



EQF AG Peer Learning Activity
Validating and Valuing transversal
skills and competences acquired by adults through volunteering
and other non-formal learning opportunities

22-23 January 2019
Rue d'Edimbourg 26 (Mundo B), Brussels.

DRAFT SUMMARY REPORT

Link to the presentations
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1K8oy6JS8s38vOTiT5gykpQgU93kRxxMw>

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1. Introduction

The EQF AG Peer learning activity (PLA) on “*Validating and Valuing transversal skills and competencies acquired by adults through volunteering and other non-formal learning opportunities*” was held in **Brussels, Belgium on 22-23 January 2019**. The activity focused on establishing a consensus and common understanding on methods for Identification and Documentation of soft and transversal skills acquired by adults through volunteering as well as on suitable assessment and certification procedures for soft and transversal skills and competences. The PLA was hosted and organised by the **European Volunteer Centre (CEV)**, and the **Lifelong Learning Platform (LLL)**, together with **DG EMPL of the European Commission** and supported by **CEDEFOP**. The event was attended by more than 40 people representing different State and Non-State stakeholders from across Europe.

1.1. PLA objectives

The PLA looked at the way validation approaches identify and document soft and/or transversal skills and competences. Using learning outcomes acquired while **volunteering as its main case**, the PLA discussed how the conceptual basis of validation methodologies can be strengthened and how cooperation in this area may be taken forward.

The intended outcomes were to:

- Compare how a selection of validation methods operating in volunteering address and capture transversal, soft skills and competences
- On the basis of the above presentations, identify a list of core transversal, soft skills and competences that are commonly acquired by adults during volunteering (and other non-formal and informal learning experiences).
- Discuss the extent to which this list of skills and competences overlaps with the list of transversal skills and competences developed in the context of ESCO.
- Propose how to take forward the work on an agreed conceptual basis for identifying and documenting transversal, soft skills and competences.

1.2. Purpose of the Report

This report gives an overview of the discussions that took place during this PLA. It is intended to support the work of the European Commission, EQF AG members, PLA participants and other stakeholders in the area of validation in developing follow up actions. The report is structured according to the main topics of the PLA and draws on a range of presentations and workshop discussions. The Full PLA agenda is included in Annex I.

1.3. Background note

A background Document, prepared by CEV, LLL Platform, Cedefop and DG EMPL was made available to all participants in advance of the event. The background note aimed at helping participants get an overview of the state of art in validation of soft and transversal skills in Europe. (See Annex 2).

2. Day 1 - Welcome from the organizers

2.1. Experts Panel - Welcome address

The first day began with a warm welcome from **Alison Crabb**, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Head of Unit of 'E2 - Skills & Qualifications', followed by **Brikena Xhomaqi**, Director of Lifelong Learning Platform. The session was chaired by **Andrea Casamenti** (Board Member, European Youth Forum). The three experts highlighted the importance of identifying and validating the soft transversal skills acquired in different formal/non-formal and informal learning environments, and emphasized the relevance of coordination and collaboration within and between EU institutions, Member States and stakeholders from different fields and sectors on the topic of validation of of non-formal and informal learning. They stressed that not only cooperation at European level is needed, but also that cooperation on a national and regional level is crucial to put in place arrangements that facilitate acquisition of such skills and the possibilities for their validation.

2.2. SESSION 1 - Setting the scene. Conceptual and practical challenges

The objective of the session one was to set the scene for the PLA. To start the discussion, CEV Director **Gabriella Civico**, explained the interest of the European Volunteer Centre and LLL Platform in working together on the topic and presented some of the main points included in the Background paper, including the objectives of the PLA and intended outcomes. The fact that the PLA would focus on transversal skills that are soft such as empathy and creativity and are therefore harder to assess and certify than 'hard' transversal skills such as language and digital skills. was emphasised. The reported importance of these kinds of skills by employers was also emphasised.

