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**SET OF APPLICATION OF GENDER  
NEUTRAL TOOLS AND TEST FOR  
POST-SECONDARY PROFESSIONAL  
EDUCATION**

**INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 6 (IO6)**

## Coordination and Edition

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Cedra - Cedefop Research Arena

CVET - Continuous Vocational Education and Training

EAEA - European Association for Education of Adults

ECVET - The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training

EfVET -European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

ELGPN - European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network

EU – European Union

EQF - European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning

EQAVET- The European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training

ERO - European Research Overview

GD VET - General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sport

ISCED - International Standard Classification of Education

IVET - Initial Vocational Education and Training

PSPE - Post-secondary and Professional Education

TTnet - Training of Trainers Network

TVET - Technical and Vocational Education and Training

VET - Vocational Education and Training System

WBL - Work-based Learning



# 1. Introduction

Geneus is a two-year project from the Austrian National Agency funded by the European Commission – within the Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Vocational Education and Training – which started in September 2017. The project aims to develop, promote and disseminate gender neutral selection tools and tests.

## 1.1. GENEUS PARTNERS

GeNeus project is coordinated by Frauen im Brennpunkt (Austria) and has five more partners from countries: Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo “Danilo Dolci” (CSC) (Italy), BIMEC (Bulgaria), SEF (Spain) and Inova+ and Polytecnic of Porto (Portugal).

### **Coordinator – Frauen im Brennpunkt – Austria**

“Frauen im Brennpunkt” was founded 30 years ago as an independent non-profit organisation and currently employs 110 people across Tyrol. Our main areas of activity are employment related counselling of women and girls, events and awareness raising for female gender issues and childcare in nurseries and with day nannies.

Employees in the counselling departments have psychological, social and political expertise and can provide experience in the areas of gender sensitivity and labour market politics. They also possess years of experience in the management of national and EU projects in other organisations, in the implementation of projects as part of Erasmus+ and Daphne and with quality monitoring of EU projects. Their strengths are the development and implementation of pedagogic approaches and measures in counselling and childcare, Research and scientific studies on gender issues, Quality Monitoring, Dissemination and Public Events.

Frauen im Brennpunkt is being supported financially and works closely together with the following regional and national stakeholders: Government of Tyrol, Labour Market Service Tyrol, Ministry for Women and Health, Ministry for Family and Youth, Chamber of Labour, City of Innsbruck and multiple other municipalities of Tyrol.

### **Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo “Danilo Dolci” (CSC) – Italy**

Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo “Danilo Dolci” is based on the experience of social and educational work carried out by Danilo Dolci and his collaborators, which started in Eastern Sicily back in 1952. The Centre stemmed from the need of offering the local communities a reality committed to



practically solve the local problems, developing a creative space in which fostering awareness and bottom-up planning were the center of the action, paving the way for a real change.

Since the beginning, the main focus of the Center were non-violent education practices as well as the development of a methodology – the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach – able to ease creative development at school and in the local territory.

At present, Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo “Danilo Dolci” is a non-profit association involving young people and adults, which mainly acts through projects in the educational field carried out in cooperation with schools, universities, institutions, associations and social groups both at local and international level.

### **Bimec – Bulgaria**

The organization was created in 2007 and develops its activity in the field of Vocational and soft skills training for adults (soft skills, specific motivational trainings, corporate training, marketing and sales; project management, entrepreneurship, tourism) among others.

BIMEC has experience in project management and implementation and our consultants manage and consult on different projects as a service for our partners. This experience makes us a reliable project-coordinator for the efficient and effective project implementation, especially related to motivational issues.

BIMEC is a member of the Bulgarian Human Resources Management and Development Association and as such has access to a wide network for promoting the idea of integrating young people into the world of work. BIMEC is also a member and co-founder of the Adult Training Institute, which incorporates the efforts of a network of training institutions, adult trainers and VET trainers to raise the quality and adequacy of adult and VET training.

### **Servicio regional de empleo y formación - Spain**

SEF is the Regional body in Murcia Region in charge of the promotion, development and enforcement of the regional labour policies related to: Employment, Career Orientation and Training. It belongs to the Regional Ministry of Economy Development, Tourism and Employment.

SEF counts with 25 offices distributed throughout the Region and the National Reference Centre of Chemistry for Vocational Education and Training. There is more than 125 guidance counsellors distributed throughout the Region, that give advice and career orientation to unemployed people.

Its mission is related to the efficiency in the matching of offer and demand in the regional labour market promoting the required profiles and providing the subsequent training adjusted to the needs. In this sense, SEF joins training policies with social policies of stable and quality employment.

SEF unifies regional resources and services related to employment. It coordinates its activities with the rest of the Public Administration Departments, being a vehicle of participation of social agents in the elaboration and design of strategies for employment and regional development.

## **INOVA+ - Portugal**

With 20 years of experience in several European funding programmes and remarkable success in this area, INOVA+ INTERNATIONAL collaborates with the European Commission and other international bodies for the implementation of specialised projects and services.

In cooperation with other partners, we can coordinate and implement high impact projects, bringing innovation to various sectors.

Acting as an enabler for the participation of other organisations in this highly competitive environment, we position ourselves as a specialised service provider in the development of competitive applications and in the project implementation stage.

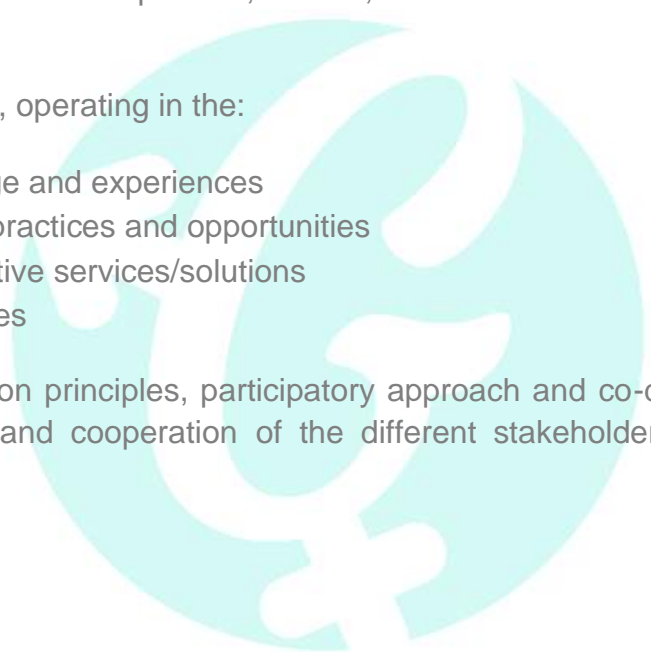
With a presence in – Portugal, Belgium, Poland and Germany – we work alongside experienced and multidisciplinary team members, who regularly act as external evaluators and experts in different European programmes. Our experience and expertise, combined with an international network of renowned partners, allows us to embark on initiatives in the most diverse areas.

We provide a portfolio of services for the development, reinforcement and improvement of individuals, organisations and communities' skills and capacities, at local, national and international levels.

We are a key partner in education and training, operating in the:

- Cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experiences
- Identification of needs, strengths/good practices and opportunities
- Design, testing and validation of innovative services/solutions
- Transfer and replication of good practices

Our work methodology is based on cooperation principles, participatory approach and co-design methods. We believe that the engagement and cooperation of the different stakeholders are essential in reaching the desired outcomes.



## Instituto Politécnico do Porto - Portugal

The Polytechnic of Porto (P.PORTO) is a public higher education institution, the largest and the most dynamic Polytechnic in the country, 1st position in the ranking of the Polytechnic and, in conjunction with major universities, is placed in the upper reaches of the ranking of National Higher Education.

P.PORTO considers its mission to be the leader of Polytechnic subsystem in Portugal, taking its social responsibility in the presence of the community and society, in an international frame of reference, demanding for the excellence. Over the past 30 years, the Polytechnic of Porto built and solidified a universe composed of various units and Services, namely: Porto Design Factory; Porto School Hotel; Porto Executive Academy; E-Learning and Teaching Innovation Unit.

The research line *Human Resources: enhancing people, organisations and communities of CEOs.PP* – Center for Organizacional and Social Studies of Polytechnic of Porto has a mission to produce and disseminate technical-scientific knowledge of HR that translates into an effective improvement in the understanding and intervention of individual, organizational and societal phenomena in the workplace. The research is oriented towards results that support the real organizational decision making, the availability of resources and strategic tools for HR professionals, the adequacy of HR education and training and contribute for the continuous development of human resources social policies.

### 1.2. GENEUS PROJECT

The latest neuropsychological science research proves that women have different intellectual strengths (e.g. planning of actions, social competences, conflict solving), than men (more mathematical and virtual strengths). At the same time most of the tests and evaluations carried out by universities, employment agencies, schools and s.o. are based on parameters which are much more favorable for male applicants.

GeNeus – Gender Neutral Tools and Test for Selection Processes – project aims at the development, promotion and mainstreaming of a Set of Gender Neutral Selection Tools and Test.

Using gender Neutral Selection Tools and Test when accessing jobs and education can increase gender neutrality and – at the same time – would reduce the dropout rate and improve the succeeding rate for women in recruitment and selection processes, thus contributing to equal educational and professional opportunities for men and women.

Along the project, the objectives are: i) to get an overview of the reality, demands and gaps of the selection processes in different environments; ii) to assess and analyse these processes, in a gender-neutral perspective; to produce and deliver useful and free tools and test and the instructions for their usage, guaranteeing a gender-neutral approach. At long-term, we expect that the project

contributes to equal opportunities of both genders in educational and professional access to jobs and education.

Figure 1 | Focus of GeNeus Project



**Target groups** of GeNeus project are:

- HR professionals, schools at secondary level, professional consultancies, Recruitment and assessment agencies, Woman NGOs, VET training centres, Employers – organizations and people who apply performance diagnostics (test procedures), and decision makers in these organisations
- Small and medium enterprises (SME)
- Public employment centers or related services as their measures influence very much national professional agendas, and decision makers public administration (PA) organisations
- Post-secondary and professional education (PSPE) institutes, job orientation centers regarding study choice at high school and university level, and decision makers in these organisations
- Decision makers in public administration and organisations who are working with tests

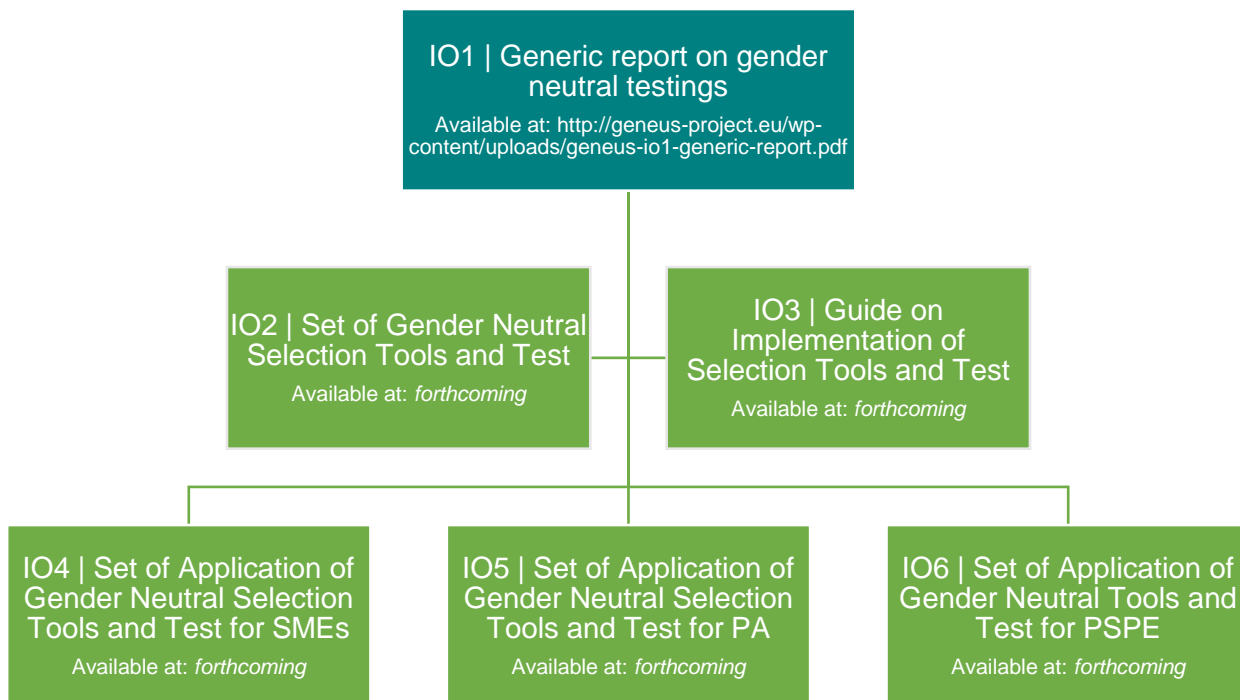
GeNeus project is design on six Intellectual Outputs (IO) to create a sustainability of the project and engaging different areas and stakeholders:

- IO1 – Generic report on national testing processes is about how SMEs, Public Administration and Post-Secondary Professional Education deal with selection processes and testing system in Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal and Spain.
- IO2 is a Set of gender neutral selection tools and a test which can be implemented in different areas of selection (job access and education access).



