found an agreement on how to Certify Validate and Recognize skills in the same way.

At national level, the tools and the regulatory part of the whole system is being defined, one of the last things done is a Guideline, approved in December 2019, but already foreseen by Decree 1313, in which the Technical Committee had to issue the same direction for the whole Italian offer system (MIUR, Regions, etc.).

National legislative references

- Ministerial Order no. 455 of 1997 (establishment of permanent territorial centers)

- Law 27 December 2006, no. 296 (Financial law 2007);

- Ministerial decree 25 October 2007 (re-organisation of permanent territorial centres);

- Law 28 June 2012, no. 92 (Reform of the labour market);

- Presidential decree 29 October 2012, no. 263 (re-organisation of centres for adult education)

- Legislative decree no. 13 of 2013 (validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification of competences);

- Inter-ministerial decree 12 March 2015 (Guidelines for the application of the new adult education system).

- Inter-ministerial decree 30 June 2015 (operational dispositions on the recognition of regional qualifications)

- Inter-ministerial decree 8 January 2018 (Establishment of the National framework of qualification

Validation and certification of informal and non-formal competences in the various regions of Italy

The situation in Italy is very diversified between the various regions. Some Regions, already before 2013, used experimentally the services of certification of competences (Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, something in Tuscany and Piedmont).
In fact, the central-northern regions are more active, as well as Liguria, Veneto, Piedmont, Friuli Venezia Giulia is an excellence.
Other Regions, on the other hand, are preparing to activate the system.

Lazio created the legislation, trained and certified the reference staff and created the list of validators, in addition to sharing everything with employment centers in the last 2 years and it is now in the initial activation phase of the services, although still experimental.
Puglia and Basilicata are also moving in this direction, together with Campania, but are still lagging behind; in Sardinia they have been working on this for years, a good job has been done. Umbria is behind instead. As for the public certification of specific professions: only what is already in the national repertoire can be certified.

All the repertoires that fall within the framework of regional certifications are included in the "Atlante Lavoro" system managed by INAPP. The "Atlante Lavoro" (Atlas of Work) and Qualifications is a detailed map of work and qualifications.
Not all professions included in the regional repertoires are also included in the national framework and therefore have national value (currently 65% of the types of professions are included in both, but 35% are not; due to equivalence groups divided by area of activity).

Lazio Region

The Lazio Region has started the construction of an operational space for lifelong learning that allows the person to fully exploit their wealth of experiences and skills acquired in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.
With resolution of the Regional Council of 22 March 2016, n. 122 the first operational guidelines have been defined for the
establishment of the Regional Certification System of competences in implementation of Legislative Decree 16 January 2013, n. 13 and of the Ministry of Labor Decree of 30 June 2015.
The system is divided into the Identification and Validation Services and the Competence Certification Service (SRIVC) through which the following objectives are pursued:
- favor the process of "recognition" of individual competences by the socio- economic and institutional systems present in the regional territory;
- facilitate the construction of professional development paths that people, individually or with the support of these services, can define starting from the skills they possess;
- facilitate the transferability and usability of the skills possessed.

In its role as the "owner" of the system, the Region has approved the criteria and minimum requirements for the accreditation of the subjects entitled to provide the Identification and Validation Services and the Certification Service of competences with Resolution of the Regional Council of the December 14, 2018, n. 816.

The application for accreditation for the provision of the Identification and Validation Services and / or the Certification Service of competences can be submitted exclusively electronically by April 30 and October 30 of each year.
For the accreditation procedure, the Region provides technical assistance to the operators concerned.
For these services, the subjects make use of a list of authorized operators.

In support of all operators and actors of the system, the Region has also created the Resource Center for the recognition of training credits and the certification of competences named "CLARICE".

Abruzzo Region

The VALE project supports the Abruzzo Region in the transposition of the provisions of Legislative Decree 13/13 and in the achievement of the performance levels and system standards referred to in the Ministerial Decree of 30 June 2015, starting from the compliance of the professional profiles directory to the National Framework of Regional Qualifications.

It makes available to operators of the training and work system a set of paths and opportunities aimed at acquiring the enabling skills provided for the provision of learning enhancement services, also through their direct experimentation on different types of recipient's finals, including people with disabilities;It favors the construction of the system through participation, social dialogue and the development of networks, on the regional territory and towards the most significant Italian and European experiences.

The System that certifies the competences with Value and Legality is a project of the Abruzzo Region aimed at the implementation, in the Abruzzo region, of methods, tools and resources aimed at establishing the regional system for the enhancement of formal, non- formal learning and informal, in terms of recognition of training credits, identification, validation and certification of skills.

Calabria Region

In line with the provisions of the "National Directory of Education and Training Qualifications and Professional Qualifications" (pursuant to art. 4, paragraph 67 of Law 92/2012 and subsequent amendments and integrations and art. 8 of Legislative Decree no. 13 / 2013), the Calabria Region established with its own DGR n. 335 of 2015 the Regional

Directory of Qualifications and Competences which constitutes the primary reference point for the identification, recognition and certification of competences as well as for the planning and implementation of interventions and services of education and professional training aimed at the matching between the demand and the job offer. In order to formalize the professional standards and make them the shared reference at regional level, the competent Sector articulates the Directory for Professional Figures, Activity Areas and Competence Units organized into Sectors of macro-aggregations of economic activities, in addition to a further Sector which includes the transversal professional figures of the production sector.

The "Regional Repertoire of Qualifications and Competences" concerns the overall definition of regional governance on professional, recognition and validation training standards and is divided into:

- professional standards: minimum characteristics that describe the professional content of the main professional figures representing the economic sectors of the regional territory, described in Areas of Activity (ADA) and related Competence Units which include knowledge / skills- abilities;
- standards relating to the processes of recognition and certification of skills: minimum reference characteristics for the activation of the processes of recognition, evaluation and certification of skills acquired in any case according to the procedures for the issue of the electronic worker file;
- training standard: minimum characteristics of formal training courses, aimed at the acquisition of Competence Units; specific training standards are identified for each training chain.
- The contents of Repertoire, as a collection of descriptions relating to the world of work, are

subject to continuous maintenance and updating in order to guarantee and adapt the correspondence of the working reality with the production context at national and regional level.

Umbria Region

The Umbria Region has chosen to establish the regional system of validation of learning through a progressive and integrated approach. This meant:

- immediately defining "transparency" as a preliminary common phase both in the recognition of credits and in
- the certification of skills. This is both for method reasons (uniqueness of the individual and his / her learning), and to facilitate the establishment of procedural economies (administrative simplification, reduction of forms, standardization of the specific skills of professional resources authorized to exercise transparency) ;
- first of all, start the credit recognition device, in order to mature and consolidate a widespread system experience on the representation and validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- proceed at the same time with the initiation of some certification procedures, referring to specific professional areas and as such specifically regulated by the related founding acts.

The procedures essentially refer to regulated professional areas, both at a national level as for the hairdresser and at a regional level as in the case of the didactic farm operator. The validation system for non-formal and informal learning is formalized through the Regional Council Resolution No. 51 of 18/01/2010 "Approval of the Directive on the regional system of professional, training, certification and certification standards". In fact, the document establishes that among the principles of certification of learning there are also simple certificates of non-formal and informal learning, subject to release on the basis of the provisions of the relative institutional procedures, where present. The simple certification of non-formal and informal learning guarantees the participation in a non- formal learning, whether or not concluded by an evaluation act of a private nature, as carried out outside a public proceeding. This includes, but is not limited to, work experience, work experience, carrying out projects in the context of the use of research grants and voluntary activities, while the certifications falling within the scope of formal employment relationships are not considered. In order to clarify and encourage a comprehensive interpretation of regional rules and strategies by system operators, in May 2013 the Region released the volume entitled "Giving value to experience" which contains operational indications and insights for the application of the certification procedures.

The Region of Umbria, with DGR July 25, 2016, n.834 - "Unitary regulatory framework concerning the integrated system of certification of skills and recognition of training credits in implementation of the Ministerial Decree June 30, 2015 - Adoption "has complied with the provisions of the first of the three points mentioned above, (The Interministerial Decree of 30/06/2015 establishes the national system of certification of skills, which merges the entirety of the release of the" qualifications "(Understood both as what in the language of use is called" professional qualification ", and the new certification institute of the individual units of competence). Defining the architecture and method principles of the system, called CERTUM, with reference, among other things, to:

- the subjects entitled and professional requirements for the exercise of the functions to supervise the provision of the services for identifying and validating and certifying the skills (Art. 10);
- the composition of the certification commissions (Art° 11);
- the development of system resources (Art. 17);
- the minimum professional requirements for the performance of the functions in charge of

providing the identification services and validation and certification of skills.

Subsequently with DGR of 16 April 2018, n. 366, the Regional Agency for Active Labor Policies - ARPAL has been identified, in application of the provisions of articles 26 and 28 of the relative founding law, as actuator subject implementing the functions mentioned above.

The "Integrated Labor Policies" Service of the regional agency which has the function of programming and managing the identification, transparency, validation and certification of skills device pursuant to Legislative Decree n. 13/13, for the system (titration, authorization) and process (service delivery) aspects, is preparing all the administrative documents necessary for the system to be fully operational.

