

FIRST E-NEWSLETTER

April, 2015

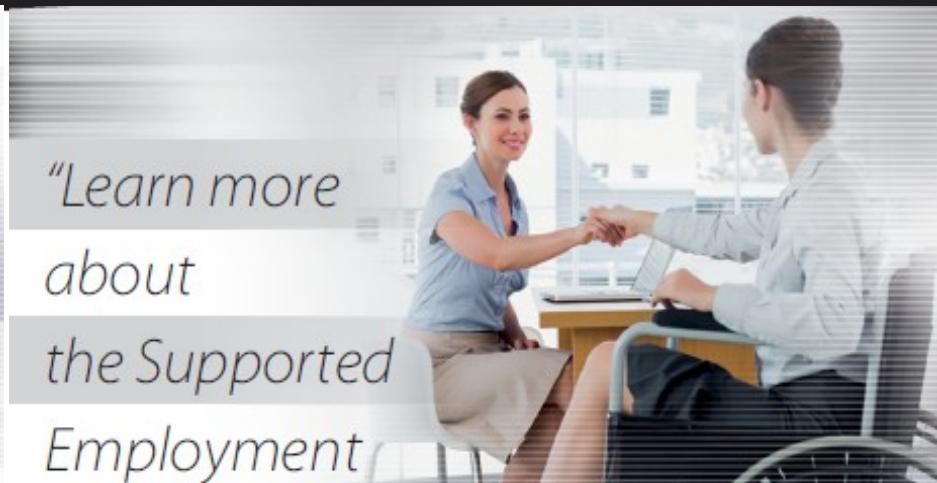


COACH@WORK

EQAVET SYSTEM - for recognition, validation and accreditation of skills, knowledge and competencies of supported employment providers for people with disabilities



*“Learn more
about
the Supported
Employment
and find your role
and place in it”*



Start: 01 September 2014

End: 31 August 2017

Duration: 36 months



Erasmus+



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Editorial

Welcome to the 1st edition of the COACH@WORK Newsletter. COACH@WORK stands for „EQAVET system for recognition, validation and accreditation of Supported Employment providers of people with disabilities” and is a project funded by Erasmus + programme of the European Commission.

Via this newsletter we will update you on the project progress, the various project intellectual outputs development, forthcoming events and planned activities, useful articles on topics relevant to the project, as well as guidelines how to benefit from COACH@WORK achievements.

If you wish to contribute to the content of the newsletter you can send your materials to zguraprojects@gmail.com. The next issue will be ready by the end of October 2015.

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What is Supported employment (SE) and SE coacher?



For the purpose of the present study: "***Supported Employment is a method of working with people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups to access and maintain paid employment in the open labour market***" (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 9). In addition the project partners will develop training materials for jobseekers with disabilities related to: preparing for interview; completion of job applications; disclosure of disability; presenting a professional appearance; analyzing strengths and weaknesses; accessing further help and resources etc.

SE coacher – a professional who is specially trained to support people with disabilities in the process of seeking and retaining suitable paid job.



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

People with disabilities (PWD) are the most disadvantaged group with regards to employment. Currently in the Bulgaria their number (age 18-29) is about 227 000 and more than 60% of them are unemployed. In Turkey they are 273,915 and only 15% are in employment compared with the national average of over 80%. In Austria they are around 850,000 and only 19% are employed and in Spain they are 3,847,900 and only 11% of them have permanent job. It is one of the key areas of both [European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#) and [Europe 2020](#) to allow full accessibility to education as well as to the labour market for people with disabilities. In many European countries and beyond accessibility to the labour market is still not given because of the lack of suitable and powerful implemented support concepts.

The impact of the Supported employment (SE) approach (a method of working with disabled people and other disadvantaged groups to access and maintain paid employment in the open labour market) have been identified in previous [T-EST project \(LLP-LDV-TOI-12-AT-0011\)](#) as very beneficial to the PWD and during its implementation phase it gives clear quality improvement of the accessibility to the labour market for those targets.

However during this process the partners discovered the need for development of dedicated VET programme for training of Job coaches of people with disabilities which does not exist so far in Europe as officially accredited job profile.

The COACH@WORK project will continue supporting the inclusion of the Supported employment approach in Austria and Spain, but also in new countries such as Bulgaria and Turkey where this will be done for the first time by developing [EQAVET](#) system for recognition, validation and accreditation of their knowledge, skills and competencies.