- IO3 is a Guide on Implementation of Selection Tools and Test on how to implement and conduct above mentioned tools and test in the right way
- IO4, 5 and 6 are Sets of application for specific contexts related to each one of target groups: IO4 is orientated to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), IO5 for Public Administration (PA) organisations and IO6 for Post-Secondary Professional Education (PSPE) organisations.

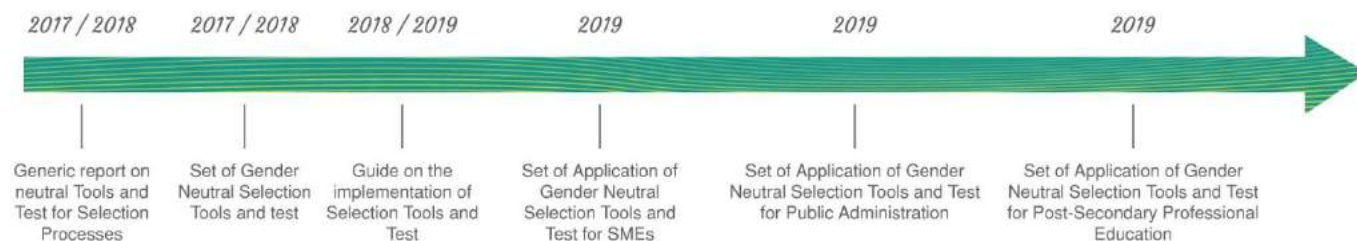
Figure 2 | GeNeus Intellectual Outputs



In Figure 3, we present the timeline of GeNeus project related to the publication of each IO.



Figure 3 | GeNeus project timeline



The New Skills Agenda for Europe (European Commission, 2016) calls on Member States to improve the quality of skills and their relevance for the labour market. The need of improving skills such as reading and writing, numeracy and digital skills and entrepreneurial mind-set are highly documented. Concerning promoting transversal skills and finding ways to better anticipate the labour market needs, the European Commission presents data that “40% of European employers report that they cannot find people with the right skills to grow and innovate”. According to the recent proposal European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (European Commission, 2018) the key skills are: i) Literacy Competence; ii) Languages Competence; iii) Science, Technological, Engineering and Mathematical Competence; iv) Digital Competence; v) Personal, Social and Learning Competence; vi) Civic Competence; vii) Entrepreneurship Competence; and viii) Cultural Awareness and Expression Competence. The different national Education and Training Systems must be able to equip people with these competences.

Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship. They are developed in a lifelong learning perspective, from early childhood throughout adult life, and through formal, non-formal and informal learning in all contexts, including family, school, workplace, neighbourhood and other communities.

The key competences are all considered equally important; each of them contributes to a successful life in society. Competences can be applied in many different contexts and in a variety of combinations. They overlap and interlock; aspects essential to one domain will support competence in another. Skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, communication and negotiation skills, analytical skills, creativity, and intercultural skills are embedded throughout the key competences.

Based on IO1 results, GeNeus project focused on four transversal competencies - Initiative/proactivity, Organisation, Social competence and Problem Solving.



### 1.3. THE INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 6 (IO6)

IO 6 is the Set of Application of Gender Neutral Tools and Test for PSPE. It is specially oriented to Post-secondary and professional education institutes, job orientation centers regarding study choice at high school and university level, and decision makers in these organisations.

PSPE (Post-Secondary Professional Education) researched by GeNeus partnership focuses on the selection of candidates for education by the PSPE organisations and if considered relevant by the PSPE organisations also on the selection of candidates for a job, as well as for competencies development of students/trainees.

From previous IO, namely IO1, 2 and 3 we systematize some relevant information specially orientated to PSPE organisations. According to information collected in the interviews with professionals of the education and training organizations and systematized in IO1 "Generic Report on Gender Neutral Testing", the PSPEs surveyed respond that they evaluate professional, academic and personal skills. Furthermore, most of them highlight the following competences/skills: i) Mathematical and verbal intelligence; ii) Concentration; iii) Personality; iv) Memory; v) Emotional & social intelligence. Other skills they assess: i) Behaviour: specific to situations and work; ii) Adaptation of principles and personal values to those of the company; iv) Adaptation of personal circumstances to challenges and personal circumstances involved in accepting the position (commuting, travelling, timetable, etc.); v) Adaptation of objectives and anxieties to the possibilities offered by the position, stress management, organisational skills.

PSPEs place a lot of emphasis on academic criteria. Documents and previous experience (diplomas, certificates, titles, publications and attendance on conferences, etc.) are evaluated, to a different extent. Some PSPEs only look for an adequate diploma to be present, some evaluate qualitatively some or all of the other factors mentioned. Tests and interviews are conducted as a method of evaluation. Often the tests work as filters which determine whether the candidate is worth holding an interview with. The procedures vary in the different countries and PSPEs; there are both standardised and not standardised procedures.

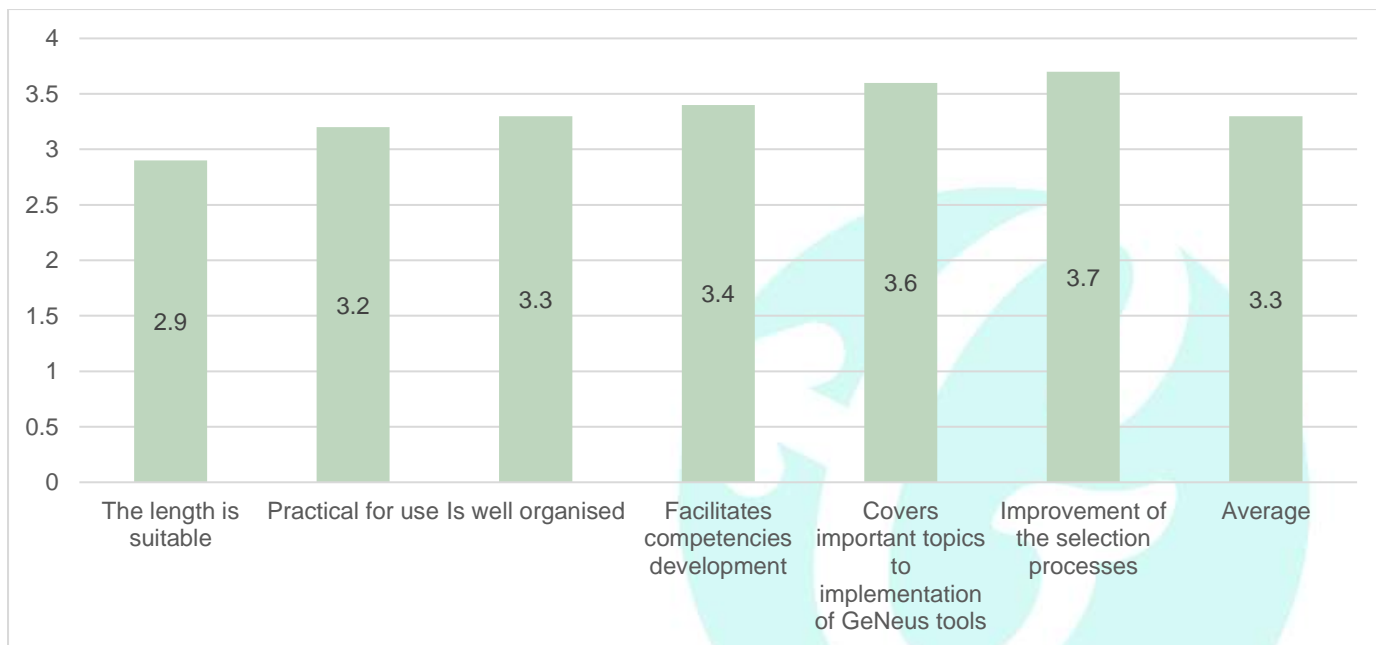
Tests, when present in PSPE practices, are more often standardised, whereas interviews more often aren't. Practical tests, such as music and sports tests, as stated by Portugal, are more often in-house. The method of "group tests" is only mentioned by Spain. The different methods evaluate relatively the same qualities of the candidates; however, it varies from country to country which specific competencies are evaluated by tests and which by interviews. For example, language competencies in the interviewed PSPEs in Portugal are evaluated through interviews and in Austria – through tests. Other factors that are commonly taken into account are professional/academic background, scientific knowledge, scientific quality and validation, contemporary knowledge and research ability, life situation, self-description, cultural and intellectual background, motivations, organisation values and identification, intelligence, personality and social and emotional intelligence and generally qualities needed to fit the specific course/position.

The majority of the PSPEs interviewed do not identify specific needs regarding testing that they have, which are not met. However, one PSPE states that tests evaluating personality are needed, rather than intelligence tests. The interviews conducted with Spanish PSPEs show, that the specific requirements for the qualifications of the people carrying out the test could be a problem, however the high costs are generally a bigger issue.

To evaluate the impact and the quality of the tools and guidelines of the set of tools presented in IO6, and to collect suggestions, all Partners carried out 2 interviews with PSPE professionals (Appendix - Template of Set Assessment and Validation). In total, 10 interviews were carried out in the five countries of the partnership with potential end users.

These PSPE professionals, potential users of these tools, answered six questions using their level of satisfaction according to the criterion (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly agree). Comments were requested on each question. As we can see on figure 4, in a minimum range of 1 point to a maximum of 4 points, the average satisfaction with the instruments is very positive (3.3), in the 'Agree' level. The least positive issue, still with a reasonably high score (2.9 points out of 4, almost in the 'Agree' level) is the item *The length of the set is suitable*. Regarding this topic, it is important to know that the financing agency requires a solid description of the procedures and findings, which does not allow for lighter los. The most valued item *The content of the set facilitates the improvement of the selection processes* (3.7 points out of 4). These results are very rewarding in the whole, specially because the most valued item by IO6 target group is aligned with the purpose of the IO and the project itself.

Figure 4 | Validation results of IO6



Legend: 1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Agree, 4 - Strongly agree

Considering the global set of observations obtained, it is important to point out some important aspects that were referred during the interviews carried out with PSPE actors, namely that (i) more than the process of development and improvement, the set of tools presented in this IO facilitates and promotes self-reflection and self-diagnosis on skills (ii) that the time of application is suitable comparing to the methodologies used in assessment centers (iii) that it is a clear, simple and well organized set of tools, prepared for quick and easy appropriation, (iv) that the set supports a fair and objective selection process.

Despite this global positive appreciation, one of the interviewees also referred that some tools are too standardized and not very dynamic and that some tools may only make sense if used together, which can make the process too long in an age of “speed recruitment”.

**The parts that were more appreciated were:** (i) the pedagogical activities that may be developed (particularly the The Pedagogical activity - *General Competencies for Employability: where am I and what can I improve?*) and the Resource - *Personal Development Plan* as it can be a valuable tool for students to define their goals and the path to achieve them; (ii) the Questionnaire on General Competencies for Employability; (iii) in general the generic gender neutral toolbox for competencies development processes, (iv) the analytical exercises for problem solving, (v) the use of the the STAR method - behavioral-based questions for the interview guidelines, (vi) the recommendations (chapter 4) that were considered also useful.

One of the interviewees also referred that it found useful the information about situation in different countries of the project partners. This means that the majority of the contents of this IO were identified as the ones they liked most by the different interviewed.

**Only one person referred pointed one downside of the set,** he/she considered the set's profile template proposal too limited to technical, academic and / or formal skills. Another interviewee, found that the content of one of the chapters of the set (Chapter 2) may be useful just for certain audiences content.

One of the questions for tool users was *whether they believed that this Set may have an efficient and positive impact on the way organization conducts student selection for the courses, responds to pre-selection employers needs of candidates and develops student's/trainees' cross competencies.* If this is not true explain why.

**All interviewees considered that this Set will have an efficient and positive impact on the way organization conducts student selection for the courses, responds to pre-selection employers needs of candidates and develops student's/trainees' cross competencies..** Answers like “Yes, that would be a great tool to promote the consciousness in our workshops, for instance, of how can we work out our soft skills to be stronger in the labour market”; “Yes, I believe this set can efficiently and positively assist organizations in their profile identification / selection / development processes, promoting greater equality and knowledge as well as effective communication. At the same time, I believe that this set will help to make the selection process more transparent and essentially based on the candidates”; “Yes, I believe that the document may be useful in developing students' competences, but not so much in the selection of students”; “Yes, although I am not directly involved

in this process in our University”; “Yes, set of tools are organised and easy to use, but are scarce” and “Yes, but need increase the number of tools in the set. The set are only in 8 tools / tokens”. As we can see there is a sense of usefulness although they expected more tools on set.

When asked about other additional comments the answers were: “We must congratulate all your work, based on science, that promotes and facilitates the work of recruitment professionals”; “I noticed a significant duplication between IP 2 and IP 3”; “I really don't think the general evaluation list adds something new, as companies already have their own elements many times suggested by integrated management systems”; “I do not see very much of the gender-neutral approach in the tools”.

It can be concluded that users and potential users of these tools in this particular sector find the toolkit useful both in selecting and raising awareness and developing skills, although some would expect more tools and would be quicker to respond. The project team sought to strike a balance between the length of the instrument and its quantity / diversity and somehow understands these two critiques. Some expected more instruments (which would still be time consuming), others prefer faster testing (which reduces the number / diversity of instruments, as well as depth and accuracy).

This IO is organized in four chapters, the Introduction, Post-Secondary Professional Education in Europe, GeNeus tools application for PSPE organisations and Recommendations.

The Introduction contains GeNeus project and partner's presentation in order to frame IO6. We finalize the Introduction with its aims, target group and previous results from IO1, 2 and 3.