Emilia Romagna Region

The Region Emilia Romagna has been working for many years on the issues of transparency, certification and qualification standards within a governance system that involves the social partners and theprovinces throughout the decision-making and "maintenance" process. In fact, the "Directive regarding the structural, methodological and procedural setting of the qualifying examination tests, the composition of the examining Commissions and the issue

of certificates" dates back to 1992 (Del. G.R. No. 2918 of 23 June 1992). On that basisand on subsequent evolutions, the system was extended to learning "however acquired" (Del. GR n. 530/06), with reference to a Directory of qualification standards (the "Regional Qualification System" - SRQ) and training standards. It is therefore a "unitary" system in that it applies without distinction with respect to the contexts of learning skills. The implementation status of the "Regional Formalization and Certification of Competences Service" is complete: the plant is defined, as are the regulatory, technical and operational devices. After a phase of controlled experimentation, the service is fully operational within the accredited institutes. It is also voluntarily used by business reality and the request for access also comes from people residing in other regions interested in being able to spend the certification in their own context.

The Emilia Romagna Region has equipped itself with a system, called the Regional System of formalization and certification of skills (SRFC), which allows people to formalize and certify the skills acquired not only as a result of training courses, but also through experience working.

The SRFC, defined and adopted in its overall plant in April 2006, with resolution of GR no. 530/06 and integrated / modified with resolution of GR. 739/2013 is characterized by the following elements:

- the area of application: the area of work, the area of professional training, the area of education and professional training, the area of apprenticeship;
- the characteristics of the people to whom the service is addressed: people with experience gained in contexts of education and training, in work and professional contexts and in contexts of social and individual life; people who participate in training courses that will result in a formalization and certification certificate; people hired with an apprenticeship contract (in accordance with the provisions of the DGR 775/2012);
- the process, unique and unitary for all areas and described in stages: it allows an assessment through evidence, through an assessment interview and an assessment by examination;
- the object of certification: the skills "however acquired" by people, in relation to the professional standards present in the repertoire of the regional qualification system;
- subjects engaged in the implementation: the implementing subject of the system are defined in the GR resolution. 739/2013.

The process of formalization and certification of competences requires various stages: individual consultancy, assessment through evidence, assessment interview and assessment through

examination, administrative requirements for the release of formalization and certification documents.

Within these phases, specific professional roles are present:

- the manager of the formalization and certification of skills and the expert of the evaluation processes, roles within the training bodies authorized to provide the formalization and certification service. The first is the procedural and organizational reference for the delivery of the entire process, while the second is the technical- methodological reference

- the expert of professional / qualification, specialist from the world of work who is able to assess, according to specific methods, whether the skills possessed by people comply or not with the standards of the Regional Qualification System, to contribute to the planning of the exam (practical test and interview), to evaluate the performance of candidates admitted to take the exam.

The exam commissions that certify the skills related to the entire professional qualification - in reference to all the areas of application of the SRFC - are composed of the expert of evaluation processes and two professional / qualification area experts.

The assessment interviews, aimed at ascertaining the possession of individual skills of the qualification, are conducted by a commission composed of the expert of evaluation processes and an expert in the professional / qualification area.

Toscana Region

The system of the Tuscany Region considered the European challenge to be strategic for the creation of a lifelong learning system capable of supporting the individual in the transition towards a society and a knowledge economy, transforming and gradually integrating the regional training systems, orientation, education and work, in a logic of enhancement of the skills of individuals, wherever they are learned, and protection of the right to lifelong learning.

One after the other, the pieces of the system were created, starting from Regional Law 32 of 2002 which defined, within a single regulatory framework, the new integrated system, centered on the protection of the learning right of all citizens. The Tuscany Region has therefore innovated the system of employment services and the professional training system, rewriting the Directory of Professional Figures, on the basis of professional standards. The system construction process was shared with the other institutional actors and with the stakeholders of the productive and social world, while the main figures of the system were defined and trained, through updating and qualification paths for the operators, both in the field of formal certification system, both for the activation throughout the regional territory of services for the enhancement of non-formal learning, up to the current experimentation of the Training Booklet in all the Provinces.

In particular way, the Tuscany Region has positioned this service within the modern network of employment services, which already perform a strategic function throughout the territory to support employment policies, promoting advanced orientation, training consultancy and reconstruction interventions of skills. A relevant factor in this process was the parallel development of advanced information systems (IDOL, Trio-web learning, Repertoire of Professional Figures), capable of managing data and system processes in an integrated way, offering online services to citizens and companies. The Tuscany Region has also played an active role also at national and international level, promoting interregional dialogue on these issues and sharing models and tools with other Regions, also in Europe, with the creation of the EARLALL network (European association of regional and local authorities for Lifelong learning), for the development of a European lifelong learning system, starting from the sharing of regional experiences. EARLALL the largest European network of Regions on vocational training.The Tuscany Region is one of the founding regions of the Earlall network and today leads its Board together with other European

regions, including the Basque Country whichcurrently have the presidency.

Lombardia Region

The system of the Lombardy Region.

he Lombardy Region has developed, for some years, a shared strategy regarding the validation and certification processes of skills acquired in different contexts, including non-formal and informal ones. With the Decree 9380 of 22 October 2012 "Approval of the model and procedures for the certification system of skills acquired in the formal and informal sphere in the Lombardy region" the system is now
regulated. With the DGR n. 8/6563 of 13 February 2008 "Regional indications for the training offer in the field of vocational education and training", the overall framework and architecture of the certification system was defined, with respect to which Lombardy has started an experimental and implementation, concerning the less tested part of the non- formal system. The process of certification of skills in the non-formal and informal field can be activated exclusively by accredited Institutes for work services and is divided into five phases:

1. Submission of the application by a citizen to an accredited Institutes for work services;

2. Evaluation of the application and consistency with the competence to be certified;

3. Construction of the portfolio of evidence (the evidence that demonstrates the actual possession of the skills);

4. Evaluation of the documentation and verification, possibly also with specific tests, in the presence of an assessor appointed by the body (it is possible that the assessor may request any integration of the documentation);

5. Issuing of the certification.

The agencies accredited to work services must guarantee additional requirements withrespect to the accreditation standard, functional to the process and the certification activity:

- a receptionist, a tutor and a certification of skills that also have timely knowledge of the certification system of skills in non-formal and informal settings;
- a network of assessors with at least ten years' experience in the reference sector, who guarantee the assessment activity.

The necessary requirements are set out in the decree on accreditation DDUO 9749 of 31 October 2012. The model of certification of skills acquired in non-formal and informal contexts is applicable to the skills provided in the Regional Framework of Professional Standards (QRSP), with the exclusion of those concerning regulated and / or qualifying figures.
Employed accredited bodies that use the non-formal and informal skills certification service must qualify in GEFO in the area reserved for accreditation, select the areas for which they intend to perform the service, electronically send the self-certification form and upload the data of the individual users in the training offer 083.
The Lombardy Region has regulated a heterogeneous set of paths relating to professional figures, some of which are regulated by state laws and / or the State Regions Agreement (for example, Hairdresser, OSS), others defined on the basis of characteristic profiles operating in the Lombard world of work. (for example, ASA).
Each training path recognized by the Lombardy Region, which meets the minimum standards defined by state legislation, is valid for professional qualification purposes and allows access to the pursuit of professional activities, including through registration in registers.

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In relation to particular profiles characteristic, operating in the Lombard labor market, the Lombardy Region has defined a specific regulation for the organization of the courses, establishing admission requirements for the same, methods for ascertaining thecompetences in the outcome, composition of the exam commissions and professional standards for the issue of the final certificate of competence.

Organizations in charge for the RVCC process

In Italy, the national and regional institutions involved in the qualification system are:

- Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR);
- Regions;
- Ministry of Labor and Social Policies;
- Ministry of Economic Development – EU Policies Department.

The system designed by Decree 13/2013 is national and also comprehensive as it covers all the range of qualifications from education, HE, VET and even the ones with legal value. It includes the professional qualifications and the regulated qualifications.

The Regions play a central role in validation services as they are in charge of the VET and employment services. In 2014, they worked and agreed on a common framework on validation procedures and services within the 'National Framework of Regional Qualifications' and on 30 June 2015 this agreement became an Inter-Ministerial Decree signed by the Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Education.

The institutional authority in charge of the implementation of the system is a National Technical Committee led by the Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Education and composed of all the Qualification Authorities (Entitling Bodies).

The Decree 13/2013 defines the following two main roles in the national certification and validation system: public entitling body and entitled body.

"**Public entitling body**" includes:

- The Ministry of Education, University and Research, in the identification, validation and certification of competences related to the qualifications of the school system and university;
- Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, in the identification, validation and certification of competences related to qualifications issued under the respective responsibilities in the VET system;
- The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in the identification, validation and certification of competences related to qualifications of non-regulated and non- organized professions in chambers or formal associations;
- The Ministry of Economic Development - EU Policies Department (coordinating the other competent authorities) in the identification and validation and certification of competences related to qualifications for regulated professions;

"Entitled body" means an organization, whether public or private – including chambers of commerce, industry, trade and agriculture, schools, universities and institutions of higher education - that is approved or recognized by the public entitling authorities, according to national or regional law, and provides, in whole or in part, services of identification, validation and certification of competences.