Panel Discussion

The first panel discussion was moderated by **Tanya Basarab** (CoE/EU Youth Partnership). It focused on creating a starting point for the discussion of the relevant list of transversal skills. It brought European Union approaches to the identification of the most relevant transversal skills. Of transversal, soft skills. Three experts: **Aikaterini Sylla**, (ESCO Support Team - European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)), **Jens Bjornavold** (CEDEFOP) and **Dennis Van Gessel** (DG EMPL, European Commission - Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals) introduced EU approaches on gathering and listing transversal, soft skills.

Aikaterini Sylla presented the [ESCO Skills and Competences portal](#) and navigated the audience through the [ESCO skills pillar](#), explaining that the ESCO skills pillar contains 13.485 skill and knowledge concepts and that this number includes skills and knowledge concepts from all sectors of economic activity as well as transversal hard and soft skills. Aikaterini presented the format of the data that is included in an ESCO skill.

She explained that apart from the transversal skills thesaurus, currently the ESCO skills pillar does not organize skills in a structured way and that the list is not exhaustive but that the Commission services will soon start developing a skill and knowledge hierarchy to allow users to access the ESCO skill and knowledge concepts more easily and intuitively. Furthermore, Aikaterini highlighted the importance of updating ESCO in order to remain fit-for-purpose. The labour market and the education and training sector are changing permanently. These changes therefore need to be reflected in new versions of the ESCO classification. The Commission services will soon launch online forums to support the communication of the ESCO team with stakeholders and obtain feedback on the content of ESCO.

Jens Bjornavold elaborated further the conceptualization of transversal skills used in ESCO. He highlighted the existence of a lot of research and projects dealing with transversal and soft skills. He stressed the risk that separated projects result in different lists of terms and conceptualizations. He then emphasized the importance of arriving to a common and agreed list of transversal skills that can provide a reference point for future developments and dialogue. Without an agreed conceptual basis, validation runs the risk of arbitrarily over- or underestimating particular skills and competences. If further developed, the transversal skills contained by ESCO may provide a starting point for developing a more consistent terminology in this area.

Following this presentation, **Dennis Van Gessel** took the floor to share the European Commission's approach when including transversal skills in the Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals. This tool supports early profiling of the skills of refugees, migrants and citizens of non-EU countries who are staying in the EU. It allows third country nationals often without prior documentation on their

education to assess their skills and therefore support integration in further education and / or labour market. The transversal skills are to a limited extent addressed in this tool and therefore there is a need for further development, also taking into account the growing importance of transversal skills these days. The outcomes of this PLA will be addressed in the future development of this section of the tool.

2.3. SESSION 2 - Panel Discussion with experts

In the second panel discussion four experts took the floor to discuss the developments perspective of NGO and NFIL learning providers. The speakers were; Serge Ravet (REVEAL), Andrea Casamenti (European Youth Forum), Aleksandra Kozyra (EAEA) and Gabriella Civico (European Volunteer Centre) ; the chair was Brikena Xhomaqi, Director of LLL platform. The presentation of **Serge Ravet**, the President of REVEAL advocated the adoption of an open recognition system in the form of open badges that could be acquired by those who participate in NFIL learning activities. He highlighted that instead of validation, stakeholders should work on recognition, without conforming to a norm. Serge stressed the role of recognition as an intersection between Inclusion, Empowerment, Enabling and Conformance, ranging from formal to non-formal, traditional and non-traditional education. He focused upon the three existing levels of recognition (macro, meso, micro), by saying that also a community could be recognising skills, calling it a 'collective recognition'.

The second speaker, **Andrea Casamenti**, Board Member of the European Youth Forum, briefly introduced the European Youth Forum and how different member organisations have developed validation tools for self-assessment and self-recognition for youth workers and young leaders. He explained that, while the tools vary from organisation to organisation, these tools are often based on the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning and assess several relevant soft skills acquired by active participation in youth organisations or in activities organised by them. These soft and transversal skills can be roughly divided into Cultural and Political awareness, Leadership and representation and Social and emotional skills. A good example of this practice is the European Open Badges Alliance (<https://ebawebsite.net/badge-systems/>) which created specific badge systems for different types of learning mobility (International youth exchanges, long term school exchanges, international training activities) and specific roles in these activities (such as facilitators or organisers of international activities).