Chapter 2 is a framework on PSPE in Europe, starting with a brief portrait/overview, identifying key players and regulatory institutions. There are also identified regulatory institutions, professionals, contexts and trainees/student's selection process procedures in Austrian, Bulgarian, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish PSPE organisations.

Chapter 3 is orientated to specific application of GeNeus tools and tests for PSPE. A first part is dedicated to selection processes and a second on to competencies development processes.

The last chapter is dedicated to identifying a set of recommendations for professionals of the Post Secondary Institutions involved in selection processes and in competences development.





## 2. Post Secondary Professional Education in Europe

In this subchapter we pretend to present a brief portrait concerning the Post Secondary Professional Education in Europe, namely in terms of its organization, main tools, regulatory institutions, organizations and networks.

### 2.1. POST SECONDARY PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN EUROPE: BRIEF PORTRAIT

The European Commission<sup>1</sup> recognizes that Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a key element of lifelong learning systems, which equip citizens with knowledge, skills and competences required in particular occupations and on the labour market.

VET responds to the needs of the economy, but also provides learners with skills important for personal development and active citizenship. Enterprise performance, competitiveness, and research and innovation can also be boosted by VET, as well as being a central aspect of successful employment and social policy.

In Europe, Vocational education and training (VET) systems can rely on a well-developed network of VET providers. These networks are governed with the involvement of social partners, such as employers and trade unions, and in different bodies; for example, chambers, committees and councils.

Vocational education and training (VET) systems consist of initial and continuing VET.

- **Initial vocational education and training (I-VET)** is usually carried out at upper secondary level before students begin working life. It takes place either in a school-based environment (mainly in the classroom) or in a work-based setting, such as training centres and companies. This varies from country to country, depending on national education and training systems, and economic structures.
- **Continuing VET (C-VET)** takes place after initial education and training, or after beginning working life. It aims to upgrade knowledge, help citizens acquire new skills, retrain and further their personal and professional development. C-VET is largely work-based with the majority of learning taking place in a workplace.

According to EQAVET, **the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training**<sup>2</sup>, there are several related initiatives for vocational education and training to help make qualifications, experiences and skills better appreciated and easier to recognise throughout the EU. The aim is to give greater access to learning or employment opportunities in different countries and

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<sup>1</sup> Information adapted from the European Commission website, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-vocational-education-and-training-vet\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-vocational-education-and-training-vet_en)

<sup>2</sup> Information adapted from the EQAVET website, available at: <https://www.eqavet.eu/What-We-Do/European-VET-Initiatives>

encourage greater mobility for individuals, businesses and other organisations. Other initiatives relate to research, cooperation and providing expertise in the field of vocational education and training.

The **European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning** (EQF) aims to better link different national qualifications systems, acting as a translation device for employers and individuals to better understand qualifications from different EU countries, thus making it easier to work, study or hire staff abroad.

The **European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training** (ECVET) is being developed to help the transfer and recognition of learning experiences in Europe, including those outside formal training systems.

**Europass** helps people make their qualifications and skills better understood and recognised throughout Europe, increasing their employment prospects. Its web portal includes interactive tools that, for example, allow users to create a CV in a common European format.

**European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network** (ELGPN) aims to assist the EU Member States in moving European cooperation on lifelong guidance forward in both the education and the employment sectors.

The **European Quality Charter for Mobility** constitutes the quality reference document for education and training stays abroad. It complements, from the quality point of view, the 2001 Recommendation on mobility for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers and has the same scope.

The **European Research Overview** (ERO) promotes European VET research reporting and cooperation.

**Cedefop** is one of the EU's decentralised agencies. Founded in 1975, Cedefop supports development of European vocational education and training (VET) policies and contributes to their implementation. The agency is helping the European Commission, EU Member States and the social partners to develop the right European VET policies.

Cedefop is the EU organisation that brings together policymakers, employers' organisations and trade unions, training institutions, teachers and trainers, and learners of all ages – everyone with a stake in vocational education and training. Therefore, Cedefop works closely with the European Commission, Member States' governments, representatives of employers and trade unions, VET researchers and practitioners. It provides them with up-to-date information on developments in VET as well as opportunities for policy debate.

At the crossroads between education systems and the world of work, Cedefop operates as a forum, allowing the organisations with a stake in its work to share ideas and debate how best to improve vocational education and training in Europe. It shares its expertise with political organisations and the 2 sides of industry in the EU countries to help them generate learning and working opportunities.



Cedefop works to strengthen European cooperation and provide the evidence on which to base European VET policy. Cedefop's added value is the high quality of its comparative analyses and expertise gathered through research and networking, which are used to: (i) Provide technical advice and propose ideas for VET policies; (ii) Fill knowledge gaps and generating new insights that identify trends in and challenges for VET; (iii) Increase awareness of VET's image and importance; (iv) Bring together policy-makers, social partners, researchers and practitioners to share ideas and debate the best ways to improve VET policies; (v) Support and encourage joint European approaches, principles and tools to improve VET.

**Cedefop Research Arena** (Cedra) aims to develop and share new thinking about the links between the labour market and skills, a topic which is relevant for academic researchers as well as policy makers at European and national levels.

**European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training** (EfVET) is a unique Europe-wide professional association which has been created by and for providers of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in all European countries.

**European Association for Education of Adults** (EAEA) is a European NGO with 130 member organisations from 41 countries working in the fields of adult learning.

The **Training of Trainers Network** (TTnet) is a network of national networks set up by Cedefop in 1998 as a Pan-European forum for key players and decision-makers in the training and professional development of vocational teachers and trainers.

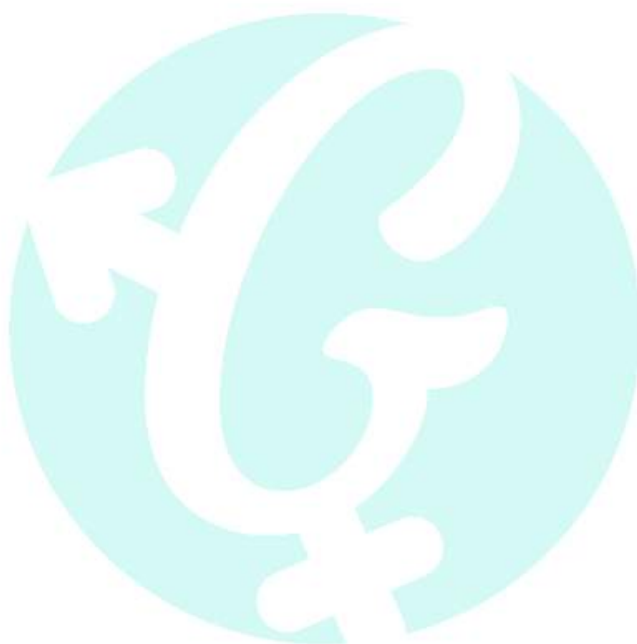
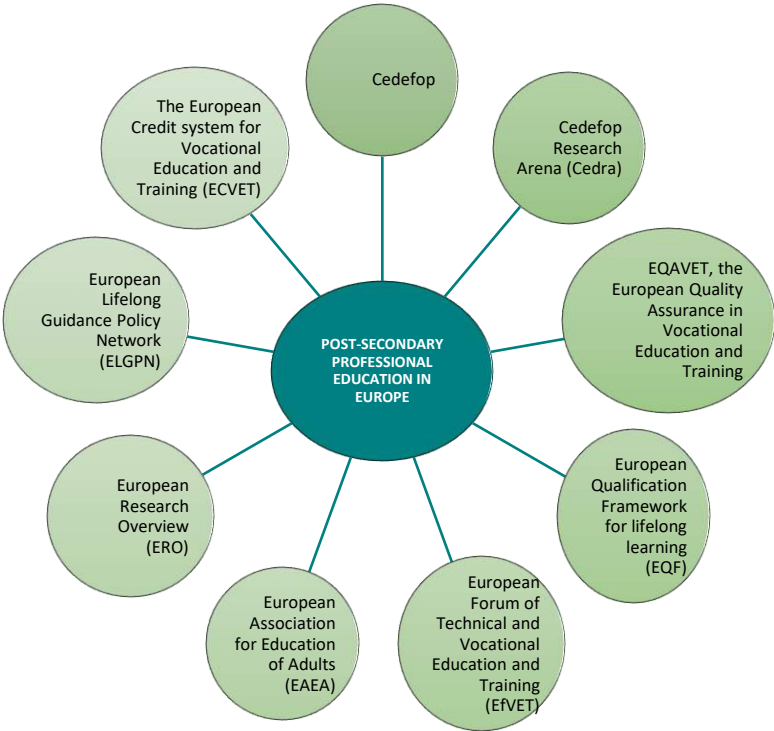


Figure 5 | Post-Secondary Professional Education in Europe: key-players



## 2.2. THE POST SECONDARY PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN GENeUS PARTNERS' COUNTRIES

In this subchapter particular attention will be given to the post-secondary professional education in GeNeus partners' countries, characterizing the VET system in these European specific countries, namely in terms of regulatory institutions, key-players, professionals, contexts and trainees/students selection process procedures.

### 2.2.1. Specificities in Austrian PSPE organizations

#### VET system and key-players

According to European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sport (GD VET) of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (BMBWF) is responsible for those tasks of educational administration within the VET sector which – according to legislation – are within the BMBWF remit. GD VET and all the others are now the responsibility of the BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research).

New is that school legislation is implemented in governmental school authorities and the regional education boards at provincial level are not divided anymore. Now they are called in general the Education Administration. There is one Education Administration in each state of Austria.

Education Administration, in each state of Austria. The GD VET of the BMUKK is in charge of the following areas of school-based education: pedagogical matters and subject- and occupation-specific issues (e.g. curriculum development); continuing and further training of teachers; questions related to location and facilities; school development and research on education, training and qualifications; international cooperation; and much more.

VET schools and colleges provide **initial vocational education and training** (IVET) programmes with different duration and at various levels in addition to broad general education from the ninth school year.

**Post-secondary VET** course include: i) 2 years: full-time school following completion of the degree; ii) Schools and colleges for people employed; 2 – 4 years: above mentioned school types in the form of an evening school.

**Initial vocational education and training** (IVET) is the major concern of VET schools and colleges, alongside the provision of sound general education. IVET's graduates are able to enter directly into a profession or to different continuing vocational education and training (CVET) opportunities/paths.

VET schools and colleges have been increasing the number of students for the past two decades, not only because they provide a balanced set of training paths (broad general education, occupation-related theory and occupation-related practice, including compulsory or optional work-placements, depending on the type of school) and because of a variety of specific training opportunities of different duration.

Since the early 1990s, VET colleges have been in particular demand, as they offer a Reifeprüfung certificate and VET diploma, which – with the acquisition of professional qualifications, the general higher education entrance qualification, and recognition of these programmes at a European level – ensures that graduates achieve a high qualification level.

EU Directive 2005/36/EC provides access to a regulated profession in another Member State where access is contingent upon possession of a diploma certifying successful completion of higher or university education of (up to) four years' duration.

The introduction of the *Berufsreifeprüfung* in 1997 has led to an increased permeability of the education system.

The ***Berufsreifeprüfung*** does not lead to the acquisition of any professional qualifications but provides the general higher education entrance qualification to (i) graduates of the dual system (apprenticeship-leave examination), (ii) graduates of VET schools of at least three years' duration, (iii) graduates of schools for healthcare and nursing, (iv) graduates of schools for paramedical training, as well as to (v) graduates of the skilled workers' examination pursuant to the Vocational Training Act for Agriculture and Forestry and (vi) people with the entrance examination pursuant to the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation.

For admission to the *Berufsreifeprüfung* exams, school attendance is not required.

The *Berufsreifeprüfung* comprises 4 partial exams: German, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Language, and an occupation-related Specialist Area.

The *Berufsreifeprüfung* can be taken at VET colleges, secondary academic schools, nursery teacher training colleges, and the colleges of social pedagogy. The first partial exam can be taken as soon as candidates have turned 17, the last partial exam when they are 19.

**Bridge courses** are offered by adult education institutions recognised by the BMUKK (e.g. vocational training institutes [bfi], economic promotion institutes [WIFI], adult education centres [Volkshochschulen]) and some VET schools and colleges. In principle, exams set by VET schools and colleges and their special forms for people in employment, including the Reife- und Diplomprüfung and the final examination of VET school, can be taken without prior school attendance.

**Educational guidance and counselling at VET schools and colleges** is provided by specially trained teachers, who are available for information and guidance, preparation for decision-making, assistance and individual advice to pupils. One to three teachers at every school are active in educational guidance and counselling, depending on the number of students there.

Educational counselling teachers work with feeder schools, with educational counselling teachers at lower secondary and lower secondary academic school, and other advisory services for school leavers (the Public Employment Service Austria, the representative body of university students Austrian Students' Union, etc.).

In the field of **Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET)**, there are no explicitly defined legal or educational policy supervisory functions for the whole sector. BMBFW bears the



responsibility for CVET in the school sector and in higher education institutions. CVET providers in non-school and non-higher educational CVET institutions are largely autonomous within the framework of legal specifications and mainly subject to the market conditions of supply and demand.

### **Professionals and contexts**

In Austria different kind of professionals can perform these three specific functions within the context of Post-Secondary Professional Education (PSPE): (i) Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses; (ii) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development; (iii) Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences.

#### **a) Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses**

For vocational highschool no testing is performed to apply. Students only need the certificate of the secondary school, except of arts and music, whose teachers of those subjects assess applicants.