Concerning the entitled bodies, specific accreditation systems for the validation services have been set up in all the Regions that formalized the procedures to implement the new validation framework. Almost all the Regions have entitled bodies that were already accredited for vocational

training or guidance or employment services giving them this new task.

Steps/phases before the RVCC Process

A citizen can reach qualification either through the training activity (qualification course contained in the repertoires of the training offer) or through the certification of skills. The latter must be established with a public notice (usually open notice with 2 annual deadlines)in which the minimum standards are defined, the individual must be able to process his/her dossier to get to the exam.

The individual must be able to access the identification and transparency service and the validation and assessment service for skills. Once the individual is admitted to the certification exam he will find a commission composed of 3 commissioners: 1 representative of the public body that issues the qualification, 1 expert in the professional sector, 1 expert qualified to validate skills - system expert.

The process takes place in this sequence:

- The individual recalls/tells his experience in terms of significant biographical events, such as identification, reconstruction and transparency of learning, also produces evidence (this is not an evaluation process);
- The individual gets to obtain a transparency document, to then get to validation, to a recognition of credits (for possible access to a training course) or to a validation document, to then get to the assessment of skills and to have a certified qualification. This is a process with an appreciative assessment.

From the oral narrative of the individual who describes his experiences it is necessary to identify where those "lands" on the Atlante del Lavoro (Atlas of work, see https://atlantelavoro.inapp.org/), established by Legislative Decree 30/06/2015, which represents work for processes and activities.

The identification of the competence does not take place on the Regional Repertoire, buton the National one, that is, on the Atlas. In the Atlas are set up professional qualifications, educational qualifications and regulated qualifications.

Once the ADA (Area of Activity) has been identified, we look for something correspondingin the Regional Directory, to make the competence transparent.

The Atlas is composed of 3 parts:

1. Atlas and work: does not contain qualifications but only ADA and activities;

2. Atlas and professions;

3. Atlas and qualifications: this part is used which collects the frame of qualifications from school, IEFP, higher education, that is the national framework of regional qualifications and from which the correlation with the EQF level can be established.

The process starts finding a professional profile to which the person's "competence" is based.

In order to have the recognized competence, the individual must cover the minimum standard of performance.

Regional qualifications consist of a single competence or aggregates of competences and can be achieved through the certification of competences acquired in a formal learning context or through a certification procedure following a process of identification and validation of acquired competences.

Regional qualifications belong to the national framework through association with at least one of the areas of activity. The skills related to qualifications associated with the national framework are subject to certification. The skills of qualifications or related to the national framework or even not related to the national framework are subject to identification and validation, provided that they are contained in approved and published repertoires and meet the requirements defined by Decree

30/06/2015.

Figures and roles of the professionals in charge of the RVCC Process

The Italian regional administrations have the competence to identify the Organizations eligible for supply the identifying and validating and certifying skills.

The Legislative Decree 16 January 2013, n.13 defines that such **Entitled Organizations** can be a "public or private entity, including the chambers of commerce, industry, crafts and agriculture, authorized or accredited by the owner public body, or in accordance with state or regional law, including educational institutions, universities and institutions of advanced artistic, musical and choreutic training, to provide all or part of the services for identifying and validating and certifying skills, in relation to areas of ownership [of the owner body] ". These organizations are entitled by "a public accreditation procedure through which a titular body (the regional administrations) attributes to an organized subject, in the presence of certain requirements, the role of titled body for the performance of the services of identification and validation of the competences and certification of skills, defining the nature and extent of the field and the conditions for their performance".

Furthermore, The Decree on the National Framework of Regional Qualifications of 2015 defines the three functions in charge of the different steps of the validation process:

1. **Dossier counsellor** - Function of Accompanying and supporting the identificationand transparency of competences.

2. **Assessment responsibility** – Function of planning and implementation ofassessment activities.

3. **Assessment sector expert** – Function of implementation of assessment activities concerning curricular and professional content.

Dossier counsellor

In line with the standards process, this function is intended to oversee the identification phase of the recognition and validation procedures and of the certification of competences.

The function supervises the application of appropriate methods in order to:
- document prior learning experiences;
- pre-code the identified competences in line with the qualifications targeted for the validation;
- support the elaboration of the "Dossier/Document of transparency";
- recommend the service interruption in the case where the minimum conditions for success in the validation or certification of competences are not fulfilled;
- provide any information of use for the next steps, including possible recommendations for the assessment phase.

The following key activities have been identified:
- support with the application to access the service of identification, validation and/or certification of competences;
- preparation of the service agreement and / or the necessary documentation to start the process;
- management of information on the procedure in the information systems or documents required;
- planning of forthcoming meetings necessary for carrying out the work of identifying the competences required for the validation of the targeted qualification;

- conducting individual and group interviews aimed at documenting the prior learning experiences and making the competences acquired through formal, non-formal and/or informal learning transparent;
- identification and formalization of competences identified with reference to the qualifications and to the relevant repertories;
- support the composition of the Dossier of evidences through the application of the acceptability and relevance criteria;
- final drafting of the "Document of transparency" referring the user to the next stages of the procedure or other services.

Assessment responsibility

In line with the standards process, this function is intended to oversee and guarantee, as a responsibility, the evaluation stage of the process of identification, validation and the certification of competences.

The function is related to the assessment that provides, at least, the technical examination 'Dossier/Document of transparency'. Each Region and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, as part of their regulations, may also include a possible direct assessment of the candidate through audition, technical interview or performance test, in any case, through an evaluative standard set by default. The opportunity and the depth of the possible assessment must be balanced by the amount and quality of the evidence presented in the Dossier through the application of the criteria of value and relevance of such evidence.

The following key activities have been identified:

- verification and evaluation of the documentation relating to the users entering the assessment process, including the documentary evidence produced in the 'Dossier/Document of transparency';
- planning the competences assessment process, taking into account the characteristics of each validation user, the context of exercise and the reference standards;
- planning the assessment procedure following the criteria of collegiality, objectivity, impartiality and independence required in accordance with regional regulations as well as equity of the conditions and privacy of validation users;
- definition, where necessary, of the indicators observed and of the minimum standards of performance based on the professional reference standards;
- detailed planning of the testing procedures and definition of the relevant assessment criteria;
- implementation of procedures and tests in accordance with the project planning and with the reference rules of the system of validation and certification;
- monitor the entire process through reports and information systems or documents arranged.

Assessment sector expert

The function is mandatory in the case of direct assessment (in presence of the candidate). If the procedure requires only the dossier, technical examination is optional. To meet this objective, the following key activities have been identified:

- assessment of the technical quality of the incoming documentation including the documentary evidence produced;
- analysis of the activities and expected performance with reference to the qualifications' professional standards and to the relevant repertories;
- preparing and carrying out of technical interviews;
- fulfilment of situational tests by preparing appropriate settings with regards to the required professional standards;

- formulation of technical assessments required by the procedure in accordance with the provided documentation;
- participation in the assessment process in accordance with regional regulations while respecting the principles of collegiality, objectivity, impartiality and independence.

The condition to access the role is that the expert should have at least five years of experience relevant to the contents of the assessment and exercised in the last ten years, continuously or not continuously.

In each Region, the three functions can be named and upgraded in different ways, but the fundamental activities and roles within the process should remain the same, as described above

The RVCC Process

The National System of Competence Certification is defined by Legislative Decree 16/01/2013, n.13 as "The set of services for identifying and validating and certifying the skills provided in compliance with general rules, essential levels of performance and of the minimum standards referred to in the applicable standards ".

The same Decree defines Competence as "Proven ability to use, in work, study or professional and personal development situations, a structured set of knowledge and skills acquired in formal, non-formal or informal learning contexts". At the same time the Decree also defines the process of Certification of competences, as a "Formal recognition procedure, by the titled body [...], based on general rules, essential levels of performance and minimum standards [applicable] the skills acquired by the person in formal contexts, even in case of interruption of the training course, or those validated acquired in non-formal and informal contexts. The certification of competences procedure ends with the issue of a certificate conforming to the minimum [applicable] standards".

As regards the process of recognition and certification of non-formal and informal competences, it basically consists of 3 phases:

1. Identification and transparency of skills;
2. Validation (which can also be done for credit recognition purposes to access a training course, or for certification purposes);
3. Attestation and issuing of Certification.

There is also the possibility of issuing a certificate at the end of each phase: a transparency document in the identification phase and a validation document at the end of the validation phase. These tools are aimed at giving citizens the possibility of having a certificate of public value, which can be used for job purpose, for training course application or for the continuation of the certification phase at a later time.

A comprehensive framework of processes and procedures of validation and certification in formal, non-formal and informal learning is defined in DI of 30 June 2015.

Access Conditions/requirements

Access to the RVSS process involves an initial phase of information and reception of the applicant, aimed at verifying the requirements for access to the service and identifying the actual needs of the service, in order to arrive at the reception of the request for access to the service and the definition of a "service agreement" or the refusal of the request and orientation towards another service.

Identification - Competences identified and put into transparency

After the phase of access to the service by the applicant, we move on to the following phases: the identification phase consists in reconstructing the candidate's experiences and "codifying competences" with reference to the qualifications examined for validation; together build a

transparency document and collect the evidence to support the acquisition of skills; inform the applicant of the next steps. This phase requires multiple individual interviews and is carried out by staff assigned to the function of accompanying and supporting the identification and transparency of skills.