They all worked with a diverse range of stakeholders to develop these systems ranging for other youth organisations to universities, private organisations and others. Some of YFJ members were also successful in developing strong partnerships with national authorities (such as in Flanders or in Spain) to integrate some of these tools into national systems for validation. The strength of many of the tools developed by their members is the capacity to provide a quality assessment of a learning path of a participant while keeping intact what makes these organisations unique and diverse. Nevertheless, The biggest obstacle is a wider recognition of these tools by national institutions (such as universities) and the private sector.

His presentation was followed by **Aleksandra Kozyra**, EAEA - European Association for the Education of Adults who highlighted that the non-formal education sector faces diverse challenges and drew attention to the need of an agreed framework for validating soft and 'life skills', from among the

current diversity and fragmentation in Europe. She described the Life Skills for Europe Project that includes a list of eight types of capabilities that constitute the fundamental aspects of the life skills concept: literacy, numeracy, digital, environmental, civic, personal and interpersonal, health and financial capacities.

Lastly, **Gabriella Civico**, the Director of the European Volunteer Center, talked about volunteering as a way of acquiring soft transversal skills. She pointed out that whilst volunteering should not be defined as a learning programme as it is not the primary aim of the volunteer activity, it is however inevitable that a volunteer would acquire 'incidental transversal skills' whilst engaging in an activity. She stressed that organisations should provide care and management to their volunteers, help them in realising, documenting, assessing and, if wanted, assessing and certifying their skills, but that they needed a coordinated European framework in which to contextualise this activity.

The moderator of the session, **Brikena Xhomaqi**, Director of LLL Platform, turned the discussion to the importance of defining what these soft and transversal skills are and how they could be measured (assessed) and validated.

The panellists pointed out that soft and transversal skills would be most valued by the labour market, and it would therefore be essential to know which skills the business sector, and other employers, consider to be important, and for this reason representatives of the labour market must be involved in the process. The concluding recommendations of the PLA later reflected this point that to make integration into the labour market possible, the creation of an accepted European framework and terminology that could be used on a pan-European-level is necessary. The panellists and the participants of the event agreed that validation of the skills acquired through volunteering should be a voluntary decision of the individual. Going through some or all of the four stages of validation (identification, documentation, assessment and certification) should be an individual choice and the identification and/or documentation stages alone should also be considered as valuable.

2.4. Living Library

The Living Library methodology works exactly like a normal library – readers come and borrow a 'book' for a limited period of time. After reading it, they return the book to the library and – if they want – they can borrow another book. There is only one difference: the books in the Living Library at the EQF Peer Learning Activity on VNFIL (January 2019) were human beings, and the books and readers entered into a personal dialogue. The books in the Living Library were people representing different methodologies and tools for the validation of non-formal and informal learning acquired by adults when volunteering. The 'reader' of the library was any PLA participant who was ready to talk with someone who had experience and knowledge of the particular tool or methodology.

The *'Living Library'* took place in the plenary room giving the opportunity for the PLA participants to meet co-ordinators and users of different validation tools for soft and transversal skills and competences. Five tables with one project per table were set up, participants were randomly divided into small groups, each group had 20 minutes to discuss the project presented at their table and then move to the next table. The outcomes of this session focused on identifying the conditions needed and what systems should be in place for validation of soft and transversal skills and competences acquired by adults while volunteering.

At the first table Lorenza Leita presented **Erasmus Plus project Lever UP** which exploits the legacy from the previous project 'LEVER' (2014-2016). Its aim is to have the learning outcomes acquired through volunteering recognised within VET context and to have the competences valued by companies as well within a frame of mutual recognition at international level. This project is currently in the piloting phase and it is looking for people to test the system free of charge.

At the second table Attilio Ascani explained project **EaSY** - Evaluate Soft skills in international Youth volunteering. The project financed by the Erasmus+ Programme – KA 2 and coordinated by FOCSIV in partnership with La Guilde, ELIDEA and FEC, supports the recognition of soft skills developed by young international volunteers. The EaSY process contributes to social recognition in facilitating companies and actor who manage staff in the world of business in deciphering the experience of international volunteering. It also helps with self-recognition of young people on the transversal competences obtained while being involved as volunteers in a third Country.