For vocational training, dual vocational training: General Manager or Human Resources Department of the company where the training will be done, these recruiters can have any formal education.

To select students for some courses in University (Architecture, Medicine, Biologies, Psychology): are used set of tests defined by the government (Ministry of education, Science and Research), which are evaluated by the computer.

University of Applied Studies, Pedagogical University (teachers) and health (nurses) and Sports: Assessment by Department of Studies - University graduates;

To select students for courses in Universities specialized on Music and on Arts, the assessment is performed by musicians or artists that are famous or have graduated at University.

For applying to all other courses in the tertiary level of education, no selection process is needed, only the certificate of secondary level of education.

#### **b) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development**

Psychologists, Social workers, pedagogues, teachers, in University context, work with students and people who strive for professional career.

Trainers: with advanced trainings (professional education e.g.): Any formal education as basis of working in this field necessary, as long as you attend further studies, they mainly work with young people;

Staff of employment service: Mainly having graduated at a University or at least high school.

#### **c) Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences**

Psychologists, social workers, pedagogues, teachers: graduated at Universities.

Trainers with advanced trainings to get more pedagogical and methodological knowledge, no graduation necessary, they can have a vocational training or high school degree and attend some further training courses specialised in the field of communication, orientation, counselling etc.

### **Trainees/students selection process procedures**

Does it exist the practice to identify and select trainees/students? How is the process of identifying and selecting trainees/students done?

As previously said, in the Austrian context in general does not exist the practice to identify and select trainees/students.

It depends on the profession: Universities of applied studies, Pedagogical Universities, University of Health and Life Science: Assessement: Test about general knowledge, testing the basics of the field you want to study in and excercises that show that you will be appropriate in the field you have chosen.

Universities or Colleges of Arts and Music have special auditions or you need a portfolio.

Students of Medicine, Architecture, Biologies, Psychologies and at some Universities Studies in the field of economics have to pass a multiple choice test that is created by the Federal Ministry of education, Science and Research and evaluated;

For vocational highschool: test only when it is about Arts or Music or Sports - an Assessment Centre.

Ordinary vocational trainings (craftsmen, service provider - shopassistant, hairdresser, Administration) the same recruiting process as every ordinary employee has depending on the company (sometimes assessment centres, sometimes tests or just an interview).





## 2.2.2. Specificities in Bulgarian PSPE organizations

### VET system and key-players

According to European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)<sup>3</sup>, vocational education and training in Bulgaria provides for the acquisition of secondary education and a professional qualification. The system of VET prepares citizens for participation in the economy and other fields of public life, creating conditions for acquiring professional qualifications and for continuous improvement. The system of vocational education and training includes career orientation, vocational training and vocational education; validation of professional knowledge, skills and competencies. Vocational training can be provided in the form of work-based learning (dual training system).

School VET begins when students are 13 or 14 years old, and WBL (dual training system) begins at 16. The legislative framework for VET in Bulgaria includes: the new Pre-school and School Education Act (2015) and the Vocational Education and Training Act (1999). The latter sets out the normative framework for the organisation of IVET and CVET with a view to guaranteeing the quality of VET in accordance with labour market needs and EU trends. The VET Act regulates conditions ensuring the functionality and development of the VET system based on cooperation among VET and government institutions, local authorities and social partners.

Continuing vocational education and training (CVET) in Bulgaria is defined as training to be delivered to persons over 16 years, which are no longer in the formal education system. It addresses employed and unemployed persons.

Planning at CVET provider level (including identification of training needs), the Centres for Vocational Training are expected to identify the needs of training by researching the needs of employers in the sector and the profession. In some cases, the employers approach Centres to ask them to organise and conduct training for their needs. The competition among the Centres for Vocational Training for learners and training programmes triggers a demand-driven approach and motivation.

Concerning the **regulatory institutions**, Authority that regulates all education in Bulgaria, including post-secondary is **The Ministry of Education and Science** Web site in Bulgarian: <https://www.mon.bg/>. The Ministry of Education and Science creates and applies national education policy, and also plans and organizes the development of education by putting together long-term programs and operational projects. The Ministry controls whether higher education institutions respect the law and in the cases of legal infringement addresses the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency with proposals to revoke accreditation status. The Ministry keeps a record of all accredited institutions and their programs/courses of study in a State Registry of Accredited Institutions and Programs.

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<sup>3</sup> Informação adotada do site da EQAVET, disponível em: <https://www.eqavet.eu/what-we-do/implementing-the-framework/bulgaria>

The **National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency** (<https://www.neaa.government.bg/en/home-en?catid=0&id=629>) is a statutory body for evaluation, accreditation and monitoring of the quality in higher education institutions and scientific organizations aiming at the enhancement of their teaching and research, as well as of their development as scientific, cultural, and innovative organizations. The Agency monitors the ability of institutions, their main units and branches to provide good quality of education and scientific research through an internal quality assurance system.

The **National Information Centre for Academic Recognition and Mobility** (ENIC/NARIC) was established in 1994 within the International Relations Department of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science. The members of the staff work in close cooperation with the Legislation Commissions, which are expert bodies of the Ministry of Education and Science entrusted with recognition of foreign credentials. The Centre is responsible for the certification of all national qualifications destined for external evaluation by foreign institutions.

The Vocational Training Centres, are governed and licensed by **NAVET - The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training** [www.navet.government.bg/en/](http://www.navet.government.bg/en/). The Agency issues and revokes licenses for vocational training and vocational guidance; supervises the activities and assesses the quality of training in licensed institutions in the system of vocational training; develops and presents to the Minister of Education and Science for approval: the List of professions for vocational education and training, etc. The VET centres offer trainings in different professions. The training may be financed by a company that employs/wants to employ the trainee, by the trainee itself or by some government programme.

## **Professionals and contexts**

In Bulgaria different professionals perform three specific functions within the context of Post-Secondary Professional Education (PSPE): (i) Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses; (ii) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development; (iii) Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences.

### **a) Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for courses**

Professionals responsible for the selection of students for professional courses in higher education. Students are accepted in Bulgarian Universities after examination on relevant academic competencies to the specialization they are applying for. Only for VET (professional courses) most often there is no selection, besides education level required; Professionals responsible for the selection of trainees in VET system.

### **b) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development**

- (i) Counsellors (psychologists) for orientation and career definition/development in secondary schools;
- (ii) Counsellors (psychologists) for orientation and career definition/development in Higher Education Institutions;
- (iii) Professionals working in private enterprises (consulting firms, e.g.) engaged in orientation and career definition/development;
- (iv) Professionals working in the Labor offices, engaged with career orientation.

### c) **Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences**

- (i) Trainers/teachers working in VET system teaching specific contents that explore assessment and development of trainees/students' soft skills;
- (ii) Professionals working in private enterprises (training companies, e.g.) engaged in assessment and development of competencies; (iv) Professionals working in private enterprises (training departments of large enterprises, e.g.) engaged in assessment and development of competencies.

### **Trainees/students selection process procedures**

Selection of trainees for VET centers is mainly based on requirements for previous education. There exists some selection for trainees for professional training courses in IT, based on experience and mathematic abilities. Mostly no selection is done, apart from some educational requirements due to lack of candidates.

Students are selected to study in Bulgarian Universities after examination on relevant academic competencies to the specialization they are applying for.



### 2.2.3. Specificities in Italian PSPE organizations

#### VET system and key-players

According to European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), compulsory education in Italy lasts for ten years (from ages 6 to 16) and includes the first cycle of education and the first two years of upper secondary school, or the three-/four-year paths of vocational education and training for which Regions have competences. All young people who finish compulsory education and training (at age 16) have a right/duty (diritto/dovere) to education and training for at least 12 years (from age 6 to 18) either in the upper secondary school or until they have gained a professional qualification through the three-/four-years training paths managed by the Regions and Autonomous Provinces or through a specific apprenticeship scheme.

The Italian **IVET system** encompasses both vocational upper secondary education – including technical education (istituto tecnico) and vocational education (istituto professionale) - managed by the Ministry of Education and the initial vocational training (formazione professionale iniziale) managed by the Regions and provided by recognised training agencies operating nationwide.

**Post-secondary (non-tertiary) education and training** is organised by the higher technical education and training system, articulated in two different training pathways offered by Higher Technical Institutes (ITS - Istituti Tecnici Superiori) and by Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTS Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore).

At the completion of the **secondary education**, young people can enter higher education consisting of the university system, organised on the cycles of the Bologna process: a first-level degree after three-year courses (bachelor's), a second-level at the completion of two more years (master's), a doctorate lasting usually three years.

All young people who have left the education system and are going to enter the labour market can get a VET qualification within the **vocational training system** managed by the Regions. IVET courses usually last one year, although there are a few two-year courses. The programmes are targeted at young people, according to their general education qualifications; we distinguish between first level (for those who have just completed compulsory education), second level (see earlier) and third level courses (for those with a tertiary level education).

Finally, there are some **apprenticeship programmes** for young people from ages 15 to 29. In the main apprenticeship programme, young people are awarded a vocational qualification designed in the collective bargaining; there are two small programmes to get a diploma or other qualifications from the secondary and/or higher education system. For adults, employed or unemployed, there is a CVET system that is publicly funded, together with a large range of courses in almost all sectors provided by private providers; these are not considered in the following overview.

The Italian **continuous VET system** is articulated in two main pathways:

— a CVET offer provided by the Fondi Paritetici Interprofessionali per la Formazione Continua (Sectoral training funds) under the control of the Social Partners and established under the Ministry



of Labour. These bilateral funds were established by law in 2000 and became operational in 2004. They are promoted at national level by the central employer organisations along with the trade unions, but they can be articulated at the local level as well. In 2016, 19 funds are operating, providing training for employed people and those in redundancy schemes;

— a CVET offer provided by the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces for all adults, employed or unemployed. This offer is implemented along the same regional regulations as for IVET training offer. So, the QA framework is almost the same for IVET and CVET.

Some adult education is provided within the education system, but the new law is aimed at obtaining qualifications from primary and lower secondary general education.

### **Professionals and contexts**

In Italy, different kind of professionals perform three specific functions within the context of Post-Secondary Professional Education (PSPE): (i) Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses; (ii) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development; (iii) Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences.

#### **(i) Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses**

The persons who conduct the selection process, e.g. interviews, are usually teachers/coordinators of the specific courses of interest. Most courses however are accessed with a test.

#### **(ii) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development**

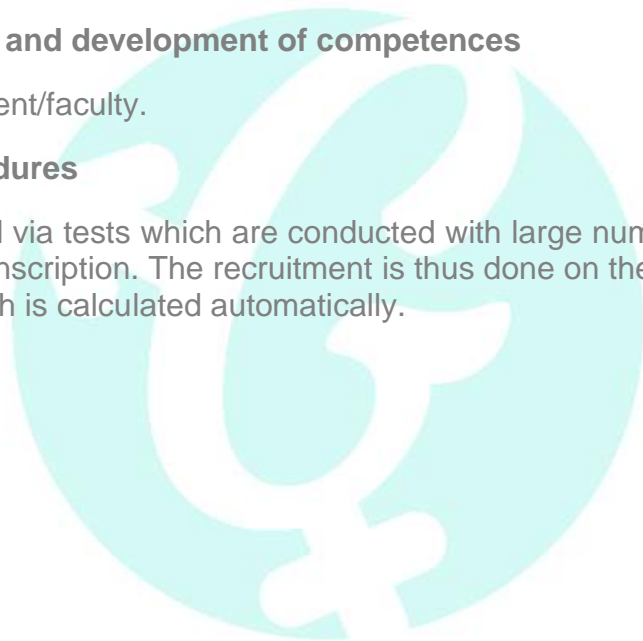
Most PSPEs in Italy have specific career orientation departments, which are headed by psychologists, sociologists, HR experts. At the department levels, counselling is mainly performed by professors/teachers/trainers. In some institutions individual students are followed by tutors who are usually members of faculty or of the pedagogical staff.

#### **(iii) Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences**

Trainers/teachers from the interested department/faculty.

### **Trainees/students selection process procedures**

Students in Italy in PSPEs are mainly selected via tests which are conducted with large number of candidates who access the test via an online inscription. The recruitment is thus done on the basis of the score candidates obtain in the test, which is calculated automatically.



#### 2.2.4. Specificities in Portuguese PSPE organizations

##### VET system and key-players

According to European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) education and training system in Portugal is centrally administered with reference to the definition of major policy lines and curricular, teaching and financial guidelines. The Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira have some independence in this area but are subject to the key national guidelines.

The **major actors** in the administration of the education and training system include three Ministers: Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education. Their intervention is made predominantly by three Directorates: Directorate-General for Employment and Industrial Relations, Directorate-General for Innovation and Curricular Development and Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES). Additionally, the National Agency for Qualification and Professional Education (ANQEP) and Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) also perform an important role in Portuguese VET system.

It is important to highlight these three main public institutions that play an important role in this field: the National Agency for Qualification and Professional Education (ANQEP), the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGES) and the Institute of Employment and Professional Training (IEFP).

The **National Agency for Qualification and Professional Education (ANQEP)** is a Portuguese public institution of national scope, with the purpose of coordinating several training policies for young people and adults. It is responsible for coordinating the implementation of youth and adult education and vocational training policies and ensuring the development and management of the competency recognition, validation and certification system.

The **Directorate General of Higher Education (DGES)** is a public organization responsible to ensure the design, execution and coordination of policies that, within the scope of higher education, are within the government's area of Science, Technology and Higher Education.