This phase consists in retrace the experiences and identify those qualifications and competences potentially to validate or certify, elaborating a Dossier. Admission to the procedure for certification of competences takes place:

- through the 'Document for validation' or validated Dossier, for competences coming from non-formal and informal learning
- through formalize the achievement of learning outcome, for competences acquired in formal context

The functionary in charge is the Dossier Counsellor.

Assessment - Competences (or skills and knowledge) validated

The validation phase involves the examination of the transparency document and takes into account the criteria of value and relevance of the evidence reported by the candidate, with respect to the contents of the qualifications taken as reference. In addition to the staff assigned to the function of planning and carrying out the evaluation activities, the participation of teachers who are experts in content is also expected at this stage.
It consists in the technical examination of the Dossier and optional direct assessment, in order to confirm the actual possession of the competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.
Procedure can provide audition or technical structured interview and/or performance tests, held by a Commission that ensures compliance with the principles of impartiality, independence and objectivity of the process.

Certification - Competences of the National Repertory certified

The process ends with the release of a validation document issued by the body authorized for the service. At this point, the candidate has direct access to the qualification exam, carried out by direct assessment, technical interview or situation test.In summary, the process involves the following actions:

- Analysis of the path subject to validation;
- Preliminary examination of the transparency document with reference to the CV;
- Evaluation of experiences and related evidence, based on the characteristics of the UCs subject to validation;
- Audit of the applicant;
- Possible technical interview or performance test;
- Release of the validation document.

Tools

Validation Libretto Competences (Il libretto formativo del Cittadino)

This is a personal document in which the formal competences acquired during the placement contract training, specialist training and continuing training, as well as non- formal and informal skills are recorded. The tool collects and documents information, data and certificates regarding experiences gained in various areas - educational / training, work, social, recreational, family - in order to improve the readability and usability of skills and the employability of people.

In Italy (up to 2017) it was a service active only in four regions: Tuscany, Puglia, Lazio and Marche. The introduction of the booklet, the Italian equivalent of Europass, dates back to the ministerial decree of 2005, and was integrated into the electronic file of the worker (articles 14 and 15 of the legislative decree n.150 / 2015), which collects the same information, integrated from the possible use of public funds and contributory payments. For both, the opening takes place at the voluntary request of the citizen, except in specific cases, such as that of the National Civil Service under the Youth Guarantee, which has provided for it to be filled in for all volunteers.

A model of this tool is set out in **Annex 1**.

Transparency Document (*Documento di trasparenza*)

This document is an extension of the CV, focused on the ability of the applicant to express his/her learning in a relevant way and to give a justified representation. It has its value in the frame of the RVCC process and it provides accessible and less ambiguous information giving the opportunity to attribute to them the most appropriate value. The tool is filled in by the applicant with the support of the validation practitioner and analyses each experience of formal, non-formal and informal learning through a "transparent" description reporting the knowledge and skills acquired, the autonomy degree achieved, the achieved results. The document offers the opportunity to summarize and give an order to the past experience of the applicant and to reflect on his/her next programs.

The Annex 2 set out an example of Transparency document format adopted by Umbria Region

Conclusions

In the survey carried out by INAPP in 2015 some primary data on impact and benefits of validation to individuals has been collected.

Out of the 511 interviews carried out, the survey involved all actors of the Process, such as managers of the validation practice, operators/practitioners involved in the operational management of validation tools and 355 beneficiaries of validation.

Asked about what is the effectiveness of validation practice for beneficiaries, the majority of **managers** (42.3%) claimed that validation processes may have an impact on employment chances. Others claimed that validation is effective for the vocational or professional orientation and in terms of related / subsequent decisions (25.0%) and a fraction of the interviewed managers considered that validation may have an impact on individual well-being (3.8%).

Asked about whether the management of the process of validation of non-formal and informal learning had brought a return of investment for their own organization, the majority of **managers** surveyed (84.6%) responded positively. The benefits identified were related to the consolidation of the validation service within their traditional systems and the creation of partnerships at national, regional and European level.

The **practitioners** surveyed were mostly trainers, coordinators of training and operators of the employment services. All operators agreed that, to perform the validation activities, specific skills are required. In particular, those skills are mainly related to understanding the regulatory framework (55.2%); guidance and assessment (14.3%); training design (7.6%); interviewing techniques (5.7%).

The majority of validation practitioners (76.2%) were able to take advantage of the specific training on the validation processes and reference tools as well as on the techniques for the identification and validation, on counseling and assessment. In terms of impact and return of investment, 60.8% of **beneficiaries** interviewed claimed to have benefitted from the validation process. In particular, the respondents claimed to have used the certificate to boost their CV and for use at job interviews.

Most of the surveyed **beneficiaries** (48.2%) evaluated the relationship with the operators of the validation service as excellent while only 2.8% defined it as critical or very critical.

Most of the beneficiaries interviewed (40.8%) believed that the validation service is easily accessible, simple enough (36.9%) and beneficial (35.8%) and very pleasant (49.6%).

Finally, when asked if the validation process has influenced their current employment status, 63.1% of beneficiaries responded affirmatively emphasizing that through the validation procedure they had been able to find a new job or to improve their search for a job and to better manage job interviews.

According to same surveys the main **target groups** of validation of non- formal and informal learning over the last five years have been:

- Unemployed people or workers at risk of unemployment;
- Workers in sectors which are poorly regulated and with the need for professional accreditation;
- Immigrant workers without formal qualifications that by now take up a permanent base in whole segments of the labor market (i.e. in the sectors of logistics, building, health and social assistance care);
- Highly qualified young Italians who move abroad for work or study;
- Volunteers, interns, apprentices.

3.3. Portugal
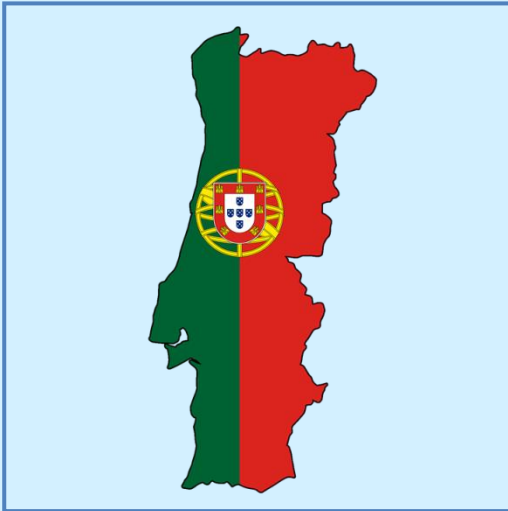
Laws and regulation at national/regional level about the RVCC Process

The process of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies, in Portugal, is regulated by Ordinance No 86/2007 of January 12th.

This law can be consulted at https://dre.pt/application/conteudo/262373.

Organizations in charge for the RVCC process

ANQEP – The National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education has the mission of coordinating the implementation of education and vocational training policies for young people and adults, ensuring the development and management of the recognition, validation and certification of competences system.


The entities responsible for developing the RVCC Processes are the Qualifying Centers.

Qualifying Centers - Structures of the National Qualifications System andthey assume a key role in bridging the worlds of education, training and employment with a lifelong learning perspective. Where the adult population can complete an education at 4th, 6th, 9th and 12th grade level, recognizing their life experiences, through the RVCC Process. Similarly, it is also possible to recognize professional experience, in a given area/profession, and award a level 2 or level 4 professional qualification.

The Qualifying Centers were created under *Ordinance nº232/2016 of August 29th*, constituting a strong and indispensable bet on the valorization of citizens, destining their activity to adults aged18 years or more and, exceptionally, to young people who are not attending education and training modalities and who are not inserted in the labor market, helping them to define a life project.

Steps/phases before the RVCC Process
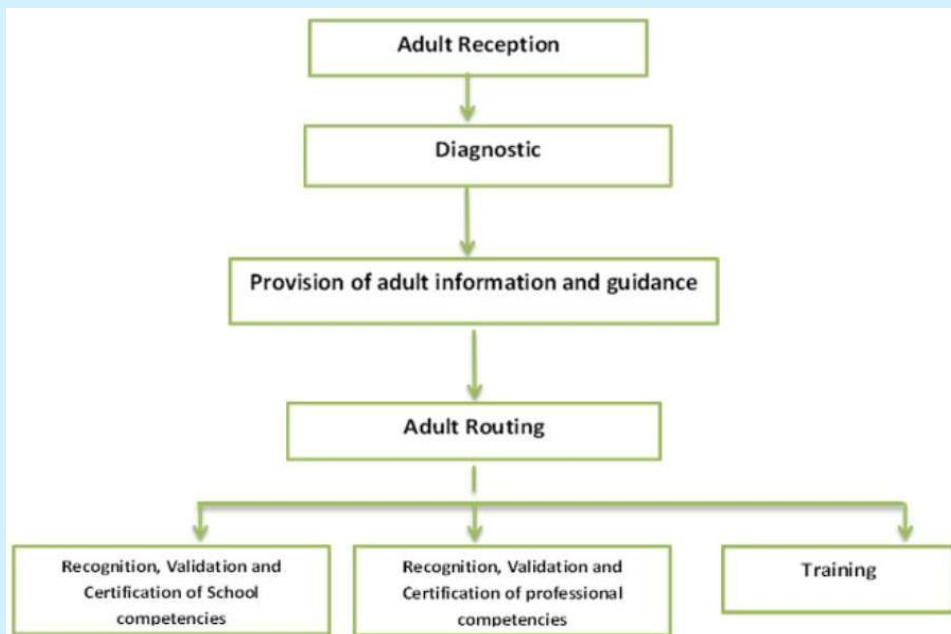
1. **Diagnostic Phase -** the technician supports and guides the adult through the following steps:

a) **Adult reception and enrolment:** During this phase the adult formalizes his/her registration, in addition to being informed about the organization's mission and its role in the field of Adult Education.