At the third table, the **Volcar Project** (2015 - 2017) was introduced to the participants by Jo Peeters. The aim of this Erasmus+ project was to deliver guidance for volunteers to raise their employability through triple support in getting their learning outcomes validated (based on the CH-Q Swiss Qualification Programme for Career Development¹, with special focus on translating competences that volunteers gained whilst volunteering).

Project Result:

- Booklet (PDF/printed) for volunteers how to “translate” their learning outcomes acquired whilst volunteering for the labour market.
- Online Moodle training to support the use of the booklet.
- Face to face training in addition to the online training, custom made for volunteering organisations.

At the fourth table, Ana Gomez presented the ideas and the system behind **Vol+I**. This system is used by the Plataforma del Voluntariado de España to certify some or all of the competences volunteers have gained while volunteering. It focuses mainly on transversal skills such as the ability to analyse and solve problems, leading skills, interpersonal communication skills, flexibility and innovation. The first step in the process is a contact meeting, followed by self-evaluation questionnaires and analysis. In the end the volunteer receives a certificate which distinguishes three levels of development in each category. (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced).

¹ <https://www.valida-suisse.ch/de/ch-q-kompetenzmanagement-system.html>

At the fifth table, Marguerite Potard explained the clearly defined tools and system used by the Belgian member of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (**WOSM**) for validating and assessing transversal skills.



3. Day 2

The second day opened with a reporting session from the Living Library discussions from the previous day. The table facilitators / presenters shared their experiences and impressions of the session. There was general agreement that the opportunity to have a ‘hands on’ look at different validations tools for soft and transversal competences had been extremely beneficial and rewarding for all in spite of the fact that it had only been possible to showcase a small selection of the many existing possibilities for validation of soft transversal competences.

Martin Noack, Senior Expert from the Bertelsmann Stiftung was then invited to give his reaction to the previous day’s work and set the scene for the following discussions. He reflected on the fact that the validation tools and systems that had been presented and shared had demonstrated very different approaches. For example, VOLCAR focussing on personal career development with a basis in self-assessment. EaSY and the Scout Leader Skills tools had also focussed on self-assessment with built in online tests, with ‘Empower Yourself’ also having an offline portfolio. Vol+ and Lever Up both included external assessment as part of the process. The different tools presented had different systematization of skills with 3-7 skills groups; 7-60 skills and between 3 and 6 skills levels.

Mr Noack shared with the participants the three main questions that he considered necessary to address:

1. Which skills exactly are relevant?
2. How should they be grouped/clustered in order to make them more accessible?
3. How should they be assessed (how many levels, evaluated by whom, how)?

He then shared various options of the next stages particularly as regards points 1 and 2:

1. Combine all the lists currently in use, cleaning them for synonyms to reduce unnecessary complexity
2. Group them by similarity, likelihood to correlate, or interdependence
3. Publish the hierarchical list, so that this work will not have to be repeated unnecessarily and any tool developer can draw from this pool by either selection from the list, or by adding even more specific indicators to adapt it to the context.

He emphasized that this list will help a great deal in bridging the worlds of non-formal & informal learning and the labour market.

The participants also had the opportunity to take a look at a comparison between different approaches to ordering and grouping different soft, transversal skills. Mr Noack highlighted the similarities and differences between the approaches.