Finally, the **Institute of Employment and Professional Training (IEFP)** is a national public employment service. Its mission is to promote the creation and quality of employment and to combat unemployment through the implementation of active employment policies, including vocational training.

The Portuguese **vocational education and training system** comprises pre-primary, basic, secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary, and tertiary education. Post-secondary non-tertiary education comprises specialised technology courses, which prepare and qualify students for work and successful completion of which leads to a diploma in specialised technology.

These courses are divided into credit units which can be transferred to tertiary education courses to which they give access. As a result of Portugal's adhesion to the Bologna Process, tertiary education suffered a profound restructuring, as regards both curriculum content and the assessment system and awarding of degrees. Most of the higher education courses have 3 years + 2 years (master) and in



some cases, the access to the profession requires 5 or 6 years (e.g. lawyer, medicine, architecture ...) that is called *integrated masters*. The usual age of entry into this level of education is 18.

It is relevant to emphasize in this context the Vocational Training Reform Agreement (in 2007), signed by the government and major Social Partners and that creates the necessary background to the strategy of qualification in terms of the implementation of the double certification principal for young people and working age employed adults (through attending modular education and training courses that are accredited for the purposes of academic and/or vocational certification); establishment of the National System of Qualification (creating CNQ); enhance the reformation of the System for the Accreditation of Training Bodies ; strengthen the improvement in the qualifications of trainers and the involvement of the Social Partners in the supervision and encouragement of vocational training for employees .

Since 1985, the Portuguese system has been structured on the basis of eight training levels (considering International Standard Classification of Education). These levels have achieved public visibility and are recognised and accepted by most actors in vocational education and training systems, as well as by the social partners and enterprises. The new National Qualifications Framework will define the new national qualification levels, in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

In general, the VET providers include public, technological and professional schools; universities and other tertiary institutions; training centers of direct management and training professional centers of participated management (both related to the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training); non public operators.

Additionally, the Comprehensive Law on the education system institutionalizes the social partners' participation in vocational education and training. The partners are involved in the general definition of policies and in their pursuance within advisory and social coordination bodies: Economic and Social Council, the National Vocational Training Council and the National Education Council.

Concerning the **post-secondary vocational education and training** the main offer are Specialized Technology Courses that provide a non tertiary vocational education and training (and leads to a diploma of specialised technology and a Level 5 vocational certificate).

**Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET)** - The National Qualification Catalogue is a framework that reflects the system of continuing vocational and training in Portugal: a range of flexible training pathways which make possible to build a vocational qualification project organised in short credit units that allow for the independent certification of skills.

The main forms of continuing vocational education and training are aimed at adults of working age (employed, unemployed and groups at risk of exclusion), including adult education and training courses that are intended to raise academic ability and vocational qualifications and enhance employability and certification of acquired learning (aimed at adults over the age of 18 who have no qualification or whose qualifications are inadequate for integration in labour market and lead to a Cycle 3 basic education certificate and a Level 2 vocational certificate or a secondary-education certificate, 12 years, and a Level 3 vocational certificate).

The **Recognition, Validation and Certification of Skills (RVCC) process** is the most common platform for access to these courses. In addition, there are also courses aimed specifically at groups that face problems in joining the labour market (most of these courses are promoted by the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training).

There are also **continuing vocational education and training at the initiative of enterprises or social partners** in accordance to the Labour Code that enshrines in law the employers' obligation to ensure that every year, at least 10% of workers on permanent contract take part in training courses and to assert the right of every worker to receive a minimum of 35 hours certified training, in average, per year.

Quality assurance in VET is a transversal issue that has high relevance nowadays, not only to achieve important changes (like guaranty the efficacy of VET systems, make easy the access into VET and reinforce the relation between VET and labour market) but also to enhance the process of monitoring the results obtained (by reference to the objectives proposed).

Facing the complexity of the VET system, different entities are involved in the quality assurance process, either in the dependence of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity (MTSS) or in the dependence of the Ministry of Education (ME). There are also entities regulated by both Ministries. The most **relevant entities** in this matter are the following:

- **Directorate-General for Employment and Industrial Relations (DGERT)** – MTSS: central service, directly administrate by the state whose mission is support the conception of the policies related to employment, training and professional certification and certification of training entities by one hand and to professional relations, job environment and health in workplace by the other hand.
- **Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP)** – MTSS: public service of national employment whose mission is promote the creation and quality of work, fighting the unemployment with active policies of employment and vocational training.
- **Cabinet for Strategy and Planning (GEP)** – MTSS: has the mission of guaranty the technical support to the formulation of policies and to sustain the operational planning. Is also responsible for the monitoring and evaluations the execution level of the policies, planning instruments and results of the management systems in articulation with other services of the MTSS.
- **Observatory for Employment and Vocational Training (OEFP)** – MTSS: is an advisory entity whose mission is contributing to diagnose, prevention and solution of problems in the scope of employment and vocational training.
- **Inspectorate-General of Education (IGE)** – ME: has the competence to act directly on the education settings in the services of the ME. It has the responsibility of monitoring, controlling, evaluation and audit technical-pedagogical and administrative-financing activities of the education establishments.
- **Cabinet for Education Statistics and Planning (GEPE)** – ME: has the mission of guaranty the production and analysis of the statistics about education, concerning the technical support to the policies formulation, operational planning and the observation and evaluation of the global results obtained in the educational system.

– **Directorate-General for Innovation and Curricular Development (DGIDC)** – ME: has the mission of assuring the concretization of the policies related with the pedagogical component of the education and to guaranty the technical support to the formulation of these policies related with curricular innovation and development.

– **National Qualifications Agency** – MTSS/ME: is a public institute integrated in the indirect administration of state. Regulated by the MTSS and ME has the mission of coordinating the execution of the educational and vocational training policies related with young people and adults and assuring develop and management of the RVCC system.

### **Professionals and contexts**

In Portugal different kind of professionals perform three specific functions within the context of Post-Secondary Professional Education (PSPE): (i) Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses; (ii) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development; (iii) Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences.

#### **(i) Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses**

Professionals responsible for the selection of students for TESP (cursos técnicos superiores profissionais/ technical courses in higher education, Level 5) and also Professionals responsible for the selection of trainees in VET system (examples: EFA (Educação e Formação de Adultos/ Adult Training and Education; CEF (Curso de Educação e Formação de Jovens/ Education and Training Courses for Youth).

#### **(ii) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development**

Counsellors (psychologists) for orientation and career definition/development in secondary schools, counsellors (psychologists) for orientation and career definition/development in Higher Education Institutions and also Professionals working in private enterprises (consulting firms, e.g.) devoted to orientation and career definition/development.

#### **(iii) Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences**

Trainers/teachers working in VET system teaching specific contents that explore assessment and development of trainees/students' soft skills.

### **Trainees/students selection process procedures**

Selection in PSPE in Portugal is different in tertiary (higher education) and non tertiary education.

**Access to higher education** requires several knowledge tests (according to the field that the student is applying). A list of knowledge tests is defined by the Ministry of Education, and each higher education institution identifies the tests for each course. These tests are held nationally, at

the same time. Students apply to the courses using these scores calculated with the classification of secondary education, and are ranked accordingly. Higher education courses in Portugal have a limited amount of vacancies defined by ME. Some artistic and sport courses have specific selection processes, defined by the Higher Education Institutions and approved by the ME, that relate to those courses, and are held by a jury composed by lecturers in the field.

In **non-tertiary higher education courses** (CET-Technological Specialization Course; TESP - Technical Courses in higher education (Level 5), ...) the selection is held locally, at the institution), which provides them upon a public set of criteria. Students must have completed secondary education level or be in the last year. Candidates are assessed on the basis of exams defined by the institution<sup>4</sup> and by an interview.

At the **secondary level vocational courses**, in the training centers, our research revealed that they have the possibility to select candidates using any kind of selection procedures, as long as they are known to the public, but because of the lack of candidates, they do not use it.



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<sup>4</sup> For example in Porto Tourism School, the 3 exams are: General Culture, English and Mathematics of the 9th grade.



## 2.2.5. Specificities in Spanish PSPE organizations

### VET system and key-players

According to European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), in Spain, vocational training is understood as the set of training activities that prepare people for the qualified performance of diverse occupations, access to employment and active participation in social, cultural and economic life. It includes the sort of teaching provided in **vocational education and training in the education system** (administered jointly between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport and the Education Departments of the Autonomous Communities) and **Vocational Training for Employment** (administered jointly between the Ministry of Employment and Social Security and the Autonomous Communities).

Both of them contemplate the vocational integration and reintegration schemes for workers, and schemes oriented towards continuous training in companies enabling the acquisition and continuous updating of occupational skills.

In the case of **Vocational Education and Training in the Education System**, EQAVET plays an important role as a guide for quality assurance since Royal Decree 1147/2011 emphasises the importance of quality assurance in VET and establishes the National Quality Assurance Framework for VET and the Quality Network for VET. Taking into consideration that the final purpose of the European recommendation is to support Member States to promote and monitor continuous improvement of their VET systems, quality assurance systems in Spain are in line with EQAVET regarding the quality cycle, descriptors and indicators.

**VET in the Spanish education system** is divided into three educational levels: basic level (secondary education, for the award of the Basic Professional Technician); intermediate level (upper secondary, for the award of the Technician Diploma) and higher level (higher education, for the award of the Higher Technician Diploma (EQF Level 5). Vocational training centres may be private or public. Work based learning and the use of occupational standards, as a reference, are compulsory at all levels.

Between 60% and 70% of the offer is Work-based learning (WBL) and within WBL, 20% refers to on the job training module. Besides, it is important to consider dual training at this regard. As far as dual VET is concerned, we are still in progress. **Dual VET** is being implemented gradually. From the first projects developed in 2012-2013 up to now, the number of students has increased from 5,000 to 16,000 in the year 2014-2015. Regarding the number of companies cooperating in dual VET, it is important to note that currently more than 5,000 are involved in these projects in the education system.

Royal Decree 1147/2011, from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, emphasises the importance of quality assurance in VET and establishes the National Quality Assurance Framework for VET. Taking into consideration that the final purpose of the European recommendation is to support Member States to promote and monitor continuous improvement of their VET systems,

quality assurance systems in Spain are in line with EQAVET regarding the quality cycle, descriptors and indicators.

### **Professionals and contexts**

In Spain, different kind of professionals perform three specific functions within the context of Post-Secondary Professional Education (PSPE): (i) Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses; (ii) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development; (iii) Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences.

#### **(i) Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses**

Regarding *Formal Education and Training*:

- Regulated by the Regional Department of Education.
- Secondary Schools for bachelor degree.
- Secondary Schools for VET (Vocational Educational Training).
- Both usually integrated.

The Department of Education is in charge of this selection process. It is an objective process where the main selection criteria is based on marks obtained in previous studies. There is a quota for disabled students.

Regarding *Vocational Training for Employment (VET)*:

- Regulated by the Regional Public Employment Services.
- These are courses designed for employed and unemployed people to improve their employability.
- The selection process is done by the technical staff of the training center.
- The qualifications obtained are equivalent to those which are obtained in formal education.

#### **(ii) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development**

In what concerns *Formal Education and Training*, the Counselling Department, is composed of psychologist and educational specialist who have passed the government competitive public examinations.

Regarding *Vocational Training for Employment (VET)*, the professionals responsible for orientation and career definition/development are Guidance Counsellors from the Regional Public Employment Services and the training centers.

#### **(iii) Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences**

Regarding *Formal Education and Training*, professionals concerned with assessment and development of competences are qualified teachers who have passed the competitive public examinations.

Regarding *Vocational Training for Employment (VET)*, the professionals involved are qualified teachers with the relevant experience and to fulfill the requirements as laid down by law, depending on the certificate level.

### **Trainees/students selection process procedures**

Considering the context of Formal Education and Training, there is only a process for selection activities such as European projects, scholarship, etc. Academic records and languages skills are evaluated.

Considering the context of *Vocational Training for Employment (VET)*, the Regional Public Employment Services requires training centers to ensure that applicants comply with the training criteria:

Level I: No requirements.

Level II: Compulsory Secondary Educational Certificate or equivalent.

Level III: Bachelor degree or equivalent.

In terms of procedures, the selection test has 2 parts: (i) a written test of general culture and the reasons for doing the course; (ii) an interview done by a member of the training staff.



## 3. GeNeus Tools for Post-Secondary Education and Training Organizations

These guidelines aim to support the implementation of GeNeus tools in the selection and competencies development processes in the context of PSPE organizations. The main aim is to promote fair, gender-neutral and non-biased *selection* and *competencies development* processes.

It aims to present strategic accompanying measures for mainstreaming of the gender neutral testing among institutions providing post secondary education services and professional orientation.

### 3.1. GENEUS GENDER NEUTRAL TOOLBOX FOR SELECTION PROCESSES

These guidelines aim to support the implementation of GeNeus tools in the selection processes in PSPE organizations. Therefore, these tools can be particularly useful for different kinds of professionals such as (i) Recruiters (trainers/trainers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses; (ii) Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development.

The *GeNeus gender neutral toolbox* for selection processes in PSPE organizations include:

- Profile definition;
- General Competencies Questionnaire;
- Analysis Exercises – Problem Solving;
- Interview template;
- General evaluation checklist.

#### 3.1.1. Profile definition

Profile definition is the systematic process of collecting complete information regarding a specific course/career. To the selection process itself, it is of extreme importance since it determines the course programme, pre-requisites and competencies profile.