b) **Diagnosis:** This phase implies carrying out an analysis of the adult's individual profile and the elaboration of the Vocational Development Portfolio**.** Throughout this phase the Technician collect several information related to the adult profile, such as:

- Expectations;
- Interests;
- School career;
- Formative course;
- Professional experience;
- Skills acquired through formal, non-formal, informal;
- Other occupations/interests;
- Life context in general;
- Assessment of accessibility;
- Availability for learning

c) **Provision of adult information and guidance:** During this phase is intended that the candidate uses the appropriate strategies to locate, collect and select information, implying the permanent search and management of information relevant to his/her life project.

The objectives of this phase are: Manage information, manage change, decide and access qualifying pathways and prepare to (re)entering the employment market.

- **Manage information:** Promote active information research by providing a set of updated, organized and synthesized information. Disseminate with the candidate an updated, organized and synthesized set of information.
- **Manage change:** Analyze and evaluate the different educational and training paths, taking into account the consequences of the Decision.
- **Decide:** Support in the preparation of the ICP (individual career project), with the following questions**:**
  - a) Definition of the career project.
  - b) Justification of project choice;
  - c) Ways of implementing the project;
  - d) Identification of constraints and strategies to overcome them;
  - e) Elaboration of a schedule for the completion of the project.

d) **Adult Referral:** Based on the work developed during the orientation process, a referral can either be the process of recognition, validation and certification of competences, or short or long-term education and training courses.

The Technician provides the adult with guidance and support for him/her to achieve the objectives originally defined considering the stage the adult is at. The number of sessions, goals and levels of achievement to be established, as well as, the approach or type of activities to be carried out with each adult is always adjusted in accordance to their profile.

Figures and roles of the professionals in charge of the RVCC Process

In Portugal, the professionals directly involved and that monitor the adults are the Technicians of Orientation, Recognition and Validation of Competences (TORVC), present from the enrolment phase to the end of the process, and the Trainers of the Key-competence areas either through the RVCC processes or Education or through Adult Vocational Training courses.

The RVCC Process

The Competences Recognition, Validation and Certification processes, developed at Qualifying Centers, consist of the identification and recognition and certification of acquired lifelong skills, resulting from individual life experiences (family, occupation and non-certified training) and, consequently, the increase in school qualifications. The RVCC process aims to improve and increase the educational qualifications of adults who do not have primary or secondary level of education. The certification obtained through this system is the same as that awarded through other means and allows the individual to further his/her education.

These processes include various stages: the recognition and validation stage; the evaluation and certification stage, certified by a jury. During RVCC processes, adults must also attend a complementary training component, minimum 50 hours, and are entitled to a maximum of 25 hours to prepare for the certification stage.

Educational RVCC processes are based on the Key-competence references of Adult Education and Training for primary and secondary levels.

Throughout the Process, during the sessions supervised by the team of professionals, several questions are asked, and these are considered the starting point for the elaboration of the autobiography and in turn the creation of the Reflective Learning Portfolio (RLP) such as:

I.   Why did I enroll in the Qualifying Center?

II.   What are my motives and expectations?

III.   What do I hope to gain from the RVCC Process?

In reference to the team of professionals, these provide answers to the following:
I.   What are skills?

II.   What is meant by Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences?

Through the exploration and clarification of these concepts, adults are able to distinguish between competence and experience and knowledge and learning.

An adult can either partially certify the educational RVCC process or totally certify the process and receive equivalency to the 1st, 2nd or 3rd cycles of primary education or secondary education.

If the adult only obtains partial certification, within the scope of the educational RVCC process, this indicates that the adult needs training and the Qualifying Centre must provide the adult with a training referral - Education and Training Centre.

Access Conditions/requirements

The RVCC process is aimed at young adults and adults who interrupted their training paths (dropouts) but want to increase their qualifications. It is intended for individuals aged 18, or over, who have at least 3 years work experience proven through official documents, in the case of Primary Education. For those who want to certify at the Secondary level, must be at least 23 years old, with at least 3 years work experience, proven through official documents.

Tools and procedures

Throughout the Enrolment, Diagnosis, Information and Guidance and Referral stages, various instruments are used for collection and analysis of information; required for the elaboration of the vocational development portfolio.

Phase 1: Registration and Enrolment

A. Application Form – Annex 1

Phase 2: Registration and Enrolment

B. Exploration Cards – Annex 2

C. Elaboration of the Curriculum Vitae – Annex 3

Phase 3: Information and Guidance

Life Project - Annex 4

D. Individual Career Project – Annex 5

RVCC Process

How are the non-formal and informal competences evaluated

During the Recognition and Validation of Competences phase, the technician and trainers are the actors responsible for accessing and exploring the skills identified by the adults, in view of the RVCC referential(s) and the requirements for validation.

The technician has a more targeted approach towards the exploration and progress of the reflective learning portfolio while the trainers' roles focus on working the following with the adults:

a. Decoding and interpreting the RVCC referential(s);

b. Providing support and guidance in the exploration of non-formal and informal learning;

c. Assessing skills by means of the referenced training framework;

d. Identifying individual training needs;

e. Providing complementary internal training aimed at identifying and developing skills;

f. Conceiving and/or (re)formulating problem situations;

g. Assessing and validating competences that correspond to the RVCC referential(s).

Through the exploration and clarification of these concepts, adults are able to distinguishbetween competence and experience and knowledge and learning.

What is Skills Assessment?

Skills assessment is an instrument that supports management, has diagnostic functions and assesses directly related skills, mobilized or developed to achieve specific aims, namely, to obtain educational certification.

Skills assessment is an exercise considered:

- **Participatory** - in which the adult takes responsibility for the construction and/or monitoring of his/her own skills assessment;
- **Dynamic and evolutionary -** requires active participation focused on two moments, introspection and reflection, which implies self-discovery and self-assessment of acquired lifelong skills in the most diverse contexts (individual practices andexperiences, allowed, assumed and/or shared);
- **Multidisciplinary** - process with different stakeholders with different experiences, qualifications, opinions;
- **Comprehensive** - regardless of origin, all competences are considered;
- **Evaluative** - based on a diagnosis to determine observable results in the competences themselves.

In conclusion, skills assessment allows self-knowledge, the identification of strengths and weaknesses, as well as, reflection about personal paths. It is important for the adult to reflect on the path taken, training acquired, experiences, disappointments, reasons for success and failure, in addition to taking responsibility for one's life. Basically, what is intended with the skills assessment is to help the adult reflect on his/her personal, family and professional path, enabling and/or

awakening the investment to trace new or better paths (life project).

How skills assessment is implemented?

The implementation of skills assessment is necessary when the adult acquires self-knowledge, manages to identify his/her strengths and weaknesses, reflects on his/her personal and professional path, expresses his/her expectations and dreams and redesigns new paths.
Skills assessment is divided into 3 phases:

- **1st phase** - refers to the adult's self-reflection on the path taken, in reference to training, experiences, reasons for successes and failures, taking responsibility through decision-making, among other aspects.

- **2nd phase** – refers to the analysis that the adult makes about his/her ambitions, desires, expectations and prospects.

- **3rd phase** – refers to the adult's capacities, proving his/her capacity to reflect and intervene.

Skills assessment is a demanding and exhaustive process that should provide deep self- reflection of the adult's personal and professional paths. To make it valid, it is necessary to establish an analysis and evaluation grid based on qualitative and quantitative parameters. The validation and certification of competences consists of the analysis and correspondence between the competences demonstrated by the adult and the required evidence criteria for validation and certification.

Thus, the analysis and evaluation are carried out by the team of professionals, considering the level of competence demonstration, by using, a scale from 1 to 5, in which the adult demonstrates of the following:

> 1 - Did not address the competence;
>
> 2 - Addressed the competence but did not explore it and/or did not reflect and/or didnot issue an opinion;
>
> 3 - Addressed the competence by means of investigation and research;
>
> 4 - Addressed the competence by showing his/her knowledge: reflected/issued an opinion;
>
> 5 - Demonstrated the competence by indicating autonomy and the capacity for intervention and argumentation.

Reference of Key Competences for Adult Education and Training: Secondary Level

1) Key-competence Areas: Recognition, Validation and Certification

According to DGFV, *"the Key Competency Framework must be adjusted to the adult and his/her acquired capital, individual needs, motivations and expectations"* (2006) each adult is unique and accumulates a diversity of experiences. The framework should be understood as a tool that is tailored to each adult and their life contexts, valuing experiences and meaningful learning, allowing learning to be guided and organized inorder to facilitate the recognition, validation and certification process. It should be an instrument, which enables the adult to direct his/her training process, through the active participation in the identification or search for knowledge.