Research	Institutions	Practices in Volunteering from living library							PLA Brainstorming "Crowdcluster based on Competence Cards"	
Great 8 (Bartram, 2005 JAP)	KODE (Erpenbeck)	ESCO	Unesco LLL-Dimensions	Lever-up	Vol+	EaSY	Scout leader Skills	Empower yourself	Competence Cards	
	Methods skills	application of knowledge	Learning to Do	Methodological			Functional skills	Technical and artistic skills	Method Skills	Academic work (M)
										Technical and manual skills (M)
7 Adapting and Coping	Personal skills	attitudes and values	Learning to Be	Personal	Flexibility and innovation	Manage Frustration	Attitudes	Responsibility, sense of initiative and analytical skills	Personal Skills	Flexibility (P)
8 Enterprising and Performing	Activity and action skills				Initiative and self-government	Followership - ability to collaborate				Motivation/commitment (P)
5 Creating and Conceptualizing										Reliability (P)
3 Interacting and Presenting	Social-communicative skills	(language skills)	Learning to Live Together	Social	Team work	Clear communication	Interpersonal skills	Intercultural skills	Social Skills	Communication skills (S)
2 Supporting and Cooperating		social interaction/skills			Interpersonal communication	Create and maintaining good relationships		Relationship skills		Teamwork skills (S)
1 Leading and Deciding						Coordinate people				Leadership skills (S)
4 Analyzing and Interpreting		thinking	Learning to Know		Analyze and solve problems	Read context and adaptation				Analytical and problem solving skills (M)
6 Organizing and Executing				Organisational	Planning and organisation	Organize and manage resources		Organisational skills		Organisational skills (M)

He also shared the results of a bottom-up attempt by PLA-participants at grouping the Bertelsmann Stiftung [Competence Cards](#) in a hierarchical way in order to contribute to the discussions around what would be the core soft, transversal competences that are important for the labour market, easily understandable by users and able to be taken into account by different tools for validating soft, transversal competences.



Mr Noack finished his intervention by reminding the participants about the [Great Eight Competencies](#), the criterion measurement framework by D. Bartram, suggesting that this is a key academic reference for the on-going discussions.

3.1 Parallel Sessions

Following the opening session participants divided into three parallel workshops. Each workshop counted with a facilitator and two experts.

- 1) **Authorising Bodies:** The session was facilitated by **Ernesto Villalba Garcia** and counted with the input of two experts: **Gerd Goetschalckx**, Policy Advisor - Flemish Employment agency (VDAB) and **Lorenza Leita** coordinator of the Erasmus Plus Lever Up project. The experts and the participants discussed the issues of assessment and certification in relation to the role of Authorising Bodies when looking at the Validation of soft and transversal skills acquired when volunteering. There was a specific focus on the experiences of Belgium and also on the solutions

proposed through the Lever Up Project. In her presentation, **Ms. Leita** introduced Lever Up to the group by describing the five steps of the validation system offered by this project. In her words, Validation is presented as “I formally demonstrated that I am able to apply the competence in real contexts, characterised by a certain level of complexity; and I can do that with a specific level of proficiency.” Ms. Leita focused on the 4th step of the process “Assessment”, where an external assessor (representative of the labor market/needs) and a third part (Lever Up validation centre) were needed. Finally, the process enclosed the student in a Triangle system between Employers, Volunteering and VET. The lever Up center serves as the body that assures the quality of the assessment.

Gerd Goetschalckx shared her perspective and experience on validation of transversal skills in the Flemish labour context, explaining that in the context of the transitional labour market that surrounds us all, an individual person can be an employee at one moment in time, and a jobseeker or a volunteer at another moment in time (or the other way around). The VDAB (Flemish PES) therefore invites every citizen to create a personal competence profile that can be updated at all times, and support the individual person throughout their entire career. Transversal skills can be included in this competence profile as a personal statement of the citizen. From a list of 13 transversal skills the citizen is invited to select the 5 that best reflect their personal competences. This information can be included in the CV as a general indication. A pragmatic approach is taken in which the employers are the ones that confirm that an individual is able to do what is validated.

For automatic matching of competences, more job related indicators for transversal skills are used. They are expressed in observable, performance criteria, that are directly linked to labour market activities (tasks) that need to be performed within the context of a specific job. The general indication, whether you can perform this task in a moderate, well or advanced manner, is at the same time an indication for the transversal skills required to perform this task. The citizen is free to mark this in his personal competence profile, but these competences can also be validated by trainers at the end of a learning process. Via IT based services that VDAB has developed a jobseeker can also ask an employer to validate these competences, based on previous work performed in the company/organization.