By specifying, in a prior moment, those various aspects of the profile, it is a guarantee that the selection process is impersonal and so, naturally gender neutral. This assessment is neutral and so there is no danger of determining in advance that the course is suitable for one or the other gender.

This Profile definition Template is adapted from IO3 - Selection Tools Booklets. Job Analysis Template developed by GeNeus partnership.



## Profile Definition Template

### COURSE NAME

--

### COURSE PROGRAMME

1<sup>st</sup> Year / Semester / Trimester

-

-

2<sup>nd</sup> Year / Semester / Trimester

-

-

Etc.

### PREREQUISITES - KNOWLEDGE, QUALIFICATIONS, AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (identify compulsory or if it is only preferential)

*School level*

--

*Foreign languages knowledge*

--

*Computer usage competencies*

--

*Professional knowledge, professional qualifications / certifications, andl experience*

--



### 3.1.2. General Competencies Questionnaire

General Competencies Questionnaire, developed by GeNeus project consists of 20 questions regarding three core transversal competencies:

- Initiative/proactivity;
- Organisation;
- Social competences.

These competencies are referred by the World Economic Forum (2016) and in the Proposal European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (Council of the European Union, 2018) as included in the top 10 skills required for workers.

This questionnaire was developed and standardized for the five GeNeus partners countries - Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Results should also be analysed and interpreted according to national specificities.

General Competencies Questionnaire corresponds to Selection Tools Booklets. General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire developed in IO3 by GeNeus partnership.

To fill this test, applicants (trainees/students) should decide on a five points scale of agreement (from 1 to 5) regarding the statements presented. The values of the scale might need to be quoted in reverse, but only in specific cases.

Scale used for applicants' answers:

- Hardly ever – 1 point
- Rarely – 2 points
- Sometimes – 3 points
- Frequently – 4 points
- Almost every time – 5 points

The final quotation of the test must be interpreted according to the coloured system, available in each National General Competencies Questionnaire. This coloured system will provide the results regarding the Level of Performance/Competence of the candidate. Specifically:

- **Very below average**
- **Below average**
- **On average**
- **Above average**
- **Well above average**

The colours green, blue and purple are the more positive results, indicating that the applicant has a suitable level of professional competence for the job position.

This test, until its final version, passed over a standardization process, with pilot phases involving the target groups of the project. As such, and due to the differences of each national context, this test can only be applied and interpreted as presented in the five countries of the partnership - Austria, Bulgaria, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

### 3.1.3. Analysis Exercises – Problem Solving

Apart from the General Competencies Questionnaire, GeNeus project consortium also developed three Analysis Exercises (and respective orientation for classification), that are intrinsically related to the competence “**Problem solving**”:

- Exercise 1 – Office party;
- Exercise 2 – Store situation;
- Exercise 3 – Office situation.

Each of the exercises is independent, therefore can be used one without the others. Respondents have to answer five questions about a certain situation that requires action. The questions refer to the following topics:

- Problem identification
- Data collection
- Generation of ideas and evaluation of ideas
- Implementation planning
- Evaluation of the implemented solution

These exercises were developed and standardized for the five GeNeus partners countries - Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal and Spain – so that results and interpretation should only be used in the five countries. However, they can be naturally used in other national contexts, but by using the general intuitive results interpretation, as an orientation, for qualitative proposes with the necessary care of not being gender biased.

Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving corresponds to Selection Tools Booklets. Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving. Office Party, Selection Tools Booklets. Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving. Store situation and Selection Tools Booklets. Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving. Office situation developed in IO3 by GeNeus partnership.

How to properly apply these exercises during the selection processes?

As mentioned before, these three Analysis Exercises are intrinsically related to the competence “**Problem solving**”. Each of the exercises is independent, so that each professional can use one without the others.

Respondents have to answer five questions about a certain situation that requires action. Each question aims to assess the following capacity:

- Q1. Please identify which problem(s) you are experiencing - **Problem identification**
- Q2. Please indicate whether you would need to collect additional information and, if so, what would you do - **Data collection**
- Q3. Please provide several possible alternatives to solving the problem and point out its pros and cons - **Generation of ideas and evaluation of ideas**

- Q4. From the alternatives identified in Q3, select the one that you consider most appropriate, indicating what actions would you take to implement your idea -

#### **Implementation planning**

- Q5. Given the situation, what would you consider a good result? What lessons have you learned from this situation? - **Evaluation of the implemented solution**

There are four performance levels in this competence, presented in a coloured system:

- **Inexistent**
- **Low level**
- **Intermediate**
- **High Level**

The three exercises are evaluated using the same criteria. The differences are the fact that for each exercise, there are examples of adequate answers to each performance level.

These exercises were developed and **standardized** for the five GeNeus partners countries – Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal and Spain – so results and interpretation should only be used in the five countries. The standardization process in the partner countries led to recommend not to use some exercise in some countries (exercise 3 should not be used in Bulgaria, and exercise 2 should not be used in Italy). In this statistical analysis these exercises in these countries were found gender differentiators.





### 3.1.4. Interview Template

Due to the importance given by recruiters to interviews as a selection tool, the GeNeus project also developed an Interview Template and associated basic structure to a semi-structured interview, divided by phases (and associated required time for implementation of each phase) that can be adapted to the different situations/contexts of PSPE organizations.

As such, this is a template of a **Semi-structured and competency-based interview**. By using this tool, recruiters ensure that every applicant (trainee/student) is going through the same process with exactly the same core questions, in order to ensure an objective and fair process.

The Interview Template is adapted from IO3 - Selection Tools Booklets. Job Interview Template developed by GeNeus partnership.

Traditionally, interview is the most used technic in selection processes. For that reason, the GeNeus project developed a semi-structured Interview Template, divided into four phases that can be adapted according to the context of the PSPE organization:

#### PHASE 1:

- Introduction by the interviewer (1-10 minutes)
- Ice breaking activity/conversation

#### PHASE 2: Get to know the Trainee/Student and Assess Competencies (15-60 minutes)

- Background analysis (educational path)
- Competences

- **Competencies Example:**

#### COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS / INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Demonstrates skills for active and participatory listening with debtors to detect any problems. Evidence oriented behaviours for clear and accurate clear transmission of all ideas, messages and information obtained by ensuring that the recipient understands them.

Concerns with the planning and participation in monitoring and evaluation of communication experiences with individuals and groups gained in life/professional situations, in person or using technological devices.

- What do you prefer when you establish contact?
- How do you deal with a conflict situation? Describe a situation you once had and its result.
- Have you ever had to deal with cultural differences? In what situation? What were the main difficulties encountered? How did you deal with them? What was the result?

**Competency evaluation**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Very low level</i>		<i>Standard level</i>		<i>Very high level</i>

## Rigor and organization

Demonstrated behaviours for the rigorous accomplishment of the tasks reaching the defined objectives. Ability to determine an effective methodology and organization for good time management, always keeping in mind the fulfilment of priorities.

- Have you ever faced a stress situation? Describe the situation you once had and its result.
- How do you assess your degree of resistance to stress?
- What is the key to accomplish the tasks in the defined time/deadline?
- Please describe a situation in which you can show you are organised regarding complex task fulfilment and time management. What were the main difficulties encountered? How did you deal with them? What was the result?

### Competency evaluation

1	2	3	4	5

*Very low level* *Standard level* *Very high level*

### PHASE 3: Perspectives of Educational Path and Course is applying for (5-15 minutes)

- Desired educational paths
- Course description
- Administrative and application procedures

### PHASE 4: Conclusion (5-10 minutes)

- Next steps of the selection process



### 3.1.5. General Evaluation checklist

In cases where the selection process has different phases/moments, different selection tools were applied and the final selection decision is not done by the responsible technician or technicians for the process, but by someone else of the organisation. That's why GeNeus project developed an Evaluation Checklist of the Applicant where the results obtained in each evaluation moment are described.

The Evaluation Checklist Template corresponds to IO3 - Selection Tools Booklets. Evaluation Checklist of the Applicant.

The bonus of this instrument is that no personal data of the applicant is provided, being the identification done only by an "Individual identification number". This way, it is guaranteed that the final selection decision is done having in concern only direct course-related competencies and no other personal information (such as age, physical aspect or gender).

INDIVIDUAL REPORT	
COURSE NAME/ EDITION	
Date	

Individual Identification Number	
----------------------------------	--

QUALIFICATIONS	
School level	
Other qualifications	
Certificates	
Observations	

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	
Professional experience	
Other ( )	

LANGUAGE KNOWLEGDE	
English	
Other ( )	

COMPUTER SKILLS	
Word	
Excel	
PowerPoint	
Other ( )	

GENERAL COMPETENCIES QUESTIONNAIRE	
Score	
Regarding the average	
Observations	

ANALYSIS EXERCISES - PROBLEM SOLVING	
Score	
Regarding the average	
Observations	

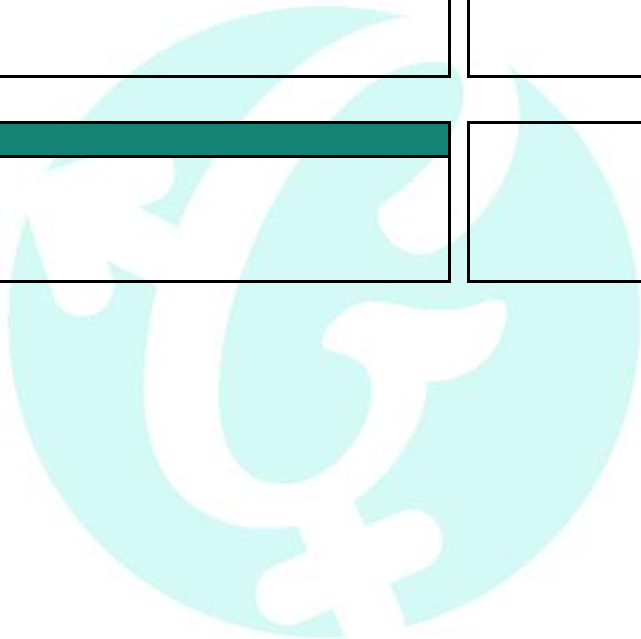
OTHER RELEVANT (1):	
Observations	

OTHER RELEVANT (2):	
Observations	

PRACTICAL EXERCISE	
Observations	

INTERVIEW	
Observations	

FINAL REMARKS & EVALUATION	
Observations	





### 3.2. GENeUS GENDER NEUTRAL TOOLBOX FOR COMPETENCIES DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

GeNeus tools can also be used in pedagogical and formative contexts to work and develop competencies/skills, namely the transversal competencies which are the focus of this project - Initiative/proactivity, Organisation, Social competence and Problem Solving. In fact, a wide range of short-term training units or curricular units focus on the skills required by the labour market. As an example, we have identified the following training/education modules: Personal and Social Development, Citizenship, Current World, Human Resources and Labour Market Economy, Psychosociology of Work and Organizations, Communication, Leadership and Team Management, Project Management, among many others.

That’s why this part of IO6 is specifically addressed to different kinds of professionals, such as trainers/teachers, psychologists, social workers, pedagogues, counsellors as tools to their work on assessment and development of competences of students/trainees.

It is proposed a diverse set of uses of GeNeus tools and testings, as initial ideas to follow and inspire alternative activities/usage. These are pedagogical strategies, methods and techniques to be adapted to different educational and training contexts.

The methods can be expository, interrogative, demonstrative and active and the techniques consist of simulation, Role Play, presentation, demonstration, case study, storms of ideas, among others.

We present a set of pedagogical activities associated with the tools developed in the GeNeus project, as can be seen in the following table.

Table 1 | Application of GeNeus tools to pedagogical activities

GeNeus tools and testing	Pedagogical activities
Test – “General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire”	General Competencies for Employment: Where am I and what can I improve?
Analysis Exercise - Problem Solving	Let's solve professional problems in group Different solutions for solving professional problems
Other tools: job interview	Simulation of Job Interview

### 3.2.1. Questionnaire on General Competencies for Employability

The Questionnaire on General Competencies for Employability, developed by GeNeus project (in IO2) with 20 questions related to three transversal competences - Initiative / proactivity, Organization, and Social competences - can be used at an early stage in a pedagogical and formative context as a diagnosis. This pedagogical activity will have to be implemented during two sessions of education / training.

Table 2 | Pedagogical activity - General Competencies for Employability: where am I and what can I improve?

<b>Title</b>	<b>General Competencies for Employability: where am I and what can I improve?</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To diagnose the initial performance of each trainee in relation to three transversal competences - Initiative / proactivity, Organization, Social competences  To frame/introduce contents about the most valued skills/competencies in the labour market
<b>Resources</b>	Questionnaire (1 by trainee/student) ( <i>Selection Tools Booklets. General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire, developed in IO3 by GeNeus partnership</i> )  Guidance sheet for interpretation (for trainer/teacher) ( <i>Selection Tools Booklets. General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire, developed in IO3 by GeNeus partnership</i> )  Personal Development Plan (see resource below the table)  Sheets A3  Colored markers
<b>Number of participants</b>	Unlimited
<b>Duration</b>	Session 1   15 minutes for the test + 2 hours for Brainstorming  Session 2   1 hour for discussion on the results + 30 minutes for the elaboration of the Personal Development Plan

## Description of the activity

### Session 1

Each trainee/student has 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire individually. The trainer collects the questionnaires and analyses the results, and they are returned in the next session.