The Secondary Level Reference Framework is based on the organization of three Competence-

áreas:

I. **Citizenship and Professionalism (CP)** – Its key competences are attained in accordance to three dimensions: cognitive, ethical and social. In this area, the intent is to highlight, recognize and certify key competences linked to democratic citizenship through reflexive learning and/or appreciation of acquired knowledge.

II. **Society, Technology and Science (STS)** – This area works contents in various fields, which allow the adult to demonstrate competences associated to the complexity and changes that have taken place in society, with situations that imply the use of formal and specialized knowledge. It has a three-dimensional integrated view – society, technology and science – understood through methods of action that often require knowledge constructed separately in different scientific and technological fields, but which nevertheless become operational, in personal and professional life contexts and in the interconnected relationships with institutions, as a means of responding to problems, which are also transverse.

III. **Culture, Language, Communication (CLC)** - Focuses on key competences that can be demonstrated, recognized and certified in accordance to three distinct dimensions – cultural, linguistic and communicational – complementary and articulative in an integrated and contextualized way.

IV. **Citizenship and Professionalism (CP**) is considered a transverse and integrative area of key competences that can be deconstructed and validated based on a concrete grid of evidence criteria. The other two Areas have a much more instrumental and operative nature within the knowledge domains

V. **Society, Technology and Science (STS**) and **Culture, Language, Communication (CLC)** are considered instrumental and operative in nature, involving specific domains of competence and covering very different scientific and technical fields, but using equal structures and the same conceptual reference elements. It is also compulsory to show knowledge of a foreign language within certain reference domains of the CLC framework.

VI. **Society, Technology and Science (STS)** – This area works contents in various fields, which allow the adult to demonstrate competences associated to the complexity and changes that have taken place in society, with situations that imply the use of formal and specialized knowledge. It has a three-dimensional integrated view – society, technology and science – understood through methods of action that often require knowledge constructed separately in different scientific and technological fields, but which nevertheless become operational, in personal and professional life contexts and in the interconnected relationships with institutions, as a means of responding to problems, which are also transverse.

VII. **Culture, Language, Communication (CLC)** - Focuses on key competences that can be demonstrated, recognized and certified in accordance to three distinct dimensions – cultural, linguistic and communicational – complementary and articulative in an integrated and contextualized way.

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3.4. Spain, Andalucía

Laws and regulation at national/ regional level about the RVCC process

In Spain, the validation or recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal education or adult life experiences is the responsibility of the Autonomous Communities. In Andalusia it is regulated in the following way:

Educational plan for basic training

For primary and secondary education we have a Permanent Education plan. These are developed over the course of a school year and are almost exclusively taught in the classroom.

In Andalusian, adult population with literacy or comprehension and expression difficulties, can start their training with a Basic Education Plan[1] that will allow them to access compulsory high school for adults if they wish to receive the corresponding certification. It is organised in two levels of one course each; Level I[2] and Level II[3]. People interested in participating in this plan can, exceptionally, use up to a maximum of three years per level if they need it. Each level contains three fields of knowledge and each field has three modules, one per term. The three field are: communication, scientific-technological and social[4]. This Plan is regulated by the Order of 24 September 2007 regulating non-formal educational plans for adults[5] and the Order of 10 August 2007, regulating the Basic Training Education Plan for Adults[6].

However, for people who do not have these difficulties but are interested in expanding their knowledge in current topics, there is the possibility of accessing a specialised non formal training plan called Promotion of Active Citizenship[7]. This Plan includes the following courses: basic use of a foreign language, basic use of information and communication technologies, the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture, interculturality, Spanish culture and language for people from foreign countries, knowledge and conservation of Andalusia's cultural heritageand the environment, the acquisition of healthy lifestyle habits and the prevention of professional illnesses and risks. The weekly teaching load of the students will be up to a maximum of 10 hours per group.
The courses are called non-formal because completing them does not lead directly to obtaininga degree, although it does lead to a certificate, with the objective of facilitating access to other levels of the formal education system.
In conclusion, in the autonomous community of Andalusia, the meaning of educational plans within

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non-formal education for primary and secondary education is given to the competencies that are necessary for adults to acquire in order to be able to access other levels of the formal educational system, to prepare for official qualifications[8]: access to middle and higher level training cycles and to promote active citizenship. This entire process is regulated by the Instructions of 28 May 2019, from the Directorate General for Attention to Diversity, Participation and School Coexistence, on the process of schooling for adults: Compulsory Secondary Education, Baccalaureate and Educational Plans in their different modalities[9].

Professional Training

In Andalusia is a procedure in Andalusia for the validation or recognition of the competences acquired in non-formal education for adults through professional experience does exist, called certificates of professionalism.
The whole process of recognition must conform to the Royal Decree 1224/2009, July 17th, of recognition of the professional skills acquired by work experience[10].

Organisations in charge for the RVCC process Educational plan for basic training

The trainings take place in of Permanent Education Centres and Sections (CEPER and SEPER respectively) belonging to the Regional Ministry of Education and Sport. This is the network of centres and sections where basic education is provided, for people over 18 years of age, ranging from functional literacy (A) to preparation for obtaining a basic qualification (B) and access to other educational levels (C).

The lifelong learning centres in Andalusia are grouped into geographical networks[11]. The CEPER and SEPER are located within secondary education institutes, depending on the educational offer that the municipalities of each Andalusian province have[12].

Professional Training

The main source of information and guidance at the national level in everything related to Vocational Training and the validation of competencies[13] is the official Professional Training System webpage[14]. It reports the phases of the process of validation, it provides access to the certification tool[15], where the user, through a guided process, is informed about which competencies are susceptible of accreditation as well as the qualifications that they could obtain once the accreditation process has been completed, with only a series of suggested professional modules. The Public Service of State Employment[16] also offers information, guidance and orientation in the recognition of competences in addition to the publication of the procedures convened by the Autonomous Communities[17]

At regional level, The General Directorate of Vocational Training for Employment of the Regional Ministry of Employment, Training and Self-Employment and the General Directorate of Vocational Training of the Regional Ministry of Education and Sport are the competent bodies in Andalusia for the procedure of evaluation and accreditation of professional competences acquired through work experience or non-formal training paths (BOJA, 2020).

The Andalusian Institute of Professional Qualifications[18] is responsible for accrediting the professional skills of the Andalusian Regional Government. It is known as "Andalucía Acredita"[19], valid at a national level. This procedure allows people who have provable work experience or who have received non-formal training, i.e. training carried out outside the official education system,

and directly related to the professional qualification they wish to accredit, to obtain official accreditation (Consejería de Educación y Deporte, 2020).

Steps/ phases before the RVCC process Educational plan for basic training

Registration: Face-to-face modality

Ordinary deadline

To pursue an educational plan it is not necessary to apply for admission. The registration can be directly formalised at the centre of choice.

It is only necessary to register at a single centre and, there, apply for up to three educational plans in order of preference, with a maximum of two per school year.

If there are not enough places in the centre to meet all the demand, these will be allocated according to the lowest annual income per capita of the family unit, and will be assigned to those who have not been enrolled in previous years.

Extraordinary deadline

If there are any vacancies left after the normal registration procedure, the management of the public educational establishments will register any remaining interested candidates that could not apply within the deadline, as long as they meet the requirements.

Formalising the registration process

- By means of a telematic process through the Virtual Secretariat, with a iANDE key[20], with cl@ve authentication, with or without digital certificate. These are the most recommended ways.
- By sending the required documentation by registered post to the school, always with the application form and its copy stamped by the post office with the date of sending before inserting it in the envelope, keeping a copy as a receipt.
- By presenting the required documentation in person directly to the school.
- Delivering the required documentation to the records of any Administrative Body belonging to the General State Administration, to any of the Autonomous Community Administrations and to the Local Bodies (this option is the least advisable due to the time that elapses between the delivery and the reception of the documentation at the centre).

There is a free telephone number for any questions about the registration form[21].

Criteria for student enrolment

- Candidates may apply for a maximum of three educational plans, on a priority basis, and may be admitted to a maximum of two per school year.
- In those schools where there are enough placements available to meet all the applications, all applicants will be registered.
- Otherwise, school placements will be allocated, assigning them to applicants who have not enrolled in the same educational plan in previous academic years.
- In the event that, after applying the criteria set out above, there is more demand for school

placements than supply, this will be decided by drawing lots.

At least 5% of the placements will be reserved for students with a recognised degree of disability equal to or greater than thirty-three percent.