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OUR STAKEHOLDERS

1. **Supported employment (SE) consultants** who directly working with people with disabilities and implementing the SEprocess at the labour market. Those people will take part into the recognition and validation process by the EQAVET system as well as will be trained through specialised VET programme in the field of Supported employment. All passed successfully the training and validation process will be certified as SE providers.
2. **VET training providers / VET centres – responsible bodies for the VET training of Supported employment providers.** Those organisations can use both the COACH@WORK training programme as well as the EQAVET control system in order to increase the level of the VET training services which they offered as well as to assure the quality of the trainings which they provides.
3. **Non-profit establishments working with people with disabilities** – those who directly organised training activities for labour market inclusion of the people with disabilities and working toward equal employment opportunities. The responsible team members of those establishments will take part into the recognition and validation process by the EQAVET system as well as will be trained through specialised VET programme in the field of Supported employment. All passed successfully the training and validation process will be certified as SE providers.
4. **Employers – companies who would like to introduce the SE approach into their companies** and to take benefit from the project results for free of charge.
5. **Governmental bodies – institutions responsible for changes into the social policy and labour legislation** such as Job Centres, Executive Employment Agency, The Parliament, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Science and Youth, National accreditation/certification bodies etc. in participating partners' countries. One of the project's intellectual outputs is the Recommendation Guidelines for the implementation of the Supported employment into the legal framework of the participating countries which is only possible if such EQAVET system for recognition/validation and dedicated accredited VET programme for SE providers will be developed.
6. **EU level institutions responsible for the Supported employment implementation** (such as EUSE, EASPD etc.). As it was stated in Above sections for the rationale behind the project idea such EU institutions are seeking for establishment of recognition/validation and accreditation mechanisms so they will be involved since the beginning of the project to ensure project sustainability and mainstreaming around Europe.

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EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

COACH@WORK project will offer a dedicated unique [ECVET](#) training programme for supported employment (SE) consultants and providers which will cover:

- Disability awareness;
- Acquisition of key & transversal competencies;
- Application of interactive technologies and methods in coaching process;
- Mainstreaming and digital technologies usage by PwD;
- Supported employment basis;
- Attitudes and approaches ;
- Pre-employment support agenda
- Career guidance and labour market methods.
- Implementation and Networking.



This COACH@WORK VET programme will be accredited by the national body (NAVET) which will happen for the first time in Europe in that field. This training programme will be followed by piloting implementation phase as well as will establish a network between 54 employers of PwD that will complete a memorandum of understanding for the further exploitation of the project outputs.

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EXPECTED RESULTS & IMPACT



COACH@WORK project partners will develop the following intellectual outputs:

- Intellectual output 1 Consolidated survey findings & Executive summary
- Intellectual output 2: EQAVET system for recognition, validation and certification non-formal and informal learning deriving from voluntary civil services' experience
- Intellectual output 3: Instructions Guide for the system of competencies monitoring in the SE service
- Intellectual output 4: COACH@WORK VET training programme for Supported Employment (SE) providers & Job profile "Supported employment coacher / consultant"
- Intellectual output 5: Usability report
- Intellectual output 6: Project website and e-learning platform

The impact of the project reflects to the labour market engagement and work towards removing unemployed people from incapacity benefits, state or charitable support, enabling full workplace inclusion and career enhancement. The long term impact of the project will increase the employment rates of PwD who are currently inactive in the labour market and have low or no work experience or vocational training. This will lead to greater independence and financial security, allowing them to become fully active members of society in general and ultimately to an improved economy. From other hand the SE providers will have the ability after official accreditation to increase the opportunities for their sustainable employment by providing this very innovative expertise which does not exist both on National and EU levels.

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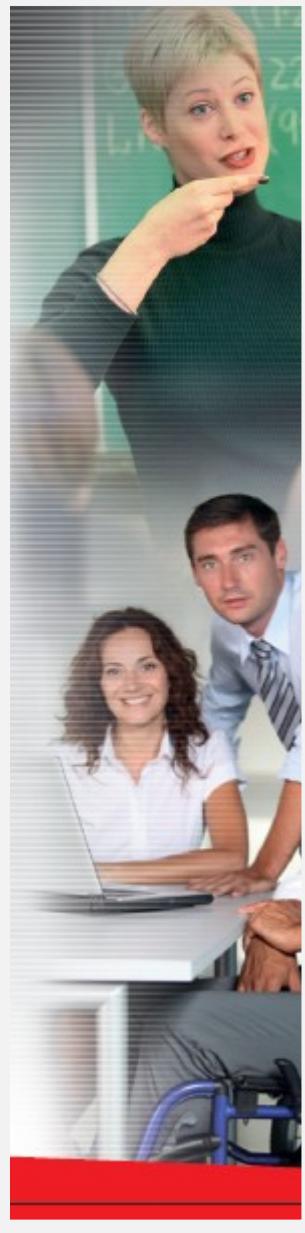
FIRST AVAILABLE RESULT:

Consolidated survey findings report

This document represents the conclusive part of the research phase of the COACH@WORK project which generally aims to develop *EQAVET* system for recognition, validation and accreditation of knowledge, skills and competencies gained by job coaches who will participate in its implementation phase. The focus is placed on *learning outcomes* - statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies. Those learning outcomes will be in connection with the unique ECVET training programme for Supported employment (SE) providers which will cover different disability related topics in the context of employability.

The present **Comparative report** comprises a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the national findings. All partners had to identify stakeholders to be involved in the interviews, then to collect and comment the received information and at the final to provide summary data in English of the outcomes/ results from the national surveys which will facilitate the formation of the professional profile of the future **SE coacher**.

