The 2022–2023 Stakeholder Survey on the competence development of guidance practitioners was an extensive evaluation project coordinated by the Euroguidance Network (EG network). It adopted a three-phased approach, namely: Desk Research, Interviews, and Questionnaire, followed by a workshop for the exploitation of the results. The study aimed to understand EG network’s strengths, identify areas for improvement, reflect on necessary changes, and gather suggestions for future actions.
In the Desk Research phase, the focus was on identifying stakeholders associated with the EG network and gaining an understanding of its main activities. This phase involved participation from 29 out of 35 EG centres.

The insights derived from this phase revealed a diverse group of stakeholders, including guidance practitioners, policy makers, trainers of guidance counsellors, researchers, teachers, EU outreach networks, local and regional authorities, schools, and end-users.

The desk research also delineated the key functions of the Euroguidance centres, thus helping shape the development of the subsequent interview phase.
In-depth interviews

The second phase, Interviews, was conducted with the objective of deeply understanding the needs, perspectives, and recommendations of the guidance community.

A total of 12 international stakeholders were interviewed, encompassing a diverse range of roles within the field, from guidance and counselling practitioners to teachers and career guidance experts. The insights from these interviews were centred around three key areas: competence development, communication and collaboration, and policy.

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<tr>
<th>Competence development</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Policy</th>
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<td>Stakeholders highlighted the need for training on relevant topics, including new methods and technologies, and foreign language skills to enhance mobility. They underscored the value of professional exchanges, community-building through shared best practices, collaboration in projects between events, and the importance of reflection on their work and experiences.</td>
<td>Euroguidance communicates well with stakeholders through email, Facebook, and its website. Both stakeholders and Euroguidance centers agree on these preferred channels. While other communication methods are used by different countries, there's potential to broaden Euroguidance’s reach by increasing visibility among decision-makers, guidance practitioners, and the public, as stakeholders suggested.</td>
<td>Stakeholders underscored the need for enhanced recognition and professionalization of career guidance, advocating for standardization and formal training. They urged for more robust resources and integrated services which address both adult and younger demographics. Additionally, they emphasized the necessity for specialized decision-making roles in guidance bodies.</td>
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Thoughts from the interviewed stakeholders on competence development

“And the big topic right now for us is sustainability, green.”

“For example, pandemic, health issues, war, migrants, working with disadvantaged people.”

“I noticed that we are all in that community very eager and anxious to learn more and more about new methodologies.”

“I think that Euroguidance has been very good here on Corona to develop the area of online guidance. There have been a lot of conferences for counsellors online.”

“The two times when I went on Academia, what I learned from that, not only from the country, but because the group was international, so you had the exchange within the group.”

“Euroguidance also helped to promote our national good practice to other European networks and European professionals. So it’s not only about taking good practice from Europe and spreading them out, but also helping to spread the best national practice to other countries.”

“Euroguidance, through the years, has been very supportive of our community, offering all kinds of workshops and toolboxes, etc.”
"I think the most important is to build the network of the practitioners and adapt the channel to them."

"Yes, social media is important. But Euroguidance is related to counsellors and I think the direct news mails and newsletters are more effective."

"Definitely LinkedIn. Because those more mature, they are already there. Those professionals from other countries, they are very vocal on LinkedIn."

"I would say, like going back to basics, I would like to see more key messages regarding why career guidance and counselling is important actually."

"I would appreciate more promoting good case example."

"I will go to Strasbourg for a school dropout event, so currently the only information I have, if the only channel in the world would be Euroguidance, is that there will be an event. OK. But till that event? And after that event you can have the communication with people who are talking about this."
Thoughts from the interviewed stakeholders on policy

"I think some more general agreed standards for counselling would be very nice, both in [national level], but also in the whole Europe."

"I think the most pressing need we have on a national level is a lack of professional career guidance counsellors."

"There's a lot of things going on at governmental level and there are three ministries that have career guidance on their agendas and they are not talking together. And that is the problem in my perspective."

"It could be much more sharing of experiences, sharing of good examples. What new laws are coming up, what new strategies are coming up in other countries, because this is also a way for our politicians, our decision makers to learn from others."

"Because the career guidance is so vague in every country like, is it a profession, it is not a profession? [...] it should be taken into consideration, and it should be treated as an equal position in school and also in university, that this is [...] a serious profession. It should be reinstated and maybe reinforced [...] across the whole European Union, the same impact in every region, it is a profession."
The final phase, the Questionnaire, aimed to validate the insights from the interview phase with a wider group. It garnered a robust 1170 responses from 32 centres across 31 countries, with 1063 of them being valid.

Analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed that the EG network plays an important role in competence development for practitioners. The network’s activities, including seminars, webinars, and conferences, were seen as relevant and participated in widely.

The respondents acknowledged the positive impact of the EG network’s services on their knowledge, competences, and networking capacities.

They also identified key areas for future EG network activities such as career guidance theories, mobility opportunities, and digital innovations.

In terms of communication, most respondents indicated that they found access to services and resources easy and preferred email as the communication channel.

However, they also showed an interest in using LinkedIn for future updates.

High satisfaction rates with EG network activities and a willingness to recommend EG network services to other professionals further underscored the value and impact of the EG network.
The majority of respondents were Career Guidance Practitioners (54.06%).
The respondents had a wide range of experience levels.
Participants engaged in a variety of Euroguidance services/activities from 2021 to 2022. The most popular was Information/promotion activities, participated in by 48.14% of respondents. This was followed by Seminars/webinars (46.31%), Conferences (41.51%), and Training (31.81%).
Analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed that the EG network plays an important role in competence development for practitioners. The network’s activities, including seminars, webinars, and conferences, were seen as relevant and participated in widely.