Enrolment, deadline and procedure in educational plans

- The deadline for enrolment in educational plans will be between June 1st and 15th each year.
- Candidates who wish to study educational plans for the first time or continue with them must complete the corresponding registration process.
- Applications for enrolment in the different educational plans will be processed, in duplicate, using Annex V of this Order and will be accompanied by the required documentation, where applicable. The forms will be provided free of charge by the educational centres and will be available on the website of the Regional Ministry of Education.
- Applications for enrolment in educational support plans for teaching in the blended learning mode will be subject to actual enrolment in the centres where they are taught.
- Those interested will apply for a maximum of three of the educational plans offered by the centre and may be admitted to a maximum of two.
- Within a maximum period of five working days at the end of the period for the presentation of enrolment applications, the School Council or the School Board, as the case may be, will publish on the notice board 00008500 Nº. 117 page 14 Official Gazette of the Andalusian Regional Government (Boletín Oficial de la Junta de Andalucía) 15th June 2012 the provisional lists of students enrolled in each educational plan, in accordance with the criteria established in article 8.
- Interested parties may make claims to the published lists before the head of the centre, for which they will have a period of two working days from the day following their publication. Before June 30th the School Board or Council, as appropriate, will publish the definitive list of people enrolled in the different educational plans. This publication will be displayed in a public and visible place and will produce the effects of notification to the interested persons, after which the ordinary process will be closed.
- The applications for registration presented in the month of June outside the established period will be dealt with in order of arrival, where appropriate, for those educational plans which, once the provisional lists have been published, have vacant school places. Those persons who are registered will be included in the definitive lists.

In the face-to-face modality, the school placements that will be taken into account in the admission procedure for each course will be determined by multiplying the number of units authorised by the maximum number of students that correspond to each area or subject in each unit. In this case, for basic training there are 25[22].

Professional training

Application for participation and documentation to be submitted

Candidates interested in participating in this procedure must apply for registration in accordance with the model available in the Virtual Office of the Regional Ministry of Education and Sport[23].

The following documents must be submitted with the application:
- Copy of the National Identification Number (ID) or passport of the applicant.

- Professional and educational background in accordance with the European CV model.
- Proof of working experience:
  - <u>Employed persons</u>: copy of the employment contract or certification from the company where the work experience was acquired and Certificate from the General Treasury of the Social Security, the Social Institute of the Navy or the mutual society to which they were affiliated, stating the company, the professional category and the period of employment.
  - <u>Self-employed workers:</u> Certification from the General Treasury of the Social Security, the Social Institute of the Navy or the mutual insurance company to which they are affiliated, of the periods of registration in the corresponding special regime. Descriptive documentation and documentation accrediting the activity carried out in the sector related to the units of competence to be accredited and the time interval in which it has been carried out.
  - <u>Volunteers or grant holders:</u> Certification from the organisation legally recognised as a voluntary organisation where the assistance was provided as a volunteer, or where appropriate, from the organisation where the assistance was provided as a grant holder, specifically stating the activities and functions carried out in the sector related to the units of competence to be accredited, the calendar year in which they were carried out, the total number of days and the total number of hours per year dedicated to them. It must be dated, stamped and signed correctly by the person responsible for the certifying organisation. In the case of claiming activities as a grant holder, a copy of the agreement or arrangement for carrying out the grant holder's activity, which includes the applicant, shall also be provided.
- In order to accredit professional competences acquired through non-formal training channels, the justification will be made by means of a document certifying that the person has training related to the units of competence that he or she intends to accredit, which will include the contents and hours of training, certified by the entity or body that provided it. Under no circumstances will certification related to formal training be presented: vocational training cycles, high school, university or equivalent qualifications and certificates of professionalism.

<u>Place and deadline for submission of applications</u>

Applications for registration will be addressed to the Directorate General for Vocational Training and must be completed through the virtual office of the Regional Ministry of Education and Sport.

The presentation of the application will be done preferably telematically, in the following links:
- Application Certificate of Professionalism, telematic presentation with digital certificate[24].

- Application Certificate of Professionalism, telematic presentation without digital certificate[25]. The application must be printed out, signed and submitted to either:
  - In the electronic register of the Administration or Body to which they are addressed, as well as in the other electronic registers of any of the subjects referred to in article 2.1[26].
  - At the post office, in the manner established by regulation.
  - At the diplomatic representations or consular offices of Spain abroad.
  - At the registration assistance offices.
  - At any other office established by the provisions in force.

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Available placements

The Andalusian Government has offered 6000 placements in 2020, distributed for each of the professional qualifications. The Andalusian Vocational Training Council[27] is in charge of offering these placements. Their number varies every year, as do the calls for applications, asit depends on factors such as the demand among the different professional branches, the money allocated by the Andalusian Regional Government to this process and the number of qualified assessment staff in each family of the professions in demand.

There are two types of calls, one generic (for the entire Andalusian population) and one specific (derived from collaboration agreements with entities or bodies that have demanded it, and aimed at people who work for them or who meet certain requirements).

Admission Process

Within two months of the end of the period for submission of applications, the holders of the Directorate General of Vocational Training for Employment and the Directorate General of Vocational Training, will jointly issue a decision with the provisional lists of persons who have been selected, not selected and excluded. This resolution with the provisional lists will be published on the notice board of the Regional Ministry of Education and Sport, and for information purposes will also be published on the website of the Andalusian Institute of Professional Qualifications.

Within ten working days from the day following the publication of the decision with the provisional lists of selected, unselected and excluded persons on the notice board of the Regional Ministry of Education and Sport, the applicants may make the allegations they consider appropriate.

Once the period for presenting allegations has ended, within the following two months the Directorate General of Vocational Training for Employment and the Directorate General of Vocational Training will jointly issue a resolution which will include the definitive lists of candidates selected to participate in the procedure, those not selected, as well as those excluded, which will be published on the notice board of the Regional Ministry of Education and Sport, and for information purposes on the website of the Andalusian Institute of Professional Qualifications.

Interested parties may file an appeal with the Secretary General of Education and Vocational Training within a period of one month, starting from the day after its publication on the notice board of the Regional Ministry of Education and Sport against the resolution with the final lists of selected, unselected and excluded candidates

Figures and roles of the professionals in charge of the RVCC process Educational plan for basic training

Secondary education teachers are among the persons responsible for the management of the schools and sections of Continuing Education. The aim is to monitor students in order to evaluate their learning process.

Professional education

The certificate of professionalism has official status and is valid throughout the national territory.

The General Directorate of Vocational Training for Employment of the Regional Ministry of Employment, Training and Self-Employment and the Directorate General of Vocational Training of the Regional Ministry of Education and Sport are the competent bodies in Andalusia for the procedure of evaluation and accreditation of professional skills acquired through work experience or non-formal training paths.

In 2007, Andalusia created the Andalusian Institute for Professional Qualifications[28] as an administrative unit, which will be attached to the Directorate General for Professional Training of the Department of Education and Science. It is responsible for processing and validating the certificates of professionalism, while the Andalusian Council for Vocational Training[29] monitors and evaluates the Vocational Training Plans implemented in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia.

The presidency of the evaluation commission is held by a public employee of the Administration and must have at least six years' work or teaching experience, or have acted for two years in an advisory or evaluation capacity in process for the evaluation and accreditation of professional skills. On the other hand, the person who occupies the commission's secretariat must be a public administration employee.

The RVCC process

Access conditions/ requirements Educational plan for basic training

To be able to register for these tests you must be over 18 years old or turn 18 in the calendar year of the call.

Exceptionally, candidates interested in being part of the basic training educational plan can also access adult education if they are over 16 years old, or if they turn 16 in the calendar year in which the academic year begins, by accrediting one of these situations:
- Being a self-employed person or an employee so that you cannot go to the ordinary school.
- Being a performance sportsman or woman in Andalusia or a high performance or high level sportsman or woman.
- To be in an extraordinary personal situation of illness, disability or any other situation that prevents you from studying in the ordinary regime. This includes victims of gender violence and victims of terrorism, as well as their children, and people who are in a situation of extreme social difficulty or risk of exclusion.
- Being in prison or minors' detention centres subject to measures of deprivation of liberty by judicial sentence.

Professional Training

1. Have Spanish nationality, have obtained the certificate of registration of Community citizenship or the card of family member of a citizen of the European Union, or hold a residence permit, or residence and work in Spain in force, under the terms established in the Spanish regulations on aliens and immigration.
2. Be at least 18 years old at the time of registration, in the case of units of competence corresponding to level I qualifications, and at least 20 years old in the case of units of competence corresponding to level II and III qualifications.
3. To have work experience or training related to the professional competences, which are the object of the call, and to be accredited:
   - In the case of work experience, it is necessary to justify, at least 3 years, with a minimum of 2,000 hours worked in total, in the last 10 years before the call.

- In the case of non-formal training related to the professional competences of the qualification applied for, justify at least 300 hours in the last 10 years before the call.

People who are in any of the following situations will be grounds for non-admission to the procedure and therefore will not be able to participate in it for the professional qualification requested:

4. Have all the units of competence of the qualification you are applying for accredited, or have passed all the training or professional modules associated with these units of competence.
5. To have a certificate of professional competence or vocational training title that includes all the units of competence of the qualification that is being applied for, or to be able to obtain them.
6. To be registered at the time of enrolment in a vocational training course for employment or in a vocational training cycle, which contains the training associated with all the units of competence that are to be accredited.
7. To be participating in another call for the procedure of evaluation and accreditation of competences to accredit the same units of competence of the qualification they are applying for.