2) Technology: Facilitated by Guilia Bordin, **Bert Jehoul** (Europass) and **Serge Ravet** (President Reconnaître Open Recognition Alliance) discussed the ways in which technology could be used to recognise transversal skills. They looked at the impact and opportunities offered by technology when looking at the Validation of soft and transversal skills acquired when volunteering. There was a focus on the opportunities offered by the revised Europass. During the discussion, Mr Ravet advocated the idea as a way that could bridge the gap between formal and informal recognition without ‘formalising’ non-formal and informal education. Thus, he proposed the adaptation of an open recognition system. A movement born from the practice of Open Badges, exploring and promoting practices, technologies and policies enhancing and broadening the opportunities for everybody, individuals and communities, to be recognised and contribute to the recognition of others. The group pointed out that the problem lays in the fact that there are too many systems for validation/recognition of transversal skills. The transition between different system is complicated as they use different

frameworks and languages (Bskilled, Gentle Student, ²ESCO Badges). The participants called for better communication and awareness to create a common system.

- 3) **Assessment and Certification: Joanna Pankowski** facilitated the session that had input from **Tarja Lang** - (Omnia - Innoval case study from Finland and **Kristiina Pernits** (SALTO T&C RC Project coordinator). This session looked at the challenges and opportunities around the issues of assessment and certification when looking at the validation of soft and transversal skills B acquired when volunteering. There was a specific focus on the opportunities offered by YouthPass. Ms. Pernits introduced the YouthPass to the participants which is a European instrument for participants of projects funded by the Erasmus+: Youth in Action (E+: YiA) and the European Solidarity Corps programmes: for young people and youth workers. She highlighted the difficulty of self-assessment that the users of the Youthpass experience when using this tool and the challenges behind not formalising the non-formal and informal but still coming up with clear, acceptable, perhaps even measurable learning outcomes towards 'the outside world'. In her presentation, Ms. Lang introduced the work of the OMNIA Education Group and the InnoVal case study. In OMNIA there are 49 020 people attending courses and 22 030 students. The project offers personalised study paths to individuals in Vocational Education and Training (VET), and successfully integrates them into the labour market. OMNIA also offers a model of action, which through different activities such as youth workshops, integration trainings for immigrants and work trainings works on strengthening youth inclusion. She also presented the results of InnoVal 2017, which provided opportunity for innovative validation of non-formal and informal learning for disadvantaged individuals in Finland for instance via evaluation with Open Badges or intensive Finnish language courses.

The participants of the parallel session agreed that the Key Competence Framework should be improved and a more systematic and extensive terminology needs to be established. Additionally, there is a focused need on categorisation to avoid the complication posed by the lack of agreement on wording and categorisation. Lastly, the participants emphasised the need for coordination and collaboration, they recommended the establishment of a new platform / community similar to LLLP but focusing only on the topic of validation or the strengthening of the working group within the LLLP by involving new stakeholders such as universities and other public institutions could serve as an alternative to a new platform.

² <http://escobadges.eu/>

4. Next Steps

In order to contribute to the next steps of the process after the PLA in the framework of the ongoing tasks of EQF, ESCO and Europass Advisory Groups, in addition to the work of CEDEFOP, to ensure the follow up of the PLA and continued efforts to identify the core (most important) soft and transversal skills and competences, the participants were invited to take part in an exercise that re-visited the 8 competencies (Motivation & Commitment; Leadership Skills; Diligence & Precision; Analytical & Problem Solving; Flexibility; Communication; Sensitivity & Empathy; Teamwork Skills) that had been presented earlier. As part of the exercise, participants were asked to think, discuss and write down other soft and transversal competences that were not listed as headers and see if they would reasonably fit as a sub-set of one of the competency fields mentioned. In general, the additional soft and transversal skills and competences identified were deemed by the participants to fit as part of the eight areas mentioned, but it was notable that several participants highlighted 'Critical Thinking' as a competence that was separate to the others mentioned, and as such, believed that it would warrant a specific grouping of its own. The exercise highlighted the complexity of identifying the most important soft and transversal skills for validation tools to use as a reference due to linguistic differences and varied cultural and conceptual perceptions. It underlined the need for a structured consultation as part of a process involving all stakeholders and with a bottom up approach in order to better order and categorize soft and transversal skills. It also highlighted the lack of usefulness of each new tool and process for validation of soft and transversal skills to develop their own list and groupings of skills and competences.

