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Validation of non-formal & informal learning

A Flemish policy in a European context
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Outline

- ▶ Council Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL)
- ▶ Belgian situation: fragmentation of VNFIL arrangements
- ▶ Political answer: New decree on integrated VNFIL-policy

European context: recommendation

- ▶ **2012 Council Recommendation** of 20 December 2012 on the **validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL)**
 - To have in place no later than 2018 **arrangements** for VNFIL
 - × Identification
 - × Documentation
 - × Assessment
 - × Certification
 - Apply principles
 - × **linked to NQF**
 - × Disadvantaged groups, information and guidance, quality assurance, professionalisation of staff, ...
 - Involvement of stakeholders



European context: Inventory

- ▶ Since 2010 regular update of **European inventory** on validation of non-formal and informal learning.
 - <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory>
- ▶ Country report Belgium (NL)
 - https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2014/87049_BE_NL.pdf
- ▶ Fragmentation of VNIL policies < > integrated policy



Validation arrangements coexist

- ▶ In Education
 - Higher education
 - Adult education
 - Secondary education
- ▶ In Work
- ▶ In Culture, Youth, Sport



VNIL in Higher Education

- ▶ Decree of 30 April 2004
- ▶ Exemptions can be granted on the basis of credits for prior learning and/or validation of competences - cf. AP(E)L
- ▶ The procedures result in a proof of acquired competences
- ▶ Responsibility of the association
 - Decentralised system: each association own rules of procedure
 - Low interchangeability (exceptions)
- ▶ No separate funding
- ▶ Cost for student : 55 to 770 euro



VNIL in Higher Education - example

Steps in the validation procedure;

- ▶ Provide general information
 - Website -> student tutor
- ▶ Intake
 - Experience / linked to learning outcomes / information on methods and tools
- ▶ Screening and assessing the portfolio
 - Deadline / complete
 - Variation, relevance, topicality, authenticity and quantity
- ▶ Finalising
 - Proof of competence, exemptions



VNIL in Adult Education

- ▶ Decree of 15 June 2007
- ▶ Exemptions can be granted on the basis of credits for prior learning and/or evaluation of competences (VNIL)
 - Responsibility of each centre for adult education, decision of principal
 - Exceptions: general basic education (common tests), projects
- ▶ Quality assurance by inspectorate
- ▶ Development of VNIL tools = huge investment and low return
- ▶ No full qualification possible
- ▶ VNIL is free of costs for student
- ▶ No separate funding



VNIL in Work

- ▶ Decree of 30 April 2004 Certificate of Work Experience
- ▶ Certificate
 - if demonstrated that one has acquired the skills needed to perform an occupation
 - is not equivalent to a diploma
- ▶ Professional competence profiles are translated into standards
- ▶ Test for one/multiple professions during one day
- ▶ Financed on basis of ESF-funding



VNIL in culture, youth, sport

- ▶ Cultural and youth sectors focus on VNIL in the sense of identification and documentation of competences
 - Several instruments exist to ‘make competences visible’
- ▶ Flemish Trainers’ School: formal VNIL procedures and certification



Conclusion

- ▶ Low attractiveness of validation – lack of familiarity?
- ▶ Fragmentation of existing validation practices
 - No coordination between policy domains
 - Confusion about concepts and definitions
 - Lack of interchangeability, objectivity and quality assurance
- ▶ Need for a single reference framework

Towards an integrated policy on VNIL

- ▶ An overarching policy on validation
 - Different policy areas involved > decree on validation
 - Consensus on scope and definition of VNFIL
 - × Identification/documentation - assessment/certification
- ▶ Certification of competences based on common framework
 - NQF VKS (and CEFR for languages)
 - Assessment standards for professional qualifications
- ▶ Recognized assessment centres



Towards an integrated policy on VNIL

- ▶ To be discussed
 - Quality assurance framework
 - Organisational principles
 - Funding and budget





Thank you
for your attention

Questions?



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