This report is presenting the information gathered through questionnaires sent and completed by predefined target groups-employer, VET centers, SE providers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bulgaria, Turkey, Austria and Spain. The research which describes and compares the national particularities and similarities of the needs has been conducted in **Dec 2014- Feb 2015**. You can download it via: http://supportemployment.eu/?page_id=15



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KICK OFF MEETING OF THE PROJECT PARTNERS

On 19-20 November, 2014, the kick-off meeting of COACH@WORK project took place in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. It was mutually hosted by the two Bulgarian partners based in the city, namely "Interprojects" Ltd. and the Coordinator "Zgura-M".



The meeting started with introduction of all partners and continued with detailed presentation of project's outputs. At the end of the first day all partners were aware of what is required in terms of their administrative and content roles. The second day was dedicated to discussion and planning of the project's research phase. The session was carried out in the form of brainstorming where all partners generated ideas about the best ways to conduct the data collection process.

As a result partners made the following decisions:

- 3 types of questionnaires, i.e. for NGOs, for VET Centres, and for SE workers will be developed;
- Bulgarian NAVET will prepare a report based on desktop research on the existing policy for Supported Employment services and the professionals involved in them.



The dates for the next transnational partners meetings were also fixed. The common dinner also contributed to strengthen the interpersonal contacts among partners.

To get more information about project's progress and to find out how the decisions made are implanted you should regularly visit the project website.



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VARIOUS DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

The COACH@WORK project has been presented during various dissemination events in partners countries:



Presentation during International conference “Disability and employment”, Sofia, 10 October 2014



Presentation of the project during Experts' workshop on “Labour market inclusion”, 28 October 2014, Plovdiv, Bulgaria .



COACH@WORK project disseminated in front of Bulgarian Business Community, 7 November 2014, Plovdiv

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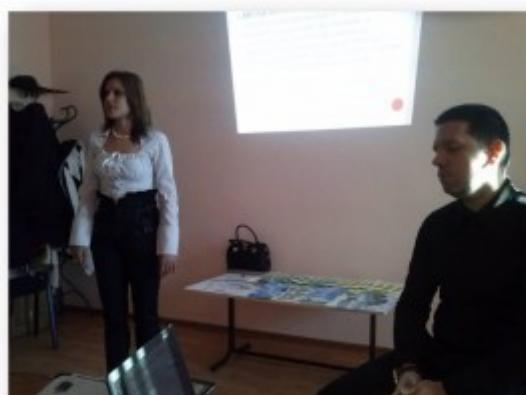


Presentation of the project during Contact Seminar on Adult Learning held on 12th to 14th of November 2014 in Brussels, Belgium



COACH@WORK project presented at a municipal seminar in Assenovgrad, Bulgaria, 25.11.2014

Presentation of the project during workshop “Development of social inclusion services in Plovdiv Municipality”, 13 January 2015, Plovdiv



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VARIOUS DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES



Presentation of the project during round table with experts in the field of disability and employment organised by the Bologna University, 19 February 2015, Bologna, Italy .

Dissemination of COACH@WORK project during training seminar on communication and interaction with people with disabilities, 22 February 2015, Velingrad.



Presentation of the project in front of representatives from all labour offices on the territory of Plovdiv Municipality, 25 February 2015



Presentation of the project during round table with international disability experts, 5 March 2015, Vilnius, Lithuania

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SECOND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS MEETING

On 10th and 11th of March 2015 in Graz, Austria the second transnational partners' meeting took place. It was organised by the hosting partner Jugend am Werk in their headquarter.

Each partner country presented the results from the implemented surveys with Supported employment providers, career counselors, case managers, mediators on the labour market, VET centers, NGO of/for people with disabilities and governmental bodies / policy makers organised in the period 15 December 2014 till 1 March 2015 in Bulgaria, Turkey, Spain and Austria.



The results were thoroughly discussed and initial plans for the development of comparative report was held. The partners also discussed the selection of psycho-attitudinal, performance based and case assessment models which will be used as a preliminary monitoring of the supported employment coaches in intellectual output 2.



They also agreed on the framework for the production of the VET programme for job coaches and divided their responsibilities in the leading of the modules production.

The next meeting will be held on 28-29 October 2015 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.



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COACH @ WORK PROJECT presented at the European Fair in Plovdiv



The 4th European Fair of social economy enterprises took place on 26-29 March, 2015 in Plovdiv. Zgura-M company participated with its own stand at the exhibition, where visitors had the opportunity to learn about the training materials developed in the framework of international initiatives funded by Erasmus + Programme.

Visits to our stand exceeded 250 a day, and among the projects of great interest was COACH @ WORK. The exhibition was accompanied by thematic roundtables and discussions. On 27 March 2015 COACH @ WORK project was presented by the Bulgarian partners Zgura-M and NFEDP within the roundtable about international cooperation. It was attended by about 60 participants, including representatives of state and local authorities, employers, representatives of NGOs and associations working in the field of support of people with disabilities. After the presentation of the project participants expressed their interest to be informed about the progress of the project and in particular the process of incorporating the new profession in the national classification and the presentation of the developed training materials.

Overall, these four days were a period of many fruitful contacts, which certainly expanded the list of the stakeholders who will in future be included in the project activities and contribute to the promotion of its results.



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Produced by the team of NAVET and
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