Tools and procedures Educational plan for basic training

The certification of the different non-formal educational plans studied, once completed, will be issued by the corresponding management position in attention to the centre's staff. The certificate will state the name of the activity carried out, the main contents of the activity and the total number of hours studied. Likewise, the degree of use of these will be assessed with the terms "insufficient", "positive" or "optimum") According to the centre's staff, the certifying managerial positions are:

- Centres with a Secretary. Signature: Secretary.
- Centre with Head of Studies. Signature: Head of Studies.
- Centres with a Director only. Sign the same in section Vº Bº
- Continuing education sections. Signature: Delegated Head of Studies.

Professional Training

At an institutional level, the only model used in Andalusia to certify the competences acquired in non-formal and informal education are the certificates of professionalism, (as you can see in the previous sections and in Annex V).

In our association we use Europass, for adults over 30 years old and Youthpass, for young people between 13 and 30 years old, see annex VI and VII.

Youthpass is a tool to document and recognise learning outcomes from youth work and solidarity activities. It is available for projects funded by Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps Programmes. It is a part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning. Youthpass certificates are available for all types of projects and activities within the Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes.
The certificates can also be issued for projects that were granted under the previous Youth in Action programme (2007-2013).

All participants of the projects approved within these frameworks are entitled to receive a Youthpass certificate, and thus recognition for their non-formal learning outcomes.

The responsibility to issue the Youthpass certificates to the participants/volunteers, in case they wish to receive them, lies with the organisation that signs the contract for the Erasmus+ grant[30].

Europass is a document that allows you to explain to employers and educational institutions what your professional qualification consists of. The Europass-Certificate Supplement contains information on: the purpose of the qualification, its level, the learning outcomes it represents and the education system it is part of[31].

These certificates in Spain are validated by SEPIE (Spanish service for the internationalisation of education)[32].

On the other hand, in February 2017, the Inter-territorial Youth Council, formed by the Youth Institute (Instituto de la Juventud (INJUVE)) and the youth organizations of the Autonomous Communities, has agreed on the implementation of a specific recognition system for non- formal and informal learning in the sphere of Youth in Spain.

There are initiatives such as "Proyecto Reconoce"[33] for recognising competencies and skills, obtained through voluntary action that improve the employability of young people.

How are the non-formal and informal competences evaluated Educational plan for basic training

The evaluation of student learning is continuous. It consists of an evaluation questionnaire

and a self-evaluation questionnaire for each subject, belonging to each area and is carried out by the teaching staff. The teacher/tutor of the group, or where appropriate the teaching team, coordinated by the person who is tutoring the group, will carry out an initial assessment in each area in the first days of the course, the results of which will guide the adaptation of the curriculum to the characteristics and knowledge of the students.

In order to guarantee the right of the students to have their academic performance evaluated according to criteria of transparency, in the first fortnight of the course the teaching staff of the group will inform the students in each area about their most relevant aspects.

During the academic period, the assessment of the modules that make up each field will be carried out at least once a term.

In the assessment sessions, the teacher or tutor of the group, or where appropriate the teaching team chaired by the tutor, may consider that a student has passed each a field of the corresponding level, when, within the process of continuous assessment, this student has achieved, in general, the basic competences and the objectives established for each one of them.

In level I, the evaluation of the learning and basic competences acquired will be carried out by means of an overall assessment of the fields that make up this level.

In level II, those students who do not pass any module of any of the fields that make up this level in the corresponding assessment session, may recover it before the end of the school year, recording the qualification obtained in the final assessment session of the course.

Level II students who have not passed all the modules of the different fields at the end of the school term will receive an activity plan aimed at reinforcing these modules and will take an extraordinary test based on them.

The tutor of each group will take minutes of the evaluation sessions, in which the most important general aspects of the group's learning process will be recorded, as well as any agreements reached and decisions taken, which will be the starting point for the next evaluation session.

After each assessment session, the tutor will inform each student in the group about the following aspects of their learning process:
  a) The qualifications of the different fields.
  b) Where appropriate, the recommendations for overcoming the learning difficulties detected.

 Each field of the corresponding level will receive a unique qualification. In all the assessment sessions held, the qualifications will be expressed in the following terms:

a) For level I of these courses, the qualifications will be expressed for each field with the terms "passed" or "not passed".

(b) For level II, the grades shall be expressed in the following terms at all assessment sessions held: Insufficient (IN), Sufficient (SU), Good (BI), Remarkable (NT) or Outstanding (SB), with Insufficient being considered a negative qualification and all others a positive one. This qualification will be accompanied by a numerical qualification, without using decimals, on a scale of one to ten, the following correspondences being applied:

Insufficient: 1, 2, 3 or 4

Sufficient: 5.

Good: 6.

Good: 6.

Remarkable: 7 or 8.

Outstanding: 9 or 10.

ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS LEARNED

For candidates who wish to access the educational plan regulated in this Order for the first time, and request the assessment of knowledge, experience and learning acquired, the centres will carry out an initial assessment test during the month of September, which will take into account personal maturity and the non-formal and informal knowledge and learning acquired by the person concerned. This will facilitate the guidance and assignment of the person to the level most appropriate to his/her personal situation.

The Coordination Team for Basic Training Education Plans will design an initial assessment model to be applied in the centre and its corresponding sections, which will take into account at least the following aspects:

  a) The criteria for the assessment of certifications of non-formal learning undertaken.
  b) The criteria for the assessment of work experience.
  c) A test referring, in general, to the objectives and basic competences established in the curriculum for each field and level.

The head of the centre will designate the teaching staff responsible for carrying out this process in the centre and its sections.

The teaching staff in charge of carrying out this process will draw up minutes of the same, specifying the corresponding qualification for the people concerned, which will determine their assignment to level I or II of each of the areas of the plan regulated in this Order.

If, as a result of the initial assessment process, it turns out that the student has already acquired, in general, the basic knowledge and competences corresponding to this educational plan, the centre will incorporate the qualification obtained in each area of level II into the academic record and will issue the corresponding certification, in accordance with the model that appears in Annex II of this Order.

Professional training

At the professional level, the procedure for the evaluation and accreditation of professional competences will consist of the following phases:

Advisement

It is compulsory and aims to identify the correspondence of the selected candidates' learning with the units of competence that might be most suitable for assessment purposes, and to provide them with the necessary support throughout the assessment process. The professional experience and previous training of each of them is analysed. A self-assessment questionnaire is filled in by them, in which they make a professional reflection and a description of their background and professional and training competence, for each of the units of competence.

Evaluation of professional competence

At this stage, it will be checked that the candidate demonstrates the required professional competence in professional achievements, at the established levels, in the performance criteria and in a work situation, real or simulated, set from the professional context.

The assessment committee will analyse the Competence Dossier and the advisor's report, making an initial assessment of the evidence in order to decide whether it is sufficient or insufficient to propose the accreditation of the units of competence. It will carry out a plan for each candidate, which will be reflected in the Individualised Assessment Plan.

The result of the assessment of the professional competence in a given unit of competence will be expressed in terms of "Demonstrated" or "Not demonstrated", the unit of competence being the minimum unit of accreditation. The Assessment Committee will publish the assessment report on the notice boards of the centre (high schools or in a specific professional training public centre) or location where it carries out its tasks.

Accreditation of professional competence

The holder of the General Directorate of Vocational Training will issue to the candidates who pass the evaluation process, a certificate of accreditation of the units of competence in which they have demonstrated their professional competence in accordance with the minutes issued by the evaluation commissions, according to the model established in Royal Decree[34] 1224/2009, of July

17th.

Within three months from the date of completion of the process, an information note will be published on the website of the Andalusian Institute of Professional Qualifications[35]. On downloading the accreditation certificate for the units of competence demonstrated. Likewise, information will be given on how to proceed to request, where appropriate, the corresponding certificate of professionals..

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4. Conclusion

This research is the result of the work developed by the Project partnership "Pro-Comp - Promoting development, assessment and recognition of Adults' non- formal and informal competences", that involves Associazione Travelogue (Italy), Asociación Iniciativa Internacional Joven (Spain), the ASSOCIAZIONE VITA INDIPENDENTE UMBRIA ONLUS (Italy), EPRALIMA – ESCOLA PROFISSIONAL DOALTO LIMA (Portugal) and Institut Méditerranéen de Formation et Recherche en Travail Social (France).

The main objective was to share methodologies, existing tools and legislation in each country, within the scope of Adult Education, in order to improve information on recognition of non-formal and informal skills systems in Europe.

We noticed several differences between the existing processes in the partner countries, for example, Spain and France do not have school recognition, only professional recognition, on the other hand, Italy and Portugal have similar procedures with regard to the recognition of skills at school and professional level, with Emilia Romagna region in Italy being the one that most resembles the Portuguese RVCC process. In terms of legislation and implementation, there were also several differences.

With this analysis and knowledge sharing, we also aim to promote the system of recognition of non-formal and informal skills in Europe, in order to have adults employed and properly inserted into the labour market and society.

The recognition, validation and certification of skills acquired throughout life is considered, by everyone involved in this project, as an asset, of great importance for each adult, whether at a personal, professional or even family level. It is a comprehensive and transversal methodology to all entities that work with adults, both nationally and internationally, in order to build a common support structure for adults involved in this process.
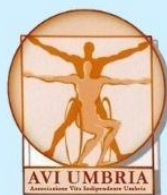
Life is a constant learning process, it makes us stronger and more capable, the "BOOKS OF LIFE" are more important when they are VALUED and RECOGNIZED!

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