83.9% of respondents found the Euroguidance services/activities they were involved in to be 'Relevant' or 'Very Relevant'.

78.8% of respondents confirmed that Euroguidance helped them develop or enhance their knowledge of the subject matter they were targeting.

65% stated that Euroguidance helped them develop additional competences or capacities for the delivery of career guidance services.

60.1% indicated that Euroguidance helped them extend their capacity for networking and collaboration in the field of career guidance.

The respondents acknowledged the positive impact of the EG network’s services on their knowledge, competences, and networking capacities.
Knowledge acquired
Participants gained knowledge and insights in areas like professional updates, good practices in career guidance, international perspectives, understanding of educational and labour market systems, ethical considerations in career guidance, and more.

Competence developed
Respondents highlighted a diversity of skills and competences that they have developed, including those in guidance and counselling techniques, digital competences, job application skills, planning and implementation, personal development.

Networking opportunities
Stakeholders benefited from Euroguidance in forming both domestic and international networks. These networks fostered professional collaborations, solid project partnerships, and enriched online interactions.
Main benefits of Euroguidance services/activities

The most important benefit, as indicated by 34.69% of respondents, was the **improved competence and capacity for the delivery of career guidance services**. Other benefits included improved awareness of the Euroguidance network, improved competence for guidance on promoting European/international mobility, improved understanding of innovations in career guidance, and improved networking and collaboration with stakeholders.
The "Topics for the Future" section offers a glimpse into the priority areas the respondents suggest for Euroguidance's future actions:

- **Career Guidance Theories, Methods, Instruments (48.21%)**: A clear demand exists for a deeper exploration of theories and methodologies in career guidance, including a focus on emerging tools and techniques.
- **Mobility Opportunities for Education, Training, and Work (44.91%)**: Practitioners express a keen interest in expanding their understanding of opportunities in global mobility related to education, training, and work.
- **Digital Innovations (38.32%)**: This high interest indicates a growing recognition of the value of technology in the guidance field, underlining the need to stay updated with digital trends and innovations.
Overall rating of Euroguidance Network activities

The majority of respondents rated the support as 'good' or 'extremely valuable', giving a weighted average of 3.17 out of 4.

Willingness to recommend Euroguidance services

Most respondents expressed a willingness to recommend Euroguidance services to other guidance professionals for developing their knowledge and competencies, with a strong recommendation being the most prevalent response.
In terms of the ease of access to services and resources provided by the Euroguidance network, a significant majority of respondents indicated that they found the access very easy or somewhat easy, making the ease of access highly rated overall.

The primary communication channel through which respondents receive information from Euroguidance is via email (66.55%), followed by newsletters from the Euroguidance network (34.42%), and visits to the Euroguidance network website (29.06%).
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Facebook was the most preferred social media platform to receive information from Euroguidance (score 2.60 out of 3), followed by LinkedIn (score 2.26 out of 3).

Overall satisfaction with the communication channels used by Euroguidance to disseminate information

The majority of respondents expressed satisfaction, with 32.65% somewhat satisfied and 28.91% very satisfied, resulting in a weighted average satisfaction score of 3.82 out of 5. This indicates a generally positive perception of Euroguidance’s communication strategies among respondents.
Evidence based actions and future priorities
Stockholm, May 2023

At the Euroguidance spring meeting in Stockholm a workshop was held to reflect on the Stakeholder Survey results, where Euroguidance representatives gathered insights and determined future actions.

During the workshop, the Euroguidance members have employed strategic planning to discern strengths and opportunities. Emphasizing collaboration, they propose actions like knowledge sharing, social media utilization, and policy engagement for impactful future outcomes, intending to engage various stakeholders to boost career guidance effectiveness.
Workshop

Participants reflected on five opportunity areas derived from stakeholder feedback, discussed relevant questions and experiences, and visually compiled their insights.

Opportunity area 1: Competence development. Training

Emphasis was placed on knowledge sharing, with proposals for mobility ambassadors, an e-course on career guidance, innovation competitions, specialized training, research publications, and fostering international cooperation in career guidance.

Opportunity area 2: Professional exchange and mobility

To better organize mobilities, strategies include enhancing language skills, publicizing exchange calendars, centralized information campaigns, hosting diverse events, a mobility online platform, reviewing Academia evaluations, and fostering partnerships with guidance associations and policymakers.

Opportunity area 3: Communication

To increase visibility, Euroguidance should leverage social media, optimize their website, utilize diverse content formats like testimonials and videos, develop practical toolkits, and implement consistent communication strategies at the network level.

Opportunity area 4: Facilitating sharing of knowledge & innovation

To enhance career guidance, Euroguidance should host webinars, establish a best practices database, prioritize European issues and green guidance, involve local communities in identifying transformative figures, showcase and recognize good practices, and organize events and co-networking activities.

Opportunity area 5: Policy

Emphasis was placed on fostering cooperation and policy engagement both nationally and in Europe, leveraging Euroguidance’s strategic positioning and expertise. Initiatives suggested include dialogues with the European Commission, research sharing, and enhancing collaborations to influence guidance policy development.
Acknowledgements

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