Following is a Brainstorming in small groups (of 4/5 elements), systematized in an A3 sheet and shared in large group around the characteristics / competences demanded by the employers in the current job market.

The dynamic ends with sharing in a large group and with the systematization of skills in the framework or flip chart.

These competencies listed by the trainees are compared with the competences proposed by the European Reference Framework for Essential Competences for Lifelong Learning (Council of the European Union, 2018)

### Session 2

In session 2, after distribution of individual results, each trainee has 15 minutes to: i) appropriate his / her individual results; ii) record the results in the Personal Development Plan and complete with activities to be carried out to improve the skills and their scheduling

The session finalizes with a brainstorming around the following questions:

- What surprised me the most about the results?
- What skills do I think need to be improved / developed?
- How can these competences be developed?



Resource – Personal Development Plan

NAME	

DATE	SCORE

POSITIVE / STRONG FEATURES	FEATURES TO IMPROVE

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?
<i>Expected results (SMART goals, if possible)</i>
HOW WILL YOU DO IT?
<i>Activities to perform to get there (detail indicating what will you do)</i>
WHEN?
<i>Specific date of accomplishment</i>

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?
<i>Expected results (SMART goals, if possible)</i>
HOW WILL YOU DO IT?
<i>Activities to perform to get there (detail indicating what will you do)</i>
WHEN?
<i>Specific date of accomplishment</i>

DATE	SCORE



If training action/course is specifically aimed at the development of these competences, this tool can be used as an assessment tool. In fact, it can be used in the first training session as a diagnostic evaluation, and in the latter as a final evaluation, enabling to assess the competences development by the trainees. Trainer/teacher can take notes on trainee/student performance on General Competencies for Employability in order to develop competencies during course.

### 3.2.2 Analysis Exercises - "Problem Solving" competency

GeNeus project partners also developed three Analysis Exercises regarding "Problem Solving" competency and its orientation for its classification. Each exercise is a description of a situation that requires action. Participants must answer five questions about a situation related to: problem identification, data collection, idea generation and evaluation, implementation planning and evaluation of the implemented solution.

It is proposed that these Exercises can be used in an educational / formative context, as an active and technical method of a Case Study in a group as described in Table 3. All resources are available at Selection Tools Booklets. Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving. Office Party, Selection Tools Booklets. Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving. Store situation and Selection Tools Booklets. Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving. Office situation developed in IO3 by GeNeus partnership.

Table 3 | Pedagogical activity - Let's solve professional problems in group

<b>Title</b>	<b>Let's solve professional problems in group</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To develop "Problem Solving" Competency
<b>Resources</b>	Case study 1: Office Party (1 per group of 4 participants) Orientation for Classification (as Guidance for trainer/teacher) Case study 2: Store Situation (1 per group of 4 participants) Orientation for Classification (as Guidance for trainer/teacher) Case study 3: Office Situation (1 per group of 4 participants) Orientation for Classification (as Guidance for trainer/teacher)
<b>Number of participants</b>	Minimum 12 and up to 36 (ideally 24)
<b>Duration</b>	3 hours

<b>Description of the activity</b>	<p>Organise 3 groups of 4 participants (because they are 3 exercises).</p> <p>Each group receives one Case Study and should answer together to the five questions proposed: Problem identification, Data collection, Idea generation and evaluation, Implementation planning and Evaluation of the implemented solution.</p> <p>The group has 45 minutes to solve the Case Study.</p> <p>Each group will read the case study to the large group and share their responses. The large group should help identify other solutions as well as the trainer.</p> <p><i>Note: This exercise can be adapted to different number of trainees, for example by selecting only two case studies or reducing the groups to 3 participants.</i></p>
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It is proposed that these Exercises can be used in an educational / formative context, as an active and technical method of Case Study, to be solved as described in Table 4 (Different solutions for solving professional problems). This Activity can be used in one session (using only one case study), two sessions (selecting two Case Studies) or three sessions (using all Case Studies), if the objective is to develop and train the Problem-Solving competency. It is important that these activities can be complemented with other training regarding the Problem-Solving competency and the way in which professional problems are analysed and solved. All resources are available at Selection Tools Booklets. Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving. Office Party, Selection Tools Booklets. Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving. Store situation and Selection Tools Booklets. Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving. Office situation developed in IO3 by GeNeus partnership.

Table 4 | Pedagogical activity - Different solutions for solving professional problems

<b>Title</b>	<b>Different solutions for solving professional problems</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	To develop “Problem Solving” Competency
<b>Resources</b>	Case study 1: Office Party (for student/trainee) Orientation for Classification (as Guidance for trainer/teacher) Case study 2: Store Situation (for student/trainee) Orientation for Classification (as Guidance for trainer/teacher) Case study 3: Office Situation (for student/trainee) Orientation for Classification (as Guidance for trainer/teacher)

<b>Number of participants</b>	Unlimited
<b>Duration</b>	1h30 per Case Study (can be repeated if the trainer chooses to use other Case Studies)
<b>Description of the activity</b>	<p>A Case Study is distributed to each trainee/student who will have 45 minutes to answer the five questions, individually.</p> <p>When all participants have their answers or the time is up, trainer should gather 4/5 participants in groups. The participants are invited to share their individual responses and each trainee can complete their answers. And a new, more complete answer to the case study is presented by the group.</p> <p>At the end, the trainer facilitates the discussion in a large group of each response and ends the session with the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How did you feel about answering the questions individually? What issues were more difficult? Why?</li> <li>– How did you develop group work?</li> <li>– Were there any differences between my answers and those of my colleagues?</li> <li>– On what issue were there more discrepancies?</li> <li>– Were you more prepared now to answer the questions again? Do you feel that your skills have improved?</li> </ul>



### 3.2.3 Job Interview

GeNeus project partners have also developed a job interview guide that can be used as a Pedagogical Activity in the context of education / training. It is proposed an activity to prepare trainees/students for the actual situation of the job interview, using the active method and the simulation/role play technique.

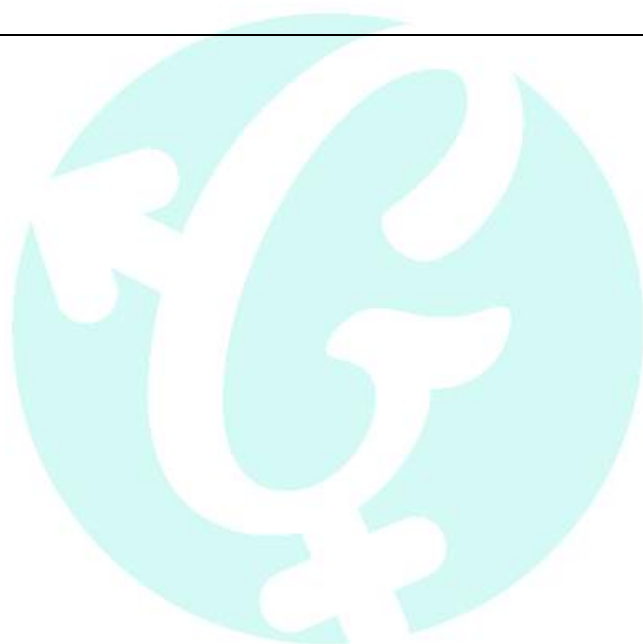
This activity can be used early in the pedagogical content approach associated with the preparation and conduct of the interview, as a way to diagnose the posture to be adopted. The trainer/teacher can choose to use this Pedagogical Activity, following the use of the expository and interrogative method of presenting the topic on Job Interview. In this case, the simulation of the interview emerges as a demonstration method and as a way of developing the competences of trainees/students.

Table 5 | Pedagogical activity - Simulation of Job Interview

Title	Simulation of Job Interview
<b>Objectives</b>	To develop skills for active job search To train Job Interview Skills
<b>Resources</b>	Distribution of a recruitment situation, adapted to the professional labour context of the education / training course and the profile of trainees/students (name and business sector of the employer, job vacancy) The trainees/students should have their own, real CVs (developed prior to this activity).  Job Interview guide (for trainer/teacher) ( <i>The template is available at Selection Tools Booklets. Job Interview Template developed in IO3 by GeNeus partnership</i> ).  Observation sheet for trainees/students for hetero evaluation (see resource below the table) Self-evaluation sheet for the “candidate” (see resource below the table)
<b>Number of participants</b>	Unlimited
<b>Duration</b>	Each simulation lasts for about 15-20 minutes and the analysis in a large group takes about 15-20 minutes. The simulation can be repeated as many times as the trainer finds appropriate.



<p><b>Description of the activity</b></p>	<p>A Case Study is distributed to trainees/students and a volunteer is asked to take on the role of candidate.</p> <p>To the remaining trainees/students, a two-part observation sheet is distributed. In the first part, referring to the 'candidate's' evaluation on the interview situation: more positive aspects of the candidate's performance and the aspects to be improved. In the second part, a reflection: notes about the issues you consider most difficult and why? What do I need to prepare well for the interview? What skills do I think need to be developed better? How can I prepare for the job interview? How can I improve the way I communicate to my competencies?</p> <p>The role-play situation begins with the entry of the candidate in the interview situation. The trainer/teacher plays the role of recruiter.</p> <p>In the end, the trainee/student has the opportunity to share with colleagues how he/she felt during role-play.</p> <p>The colleagues then share their perspectives on how the 'candidate' did in the interview situation and the trainer also adds to his/her perspective.</p> <p>At the end, in a large group, trainees/students share their reflection on the interview situation.</p>
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Resource - Observation sheet for Trainees/Students for hetero-evaluation

NAME OF THE "CANDIDATE"

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POSITIVE / STRONG FEATURES

FEATURES TO IMPROVE

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Resource - Self-evaluation sheet for “candidate”

NAME OF THE “CANDIDATE”

POSITIVE / STRONG FEATURES

FEATURES TO IMPROVE

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Issues I consider more difficult and why?

What do I need to prepare well for the interview?

What skills do I think need to be improved?

How can I improve the way I communicate my competencies?



## 4. Recommendations

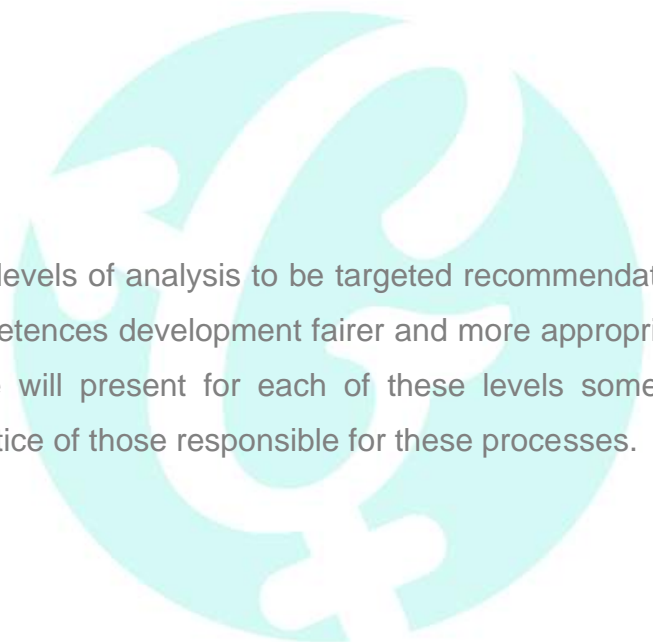
The fight against gender discrimination is not separate from other forms of discrimination. When the objective is the equal opportunity of any person to a particular professional role it is important to have in perspective the need to create a conscience (personal and social) of the phenomenon and to present concrete behaviors for the action. In this project, our focus is gender equity (especially regarding the use of tests and others forms of evaluation in the recruitment and selection processes), but we know that for equity to occur, different variables can enhance its applicability.

The focus of any appraiser should be "to attract, evaluate, select, host, integrate and develop any person available in the market or organization taking into account a current or future need of the organization, relying on a skills profile that can predict a high performance in a given function with the appropriate opportunity to develop that potential". This necessarily entails an effort of objectification throughout the process and at different levels of analysis, because it depends on it a greater proximity to the justice in the selection of candidates.

We therefore propose a set of recommendations to professionals involved in this process, organized by levels of analysis of the process:

- 1 - Individual level
- 2 - Interpersonal level
- 3 - Team level
- 4 - Organizational level
- 5 - Societal level

As we can see in figure 6, there are different levels of analysis to be targeted recommendation to make the process of selection or career/competences development fairer and more appropriate to the needs of organizations and society. We will present for each of these levels some brief recommendations that can guide a better practice of those responsible for these processes.