Following the exercise and further reflection on the next steps in order to advance the discussion and move towards a more universal framework for the validation of soft and transversal skills the following 10 recommendations, as developed by the PLA hosts, CEV and LLLP, based on the PLA discussions, were presented to the participants. Participants were invited to share suggestions for changes, additions and amendments but none were forthcoming and it was agreed that they captured very well the conclusions of the PLA and the areas of focus for the next steps.

1. Outputs from the PLA should be made available to those involved in Expert Groups for EQF, ESCO and Europass and efforts made to feed them into the specific areas of work that are relevant. (Ideas taken up).
2. There should be better coordination between frameworks eg Key Competences for Life-Long Learning, ESCO, UNESCO dimensions of learning and others.
3. Efforts to compile a directory of existing validation tools should be supported by all stakeholders especially and in particular the ongoing process within the project IMPROVAL.
4. A robust vocabulary and categories for the most important soft, transversal skills should be developed on the basis of existing practice (see rec. 5). This can be in the context of the development of any future version of ESCO.

5. Further developments should be based on a bottom up approach and maximum cross sector collaboration in order that there is common ownership and 'buy in' to the process and eventual results and outcomes.
6. The possibilities offered by the new Europass for documenting soft, transversal skills acquired through volunteering that are validated should be maximised.
7. The role of a Peer Review group to develop and provide a Quality Label for Validation Tools should be explored in order that users (individual citizens and employers / education providers) can have trust and confidence in a specific certificate / Open Badge or other kind of credential.
8. The CEDEFOP Guidelines on Validation should be updated in order to include the advanced knowledge of the topic in the field and the recent developments. They should provide the foundation for quality assurance processes for validation tools (see rec. 7).
9. The outcomes of the PLA should feed into the Berlin declaration from the VPL-Biennale on 7th/8th of May.
10. The "Validation Community" should be strengthened via regular meetings (like the Validation Festival and the VPL Biennale) and other instruments that facilitate the exchange of knowledge across sectors, actors and countries.

5. Closing Session

Koen Nomden, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion closed the PLA and outlined some of the plans and intentions of the European Commission, and in particular DG EMPL, as concerns the possibilities for the validation of soft and transversal skills acquired by adults and other forms of non-formal and informal learning. He announced that the Commission will consider the outcomes of the PLA in its future reflections on validation of non-formal and informal learning.

6. ANNEX 1 – Agenda



EQF AG Peer Learning Activity

Validating and Valuing transversal skills and competencies acquired by adults through volunteering and other non-formal learning opportunities

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Rue d'Edimbourg 26 (Mundo B), Brussels.

AGENDA

Tuesday 22nd January 2019	
11:30 - 12:30	Registration & light lunch
12:30 - 13:00	Welcome address <i>Alison Crabb, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, HoU E2 Skills & Qualifications</i> <i>Brikena Xhomaqi, Director of Lifelong Learning Platform</i> Chair: Andrea Casamenti, Board Member European Youth Forum
13.0 - 14:30	Setting the scene – conceptual and practical challenges <i>Gabriella Civico, European Volunteer Centre</i> Panel discussion with experts - Institution developments perspective Focus on list of the most important transversal, soft skills