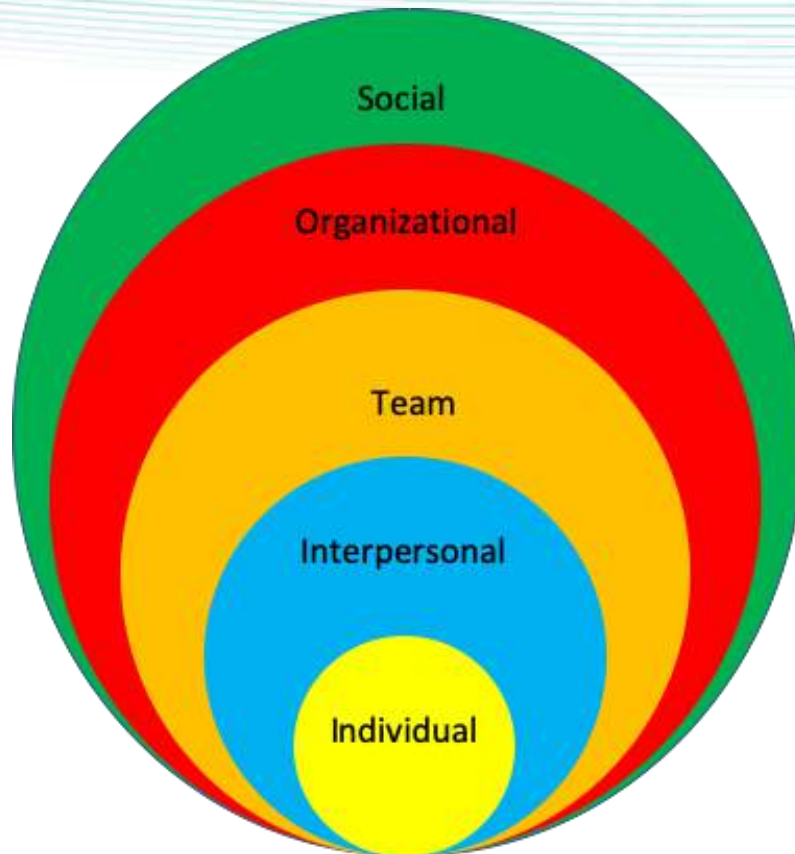


Figure 6 – Recommendations levels for neutral evaluation

Human resources go through a long process in terms of entry, worker existence until the departure of organizations, whether they are training or they are already working and contributing to the productive sector of society. Recruitment by PSPE implies in the first phase the attraction of participants in processes involving the purpose for which they were create. After a first phase of attraction, the time comes to evaluate them, which may involve a set of techniques and culminate in the presentation of an individual report on a variety of skills, interests and contexts (training or work). Following this evaluation and vocational guidance, opportunities for entry into the world of work may arise, and a suitable reception is required in the first days / weeks, as well as adequate initial training, mentoring and socialization for a good integration in the organizational culture. Over time, career development opportunities will emerge and, in time, they will leave the organization.

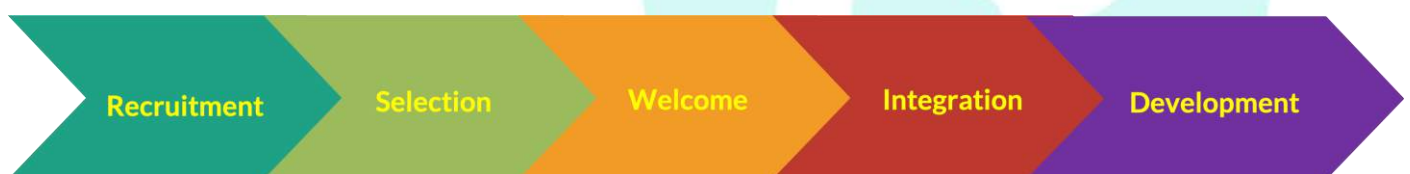


Figure 7 – Professional life process in organization

## 1 - Individual level

Recommendation 1 - *The evaluator/trainer/teacher must be aware of the limits of his / her competence to use the evaluation instruments.*

The principles of responsibility, competence and property are important to respect. The evaluator should not use instruments for which he is not authorized by the authors, for whom he is not trained or who are in the domain of areas outside his responsibility.

Recommendation 2 – *The instruments should be selected, administered and interpreted appropriately and accurately as indicated in the manuals.*

The tests follow a logic and are tested for specific populations and the procedures and instructions of the authors must be respected. That is to say that, if you follow the results, you would not favour nor hinder any type of candidates.

Recommendation 3 - *The evaluator/trainer/teacher must maintain confidentiality and treat any candidate with respect, while maintaining focus on objectivity, fairness and neutrality.*

The duty of respect for the human person and the right to privacy must be ensured, and the evaluator should not comment, pass information and take care of the stored information about the candidates, ensuring the legal rights of the participants.

Recommendation 4 - *The person responsible for the evaluation (eg: teachers, trainers, etc.) should have a high degree of awareness about their attitudes, beliefs, values and personality, and should be attentive to the level of prejudice and bias that may be occurring when evaluating candidates.*

Being socialized in mostly macho cultural environments with different types of prejudices, the best qualified professionals should try to identify to what extent they are unconsciously influenced by their own prejudices. This high degree of personal awareness acts as a signal to the responsible evaluators, who can thus change their behavior in order to make their practices more neutral and may even request their absence in processes for which they evaluate as not being objective.

Recommendation 5 - *The person responsible for the evaluation should take on a role of educator and advisor to the other actors in the process, enforcing legal, moral and procedural norms.*

When other players act beyond their role, act biasedly, are incompetent or misinformed, those responsible for recruitment/ selection of candidates (course directors, eg) should intervene to

restore best practice. They may even have to decide to file an informal complaint to the management of the organization, if these colleagues are not wise enough to change their practices. A formal complaint must be presented only in extreme situations, when the informal ones show its ineffectiveness. Recruiters (trainers/teachers/coordinators) responsible for the selection of trainees/students for some courses, Counsellors for orientation and career definition/development, Trainers/teachers for assessment and development of competences who are normally responsible for evaluating candidates should seek to define their role well by avoiding responding to requests from instituted powers that might undermine the neutrality of evaluations.

## **2 - Interpersonal level**

*Recommendation 6 – The candidate must be informed about the stages of the evaluation process, as well as about their rights and the use of their data.*

In the relationship between applicant/candidate and evaluator there must be confidence, because of this confidence emerges a greater probability of the candidate presenting a sample of their natural behavior and better performance in the tests closer to reality and not so contaminated by contextual variables. Being transparent and adopting an informative and available attitude to answer questions and doubts allow to work also the branding of the organization, consolidating the image of seriousness and rigor that is reflected equally in the evaluation of candidates.

*Recommendation 7 – Interviews should be well structured and conducted by trained individuals.* The interviews should focus on a specific competency profile and should not have too many variations that could jeopardize the comparison with other candidates. If possible, it should have more than one interviewer and the environment to be created should be warm and collaborative, avoiding too much tension and power asymmetry between evaluator and applicant.

*Recommendation 8 – Know the mistakes that affect our social impressions.*

When in interaction with others, we may be conditioned by errors of positivity and negativity distortion, Halo effect or even Pollyanna syndrome. We can, after a set of positive first impressions, be more condescending in the evaluations of later items of the evaluation or vice versa, not being consistent with the results actually produced by other objective tools the evaluated one answered. It may exist the tendency for an impression created in one area to influence opinion in another area. On the other hand, we can consider the reality that is provided

by the behavioral sample of the candidate as "very naive" and in this way we do not capture important nuances. Evaluators should be well aware of the normal errors of causal attribution and errors of social representation.

### **3 - Team level**

Recommendation 9 – *Clarify the role of each team member in the evaluation process.*

The guidance and professional evaluation teams should define well the role of each member in the process, thus avoiding injustices and increasing their efficiency, namely discussing the part that belongs to the professional as an individual and the part to which belongs to the team as a collective body. This clarity can be to create analysis documents, profile definition, courses requirements descriptions, as well as the design of the evaluation process in its multiple stages, usually certified by quality systems.

Recommendation 10 – *Establish trust and critical sense of the team.*

Teams (in this particular sector) need to work properly on trust, as this is the basis of success as a team. On the other hand, it is important that each element is mature enough to conflict with the discrepancies in the appropriate and planned form of evaluation. With confidence and the attitude of conflict, there are greater indicators of neutrality and justice in the process.

Recommendation 11 – *Ensure blind evaluation of questionnaires and problem-solving cases.*

In some demographic contexts, it is very likely to evaluate / guide candidates we know (which may imply incompatibility of interests). In these particular situations, the team should adopt mechanisms to minimize this reality. An identity encryption system can be created in the results associated with the candidates, which can only be identified at a point in the final report. It may also be necessary for each member to inform the team that a given candidate cannot be evaluated, and that it is necessary to pass on to another colleague (if that is possible).

### **4 - Organizational level**

Recommendation 12 – *Define equal opportunity policies.*

Any self-respecting organization should guide its practice by a set of general principles that define its purpose and social orientation. Having a policy of equality of opportunity assumed, written,



approved and disclosed in the organization, is not enough but is a good principle that can guide the practice of all within the organization.

*Recommendation 13 – Create regulations and best practice manual based on equal opportunities.*

In order to operationalize the strategy of treating everyone equally through an organizational policy of equality and equity, PSPEs must define how they intend to achieve it. Creating regulations on this subject, as well as raising everyone's awareness of good practice in this area, can be good ways of realizing this intention. Organizational citizenship behaviors in which these practices are followed may also be rewarded, as well as sanctioned by management, behaviors and practices that do not go this way. Indicators that take into account equal opportunities may also be associated with performance evaluation.

*Recommendation 14 – Relying on the role of the evaluators and deciding on the basis of their reports.*

Organizational decision-makers (Post-secondary and professional education institutes, job orientation centers regarding study choice at high school and university level, education and training institutions) should respect and value the objective work and results presented by the technicians. Decisions must be more factual and not so based on subjective and more fallacious intuitions and interpretations. Creating rationality and logic in the process is closer to justice and equal opportunities. Investing in careful, objective, and professional evaluations and then assigning them no value, or lowering their weight to the detriment of (often hidden) "other agendas" are not good signs of transparency and integrity. Leadership must decide with the courage to confront nepotism and variances to the evaluation process, thereby also assuming a virtuous and inspiring leadership style for its followers in the organization.

*Recommendation 15 – The organizational decision-makers should avoid the mistake of selecting "people in their image and likeness".*

Decisions makers must be aware that diversity and the difference of profiles are a variable of organizational success and not a handicap. Often decision makers tend to select people similar to their own profile of skills and personality, which is a huge mistake. Accepting the difference of profiles and learning to deal with the diversity in a world more and more demanding is crucial.



Recommendation 16 – *After selection, it is important that the organization creates the conditions for adequate reception, socialization and development.*

Many well-executed recruitment and selection processes may be inefficient in the following stages, due to the system's inability to welcome the new element well, to accompany it in the process of socialization, and to provide opportunities for growth. The true potential of a selected candidate will only happen if in later stages they are taken care of, therefore it is important to create these conditions of development (for example, a course director may be able to identify features or specific skills that the newcomer student/ trainee needs to invest and give him/her an individualized approach or orientation).

Recommendation 17 – *Resist external pressures that seek to interfere with the institution's independent decisions.*

All sectors, organizations and professionals are subjected to pressures, whether they are legitimate or illegitimate (almost always through nepotism and power interests). Experience and healthy awareness of leadership, as well as the practice of organizational justice (procedural, relational and distributive), can be good defenses in relation to inappropriate requests from people with power.

## **5 - Societal level**

Recommendation 18 – *Raise social awareness of the phenomenon of social discrimination in general and gender discrimination in particular.*

Institutions with some power in society should seek to combat the discourse that leads to gender asymmetries. To create legislation on non-discrimination, to do justice in court based on equal opportunities and to enforce laws are always good ways to improve society. Here, the mass media can play a crucial role in being sensitive to public discourse that must be neutral and not conducive to more prejudices.

Recommendation 19 – *Influence the curricular plans on basic education with the purpose of greater equality of opportunities.*

Minds take time to change. The best way to contribute to the desired change in terms of equal opportunities is to adequately educate new generations. Including in the curricula the theme of equality and building manuals that raise awareness of diversity are many ways to contribute to this different and better society than we want.

Recommendation 20 – *Less stereotyped gender roles*

There are no professions for men or women. Both are able to take on any task. A non-patriarchal society with less conservative male models will make a huge contribution to equal opportunities. It is therefore important to balance the social roles assigned to men and women.



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# APPENDIX

## SET ASSESSMENT AND VALIDATION

The GeNeus Set of Application of Gender-neutral Selection Tools and Tests for Selection Processes in Post-Secondary Professional Education (IO6) seeks to facilitate the selection of future students/trainees and the competencies development of their students/trainees effectively and fairly through the implementation of gender-neutral tools and tests – thus mitigating the possibility of gender bias during these processes. It can be used as a supportive tool by orientation services for employment, selection committees and transversal competencies trainers in their daily work.

GeNeus consortium, composed of six partners from five different countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Spain, Italy and Portugal) kindly ask you to please answer the following questions. At this moment, we are in the phase of assessing the end-users' opinion regarding the Set and its relevance, hence your contribution is so important for us. Please provide us as much information as possible, since all feedback and inputs will be collected and analysed in order to improve and optimize this Set.

Please choose the appropriate answer for your evaluation.

CRITERIA	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Observations
1. The content of the Set facilitates the improvement of the selection processes.					
2. The content of the Set facilitates the competencies development process.					
3. The Set is practical for use and addresses the end-users effectively.					
4. The Set covers thoroughly all the important topics concerning the effective implementation of the GeNeus gender-neutral tools and test.					
5. The length of the Set is suitable.					
6. The content of the Set is well organized.					



1. Which are the parts did you like the most and which the least? Do you consider that there is something missing to the Set? If yes, please specify.

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2. Do you believe the content of this Set may have an efficient and positive impact on the way you/your organisation:

- a. conduct the student selection for the courses you provide,
- b. to respond to employers pre-selection needs of candidates,
- c. to develop your organisation student's/trainees' transversal competencies

If not, please explain why not.

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3. Do you have any other comments regarding the improvement of the Set?

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## PARTNERS

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INOVA+ - Portugal

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Bimec – Bulgaria

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