	<p>Chair: <i>Davide Capecchi, CoE / EU Youth Partnership</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Aikaterini Sylla, ESCO Support Team - European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)</i> ● <i>Dennis Van Gessel, DG EMPL, European Commission - Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Jens Bjornavold, CEDEFOP</i> <p style="text-align: center;">Questions for the panellists and audience to answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Which soft and transversal skills have you included in your tools?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>How difficult or easy was it to identify the skills to include?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Which stakeholders did you involve or consult with?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Are you satisfied with the results?</i> ● <i>What are the strengths and weaknesses of the list you created and their indicators?</i> ● <i>What advice would you give for the process of creating a list of core soft and transversal skills?</i> <p style="text-align: center;">Rapporteur: <i>Carme Royo, EUCEN</i></p>
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14:30 -15.00	Coffee break
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15.00 – 16.30	<p>Panel Discussion with experts - NGO/NFIL learning provider's developments perspective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- Focus on list of the most important skills</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Speakers (representatives from):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Gabriella Civico, European Volunteer Center</i> ● <i>Andrea Casamenti, European Youth Forum</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Serge Ravet, REVEAL</i> ● <i>Aleksandra Kozyra, EAEA</i> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair: <i>Brikena Xhomaqi, Director of LLL Platform</i></p>
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	<p style="text-align: center;">Questions for the panellists to answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which soft and transversal skills have you included in your tools? ● How difficult or easy was it to identify the skills to include? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which stakeholders did you involve or consult with? ● Are you satisfied with the results? ● What are the strengths and weaknesses of the list you created and their indicators? ● What advice would you give for the process of creating a list of core soft and transversal skills? <p style="text-align: center;">Rapporteur: Cristina Paulus</p>
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16.30 - 18:00	<p style="text-align: center;">“Living Library”</p> <p>The aim of the “Living Library” is for participants to meet co-ordinators and users of different validation tools for soft and transversal skills and competencies. The outcomes will focus on identifying <i>the conditions needed and what systems should be in place in order for soft and transversal skills and competencies acquired by adults while volunteering or through other non-formal and informal learning experiences to be validated?</i></p> <p>7 tables with one project per table to discuss in small groups for 20 minutes and then move to the next table.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Table 1: Lorenza Leita - Lever Up Project; Table 2: Attilio Ascani - EASY Project; Table 3: Jo Peeters - Volcar Project; Table 4: Ana Gomez – Vol+I; Table 5: Marguerite Potard - WOSM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Moderator: Marko Paunovic</i></p>
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19.30 - 21:00	<p>Joint Dinner (Self-Paying) (to be organised in the morning of 22nd)</p>
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Wednesday 23 January 2019

08:30 - 09:00

Registration & Welcome Coffee

09.00 - 10.00

Reporting from “Living Library” discussions previous day:

Rapporteurs = table facilitator

Proposal of list of Soft and Transversal Tools with voting throughout the day in flip charts or in using Smartphones and the conference APP.

Expert response: Martin Noack (Bertelsmann-Stiftung)

10:00 -10.30

Coffee break

10.30 – 12:00

3 Parallel Sessions 15 participants per Session: Small group discussion/ round table format.

- 1) Authorising Bodies** (Gerd Goetschalckx, Policy Advisor - Flemish Employment agency (VDAB) & Lorenza Leita - Lever Up project)
- 2) Technology** (Bert Jehoul - Europass & Serge Ravet - Open Recognition Alliance)
- 3) Assessment and Certification** (Tarja Lang - Omnia - Innoval case study from Finland; Kristiina Pernits - SALTO T&C RC Project coordinator - YouthPass)

Facilitators for each session Marko Paunovic, Giulia Bordin, Panagiotis Chatzimichail,

12.00 - 13:30

Lunch (Self-Paying)

13:30 – 14.30	<p>Feedback from the Parallel Sessions</p> <p>Conclusions: <i>Main outcomes “One page Road map” LLLP & CEV</i></p> <p><i>(open discussion with participants)</i></p>
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14:30 - 15:00	<p>Closing remarks</p> <p><i>Koen Nomden, European Commission, DG EMPL-E2</i></p>
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15:00	Departure
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7. ANNEX 2 - Participant list per Country and Organisation

- Denmark
- France
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Latvia
- Malta
- Romania

- CEDEFOP
- EURASHE
- EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION (EUA)
- EUROPEAN STUDENTS UNION (ESU)
- EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE
- European Youth Forum (EYF)
- external experts
- EVERIS
- Lifelong Learning Platform